CAREER TURBULENCE: EXPLORING A NEW CAREER DEVELOPMENT

THEORY USING CAREER TRANSITIONS OF MBA ALUMNI

by

PATRICIA DIETRICH ZETTEK

(Under the Direction of Wendy E. A. Ruona)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the nature and correlates of career change among MBA alumni. In order to accomplish this broad purpose five research questions were addressed. (1) To what extent do MBA alumni experience specific *career transitions*? (2) For those who experienced specific career transitions, what *impact* did those transitions have on their careers? (3) To what extent did MBA Alumni experience *career turbulence?* (4) To what extent did MBA alumni report *an orientation toward self-directedness* in regard to career management? (5) To what extent did the *personal characteristics, contextual factors* and *an orientation toward self-directedness* predict the *career turbulence* MBA alumni experienced?

The study proposed *Career Turbulence*, a conceptual model that takes into consideration the vibrant and interesting career experiences that suggest a new normal in the American managerial career. A questionnaire was developed that included 14 items to measure the frequency of specific career transitions, 14 items to measure the impact of those transitions on the respondents' careers, nine items to measure career self-directedness, and ten items to collect demographic information.

The survey was completed by 206 MBA alumni. The following primary findings resulted from this study:

1. Taking on additional responsibilities with no change in salary or title has become a common practice in the modern managerial career, and is rated as the highest producer of career turbulence.

2. Overall, career transitions were considered positive occurrences, even when the transitions themselves were rated less than positive.

3. Career turbulence is more a product of the number of transitions experienced than the self-reported impact of those transitions.

4. MBA alumni in this study reported a high degree of self-directedness in their career management behavior and attitudes.

INDEX WORDS: Contemporary career development, conventional career development, managerial careers, career transitions, transition impact, self-directed career management, career turbulence.

CAREER TURBULENCE: EXPLORING A NEW CAREER DEVELOPMENT

THEORY USING CAREER TRANSITIONS OF MBA ALUMNI

by

PATRICIA DIETRICH ZETTEK

B.S., St. Mary's University, 1982

M.Ed., University of Georgia, 2006

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial

Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2016

CAREER TURBULENCE: EXPLORING A NEW CAREER DEVELOPMENT

THEORY USING CAREER TRANSITIONS OF MBA ALUMNI

by

PATRICIA DIETRICH ZETTEK

Major Professor: Wendy E.A. Ruona

Committee: Laura L. Bierema
                    Jason A. Colquitt
                    Thomas Valentine

Electronic Version Approved:

Suzanne Barbour
Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
August 2016

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my late parents, Monroe and Patricia Dietrich. They taught me independence, compassion, humor, patience, and unconditional love. I'm quite sure this pursuit would have surprised them as I was not exactly a stellar student through high school. My father passed just before I graduated from college, missing the opportunity to celebrate getting his last child that far with the love of his life by his side. My mother and I both felt as if he was there with us though. I will always be grateful to be a part of the incredible family they made together. It continues to be my greatest source of pride and inspiration.

This work is also dedicated to my children, Clara and Kyle. I hope that in some small way this goal of mine inspires you to set and accomplish lofty goals yourselves. The strength and courage you have shown in your young lives will take you farther than either of you has imagined. Keep striving to be your best selves and the rewards will be limitless.

And finally to my partner, Chuck Brooks, who has been steadfast in his support and encouragement over our last ten years together. You are my best friend, and biggest cheerleader. Thank you for always being there for me, and for my children. I love you, and look forward to having even more time to spend with you!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Business. Jason, you brought a unique perspective as an Organizational Behavior researcher, and added valuable insight to this study. Thank you for making time for this endeavor in your already very full research and teaching schedule. I hope to work on other studies with you in the future.

Throughout this process I have been employed by the University of Georgia. Anyone who knows me will remember that I started this journey because I thought it would be a missed opportunity *not* to pursue a degree while working here. I only hope that I can use what I have learned to the benefit of the University, and the Terry College MBA Program. I am grateful to the College and the Program for the steadfast support, both financial and professional, that allowed me to finish this drill. To my Director, Shannon Caldwell, your vision and courage to make the changes that need to be made benefitted the Program over the last eight years and will continue to do the same for years to come. I have learned so much from working with you. To Holly Weimer, the better half of the corporate relations team, you helped me through more formatting and technological challenges than I care to mention getting this document finalized. I think you should get an honorable mention from the Grad School for your efforts on my behalf.

To the rest of you who have supported me throughout this journey, forgive me for not mentioning you all by name. To do so would add pages to a document that I am more than ready to complete. I plan to thank you all individually and in person, preferably over a meal or beverage. But for now please let me simply say, thank you, all!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Perspectives on careers have changed considerably in the last 20 years. The conventional, organizational career that views career decision-making as a one-time process taking place early in adulthood and resulting in lifelong proclamations or long-term commitments to one or two organizations over time is now regarded by many as a thing of the past (Arthur, 1994; Arthur, Inkson, & Pringle, 1999; Hall, 2004; Savickas, 2009). That *conventional career* framework has been replaced by a *contemporary career* development construction that incorporates flexible employment arrangements and non-linear patterns.

Models that tout the virtues of the "Free Agent Nation" (Pink, 1997) have become increasingly prevalent in the literature. Theories on boundaryless careers (Arthur, 1994; Arthur and Rousseau, 1996), protean careers, (Hall, 1976; 1996), and kaleidoscope careers (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006) have been presented as the new normal in career development, typically portrayed as juxtaposed to the conventional careers prominent through much of the 20th century.

The wide acceptance of *contemporary careering* seems to indicate two things. First, career decision-making in the 21st century is based on different factors than the generally accepted precepts of the past—namely money, title, promotion, and prestige. And second, career decisions are made repeatedly throughout the lifespan based on a

collection of one's career preferences, personal characteristics, and contextual factors that may shift in priority, or even emerge anew, throughout one's career.

Although career development theory continues to evolve to address a more holistic understanding of career as it relates to the individual, the employer, and the global community, the vast majority of the literature focuses almost entirely on these two fairly restrictive paradigms: *conventional careering* and *contemporary careering*— or more simply stated, the traditional way of managing one's career versus the modern way.

Many scholars have written about the conventional career. The most comprehensive definition is offered by Wilensky (1960) who depicted career as "a succession of related jobs arranged in a hierarchy of prestige through which persons move in an ordered, predictable sequence" (p. 554). This definition highlighted three critical factors that are worthy of further dissection. The first main element was that one's career was a *succession* of related jobs—indicating an expectation that occupational choices were connected in some clear, logical order. The second important tenet was the *hierarchy of prestige* signifying that vocational choices were made with one thing in mind— *progression*, or the climb up the proverbial ladder toward more responsibility and stature. The third assumption, *predictability*, as in the order of movement in one's career, endorsed a widely accepted roadmap of career transitions that unfolded in one clear path or direction.

That last element, predictability (or certainty of direction), was further validated as Super (1953) identified four stages of career (1) trial, (2) stabilization, (3) maintenance and (4) decline. While the preliminary stage in Super's theory introduced an element of choice that implied a time for re-evaluation of the initial career decision,

very little attention was paid to the possibility of changing direction after the trial period. Super's views gained popularity through the 1960s, supported by social norms that commanded a male-as- breadwinner family structure and an organization-for-life mentality (Sullivan and Baruch, 2009).

Loyalty, implied as a vital component of work in the conventional career model, became explicit when Argyris (1960) introduced the idea of the psychological contract between employer and employee. The contract was further developed by Levinson, Price, Munden, Mandl, & Solley (1962) as they attempted to describe the unspoken understandings between factory foremen and employees regarding their work arrangement, especially as related to grievance protocol. This furthered the evolution of the idea of organizational commitment as the employee was expected to remain loyal by continuing employment at one organization and the organization would in turn offer the promise of steadfast job security. This concept of reciprocal obligation helped coin the term *organizational career*. The descriptors *organizational* and *conventional* as they relate to career became largely interchangeable from this point forward. It is important to note that a stable organizational culture was presumed in this career model, as was the expectation that seniority drove career advancement. Also foundational in this career model was the recognized reward system which centered on the extrinsic incentives of increased salary and advanced title; the trappings of success in *conventional careering*.

In contrast to the conventional career model described above, the contemporary career paradigm is based on the individual's self-management and self-direction. There is not yet one comprehensive definition of the contemporary career that is widely accepted in the literature. Instead, the concept is offered in an

amalgamation of core elements proposed by notable scholars who have written about the concept in recent years. The defining elements of contemporary careering include: a boundaryless mindset, a mobility preference or perspective, purposeful self-direction, work/life balance or integration, and an emphasis on an individual's core values. These contemporary patterns are largely represented in the literature as a complete departure from the conventional career patterns that came before them (Briscoe, et al., 2006). See Table 1.1 on the following page for an overview of relevant theories.

The movement in the literature toward contemporary career theory views a career as a means to fulfill internal or psychological measures of success driven by things like personal learning or individualized professional development and growth (Hall, 2004). These elements are thought to have replaced the standard foci of the past (money or title) as reflection and re-evaluation frame an individual's internal concept of success. This more subjective definition of success drives career paths that incorporate lateral, backward, or even escaping job moves that help satisfy personal needs (Arthur, 1994; Hall & Mirvis, 1995).

Common threads in all these contemporary models are flexible employment contracts, multiple employers and job changes, and lateral or backward career moves. The overriding premises are that employability and self-directedness have replaced promotability and organizational loyalty as the symbols of the modern career.

It is well-documented through Bureau of Labor Statistics that the shift toward multiple careers is happening in the United States. A 2015 report of employment of activity indicates an average of 11.7 jobs held between the ages of 18 and 48, with about a third of all jobs among 40-48 year old workers ended in less than a year. Sixty

nine percent of jobs among 40-48 year olds ended in fewer than five years (Number of jobs held, 2015). The allure of career free agency (Pink, 2001) lays the groundwork for exciting new visions of career development theory (Briscoe, et al., 2006; Mainiero and Sullivan, 2005; Schein, 1996; Sullivan & Baruch, 2009). Widespread acceptance of the contemporary career pattern as today's reality is the result.

In many ways the changes brought forth in career patterns have been represented in the literature as overwhelming and colossal (Savickas, et al., 2009; Sullivan & Baruch, 2009). Many scholars have found that individuals are choosing varied career paths that include working in a number of different organizations performing a variety of different roles (Arthur, 1994; Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Hall & Mirvis, 1995; Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005; 2006). Many other theorists agree with these findings and further suggest that personal identity, personalized professional development, and life design rightfully belong at the center of today's theory (Bloch, 2005; Savickas, 2002).

Yet there is a lack of empirical data on individuals' experiences of changing careers. Most of the research conducted thus far is qualitative and outside the United States, therefore making transferability and generalizability problematic. Cohen & Mallon (1999) conducted interviews with ex-managers of a British National Health Service. The participants included seven men and 18 women who were pressed into portfolio careering after systematic restructuring. Duberley, Cohen & Mallon (2006) discuss how workers in New Zealand navigate the rapidly transforming economy by revamping their careers. McDonald, Brown & Bradley (2005) conducted a mixed methods study of managers in a public sector Australian organization. Findings indicated contemporary career patterns

5

Table 1.1

Career Theory Overview

Paradigm	Theorist	Year	Summary
Conventional	Parsons	1909	Introduced a method for choosing a vocation that begins with a personal data statement and addresses various aspects of the vocational problem: later named the Trait and Factor theory.
Conventional	Holland	1959	The RIASEC theory of career development focuses on personality and choice by encouraging a comparison of oneself to one's perception of an occupation.
Conventional	Super	1957	Identified four stages of career (1) trial, (2) stabilization, (3) maintenance and (4) decline.
Conventional	Schein	1971	Career anchor theory analyzes personal values & career-related events in 41 managers in various organizations.
Contemporary	Hall	1976	Protean careers named for the Greek god Proteus who changed shapes are driven by the individual and not the organization.
Contemporary	Hall & Mirvis	1995	Identity development and heightened adaptability are named as the two meta-skills needed to navigate 21st century careers.
Contemporary	Arthur & Rousseau	1996	Boundaryless careers are focused on self-development and can involve upward, downward or lateral moves between organizations.
Contemporary	Mainiero & Sullivan	2006	Kaleidoscope careers rotate varied aspects of career in order to arrange their relationships and roles in new ways.

were less likely for men than women in this study. Common in all these studies was

the undertaking of new career forms as the result of external forces, specifically

restructuring or rapid organizational transformation, leaving a gap to be filled by

studying voluntary or self-selected contemporary careering.

Clearly the 21st century career landscape is more complex, dynamic, and interactive, stemming at least in part from increased technology and an interdependent global economy. In fact, the question currently under debate is whether or not the traditional career still exists, and if so, to what extent (Clarke, 2008; Sullivan & Baruch, 2009). Certainly as people's lives and society's priorities change careers are likely to change to adapt to these variations. So it is not surprising that the time-honored linear career pattern that continues in one or two organizations throughout a lifetime has become less common.

This study will explore whether the field is romanticizing away from a type of careering that does in fact still persist in some circles today, as well as investigate how different career patterns are perceived by the individual who experiences them. While the contemporary career patterns have been identified as the new normal by many scholars (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Hall and Mirvis, 1992; Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005;2006; Sullivan & Baruch, 2009) the factors that influence these non-traditional career moves may just as easily lead to conventional career patterns, especially in managerial careers. This possibility has not been fully explored in the career development literature.

A deeper exploration into managerial careers with an eye toward the area of overlap between conventional and contemporary career ideals will offer a more thorough understanding of career decision-making. Comprehensive career development theory should not be premised on a binary, either/or basis, but rather viewed through a both/and perspective. Viewing the complex and dynamic phenomenon of career requires an acceptance of the individuality or at least variability

7

that is present in every career. Career variability will serve as a primary construct of this study branded as *Career Turbulence*. Conceptually, career turbulence describes the extent to which career changes impact one's life. Operationally, career turbulence will be defined as the product of career transitions captured in the data collection multiplied by their self-reported impact. This construct serves as the dependent variable in the study, describing 21st century careering.

Problem Statement

Two broad, countering career concepts are represented in the literature. *Conventional career* development theories tend to view career decision-making as a one- time process that takes place early in adulthood, operates on a mutual psychological contract between employee and organization and upholds hierarchical advancement and objective measures of success. *Contemporary career* development theories posit career trajectories that twist and turn, fall back, and restart. These contemporary career patterns, known as boundaryless (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996), kaleidoscope (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2005), or protean careers (Hall, 1976), operate on two premises. First, career decision- making in the 21st century is based on different factors than before; things like fulfillment, work/life balance, or calling. And second, careers are self-directed and guided more by personal values than ever before (Briscoe, et al., 2005). Yet, we know little about whether the conventional and contemporary career patterns can overlap or operate simultaneously, and even less about how modern professionals navigate these espoused patterns. Managerial careers, those most often pursued by recipients of a Master of Business Administration (MBAs), were once reputed as being an uninterrupted climb up the corporate ladder (Reitman & Schneer, 2005) and provide a fertile network for exploration.

8

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to explore the nature and correlates of career change among MBA alumni. In order to accomplish this broad purpose five research questions were addressed:

1. To what extent do MBA alumni experience specific *career transitions*?

2. For those who experienced specific career transitions, what *impact* did those transitions have on their careers?

3. To what extent did MBA Alumni experience *career turbulence?*

4. To what extent did MBA alumni report *an orientation toward self-directedness* in regard to career management?

5. To what extent did the *personal characteristics, contextual factors* and *an orientation toward self-directedness* predict the *career turbulence* MBA alumni experienced?

Significance of the Study

This study has the potential to contribute to the field both theoretically and practically. The theoretical significance lies in the possibility that these data will allow for an empirical investigation of what has been accepted as the standard of *contemporary career* theory. By gathering data on the career transitions of MBA alumni and inquiring as to the significance of those transitions, *Career Turbulence*, a new metric of modern careering will be explored. Furthermore, the basis for how *conventional* and *contemporary* career patterns relate to one another is unclear and unexplored in the career development literature. Since most studies of career decision-making have been qualitative, performed in another country, and resulted in findings

that are broadly categorized into either contemporary or conventional careering, the need to focus attention on the interplay between the two ideas as they relate to the American workforce through an empirical investigation is compelling.

The practical significance of this study lies in its potential to inform the practice of individual career planning and career counseling by raising awareness of the personal and professional differences that exist with respect to lifelong career management; therefore this study will contribute to the HROD knowledge base by developing a deeper understanding of the practice of careering and the personal and contextual factors that impact it. It is also expected that organizations that routinely hire MBA talent will use the study's findings to attract and retain their preferred candidates. These data can provide helpful insight into what truly drives the career behavior of MBA graduates, a highly sought-after talent pool.

Definitions

For the purposes of this study, the following definitions are being used. Some of the definitions offered here reflect only the aspects that are included in this study, and are not intended to be all-encompassing definitions of the terms. Each of these will be further discussed in chapters two and three. The terms of import are:

1. *Career transitions:* Any shift in responsibility, title, department, function, or organization, whether self-directed or driven by another.
2. *Career turbulence:* The measure of one's overall career variability determined by multiplying the number of career transitions experienced by the self-reported impact of those transitions on the individual's career.

3. *Career orientation*: the career agent' outlook regarding locus of control as it relates to career choice and change.

4. *Careering:* The activity of navigating one's career that takes into account both personal and contextual factors simultaneously addressing the subjective and the objective elements of career.

5. *Contextual factors:* Elements of the work performed and the organizational culture in which it is performed.

6. *Personal characteristics:* Age, Race, gender, employment status, length of time in the workforce, and approximate annual income.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews the literature that provides the theoretical grounding for this study. The research studied included books, journal articles, and dissertations that cover several topic areas related to careers. The literature search focused on works published in the last 20 years that shape the concept of contemporary careering, and seminal works from the 20th century.

Most of the formative career development theory in the latter half of the twentieth century operated from the perspective of lifetime employment in a stable work environment, subscribing to what is described herein as the conventional career theory model. As organizations moved away from lifetime employment contracts, and individuals became more reflective of what matters most to them, new theories were developed to address career as a more self-directed concept; the model described throughout this document as contemporary.

This discussion will be organized into two main sections. It begins with a broad review of the career development theory base addressing significant works and theories that have shaped the field over time. The review of these foundational works will be organized chronologically and grouped into specific theory families. Next the review explores the empirical studies that have been performed in recent years with particular attention paid to the popular representation of contemporary careering. Each of the

individual studies will be addressed as they relate to the study proposed and how this study will attend to specific gaps that remain in the literature.

Career Development Theories

Trait and Factor Theory

The beginning of career development theory is often credited to the contributions of Frank Parsons. In 1909 Parsons introduced the concept and a method for choosing a vocation in a time when work was often passed down through family generations. Children would follow the vocational paths of their parents or family friends, often learning through apprenticeship.

Parsons was the first to address the importance of the individual choosing a vocation for him or herself and act upon it. He constructed a career assessment that explored three important things to be considered when looking at occupational choice: (1) understanding oneself; (2) understanding the requirements of different lines of work, and (3) recognizing the importance of the relationship between those two things. At this time it was widely believed that career choice was an event that would take place once, fairly early in life. Parsons' contribution to the field was the first talent matching approach, later named the Trait-and-Factor (T-F) theory. Matching one's traits and factors to compatible work is the premise of this foundational concept, and structures most career development theory that follows it.

Person-Environment Theory

In 1959 John Holland took Parsons' T-F theory further into the field of Psychology by crafting an instrument that measured personality characteristics that significantly impact career choice. Six personality types were identified: Realistic,

Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional (RIASEC). These same

six descriptors were ascribed to work environments and work functions with the

premise being individuals would seek out compatible cultural fit between their

personality type and prospective work environments. The RIASEC personality and

environment categorization was the genesis of Person Environment (P-E) theory. P-E

Theory became a seminal career development theory of the time and prevailed as the

preeminent career philosophy for more than a decade (Brown, D., 2002).

Career Stage Theories

In 1952 Ginzberg conducted a study that introduced three primary stages of

career choice: (1) fantasy, (2) tentative, and (3) realistic. These stages were bound by

general age beginning in childhood and continuing through adolescence to young

adulthood. Two very provocative ideas were introduced through this study (1) the

individual's process of compromise between interest, ability and opportunity and (2)

the posited irreversibility of occupational decisions once they are made. These two

areas indicate the importance of concentrating on the decisions made during specific

stages of maturation, specifically early adult life stages. The last stage in this theory,

realistic represented the development stage from late-adolescence to early adulthood

and was later explained by Ginzberg (1969) to include three sub-stages:

> The realistic period begins with the exploration stage, during which the
>
> individual seeks for the last time to acquaint himself with his alternatives.
>
> This is followed by the crystallization stage, when he determines his
>
> choice, and finally, by the specification stage, during which he delimits it
>
> (p.76).

Ginzberg's realistic stage was said to begin around age 17 and continue through the early twenties.

