

The Systemic Perspective Approach (SPA) –
A Multi-Cultural Model for Workplace Counselling
in the Singapore Context

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Doctor of Professional Studies (Practice Research)

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CERTIFICATION OF DISSERTATION

I declare that the work presented in the thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original and my own work, except as acknowledged in the text, and that the material has not been submitted, either in whole or in part, for a degree at this or any other university.

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29 JULY 2015

Signature of Candidate

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ENDORSEMENT

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Signature of Supervisor/s

Date

DEDICATION

To my grandparents

Dr Denis Paul McIntyre and Gloria McIntyre

For their belief and love

To my parents

Jeffrey and Amy Fong

For their care and concern

Kate Van der Beld

Who journeyed my life with me

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Abstract

Organisations today face the challenge of managing the expectations of a culturally diverse workforce as a result of globalisation. Singaporean organisations, both governmental and private, face the same challenge due to the prevailing influx of foreign talents and transnational migrant workers in the last decade. There is a growing need to consider both diversity and multi-cultural issues in the workplace to ensure an effective management of their culturally diverse workforce. Multi-cultural and diversity issues when not aligned with workplace norms and culture may lead to interpersonal conflicts, challenges in adjusting to organisational culture, poor work performances and maligned communication styles. Organisations are turning to workplace counsellors and Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to support their employees in mitigating these issues so as to improve corporate organisational behaviour (OB) initiatives like employee engagement, motivation and work performance.

Counselling in the context of multi-culturalism needs to consider not just ethnic and cultural factors but diversity issues such as age, gender, ability, religion, language, socio-economic status and issues, political factors, sexual orientation and the global environment. Both the client and the counsellor bring their unique personal cultural identities into the counselling process. Since one's personal cultural identity is influenced and shaped by these cultural and diversity issues, the counselling process is a multi-cultural interaction. In order to develop more effective therapeutic alliance with culturally diverse clients, counsellors then need to consider multi-cultural competencies as part of their core professional competencies. A multi-cultural approach would enable practitioners to be more culturally sensitive by becoming aware of their faulty assumptions, stereotyping tendencies, biases and prejudices, and adopt more culturally appropriate interventions as existing western-style therapeutic approaches may not be adequately contextualised for application in non-western contexts.

In this thesis, the Systemic Perspective Approach (SPA), considers both culture and diversity issues framed by its eight dimensions that include physical, mindset, affect, philosophy, ethnicity, social, political/economics and globalisation. Each of these dimensions of the workplace system is undergirded by their own defined values, beliefs, norms and culture (VBNC). The SPA model explores how each dimension of the system may inter-relate with each other and their underlying VBNC's within the context of a

problem experienced by the client being counselled. In this regard, the SPA model helps provide a multi-dimensional and holistic framework for counselling and also a framework to help develop awareness, knowledge and skills related to multi-cultural competencies. It is proposed to have significant practice value in an increasingly cultural diverse workplace.

This study investigates the SPA model as applied to the “Dads for Life” survey project sponsored by the Singapore Government. The programme was implemented across organisations nationally and yielded valid responses to the survey. Multi-variate statistical analysis was conducted to (a) determine the validity and reliability of the survey instrument and items and (b) to determine the relationships between variables relevant to the Singapore workforce. The conceptual model underpinning this study classified the eight dimensions as independent variables. The VBNCs of each dimension was then classified as dependent variables and justified by existing theory. The findings of this statistical analysis research demonstrated the statistical significance of the relationships between the independent and dependent variables (eight dimensions and the VBNCs). The findings support the applicability of the model within the workplace counselling context and is a valid and reliable instrument for measurement of the dimension / VBNC constructs. Numerous limitations of the study are addressed including the need for further validation of the model. Future research is suggested to further develop the potential of this model to contribute in areas of policy development, human resources management, social services sector improvement and most of all, in support of professional advocacy.

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¹ 'Strongly Agree' & 'Agree' variables

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Multi-cultural counselling has been generally used to describe as any counselling relationship in which “the counsellor and the client belong to different cultural groups, hold different assumptions about social reality, and subscribe to different worldviews” (Das, 1995, p. 45). Vontress (1998), a pioneering scholar in multi-cultural counselling, defines it as “counselling in which the counsellor and client are culturally different because of socialisation acquired in distinct cultural, subcultural, racial-ethnic, or socioeconomic environments” (p. 74).

The phenomenon of rapid globalisation, growing internationalisation of businesses, together with significant technological advances and the rising influence of the Internet and social media, have contributed to unprecedented connectivity in the world we live in today. In our increasingly borderless, highly interconnected globalised world, there are massive and rapid movements of people across geographical borders for different purposes such as work, education, retirement, immigration, family, marriage, as well as other political and economic reasons. This has led to increasing cultural diversity within nations, as well as a rising trend in inter-cultural marriages across the globe. These are but only some of the factors that contribute to increasing complexity in understanding issues of diversity, ethnicity, multi-culturalism and multi-cultural identities.

Multi-culturalism has been a highly controversial concept, that has been much debated and studied in the academic realm, ranging from social science disciplines like sociology (Hall, 2000), anthropology (Vertovec, 2007) to political philosophy (Taylor, 1992; Kymlicka, 2010) and as well as psychology (Berry, 2011; Fowers & Richardson, 1996) and social psychology (Chryssochoou, 2004; Crisp & Turner, 2010). Each discipline brings its own unique perspectives, insights and critique to the concept of multi-culturalism. For example, as a political discourse, the major controversy over the ideology of multi-culturalism is whether it represents a genuine commitment to greater equality through the appreciation of socio-cultural differences

or is it a means of political control, rationalising oppression and the perpetuation of inequality by categorising people within racial/ethnic groups, through promoting tolerance & limiting the access to resources and privileges based on group rights (Benhabib, 2002; Kymlicka, 2010; Sen, 2006).

Then from a cross-cultural psychology perspective, multi-culturalism has been described as the “acceptance of, and support for, the culturally heterogeneous composition of the population of a society” (Van de Vijver, Breugelmans & Schalk-Soekar, 2008, p. 93). However, such a definition is limited in scope because multi-culturalism is more than demographic issues, acculturation strategies and intercultural interaction (Berry 1997, 2008 & 2011). Definitions and perspectives of multi-culturalism vary according to the different academic fields and the contexts where it is used. There is a need to clarify the use of the concept in relation to this study. Chapter 2 will critically discuss the notion of multi-culturalism, as well as clarify the definition of this key foundational concept of the study.

To define multi-culturalism meaningfully for its use in this study, there is a need to move away from the populist and ideological understanding of the term. As a neutral descriptive term, multi-culturalism has been used to describe the co-existence of many culturally diverse ethnic groups, where socio-cultural differences are recognized in a state, society or community. However, multi-culturalism needs to be defined and understood in the context of counselling for it to make sense to this work.

For the purpose of this study, the definition of multi-culturalism in the context of counselling is most aptly defined as the process of understanding how dimensions of cultural diversity such as ethnicity, culture, values, beliefs, norms, attitudes, behaviours communicative styles; together with contextual and systemic factors like age, gender, ability, religion, language, socio-economic status, political factors, sexual orientation and the global environment, influence the counselling process, and the relationship between the counsellor and the client (Arredondo et al., 1996; Collins and Arthur, 2007, 2010a, 2010b & 2010c; Pedersen, 2001).

Counselling in the context of multi-culturalism needs to consider not just ethnic and cultural factors but also consider wider diversity issues, as well as the contexts and systems that the client is embedded in. This calls for counsellors to adopt a systemic

and multi-dimensional approach towards assessing “the salience of a wide range of potential cultural and personal identity factors to the client’s presenting concerns” (Collins & Arthur 2010a, p. 206). Both the client and the counsellor bring their unique personal cultural identities into the counselling process. A person’s identity is shaped by many contextual factors such as one’s family, ethnicity, social, economic, political background, as well as even biological and personality factors. The term “personal cultural identity” used in this study refers to understanding one’s identity from all these different dimensions through the lens of culture. Since one’s personal cultural identity is influenced and shaped by these cultural and diversity issues, the counselling process is a multi-cultural interaction (Collins & Arthur, 2007, 2010a, 2010b; Pedersen, 1990; Sue, Ivey & Pedersen, 1996).

Paul Pedersen (1997), an authority in multi-cultural psychology proposed that multi-culturalism has become a powerful “fourth force” in psychology. It complements the other three major psychological forces of psychodynamic, behavioural, and humanistic perspectives, by emphasising on the cultural dimension in understanding human behaviour. Since “to some extent all mental health counselling is multi-cultural” (Pedersen, 1990, p. 94), he suggests “the possibility that we are moving toward a generic theory of multi-culturalism that recognizes the psychological consequences of each cultural context, where each behavior has been learned and is displayed ... and calls attention to the way in which a culture-centered perspective has changed the way we look at psychology across fields and theories” (Pedersen, 1999, p. xxii).

Adopting such a cultural perspective to counselling, the concept of “multi-cultural counselling and therapy” is defined as a helping role that uses culturally appropriate modalities and defined goals that are aligned with the cultural values and life experiences of clients (Sue, Arrendondo, & McDavis, 1992; Sue et al., 1996). Therefore, the term “multi-cultural counselling” in this study is used to refer to such an approach to counselling that emphasises on the cultural dimension to understanding human behaviour, in the mitigation of therapeutic relationship, as well as its impact in the treatment process and intervention in the context of counselling. Chapter 2 will discuss at greater depth the field of multi-cultural counselling, that is a foundational concept to this study.

In this study, the multi-cultural perspective to counseling proposed takes a broader definition of culture than its narrow definition. A narrow definition of culture is limited to issues related to race, ethnicity and nationality. A broader definition would include contextual factors that surround the contexts that we live and engage in. Contextual factors would include “any and all potentially salient ethnographic, demographic, status, or affiliation identities” (Pedersen, 1999, p. 3). The ways we identify ourselves do influence the way we perceive ourselves and so could also be considered as part of culture. Examples of contextual factors are like language, gender, ethnicity/race, spirituality, sexual preference, age, physical issues, socioeconomic status etc.

A contextual approach to the understanding of multi-culturalism emphasises not just on differences in ethnic categories but also “the unique set of values, beliefs, norms, cultures, customs, practices, traditions and historical narratives, communication styles surrounding ethnic identities” (Sanchez, Shih & Wilton, 2014, p. 7). There is a tendency for racial and ethnic identities to overlap. While multi-racial identities describe people belonging to more than one racial category, multi-cultural identities describe people belonging to more than one ethnic or multiple ethnic groups. With increased cultural diversity within nations, individuals may find themselves with multiple cultural identities as they live within in a national, racial and ethnic context. For example, a Chinese-Asian American navigates an American cultural identity, an Asian racial identity, as well as having China and Dalian ethnic identities.

Likewise in Singapore, no assumptions can be made of the Singaporean Chinese as one homogeneous cultural identity. Although the Singapore Chinese are ethnically the same, they are culturally diverse. The Singaporean Chinese being the predominant racial group in Singapore is historically made up of immigrants from different provinces and districts in Southern China, each with their unique lingua franca and folk culture and traditions. Although the Peranakans belong to the ethnic Chinese group, they are culturally and linguistically different from the other Chinese.

The Peranakans, also known as Babas-Nyonya refers to those of Chinese descent who settled in the Malay Archipelago from the 15th to the 17th century. Most have inter-married with the native Malays and developed their own cultural identities and colloquialism as distinct from later Chinese settlers. As a result of the inter-marriages, the Peranakan culture is a unique hybrid of Chinese and Malay cultures.

Therefore the customs, practices and values of the Chinese Peranakan would differ significantly from the Chinese of other ethnic dialect groups in Singapore. According to Chu (2014), the assumption of internal homogeneity within Singapore's broad racial categories' may not be an accurate representation of the diversity represented within them. For example, although the Chinese are often seen as homogenous, there are as many as 54 ethnicities in Mainland China (Zhang, 2009). Depending on where the early Chinese settlers in Singapore are from, their decedents would speak different dialects, share different habits, customs and cultures. Likewise, the Indians in Singapore are also ethnically diverse (Rai, 2009). Hence, in Singapore, there is a need to consider ethnic differences and how they contribute to cultural diversity in the nation. So for example, the cultural identity of a Singaporean could include a Singaporean national identity, a Chinese racial identity and a Peranakan ethnic identity.

The implication is that if understanding the cultural identity of client needs to take into account broader contextual factors, this paradigm shift would require counsellors to include multi-cultural counselling competencies as part of professional competencies since all interactions are at some level, multi-cultural in nature (Laungani, 1997; Pedersen, 2001 and Sue et al., 1992) and "the relationship forms the center of the treatment" (Roysircar, Hubbell & Gard, 2003; Patterson, 1996). Meissner (2006) suggests that effective therapeutic outcomes are dependent on the effective negotiation of personal and cultural relevance in the therapeutic relationship. A culture-infused counselling approach that centres on the importance of cultivating a culturally-sensitive working alliance has become increasingly needful when working with culturally diverse clients (Collins & Arthur, 2007, 2010a, 2010b & 2010c).

