

Satisfaction and Bridge Employment

The Role of the Financial Situation and Health

Marie-Eve Dufour*, Ph.D, Tania Saba, Ph.D

Faculty of Business Administration, Laval University, Quebec, Canada*; School of Industrial Relations, University of Montreal, Montreal, Canada

e-mail: Marie-Eve.Dufour@fsa.ulaval.ca, Tania.Saba@umontreal.ca

Abstract

With the retirement of the first generations of Baby boomers, additional pressure is applied on the various established pension plans, the labour market and the economy in general, to the point that some countries need to review the social protection systems (OECD, 2015). As many industrialized countries, Canada plans to gradually delay the age of eligibility to the public retirement plans to 67, starting in 2023. Consequently, facing the aging workforce, many studies are dedicated to public policies and human resources challenges and practices aimed at older workers retention (i.e. Saba 2014). In parallel, bridge employment is growing in popularity, defining new life courses. In the province of Quebec, recent surveys while revealing a positive perception of retirement, also anticipate a financially based consideration for wealthy workers to undertake bridge employment (i.e. Baghai, Dufétel, Généreux, & Morin, 2012; Mercer, 2015). In this context, research on retirees' post-career activities and their adaptation is becoming increasingly important (Zhan & Wang, 2015).

Bridge employment is defined as a pattern of employment for older workers as they leave their career jobs and move toward complete labor force withdrawal (Schultz, 2003). It can take various forms including full-time and part-time jobs, self-employment, temporary employment or contract employment. Retirees engage themselves in bridge employment to provide extra-income if they do not have enough pension income or savings for their later years, to help balance work and leisure time while remaining engaged economically and socially in productive activities or contribute to the well-being of individuals and their families (Wang, Zhan, Liu, & Schultz, 2008). Bridge employment is part of the broader concept of the intention to continue working (ICW), which refers to the willingness of midlife or older adults to participate in the labor force in any observable work arrangement as long as possible (Kanfer, Beier, & Ackerman, 2013; Schalk & Desmette, 2015; Templer, Armstrong-Stassen, & Cattaneo, 2010). Today, retirement is no more viewed as a one-time permanent exit from a career job, but as a process that occurs over a period of time, which may involve moving in and out of employment time to time after officially retiring (Beehr, 1986). It would be wrong to believe that all workers have the intention of

continuing to contribute actively in the labor market (Kanfer et al. 2013; Kooij, 2010). Based on continuity theory (Atchley, 1989; Beehr, 2014), our research is looking at some factors influencing work activities after retirement.

Three research trends seem to have emerged from previous studies on retirement and return to work: early retirement and its explanatory factors (i.e. Adams, Prescher, Beehr, & Lepisto, 2002; Zappala, Depolo, Fraccaroli, & Guglielmi, 2008, Kubicek, Korunka, Hoonakker, & Raymo, 2010), desire to continue working (which includes bridge employment) and its explanatory factors (i.e., Armstrong-Stassen & Schlosser, 2011; Ng & Feldman, 2009, Templer et al., 2010; Topa, Alcover, Moriano, & Depolo, 2014; Zhan, Wang, & Yao, 2013), and consequences of bridge employment (i.e. Dingemans & Henkens, 2014). Most studies that have focused on bridge employment's explanatory factors looked at the direct influence of individual characteristics or attitudes, such as age, health, finances, level of education, career attachment, job satisfaction or work stress to name just a few (i.e. D'Amato & Herzfeldt, 2008; Kim & Feldman, 2000; Kooij, 2010; Ng & Feldman, 2009; Topa et al., 2014; Zhan et al., 2013). Retirement is a complex decision and research should also explore the joint effects of multiple factors (Wang & Schultz, 2010; Zhan et al., 2013). The only exception, to our knowledge, is the study by Gobeski and Beehr (2009). Therefore, as suggested by Barnes-Farrell (2003), Gobeski and Beehr (2009), and Zhan et al. (2013), our research focuses on the joint effect of satisfaction (work satisfaction and career satisfaction), perception of health, and perception of financial situation at retirement in the explanation of bridge employment.

A questionnaire (50 questions) was administered by mail in 2014 to Francophone retired Health-Care Workers of the province of Quebec (N=8697). 3533 questionnaires were returned. Of these, 3473 were deemed usable, for a response rate of 39.93%. The average age of respondents was 66.29 years old. The average retirement age was 57.5 years old. The sample included a high proportion of women (92.2%). 66.6% of respondents hold a college or bachelor's degree, diplomas leading to jobs in the health-care sector in the province of Quebec. A high proportion of respondents held full-time jobs (67.2%) before retirement. The average labour market tenure was 34.99 years, and the one in the last job before retirement was 25.39 years. Before retirement, 84.4% of respondents held professional positions and 96.9% were unionized. 55.2% of respondents returned or attempted to return to work after retirement. Of these 34.1% were successful after an average of 9.56 months in retirement.

Our paper, which is still at a developmental stage, will be one of the first to examine the joint effects of several factors in explaining bridge employment. While the financial situation is widely seen as one of the main reasons to undertake bridge employment, it appears that other factors seem to play a more important role for our respondents. The return to work seeming more a matter of choice, our study focuses on the role of perception of the financial situation in its explanation. In this study, we postulate that influences of perception of health and financial situation are based more on their joint effects with other factors, rather than of direct impacts. We pursue a more

thorough and precise understanding of older workers behavior in a hope to identify managerial practices contributing to their retention.