In 1957 Donald Super built upon and repositioned Ginzberg's life stages theory. Super, often recognized as the father of developmental stage career theory, made a pivotal contribution to career development theory by attending to adolescent readiness for vocational choice. He mixed elements of developmental psychology with vocational counseling to stress the importance of job sequence in relation to life roles. Building on Ginzberg's (1952) work, he proposed four stages of career: (1) trial, (2) stabilization, (3) maintenance, and (4) decline. Super offered general motives that influence career decision-making in each stage.

During the trial stage Super posited that individuals are trying to learn skills and assess their competence at different work-related tasks. The stabilization stage is when individuals are concerned primarily with getting established in their chosen line of work in order to support their lifestyle needs. Workers in the maintenance stage are well-established in their career and lifestyle and decidedly committed to staying the course. Decline is the career stage in which an individual expects to reduce work hours to pursue non-occupational interests.

Later, Super (1970) refined his and Ginzberg's (1969) work by separating the four stages into five and adding corresponding age brackets to each: Growth, ages 4-14, Exploration, ages 15-24, Establishment, ages 25-44, Maintenance, ages 45-64, and Disengagement, for those aged 65 and up. Over time these stages grew into the Life-Span, Life-Space Approach to career development, which later evolved into the Life Span Rainbow (Super, 1990). The Life span Rainbow focused on specific aspects of

career development, borrowed from developmental, social, and phenomenological psychology, blended with self- concept and learning theory. By addressing stages of personal development and their relation to careering, Super offered a more holistic view of career as an integral aspect of one's life, not just a means to an income, but an important dimension of the individual's evolving identity.

Career Anchor Theory

In 1974 Edgar Schein expanded on P-E theory and identity development components of Ginzberg and Super's work by performing an empirical study on a group of 41 MBA graduates from the Sloan School of Management at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). The research purpose was to explore self-concept and its impact on vocational choice in adults. The mixed-methods study investigated values, motives, and abilities as they related to careers and resulted in the identification of *Career Anchors*: characteristics of identity that were said to drive vocational choice. The study uncovered five preliminary anchors; (1) managerial competence, (2) technical/functional competence, (3) organizational security, (4) creativity, and (5) autonomy. These findings were later expanded with the addition of three more anchors that were identified in follow-up studies with roughly the same group of participants. The additional anchors: (6) service/dedication to a cause, (7) pure challenge, and (8) lifestyle added important dimensions of desire that have been supported by subsequent studies (Bloch, 2005; Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005; Sullivan & Baruch, 2009).

Schein's (1974, 1990, 1996, 1999) research was particularly significant to this investigation for three primary reasons. First, up to this point in time no other empirical study had been performed using graduate business students as the test population. This

test group offered a more educated and tenured group of participants than was customary in the study of vocational choice, and therefore a more focused look at experienced workers. Second, the study was longitudinal, completed over a period of 15 years with many of the same participants. This effort to measure results and responses over time challenged the conventional wisdom that vocational decisions were one-time occurrences resulting in lifelong proclamations. Third, it focused on self-concept and professional identity in career changers. By virtue of their continued schooling, many of the participants in Schein's studies were self-described career changers who had worked for a time before returning to business school with the intention of advancing or redirecting their careers.

Schein's (1974) Career Anchor Theory is the most widely recognized study to tie one's career choices to deeper characteristics of identity and self-concept, therefore positioning it as a tipping point between conventional and contemporary career theory (Feldman & Molino, 1996). The Career Anchors, or factors like them, offer the most plausible explanations, up to this point in time, for career decisions that may seem random or illogical. Schein's theory serves as the foundation for recognizing careers as a means for personal fulfillment and self-expression and plays a large part in the emergence of the proliferation of contemporary career development theory.

Protean and Boundaryless Career Theories

Hall (1976) introduced the idea of the protean career as part of addressing the emerging issues of the time, namely increased presence of women in professional careers and dual-career couples. He first described the protean career by drawing on the mythology of the Greek god Proteus, who could change his shape at will. Hall later

drew on the discussion of careers as pursuing personal meaning, traveling along the "path with a heart" (Shepard's work as cited in Hall & Mirvis, 1995), co-authoring several articles focused on this contemporary concept of career.

Around this same time period, another modern career concept was introduced in the literature. Arthur (1992) introduced viewing career as an "inter-organizational concept" (p.303). Arthur coined the term "boundaryless" to describe careers crediting the individual career agent with greater mobility, yet still framing the concept using the organization as a central variable. "Put simply, the boundaryless career is the antonym of the bounded, or organizational career that has dominated empirical research in recent times" (Arthur, 1992, p. 296).

Although both the protean and boundaryless career models were often cited in the literature after their introduction, challenges to empirically test the concepts surfaced in many of the articles supporting the theories (Allred, Snow, & Miles, 1996; Briscoe, et al., 2005; Sullivan, Cardin, & Martin, 1998). These challenges were largely left unanswered in the literature for years to come. In response to requests for a more clearly defined concept of protean career, Hall & Moss (1998) wrote:

> The protean career is a process which the person, not the organization, is managing. It consists of all the person's varied experiences in education, training, work in several organizations, changes in occupational field, etc. The protean person's own personal career choices and search for self-fulfillment are the unifying or integrative elements in his or her life. The criterion of success is internal (psychological success), not external (p. 25).

Both the protean and boundaryless career theories attend to the way in which the career agent's needs and career concerns change over the course of the career, drawing from career stage theory and recognizing the shift toward a more subjective focus of career than in the past (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Hall & Mirvis, 1995; Patton & McMahon, 2006). These contemporary career patterns encompass a more flexible, mobile career course with peaks and valleys, twists and turns, and moves from one line of work to another. These models also sought to bring into focus an emphasis on learning as explained by Hall & Mirvis (1995):

> People's careers will become a succession of ''mini-stages'' (or short-cycle learning stages) of exploration-trial-mastery-exit, as they move in and out of various product areas, technologies, functions, organizations, and other work environments. The key issue determining a learning stage will not be chronological age (in which the 40s and 50s were ''mid-career'') but *career age,* where perhaps 5 years in a given specialty may be ''midlife'' for that area (p. 277).

The short cycle described in this description indicates the increased pace of change often attributed to 21st century life. However what's concerning in this definition is the presumption of challenge or learning as a positive, painting a picture of contemporary careering that presumes these changes are voluntary. An exploration as to whether these pursuits are undertaken to realize more subjective measures of success or to reposition or rebound from unplanned disruptions or interruptions will add significantly to the literature base.

Constructivist Theories

As the complexity of career development increased through the 1980s and into the 21st century, career development theoreticians responded with a more constructivist stance (Bloch, 2005; Gottfredson, 1996; Patton & McMahon, 2006; Savickas, 1998, 1999, 2002). The constructivist approach attempted to address big issues like gender, ethnicity, race, social status, sexual orientation, and other aspects of identity that had not previously been attended to in career development studies (Brown, 2002). The increased emphasis on cultural values added even more to the significance of Schein's work as his findings uncovered the non- negotiable aspects of his participants' careers by identifying career anchors as "the elements of their self-concept that they *could not give up* even in the face of difficult choices" (Schein, 1996, p. 158). The emphasis was added in the quote to bring attention to the element of volition built into the definition.

In addition to the emphasis on personal and cultural values, adaptability emerged in the late 1990's to take the place of maturation as the more widely acclaimed construct to shape career development in adults. Savickas (1999) spearheaded this significant shift as he proposed that adaptation served as a more meaningful construct because of maturation's "limiting biological foundation" (p. 20). Later introducing the Career Construction Theory (CCT) where adaptation as a primary construct shifts the attention from the individual to the individual-in-situation and reinforces the move toward constructivist career development theory (Savickas, 2002).

With adaptation emerged a further move toward identity development and meaning- making as aspects of career development. Meaning-making supports the notions of complexity, personal fulfillment, and identity and inspired the work of

Debora Bloch (2005). Bloch first addressed the self-search aspect of career exploration when she focused on the path individuals took to get from knowledge to understanding. She placed great emphasis on self-awareness and the importance of synthesizing experience, attitudes, values, and relationship to design and craft a more fulfilling career to address higher level needs like self- concept and identity (Bloch, 2005): "The career development of each individual is a series of choices that have internal harmonics or resonances for the individual and can only be understood in terms of that individual" (p. 200). The emphasis on internal harmonics will later be handled through "calling" and is embodied in several other articles relating to career development around this time (Dobrow, 2004; Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005).

Kaleidoscope Career Model

Further acknowledging the constructivist approach to career theory and the complexity present in navigating careers in the 21st century, Mainiero and Sullivan (2005) also explored the importance of addressing higher level needs through careers. The Kaleidoscope Career Model (KCM) was developed through a series of three studies and was originally designed to provide benchmarking ideas for companies to attract and retain talent in the modern career landscape. This research incorporates the organizational lens and an emphasis on building mutual loyalty between employer and employee - two aspects not usually addressed in the contemporary theories. These researchers pointed to the importance of making it easy for employees to shift focus and priority through expanded or revised responsibilities to forge careers that provide higher level satisfaction within the same organization. Their research suggested greater loyalty is created between the employee and the organization through this more flexible

approach. The study provided a call to action for employers in an age where the idea of lifelong job security was no longer probable as a realistic employment goal (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Hall & Mirvis, 1995; Hoekstra, 2011; Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005, 2007).

The KCM has great significance in the study of modern career development for a number of reasons. First, as mentioned above, it focused on the organizational lens of contemporary careering by using findings to recommend ways in which employers could accommodate the individual so that both the organization and the career agent could thrive. Second, the researchers focused significant attention on the *opt-out revolt* the term popularized in the media and used to describe the actions of workers who were "searching for a life that is richer, more balanced, authentic, and challenging. And when they find their needs can't be met they are taking control and walking away" (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005, p.2). Third, and most significantly, the model was based on the findings of a scholarly, longitudinal, empirically-based study in the United States. As such it will be addressed in greater detail in the Empirical Studies section of this chapter. A summary of the career development theories addressed thus far is shown in Table 2.1 on the following page.

Although many career development theorists remarked about the need to conduct empirically-based research to further clarify the contemporary career, few published works exist. The following section of this chapter will review the research that has most closely attended to the aspects of careering proposed for greater exploration through this study.

Career Theory	Distinction – new vs. traditional	Prominent theorists	Key Elements
Protean Career Theory	New – driven by internal measure of success and development of longer term personal competence and marketability	Hall & Mirvis, 1996 Hall, 2002	• Driven by the individual not the organization. Careers that put self-fulfillment and personal norms and values above those of the organization. Self-directed and values-driven are the two primary components of the protean career, (Briscoe, Hall, & DeMuth). • Attends to guarding against obsolescence related to skill mastery and functional competence. • Requires self-awareness to identify learning goals and determine how to accomplish them as well as broadening necessary skill set inherent in the goals. • Focused on increased customization of the career path to suit the needs of the individual.
Boundaryless Career Theory	New – defies traditional employment contract assumptions by seeking out of organizations or opportunities that will foster optimal career or professional development for the career agent	Arthur & Rousseau, 1996 Arthur, 2008	• Careers that involve switching jobs, specializations, companies, industries or locations often involving downward of sideways movements rather than linear, progressive movements. • Does not characterize any single career form, but rather, a range of possible forms that defies traditional employment assumptions by crossing organizational boundaries to enhance one's own self-development. • Boundaryless mindset and Mobility Preference are the two primary components of the boundaryless career (Briscoe, Hall, & DeMuth)
Kaleidoscope Career Model	New – originally developed to explain the reason women were "opting out" of corporate careers	Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005	• Career decisions are relational – meaning every action is considered in relation to all others involved (family members and coworkers alike). • Strong consideration of interplay between work and non-work demands and their influence over career decisions. • Careers defined by choosing patterns that meet three needs (1) authenticity, (2) balance and (3) challenge. Each of these needs ebbs and flows to a position of priority throughout the career timespan.
Career Anchor Theory	Balances new and traditional by focusing specifically on the individual, yet suggests that one anchor drives all the career decisions	Schein, 1974, 1980,1985, 1996; Schein & Van Maanan, 2014	• Guided by eight characteristics,, personality traits, or motivators described as principles that will not be given up in the face of difficult choices. • Career is held together by 3 things: (1) self-perceived talents and abilities; (2) basic values and (3) evolved sense of motives that pertain to career. • Widely believed that most people are driven by only one career anchor of the eight identified in the studies
Life-Span, Life-Space Career Theory	Traditional in terms of linear progression and organizational loyalty, yet trans-disciplinary in relation to life-career integration	Super, 1980	• Joining elements of vocational counseling and developmental psychology careers were viewed in relation to maturity and life roles. • A beginning to looking at career more holistically and in constant relation to other aspects of a person's life
Trait & Factor (TF); Person/Environment (PE) Career Theories	Traditional	Parsons, 1909; Holland, 1959, 1997; Wilensky, 1960; Porter, 1979	• Career choice is based on a talent matching approach considering individual traits and job-related factors. It later incorporates the field of Psychology (PE) • "A career is a succession of related jobs arranged in a hierarchy of prestige through which persons move in an ordered, predictable sequence" p. 554.

Empirical Studies

Cohen & Mallon, (1999) conducted a study that focused on the transition of managers out of organizational employment that attended to the gaps in the literature noted by several theorists. This study is based on the following observation:

> "Three particular concerns about the available literature [on contemporary careering] can be highlighted: first, the empirical base on which assertions of new development in careers is modest at best; secondly the debate is ridden with untenable dichotomies about old and new careers, and finally, little is written about the potential downside of more flexible careers" (p.335).

The focus of this study was the transition of managers out of conventional employment in the British National Public Health Service in New Zealand (NZHS) to pursue contemporary or "portfolio careers," defined as the type of work arrangement that "focuses specifically on the individual's skills that can be applied in a variety of industries, functions, or roles" (p. 329). The study attempted to address the above-mentioned gaps in the contemporary career development literature and specifically notes the need to consider career actors' perceptions of the changes to contemporary careering by "seeking to understand how individuals experience changing careers" (p. 330).

This qualitative, interview study was conducted with a total of 39 participants ranging in age from 32-55 years. All of them had worked at NZHS for a number of years. Half of the participants left to start their own ventures, and the other half left for some other sort of portfolio career arrangement. The interviews focused on how the

participants viewed their careers so far, how they accounted for their decision to move into portfolio work, and how they understood and experienced their new work arrangement.

Only two of the participants were "made redundant against their will… all of the others left voluntarily, although with reluctance in many cases" (p. 337). Just over half of the participants chose to pursue portfolio work because they felt it was their only option, having reported concerns about age, or disability. The remainder considered portfolio work as their best career option because of its promise of flexibility and opportunity for professional growth not offered through their organizational employment.

Cohen & Mallon (1999) report the following findings: the participants "point to a series of tangible losses by liberation - like salary, pension and access to training opportunities, but a number of more abstract gains like balance, autonomy, integrity, and a consolidation of skills and interests within portfolio" (p. 347). Some participants reported great value stemming from their organizational employment roots, specifically in the skills and relationships that helped them succeed on their own. There were mixed emotions however, as some reported feeling liberated, and others marginalized, by this new working arrangement.

The Cohen & Mallon (1999) study supports the idea that both contemporary and conventional careers do offer separate benefits to the career agent, and suggests the possibility that a blended career approach could meet a broad array of needs, addressing one of the issues raised through this dissertation study. Gaps not addressed through this study include the fact that because the study participants all worked at the same initial

employer, the rich and diverse context present in reviewing experiences in a variety of organizations is missing. In addition the relatively small sample studied leaves question as to its generalizability beyond this rather limited purview. The study proposed here focusing on a larger group of MBA alumni who have worked for a broad array of employers of differing size, industry, and profit structure could add a great deal to supporting this important research effort.

Duberley, Mallon, & Cohen (2006) further investigate the reasons for entering portfolio careers in the same participants involved in the Cohen & Mallon (1999) study. This study delves deeper into the characteristics of personality and motivation of the sample by taking a different view of the same interview data gathered in 1999, focusing more tightly on the *transition* from the public sector, organizationally-centered position, to the portfolio work the participants pursued. The emphasis on the actual career change supports the quest of this study to use career transitions and their impact as meaningful measures of careering. "Transitions are the punctuation marks in a career story. The transition will have objective characteristics which can be seen and measured and will also have subjective meaning for the individual" (p. 285).

This study's findings support this researcher's claim that the dichotomous view of contemporary versus conventional careering is an oversimplification.

The data (from participants, who in fact regarded themselves as well

capable of dealing with change and indeed as pioneers of new career

forms) suggest that there is no clear dichotomy between organisational

employment and portfolio working (or other freelance). Indeed the two

are more closely linked in the career experiences of individuals than

commonly supposed. Participants saw their personal transition as

illustrative of more macro trends in work, and likely to affect increasing

numbers of people. In seeking new avenues for legitimising their move,

many had found the current career discourse to be helpful (p. 289).

The popular, contemporary, career discourse allowed many participants to adopt

the idea that they were pioneers, brave enough to embrace societal changes, unlike their

colleagues who still depended on conventional, organizational employment. They saw

their transitions as reflective of modern trends in the workplace, viewing portfolio

careering as "wise, timely, and courageous" (p. 289).

The Duberley, et al. (2006) study's handling of career transitions specifically

mirrors one aspect of the MBA alumni study proposed: the subjective reflection on

specific career transitions, yet the research seems to offer too romanticized a view of

contemporary careering, much like has been represented in the literature. While the

findings support a call to explore whether the dichotomous view of contemporary

versus conventional careering is reasonable, it is lacking in rigor related to a broader

array of participant employment experience (public vs. private sector, and US vs. New

Zealand) offering a gap that can be filled by a quantitative study with a larger sample

using participants with a broader and more diverse employment history.

McDonald, Brown, & Bradley (2005) performed a mixed-methods study using

managers in an Australian organization to "determine the extent to which career paths

of senior managers conform to the traditional versus the protean elements described in

the literature, and whether these paths varied by gender" (p. 110). Interviews of 15

senior managers and survey results from 81 managers from one Australian public sector

agency were conducted to examine the retrospective career paths of the participants. The results were coded into four areas that were intended to show a distinction between conventional and contemporary careers: (1) development, (2) orientation of the employee, (3) definition of success, and (4) organizational environment.

The category of *development* included both training and self-elected participation in key organizational projects that would offer considerable learning. The consensus of the participants was that although formal training had been an important part of this organization in the past, it was no longer considered a worthwhile endeavor. Deeper investigation into issues related to gender perception of training and development found that women participants placed more emphasis on the benefit of having a mentor, where men placed more emphasis on the benefit of technical qualifications or "trade background" (p.127). There was no specific mention of self-initiated training, an attribute described as inherent in contemporary career models, yet perhaps the mentor relationships referenced by some of the women could be categorized as more contemporary methods of training.

The second area, *orientation of the employee,* included reports that both men and women had similar views regarding length of service, work hours, levels of autonomy, and personal responsibility for advancing their career, indicating both contemporary and conventional career views of this dimension. The category entitled *definition of success* also revealed a mixed definition between internal (contemporary) and external (conventional) definitions of success uncovered in the interviews. Yet the discussion section included this observation: "Both men and women, conceptualized success in terms of objective occupational levels and goals, moving up the

organizational ladder and progressing through the ranks" (p. 130) a decidedly conventional view.

An interesting observation made in the final category, *organizational environment*, was revealed through interview quotes when women felt their achievements would make them role models for other women, using terms like "champions for the cause" (p. 131). The women who participated in this study felt the organization was clearly male-dominated, attributing their rise into management and similar achievements to "perseverance and very hard work" acknowledging the need to "win the men's acceptance" (p.131). Interestingly, women also indicated that increased specialization had negative effects as a way of locking people into particular jobs in an attempt to preserve institutional knowledge, whereas men viewed such depth as positive. The findings of this study are summarized here:

> Results suggest that while some aspects of career trajectories have indeed shifted from traditional to protean patterns, a traditional career model relying on length of service and a predictable climb up the corporate ladder has been typical for many senior managers. However, this trend towards more traditional career patterns was stronger for men than for women, who were more likely to report protean aspects of their careers, a significant finding given the highly structured environment in which the research was undertaken (p. 138).

The findings of mixed definitions of career success align with this researcher's expectations, yet the McDonald study's use of a smaller sample from one organization invites a broader exploration. The use of a mixed-methods approach does offer rich

description of experience and contributes well to the literature. The research offers a unique look at conventional versus contemporary careers while inserting gender into the foreground of the discussion. This study reinforces the intent to use specific personal characteristics like gender to predict career turbulence in MBA alumni through bivariate and multivariate analyses. Additional detail on the paths, transitions, their frequency, and impact would have added considerable depth to this study and will be elements explored through the study proposed here.

Mainiero & Sullivan, (2005) delved deeply into attitudes that are present in contemporary careering through a three-part, mixed-methods study that took place over five years focusing on workers in the U.S. In it they introduced the metaphor of the kaleidoscope in the KCM "as a means of understanding the opt-out career interruption phenomenon" (p. 111) and to investigate the popular media's representation of women opting out of the workforce to concentrate on family.