In light of these developments in multi-cultural counselling, as well as the intensifying of cultural diversity due to the impact of globalization, this study hopes to provide a systemic and multi-dimensional framework as a model that would add-value to developing counsellors' multi-cultural competencies in working with culturally diverse clients. There is a growing necessity for counsellors to be more multi-culturally competent in workplace counselling, especially in multi-cultural Singapore due to the rapidly changing demographics caused by increased influx of transnational migrant workers into the workforce.

Singapore – affectionately known as the Little Red Dot – has been enjoying great economic success for 50 years since her independence. With help from her population of early immigrants made up of diverse nationalities and cultures, this small island nation has grown from a small, humble fishing village to a major economic hub. She has become a cosmopolitan nation renowned and respected by the international community. In the face of the global economic challenges of today, Singapore is relying on foreign talent (FT) and transnational migrant workers more than ever before for economic growth, especially in the last decade. Since 1965, multi-culturalism has become the “cornerstone of her nation-building efforts” (Chan, 2013, p. 85). She has succeeded where others may have struggled, in that her achievement is seen in using a multi-cultural national policy to “foster social cohesion and as a building block of a new nation” (Chan, 2013, p. 84). In 1965, Singapore’s population was made up of about 75% Chinese, 13% Malays, 7% Indians and 5% others. An intentional multi-cultural national policy with an emphasis on national values of meritocracy, justice and equality, prevented the majority Chinese group from dominating over the other ethnic minorities.

In those early years of Singapore’s history, such a policy was a political necessity in building a cohesive society characterized by racial harmony and social stability that is needed to attract foreign investments and investors into a nation where its main capital is in its human resources (Vasu, 2008). Social stability and security has direct impact to Singapore’s economic viability and survival among other competitive global economies. Hence, the government put in considerable efforts in maintaining her multi-culturalism national policy to ensure social cohesiveness and stability. Critics of Singapore’s multi-culturalism policy have argued it is an instrument of social control to govern the discourse on race, and suppress public discussions on racially sensitive issues (Chua, 2003).

The migrants that come to Singapore may be categorized broadly into two main groups. For the purpose of clarity of this study, the terms “foreign talent” (FT) and “transnational migrant workers” are used to describe these two groups. The migrants who are skilled workers and professionals who would come to Singapore and work in white-collar jobs are described as “foreign talent”. This group is generally economically wealthy and well educated (Yeoh & Lin, 2013; Chong, 2013). They are

usually from Western countries like the United States, United Kingdom, France, Australia and Japan. The other group termed as “transnational migrant workers” refers to the more low-skilled workers, usually in blue-collar jobs are usually from China, South-east Asia (Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand) and South Asia (Sri Lanka, India, Bangladesh) (Yeoh, 2004). The population report in 2013 showed that 59% of the non-resident workforce is low-skilled labourers (Singapore Government, 2013). Transnational migrant workers are usually involved in the construction industries, domestic labour, and also the service and manufacturing industries (Yeoh & Lin, 2012). Singapore has also been encouraging the Chinese and Indians to remain as citizens and PRs since the 1990s (Yeoh & Lin, 2012). As a result, the influx of foreign talent and transnational migrant workers into Singapore has also contributed to a rise in transcultural marriages and families.

In recent years, such rapidly changing demographics have put Singapore’s multi-cultural national policy to the test. As of 2013, 38.6% of Singapore’s population of 5.4 million is now made up of non-residents from abroad. Within the Singapore’s resident population of about 3.8 million, about 13% are migrants who attained permanent residency; while the ethnic composition of Singapore citizens consists of 74.2% Chinese, 13.3% Malay, 9.1% Indians and 3.3% others (Population Trends 2013, Department of Singapore Statistics). The rapid influx of migrants into Singapore during 2008-2010, has led to a rise in anti-migrant sentiments over the social media. On 8 Dec 2013, the riot in Little India made substantial headlines for being the first in 40 years since the island-nation’s 1969 race riots. Migrants are increasingly being blamed for the deterioration of public safety in Singapore.

Also recent backlashes against the government’s liberal immigration policies have raised a cause of concern. This was reflected by the notable budget of S\$10-million in 2009 spent for the purpose of integration (Yeoh & Lin, 2012). This time round, the government’s policy of multi-culturalism has been extended to include the integration of migrants workers, with campaigns promoting the understanding of cultural differences of migrant populations and encouraging a more culturally-sensitive and tolerant attitude towards assimilating them into Singapore society. The need for a more culturally-sensitive approach towards the migrant population has also found its way into the counselling profession.

In the last decade, there has been a trend of increasing number of transnational workers of the lower economic class, usually from the developing nations, seeking help from the local social services providers, partly funded by the Singapore government, such as the Family Service Centres and Voluntary Welfare Organisations in Singapore. They seek help for different issues ranging from marital problems, financial issues, exploitation, employment-related problems, work injuries, health issues cultural adjustment issues, abuse and family violence (Malay, 2014; Kai, Hui, Nodzenski & Bacolod, 2011; Tan, 2013). Therefore, not just counsellors, but social workers are finding themselves working with an increasing number of transnational migrant workers. These workers are fluent mainly in their native languages, which make communication challenging, on top of the cultural differences between them.

Changes in the demographics of society have definitely brought new challenges to the counselling profession in Singapore. One such challenge is the need for counsellors to be more competent in multi-cultural counselling, so they have a wider knowledge and are better equipped to be culturally sensitive as they work with a culturally diverse population both in the workplace and beyond.

1.2 Multi-Cultural Challenges and Issues in the Singapore Workplace

Globalisation has transformed our world to become highly interconnected economically, technologically, politically and culturally. Business organisations around the world, including Singapore, are also facing diversity issues due to an increasingly culturally diverse workforce. The Australian Government's department of industry's 2012-2014 report on "Workplace Diversity Strategy" provides a comprehensive explanation of diversity issues, which defines them as factors relating to "gender, age, language, ethnicity, cultural background, disability, sexual orientation or religious belief", as well as "educational level, job function, socio-economic background, personality profile, geographic location, marital status etc" (p. 4).

Workplace diversity is about respecting and acknowledging individual differences, and ways to manage them in the workplace. Where diversity issues are not managed well, they contribute and lead to multi-cultural issues and challenges. Multi-cultural issues and challenges refer specifically to conflicts, tension, communication

difficulties, negative consequences that may arise due to the lack of or neglect of cultural understanding between people. Some examples of negative consequences would include cultural biases, prejudices, stereo types, wrong assumptions and misconceptions that could lead to oppression, inequality, injustices and discrimination. These are some pertinent multi-cultural issues and challenges that have arise in the increasingly culturally diverse world that we live in. We see these issues and challenges not only in the homes, within families, but also in the schools, in workplaces, as well as in the larger society and globally. Racial, gender, sexual orientation discrimination are some examples of on-going multi-cultural issues that still exists in our culturally diverse world today.

In 2003, it is estimated that organisations spend \$8 billion annually on diversity, which by today's standard is likely to be an underestimation of the cost of diversity (Hansen, 2003). "Firms are seeing the need to hire a workforce that reflects today's diverse society, and a major competitive factor for organisations is attracting and retaining the best available human resource talent in the context of the current workforce demographic trends" (Prieto, Phipps & Osiri, 2009, p. 13). However, the relationship between cultural diversity and organisational performance is still difficult to be determined due to the mixed empirical findings (Prieto et al., 2009; Watson, Kumar & Michaelsen, 1993). Some research has also shown that cultural diversity does not necessarily lead to positive outcomes, but instead may contribute to higher conflicts, less social cohesion, disunity and higher turnover rate (Jackson & Joshi, 2004; Jayne & Diboye, 2004).

Organisations and businesses in Singapore likewise, face the daunting challenge of managing a culturally diverse workforce because of the prevailing influx of FT, and transnational migrant workers. The goal of becoming a major player in the international economy has contributed to the liberalization of immigration laws to attract FT in to the Singapore economy. Her main economic strategy has always been to invest heavily into information technology and human capital, so that she remains competitive among the global economies. The government is interested in attracting highly skilled labour and developing Singapore into the "talent capital" of the global economy (Yeoh & Lin, 2012). Increased diversity in the workforce implies

the need for more effective management of both diversity and multi-cultural issues to ensure performance and productivity of a culturally diverse workforce.

The FT and transnational migrant workers bring with them their unique life experiences, own set of values, beliefs, customs, ethnic and cultural norms that may be very different, or even conflicting with that of the host culture and that of each other. As a result, some potential diversity and multi-cultural issues that may arise in the workplace include interpersonal conflicts, microaggressions (Sue & Sue, 2010), or conflicts due to misalignment or conflict of values, beliefs, norms and culture (VBNC) with the management, with leadership styles, organisational systems and strategies, styles of communication, language barriers, difficulty in adapting to the organisational culture, culture shock and adjustment issues, as well as issues related to prejudices, discrimination, biases and even oppression. These issues may contribute to high levels of occupational stress (Pasca & Wagner, 2011).

One possible cause of these issues may likely be due to the conflict and/or misalignment of values, beliefs, norms and cultures between individuals from different cultural backgrounds, as well as between individuals and the organisation. These multi-cultural and diversity issues may negatively affect one's psychological and emotional wellbeing, which in turn may then hinder an individual's effectiveness and performance at work (Jackson & Joshi, 2004; Jayne & Diboye, 2004; Sue, 2010).

As a result, organisations are increasingly turning to workplace counselling, such as the Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs) as a means to mitigate such multi-cultural issues, as part of their diversity management strategy. By attending to the psychological and emotional wellbeing of their culturally diverse workforce, they hope it would translate into enhanced employees' motivation, positive employee engagement, productivity and improved work performance that would eventually benefit organisational mission and goals.

The blue-collar transnational migrant workers also face some unique challenges of their own. These transnational migrant workers are mainly from developing nations like China, India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam and

Cambodia. The nation is dependent upon these migrant workers to take up low-skills and low wage jobs that Singaporeans are unwilling to take up. They mainly work in the construction, marine, sanitation, landscaping, manufacturing industries and a few service industries such as catering and hospitality (Au, 2014). Leaving their homes and coming to work in Singapore, these migrant workers face various challenges that may include financial problems, exploitation, discrimination, employment-related problems, work injury, health issues, cultural adjustment issues, marital problems, abuse and family violence (Malay, 2014; Kai et al., 2011; Tan, 2013).

Many of these transnational migrant workers are also vulnerable to issues of exploitation in Singapore. Currently, Singapore offers no minimum wage for its migrant population, and minimal legal protection. There is also limited union representation for non-residents, and organised public demonstrations are illegal without government permit (Malay, 2014). Non-Profit Organisations like Healthserve and Transient Workers Count Too, seeks to provide social services and advocates for the rights of migrant workers. They use social media as a platform to raise awareness and educate the public through research work and documenting issues of exploitation and abuses suffered by migrant workers in Singapore. According to Transient Workers Count Too, one main form of exploitation is related to the “kafala system” where by the migrant worker is tied to his employer for the sake of his livelihood. “Deception, exploitation and intimidation are never far away from the employer-employee relationship, since a worker’s entire livelihood and right to stay in Singapore is contingent on obeying (Au, 2014). The lack of state’s legislation on this system leads to perpetuation abuses being inflicted on some of these migrant workers.

Also in the last decade, it is notable that there has been a surge in the number of Singaporean men beyond their 40s marrying non-resident brides from China, India, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam. According to a report on The Straits Times, “2012 saw 5,599 marriages between citizen grooms and non-resident brides - a 40 per cent jump from the 3,988 in 2002. That accounted for 20 per cent of all marriages last year, up from 17.2 per cent in 2002” (Tan & Basu, 2012). Unfortunately, there has also been an increased in the report of domestic violence and abuse from this group of non-residents. According to the Subordinate Court,

10% of personal protection order (PPO) has been filed by them between 2010 and 2013 (Tan, 2013).

With greater awareness, transnational migrant workers are turning to social service providers like Family Service Centres (FSC) and Voluntary Welfare Organisations (VWO), and Non Profit Organisations (NPO) for help. They typically provide counselling support, financial aid, help find accommodation in crisis situations, as well as advice on legal matters of immigration, divorce, housing and personal protection orders in cases of domestic abuse. Healthserve also provides affordable medical services and some family service centres provide tuition and run educational programs for children of poor migrant workers, and also pre-marital and marital counselling services. Hence, in recent years, social workers and counsellors are having to work with increasing number of transnational clients in these agencies. They have reported that communication is a challenge when helping them as they may only be fluent in their native languages (Tan, 2013).