References

- Adams, G.A., Prescher, J., Beehr, T.A. and Lepisto, L. (2002), "Applying work-role attachment theory to retirement decision-making", *International Journal of Aging and Human Development*, Vol. 54, pp: 125-137.
- Armstrong-Stassen, M. and Schlosser, F. (2011), "Perceived organizational membership and the retention of older workers", *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 32, pp: 319-344.
- Atchley, R.C. (1989), "A continuity theory of normal aging", *The Gerontologist*, Vol. 29, pp: 183-190.
- Baghai, P., Dufétel, C., Généreux, C. and Morin, F. (2012), "*Les Canadiens sont-ils prêts pour la retraite?*". McKinsey & Company.
- Barnes-Farrell, J.L. (2003), "Beyond health and wealth: Attitudinal and other influences on retirement decision-making", In G.A. Adams and T.A. Beehr (Eds), *Retirement: Reasons, processes, and results*. New York: Springer, pp: 159-187.
- Beehr, T.A. (1986), "The process of retirement: A review and recommendations for future investigation", *Personnel Psychology*, Vol. 39, pp: 31-55.
- Beehr, T.A. (2014), "Ro retire or not to retire: That is not the question", *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 35, pp: 1093-1108.
- D'Amato, A. and Herzfeldt, R. (2008), "Learning orientation, organizational commitment and talent retention across generations. A study of European managers", *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, Vol. 23, pp: 929-953.
- Dingemans, E. and Henkens, K. (2014), "Involuntary retirement, bridge employment, and satisfaction with life: A longitudinal investigation", *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 35, pp: 575-591.
- Gobeski, K.T. and Beehr, T.A. (2009), "How retirees work: Predictors of different types of bridge employment", *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 30, pp: 401-425.
- Kanfer, R., Beier, M.E. and Ackerman, P.L. (2013), "Goals and motivation related to work in later adulthood: An organizing framework", *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, Vol. 22, pp: 253-264.
- Kim, S. and Feldman, D.C. (2000), "Working in retirement: The antecedents of bridge employment and its consequences for quality of life in retirement", *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 43, pp: 1195-1210.

- Kooij, D. (2010), “*Motivating older workers. A lifespan perspective on the role of perceived HR practices*”. Ridderkerk, The Netherlands: Ridderprint.
- Kubicek, B., Korunka, C., Hoonakker, P. and Raymo, J.M. (2010), “Work and family characteristics as predictors of early retirement in married men and woman”, *Research on Aging*, Vol. 32, pp: 467-498.
- OECD (2015). “*Pensions at a Glance 2015: OECD and G20 indicators*”, Paris: OECD Publishing.
- Mercer (2015). “*Inside Employees. Minds*”, retrieved at www.mercer.ca
- Ng, T.W.H. and Feldman, D.C. (2009), “Re-examining the relationship between age and voluntary turnover”, *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 74, pp: 283-294.
- Saba, T. (2014), “Promoting Active Aging: The Canadian Experience of Bridge Employment”. In Alcover, C.M., Topa Cantisano, G., Depolo, M., Fraccaroli, F. and Parry, E. (Eds). *Research Handbook in Bridge Employment*, London: Routledge, pp: 216-235.
- Schalk, R. and Desmette, D. (2015), “Intentions to continue working and its predictor”, In Bal, P.M., Kooij, D.T.A.M. and Rousseau, D.M. (Eds). *Aging workers and the employee-employer relationship*, New York: Springer, pp: 187-202.
- Schultz, K.S. (2003), “Bridge employment: Work after retirement”, In G.A. Adams and T.A. Beehr (Eds.). *Retirement: Reasons, Processes, and Results*, New York: Springer.
- Templer, A., Armstrong-Stassen, M. and Cattaneo, J. (2010), “Antecedents of older workers’ motives for continuing to work”, *Career Development International*, Vol. 15, pp: 479-500.
- Topa, G., Alcover, C.-M., Moriano, J.A. and Depolo, M. (2014), “Bridge employment quality and its impact on retirement adjustment: A structural equation model with SHARE panel data”, *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, Vol. 35, pp: 225-244.
- Wang, M. and Shultz, K. (2010), “Employee retirement: A review and recommendations for future investigation”, *Journal of Management*, Vol. 36, pp: 172-206.
- Wang, M., Zhan, Y., Liu, S. and Schultz, K.S. (2008), “Antecedents of Bridge Employment: A longitudinal investigation”, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 93, pp: 818-830.
- Zappala, S., Depolo, M., Fraccaroli, F. and Guglielmi, D. (2008), “Postponing job retirement? Psychological influences in the performance for early or late retirement”, *Career Development International*, Vol. 13, pp: 150-167.
- Zhan, Y., Shi, J., & Wang, M. (2015), “Retirees’ motivational orientations and bridge employment: Testing the moderating role of gender”, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 100, pp. 1319-1331.

Zhan, Y., Wang, M. and Yao, X. (2013), "Domain specific effects of commitment on bridge employment decisions: The moderating role of economic stress", *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, Vol. 22, pp: 362-375.