> Like a kaleidoscope that produces changing patterns when the tube is
> rotated and its glass chips fall into new arrangements, women shift the
> pattern of their careers by rotating different aspects in their lives to
> arrange their roles and relationships in new ways" (p.106).

This mixed-methods study included more than 3000 participants. The authors sought to develop a new model for careers that would deconstruct what employees were doing in their careers and why. The study was actually three studies rolled into one. It began with an online survey of 100 professional, "high achieving" (p108) women. The next step was another, more detailed online survey of 837 men and 810 women. The third and final step was performed gathering data from "online conversations with 22

men and five women about their careers" (p. 108). All of the participants in this last study were enrolled in an Executive MBA Program. Their findings were initially represented with significant emphasis on women's careers:

> Women forged their own approach to a career without regard for traditional career models and standard measures of achievement. They rejected the concept of linear career progression preferring instead to create non-traditional, self-crafted careers that suited their objectives, needs and life criteria (p. 109).

Mainiero & Sullivan deepened their investigation of the data collected in the 2005 study in 2006 and found that men as a group were more likely to follow traditional, linear career paths, and women's careers were often interrupted for various reasons, not only the childcare concerns often popularized in the media. The reasons driving the career interruptions were grouped into three categories: (1) authenticity, (2) balance, and (3) challenge, coined as the "ABCs of Career" (p.106). A noteworthy observation was made relating to gender in careers as they report:

> Women in our research made career decisions from a lens of relationalism, they factored in the needs of their children, spouses, aging parents, friends, and even coworkers and clients – as part of the total gestalt of their careers. Men examine career decisions from the perspective of goal orientation and independent action - acting first for the benefit of their career (p. 111).

This relationalism is illustrated through the act of adjusting priorities and behaviors in relation to one another so as to address multiple needs, goals, and roles.

The KCM also takes into account career stages as they found that specific factors became more critical at different points in the lifespan. Challenge appears earlier in career. Balance becomes more prevalent in mid-career. And authenticity takes more of an active role in later career. Interestingly, the first two stages in the pattern held true in their study for both men and women. The third stage, authenticity, is not fully explored in the men's career pattern; showing potential for further research.

The Mainiero & Sullivan study offers rich context to use as a backdrop for the study proposed through this document by addressing the changing priorities and relationalism present in the modern career. Exploring the transitions and career orientation of MBA alumni should offer a more thorough investigation of both men and women adjusting priorities and behaviors to inform transitions and measure or predict Career Turbulence.

Briscoe, Hall, & DeMuth (2006) sought to answer the repeated calls to operationalize the contemporary career attitudes represented in the literature through empirical exploration. They claim, "While the protean and boundaryless career models have been very successful in informing theory, they have prompted limited research and application because they lack operational definition by appropriate psychometric measures" (p. 31). In an effort to provide operational definitions they designed four scales to measure protean and boundaryless career attitudes highlighting four specific dimensions of the contemporary career: (1) Self-directed career management, (2) mobility perspective, (3) boundaryless mindset, and (4) values-driven attitude. Each dimension was measured on a separate scale and discussed in more detail in the following.

The *self-directed career management* definition refers to the agent developing internally focused, proactive and independent action in their careering. *Mobility perspective* refers to the attitude of a career agent who is not only comfortable with a career that plays out in several employers, but actually prefers it. A *boundaryless mindset* is defined as an attitude held by an individual who "navigates the changing work landscape by enacting a career characterized by different levels of physical and psychological movement… [showing an] enthusiasm about creating and sustaining active relationship beyond organizational boundaries" (p. 31). A *values-driven* attitude indicates a desire to use one's own values to guide their career, not necessarily only in situations where their values differ from their organization's, but as a fundamental part of showing up in their career and their life. This research is unlike other studies represented in this review and is best described in the authors' words:

> The series of three studies aimed to explore these expectations by first constructing and initially validating scales to measure protean and boundary- less career attitudes. The goal was to produce scales that researchers could use to test hypotheses about these two career models. The first study primarily involved scale construction. The second study further tested and refined the scales using a new group of participants. The third, and final, study explored the convergent validity of the refined and final scales (p.32).

Study one involved a self-completion survey that included items representing all four dimensions. The surveys were given to both students and professionals: three different groups of students, both undergrad, and MBA students, and one group of

middle and upper level managers from a Fortune 100 company. The data collected was then analyzed in the second step in the study to investigate the reliability and validity of the scales and refine the items that would be retained for each of the scales.

The findings of the study indicated relatively stable scores across the four scales, indicating a consistent interpretation of each dimension as descriptive of contemporary careering. The Briscoe, et al., 2006 study "suggests the use of these scales as further avenues of research to investigate whether protean and boundaryless perspectives, like other attitudes (such as career self-efficacy), can be effectively taught and developed" (p. 44).

The Briscoe study is the first to mention the idea of teaching or adopting these attitudes, as they have been largely represented in the literature as innate or natural. This is a noteworthy departure from the popular representation of contemporary career attitudes as a natural evolution from, or modernization of the core principles that undergird conventional careering. The study's emphasis on empirical exploration of the attitudes posited as inherent in contemporary careering makes it unique among all others reviewed. The opportunity to use the derived scales to test for, and potentially train for, boundaryless or protean careering has intriguing promise in the field of career counseling, and foundational importance in viewing contemporary and conventional careering on a continuum of Career Turbulence.

Reitman & Schneer (2005) conducted a longitudinal study of MBAs, surveying participants three times over a period of 13 years to determine what, if any, long term effects resulted from managerial career interruptions. They set out to test two hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Managers with a gap in early career will earn less income

in later career than those who were continuously employed.

Hypothesis 2: Managers with a gap in early career will have lower career

satisfaction later in their career than those continuously employed (p. 246-7)

The study sample consisted of MBA alumni from two northeastern U.S.

universities. In 1987 a survey was mailed to 1361 alumni who graduated between 1975

and 1980. The researchers made special attempts to equalize the number of men and

women participants by surveying every woman from each class, and randomly

selecting the same number of men to participate. In 1993 a new survey was mailed to

877 of the same respondents, and finally in 2000 the last survey was mailed to a total of

830 respondents. The attempt was to span early, mid and later career. The average age

of the participants as of the last survey was 51. At the time of last contact most

(approximately 77%) were employed full-time, 9% were employed part-time, and 14%

were unemployed. Less than half of all the participants who responded to the third

survey reported uninterrupted career histories since attaining the MBA.

More than half of the gaps in employment were reported as involuntary. The

reasons cited most commonly by men were restructuring and personality mismatch.

Women cited restructuring and childrearing as the primary reasons for interruptions in

their careers. The income penalties for those who experienced career interruptions were

significant, however, they were worse for men than for women.

Findings regarding career satisfaction show men reported less career

satisfaction when they had experienced a career interruption. Women on the other hand

rated satisfaction the same whether they experienced an interruption or remained

continuously employed. This supports the claims made by other researchers that women tend to be more satisfied than men with the alternate career paths described in the contemporary career models (Sullivan, 1999; Mainiero & Sullivan, 2006).

The study indicated that career interruptions seem to permanently affect one's record and negatively impact future earnings. Although the researchers had expectations that the income penalties would be mitigated over time, especially given the new theories and models of career paths, the findings did not support that expectation. The researchers indicate the "gaps derail a career and managers never get back on the fast track" (p. 257) which contradicts the positive spin contemporary career models have placed on nonlinear careers. They also note that there appears to be no greater penalty for gaps that are involuntary, however no specifics are noted to indicate how that distinction was made.

While it is true that the Reitman & Schneer (2005) study supports the claim made in contemporary career theories that many managers have not had the continuous career history once expected in a managerial career, restricting the purview of the study to career interruptions limits its scope considerably. Since it does not address the broader aspects of the contemporary career pattern expressed in the literature, and no motives for the interruptions were given in this report, their study only partially addresses the overlap between conventional and contemporary careering and the concept of Career Turbulence overall. A more thorough exploration of how the individuals perceived the interruption or rebounded afterward would add significantly to the literature base by offering a richer account of MBA career patterns further

investigating the extent to which they experience patterns that incorporate elements of both contemporary and conventional careering.

Chapter Summary

Career Development Theory has experienced exciting changes in recent years, from its roots in vocational psychology to its more recent framing through a social constructivist lens. The field continues to evolve to address a more holistic understanding of career yet the vast majority of the literature falls into two opposing standards; conventional versus contemporary. These two streams are represented as direct opposites, without any consideration given to the possibility of a theory that could incorporate dimensions of both. The concept of Career Turbulence represents the complex interactive system that incorporates all career transitions – whether voluntary or involuntary, their frequencies, and their related impact. The notion of Career Turbulence is offered as a universal measurement of career variability that exists in all careers whether categorized as conventional or contemporary. Investigating the nature and origins of career change among MBA alumni offers tremendous promise to introduce this new measurement and add depth and context to the prevailing binary view of career theory.

The empirical and theoretical studies reviewed in this chapter have not sufficiently addressed the individual's experience or perception of change in their careers. In addition a large percentage of the studies that have been performed point to external forces as the drivers of the transitions that occur, leaving the self-initiated transitions that have been represented as foundational in contemporary careering, and the driving forces behind them unexplored and therefore unknown. This study will

address both voluntary and involuntary transitions of MBA alumni, as well as the frequency and overall impact of those transitions to introduce a universal measurement for career variability, Career Turbulence. This study will also explore the extent to which personal characteristics, contextual factors and an individual's career orientation regarding locus of control may predict Career Turbulence.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to explore the nature and correlates of career change among MBA alumni. In order to accomplish this broad purpose five research questions were addressed:

1. To what extent do MBA alumni experience specific *career transitions*?

2. For those who experienced specific career transitions, what *impact* did those transitions have on their careers?

3. To what extent did MBA Alumni experience *career turbulence?*

4. To what extent did MBA alumni report *an orientation toward self-directedness* in regard to career management?

5. To what extent did the *personal characteristics, contextual factors* and *an orientation toward self-directedness* predict the *career turbulence* MBA alumni experienced?

This chapter is organized into eight sections: logical framework, instrumentation, study population, data collection, data preparation, description of respondents, data analysis, and limitations.

Logical Framework

It has been theorized that managerial careers are those most likely to follow a predictable climb up the corporate ladder (Reitman & Schneer, 2005) representing the

pattern of the conventional career trajectory supported in the literature. This reputed

path presents the exception to 21st century careering as represented in recent career

development literature. A review of several theories of career development revealed

that the majority of theories fall into either the contemporary career frame (i.e. the

process of managing one's career based on the internal definition of success) or the

conventional school of thought, (representing the linear and progressive climb

discussed in chapters one and two)—yet no one theory seeks to include components

from both or frame these big ideas differently.   Therefore the conceptual framework for

this study is a composite of elements from both streams of career development literature

that best describes, and perhaps even predicts, the modern managerial career – a

concept labeled *career turbulence.* There are three fundamental concepts in this

integrated theory: (1) career transitions (2) transition impact, and (3) career turbulence.

Table 3.0 provides definitions of these concepts.

Table 3.0

Definition of the Primary Study Concepts

Concept	Definition
Career Transitions	Any shift in responsibility, title, department, function, or organization – hether self-directed or driven by another.
Transition Impact	he impact of the transition on one's career as reported by the espondents who experienced it.
Career Turbulence	he total number of career transitions multiplied by their impact causes Career Turbulence Total ct * i = CT

Three secondary concepts, *career self-directedness*, *personal characteristics,*

and *contextual factors,* will be further explained in the Instrument Development Process

section. This study investigated career turbulence of MBA alumni to explore the extent to which these variables support an empirically driven career development theory. A conceptual model of the study is displayed in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1

Conceptual Model of the Study
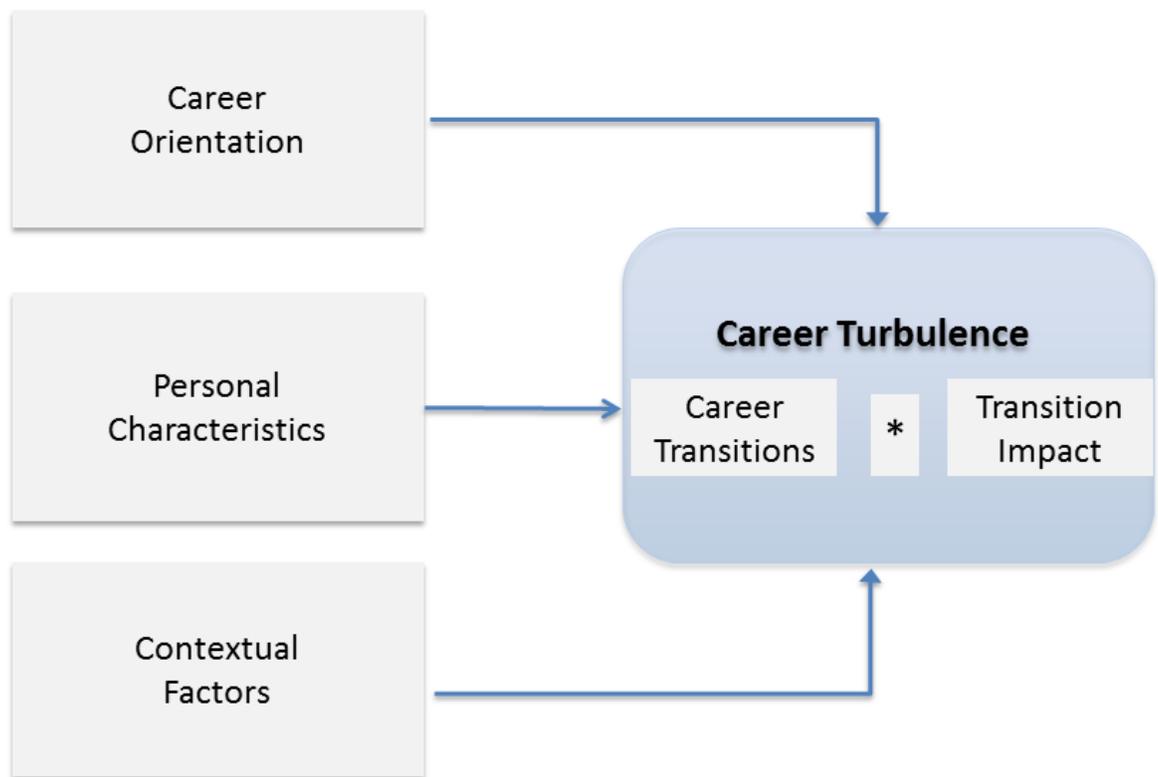
Instrumentation

In order to gather data a three-part researcher-designed electronic survey (Appendix A) was developed to measure the (a) frequency of career transitions, (b) impact of the transitions rated by those who had experienced them, (c) orientation toward self-directedness and (d) background variables; the personal characteristics and contextual factors uncovered through demographic information. Designing the

instrument for this study required an exceptionally difficult and detailed process that was executed through ten specific steps that are outlined in Table 3.1 on the next page and described more deeply below.

Step 1: Concept Clarification

The instrument development process began with a thorough review of the literature and many hours of discussion between the researcher and her peers working in the career counseling industry. It was followed by extensive dialogue between the researcher, major professor, and two different methodologists to identify and define the relevant concepts of the research. The following three predictor variables were determined: *career orientation, personal characteristics,* and *contextual factors.* Two independent variables - *career transitions* and *transition impact,* make up the dependent variable, *career turbulence.* These concepts are detailed below.

Career Orientation. The first of many attempts to clarify the constructs of the study involved determining the factors that led to career decision-making, eventually categorized as *career orientation.* Through a thorough review of the career development literature Schein's (1974) career anchors initially emerged as the most fitting constructs to measure career orientation in MBA graduates. However the vast majority of recent literature focused predominantly on contemporary career anchors. This made restrictive explanation of each construct very difficult. Several attempts followed to refine individual orientation constructs. Eventually it was determined that for this quantitative examination fewer constructs that merged overlapping elements into broader categories provided the best foundation for the study. Extensive discussion between the researcher, major professor, and methodologist raised the question of

whether the two identified literature veins that deal with career orientation,

conventional and contemporary, were in fact only one category which offered within it

a range or continuum of locus of control related to career preferences and behaviors. A

Table 3.1

Instrument Development Process

Process Steps	Activity
1. Concept Clarification	Pull theoretical explanations from the literature and explain them in terms of measurable variables that interact to predict career behavior
2. Item Pool and Response Scale Development	Review literature for previously used items and write others
3. Test Survey of Sample Population	Use rough instrument to test the items and preliminary concepts determined, specifically transition frequency and significance
4. Item Pool Refinement	Conduct rough analysis of responses of initial survey, eliminate poorly performing or confusing items
5. Instrument Format Development	Incorporate recommendations of research committee to design a four part electronic instrument for use in the pilot study, refining items from print survey as suggested
6. Pilot Study	Distribute refined items in electronic format to study group of 25 MBA alumni from a variety of US business schools.
7. Refinement of Response Scale	Review each segment of the instrument and assign corresponding response scale
8. Design of Study Instrument	Group like items into sections to measure transition frequency, impact, and career orientation along with demographic information and determine best logic chain and item format for ease of completion
9. Expert Panel Review	Convene a panel to critique the study instrument and offer input for addition, deletion, or reworking of items
10. Finalize Study Instrument	Incorporate recommended changes received from expert panelists and finalize the survey instrument

researcher- developed instrument was designed to plot career orientation on this continuum, addressed in Step #2 (Item Pool Development) below.

Personal Characteristics & Contextual Factors. The next steps involved defining additional variables that may influence career decision-making. The literature offered several attributes to consider (Briscoe, et al., 2005; Kuijpers & Scheerens, 2006; Mainiero & Sullivan, 2006). From these studies the following selection of specific elements were grouped into the *Personal Characteristics* and *Contextual Factors* that could be identified through a detailed demographic section of the survey.

Career Transitions. The next step in clarifying the concepts of the study was determining the various *Career Transitions* that can occur. This step began with the researcher compiling an extensive list of career events. An expert panel of five career counseling professionals was consulted to review and add to the list. A comprehensive list of possible career events was drafted. Those events were then arranged by the researcher into a Microsoft Excel table to assess overlap and eliminate redundancy. Seventeen initial career transitions were identified through this exercise and used in the test survey process outlined later in Step #3 (Test Survey of Sample Population).

Transition Impact. The next step of the process was to determine the relative impact of the 17 career transitions that were identified. Because some career transitions are minor and others are major, it was necessary to attempt to determine appropriate weights for each. Initially, this was accomplished based on data gathered from two cohorts of graduate business students through a confidential survey described further in Step #3. Concerns over the validity of those ratings prompted the move toward incorporating each individual participant's rating of impact in the final instrument.

Career Turbulence. Related to measuring the relative impact by transition, a key phase of the development of this study required the creation of the dependent variable—*Career Turbulence*. The logic in creating this variable was acknowledging that change means different things in the lives of different people. That is, when an unmarried 25 year old with limited debt loses a job there is a very different life impact than for another 25 year old who is married with children and carrying significant debt.

Career Turbulence is intended to provide a conceptual framework through which to view career transitions and their relative impact on the career of the person experiencing them. The conceptual definition of *Career Turbulence* is the measure that represents the presence of variability in all careers. This concept will be operationally defined through this study as the number of transitions experienced by the individual multiplied by the self-reported impact of those transitions.

Step 2: Item Pool and Response Scale Development

Once the concepts were clarified, either existing, validated items were selected from the literature for each construct or items were developed by the researcher. The specific item and response scale development process and the cumulative total of items developed for each construct is outlined below in Table 3.2.

Career Orientation. For the construct initially named *career preferences,* a thorough review of the literature uncovered two compelling studies that offered items for consideration in measuring contemporary careering (Briscoe, et al., 2005; Mainiero & Sullivan, 2006). The items to measure conventional careering were found in Schein's (1974) study that has been updated and refined over the years. Schein and VanManaan's (2014) most recent update of the Career Anchors instrument and the

Porter (1979) study of organizational commitment served as framework to measure conventional careering. The assertion that these two paradigms - conventional and contemporary careering, could in fact be measured on one continuum, led to the researcher's development of the *Career Continuum Assessment* (CCA) that would be used to measure career control orientation. The full CCA is shown in Appendix B. An abbreviated version is under development.

Personal Characteristics and Contextual Factors. Because change means different things to different people, much of its effect on the individual is influenced by specific attributes. These attributes were identified through section three of the survey. Kuijpers & Schereens (2006) offer excellent insight into qualities that influence career decisions. They proposed the qualities in two broad categories. (1) Personal factors: gender, age, current job description, and career ambition, and (2) Work-related factors: mobility perspective, dynamic work environment, and career support provided by employer. These dimensions were included in the demographic section of the first prototype instrument and amended and refined for the final instrument.

Career Transitions. A review of the literature and interviews with five career services professionals were used to develop a comprehensive list of possible career transitions. That list was subsequently reviewed by current MBA students and three human resource professionals from three different employers. An extensive list of possible career transitions was the result, which were refined through the redundancy exercise described earlier in Step #1 Concept Clarification to yield the 17 career transitions measured in the prototype instrument.