It has been found that most counsellors in Singapore prefer to use empirically validated treatments, known as Evidence Supported Therapies (EST). Evidence Supported Therapies are therapies that have been tested so that there are scientific, empirical research evidences for their efficacy in psychological treatment. EST are validated based upon Western model of empiricism through the use of randomized control trials. This involves using a control group and an experimental group to prove their validity, reliability, and effectiveness (Chambless & Hollon, 1998; Kendall, 1998). Some common EST practiced in Singapore include cognitive behavioral therapy, rational emotive behavior therapy, and more recently, eye movement desensitization and reprocessing and emotion focused therapy. The use of EST is strongly advocated in Singapore because their effectiveness and efficacy have been validated through scientific research. Using a scientific and reliable treatment method is deemed to lead to more cost-savings and effectiveness, in the productivity-driven culture of Singapore.

A significant limitation of the EST is that they may not consider culture and diversity issues in counselling, as well as how other systemic factors that may precipitate and/or perpetuate the client's problems. This is due to EST's lack of inclusion of people of colour in their standardizing samples to demonstrate reliability and validity

in their use of people of colour (Ollendick, King & Chorpital, 2006). They are also limited in their consideration of the impact of ecological or contextual variables such as different cultural contexts on treatment effectiveness. Hence in recent years, there has been a growing emphasis for the counselling profession to adopt a more holistic and contextual approach to counselling.

To meet the counselling needs of an increasingly culturally diverse workforce, there is a need for counsellors to gain multi-cultural competencies, as part of their professional competencies. Counsellors need to be aware of their own worldviews, prejudices, assumptions and biases that may hinder the counselling process and affect the therapeutic alliance with their clients. A lack of understanding of their clients' VBNC may also lead to the adoption of culturally inappropriate intervention strategies that could affect the therapeutic outcome. Most Western counselling theories and therapies need to be contextualised in applying to an Asian context as interventions that are more culturally sensitive is likely to be more effective (Das, 1995; Sue et al., 1992; Sue & Sue, 2010).

There is also a need for a systemic framework that could provide a more holistic understanding, leading to more accurate diagnosis, culturally-sensitive and effective interventions in counselling. To do so, it is helpful for counsellors to consider how predisposing and situational factors may contribute towards the clients' problems, as well as the impact of problems on upon the systems that the client is embedded in. Currently in the counselling field, there is a lack of such a framework, as well as one that could help identify multi-cultural issues, misalignment and conflict of VBNC that may arise in counselling, and thereby help improve the multi-cultural competencies of counsellors.

As such, advancing approaches to take the complexity of systems into account and aligning them with rapidly changing needs and concerns is critical to optimise workplace adaptation. This study seeks to explore the application of a contemporary framework based on this problem in the Singaporean context. The efficacy of the model is evaluated including assessments of the validity and reliability of its measures.

1.3 The Systemic Perspective Approach (SPA) as a Model for Workplace counselling

While there are several different models that approach people related issues in a systemic manner, what seemed to be lacking is the know-how in operationalising and applying these models in case management. Consideration of underlying systemic factors like the different VBNC whether they might be misaligned and conflicted, as well as sociocultural dimensions of the client's identity, would enhance the effectiveness of the counsellor in exploring the social-psychological dynamics influence on one's behaviour and interactions with others (Livermore, 2011).

The multi-dimensional, systemic approach of the SPA model provides breath of understanding in its consideration of cultural and contextual dimensions to understanding the client, as well as depth of understanding through its analysis of the inter-relationship of the VBNC within the dimensions.

The SPA identifies eight dimensions within systems that an individual may be embedded in (Corey, 2009; Cook, 2012). The dimensions of the SPA are 1) Biological/physical 2) Mindset 3) Affect 4) Philosophy 5) Ethnicity 6) Social/Environmental 7) Political/Economics and 8) Globalization. These eight dimensions provide a helpful systemic guide for the counsellor to understand the client by considering the impact of these dimensions on the client, as well as the VBNC within them and the client's own VBNC as well. The SPA provides a multi-dimensional framework to understanding the client and his problems, so as to provide holistic understanding in the context of counselling.

The SPA model besides providing a holistic paradigm, also assists the counsellor to identify intrapsychic factors like the client's biological and developmental predispositions, socio-cultural influences, espoused VBNC as well as pre-existing medical conditions that the attending counsellor might need to be aware of in the counselling process. This allows for a more comprehensive assessment of the client and the presenting problem, leading to more comprehensive case conceptualization, accurate diagnosis. The SPA model also builds the multi-cultural competency of counsellors as it promotes awareness of their own differing VBNC with that of their clients, surfacing potential prejudices, discrimination and/or assumptions that could

hinder the counselling process. It is a framework that can help them to identify conflict and misalignments in VBNC, leading to an increase in awareness could lead to the cultivation of a more culturally sensitive therapeutic alliance and appropriate interventions in counselling.

As Singapore's population become increasingly culturally diverse, the workplace is made up of more and more FT and transnational migrant workers. The implication is that in the field of workplace counselling, there is an increased need for counsellors to develop multicultural-competencies and be equipped with tools to help them be more effective in working with the culturally diverse (Flanagan & Flanagan, 2013). Counsellors need to be competent in contextualizing traditional western counselling approaches when applying them to the culturally diverse clients that they work with. They also need to develop self-awareness, as well as study to gain more cultural knowledge of diverse populations from different cultural backgrounds. As mentioned, awareness, knowledge and skills are three main components of multi-cultural competencies (Collins & Arthur 2010a, Sue et al., 1992; Sue, 2001).

A major criticism of multicultural competencies is that too much emphasis is given to race and ethnicity, while other diversity issues have been largely neglected (Coleman, 2004; Vontress & Jackson, 2004). A broader definition of culture needs to include diversity issues such as such as age, gender, ability, religion, language, socio-economic status and issues, political factors, sexual orientation and the global environment. This is because the client's personal cultural identity is shaped and influenced by diversity issues, social-cultural and contextual, as well as personal identity factors (Daya, 2001; Arthur & Collins, 2005; Collins & Arthur, 2010a, 2010b; Mollen, Ridley & Hill, 2003).

The need for the consideration of both culture and diversity issues in the treatment of mental health has also been affirmed by the World Health Organisation. In its Mental Health Action Plan of 2013-2010, it states that "determinants of mental health and mental disorders include not only individual attributes such as the ability to manage one's thoughts, emotions, behaviours and interactions with others, but also social, cultural, economic, political and environ-mental factors such as national policies, social protection, living standards, working conditions, and community social supports" (p. 7).

Coincidentally, these determinants of mental health are considered in the SPA's systemic and contextual approach to understanding the client in the context of multi-cultural counselling. Currently in Singapore, most counsellors in workplace counselling do not take into consideration diversity or systemic issues when working with transnational clients. There is a lack of a framework that could help them identify multi-cultural issues in counselling. Hence, the SPA model hopes to contribute to existing research by providing a multi-dimensional framework to improve multi-cultural competencies, as well as embrace a broader definition of culture, to consider diversity issues, through the VBNC and inter-relationship between the dimensions.

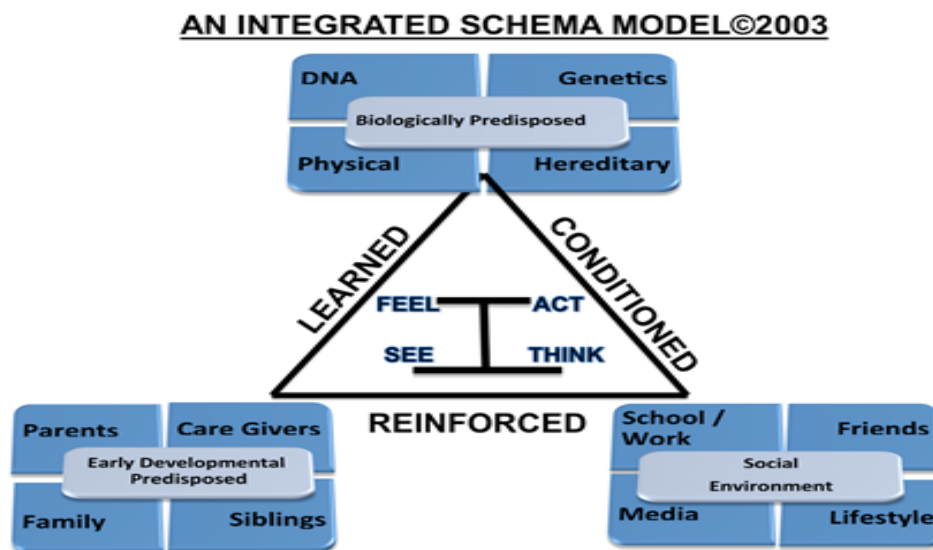
1.4 Overview of the Concepts

The next section will provide an overview of the explanation of concepts and key components of the SPA model. These key concepts include the individual schema profile, the systemic framework with its eight dimensions, the multi-cultural tree, as well as the schema and the concept of the VBNC in relation to the model.

1.4.1 The Schema Profile

The schema profile forms the core of the SPA model by providing a simple framework to understanding an individual through considering how biological predisposition, early developmental predisposition and social environment shape the development of one's distinct way of feeling, behaving, perceiving and thinking through the process of learning and social conditioning.

Figure 1.1: The Schema Profile



As illustrated in Figure 1.1 above, an individual has his or her own unique identity regardless of background and culture. This identity is influenced and shaped by predisposing biological, developmental and environmental conditions. These conditions not only shape his or her worldview, but also one's VBNC. An individual might have inherited genetic predisposition to certain conditions. For example, if an individual is born to parents who are drug addicts, they may inherit a biological predisposition that puts them at a higher risk of becoming addicts themselves.

Predisposing developmental behaviours refer to how individuals are being nurtured by the structural ecosystem of the family and how they adopt learned behaviours. For example, if a child was physically abused when young, he or she may learn that it is permissible to get one's way by instilling fear in others through the use of violence. When an individual interacts with the larger community, socio-environmental factors and experiences also contribute to shape the person's life and behaviours. The combination of the three predispositions influence how the individual would feel, act, see and think, as well as shape his or her underlying VBNC. As in social psychology, it is posited that a person could have different identities - predisposed identities, social / corporate identity, national identity and global identity.

Figure 1.2: The Schema Profile Reinforced

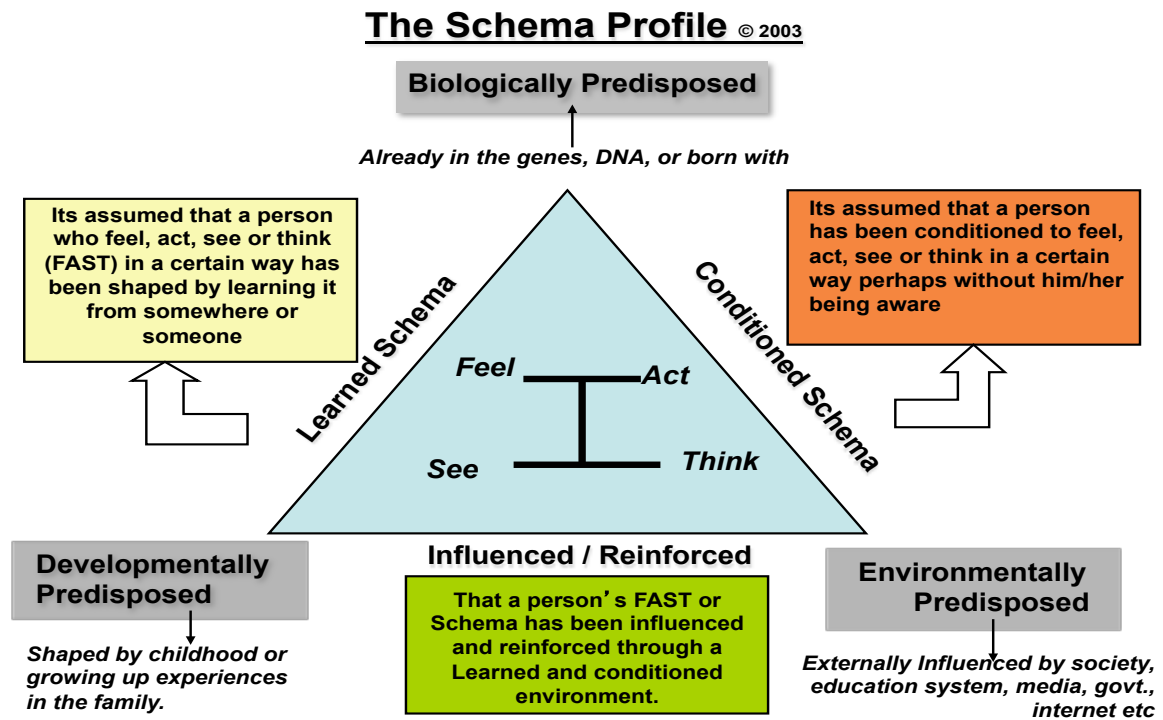


Figure 1.2 illustrates how the interaction between predisposing biological, developmental and environmental conditions contributes to the development of one's individual schema. This individual schema comprises of one's cultural and personal identity. Biological, developmental and social/environmental factors influence the development of the client's emotions (feel), behaviour (act), perception (see), and cognition (think), as well as development of client's personal VBNC. The schema also considers how learning has been conditioned and reinforced through the systems/contexts that the individual is embedded in. Hence, the way an individual feel, act, see and think may be learned, conditioned, and/or reinforced through a learned and conditioned environment.