Table 3.2

Initial Item Development Process

Construct	Item Development Process	Items	Cumulative Total of Items
Career Self-Directedness	Review of the conventional and contemporary career literature resulted in development of the Career Continuum Assessment , 31 items to measure career	31	31
Personal characteristics	Borrowed demographic constructs used in Kuijpers & Scheerens (2006) – 4 items	4	35
Contextual factors	Borrowed work-related constructs used in Kuijpers & Scheerens (2006)- 3 items	3	38
Career transitions	Interviews, discussions and review with experts to construct a list of 17 transitions	17	55
Transition impact	Measuring self-reported impact of the 17 transitions	17	72
Career turbulence	Direct inquiries of individual's perception of career turbulence – 4 items	4	76

Transition Impact. After the full list of transitions was decided, the impact of those transitions was measured on a scale from (1) very low impact to (5) very high impact. All respondents rated impact of all transitions in section one, before being asked if they had experienced them, which occurred in section two of the same survey. This response process was reworked in the final instrument to a two-part logic stream allowing respondents to move to rating impact immediately after answering a question about the transition itself.

Career Turbulence. The dependent variable in the study was initially measured on the prototype survey by multiplying the number of transitions by their reported impact from (1) very low impact to (5) very high impact. In the final research study *career*

turbulence was measured as follows. First, data on the number of times specific transitions were experienced were gathered. Then any respondent who selected a response indicating s/he had experienced the transition rated that transition from (1) very negative impact, to (5) very positive impact. Those two components were calculated by multiplying the number of transitions by the reported impact of each. The result of that calculation is the calculated c*areer turbulence* value. In addition, a single, confirming item inquiring as to the individual's perception of the amount of career turbulence they had experienced in comparison to others in their field was included. This allowed a direct comparison of respondent's perception of turbulence with the career turbulence value derived from the formula.

Step 3: Test Survey of Sample Population

In order to test the transition frequency and impact constructs the researcher assembled a trial survey in the early stage of instrument development. This step used a test survey to collect data from selected Professional MBA students participating in a career education workshop (Appendix C). This two part survey was administered to 46 respondents between the ages of 24 and 59 years of age. Twenty nine were male, 17 were female. Participants had an average of nine years of professional work experience since completing an undergraduate degree, admittedly less than the participants that will be targeted in the actual study. However their near completion of a graduate degree in business and their voluntary participation in a rigorous extra-curricular career management course provided reasonable credibility as experts to address frequency and perceived impact of career transitions. The participants were asked to rate each of the listed transitions from very low impact to very high impact on a 5 point Likert scale,

then indicate the number of the specific transitions they had experienced. The results are summarized in Table 3.3, and served as the foundation for the development of the final study instrument.

Table 3.3

Test Survey Transition Impact Ranking and Rating

Rank	Transition	Mean Rating
1	Relocated for a new position in new organization	4.59
2	Laid off / Downsized	4.59
3	Fired	4.54
4	Starting a business	4.52
5	Better position new company	4.5
6	Changing function/industry	4.46
7	Forced to a part-time arrangement	4.35
8	Reduced pay for same work	4.09
9	Offered and accepted a promotion	4.07
10	Opting out of workforce for personal reasons	4.0
11	Relocating for a new position in same organization	3.89
12	Moving to a lower paying job in a new organization	3.83
13	Taking a part-time job over a full-time job	3.35
14	Making a lateral move to a new organization	3.33
15	Taking on new responsibilities with no change in compensation	2.87
16	Declining a promotion	2.8
17	Making a lateral move in the same organization	2.74

Step 4: Item Pool Refinement

An SPSS analysis of the responses from the test survey was conducted to determine which items performed well, which correlated with others, and which items would benefit from further refinement. The results are discussed by category in the following.

Career Expectations. Career preference was recommended by the facilitator of the workshop where the test survey was administered and further supported by the

categories of contemporary careering tested in Briscoe, Hall & DeMuth's (2010) Protean and Boundaryless Career Attitude Scale: boundaryless mindset, mobility perspective, values-driven, and self- directedness. The Career Continuum Assessment was initiated from these four categories. Nine items were selected from the original 31 based on a rank order exercise conducted by the researcher in a Professional MBA career workshop. Self-Directedness was the characteristic that was rated most important to the test group.

Personal Characteristics & Contextual Factors. The general demographic items included in the test survey were expanded to provide the *Personal Characteristics* and *Contextual Factors* in the prototype instrument. These factors were determined by the expert panel discussed in Step # 8 Expert Panel Review. Categories included: age, gender, race, current employment type and status, job title or description, annual income, and MBA program type.

Career Transitions. The analysis from the test survey responses showed several overlapping or poorly performing items. The item pool was reduced from 17 items to 14 specific *career transitions* on the final study instrument, shown in Table 3.4.

Transition Impact. After analyzing the data gathered through the test survey, discussion between the researcher and the methodologist resulted in the decision that no respondent should be given the opportunity to rate the impact of a transition s/he had never experienced. This decision was operationalized in the final survey instrument using skip logic to allow respondents who selected the response "never" for any specific transition to immediately advance to the next specific transition item without rating the impact of a transition they had not experienced. In addition, after review of

an expert panel, it was determined that impact should be rated on a scale of negative to positive rather than simply degree of impact. This process is described in more detail in Step #5.

  Career Turbulence. The construct of *career turbulence* is measured in data gathered in survey sections one and two as well as an additional item composed to directly assess the individual's perception of comparative turbulence.

Table 3.4

Refined List of Career Transition Items (also used to assess impact)

Item #	Item Description
1	Accepted a promotion in the same organization
2	Accepted a promotion in a different organization
3	Made a lateral job move
4	Relocated for a position
5	Accepted a lower paying job in the same organization
6	Taken on new responsibilities with no change in title/pay
7	Changed professions
8	Left a part-time job for a full-time job
9	Left a full-time job for a part-time job
10	Lost a full-time job due to layoff or downsizing
11	Lost a full-time job due to poor performance
12	Attempted an entrepreneurial venture *in addition to* your day job
13	Attempted an entrepreneurial venture *in place of* your day job
14	Left the workforce entirely

Step 5: Instrument Format Development

The prototype survey was used as a basis for the construction of the survey to be used for the research prospectus. The survey had four sections: (1) *Career Transitions*, (2) *Transition Impact,* (3) *Career Preferences*, and (4) *Background Information*. The researcher's committee spent considerable time reviewing the hard copy of the prototype instrument during the prospectus defense. Committee members provided specific recommendations related to construct clarification, individual item clarity, additional items needed, and items that could be removed. The research committee also recommended clarifying the variable title *Career Preferences* to be more descriptive of the characteristics the section measured. Self- directedness emerged as the main element of *career preferences*, later resulting in the new label *career orientation*. Adjustments were made and development of the instrument began. *Step 6: Pilot Study*

An electronic instrument was drafted incorporating the new item text for distribution to a group of 25 MBA alumni from a variety of American business schools. These 25 respondents were members of the researcher's personal network who had a minimum of 10 years of professional work experience since completing their degree. The Qualtrics instrument was distributed as a link in an Email. The accompanying message invited participants to share feedback on the design, flow, item content and rating scales. A total of 22 responses were collected, two recommendations were made for rating scale adjustments and one suggestion on item wording. All feedback indicated a positive response experience.

Step 7: Development of the Response Scale

The next step in the process was determining a response scale for each section of the instrument. Many different methods of response were considered. A rough preliminary test survey was constructed through Qualtrics to test multiple choice, force response, matrix table and text entry options. Decisions for each section of the final instrument were informed by that exercise.

For section one, frequency of *career transitions*, a seven point Likert scale was used to capture the number of times in the last ten years each respondent experienced the 14 specified career transitions. The following selected responses were offered: (1) Never, (2) One time, (3) Two times, (4) Three times, (5) Four times, (6) Five times, and (7) more than five times, which included a text box for the participant to enter the actual number of times the transition was experienced. Each time the respondent selected a value other than (1) Never, they were asked to rate the impact of the transition on their career. A rating scale from (1) Very low impact to (5) Very high impact was constructed. It was decided through in-depth discussion between the researcher and the methodologist to restrict the timespan for measurement to a ten year period to include the transitions that occurred during the most recent economic downturn. This decision was supported in the test survey by current Professional MBA (PMBA) students.

In section two the respondent rated the extent of their agreement with nine statements that measured their *career orientation* as it relates to self-directedness. A five point Likert scale was used: (1) Strongly disagree to (5) Strongly agree. Section three addressed background variables and demographic data through multiple-choice, forced- response items, with one text entry option to collect any comments.

Step 8: Design of the Study Instrument

The study instrument designed based on research committee feedback was an online, self-completion survey, which was developed and administered in Qualtrics. The Qualtrics platform was chosen because it offers easy access and completion for participants through either mobile application or standard computer interface, as well as structured and dynamic skip logic for an easy and efficient response experience. The researcher proposed several designs developed in Qualtrics offering different logic chains and item formats for use in the final instrument. Early versions proposed items two-part items to investigate the frequency of transitions experienced and their resulting impact set in a side-by-side structure. This format offered the immediacy of response sought between transition and impact but required a two-step response process which is a challenging user experience. Another proposed version asked for text entry responses after each frequency item to measure the impact of that transition. This method was rejected because it would have made data analysis problematic.

The final version proposed to the methodologist offered the important connection between the transition and its impact through the use of if/then logic which allowed those who had experienced the transition to immediately rate its impact on their career. It also allowed respondents who had never experienced the transition to move quickly through to the next transition. This version was approved by the methodologist with the understanding that final approval be gained from the researcher's major professor, who recommended a final review by an independent panel of experts who critiqued the instrument and offered feedback through a structured review exercise.

Step 9: Expert Panel Review

The expert panel assembled to review and critique the proposed instrument was made up of two members of the researcher's doctoral committee, two additional Career Development scholars from a large Midwestern, land grant institution, and two career counseling professionals. The research committee members were sent the instrument with a request to respond with any suggested improvements. After two weeks the remaining panelists were sent the link to the electronic survey through Email with a Microsoft Word version attached to the message and asked the following questions:

1. Were the concepts and instructions clear?

2. Regarding item wording and order, is there anything you would recommend reworking?

3. How was the survey's look, feel, and flow? Consider the experience of filling it out in terms of time it took, the section headers and ordering, and if any items were not included you thought should be and share any recommendations for improvement.

4. Do you know of friends, colleagues or acquaintances that might like to be included in the survey population for any follow-up research?

Valuable and substantive feedback was provided by career counseling professionals working with MBA students. This input specifically related to the dichotomous view of career patterns represented in the literature and the possible categorization of the 14 career transitions into groupings or contemporary and conventional career events.

Reflecting on this input and using the instruments in Briscoe's 2005 study, eleven of the 14 career transitions identified in this study were categorized into two groupings

that align with contemporary and conventional career patterns (Briscoe, et al., 2005). The transitions that fell into the conventional category include: accepting a promotion in the same organization, accepting a promotion in a different organization, relocating for a position, and leaving a part-time position for a full-time position. The career transitions that fit in the contemporary category included: making a lateral move, changing professions, attempting an entrepreneurial venture, and leaving the workforce voluntarily. The three remaining career events addressed in this study: taking on additional responsibilities with no change in title or pay, losing a job due to layoff or downsizing, and losing a job due to poor performance were not included in either the contemporary or conventional category.

The two external Career Development scholars requested a conference call together to offer suggestions for improvement in lieu of a written reply. These expert reviewers printed a Microsoft Word version of the survey using that as their reference rather than completing the survey online. The resulting feedback related more to the content of the study than to the look, feel, or experience of the actual study instrument.

One of the experts recommended adding open response questions to capture additional comments in every section of the survey to add richness to the quantitative data collected. The other agreed that additional comments would enhance the data collected. This recommendation was followed by adding text box entries to each section offering participants the option to share more detail or context for any of their responses.

The expert reviewers also recommended the addition of four more background variables that the panelists felt would offer greater richness to the study by

56

measurement through multi-variate analyses. These additional attributes were included in the final instrument: (1) number of years of work experience before receiving the master of business degree, (2) number of years since completing the degree, (3) current title or job description, and (4) approximate annual income. The panel also concluded that the work-related factors measured by Kuijpers & Schereens (2006) should be replaced by nine specific items measuring self-directed career management practices taken from the researcher-developed Career Continuum Assessment. Those nine items made up Section Two of the final instrument entitled Career Expectations.

Step 10: Finalize Study Instrument

The instrument was modified in Qualtrics to reflect the changes recommended by the expert panel and prepared for E-mail distribution.

Study Population

A large sample population was identified for this study by virtue of the researcher's work in an MBA career resource center and access to alumni contacts through the university's central records office. A list of contacts for alumni graduating from the school's Full-Time MBA program between the years 1980-2005; alumni from the Professional MBA (PMBA) program graduating between 1995-2010, and alumni from the school's Executive MBA (EMBA) program from 2000-2015 was requested through the central alumni records office. These brackets of time take into consideration the average years of work experience for each subgroup and the likelihood that a reasonable span of time has passed in their career to offer sufficient experience from which to draw conclusions related to career transitions. The

professional work experience of this population provides intentionally relevant insight into the operationalization of Career Turbulence as an emerging career development model.

An Excel file containing 1473 records, the full list of prospective respondents, was provided by the university's office of alumni records with the stipulation that the list was only to be used for outreach within a 14 day period to ensure the most recent alumni contact preferences were honored. Since the population to be studied routinely uses Email, and preferred Email addresses had been routinely collected by the alumni service office, this method of contact was expected to yield the best response rate. Unfortunately, of the 1473 records provided by the central alumni record office only 1072 of them included Email addresses. Since the instrument was electronic, and its distribution method was planned as a link through an Email message, only contacts that included Email addresses were useful.

Data Collection

The data were collected confidentially through a self-administered electronic questionnaires designed in Qualtrics, an online software that automatically transforms survey delivery to be accessed through both mobile and standard technology platforms. A multiple contact strategy as described by Dillman (2007) was used for this study. The data collection process followed five steps:

1. A test message was sent to verify the viability of E-mail addresses.

2. The initial invitation to participate in the study, which included the

survey link and participant consent information, was E-mailed to all

prospective participants.

3. A reminder E-mail message was sent to all prospective participants

inviting them to participate and clarifying that this was the same study

introduced on December 9.

4. A follow-up reminder and thank you message was sent to coincide with

expected holiday vacation time for this population.

5. The final message was sent to remind them of the study timeline.

Step One: Research Test Message

On December 5th a preliminary message to test contact accuracy revealed that

the contact list provided by the alumni office appeared to have current, useable contacts

for 1072 MBA alumni. The test message to the 1072 prospective participants revealed

over 300 out of date contacts. The dead contacts were removed and 767 received the

invitation to participate.

Step Two: Invitation to Participate

On December 9th a message containing the invitation to participate, the survey

link, participant consent information and contact information for the researcher and the

major professor was sent to 767 prospective participants.through Microsoft Outlook.

Within one hour of sending the invitation, Microsoft shut down the researcher's E-mail

account based on suspicion that the account had been hacked and was being used for a

phishing scam. Once the researcher's email account was reinstated it was found that

296, approximately 39% of the contacts in the Excel file provided resulted in

undeliverable survey invitations, leaving a total of 471 useable E-mail addresses.

Step Three: Reminder Message

After an overhaul of the outreach file to remove all undeliverable addresses, a reminder was sent to all useable addresses on December 17th, exactly 14 days after receipt of the alumni records. The first line of the message was edited to notify all participants that the

survey link would remain active until early January. It also included a line thanking any participant who had already responded to the survey to guard against multiple responses by the same participants.

On the same day that the reminder message was sent, a second request for the contact list from the university's central records office was submitted to allow additional outreach to the sample population within the constraints communicated. A second Excel file was received on December 20th. An electronic comparison of the two files identified no changes from the original file. All contacts that had been identified as having outdated Email addresses were deleted from the file, and a new Excel spreadsheet was prepared for the final mail merge invitation.

Step Four: Follow-up Request

A follow-up message was sent on December 23rd. The initial sentence added to the beginning of the previous message clarified that this request was reminder for those who had not yet participated in the research study request sent on December 9th. The timing of this request purposefully designed to be so close to the winter holiday season to catch participants when they may have had more free time to participate in the study.

Step Five: Final Request

The final reminder was sent on January 3rd expecting that the holiday break would end for most of the targeted sample the following day. This invitation yielded 83 more responses by January 5th, when the survey was set to expire. From the 471 messages delivered 206 survey responses were ultimately returned. All were deemed useable as shown below.

Table 3.5

Overview of Study Responses

Number of E-Mails Delivered	Number of Responses	Number of Useable Responses	Response Rate	Adjusted Response Rate
471	*206*	*206*	*43.*	*43.7*

Data Preparation

Data was collected via Qualtrics, and exported into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet for initial data review. Each record was assigned a unique identifier. The items were numbered and coded for easy identification allowing the researcher to quickly scan the raw data. The first step in the cleaning process was to determine if any surveys were unusable. All 206 surveys returned were useable. In the next step the data were checked for erroneous entries, and standardized for numeric uniformity within the Microsoft Excel file.

The need for recoding was evident in three specific items. The first item was birth year, an open-response item in which many respondents entered full birth dates either in text or numerals, or simply gave numeric ages. All entries were standardized to a four digit birth

year. Next an open-response item from the background variable section requesting the respondent provide their race or ethnicity was standardized using a numeric value. The responses were read, interpreted, and recoded as follows: (1) for White, (2) for Black, (3) for Asian, and (4) for Hispanic.

The last recoding challenge encountered in the Career Transitions section of the instrument. It stemmed from the fact that each transition item offered the respondent the option to choose the number of times they experienced each transition from (1) never to (7) more than five times. Those who chose response number 7 "more than five times," were asked to enter the number of times they experienced the transition in a text box. The numerical coding was reworked to indicate (0) as never, (1) as one time, (2) as two times, (3) as three times, (4) as four times, (5) as five times, and (6) as more than five times, which included a text box for numeric entries of more than 5. The text box entries displayed as separate items in the data set. To simplify and standardize the data the text box responses were coded as straight numeric values and entered in the data file. One specific item in Section One, "*How many times in the last ten years have you taken on additional responsibilities with no change in title or pay?*" required even further preparation. Although 92.7% of the respondents who experienced this transition used the selected response option, or entered a numeric value between six and ten in the text box, the remaining 7.3% entered values that would significantly skew the mean response for this item. Therefore the item was recoded in SPSS to show the maximum response as 10, allowing the researcher and methodologist to maintain write-in values up to ten, while recoding any larger value into a ten.

The final data preparation step involved separating text entries provided in the open response items. All text entry responses were removed and relocated to a separate Excel sheet to be analyzed for qualitative reporting. One hundred eighty four of the 206 participants, approximately 89%, provided comments in lieu of, or in addition to selected responses. The researcher organized the qualitative responses gathered from the open response items in each section into a separate Excel sheet categorized according to item number. After a general review of the qualitative data the researcher organized all the comments into an easily sortable table in Microsoft Word to categorize the comments into general themes.

Once these steps were completed the quantitative data were loaded into SPSS to conduct further preparation and preliminary analysis. After conducting frequency analyses for the first two variables, career transitions and transition impact, another issue was uncovered that required further data standardization. Section One of the survey was constructed to ascertain the number of specific transitions first, then prompt respondents who had selected any response other than "never" to rate the impact of that transition from 1-5 on a Likert scale. The rating scale was originally (1) Very negative impact, (2) Somewhat negative impact, (3) No real impact, (4) Somewhat positive impact, and (5) Very positive impact. The initial coding made recognizing the negative to positive range of the responses less obvious as all were coded as positive values. The researcher and methodologist recoded all impact variable ratings through SPSS as follow: 1 was recoded to -2, 2 was recoded to -1, 3 was recoded to 0, 4 was recoded to 1, and 5 was recoded to 2 providing negative to positive impact values that would offer more appropriate ranks for analysis on a negative to positive scale.

As the data review continued another issue was uncovered in Section Two - Career Expectations. In the survey design phase, the items in this section were intended to represent two different ends of a pole. Some of the items were worded in such a way that agreement would indicate that the company would direct the respondents' career choices. Other items were worded in such a way that agreement would indicate that the career agent would direct his or her own career choices. Consequently, before further analysis the items were coded uniformly on one single dimension. To accomplish this four of the Career Orientation items were reversed and recoded into new variables in SPSS.

Once the recoding was complete an initial test for appropriateness of responses was conducted, specifically checking for normal variation of two key variables, Career Orientation for Self-Directedness and Career Turbulence. Figures 3.2 and 3.3 show the output charts for these two variables representing fairly normal distributions on both.

Figure 3.2
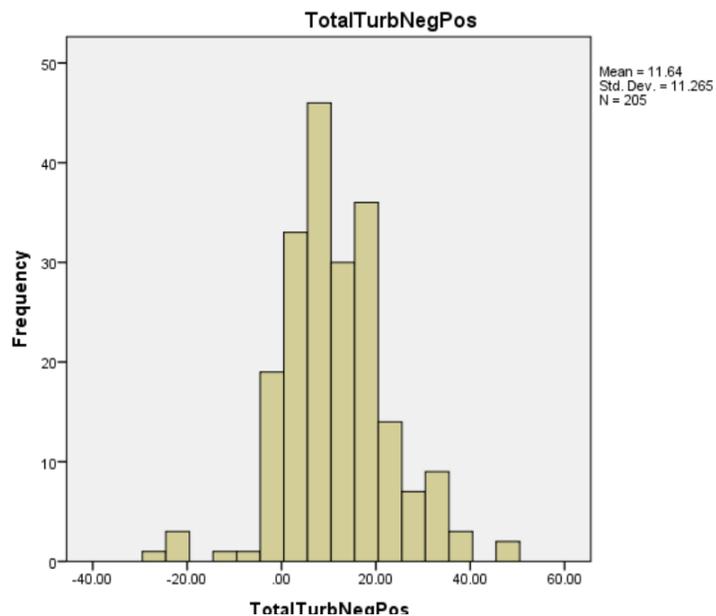
Figure 3.3
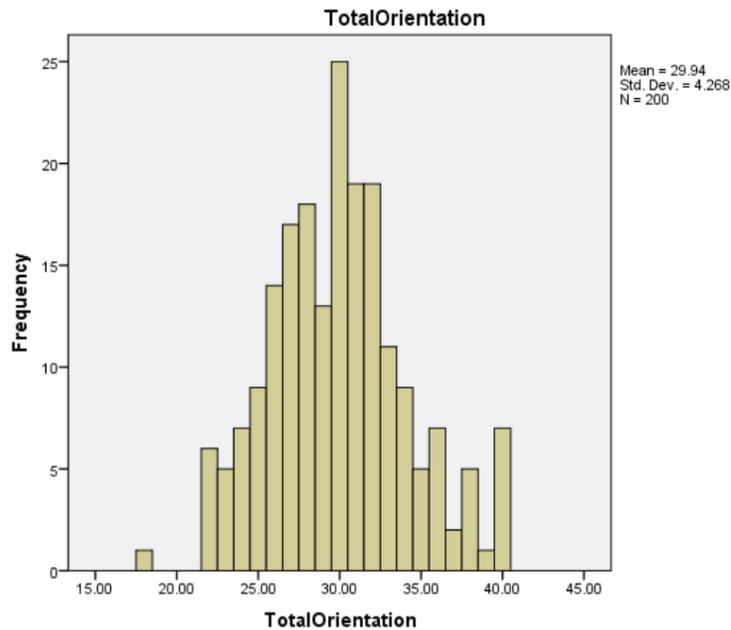
Description of Respondents

The study sample included 206 MBA alumni from a large southeastern United States research one university. The respondents ranged in age from 30 to 71 with a median age of 49 years. The respondents were 78% male 18% female. Just fewer than 4% of respondents did not answer the question on gender. A majority (84%) were Caucasian. Of the remaining respondents 3% were African American, 5% were Asian, 1% were Hispanic. The remaining 7% chose not to indicate race. This homogeneity made predicting turbulence by race inconsequential.

Approximately 11% of the respondents held additional academic degrees, nine having earned doctoral degrees, and another 12 earning additional master's degrees. Approximately half of the respondents reported some sort of continued professional training, some earning certification, and others participating for self-identified skill development. The vast majority, 79% reported employment status as employed full-time by another. Roughly 7% of those also reported some entrepreneurial venture in

addition to their full-time employment arrangement. Reported income for this population is relatively high with 31.6% of the group reporting income of greater than $275,000 annually. Further description of the personal characteristics of the survey respondents is provided in Table 3.6.

Data Analysis

Once the recoding was complete and the data set was reviewed in Excel the data were imported into SPSS for analysis to begin to answer the six research questions. The analysis planned was a variety of statistical procedures including coefficient alpha, frequency, mean, mean rank, along with bivariate and multivariate analysis to determine the relationships between variables.

Research question #1 (To what extent do MBA alumni experience specific career transitions?) was analyzed for frequency, means, standard deviation, and ranks. The number of transitions experienced were ranked from most frequent to least frequent. It was uncovered in this exploratory analysis that the frequency of the transitions varied widely, with 145 respondents experiencing a promotion, and only four experiencing the loss of a job due to poor performance. Research question #2 (For those who experience specific *career transitions*, what *impact* did those transitions have on their careers?) was also analyzed for mean, standard deviation and mean rank. Fourteen career events were used to assess the both the frequency and the impact of specific career transitions.

Research question #3 (To what extent do MBA alumni experience *turbulence* in their careers?) was calculated by multiplying the number of specific transitions by their reported impact to come up with a total career turbulence factor. After conducting

preliminary regression analyses for each of these three variables; transitions, impact, and turbulence, it became clear that co-variance was not substantiated in the data. Therefore the researcher and the methodologist determined it more appropriate to treat each as an index, rather than a scale.

Research question #4 (What *orientation regarding locus of career control* do MBA alumni report in regard to career change?) was designed to determine whether respondents report self-directedness or organizational-directedness in their career decision-making. Nine items were used to measure career orientation. In order to answer research question #4, a series of descriptive frequencies, means, and bivariate analyses were employed. The researcher ran the mean and standard deviation for each item, as well as summary item statistics to find the range and variance of the mean between the nine items.

Research question #5 (To what extent do *personal characteristics, contextual factors*, and *career orientation* separately predict observed *career turbulence* MBA alumni experience?) was measured through background variables. Ten items that included gender, age, race, employment status, educational attainment and employment status were analyzed through a series of bivariate analyses to determine which if any showed significant relationships to the amount of career turbulence reported.

The comments gathered through the open response items on the survey presented some background information for individual participants. This qualitative data provided color and context to the survey data however they were not rigorously analyzed for the purpose of this study. Additional information revealed in the open-response items will be briefly addressed in Chapter Five of this report.

Table 3.6

Personal Characteristics and Contextual Factors of Study Respondents (total n=206)

Variable	Values	
Age	M=50.97	SD=8.15
Gender		
Male	n = 160	77.7%
Female	n = 38	17.5%
Race		
Caucasian	n = 173	84.1%
Asian	n = 10	4.9%
African American	n = 6	3.1%
Hispanic	n = 3	1.4%
Years Since MBA Graduation	M=18.85	SD=10.30
Employment Status		
Employed by Other FT	n = 162	78.6%
Self-Employed PT	n = 20	9.7%
Self-Employed FT	n = 11	5.3%
Unemployed – seeking	n = 3	1.5%
Unemployed-not seeking	n = 2	1.0%
Retired	n = 5	2.4%
Other	n = 14	6.8%
Additional Educational Achievement		
Doctorate	n = 9	4.4%
Additional Master	n = 12	5.8%
Other	n = 64	31.1%
Prof. Certification	n = 72	35.0%
Job Skill Training	n =103	50.0%
Income		
$50,000–$75,000	n= 6	3.0%
$75,001-$125,000	n= 32	15.5%
$125,001-$175,000	n= 28	12.7%
$175,001-225,000	n= 30	14.6%
$225,001-275,000	n= 16	7.8%
Above $275,001	n= 65	31.6%
Other	n= 17	8.3%

Limitations

Although this study benefitted from a fairly large sample, the problem of generalizability is very real. Because the study population is from one institution at one point in time, statistical inference is not possible. As stated by Creswell (2009):

> Because of the characteristics of the setting of participants in an experiment, a researcher cannot generalize to individuals in other settings without jeopardizing external validity. The researcher needs to conduct additional experiments in new settings to see if the same results occur as in the initial setting (p. 165).

Therefore, extending the findings of this original study beyond this population will require logical inference. It is expected however that this sample offered significant insight into aspects of career development that have not previously been explored in the literature. The broad array of organizations represented as employers of this population, along with the varied nature of managerial work the participants perform will offer extensive breadth and variety of professional experience. It is projected that the career experiences of this population offer a logical foundation for inference to others pursuing managerial careers.

It is worth mentioning that an additional limitation in this study results from the self- selection of respondents. It is possible that those who chose to participate in the survey feel more confident in reporting on their career, representing more positive career transitions than the entire population experienced, however there is no way to determine whether this is the case for this group of respondents.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This study's purpose was to explore the nature and correlates of career change among MBA alumni. This chapter presents the findings in relation to the following five research questions:

1. To what extent do MBA alumni experience specific *career transitions*?

2. For those who experienced specific career transitions, what *impact* did

   those transitions have on their careers?

3. To what extent did MBA Alumni experience *career turbulence?*

4. To what extent did MBA alumni report *an orientation toward self-directedness*

   in regard to career management?

5. To what extent did the *personal characteristics, contextual factors,* and *an*

   orientation toward self-directedness predict the career turbulence MBA alumni

   experienced?

Findings Related to Research Question #1

The first research question asked, "To what extent to MBA alumni experience specific *career transitions*?" The researcher calculated the frequency, frequency mean, and mean rank for each transition. Appendix D will show the complete information on frequencies through the SPSS output reports. Table 4.1 presents the summary data of the 14 career transitions for the study population.

As can be seen in Table 4.1 on the following page the 206 respondents showed considerable variation on the extent to which they experienced specific career transitions. Two of the items were extremely frequent; "Accepting a promotion in the same organization," and "Taking on additional responsibilities with no change in title or pay" were experienced by 70% and 67% of the respondents respectively. The seven most frequently reported transitions were experienced by more than 26% of the respondents. Of those seven events three grouped into the category of conventional career events outlined earlier using Briscoe's 2005 study. Those three are: item #1 - accepting a promotion in the same organization, item #2 - accepting a promotion in a different organization, and item # 4 - relocating for a position. Three others in the top seven grouped into the contemporary career categorization. Those three are: item # 3 making a lateral move, item #7, changing professions, and item #12 attempting an entrepreneurial venture. Only one item in the top seven defied convenient categorization: item# 6 taking on additional responsibilities with no change in title or pay.

The remaining seven transitions were experienced fewer than 30 times in the last ten years. It's worth noting that for our population only four participants reported losing a full-time job due to poor performance. This could be the result of response bias, where only the more successful alumni chose to participate in the survey at all, or a very positive reflection of the work performance of this population.

Findings Related to Research Question #2

The second research question asked, "For those who experience career transitions, what *impact* do those transitions have on their careers?" To summarize the noteworthy

Table 4.1

Transition Frequency by Item

Rank of Freq.	Item Number and Description	People who Experienced	1-2 times	3-4 times	5+ times	Mean	SD
1	1. Accepted a promotion in the same organization	145	87	44	4	2.17	1.66
2	6. Additional responsibilities with no change in title/pay	137	72	43	22	2.57	2.50
3	3. Made a lateral job move	82	73	8	1	.99	1.33
4	2. Accepted a promotion in a different organization	77	62	14	1	1.04	1.47
5	7. Changed professions	69	60	7	2	.88	1.36
6	4. Relocated for a position	60	48	9	3	.83	1.43
7	12.Attempted entrepreneurial venture *in addition to* day job	54	45	3	6	.86	2.32
8	10. Lost a full-time job due to layoff or downsizing	29	26	3	0	.34	.93
9	13. Attempted entrepreneurial venture *in place of* day job	26	23	2	2	.32	.97
10	14. Left the workforce entirely	20	20	0	0	.21	.65
11	8. Left a part-time job for a full-time job	14	13	0	1	.17	.70
12	9. Left a full-time job for a part-time job	13	13	0	0	.13	.49
13	5.Accepted a lower paying job in the same organization	11	11	0	0	.12	.50
14	11. Lost a full-time job due to poor performance	4	4	0	0	.04	.28

findings related to this question two tables are provided. Table 4.2 displays the individual impact ratings recorded by participant for each specific transition. These findings are arranged in rank order based on the number of respondents who experienced the transition. The table shows the impact rating from - 2 to 2; listing how many participants rated each transition and the accompanying impact rating. Mean and standard deviation are also shown.

Interestingly, only three items ranked below neutral, with tight distribution indicating these transitions were perceived by those who experienced them as only somewhat negative even though two of the three related to involuntary job loss, and the third related to demotion. The two top ranked transitions were both positive and progressive, reflecting upward mobility at the same or new organizations.

Findings Related to Research Question #3

The third research question asked, "To what extent do MBA alumni experience *career turbulence?"* To address this question means, mean ranks, median, and standard deviations were calculated. The number of transitions by participant was multiplied by the median impact given for that transition by the entire study sample to come up with a mean turbulence score. The ranked means show a range from 5.0 to 14.4 with standard deviations ranging broadly from 2.04 to 17.8. Table 4.3 shows the mean turbulence ratings by item listing the number of participants who experienced each of the transitions being measured.

The transition that led to the highest mean turbulence rating was "Taking on additional responsibilities with no change in title or pay" scoring a turbulence rating of 14.4. While the individual impact ratings were not extreme for this transition, more than

Table 4.2

Transition Impact Response by Participant (n=206)

Mean Rank	Item Number and Description	N Who Rated	Respondents per Rating					Mean	SD
			-2	-1	0	1	2		
1	2. Accepted a promotion in a different organization	77	1	1	4	18	53	1.57	.77
2	1. Accepted a promotion in the same organization	146	2	0	10	53	81	1.45	.74
3	8. Left a part-time job for a full-time job	14	0	0	3	2	9	1.43	.85
4	7. Changed professions	69	3	2	2	27	35	1.29	.99
5	4. Relocated for a position	60	1	5	3	20	31	1.25	1.00
6	3. Made a lateral job move	83	0	1	16	38	28	1.12	.76
7	12.Attempted entrepreneurial venture *in addition to* day job	54	0	4	15	12	23	1.00	1.01
8	13. Attempted entrepreneurial venture *in place of* day job	26	0	5	4	5	12	.92	1.20
9	6. Additional responsibilities with no change in title/pay	138	4	12	22	66	34	.83	1.00
10	9. Left a full-time job for a part-time job	13	0	2	9	1	1	.77	.76
11	14. Left the workforce entirely	20	4	2	6	6	2	.00	1.30
12	5.Accepted a lower paying job in the same organization	11	1	6	3	1	11	-.27	1.27
13	10. Lost a full-time job due to layoff or downsizing	29	7	10	4	2	6	-.34	1.47
14	11. Lost a full-time job due to poor performance	4	1	2	0	0	1	-.50	1.73

Table 4.3

Turbulence Rank Highest to Lowest Using (Career transitions * impact = Career Turbulence) n=206

Mean Rank	Item Number and Transition Description	Responses	Mean	Median	SD
1	6. Taken on new responsibilities with no change in title/pay	138	14.40	12	8.06
2	1.Accepted a promotion in the same organization	146	13.89	13.5	5.82
3	12. Attempted entrepreneurial venture *in addition to* a day job	54	13.54	10	17.8
4	2.Accepted a promotion in a different organization	77	12.57	10	5.16
5	4.Relocated for a position	60	11.75	10	4.86
6	7. Changed professions	69	11.06	10	4.30
7	3.Made a lateral job move	83	10.33	8.5	4.46
8	13. Attempted an entrepreneurial venture *in place of* a day job	26	9.54	9	5.51
9	8. Left a part-time job for a full-time job	14	9.46	10	2.26
10	5.Accepted a lower paying job in the same organization	11	6.50	5	3.50
11	14. Left the workforce entirely	20	6.45	6	2.91
12	10. Lost a full-time job due to layoff or downsizing	29	5.83	6	3.27
13	9. Left a full-time job for a part-time job	13	5.19	6	2.04
14	11. Lost a full-time job due to poor performance	4	5.00	4	3.46

two thirds of the respondents experienced this trend with many indicating through their additional comments that this was routine in their experience. In fact 18% of all respondents took the time to offer comments to this effect in the open-response option provided for this item. "Accepting a promotion in the same organization," earned the second highest mean turbulence rating of 13.89, with even more respondents having reported experiencing this transition.

The transition item that received the lowest turbulence rating was "Losing a full-time job due to poor performance" scoring a mean turbulence rating of only 5.0. The next lowest was "Leaving a full-time job for a part-time job." The mean turbulence rating for moving to part-time work from full-time employment was 5.19. These lower ratings are most logically explained by the very small number of respondents (four and 13 respectively) who reported experiencing these transitions, resulting in a very modest percentage of respondents who were given the opportunity to rate its impact. The impact rating for losing a full-time job due to poor performance varied widely among the four participants who experienced it.

To further analyze the data related to research question #3 ANOVA analysis was used through a paired sample t-test to determine the shared variance between conventional and contemporary career events and career turbulence. The results are as follow:

- Career Turbulence in contemporary careering (M=3.44, SD=3.82) conditions; t= (204) -10.82, p= 0.000

- Career Turbulence in conventional careering (M=4.17, SD=3.23) conditions; t= (204)-10.64, p= 0.000.

In an attempt to view the calculation for turbulence (transitions * impact = CT), a single item was added to the survey to ascertain the participants' self-reported turbulence in relation to others in their field. this item offered the respondents an opportunity to reflect upon their careers as compared to others. The item began by defining the term turbulence and ended by asking, "When you think back over the last ten years, how would you describe your career?" A Likert-type response scale offered the following ratings: (1) Not at all turbulent, (2) Less turbulent than others in my field, (3) Average when compared to others in my field, (4) More turbulent than others in my field, and (5) Extremely turbulent. The results were (M = 2.72, SD = 1.10) indicating that most respondents viewed their careers as less turbulent than average when compared to others in their field. The detailed ratings revealed the following:

- 32 respondents indicated their careers were not at all turbulent.

- 56 respondents rated their careers as less turbulent than others in their field.

- 72 rated their careers as average when compared to others in their field.

- 34 rated their careers as more turbulent than others in their field.

- 12 rated their careers as extremely turbulent.

Findings Related to Research Question #4

The fourth research question asked, "What orientation regarding self-directed career management do MBA alumni report in regard to career change?" The respondents were asked to rate their agreement with each statement on a 5 point Likert-type scale ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree. The range in means from 2.95 to 4.37 indicates a relatively strong orientation toward self-directedness within this population. Table 4.5 presents the findings by item.

The highest mean ranked item was "I am driven by my own definition of

77

success" and the lowest mean ranked item was "I rely on my organization to offer me opportunities to advance in my career." There was a tight range of standard deviation among all items spanning from .62 to 1.11.

Table 4.4

Career Orientation (n=198) Response scale: (1) Strongly disagree, (2) Disagree,

(3) Neither agree nor disagree, (4) Agree, (5) Strongly agree

Mean Rank	Item#	Item Text	Total Responses	Mean	SD
1	20	I am driven by my own definition of success	198	4.49	.62
2	19	I rely on myself to find opportunities to advance in my career	198	4.41	.58
3	17	I rely on myself to seek out and obtain the skills I need to do my job	198	4.37	.63
4	24	I set my own challenging professional goals (outside of those set by my organization)	198	4.18	.68
5	22	I navigate my career based on my own priorities instead of my employer's priorities	198	3.71	.98
6	23	I expect my organization to outline and direct my professional goals	198	3.60	1.02
7	16	I rely on my employer to train me on the skills I need to do my job	198	3.43	1.07
8	21	I am driven by my organization's definition of success	198	2.99	1.03
9	18	I rely on my organization to offer me opportunities to advance in my career	198	2.95	1.11

Overall, as can be seen in Table 4.4 this population as a whole demonstrates an orientation toward self-directed career management with range in means from 2.95 4.37 with only two items falling below neutral, with the two lowest ranking items related to the organization's definition of success and opportunities to advance.

Findings Related to Research Question #5

The fifth research question asked, "To what extent do the personal characteristics, contextual factors, and an orientation toward self-directedness predict the amount of career turbulence MBA alumni experience?" As a first step a series of descriptive statistics was achieved statistical significance: (1) Age, (2) Income, (3) Employment Status, and (4) Orientation toward self-directedness conducted. A required statistical significance of $p < 05$ was set for this exploratory study, consistent with Bender and Lange's (2001) endorsement for nonmedical findings. A total of ten predictor variables were tested. Only four First bivariate analyses using Age, Income, and Orientation toward self-directedness were conducted against the dependent variable, career turbulence. Then ANOVA analysis was used to test the correlation between employment status and career turbulence. Results of these analyses are as follows:

- Income: ($r_s = .149$, r2= .02, $p = .048$). Income is positively correlated with Career Turbulence, but this correlation is quite low indicating only 2% of the variance is explained.

- Employment status: (F= 9.60, df= 2, p= .000) The overall equation for employment status revealed that the significance is due to differences between both the employed categories and the unemployed category. Employed have very high turbulence, unemployed are negatively correlated at -.60.

- Orientation: ($r = .164$, r2 = .0269, $p = .021$). Orientation is positively correlated with CT with a small correlation.

A stepwise linear regression analysis was performed to account for the total shared variance of these four predictor variables. As seen in Figure 4.1 below, the four factor

model age offered the largest percentage of explained variance at 7% with income increasing that shared variance by another 4%, employment status adding another 3%, and career orientation adding the final 4%. Combined, the four factor model explains a total shared variance of 18%. Once it was determined that the data passed all eight assumptions to give a valid result a straight multiple regression analysis was conducted. The results of the multiple regression analysis are shown in Figure 4.2 on the following page.