The extension of the schema to include the eight dimensions provide a helpful systemic guide for the counsellor to understanding the client by considering how these contextual factors and how they influence and shape the development of the cultural aspects of the client's identity. Consideration of the VBNC of the client & that of the systems that he or she is embedded within, provides a multi-dimensional framework to understanding the client and his problems.

1.4.1.1 Schema

Schemas are defined as structures that organise information in a database-like form that sorts and summons information based on stimuli (either overt events or other verbalizations). As an extension of Beck's cognitive therapy for personality disorders, Dr. Jeffrey Young, who developed the schema therapy formulated the concept of an "early maladaptive schema," defined as "a long-standing and pervasive theme that originates in childhood which defines the individual's behaviours, thoughts, feelings, and relationships with other people; which leads to maladaptive consequences" (Young, Klosko & Weishaar, 2003).

The goal of schema-focused therapy is to help patients to identify cognitive distortions and challenge underlying beliefs that routinely result in impaired psychosocial functioning. For example, one might hold to a maladaptive schema centred on the fear of being abandoned, which results in excessive jealousy and clinging in relationships. The therapeutic approach would be to assist the patient in uncovering his or her assumption that significant others will inevitably leave and the connection of that assumption to particular behavioural and emotional responses. Over time, the patient is encouraged to develop other ways of relating by replacing counter-productive modes, accompanied by shifts in thinking and affective reactions.

Maladaptive schemas arise as deeply entrenched patterns of response that developed as the child tried to organise personal experience of oneself and others in a world that may have been filled with abuse, instability, or neglect. Although they may have served as logical solutions in childhood, they remain in play in adulthood as ineffective means for meeting basic security and intimacy needs, and, thus, are associated with negative emotions and impaired functioning. Young (2003) has proposed instability and disconnection, impaired autonomy, and undesirability as three domains, or groupings, of schemas.

Although schema theory is linked more closely to traditional cognitive theory than to psychodynamic theory, schema-based approaches to couples therapy overlap considerably more with traditional insight-oriented strategies. Their emphasis is on interpretation of interpersonal exchanges within the therapy session as a vehicle for change, attention to affect during the processing of schema-related events, and their

emphasis on the childhood origins of maladaptive schemas and the emotional reworking of these early experiences (Young et al., 2003).

Cognitive psychologists studying memory developed the concept of schema, which can be understood as templates used to make sense of and draw conclusions about new sensory affective, and of cognitive information. The schema construct was formulated to explain how memory is organised and why it produces the inaccuracies and incompleteness often observed in human recall. The concept of memory organization as a schema, also forms patterns of relationship. The inter-twinning data form links which is retrieved from memory and recalled when required (Heuer, 1999).

The incorporation and abstraction of new experiences into relevant schemata serve to influence the interpretation of future experience and thereby the encoding and recollection of new memories. Schemata, therefore, affect all levels of human cognitive processing and may well be the most significant regarding a theoretical model contribution to date in cognitive psychology. The development and modification of schemata are central to Beck and others' models of cognitive-behavioural conceptualisations of psychopathology and therapeutic change (Haugtvedt, Machleit & Yalch, 2005, p. 173). For example, people perceive successes and failures according to the schemata (plural for schema) and make decisions by drawing from elements of memory that explain the causes and implications of success or failure. Memory is connected to many different overlapping schemata. This system is highly complex and difficult to understand (Heuer, 1999, p. 45).

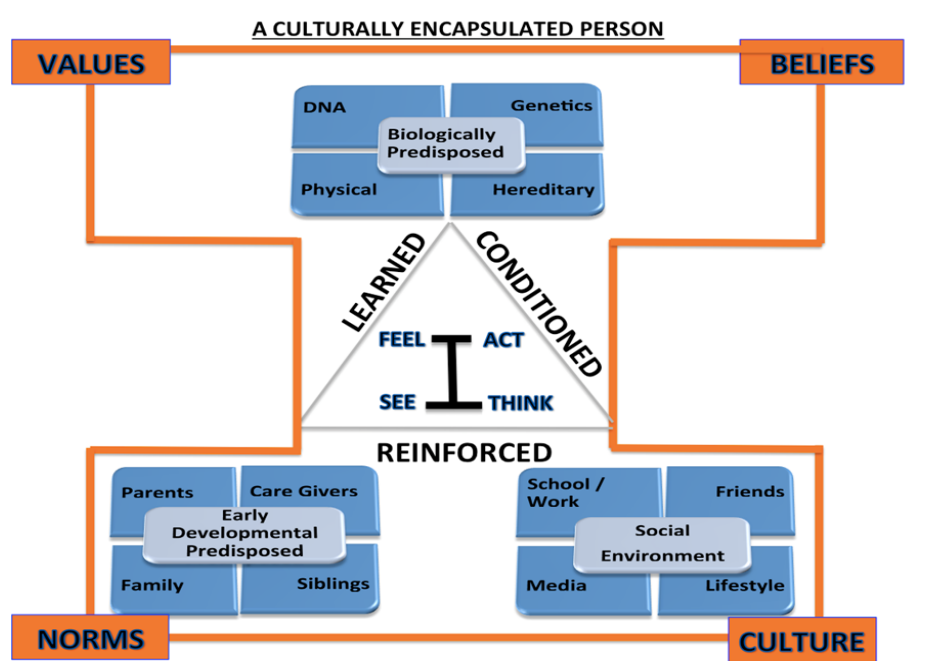
This conception of a schema is so general that it begs many important questions of interest to memory researchers. It serves the purpose of emphasising that memory does have structure. It also shows that how knowledge is connected in memory is critically important in determining what information is retrieved in response to any stimulus and how that information is used in reasoning (Heuer, 1999, p. 46).

A somewhat related cognitive model of pathological anxiety has been proposed by Beck and Emery (1985) in the schema theory of anxiety. Central to this theory is the mechanism of cognitive appraisal, with anxiety as the feeling state resulting from the appraisal of threatening stimuli. The appraisal process, in turn, is influenced by

cognitive structures known as schemata, which consist of stored information abstracted from previous experience (Ingram, 1990). Schema theory views pathological anxiety as the result of faulty schemata that lead to habitual, and largely automatic, over appraisal of danger; pathological appraisal often takes place automatically without benefit of the scrutiny that accompanies attentional focus. Accordingly, Beck's therapeutic approach to ameliorating pathological anxiety involves helping the patient allocate more attentional resources to the appraisal process, as a corrective to faulty schematic processing.

1.4.2 Concept of Values, Beliefs, Norms, Culture (VBNC)

Figure 1.3 The Schema Identity Profile Encapsulated by VBNC



An individual is made up of his own predisposed identity. A person's identity is made up of his learned, conditioned and reinforced VBNC. This set of VBNC as shown in Figure 2, is also being influenced and shaped by predisposing biological, developmental and socio-cultural environmental factors through one's growing up experiences, Be it an individual or an organisation, the roots of one's core identity is encapsulated by the unique set of one's VBNC. These VBNC strongly influence the way one behaves, as well as the decision and choices one makes in life.

VBNC are deeply rooted within an individual identity. They are either taught or learned from one's racial ethnic family of origin, religious beliefs, friends and social community groups, workplace, nationalistic slogans and campaigns, Since decisions and judgments are strongly influenced by the underlying basic value system of an individual (Hardman & Macchi, 2003), consideration of how these VBNC impacts one's thoughts, emotions and behaviour is of importance.

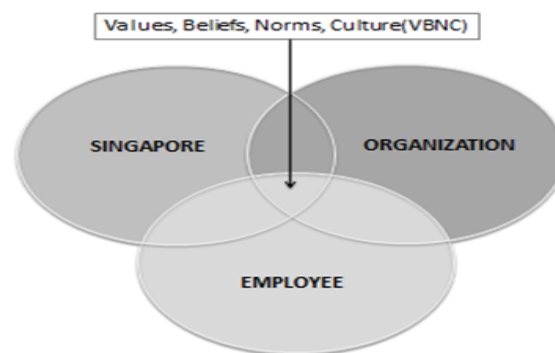
Values, beliefs, norms and culture are inter-related, dynamic and also complex in that because they may influence one another, the relationship between them may not always be easy to explain. While it may be argued that one's family and ethnic culture do contribute to the formation of one's values and beliefs in the early years, they are continually being shaped and influenced by other significant relationships that one develops later in life, the social network and community where the individual finds one's affiliation, as well as by the pervasive and persuasive influence of social media in this age of globalisation.

The personal experiences that a person go through in life both positive or negative also significantly impact the development of one's values, beliefs, norms and culture. Hence, it is likely that several factors contribute to the development of one's VBNC, and since each variable may be vulnerable to influence and change, there may or may not be a direct relationship between each of the VBNC variables. For example, a person may be supportive of same-sex marriages in the belief in the freedom to love but he or she may not subscribe to it as a norm or way of life because it may not aligned to one's spiritual or sexual orientation. Such conflicts in within one's VBNC are common which makes the relationship between the variables more complicated, requiring a more phenomenological approach to understanding the relationship between values, beliefs, norms and culture.

According to Marsella (1988), the "psychological attributes of culture" has been defined as "shared learned behaviour that is transmitted through generations, externally manifesting itself as artefacts, roles, and institutions, and internally expressed as attitudes, values and beliefs" (p. 8). Hence, other than personal VBNC that may affect human behaviour, VBNC are also found in systems and institutions that one is interacting with. It is usually the VBNC that shapes how systems function and work. For example, in the context of an organisation, the mission, vision and

goals are its espoused VBNC that which drives the organisation's strategies, operations, motivations and the working culture of the company. The VBNC is the lynchpin, as shown in Figure 1.3, and may be considered as that which makes up the "soul" of the organisation. In the same manner, at a national level, the government's VBNC would also strongly shape how the country is run and the development of the national culture of the country. For example, the United States belief in freedom and democracy strongly drives her anti-terrorism policies at the national and international level.

Figure 1.4 VBNC Alignment Diagram



When there is a misalignment or conflict between one's VBNC with another, or even with the system that one is embedded in, it may create psychological stress and also struggles in working or living with the system. Some times systemic issues may be traced to VBNC within systems that perpetuate negative consequences such as injustices, discrimination and inequality. A multi-dimensional and multi-cultural approach that is culturally sensitive to VBNC would be helpful in surfacing these otherwise underlying systemic issues, that could be contributing and perpetuating the client's problem.

1.4.2.1 Values

For the purpose of this study, values refer to principles, moral code of conduct, standards of behaviours, judgements of things that are important, that may have

been learnt or passed down from an individual's culture, family, society, religion or other work or social groups. An important aspect of culture involves the transmission of what has been shared and learnt (Swartz, 2001). Values, beliefs, social norms and behaviours, are passed down explicitly and implicitly through the process of socialization, as well as and through daily shared experiences (Lonner, 1994; Reid, 1994).

In Schwartz's theory of basic human values (1992, 2006), he identified some distinct features related to the concept of values. According to him, values are beliefs that are linked closely to one's emotions. When one's value is being violated or threatened, strong emotions may be triggered due to one's emotional attachment to the value. Also values are the source of motivation that drives one to achieve his or her goals. Values are criteria for decision-making as well. People would tend to prioritise what is important to them based on their values. Hence, the choices that one makes in life may reveal what values are important and what kind of values that he or she lives by.

A common important Asian cultural value is that of "face". This translates that one's reputation is deemed of great value and importance that it is necessary to protect oneself from any situation that might be disgraceful or shameful at all cost. In the context of multi-counselling, it is helpful for counsellors to be aware and sensitive to the cultural value of "saving face". This would ensure the counsellor remains respectful, sensitive to non-verbal cues of their Asian clients and perhaps to use more indirect and gentle way of communicating when trying to confront any inconsistencies or weaknesses during counselling. In some shame-based Asian culture, families or individuals may avoid seeking professional help when faced with problems, as they would prefer to keep their problems hidden so as to avoid bringing disgrace to the family.

1.4.2.2 Beliefs

For this study, beliefs are defined as mental representations of their self-image, their relationships and their world (Dweck, 2006). These representations and beliefs are developed from infancy, and through one's growing up experiences and the process of socialization. They make up fundamental aspects of one's personality. These

beliefs include personal, cultural, social, economic, political and spiritual beliefs that shape the convictions and principles which one adheres to.

Culturally rooted traditions of religious beliefs and practices carry important consequences in willingness to seek mental health services. In many traditional societies, mental health issues are viewed as spiritual concerns, so abiding to customary practices acts as a way to renew one's commitment to a religious or spiritual system of belief. In these traditional societies, people when faced with personal difficulties, have looked to their faith, religious leaders and spiritual practices for guidance and healing (Lu, 1995).

Common beliefs within a cultural group would influence social norms and social interaction with one another. Depending on their cultural beliefs, people could be viewed as independent or interdependent beings. These beliefs shape one's behaviours in terms of making decisions independently or considering the needs of one's extended families above self; whether one should recognise status of power within the cultural group; adopt a mindset of harmony, respect for others or value controlling and dominating others. Due to globalisation, many cultures are exposed to the ethos of other cultures, causing them to evaluate and even question cultural beliefs and practices that have been instilled in them. For example, if an Asian man's family does not agree with his way of life, the choice of whether to abide by his family's demands, or leave his family to lead the desired lifestyle, would depend on the cultural values and beliefs which he embraces.

The belief system serves as the cultural backbone that drives one's behaviour and perception of others (Slattery, 2004). In one culture, it might seem acceptable for a twelve-year-old girl to kiss her father on the cheeks but, not acceptable in another. The judgments made by the individual culture may indicate the individual culture's valuing decisions. These decisions will determine one's actions and how other cultures are viewed. Membership to a culture brings meaning and identity to an individual (Slattery, 2004). This explains why the pressure to conform to one's cultural beliefs, values and social conventions may be so strong in influencing the individual's behaviours and the choices he or she would make in life.

1.4.2.3 Norms

For the purpose of this study, norms are defined as standards or expected social behaviours that are commonly accepted socially by the majority in a group or society. It usually involves some form of expected behaviour or practices of the group or society. Values and norms are the basis for solidarity for all kind of groups and societies (Parsons, 1937). Norms helps the society to regulate and survive.

Deviation from, or violation of accepted norms may threaten group cohesion as well as status quo. One way to deter non-conforming behaviours is to develop a punishment system (Parks, 2011). Hence, non-conformity to standard behaviours or practices may render the individual an outsider or outcast in highly collectivistic communities. Prior to the African civil rights movement, discriminated African Americans being punished for violating social norms, as enforced by the white community was unfortunately a norm of that era. A norm in many Asian societies, including Singapore today, is for a wife to take on the first name of her husband after marriage.

1.4.2.4 Culture

For the purpose of this study, culture refers to “socially transmitted beliefs, values, and practices ... [and] shared ideas and habits”, including values, beliefs and attitudes that are transmitted through historical, social, political, economic and religious institutions in a society (Latane, 1996, p. 13). Also according to Marsella’s (1988) definition the “psychological attributes of culture” (p. 8), culture also encompasses a way of living transmitted by the historical, economic, ecological, and political forces on a group. Hence, the different systems that individual is embedded in have different cultures comprising of shared and socially transmitted beliefs, values, practices and norms within the systems. For example, there is ethnic culture, family culture, economic culture, political culture of the workplace or country, workplace culture, community culture, as well as social culture. These definitions suggest that culture is fluid and dynamic, may be universal, culturally specific or relative constructs (American Psychological Association, 2003, p. 380).

Culture influences and shapes how individuals and groups create identities, values, norms, and ways of living, that are transferred from one generation to another which

goes beyond race and ethnicity. Some examples of racial categories in Singapore include Chinese, Malays, Indians and Eurasians. People belonging to the same racial category, do share common physical traits, language, religious backgrounds, cultural values and norms. However, within each broad racial category there can be much diversity because it is made up of smaller sub-ethnic and dialect groups. For example, the Singapore Chinese category is made up of people from different ethnic Chinese dialect groups such as Teochew, Cantonese, Hakka, Hokkien and Peranakan. Each of these dialect groups would have their own unique set of VBNC, that differ from each other such as the dialect language spoken, as well as having their own cuisine, customs, traditions and practices.

Culture has become so fundamental in human societies and weaved so intricately in our nature, that human beings often unquestionably internalise it. Culture is so ingrained and programmed internally that even though it gives life structure and meaning, most of the time its influence may exist beyond our awareness. In most cases, the impact of the existence of culture is defined by time past and future in its practices, customs, rituals and traditions that it represents.

Hofstede's work on culture is the most widely cited in existence (Bond 2002; Hofstede, 1984). His observations and analysis provides valuable insights into the dynamics of cross-cultural relationships. Much interest has been placed on culture in business in the last two decades, and the importance and relevance has not waned. Hofstede's landmark study of IBM (Hofstede, 1980) with Peters and Waterman started the organisation culture sensation with "In Search of Excellence" (Peters & Waterman, 1982). For his research, Hofstede identified four bipolar dimensions of Power Distance; Individualism/Collectivism; Uncertainty Avoidance; Masculinity/Femininity, which became the basis of his characterisations of culture for each country. Hofstede later introduced a fifth element 'Confucian Dynamism' or 'Long/Short Term Orientation' in his subsequent study (Hofstede & Bond, 1988), which was an attempt to fit the uncertainty avoidance dimension into the Asian culture.

According to Hofstede's (1997) cultural dimensions theory, whether a society is individualistic-collectivistic, would influence how families in the society function. Individualistic societies would value personal freedom, rights and achievements more

than community needs, group cohesion and group rights and needs. Therefore, if a family embraces values of collectivism over individualism, then there are usually stronger ties with extended families and higher degrees of involvement and responsibility to meet one another's needs within the family, as well as with one's extended families. Individualism promotes self-efficiency, individual responsibility, accountability, personal autonomy and privacy. Collectivism, in contrast emphasises more on the "we" identity over the "I" identity, group rights over individual rights and so group loyalty, role obligations and responsibilities to the group are emphasised (Perel, 2000; Hall, 1990).

The notion of paradigm (Kuhn, 1970), describes the totality of how a phenomenon is conceived by a science, provides an understanding of how culture function within individuals. A paradigm can be defined as a set of shared assumptions and beliefs about how the world works. To scientists, it helps structure their perception and understanding of a discipline. Basically, paradigms or beliefs define our perspective and experiences of reality. Psychologists adopted this notion to describe the cognitive worldview through which human beings see and relate to the world. Paradigms, shape our understanding of human existence, the possibilities of life and the manner in which life's processes are meant to function. Since it has been the set way through which one views the world, challenging one's paradigm is likely to be met with resistance. Great difficulty or discomfort is usually experienced when a paradigm shift or change is required, as one has grown emotionally attached to it.

These paradigms help create one's identity so, when they are changed, the world no longer functions as it "should" and one could feel 'lost', unsure of where one stands and who one is. These human paradigms form culture, filling it up with one's identity, beliefs, values and behaviours (Slattery, 2004). Family, community and societal institutions act as purveyors of culture teaching us the contents of our specific culture, as part of a natural process of growth. Basically, what one views as right and real is defined by one's paradigm, which becomes one's culture. With the different paradigms of reality that exist in the world, different cultures are born. Each of these cultures is sacredly protected as a threat to it may be interpreted as a threat to its member's existence, or idea of existence.

1.4.3 The “Multi-Cultural Tree”

The “Multi-cultural Tree” is used to illustrate how VBNC relate to multi-cultural issues. Multi-cultural issues that may arise in the context of counselling in a culturally diverse workplace include negative behavioural responses and reactions such as stereotyping, prejudices, assumptions, biases, oppression and discrimination (SPABOD).

As represented by the tree, the roots of these negative behavioural responses and reactions can be traced to one’s VBNC. A lack of understanding or awareness of the client’s VBNC could lead to conflicts in VBNC that could potentially contribute to SPABOD. Some of the negative consequences or “fruits” of SPABOD include disagreements, misunderstandings, conflicts, impasses, fights, hatred and aggression and in extreme cases, even war.

Figure 1.5 Amalgamating SPA with the Multi-Cultural Tree

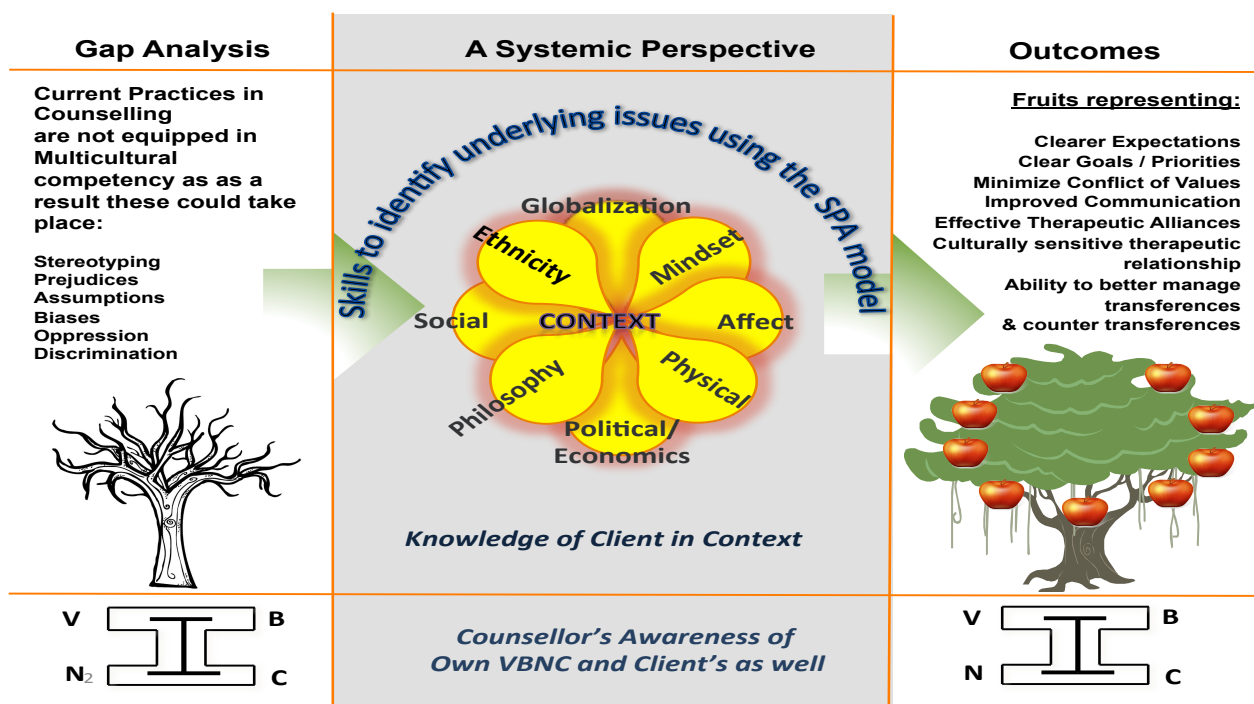


Figure 1.5 shows how the SPA is proposed to meet the critical gap in current counselling practise in terms of the lack of multi-cultural competencies among counsellors in the face of a growing culturally diverse workforce of FT and transnational migrants in Singapore. In the current counselling field, there is no framework for identifying multi-cultural issues in counselling and no practical tools to help counsellors develop multi-cultural competencies of awareness, knowledge and

skills in counselling. This could result in SPABOD arising in the process of counselling that may affect the building of an effective therapeutic alliance.

The SPA framework when applied and used could help the counsellor to gain greater self-awareness of SPABOD influenced by his or her own VBNC. At the same time, through applying the SPA, it also help the counsellor to be aware of the client's VBNC and where misalignments may potentially occur, and cause conflicts in counselling. Awareness would help the counsellor to be more culturally-sensitive in the counselling process, and also help the counsellor to intervene with more culturally appropriate interventions that are consistent to the client's culture, worldview and experiences, thereby contributing to more effective therapeutic outcomes.

The SPA also provides a systemic framework for organising knowledge about the client by considering the contexts and systems that the client is embedded in, as well as the VBNC undergirding the eight dimensions of the SPA, including biological/physical, mindset, affect, philosophy, ethnicity, social, political/economics and globalisation. This multi-dimensional approach provide a more holistic understanding of the client and the client's problems in the context of working with culturally diverse clients.

By applying the SPA, greater awareness and knowledge would contribute to improve the skills of the counsellor in the area multi-cultural competencies when working with the culturally different client. Some of the positive outcomes or "fruits" of the SPA in counselling would include clearer counselling goals, priorities and expectations, minimize conflict of values, improve communication, more effective and culturally sensitive therapeutic relationship, as well as ability to better manage transferences & counter transferences that may arise in the context of counselling.