Summary

Several methods were used to answer the five research questions in this study. Those methods included descriptive statistics, bivariate correlations, linear regressions, and exploratory factor analysis. Key learning uncovered through these analyses include: (1) personal characteristics, contextual factors and career orientation are not major predictors of career turbulence, (2) conventional career patterns identified by increased responsibility and linear progression within organizations are still prevalent within this population, (2a) the most frequently reported career transitions among MBA alumni in this sample involve increasing responsibility, and (2b) the least frequently reported career transitions among this population involve any departure from the workforce, (2c) the vast majority of this study sample work full-time in organizational careers.

Figure 4.1

Stepwise Model of Significant Predictor Variables

Model Summary[e]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.257[a]	.066	.061	10.50444	
2	.328[b]	.108	.097	10.29976	
3	.381[c]	.145	.130	10.10887	
4	.421[d]	.177	.158	9.94835	2.213

a. Predictors: (Constant), Age

b. Predictors: (Constant), Age, Income Categories

c. Predictors: (Constant), Age, Income Categories, Employment

d. Predictors: (Constant), Age, Income Categories, Employment, TotalOrientation

e. Dependent Variable: TotalNEWTurbNegPos

Figure 4.2

Multiple Regression Model for the Four Factor Solution.

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	15.020	7.619		1.971	.050
	Employment	-5.453	1.790	-.217	-3.047	.003
	Age	-.350	.098	-.253	-3.588	.000
	Income Categories	1.663	.469	.253	3.543	.001
	TotalOrientation	.468	.184	.181	2.549	.012

a. Dependent Variable: TotalNEWTurbNegPos

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the findings of the study, forward conclusions drawn from the findings, and explore potential implications for research and practice. This chapter is divided into five sections: (1) a summary of the study, (2) a discussion of the findings, (3) conclusions, (4) recommendations for future research, and (5) implications for practice.

Summary of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the nature and correlates of career change among MBA alumni by addressing the following five research questions.

1. To what extent do MBA alumni experience specific *career transitions*?

2. For those who experienced specific career transitions, what *impact* did those transitions have on their careers?

3. To what extent did MBA alumni experience *career turbulence?*

4. To what extent did MBA alumni report *an orientation toward self-directedness* in regard to career management?

5. To what extent did the *personal characteristics, contextual factors* and *an orientation toward self-directedness* predict the *career turbulence* MBA alumni experienced?

This was a quantitative study conducted using a researcher-developed, selected response instrument constructed in Qualtrics. The instrument development process included multiple brainstorming sessions with career professionals, repeated discussions with committee members, two test surveys with current MBA students, one pilot study with experienced professionals, and an expert review by career development scholars and career service professionals. Quantitative analysis was selected for this study as it filled a gap in the literature left by the predominance of interview studies. Although the instrument was predominantly selected-response items, three general open-response items, one in each section of the instrument, were included to collect comments and offer respondents the opportunity to qualify the responses they provided.

The survey had a total of 36 questions based on feedback from a sample group who recommended a total response time of less than 10 minutes. A total of 206 useable surveys were collected from the 471 distributed. Analysis was conducted using SPSS version 23. Many of the respondents (85%) provided comments in the open-response items to add context to their selected responses. The comments provided color and context, but were not rigorously analyzed for the purpose of this study.

Discussion of the Findings

Statistical Analysis of the 206 usable surveys included descriptive statistics, rank ordering of means, bivariate correlations, simple and multiple regression analyses, and exploratory factor analysis to offer meaningful conceptual groupings of the variables. This section discusses the major findings by research question based on the data analysis.

Findings Related to Research Question #1

Ranks, frequencies, mean, and standard deviation were used to answer the question, "To what extent do MBA alumni experience specific career transitions?" The means ranged from .04 to 2.17 on a frequency scale from (0) never, to (6) more than five times from the list of 14 transitions. The selection of (6) "more than five times" provided a text box for numeric value entry. The seven highest ranked items, or the top half of the group, included three transitions that have been identified in the literature as fitting neatly into the conventional career pattern. They are "Accepted a promotion in the same organization," "Accepted a promotion in a different organization," and "Relocated for a position" (Briscoe, et al., 2005; McDonald, et al., 2005). Three other transitions in the top seven can be suitably described as contemporary career moves: "Made a lateral move," "Changed professions," and "Attempted an entrepreneurial

venture in addition to your day job" (Arthur, et al., 1999; Briscoe, et al., 2006; Mainiero

& Sullivan, 2005).

The seven career transitions ranked in the lower half were each experienced by fewer than 29 of the 206 respondents. These seven included four contemporary transitions: "Attempting an entrepreneurial venture in place of your day job," "Leaving the workforce entirely, " "Leaving a full-time job for a part-time job," and "Accepting a lower paying job in the same organization." Only one seemingly conventional transition was in the lower half of the ranking: "Leaving a part-time job for a full-time job." Two other transitions, "Losing a full-time job due to layoff or downsizing," and "Losing a full-time job due to poor performance," did not fit neatly

84

into either the conventional or contemporary category based on the literature reviewed for this study. Layoff was the transition experienced most frequently in the lower half with 29 respondents reporting that occurrence. Losing a full- time job due to poor performance was the least experienced transition among this population, reported by only four participants, which may have been influenced by social desirability bias.

One last item found in the top half of the ranking has not been previously grouped into either the conventional or the contemporary category in the literature. "Taking on additional responsibilities with no change in title or pay," emerged as one of the most frequently experienced career transitions in this

study, and is presented as the first major finding: Ttaking on additional responsibilities with no change in title or pay may indicate a new norm for modern managerial careers. This supports similar claims made by Allred (1996) and Hassard (2011) in their investigation of organizational restructuring and its effects on employees. Of the 206 respondents in this survey 137 of them reported this transition with 22 of those surveyed reporting it as occurring more than five times in the last 10 years.

Overall the evidence reported to answer this research question indicates that this population experienced conventional and contemporary career transitions almost equally. Four conventional transitions occurred 296 times cumulatively, and the seven contemporary transitions occurred 294 times. The larger number of transitions included in the contemporary career category are the result of the variety of backward, lateral, reducing and exiting activities included in the way these careers are conceptualized (Arthur, 1992; Hall 1976).

Findings Related to Research Question #2

Transition impact was measured through the second research question. Mean, mean rank, and standard deviation analyses were performed to answer the question, "For those who experienced specific career transitions, what impact did those transitions have on their careers?" The instrument response scale (1) very negative impact, (2) somewhat negative impact, (3) no real impact, (4) somewhat positive impact, and (5) very positive impact was recoded through SPSS to provide a more conspicuous negative to positive interpretation in the data analysis. Ratings were

recoded and responses were ranked by mean from most negative to most positive using a scale of (-2) very negative, (-1) negative, (0) neutral, (1) positive, and (2) very positive.

The means ranged from -.50 to 1.57 with four of the five most positively rated items fitting in the conventional career category. "Accepted a promotion in a different organization" rated as the most positive transition (*M*= 1.57, *SD*= .77). "Accepted a promotion in the same organization" was the second most positively rated transition item (*M*= 1.45, *SD* = .74). The third most positively rated transition was "Left a part- time job for a full-time job" (*M* = 1.43, *SD* = .85) with "Relocated for a position" rated at *(M* = 1.25, *SD* = 1.00). The placement of four conventional transitions in the five

most positively rated indicated these transitions carried with them greater desirability in this population.

The most positively ranked contemporary transition was "Changed professions"

86

which was experienced by 69 respondents (33%) of the sample, and rated at (M = 1.29,

SD =.99). Elsewhere in the literature this transition has been reported as more common for women than men (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005; McDonald et al., 2005). Yet, the gender distribution for this item closely resembled the respondent population overall with 20% of those reporting a change in professions being women, and 80% men. The commentary provided by the respondents who changed professions reflected two

themes reported in other studies, namely family, and fulfillment (Duberley et al., 2006; Maniero & Sullivan, 2006; Schein, 1996).

The second most positively rated contemporary transition "Made a lateral job move" was experienced by 83 of the 206 respondents and rated (M = 1.12, SD = .76), sixth out of 14. "Attempting an entrepreneurial venture in addition to a day job" received the last truly "positive" rating (M = 1.00, SD = 1.01). Taking on additional responsibilities with no change in title or pay was rated (M = .83, SD = 1.00) indicating that this occurrence was perceived as having a fairly positive impact on these individuals' careers. As can be seen in Table 4.2 the response distribution shows four participants rating it as very negative, 12 rating is at somewhat negative, 22 rating it as neutral, 66 rating it as positive, and 34 rating it as very positive. Much of the commentary surrounding this transition indicated that being asked to take on more was considered a compliment that resulted from their hard work and demonstrated initiative. Most respondents viewed this transition as a normal part of professional careers.

Sample comments included: "It's expected of a leader," "I take on whatever I can to

try to improve skills and capacity," "My career is about being entrepreneurial in the context of my firm, reinventing myself and my team to drive change."

Overall mean impact ratings of the 14 career transitions skew considerably more positive than negative with only three items reported as slightly below neutral. Not one of the transitions, not even "losing a job due to poor performance" was represented as having a negative impact on the respondent's career. This could be the result of response bias whereby respondents recast negative transitions through the hindsight of subsequent successes, or perhaps a testament to the resilience of the population. All of the findings for research question #2 provide the second major finding of this study; career movement overall was considered positive within this study group.

Findings Related to Research Question #3

The third research question asked, "To what extent do MBA alumni experience *career turbulence?"* To address this question means, mean ranks, median, and standard deviations were calculated. Because not all transitions were experienced by all participants, the median impact rating for each transition item was used for the CT formula [career transitions * impact = CT] to calculate turbulence scores by item. The ranked means show a range from 5.0 to 14.4 with standard deviations ranging broadly from 2.04 to 17.8.

The transition that received the highest mean turbulence rating was "Taken on additional responsibilities with no change in title or pay" with a rating of ($M = $ 14.4, $SD = 8.06$). The reader may recall that this transition was rated between neutral and positive in terms of impact. The second highest ranked item in terms of mean turbulence was "Accepted a promotion in the same organization" ($M = 13.89$, SD

88

=5.82) As in the case of the top ranked item, the frequency of this transition within this population provides the mathematical foundation for its turbulence ranking. A total of 146 of the 206 respondents experienced it, reporting a largely positive impact on career overall. That transition, which is considered typical in a conventional career, was accompanied by two other conventional transitions rated in the top five for turbulence, "Accepted a promotion in a different organization," ($M = 12.57$, $SD = 5.16$) and "Relocated for a position" ($M = 11.75$, $SD = 4.86$). The only contemporary transition in the top five for turbulence was "Attempting an entrepreneurial venture in addition to your day job." The remaining transitions in the top third of this turbulence hierarchy were "Changed professions," ($M = 11.06$, $SD = 4.30$) and "Made a lateral job move," ($M = 10.33$, $SD = 4.46$) for a total of three contemporary and three conventional transitions listed in the top half of the turbulence ranking list, with conventional transitions holding three of the top five most turbulent transitions.

The fact that the conventional career transitions appeared higher in the ranks, meaning they were perceived as more turbulent when compared to contemporary transitions, is somewhat surprising given the positive impact ratings they received in the analysis to answer research question #2. The fact that they were reported as having a positive impact on the individual's career, and also reported as among the most turbulent transitions seems to indicate that participants in this study view career turbulence as more positive than negative, which is in keeping with the finding presented for research question #2, that this group finds career movement to be positive overall.

Interestingly, the transition that received the most negative *impact* rating, "Losing a full-time job due to poor performance" ($M = 5.00$, $SD = 3.46$) ranked

lowest on the turbulence list. This unexpected finding is explained mathematically by the extremely low number of respondents who experienced it. A transition experienced by only four of the 206 respondents skews the variable's measurement dramatically. To further confound the finding, the four respondents rated its impact with a wide degree of variance; one respondent rating it as very negative, two of them rating it as only somewhat negative, and one rating it as very positive. These ratings resulted in a median impact much closer to neutral than to negative at -.02. It seems curious that losing one's job due to poor performance was not considered turbulent by this population. Perhaps response bias is also at play here.

The broad distribution in standard deviation, ranging from 2.04 to 17.8, could indicate a hesitation for the participants to relate to the term "turbulent" in describing career transitions, as indicated by comments offered in the open-response item that closed this section of the survey. One respondent specifically stated that s/he "was not connecting at all with the term turbulence. Activity, variety, and unpredictability are

not synonymous, and unpredictability is the only one of the three that I would associate with turbulence. Disruption might be a better word to use."

Career turbulence was also measured in an additional, single item included to test the internal validity of the turbulence construct. This item was intended to frame the turbulence concept by requesting that respondents rate their careers in comparison to others in their field. Item number 15 was placed after the last item in the transition frequency and impact section and before the open response item inviting participants to address anything not covered in the specific items. Item 15 read, "The term 'turbulence' is used to describe the activity, variety or

90

unpredictability in an individual's career. Each individual is the best judge of whether the actions they have taken in their career resulted in career turbulence. When you think back on your career over the last ten years, how would you describe your career?" The response scale was as follows: (1) Not at all turbulent, (2) Less turbulent than others in my field, (3) Average when compared to others in my field, (4) More turbulent than others in my field, and (5) Extremely turbulent. The mean response for this item was 2.72, with a 77% rating their careers as less turbulent than average when compared to others in their field.

In summary, the concept of turbulence seemed to hold different meaning for different people. Many respondents indicated that they had knowingly chosen careers that were inherently turbulent citing real estate development, banking, and entrepreneurship as the career functions falling into this category. Comments offered to this effect seemed to indicate a sense of pride in the choice: "I've had nine different CEO roles in the last 15 years, turbulent is an understatement!" "Lots of change in my work (mergers and acquisitions) one must be adaptive to succeed." Others offered detailed activities and transitions asking the researcher specifically if they should be considered turbulent: "International relocation, divorce, executive positions in sales all typical. Many transitions, but no one died. Is that turbulence?" These comments seem to encompass a broad range of emotions resulting from the concept of career turbulence.

Findings Related to Research Question #4

Research question #4 "To what extent did MBA Alumni report an orientation toward self-directedness in regard to career management?" was intended to measure self-directed career management, one of the primary

dimensions of contemporary careering identified in boundaryless careers (Arthur, 1994), kaleidoscope careers (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005) and protean careers (Hall, 1996, 2004) and tested for validity in Briscoe, et al.'s study (2006). To measure career orientation the respondents were asked to rate their agreement with nine separate expectation statements using a 5 point Likert-type response scale. Respondents rated their agreement with each statement from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. A total of 198 participants responded to this section of the survey, eight fewer participants than responded to all the other sections. Overall 63% of the participants identified self-directed career attitudes through strong agreement with the nine items to measure this characteristic.

The two statements that earned the highest agreement rating were "I am driven by my own definition of success" ($M = 4.49$, $SD = .62$), and "I rely on myself to find opportunities to advance in my career" ($M = 4.41$, $SD = .58$). The two lowest ranked orientation items were the opposite of the above: "I am driven by my organization's definition of success," ($M = 2.99$, $SD = 1.03$) and "I rely on my organization to offer me opportunities to advance in my career," ($M = 2.95$, $SD = 1.11$) Overall the responses to these nine items indicated a strong internal locus of control. This leads to the third major finding in this study. That is MBA alumni report a high degree of self-directedness in their career management behaviors and attitudes. This characteristic is the only attitudinal variable measured in the study and is firmly embedded in the foundation of the contemporary careering literature (Arthur, et al., 1999; Briscoe, et al. 2006; Hall, D.T., 2004). This is a departure from the frequency and impact results from the earlier research questions where results blended contemporary and conventional career tendencies toward action. Career

92

orientation was also the only attitudinal variable explored in this study. Future

research to investigate other attitudes related to contemporary careering (i.e. mobility

preference, or boundaryless mindset) would add significantly to this line of research.

Findings Related to Research Question #5

The fifth research question asked, "To what extent do the personal

characteristics, contextual factors and orientation regarding self-directedness predict

the amount of career turbulence MBA alumni experience?" Exploratory model

building was performed to see if multi-variate explanations were superior to the

bivariate analyses conducted for earlier research questions. Using the four variables

that achieved statistical significance (age, income, employment, and orientation)

stepwise forward regressions were completed, and several different models were

attempted, from two factors through six factors. Eliminating cross loaders and

minimizing non-loaders resulted in the four factor solution as the best model to

explain shared variance.

Age revealed the single greatest shared variance of the four at 9%. Income

displayed the second greatest shared variance with an additional 4%. Career

orientation indicated another 4% shared variance, and employment status added

another 3%. These findings resulted in a four factor model which captured a

cumulative shared variance of

18%, a relatively weak predictive value. While the predictive or explanatory power

in the variables is less powerful than expected the conceptual model is sound.

Ancillary Analysis

Frequency, impact and turbulence ratings for the specific transitions

hinted toward the possibility of grouping transitions into some meaningful

structure. Exploratory factor analysis was performed using Varimax rotation in factor solutions from three to six factor families. Ultimately a four factor model loading at .50 criterion was selected allowing transitions experienced by this group to be empirically categorized into four factor families:

- (F1) Repositioning, which includes all transitions that relate to a change in work context - relocation, promotion into a different organization, and changing professions.

- (F2) Retooling, which encompasses skill building - taking on additional responsibilities, making a lateral move, being promoted in the same organization.

- (F3) Reducing, which addresses decreased professional responsibilities - layoff or downsizing, and demotion.

- (F4) Redirecting, which involves major professional direction changes - losing a full-time job due to poor performance and leaving the workforce altogether.

This four factor solution captured 45% of the total variance and eliminated all cross-loaders, yet left four transition items out of the grouping entirely. See Figure 5.1 for the total variance explained by each factor family and the rotated component matrix.

Figure 5.1

Four Factor Model of Career Turbulence

Total Variance Explained

Component	Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	1.660	11.B9d	11.B9 e
2	1.62i	11.621	23.5H
3	1.56	11.15£	34.67e
4	1.40	10.054	44.731

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotated Component Matrix[a]

	Component			
	1	.:.	3	4
New 4 Reb New 2	.67		.11€	
PromDif New 7	.63ll			.12
ChangeProf	.611	.339		-.122
New 8 FT-PT	.42C	-.393	.17<	-.12E
New 9 PT-FT	.37.l		-.1H	
New 10 Layoff		.791		
New 5 Demotion		.666	.29i	
New 6 Addl Resp		.123	.75	.11i
New 3 Lateral			.51	-.25E
New 1 Promo	.22i	.229	.504	.41
New 11 Fired				.67
New 14 Left Wkfrc	.16:!	.178	-.451	.591
New '13 Entr instead	.11i	.41 2	-.32	-.442
New 12 Entr Plus				-.29

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization."

a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

Summary of the Findings

Five major findings were uncovered through the five research questions:

1. Taking on additional responsibilities with no change in salary or title has become a common practice in the modern managerial career, and is rated as the highest producer of career turbulence.

2. Overall, career transitions were considered positive occurrences, even when transitions themselves were rated less than positive.

3. Career turbulence is more a product of the number of transitions experienced than the self-reported impact of those transitions.

4. MBA alumni in this study reported a high degree of self-directedness in their career management behavior and attitudes.

5. Predictor variables selected for this study offered adequate but not extremely powerful explanatory value.

Conclusions

The following are the major conclusions from this in light of the findings.

Conclusion One: Taking on additional responsibilities with no change in salary or title has become a common practice in the modern managerial career, and is rated by this population as the highest producer of career turbulence.

This transition defies easy categorization in either the contemporary or conventional category. It seems conventional if it is assigned by the employer in an attempt to maintain peak organizational productivity with fewer resources. It fits within the contemporary career category if it is initiated by the employee as a means

to manage one's own career by developing competencies or broadening networks, behaviors central to contemporary career management, and alluring to the ambitious employee. Whether framed as conventional or contemporary its ranking as the most turbulent transition is not surprising as with it comes heightened performance expectations on a broader base of work. This finding, similar to that of Allred (1996) indicates that even the most subtle changes in career characteristics require an adjustment in professional equilibrium which is likely to have cascading effects on the career agent's personal and professional relationships.

Conclusion Two: Overall, career transitions are considered positive occurrences, even when the transitions themselves are rated as less than positive.

Career activity carried with it a positive connotation within this population as these participants reflected on the last ten years of their careers. Commentary provided through open responses indicated that the alternative to such career activity would be career stagnation, an undesirable replacement. "I would not think to use the term turbulence to describe a career filled with movement and new experiences. Why would growth be turbulent?" "Major changes like getting the EMBA, taking on new responsibilities or new positions and relocating have all been very positive yet still disruptive. It's much better than the alternative of standing still." Similar to findings outlined by Bidwell (2013) employment tenure is heavily dependent upon the employee's perception of their value to the organization. This population seemed to identify transitions as ways to invest in their careers.