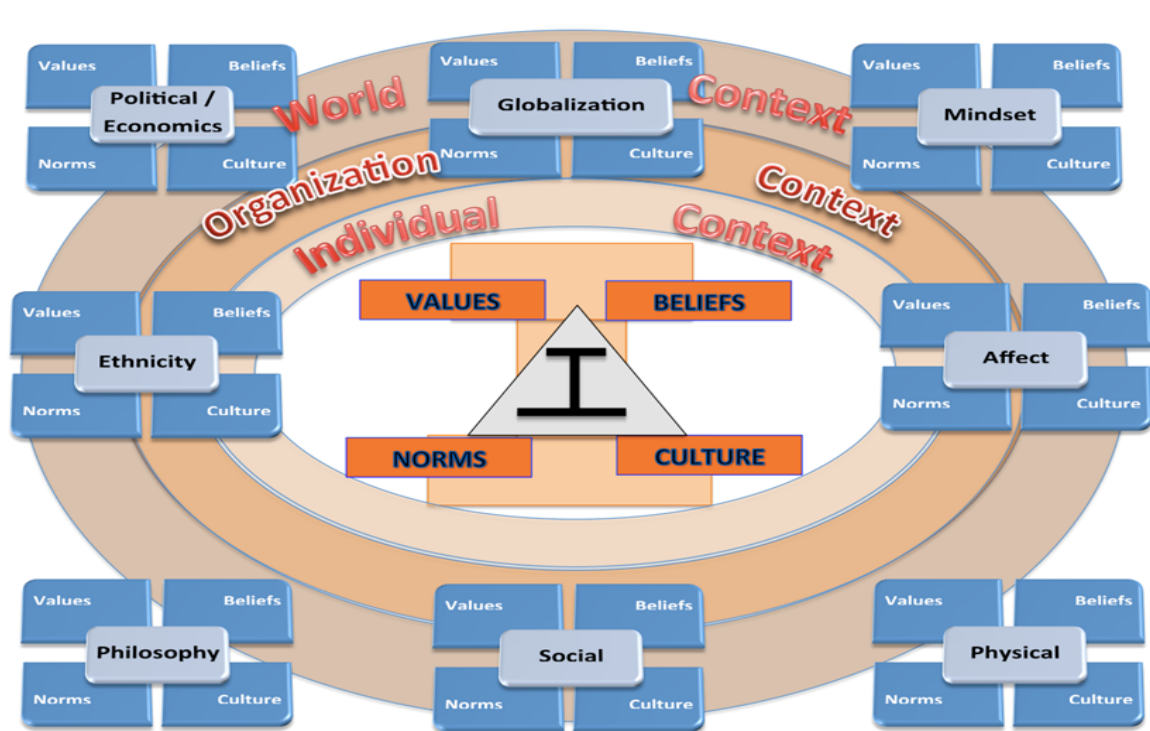
As workplace counsellors and EAP Consultants, there is a need to view employees from a systemic perspective. Apart from simply considering their functional and professional role and work environment, their socio-cultural and bio-psychosocial perspective needs to be addressed as well due to the pervasiveness of VBNC that influence and affect their lives.

Negative responses in multi-cultural issues may arise in organisations when stereotyping, discrimination, assumptions and biases lead to unequal treatment or unequal access to resources such as employee benefits, opportunities for promotion or development. In some countries like the United States, discriminatory treatment of employees in the workplace could result in legal action being taken against the organisation because of employment discrimination laws. Biases against groups of individuals could cause ethical and legal boundaries to be violated, which may be detrimental to organisations' reputation.

However, in many other countries, ethnic minorities, oppressed by the discriminatory policies and lack of appropriate support by the organisation has contributed to high attrition rate and poor employee engagement. As such, EAP Consultants and workplace counsellor have a much wider role in championing and advocating for the rights and protection of the employees in advocating for certain changes to policies and guidelines with regards to employees and related manpower issues.

1.4.4 The Eight Dimensions

Figure 1.6 The SPA's Eight Dimensions



The SPA model, illustrated in Figure 1.6 was developed to identify multi-cultural issues in the counselling practice and profession. The lack of awareness and consideration of multi-cultural issues may result in counsellors and psychologists unintentionally making theoretical or biased assumptions about their clients based on their own VBNC. The SPA's structured framework is helpful in enhancing multi-cultural competencies by raising awareness many would make theoretical assumptions based on their own VBNC unknowingly.

The SPA model has been influenced by the work of Corey (2009), as well the schema theory (Young et al., 2003), the bio-psychosocial (BPS) model (Engel, 1980), systemic theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1977) and the ecological perspective to counselling (Cook, 2012). The SPA model adapted Corey's dimensions, which include Political/Economic, Mental, Environmental, Social, Physical, Emotional, Cultural and Spiritual, and modified them to fit into a Singapore context.

The SPA model defined its own eight dimensions as Mindset, Affect, Physical, Philosophy, Ethnicity, Social, Political/Economics and Globalisation. The SPA emphasizes on understanding an individual the context of different systems that one may be embedded in, and how the VBNC within systems may interrelate to shape the development of one's personal and socio-cultural identity. Since an individual is constantly interacting with the different systems that one is embedded in, the inter-relationship between the dimensions is dynamic and active.

Depending on the individual, these dimensions are inter-related and to different degrees. For example, for one person, the values, beliefs, norms and culture within his ethnic group and family of origin could influence the way he relates to others in his social context or even the way he deals with his emotions (affect). His mindset and philosophy about life would also shape his view, values and beliefs about financial and economic issues. Hence, the eight dimensions comprise of different systems and contexts of an individual's life by taking an ecological approach to understanding human behaviour.

The ecological perspective in counselling is founded upon Urie Bronfenbrenner's (1977) ecological systems theory on human development, which postulates that the process of human development is being shaped by the interaction between an individual and his or her environment. His model focuses on the patterning and

interrelationship of five environmental factors that would influence and shape an individual's growth and development: the microsystem, the mesosystem, the ecosystem, the macrosystem and the chronosystem.

The main emphasis of ecological perspective in counselling is that of understanding people in context by considering the interaction of different systems upon the individual. This emphasis is also reflected in Kurt Lewin (1936)'s famous formula in social psychology of $B=f(P, E)$, where behaviour is considered a function of the person in their environments. Ellen P. Cook (2012) picks up where Lewin has left off, emphasizing on the importance of ecological perspective in counselling, in understanding people in context because human behaviour is more interactional than personal. According to her, the ecosystem is always interacting and exerting its influence on the individual to varying degrees, from one's biological predisposition to the broader socio-cultural context in structuring human relationships and interaction.

Applied to multicultural counselling, the ecological perspective emphasizes on the importance of understanding cultural and ethnic identity as resulting from interaction of different systems (psychological, family, sociocultural, political-economic etc.) that the individual is embedded in. Therefore, for a holistic view, one cannot view diversity only in terms of a person's cultural background, without considering the impact of systems upon the individual.

Undergirding these eight dimensions is the consideration of VBNC within them. The SPA model provides a comprehensive framework that is culturally sensitive through taking a systemic and ecological perspective to understanding the client. Such a multi-dimensional model enables the counsellor to become aware of how alignment or misalignment of VBNC within the different systems could be affecting the client and contributing to the problem. The next part of this chapter provides the explanation of the eight dimensions and what each one comprises of.

1.4.4.1 Mindset

In the SPA model, mindset refers to the level of cognitive ability for example: the level of intelligence, understanding, learning styles, critical and analytical thought process, spatial orientation and other cognitive functioning that might hamper the

counselling process. This dimension also includes academic qualifications, IQ levels, cognitive competency, neurological development and cognitive thought processes.

Mindset is intricately related to one's self-schema because it is a kind of fixed mental attitude, predisposed perspective, viewpoint, response or interpretations of certain situations. Mindset may also have been influenced and shaped by the individual's VBNC, which are also significant elements within one's self-schema. Self-schemas may be developed out of different aspects of a person, including physical appearances, social roles, personality traits, as well as areas of interest and skills. They are usually established in the domains that the person values (Markus, 1977). To date, studies have documented availability of self-schemas in a variety of behavioural domains including body weight (Markus, Hamill & Sentis, 1987), exercise (Kendzierski, 1988), and sex roles (Markus et al., 1987), independence (Markus, 1977) and academic performance (Garcia & Pintrich, 1994).

Mindset also includes one's perception of knowledge of the world, also termed as 'epistemology.' Culture influences our learning as it shapes the way we see the world. We rely on a combination of intellectual deductions, on emotions, as well as both cognition and intuition in understanding the world around us (Brown & Landrum-Brown, 1995). Albert Bandura (1977), in his social learning theory states that behaviour is learned from the environment through the process of observational learning. Concepts and mindsets propagated and reinforced by practices within culture do shape one's view about sexuality, bodies and perception of self (Slattery, 2004). It provides coherence to our ideas, religious beliefs and everyday thinking. It enables one to classify and compare persons and objects in a social setting (Moscovici, 1988).

Cognitive researchers have shown that the processes of memory are influenced and shaped by people's learning histories and cultures, which are also "product of the evolutionary past in which humans have created, and been created by, their social groups (Kenrick, Sadalla & Keefe, 1998; Tooby & Cosmides, 1992). Since mindset is quite conditioned in one's cognition and schema, it can pose as a challenge for counsellors to work with clients who might not be motivated to change their mindsets from irrational to rational thoughts.

1.4.4.2 Affect

The affect dimension of the SPA is concerned with how the client responds to emotional triggers. It is also interested in understanding the client's level of emotional awareness, what drives and motivates the client, as well as the client's capacity in identifying, processing and managing emotions.

This dimension considers the emotional and psychological functioning of the client. Psychodynamic theory, object-relations theory, John Bowlby's attachment theory (1988), as well as recent research in neurosciences, emphasize the importance of early experiences of an infant, especially in the first two years of life because of their impact on the development of the right brain. The development of the right brain will affect one's emotional functioning and capacity to manage emotions later in life. According to Bowlby (1988), attachment is a system that helps the infant make sense of the world through interaction with and attachment to the primary caregivers, usually the parents.

Attachment serves the important function in helping the infant to manage stress by developing his capacity to regulate his emotions. The infant is limited in his ability to regulate and manage emotions. Therefore, when he experiences stress or discomfort, by crying or clinging or other distressful behaviours, he is signalling to his caregiver his need to help manage the stress. If the caregiver is sensitive to the needs of the infant, attends and soothe the infant's discomfort, the infant will experience relief and comfort from the caregiver. These "soothing" experiences would help the child develop his own capacity to regulate his emotions and helps to build tolerance needed for healthy emotional management.

The family environment that one grows up in does have casual affects as to how one manages emotions. One may have learned how to manage emotions from the modelling of significant people in his or her life. If the suppression of emotion is the norm at home, the client may have learnt from an early age that this experience probably taught him or her never to talk about or express one's feelings. Hence, the way the family of origin manage emotions and beliefs about emotions that have been passed down would significantly influence how one views and deals with emotions.

1.4.4.3 Physical

This dimension of the SPA includes physical appearances, physical and health conditions, biological and genetic predispositions, body mass index, physical impairment, medical history, medication that the client is taking, allergies, as well as issues related to body image, sex-related issues, as well as gender identity issues. It may also extend to include how others' or society's perception of one's physical appearances, or even physical characteristics related to one's ethnicity, may affect the client psychologically.

Psychopathology interview is important as part of the initial counselling intake interview. Assessment of distressed and disabled individuals in culturally diverse environments is critical as well. A holistic understanding of the client requires a detailed enquiry to ascertain any form of physical impairment (e.g. asthma, diabetics, epilepsy, cardio), biological maladaptive issues, as well as effects of medication that client might be currently taking. This is to rule out any prior psychosomatic state of the client before commencing on counselling. A case in point would be when a client who is on anti-depressive medication might not be effective during the counselling process.

Physical features and appearances are also critical in case intake. For example, counsellors seeing clients who are bulimic and anorexic might need to ascertain as to their mental and physical condition before deciding to proceed with counselling. This is because "psychological energy seeks an outlet through physical symptoms due to its inability to be expressed mentally" and "permanent faults in personality...leads to the dissipation of energy and eventually to somatic dysfunction" (Mizrachi, 2001, p.325).

Body image is also considered under this dimension of Physical. Defined as "a mental picture of the self that includes attitudes and perceptions regarding one's physical appearance, state of health, skills and feelings, and attitudes toward the physical self" (Mock, 1993, p. 154). One's values in relation to physical health can affect one's recovery from illness and quality of life. For example, in diabetes education, instilling patients with the appropriate attitudes and knowledge are essential in empowering them. Therefore, diabetes education is aimed at raising self-

awareness to one's needs, values and desired outcomes in diabetes care. In the past three decades, there has been increasing emphasis in nursing intervention on focusing on a patient's beliefs, perceptions, and expectations regarding self, as they are believed to have significant impact on one's recovery and quality of health (Beland, 1970; Lehberger 1973; Mitchell, 1973).

This shows how beliefs in relation to the physical dimensions may affect not only one's physical condition, but also one's mental and emotional functioning, which also impact one's health. There is a close interrelationship between the physical dimension to the mindset and affect dimensions, which explains why some physical conditions could be psychosomatic.

According to Rodin, Silberstein and Striegel-Moore (1985), the over emphasis on thinness in our culture today has contributed to women who are normal weight defining themselves as over-weight. In the realm of sexual behaviours, adolescents are vulnerable to the influence of their peer group's behaviours, and whose ideas of sex do influence their sexual behaviours and perceptions of sex (Heaven, 1994). Culture and practices within culture are constantly shaping and influencing the concept and mindset that surrounds coming-of-age, sexuality and our bodies (Slattery, 2004).

Research has also shown that stress induced issues like how one looks in relation to one's ethnic identity is perceived by others. This is especially so if one is from a minority group and that the particular physical traits identify one with a certain group that may make one more vulnerable towards being discriminated against.

Psychological stressors related to multi-cultural issues include racist comments, insults, graffiti, literature, or being rejected because of one's ethnicity, isolation or deliberate exclusion from social groups, being treated with disrespect or being looked down because of one's way of speaking, one's accent and way of dressing (Gale & Davidson, 2006). As discussed, the physical dimension provides insights into understanding the client, and so the omission of this dimension for consideration may affect the counselling process especially in case intervention.

1.4.4.4 Philosophy

Philosophy as a dimension of the SPA has been described as a set of cultural, religious, values, beliefs and norms. This dimension is interested in the principles, values and beliefs that shape the client's perceptions and attitudes towards themes like meaning and purpose of life, principles for living, death, issues of morality, religion and spirituality.

Boyatzis, Murphy & Wheeler (2000) suggested that philosophy, rooted in one's values and beliefs, is the missing link between values and behaviour. Philosophy is therefore important for explaining one's behaviour, as it seems to supersede any social context. It is critical for counsellors to avoid the imposition of their beliefs and cultural considerations as each individual has their own and to do otherwise may be considered disrespectful or even condescending (Hickson & Kriegler, 1996).

Weisskopf-Joelson (1953) proposed considering one of the goals of psychotherapy as the development of a philosophy of life. Beutler (1979) considers a systemic approach to therapy as an effective way of inducing people to consider alternative beliefs. Multi-culturalism as a social philosophy and policy seeks to create a cohesive society by recognizing and appreciating diversity of diverse ethnic and cultural groups, and not simplifying diversity by reducing groups into a one single cultural mould (Reitz, Phan & Banerjee, 2009). Philosophy symbolises the person's solidarity, expressing its unique worth, and contribute to its survival (Durkheim, 1974; Parsons, 1951).

1.4.4.5 Ethnicity

The dimension of ethnicity of the SPA refers to a person's ethnic roots, language, religion, rituals, traditions, rites and customs, closely related to one's family of origin. This dimensions is concerned about understanding the client's genogram diagram, as well as the client's ethnic background, cultural values, beliefs and cultural norms. It is concerned with how the client's family of origins have influenced or shape the development of the values, beliefs norms and culture in relation to the area of the client's ethnicity. It is interested in how the client's ethnic culture and family culture could be influencing or contributing to the client's problems either directly or indirectly. This is because culture and family are closely related and "cultural

identities and values are often learned within the context of the family” (Cheung, 2000, p. 129).

Hofstede’s (1984) work on culture has been widely recognized and his cultural dimensions theory is a framework for cross-cultural communications. In his theory, he proposed five cultural dimensions along which cultural values could be analysed. They are individualism-collectivism; uncertainty-avoidance; power-distance (strength of social hierarchy), masculinity-femininity and long-term orientation which refers to a society’s perception on time and importance attached to the future. His cultural dimensions may provide insights as to how this ethnicity dimension relates with the larger historical and socio-political forces at work.

For example, a society’s beliefs of masculinity and femininity would likely influence and shape gender roles within families. Society’s beliefs refer to accepted social values, social norms, as well as shared views within the society. For example, in Singapore, the belief in meritocracy may be considered a society’s belief. According to Hofstede (1984), masculine cultures’ values tend to emphasize more on competitiveness, materialism, ambition, dominance, whereas feminine cultural values would emphasize more on relationships and quality of life. In masculine cultures, the differences between gender roles are more dramatic and less fluid than in feminine cultures where men and women have the same values emphasising modesty and caring. It is also interesting to note that gender roles and diversity issues exist not just across cultures but also within the same cultures and sometimes even within the same family. Such differences are important to the counselling process because they do impact the client. Traditional counselling theories that do not take a more culturally sensitive approach may miss out on important aspects that contribute to the holistic development of the client.

Under this dimension, counsellors also need to consider and be sensitive to issues related to differential and unequal treatment especially for clients from minority groups who do not fit into the dominant culture. They may be vulnerable to oppression, discrimination, prejudices and biased treatment that limit their access to opportunities and resources. Social justice counselling is a natural evolution of multi-cultural counselling because of its systemic and contextual approach to understanding clients. Limitations, injustices and gaps in the systems may become

apparent to counsellors and where appropriate to the case, counsellors may need to take on a more proactive advocacy role by helping to mitigate systemic gaps on behalf of their clients.

1.4.4.6 Social

The social dimension of the SPA considers the social circles, social environments, and communities that the client is embedded in, including family, relatives, children, school, and colleagues at work, religious communities, and any social groups that the client is involved in. This dimension is concerned with the interpersonal relationships and social networks of the client both on and offline. In this age of globalisation, the social dimension has to include social media and the online community as consisting of the client's social system as well. This dimension is also concerned with the culture that consists of the shared values, beliefs, their social norms and the social groups the client might be involved in and how they may be contributing or perpetuating the client's problem. Further exploration into this dimension could see it as a protective factor for the client in the midst of his or her crisis. The social dimension also includes social support or aid from social services or welfare institutions that may be rendering specific support to the client.

This social dimension is significant because in every society, social-political, economic and cultural factors do contribute to the development of one's social identity. Social identity comes with certain norms and ways of interactions, communication, social etiquettes and social cues that help one make sense as to how to function in society. Social identity encompasses a person's total psychological identification with social groups and roles that are deemed meaningful and important in shaping attitudes, beliefs and behaviours (Deaux, 1993; Hooper, 1985; Tajfel, 1978). Our view of self is also strongly influenced and shaped by our social identity (Garza & Borchert, 1990).

Social, political and economic institutions, systems, and communities have their own VBNC, which are shared by its members. The influence of these VBNC is pervasive and has significant influence over the client. For example, a Christian of a particular denomination will likely embrace the VBNC of its teachings which in turn may

significantly influence the way he or she choose to live life and make choices regarding lifestyle, career, finances, marriage and relationships.

1.4.4.7 Political/Economics

The political/economic dimension of the SPA refers to factors related to one's country of origin, the country that one is currently residing in or is citizen of. This dimension also covers government, political systems, institutions, political policies, matters pertaining to the law, economic institutions and organisations, economic policies, law, matters relating to the client's place of work, working environment, as well as all financial and economic related matters. It also considers organisational manpower policies and employment acts that govern the corporate and business policies and procedures. On a more personal level, the economic dimension also considers the financial and economic aspects of the client's life, as well as issues related to the client's job, career, workplace, workplace culture, industry that the client is in, as well as work-related challenges, environment and financial issues.

The political and economic institutions in a society usually represent the values and beliefs of the economically and politically powerful in the dominant culture. These values and beliefs strongly influence and shape organisational cultures in the society as well. McDougall (1908) argues in social psychology that effective political and economic policies need to be established upon the understanding of the psychology of the individual. Kanter (1997) has suggested that employees are attracted to organisations with values that are aligned to their own personal values. According to Harrison, Price and Bell (1998), organisations are increasingly relying on functional work groups and teams for creative innovation, problem solving and decision-making. Diversity within teams have been traced to demographic and characteristic differences, as well as deeply held values and beliefs.

According to Hofstede (1984), a society's beliefs regarding the cultural value of power-distance as well as long or short-term orientation would also influence the economic and political policies of the country, as well as values that are being perpetuated in the society. The power distance has been described as the extent to which the less powerful members of organisations and institutions (like the family)

accept and expect that power is distributed unequally. Cultures that endorse low power distance tend to be more supportive of values of democracy and equality. Societies that are more long-term in orientation would tend to attach more importance to the future. Values perpetuated in these societies would include values of pragmatism, persistence, saving, sacrifice for future rewards, capacity for adaptation. In short term oriented societies, values promoted are related to the past and the present, such as respect for tradition, preservation of one's fulfilling social obligations and reciprocal relationships.

This economic dimension also includes organisational culture because the culture of one's workplace is related to the economic dimension of the client's personal life. While organisational culture is under the economic dimension, the social dimension focuses more on the interpersonal relationships in different arenas of the client's life that may include the workplace as well.

Edgar Schein's (2010) model on organisational culture provides insights as to the role of VBNC in shaping organisational cultures. According to him, there are three levels of organisational culture - artefacts; espoused values as reflected in the organisation's mission, philosophy and strategies; and finally, basic assumptions and values, which represents the core or essence of culture. It is at the third level where the organisation's VBNC is operating at an unconscious level. At this level, basic assumptions go deeper into existential issues such as that of existence, nature of humans, relationships and activity, as well as reality and truth. VBNC is not only influential in shaping human behaviour and cultures but organisational cultures as well. Hence, the importance of considering the VBNC within different systems that the client is embedded in cannot be underestimated, as they may have profound influence on the client, usually at an unconscious level.

1.4.4.8 Globalisation

The dimension of globalisation of the SPA refers to the consideration of the impact of globalization, which include global connections, network, global citizenship, and social network like Facebook, Twitter, and as well as international mobility. Increased connectivity is a significant characteristic of globalisation. Communication network is important and it connects the person to the various systems the person is aligned to.

This dimension is important as it provides a sense of belonging and affiliation with people in their environment, and also across geographical borders and time-zones. In the age of globalisation, lack of connectivity is almost unimaginable.

1.5 The SPA Framework

The development of the SPA as a framework provides a holistic approach towards cultivating the optimal development of a helping relationship between the counsellors and their clients. The model provides a multi-dimensional and multi-cultural perspective and to understanding the client and conceptualizing the counselling case by assessing how the eight dimensions impact on the client's bio-psycho social well-being.

The SPA enables counsellors to move away from generalising, stereotyping or taking a one-dimensional view towards their clients. This is because from both a systemic and ecological perspective, one's personal cultural identity are shaped not only by cultural, ethnic factors, personal identity factors but also contextual factors such as political, social, economic, environmental, historical and even one's family system and ethnic background as well (Collins & Arthur, 2010b).

By looking beyond the traditional roles and taking a universal perspective (Ortiz, 2011) instead, counsellors can adopt a multi-dimensional approach to counselling. Such a systemic and contextual approach requires them to be sensitive in considering the client's VBNC during the counselling process. This holistic and comprehensive view would help them understand their clients better and gain insights into the worldview of the client and to developing appropriate treatment plans and interventions for their clients' issues.

Greater awareness and sensitivity to VBNC, which are the roots of multi-cultural issues, would help minimise SPABOD responses that may arise during counselling contributing to better therapeutic rapport with clients. The SPA is designed to address multi-cultural issues as a model for multi-cultural counselling. Its efficacy could be applied in different contexts be it human services, human resource development or even be applied to processes and systems as well.

For the purpose of the thesis, the SPA model is applied to the “Dads for Life” project to indicate the validity of the SPA in measuring multi-culture elements.

1.6 Professional Background to Study

This thesis has been a learning and development journey for the researcher. His learning and reflections from the gathering of knowledge, the personal and professional challenges faced, both life and work experiences led to him developing an interest in the area of multi-cultural aspect of counselling in the workplace, which later led to the development of the SPA model.

A very clear, distinct role that the researcher has assumed throughout his personal and professional life, be it officially or unofficially, is one of leadership. From the genesis of the researcher’s family of origin, to leading a symphony orchestra, later as a counselling psychologist, and now an organisational consultant, his desire has always been to be an agent of change in society, driving change in human performance and system processes. His interest has always been in people development, and helping people to change for the better by exploring with his clients various options to improve their lives, both at personal and professional levels. As an organisational consultant, he explored organisational issues from both a macro and a micro perspective, gaining insights for organisational management and system analysis. When he pursued his postgraduate studies on the applied and social sciences of psychology, it further challenged him to think systemically and creatively in order to consider the limitations of western-centric modalities in addressing multi-culturally issues in counselling.

In the researcher’s professional experience as a counselling psychologist, the annual hospital audits had often reported discrepancies and inconsistencies in the patients’ case notes. Upon investigation, it was observed that because counsellors and psychologists’ case in take forms were not standardised, there was a tendency for counsellors and psychologists to form certain assumptions and biases of their own when evaluating their patients, due to the lack of information collected during the in take and assessment stage. This could be detrimental as it could result in wrong

diagnosis, and as a result of the lack of comprehensive understanding, and faulty assumptions recorded by them.