Conclusion Three: Career turbulence is more a product of the number of transitions experienced than the self-reported impact of those transitions.

Even when transitions were reported as having minimal impact on the agent's career overall, the frequency of occurrence resulted in greater turbulence ratings. Similar to the process of erosion frequent minor transitions wear away at career stability and equilibrium through sheer repetition. In contrast, transitions that seem highly turbulent, like losing a job due to poor performance, or leaving a full-time job for a part time job, earned very low turbulence ratings because they were rarely experienced.

Another finding related to career turbulence is the realization that self-reported turbulence among participants of this study is quite low when measured comparatively to others in the respondent's field. This could be a product of subjective reporting bias, meaning that MBA alumni viewed their careers more positively in hindsight. Or it could mean that career turbulence was less memorable when the longer term career is viewed as a whole in comparison to others.

Conclusion Four: MBA alumni in this study reported a high degree of self-directedness in their career management behaviors and attitudes.

As found in Adamson, Doherty & Viney, (1998) middle managerial careers lend themselves to a certain degree of proactivity to avoid negative career consequences that result from the organizational delayering that has grown common in recent decades. Therefore it is not surprising that this study of a group of white-collar professionals found that the majority of participants (63%) agreed with self-directed career attitude statements. Many studies have reported that self-directed career management leads to more contemporary career patterns (Hassard, Morris & McCann, 2011; Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005; McDonald, et al., 2005; Reitman & Schneer, 2005), that correlation was

neither confirmed nor refuted in this study. While self-directed career orientation was significant as a predictor of career turbulence, it explained only 3% of its shared variance.

Implications

This study contributes to the field of Human Resource and Organizational Development through the exploration of the empirical dimensions of contemporary and conventional career management through the experiences of the career agents. By investigating specific career transitions, the frequency with which they are experienced in modern managerial careers, and the impact those transitions have on the careers of those who experience them the study attempted to "focus more closely on the individual's subjective experience" as suggested by Adamson, et al. (1998, p. 258). Although exploration of these concepts has been undertaken by others through qualitative methods as pointed out in the literature review section of this document (Cohen & Mallon, 1999; Duberley et al., 2006; McDonald et al., 2005) no other study sought to explore managerial careers through quantitative research of personal career experiences as was undertaken for this study.

Additionally, this study proposed a new construct by which to measure career variability, whether contemporary or conventional in nature. This measurement construct, introduced through this study as career turbulence, seeks to bridge the gap between conventional and contemporary career development through the provision of one flexible and overarching dimension. It answers the call for further research made by Adamson (1998), Arthur (1994), Duberley (2006), and Hassard (2011) by providing an empirical attempt to reach a clearer and more mutual understanding of the overlap

99

between two opposing career ideals represented in the literature. As contemporary career transitions were explored alongside conventional career transitions in this study the ways in which these two paradigms can operate simultaneously was investigated. The findings indicated that the two categories were experienced almost equally by members of the study group as the most frequently reported career transitions were experienced equally. Conventional career moves that involved increasing responsibility, the linear progression touted as a pillar of conventional careering, were contrasted by 40% of the population who reported making at least three lateral moves in the last ten years. Also, while the vast majority of this population (79%) is employed full-time by another, an element commonly described in conventional careering (Cohen & Mallon, 1999), entrepreneurial endeavors were reported in addition to or in place of a day job by 39% of the group, identified as a decidedly contemporary phenomenon (Mallon, 1999; Pink, 2001; Sullivan, 1999).

Implications for Research

Mixed Methods Approach: While rigorous qualitative analysis was not part of this dissertation, the comments provided by the participants in this study offer promise for future analysis that could add deeply to the findings provided. The concept of career turbulence will benefit from further exploration through rigorous and systematic qualitative analysis of this additional data.

Volition: Choice as it relates to voluntary compared to involuntary career transitions is a very important component to consider in any career change as it is likely to influence the perception or impact of the experience. As such, investigating the direct career results of transitions that were the consequence of repositioning or rebounding

from unplanned disruptions would add greatly to the study conducted herein. When transitions are taken on voluntarily they are much more likely to be considered positive, especially by career agents who identify as self-directed career managers (Reitman & Schneer, 2005).

Economic Predictors: In order to maintain the brevity of the survey, economic factors were not included as predictor variables in this study, and the result was disappointing explanatory or predictive value of the independent variables. Although the four factor model provided worked to predict 18% of the shared variance between the independent and dependent variables, further research is needed to determine other factors that better predict or explain career turbulence. A research design that incorporates economic predictors over personal characteristics may be more revealing.

Gender Differences: This study can neither confirm nor dispute the construction Mainiero & Sullivan, (2005) offer to explain women's career progression as stemming from a lens of relationalism. That contention rests on career transitions that are decided upon based on the needs of their children, their spouses, their aging parents, or others in their social or professional circles. In fact, the commentary provided from the open response segment of this study indicated that men considered similar family relationships when making career decisions. "With long hours and heavy travel a career in banking made work my life so I changed careers to be more help to my wife in raising our child." "I relocated twice within two years for my wife's career in the Navy. If I hadn't attended the EMBA program I think my career choices would have been severely limited. The experiences in the program helped me be more marketable for a greater number of roles that will allow us to follow her career for a little longer."

The same study mentioned above (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005) indicated that changing professions was experienced much more frequently by women than by men. This study however refutes that finding in that the gender distribution for changing professions among this population closely resembled the overall gender distribution of the study sample at 20% women, and 80% men. Studies that investigate whether contemporary career transitions are equally as prevalent in men as they are in women are recommended.

Implications for Practice

Increasing Variety: The findings of this study can help organizations attract top talent by recognizing the mutual advantages of offering a variety of opportunities to valued employees that will allow them to explore different career patterns. The evidence indicates that career agents will welcome change and variation of responsibilities as a way of honing skills and improving morale. Employers can build the loyalty that they desire from their top talent by offering greater variety of assignments as they address economic challenges that lead to downsizing and delayering. Individuals will benefit if organizations begin offering broader responsibilities that include upward, lateral, or even backward moves along with more autonomy and greater mobility within and between functions. This would provide the variety desired by the modern professional (Adamson, et al., 1998; Hassard, et al., 2011).

Career Turbulence: Career stagnation was mentioned in this study as an undesirable alternative to career turbulence indicating that the term has positive connotation in certain circles. Conceptualizing career patterns as turbulent rather than

conventional or contemporary will offer an over-arching theory of career activity that resists the constraints imposed by tying career decisions to time or sequence, fostering adaptability as attribute in successfully managing one's career.

Factor Impact: Career counseling using the four factor families can assist in recognizing the patterns emerging in one's career and the steps one might take to better prepare for them. Each grouping may be a means to recognizing subconscious needs the career agent is attempting to address. Identifying the transitions that group together when they occur can assist in painting a clearer picture of the career intentions at play, allowing for a deeper dialogue on proactively managing ones career.

Study Conclusion

This quantitative study of 206 MBA alumni explored career experiences to learn about the nature and correlates of the modern managerial career. The study provided evidence of a crossover between conventional and contemporary career activities that calls into question the clear dichotomy presented in the literature. It proposed Career Turbulence, a conceptual model that takes into consideration the vibrant and interesting career experiences that suggest a new normal in the American managerial career: a career that favors movement, inviting new opportunities for repositioning, retooling, reducing or redirecting one's professional activities. It attempted to find predictors of career turbulence, albeit unsuccessfully, and offered opportunities for future research related to volition in career transitions, economic factors as predictors of career turbulence, and deeper investigation of the qualitative data collected to offer even greater insights into the career experiences and attitudes of this population.

REFERENCES

Adamson, S. J., Doherty, N., & Viney, C. (1998). The meanings of career revisited: Implications for theory and practice. *British Journal of Management, 9*(4), 251-260.

Allred, B. B., Snow, C. C., & Miles, R. E. (1996). Characteristics of managerial careers in the 21st century. *The Academy of Management Executive, 10*(4), 17-27.

Arthur, M. B., & Rousseau, D. M. (1996). *The boundaryless career* Oxford University Press.

Arthur, M., Inkson, K., & Pringle, J. (1999). *The new careers: Individual action and economic change* Sage.

Arthur, M. B. (1994). The boundaryless career: A new perspective for organizational inquiry. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 15*(4), 295-306.

Bidwell, M. J. (2013). What happened to long-term employment? the role of worker power and environmental turbulence in explaining declines in worker tenure. *Organization Science, 24*(4), April 12, 2015-1061-1082. http://dx.doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1120.0816

Bloch, D. P. (2005). Complexity, chaos, and nonlinear dynamics: A new perspective on career development theory. *The Career Development Quarterly, 53*(3), 194-207.

Briscoe, J. P., Hall, D. T., & DeMuth, R. L. (2005). Protean and boundaryless

careers: an empirical exploration. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 69*, 30-

31-47. doi:doi:10.1016/j.jvb.2005.09.003

Brown, D. (Ed.). (2002). *Career choice and development* (4th ed.) John Wiley &

Sons.Brown, D., Johnson, M. K., Mortimer, J. T., Gottfredson, L. S., Savickas, M.

L., Young, R. A., . .

Dawis, R. V. (2002). *Career choice and development* (Fourth ed.). San Francisco:

Jossey- Bass.

Brown, S., & Lent, R. (Eds.). (2005). *Career development and counseling: Putting*

theory and research to work. Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons,

Inc.

Clarke, M. (2008). Plodders, pragmatists, visionaries and opportunists: Career

patterns and employability. *Career Development International, 14*(1), 8-9-

28.http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/13620430910933556

Cohen, L., & Mallon, M. (1999). The transition from organisational employment

to portfolio working: Perceptions of "boundarylessness". *Work,*

Employment & Society, 13(2), 329-330- 352.

Creswell, J. W. (2009). In Knight V., Connelly S., Quesenberry S. and Scott M.

(Eds.), *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods*

approaches (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Dany, F. (2014). Time to change: The added value of an integrative approach to

career research. *Career Development International, 19(6), 718-*

*73.*http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/CDI-06-2014-0075

Davies, A., Fidler, D., & Gorbis, M. (2011). Future work skills 2020. *Institute for the Future for Apollo Research Institute, 1*(1), April 12, 2012

DeFillippi, R. J., & Arthur, M. B. (1994). The boundaryless career: A competency-based perspective. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 15*(4), 307-324.

Dillman, D. A., Smyth, J. D., & Christian, L. M. (2009). *Internet, mail, and mixed-mode surveys: The tailored design method* (3rd ed.). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Feldman, D.C., Molino, M.C., (1996). Careers within careers; Reconceptualizing the nature of career anchors and their consequences. *HR Management Review, 6(2), 89-112.*

Ginzberg, E. (1969). Theory of occupational choice. In W. L. Hitchcock, & N. K. Mallory (Eds.), *Readings in guidance* (pp. 74-75-77). New York, NY: Educational Publishing Company.

Ginzberg, E. (1952). Toward a theory of occupational choice. *Occupations: The Vocational Guidance Journal, 30*(7), 491-494. doi:10.1002/j.2164-5892.1952.tb02708.x

Gottfredson, G. D. (1977). Career stability and redirection in adulthood. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 62*(4), 436.

Hall, D. T. (1976). *Careers in organizations* Goodyear Pub. Co.

Hall, D. T. (2004). The protean career: A quarter-century journey. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 65*(1), 1-13.

Hall, D. T., & Mirvis, P. H. (1995). The new career contract: Developing the whole person at midlife and beyond. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 47*(3), 269-289.

Hall, D. T., & Moss, J. E. (1999). The new protean career contract: Helping

organizations and employees adapt. *Organizational Dynamics, 26*(3), 22-

37.

Hassard, J., Morris, J., & McCann, L. (2012). 'My brilliant career'? new

organizational forms and changing managerial careers in japan, the UK,

and USA. *Journal of Management Studies, 49*(3), 571-599.

doi:10.1111/j.1467-6486.2011.01032.x

Hoekstra, H. A. (2011). A career roles model of career development. *Journal of

Vocational Behavior, 78*(2), 159-173.

Holland, J. L. (1966). *The psychology of vocational choice: A theory of personality

types and model environments.*. Waltham, MA: Blaisdell Publishing

Company.

Holland, J. L. (1997). *Making vocational choices: A theory of vocational

personalities and work environments* (3rd ed.). Odessa, FL: Psychological

Assessment Resources.

Iellatchitch, A., Mayrhofer, W., & Meyer, M. (2003). Career fields: A small step

towards a grand theory. *International Journal of Human Resource

Management, 14*(5), 728-729-750.

Kuijpers, M. A., & Scheerens, J. (2006). Career competencies for the modern

career. *Journal of Career Development, 32 Number 4*(June), 303-304-319.

Louis, M. R. (1980). Career transitions: Varieties and commonalities. *Academy of

Management Review, 5*(3), 329-330-340.

Mainiero, L. A., & Sullivan, S. E. (2005). Kaleidoscope careers: An alternative explanation for the opt-out revolution. *The Academy of Management Executive, 19*(1), 106-107-123.

Mainiero, L. A., & Sullivan, S. E. (2006). *The opt-out revolt: Why people are leaving companies to create kaleidoscope careers*. New York, NY: Davies-Black Publishing.

Mallon, M. (1999). Going portfolio: Making sense of changing careers. *Career Development International, 4*(7), 358-359-370.

McDonald, P. K., Brown, K. A., & Bradley, L. M. (2005). Have traditional career paths given way to protean ones?: Evidence from senior managers in the australian public sector. *Career Development International, 10*(2), 109-110-129.

Number of jobs held, labor market activity, and earnings growth among the youngest baby boomers: Results from a longitudinal study. (March 31, 2015). Retrieved from http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/nlsoy.pdf

Nunnally, J. C. (1978). *Psychometric theory* New York: McGraw-Hill, c1978; 2d ed. Parsons, F. (1909). *Choosing a vocation* Houghton Mifflin.

Patton, W. A., & McMahon, M. L. (2006). Constructivism: What does it mean for career counseling. *Career Counseling: Constructivist Approaches,* 3-15.

Pink, D. H. (2001). *Free agent nation: How America's new independent workers are transforming the way we live* Business Plus.

Reitman, F., & Schneer, J. A. (2005). The long-term negative impacts of managerial career interruptions a longitudinal study of men and women MBAs. *Group & Organization Management, 30*(3), 243-262.

Savickas, M. L. (1998). Career style assessment and counseling. In T. Sweeney (Ed.), *Adlerian counseling: A practitioner's approach* (4th ed., pp. 329-330-360). Philadelphia: Accelerated Development Press.

Savickas, M. L. (1999). The psychology of interests. In E. Watkins, & A. R. Spokane (Eds.), *Vocational interests: Their meaning, measurement, and counseling use* (First ed., pp. 19-20- 56). Palo Alto, CA: Davies-Black.

Savickas, M. L. (2005). Theory and practice of career construction. In S. Brown, & R. Lent (Eds.), *Career development and counseling: Putting theory and research to work* (pp. 42-43- 70). Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Savickas, M. L. (2002). Career construction. *Career Choice and Development,* 149-205.

Savickas, M. L., Nota, L., Rossier, J., Dauwalder, J., Duarte, M. E., Guichard, J., Van Vianen,

Schein, E. H. (1974). Career anchors and career paths: A panel study of management school graduates. Technical report no. 1.

Schein, E. H. (1990). Career anchors and job/role planning: The links between career pathing and career development.

Schein, E. H. (1996). Career anchors revisited: Implications for career

development in the 21st century. *The Academy of Management Executive,*

10(4), 80-88.

Schein, E., H. (1999). Career anchors revisited: Implications for career

development in the 21st century. *Academy of Management Executive,*

00(0), 80-81-88.

Spector, P. E. (1992). In Lewis-Beck M. S. (Ed.), *Summated rating scale*

construction: An introduction. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Sullivan, S. E., Cardin, W. A., & Martin, D. F. (1998). Careers in the next

millennium: Directions for future research. *Human Resource Management*

Review, 8(2), 165-166-185. doi:doi:10.1016/S1053-4822(98)80003-X

Sullivan, S. E. (1999). The changing nature of careers: A review and research

agenda. *Journal of Management, 25*(3), 457-484.

Sullivan, S. E. (1999). The changing nature of careers: A review and research

agenda. *Journal of Management, 25*(3), 457-484.

Sullivan, S. E., & Baruch, Y. (2009). Advances in career theory and research: A

critical review and agenda for future exploration. *Journal of Management,*

35(6), 1542-1571.

Super, D. E. (1953). A theory of vocational development. *American Psychologist,*

(8), 185-186- 190.

Super, D. E. (1984). Career and life development. In D. Brown, & L. Brooks

(Eds.), *Career choice and development* (pp. 192-193-234). San Francisco:

Jossey-Bass.

Super, D. E. (1990). A life-span, life-space approach to career development. In D.

 Brown, & L. Brooks (Eds.), *Career choice and development* (2nd ed., pp.

 197-198-261). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Super, D. E., Savickas, M. L, Super, C. M., Brown, D., & Brooks, L. (1990).

 Career choice and development. *Career choice and development* (pp. 197-

 198-261). San Francisco, CA: Jossey- Bass.

Super, D., Savickas, M., Super, C., Brown, D., & Brooks, L. (1990). Career choice

 and development. *Career Choice and Development,* , 197-261.

Super, D. E. (1957). *The psychology of careers* New York: Harper & Row.

Super, D. E. (1957). The psychology of careers; an introduction to vocational

 development.

Super, D. E. (1990). A life-span, life-space approach to career development.

Watson, T. (2011). Managing in the modern corporation: The intensification of

 managerial work in the USA, UK and Japan - by John Hassard, Leo

 McCann and Jonathan Morris. *British Journal of Industrial Relations,*

 49(3), 597-599. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8543.2010.00843_8.x

Wilensky, H. L. (1960). Work, careers and social integration. *International Social*

 Science Journal, 543-560.

APPENDIX A

Career Turbulence Study

21st CENTURY CAREERS Many people believe that the 21st century career is more turbulent than ever before. Career Turbulence is the term I am using to describe the non-traditional career patterns that have been referred to as the new normal for the American professional career. This survey is designed to test this assertion by exploring the career transitions of MBA alumni. The following 15 statements represent specific career transitions. Please indicate how many times you have experienced each transition in the last ten years. Some responses will result in another question asking you to rate the impact that transition had on your career.

SECTION ONE - CAREER TRANSITIONS   1a. How many times in the last ten years have you accepted a promotion in the same organization?
Never
One time
Two times
Three times
Four times
Five times
  More than five times - please enter that number below _____

1b. Overall how would you rate the impact accepting a promotion in the same organization had on your career?
Very negative impact
Somewhat negative impact
No real impact
Somewhat positive impact
Very positive impact

2a. How many times in the last ten years have you accepted a higher level position (promotion) in a different organization?
Never
One time
Two times
Three times
Four times
Five times
  More than five times - please enter that number below _____

2b. Overall how would you rate the impact accepting a higher level position (promotion) in a different organization had on your career?
Very negative impact
Somewhat negative impact
No real impact
Somewhat positive impact
Very positive impact

3a. How many times in the last ten years have you made a lateral job move, either in the same organization or in a new organization?
Never
One time
Two times
Three times
Four times
Five times
  More than five times - please enter that number below _____

3b. Overall how would you rate the impact making a lateral move, either in the same or in a new organization had on your career?
Very negative impact
Somewhat negative impact
No real impact
Somewhat positive impact
Very positive impact

  4a. How many times in the last ten years have you relocated for a position?
Never
One time
Two times
Three times
Four times
Five times
  More than five times - please enter that number below _____

4b. Overall how would you rate the impact relocating for a position had on your career?
Very negative impact
Somewhat negative impact
No real impact
Somewhat positive impact
Very positive impact

5a. How many times in the last ten years have you accepted a lower paying full-time job in the same organization?
Never
One time
Two times
Three times
Four times
Five times
  More than five times - please enter that number below _____

5b. Overall how would you rate the impact of accepting a lower paying full-time job in the same organization?
Very negative impact
Somewhat negative impact
No real impact
Somewhat positive impact
Very positive impact

6a. How many times in the last ten years have you taken on new responsibilities with no change in title or pay?
Never
One time
Two times
Three times
Four times
Five times
  More than five times - please enter that number below _____

6b. Overall how would you rate the impact taking on new responsibilities with no change in title or pay had on your career?
Very negative impact
Somewhat negative impact
No real impact
Somewhat positive impact
Very positive impact

7a. How many times in the last ten years have you changed professions? (For example - left a job in sales to take a job in management)
Never
One time
Two times
Three times
Four times
Five times
More than five times - please enter that number below _____

7b. Overall how would you rate the impact changing professions had on your career?
Very negative impact
Somewhat negative impact
No real impact
Somewhat positive impact
Very positive impact

8a. How many times in the last ten years have you left a part-time or temporary position to take a full-time, permanent position?
Never
One time
Two times
Three times
Four times
Five times
More than five times - please enter that number below _____

8b. Overall how would you rate the impact leaving a part-time, contract or temporary position to take a full-time, permanent position had on your career?
Very negative impact
Somewhat negative impact
No real impact
Somewhat positive impact
Very positive impact

9a. How many times in the last ten years have you left a full-time permanent position to take a part-time, temporary or contract position?
Never
One time
Two times
Three times
Four times
Five times
  More than five times - please enter that number below _____

9b. Overall how would you rate the impact leaving a full-time, permanent position to take a part-time temporary position had on your career?
Very negative impact
Somewhat negative impact
No real impact
Somewhat positive impact
Very positive impact

10a. How many times in the last ten years have you lost a full-time, permanent job due to layoff or downsizing?
Never
One time
Two times
Three times
Four times
Five times
  More than five times - please enter that number below _____

10b. Overall how would you rate the impact losing a full-time, permanent position due to layoff or downsizing had on your career?
Very negative impact
Somewhat negative impact
No real impact
Somewhat positive impact
Very positive impact

11a. How many times in the last ten years have you lost a full-time, permanent job due to poor performance?
Never
One time
Two times
Three times
Four times
Five times
  More than five times - please enter that number below _____

11b. Overall how would you rate the impact losing a full-time, permanent position due to poor performance had on your career?
Very negative impact
Somewhat negative impact
No real impact
Somewhat positive impact
Very positive impact

12a. How many times in the last ten years have you attempted an entrepreneurial venture in addition to your "day job?"
Never
One time
Two times
Three times
Four times
Five times
  More than five times - please enter that number below _____

12b. Overall how would you rate the impact attempting an entrepreneurial venture in addition to your "day job" had on your career?
Very negative impact
Somewhat negative impact
No real impact
Somewhat positive impact
Very positive impact

13a. How many times in the last ten years have you attempted an entrepreneurial venture in place of your "day job?"
Never
One time
Two times
Three times
Four times
Five times
　More than five times - please enter that number below _____

13b. Overall how would you rate the impact attempting an entrepreneurial venture in place of your "day job" had on your career?
Very negative impact
Somewhat negative impact
No real impact
Somewhat positive impact
Very positive impact

14a. How many times in the past ten years have you left the workforce entirely (e.g. to care for a loved one or return to school)?
Never
One time
Two times
Three times
Four times
Five times
　More than five times - please enter that number below _____

14b. Overall how would you rate the impact leaving the workforce entirely had on your career?
Very negative impact
Somewhat negative impact
No real impact
Somewhat positive impact
Very positive impact

15a. The term "turbulence" is used to describe the activity, variety or unpredictability in an individual's career. Each individual is the best judge of whether the actions they have taken in their career resulted in career turbulence. When you think back on your career over the last ten years, how would you describe your career has been thus far?
Not at all turbulent
Less turbulent than others in my field
Average when compared to others in my field
More turbulent than others in my field
Extremely turbulent

15b. Please feel free to provide any comments or context to your responses below.

SECTION TWO – CAREER EXPECTATIONS The following are 9 statements that describe individuals' expectations of the organizations that employ them. Please indicate the extent of your agreement or disagreement with the following statements. There will be a text entry option at the end of this section to offer any additional comments or context to your responses.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
16. I rely on my employer to train me on the skills I need to do my job					

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
17. I rely on myself to seek out/obtain the skills I need to do my job					

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
18. I rely on my organization to offer me opportunities to advance in my career					

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
19. I rely on myself to find opportunities to advance in my career					

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
20. I am driven by my own definition of success					

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
21. I am driven by my organization's definition of success					

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
22. I navigate my career based on my own priorities instead of my employer's priorities					

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
23. I expect my organization to outline and direct my professional goals					

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
24. I set my own challenging professional goals (outside of those set by my organization)					

25. Please feel free to provide any additional comments or context relating to your responses to this section below.

SECTION THREE - BACKGROUND VARIABLES The following section will ask 10 questions to gather some personal information that will help us analyze the data in a variety of ways to explore whether certain transitions are more likely for different populations. Please complete the following demographic information. Remember all your answers are confidential and represented in the data collection only in the aggregate. there is an open text entry box for comments at the end of this section. Feel free to share any additional comments there.

26. What is your gender?
‰ Male
‰ Female

27. In what year were you born?

28. What is your race or ethnicity?

29. From which Terry MBA Program did you graduate?
Full-Time, two year program
Full-Time, eleven month program
Evening, Fast-Track, or Professional
Executive

30. Prior to beginning your MBA, approximately how many years of work experience did you have?

31. Have you earned additional certifications or degrees since graduating with your MBA? Please select all that apply.
‰ Additional Master's Degree
‰ Doctoral Degree
‰ Official/Professional Certification
‰ Regular participation in training & development classes
‰ Other _____

32. What is your current employment status? (Check all that apply.)
‰ Self-employed full-time
‰ Self-employed part-time
‰ Employed full-time by another individual or organization
‰ Employed part-time by another individual or organization
‰ Unemployed, seeking work
‰ Unemployed but not seeking work
‰ Retired
‰ Other _____

33. If employed, Please provide a general title and brief description of your work. (e.g. management consultant leading healthcare projects for a multi-national consulting company; or business analyst managing revenue and profitability for a $25 million privately held business)

34. What is your approximate annual income?
$50,000 - $75,000
$75,001 - $125,000
$125,001 - $175,000
$175,001 - $225,000
$225,001 - $275,000
Above $275,000
  Other. Please provide any comments below. _____

35. Approximately how many years ago did you graduate from Business School?

36. Please offer any additional comments or context you would care to share in the space provided below.

APPENDIX B

Career Continuum Assessment

Question #	Conventional	Least True For Me		Neutral	Most True For Me		Contemporary
1	I feel tremendous loyalty to this organization	1	2	3	4	5	I feel no tremendous loyalty toward any one organization.
2	I really care about the fate of this organization.	1	2	3	4	5	The fate of this organization means very little to me.
3	I am willing to put forth great effort to help this organization be successful.	1	2	3	4	5	I am willing to put forth great effort toward work that serves a greater purpose than simply meeting business objectives.
4	Working in a position that offers exceptionally secure work is more important to me than working in a less secure job for more money.	1	2	3	4	5	Working in a position that pays a lot of money is more important to me than working in a more secure but lesser paying position.
5	This organization really inspires the very best in me	1	2	3	4	5	I am most driven by the personal satisfaction I feel by doing my very best work.
6	I am open to relocating to wherever my organization needs me.	1	2	3	4	5	Working in a very specific geographic location is very important to me.
7	I enjoy working consistently with the same group of colleagues	1	2	3	4	5	I enjoy working with a wide variety of people from different departments or organizations.
8	My employer is responsible for training me on the skills I need for my professional development	1	2	3	4	5	I am responsible for mastering the skills I need for my professional development
9	I rely on my organization to offer me new opportunities	1	2	3	4	5	I rely more upon myself than on others to land new work-related opportunities
10	I am driven almost entirely by my organization's definition of success	1	2	3	4	5	I am driven almost entirely by my own definition of success.
11	My organization's evaluation of my work is more important to me than my own evaluation of that work.	1	2	3	4	5	I evaluate my work against my own standards of quality.
12	I would be satisfied working for this organization for my entire career if offered the chance to do so.	1	2	3	4	5	I am most satisfied seeking opportunities out on my own, in this organizaton or others.
13	I feel successful whether or not my core values align with those of my organization.	1	2	3	4	5	I feel successful when I am able to align my core values and priorities with my work requirements
14	I seek out work opportunities that offer consistent, stable work.	1	2	3	4	5	I seek out work opportunities that strongly challenge my problem solving skills
15	Using my skills to advance my position within the organization is more important to me than 'making the world a better place.'	1	2	3	4	5	Using my skills to make the world a better place is more important to me than achieving a high-level position
16	I rely on my organization to offer me opportunities to learn something new.	1	2	3	4	5	I seek job opportunities that allow me to learn something new
17	I rely on my organization to come up with ways to work more effectively	1	2	3	4	5	I rely on myself to come up with ways to do my work more effectively
18	The positions available in my organization dictate my ability to be successful.	1	2	3	4	5	I'm responsible for my own success.
19	I prefer to stay in a company I'm familiar with rather than look for employment elsewhere.	1	2	3	4	5	I prefer to move around to new and different organizations
20	I prefer a job that offers me strict guidelines on how to do my work.	1	2	3	4	5	I prefer a job that offers me considerable freedom and independence in how to do my work.
21	I expect the organization to assign me the goals I need to fulfill.	1	2	3	4	5	I expect to set challenging goals for myself.
22	My ideal career would be spent with just one organization.	1	2	3	4	5	I would consider it odd to work for only one organization for my entire career
22	My chance to lead depends on the positions available to do so within my organization	1	2	3	4	5	My chance to lead depends on my ability to prove my value.
23	I feel successful when I make a real contribution toward goals of my organization.	1	2	3	4	5	I feel successful when I make a real contribution to the welfare of society
24	I seek professional development opportunities based upon my employer's needs and priorities.	1	2	3	4	5	I seek professional development opportunities based on my needs and priorities.
27	It is not my place at work to question the standards that we are expected to meet.	1	2	3	4	5	I feel most successful in my career when I am able to speak my mind openly at work.
28	I navigate my career based on my employer's priorities as opposed to my own personal priorities	1	2	3	4	5	I navigate my own career based on my personal priorities as opposed to my employer's priorities
29	What's most important to me is how my employer perceives my career success not how I perceive it.	1	2	3	4	5	What's most important to me is how I perceive my career success, not how others perceive it.
30	I prefer to be told how to go about doing my work.	1	2	3	4	5	I prefer to decide on my own how to go about doing my work.
31	I would rather participate in a work-related task that I consider inappropriate or unethical than leave the organization altogether.	1	2	3	4	5	I would rather leave my organization than participate in a work-related task that I consider inappropriate or unethical

APPENDIX C

Impact of Career Transitions

Some changes that occur within one's career are minor, others are major. Below you will see a list of frequently experienced career transitions. **Please rate each statement in terms of its impact on you by circling a number to its right**: (*1) indicates a very low impact; (5) indicates a very high impact*.

(1) VERY LOW IMPACT (2) LOW IMPACT (3) MODERATE IMPACT (4) HIGH IMPACT (5) VERY HIGH IMPACT

CAREER TRANSITION	RATING Low to High
1. Accepting a promotion	1 2 3 4 5
2. Declining a promotion	1 2 3 4 5
3. Accepting a lateral position	1 2 3 4 5
4. Relocating for a better position (within the same organization)	1 2 3 4 5
5. Relocating for a new position (in a NEW organization)	1 2 3 4 5
6. Accepting a lower paying job in the same organization	1 2 3 4 5
7. Accepting a lateral position in a NEW organization	1 2 3 4 5
8. Accepting a better job (promotion) in a NEW organization	1 2 3 4 5
9. Accepting a lower paying job in a NEW organization	1 2 3 4 5
10. Changing industries, functions or professions to advance your career (e.g. move from a career in journalism to a career in business, job in sales to job in management)	1 2 3 4 5
11. Taking on new responsibilities with no change in title/salary	1 2 3 4 5
12. Leaving a full-time position to take a part-time position – *voluntarily*	1 2 3 4 5
13. Leaving a full-time position to take a part-time position – *involuntarily*	1 2 3 4 5
14. Losing a full-time permanent job as the result of layoff or downsizing	1 2 3 4 5
15. Losing a full-time permanent job as the result of poor performance (getting "fired")	1 2 3 4 5
16. Leaving the workforce entirely (e.g. to care for loved one or return to school)	1 2 3 4 5
17. Starting your own business	1 2 3 4 5

The list of questions below will ask about your specific career transitions. By filling in the blanks *please indicate how many times since you graduated from college you have …*

TRANSITION	NUMBER OF TIMES
1. Changed employers -	_____ times
2. Accepted a promotion -	_____ times
3. Declined a promotion -	_____ times
4. Accepted a lateral position within the same organization - - - -	_____ times
5. Accepted a lateral position at a new organization - - - - - - - - - -	_____ times
6. Relocated for a position within the same organization - - - - - -	_____ times
7. Relocated for a new job in a new organization - - - - - - - - - - - -	_____ times
8. Sought or accepted a lower paying job in the same organization	_____ times
9. Sought or accepted a lower paying job in a new organization - -	_____ times
10. Changed industries, functions or professions - - - - - - - - - - - - -	_____ times
11. Taken on new responsibilities with no change in title or salary	_____ times
12. Left a full-time job to take a part-time job, *voluntarily* - - - - -	_____ times
13. Left a full-time job to take a part-time job, *involuntarily* - - - -	_____ times
14. Lost a job as the result of layoff or downsizing - - - - - - - - - - - -	_____ times
15. Lost a job as the result of poor performance (got "fired") - - - -	_____ times
16. Left the workforce entirely -	_____ times
17. Started a business -	_____ times

The data gathered from this survey will not be reported in a study. It will be used only to develop an instrument for a future study. If you have any questions or concerns please email pzettek@uga.edu .

Thank you for your participation!

APPENDIX D

TRANSITION ITEM FREQUENCIES

	1a Promo same orga	2a Promo Different	3a Lateral	4a Relocated
J Valid	206	20f3	206	206
Missing	0	0	0	0
Mean	2.170	1.039	.985	.825
Meclian	2.000	.000	.000	.000
Stcl. Deviation	-1.6632	-1.4678	'1.3306	1.4309

5a Demotion	fIEW6 Additional Respons	7a Ct1angecl professions	8aLeft PTfor FT	9a Left FT for PT
206	206	206	206	206
0	0	0	0	0
.117	2.5728	.879	.165	.126
.000	2.0000	.000	.000	.000
.4998	2.50308	1.3578	.6998	.4875

10a Layoff	11a Firecl	12a Entrep. Plus FT	13a Entrep Insteacl of FT	-14a Left workforce
206	206	206	206	206
0	0	0	0	0
.340	.039	.864	.316	.209
.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
.1271	.2766	2.3166	.9690	.6478

APPENDIX E

Impact of Career Transitions

Some changes that occur within one's career are minor, others are major. Below you will see a list of frequently experienced career transitions. **Please rate each statement in terms of its impact on you by circling a number to its right**: (*1) indicates a very low impact; (5) indicates a very high impact*.

(1) VERY LOW IMPACT (2) LOW IMPACT (3) MODERATE IMPACT (4) HIGH IMPACT (5) VERY HIGH IMPACT

CAREER TRANSITION	RATING Low to High
1. Accepting a promotion -	1 2 3 4 5
2. Declining a promotion -	1 2 3 4 5
3. Accepting a lateral position -	1 2 3 4 5
4. Relocating for a position -	1 2 3 4 5
5. Accepting a lower paying job or demotion -	1 2 3 4 5
6. Losing a full-time permanent job as the result of layoff or downsizing - - - - -	1 2 3 4 5
7. Losing a full-time permanent job because of poor performance ("fired") - - -	1 2 3 4 5
8. Leaving the workforce entirely (e.g. to care for loved one/return to school)	1 2 3 4 5
9. Taking on new responsibilities with no change in title/salary - - - - - - - - - - -	1 2 3 4 5
10. Changing industries, functions or professions (e.g. move from a career in journalism to a career in business, job in sales to job in management) - - - - -	1 2 3 4 5
11. Leaving a full-time position to take a part-time position - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -	1 2 3 4 5
12. Starting your own business -	1 2 3 4 5

Frequency of Career Transitions

The list of questions below will ask about your specific career transitions. By filling in the *blanks please indicate how many times **in the last five years** you have…*

CAREER TRANSITION	NUMBER OF TIMES
13. Accepted a promotion -	_____ times
14. Declined a promotion -	_____ times
15. Accepted a lateral position - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -	_____ times
16. Relocated for a position -	_____ times
17. Accepted a lower paying job - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -	_____ times
18. Taken on new responsibilities - no new title/salary - - -	_____ times
19. Changed industries, functions or professions - - - - - - -	_____ times
20. Left a full-time job to take a part-time job - - - - - - - - -	_____ times
21. Lost a job due to layoff or downsizing - - - - - - - - - - - -	_____ times
22. Lost a job for poor performance ("got fired") - - - - - - -	_____ times
23. Left the workforce entirely -	_____ times
24. Started a business -	_____ times

Career Preferences

The following are statements regarding your career preferences. Please rate each statement in terms of its truth for you by circling a number:

(*1*) indicates least true for you; (5) indicates most true for you.

CAREER PREFERENCE	RATING Least True - Most True
25. I feel tremendous loyalty to organizations in general - - - - - - - - -	1 2 3 4 5
26. My employer should train me on the skills I need to do my job - - - -	1 2 3 4 5
27. I am responsible for learning the skills I need to do my job - - - - - - -	1 2 3 4 5
28. I rely on my organization to offer me opportunities to advance - - - -	1 2 3 4 5
29. I rely on my own ability to find opportunities to advance - - - - - - - - -	1 2 3 4 5
30. I am driven by my own definition of success - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -	1 2 3 4 5
31. I navigate my career based on my own priorities instead of my employer's priorities -- - -	1 2 3 4 5
32. I feel successful when I make a real contribution to the welfare of society -	1 2 3 4 5
33. I expect my organization to assign me the goals I need to fulfill - - -	1 2 3 4 5
34. I expect to set challenging goals for myself - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -	1 2 3 4 5

Demographics

PERSONAL INFORMATION	Selection
35. Gender	Selected response
36. Marital Status	Selected response
37. Job title	Open response
38. How would you describe your career goals or ambition?	Open response
39. Salary range	Selected response
40. Age range	Selected response
41. Mobility preference	Selected response
42. Career support of employer	Selected response
43. General work environment	Selected response
44. Overall, which of the following best describes your view of your career?	Selected Response
45. How would describe the career transitions you have experienced in your career?	Open Response

If you have any questions or concerns please email pzettek@uga.edu .

Thank you for your participation!

APPENDIX F

5

Dear _____

You have been selected as a graduate of UGA's MBA Program to participate in a study that explores MBA career patterns. I work in our MBA Career Management Center, and your responses will help me market the Terry MBA program to employers who target MBA talent, and help satisfy the requirements of my doctoral degree. This online survey will take about 10 minutes to complete and all responses are confidential. The data collected will be used only in the aggregate.

By participating in this study you are helping shape the future of the UGA MBA Program. Please give me 10 minutes of your time now, or in the near future, to support your alma mater. The survey will expire on December 31, 2015. Your participation is enthusiastically encouraged, but completely voluntary. I personally guarantee the confidentiality of your responses. For further research consent details see below.

Click <u>HERE</u> to take the survey.

The Terry MBA Program and I truly appreciate your consideration. I would be happy to share the results of this study with you if you are interested. To request a summary report to be sent to you via email click HERE.

Sincerely,
Patti

As a participant in this study, you will complete an online survey that includes 50 questions about your career since business school. There are no anticipated risks to you as the result of your participation. Your participation is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without penalty, or skip any questions that you feel uncomfortable answering. It should take approximately 10 minutes to complete the online questionnaire. All of your responses will be confidential and will not be associated with your name or email address.

It is important that I notify you of the following: Internet communications are by nature, somewhat insecure and there is a limit to the confidentiality that can be guaranteed due to the technology itself. However, once the completed survey is received by the researcher, sound, standard confidentiality procedures will be followed, and only summary data will be reported. In addition, given that communication via the Internet is more risky in regards to privacy, if you prefer, you can request a hard copy of the survey instrument to complete by hand, and submit via fax or US mail to the address above.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to ask now or at a later date. You may contact Patti Zettek, Study Director, at 706-542-2070 or Pzettk@uga.edu. Thank you for your participation!

Patricia D. Zettek
Terry College of Business ❘ MBA Career Management Center
office 706.542.2070 ❘ mobile 706.255.2622 ❘ pzettek@uga.edu

Take a look at our current student profiles: http://www.terry.uga.edu/recruitmbas/

APPENDIX G

Dear Esteemed Scholars,

I am writing today at the recommendation of my major professor, Wendy Ruona, to ask your assistance in reviewing the questionnaire I have designed for my dissertation study. This study will investigate the career patterns of MBA alumni to explore a concept I call Career Turbulence, defined loosely as the frequency and impact of career transitions experienced by the career agent.

This LINK will take you to the questionnaire I propose for the study. As experts in this field your feedback would be tremendously valuable. The things listed below are of particular interest. Of course, if you have recommendations outside of these few things I welcome them unconditionally.

1. The overall flow and format of the questionnaire; is it workable and user-friendly?
2. The construction of the items; are any unclear, superfluous, or missing?
3. The background information section; are there any traits or factors you might be interested in adding?

If you are willing to review this questionnaire, I'd like to schedule an appointment with you for a brief 10-15 minute conversation to hear your feedback. Please reply to this message to let me know a few times that might be convenient for you. If a phone call is asking too much, a reply email to this e-mail address with comments on questions above would be equally appreciated, and just as helpful.

Thank you in advance for your valuable consideration.

Truly,
Patti

Patricia D. Zettek
Doctoral Candidate | University of Georgia |
Adult Education, Learning, and Organizational Development
office 706.542.2070 | mobile 706.255.2622 | pzettek@uga.edu