The researcher hypothesised that in order to minimise faulty assumptions, sweeping perceptions and hidden biases, we needed to be cognizant of thinking in a more systematic and structured manner. Hence, it was the need to improve the protocol of case formulations that sparked off the interest to develop a model that would provide practitioners with a more holistic and systemic tool for case assessment and management. In addition, despite the existence of systemic models found in the counselling field, two common limitations were that they were challenging in its application, and most of them do not sufficiently address multi-cultural issues.

The SPA, therefore, was first developed in order to mitigate a critical gap in counselling psychology. The model was developed to enhance the multi-cultural competencies of counsellors, as there seems to be a lack of framework to help them become more aware of, and identify multi-cultural issues in their practise. There is also a lack of a model that provides a holistic view of client that considers both culture and systemic issues affecting the client. The SPA is developed out of an amalgamation of the schema theory (Young et al., 2003), the bio-psycho social model (Engel, 1980), systemic therapy (Bronfenbrenner, 1977) and the ecological perspective to counselling (Cook, 2012) into one holistic concept, in order to mitigate the gaps in multi-cultural counselling. These counselling theories and models have strongly influenced and shaped the development of the SPA.

The researcher had also worked with various cultural modalities and came to realise that an amalgamation of specific models could help provide a more structured and holistic system for the client's assessment process. The effective outcomes observed when applying the SPA in the context of clinical and organisational counselling, and in both professional and academic settings, eventually led to the development of this thesis.

1.6.1 Researcher's biases

One potential threat to validity that researchers must be careful to watch out for is called researcher's bias (Johnson, 1997). Often the data collected by respondents will be biased by the presence of researcher conducting the study. It has long been recognized that researcher's' characteristics may inadvertently affect results through biased research design or through biased recording, interpretation or evaluation of participant responses (Miyazaki & Taylor, 2007).

1.7 Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to develop a systemic framework, the SPA, as a practical tool for multi-cultural counselling. The action research intent of the study is aimed at providing counsellors with a holistic and theoretically sound approach to dealing with the emerging complex issues due to increasing levels of workforce diversity.

Embedded in theoretically sound constructs, the SPA is designed as a systemic model to help counsellors identify and address multi-cultural issues in counselling. The application of the model to the Singaporean "Dads For Life" (DFL) national research project sought to investigate the relationships between the eight dimensions of the model and the VBNC and to validate the applicability of the measurement model.

The thesis proposes that the use of the SPA as an assessment tool will enable counsellors to assess clients in a more comprehensive and holistic manner empathetic to their cultural frames of reference. By considering the eight dimensions, as well as the VBNC within them the model clearly illustrates its intent to address this compelling, and increasingly urgent workforce issue. This would help counsellors not only to see clients more holistically, but also be more culturally sensitive.

1.8 Objectives of Study

From this study, the researcher hopes to contribute to the counselling industry by introducing a more holistic approach to multi-cultural counselling in the culturally diverse workplaces of Singapore. The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. Undertake a detailed search and review of relevant literature and existing practices;
2. Review existing practice and relevant personnel and practice;
3. Develop and a systemic model as a tool that the industry could use to assess and assist their clients;
4. Implement a suitable project with appropriate methodology to test the proposed model;
5. Disseminate study findings;
6. Propose recommendations; and
7. Identify improvements and developments of the model moving forward.

1.9 Research Design

This section will explain the research problems that lead to the research questions of this study. It will also provide a brief description of the research design and methodology used for purpose of this study.

1.9.1 Research Problems

As Singapore's population becomes increasingly culturally diverse, the workplace is made up of more and more FTs and transnational migrant workers. The implication is that in the field of workplace counselling, there is an increased need for counsellors to develop multicultural-competencies and be equipped with tools to help them be more effective in working with the culturally diverse (Flanagan & Flanagan, 2013).

To propose the SPA as a model to fill the above gaps in the counselling practice, it is being applied to the Dad's for Life (DFL) research project, which is in the context of supporting Singaporean fathers in the workplace. One of Singapore's main economic strategies for maintaining her competitiveness in the global markets, is to invest in human capital and to better support the Singapore workforce. In particular, the DFL project is concerned about the wellbeing and work-life balance of Singaporean fathers in the workplace.

In addition to this, there is the problem that workplace counsellors are not competent in multi-cultural competencies in working with a culturally diverse workforce because of a lack of framework to identify multi-cultural issues related to supporting fathers in the workplace.

1.9.2 Research Questions

To better support Singaporean fathers in the workplace, and to fill the above mentioned gaps in the counselling practise, there is a need to answer the following two research questions that have been designed based on literature review and the current challenges identified in the field of multi-cultural workplace counselling.

Research Question 1: How and to what extent is the SPA a valid and reliable multi-cultural framework for identifying multi-cultural issues in counselling practise in Singapore?

Research Question 2: How and to what extent do pro-father workplace interventions support the wellbeing and work-life balance of fathers in Singapore?

In order to answer the second research question, two sub-questions are designed to provide deeper insights.

Sub-Question 2a: *What is the profile of Singaporean fathers at work in terms of the multi-cultural dimensions of the SPA, and to what extent is the profile influenced by each dimension's VBNC?*

Sub-Question 2b: *To what extent do workplace interventions promote the wellbeing and work-life balance of fathers, and how do their perceptions relate to their SPA profiles?*

1.9.3 Methodology

The methodology adopted by the study assumes a pragmatist paradigm and exploratory, sequential mixed methods research design (Creswell & Clarke, 2011).

There are two phases in sequence for the research design.

Phase 1 involves qualitative focus group discussions (FGDs) to determine the perception of fathers and the efficacy of workplace interventions in promoting wellness and work-life balance among culturally diverse Singaporean fathers in the workplace. Once that is established, to determine the reliability and validity of the measure of the SPA.

Phase 2 is quantitative research that involves survey administration and descriptive statistics to determine the reliability and validity of the measure of the SPA.

1.10 Contribution to Practise

The SPA model provides a holistic framework to assist the counsellor in identifying multi-cultural issues that may arise when working with culturally diverse clients. The SPA enhances the multi-cultural competency of counsellors as it promotes awareness of conflicts and misalignment of VBNC in the therapeutic relationship. It does so by surfacing potential prejudices, discrimination and/or assumptions that could hinder the counselling process.

The SPA provides a structure to assess a client using eight dimensions aligned to Corey's (2009) eight sub-systems – Political/Economic, Mental, Environmental, Social, Physical, Emotional, Cultural and Spiritual. The SPA hopes to bridge the gap between counsellors and their clients, as well as to improve therapeutic efficacy by proposing a holistic and systemic framework, with an emphasis on VBNC for understanding clients.

This multi-dimensional framework helps counsellors consider salient issues with a holistic understanding of clients, thereby contributing to the development of more culturally sensitive therapeutic alliance and effective interventions in counselling.

The SPA model can be applied not only in counselling, but in the workplace to address employees' well-being issues as well. The SPA model is based on systems theory, which was initially developed for the social service industry. Hence, this model may be extended beyond the counselling field to address wider social concerns and hope that its application will produce better-desired outcomes.

1.11 Contribution to Theory

The SPA model is developed from the amalgamation of different theories such as the schema theory, systemic theory and ecological perspective. The SPA model hopes to provide a systemic framework that is not only holistic but with due consideration of VBNC, it hopes to help counsellors to better mitigate multi-cultural issues that may arise in the counselling process. Heightened cultural awareness would help counsellors to be more sensitive to adopt culturally appropriate interventions in treatment.

The counselling profession and her professionals need to be aware of existing multi-cultural issues in their practice because up until recently, counselling theories and techniques has been centred on western-centric practices (Lorelle, Byrd & Crockett, 2012). However, these practices might not be appropriate because they do not take into consideration the multicultural and diversity issues specifically in an Asian context like Singapore. A potential pitfall for counsellors would be to prescribe to ethnocentric western counselling theories and models learnt in their training, without critically considering how they might be culturally appropriate or fit into the worldview of culturally diverse clients.

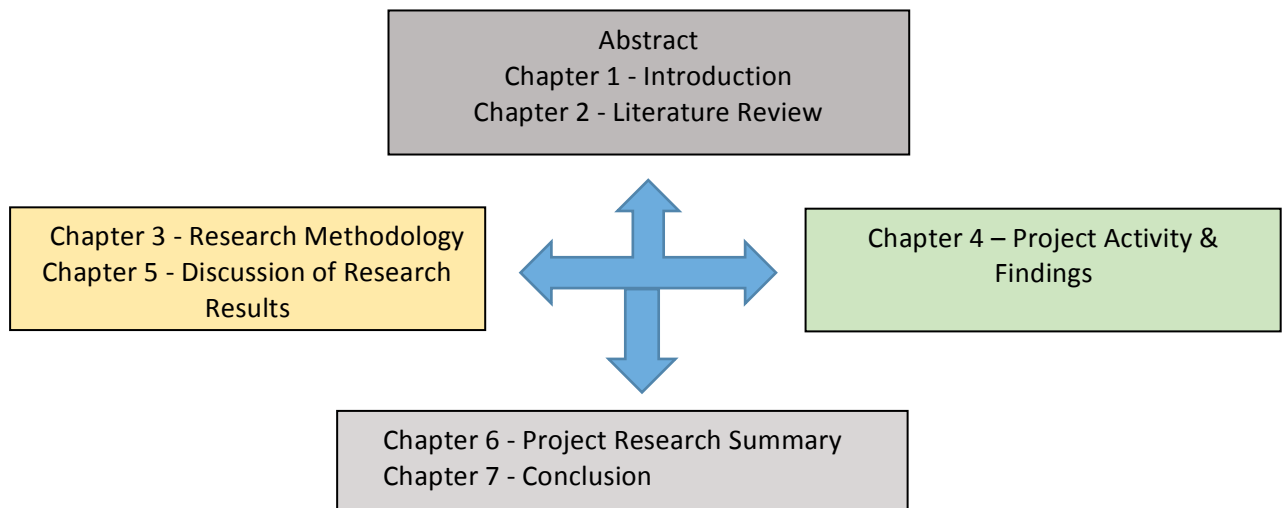
Psychotherapy has been largely conceptualised in the West and it often makes the assumption that Western counselling theories can be applicable to all population (Ivey, Ivey & Simek-Morgan 1980). Most of these traditional counselling models

advocate Western values of individualism and independence. These are different from values of collectivism and inter-dependence relevant to the Asian context. A more multi-culturally competent and culturally sensitive counsellor would be better able to contextualise western counselling theories and interventions so they are more culturally appropriate and effective for the culturally diverse client.

1.12 Structure of Thesis

The thesis illustrates the researcher's approach in delivering the study and documenting the development of the project undertaken. The diagram below (Figure 1.7) demonstrates the outline of the study to ensure a structured framework has been adopted.

Figure 1.7 – Thesis Structure



1.13 Conclusion

Everyone is vulnerable to inheriting the biases that are being perpetuated in the societies we live in, and through the process of social conditioning, while being completely unaware of them (Sue & Sue, 2010). Counsellors are also vulnerable to being influenced by stereotypical views or biases against migrants. There is therefore, an increasingly critical imperative for counsellors to exercise high levels of self-awareness.

A key premise of the study is to help counselling professionals better identify and manage multi-cultural issues that may affect therapeutic alliance in the counselling process. In an increasingly culturally diverse Singapore context, there is a growing need for counsellors to be better trained and equipped in multi-cultural competencies in counselling. The SPA is therefore both a systemic framework, as well as a multi-cultural model for counselling culturally diverse clients.

This study seeks to investigate the validity and reliability of the SPA as framework for identifying multi-cultural issues in counselling practise in Singapore. The next chapter will discuss the outcomes of the literature review process that helped to identify the gaps in current research in multi-cultural counselling, and how this study can further contribute to the body of knowledge in this field.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of the literature review is to lay the foundation for the research study. This can only be done with a comprehensive understanding of the literature in the field (Randolph, 2009). The literature review will help to provide the context and clarify the research question, review the significant historical contributions in the field, explain important concepts and vocabulary related to the study, identify existing gaps in research and provide the reasoning for this proposed research study.

This chapter will provide the background of significant historical development in the field of multi-cultural counselling. It will also critically discuss and clarify the concept of multi-culturalism in the context of multi-cultural counselling. It will also seek to explain important concepts related to this study such as concepts like multi-cultural counselling, multi-cultural competencies and workplace counselling. It will also discuss issues that would provide the relevant context in relation to this study like the impact of diversity in the workplace, and how work-life balance and occupational stress have contributed to the rising role of the EAP as a form of workplace counselling service. Finally, it will also discuss the counselling theories that have inspired the development of the proposed conceptual model.

Reviewing the literature review will uncover existing gaps in multi-cultural counselling research and the limitations of major counselling theories and existing multi-cultural counselling models, which contribute to the need for a more holistic, systemic and culturally-sensitive framework in multi-cultural counselling. This will thereby help to clarify the focus of the study and provide the reasoning behind the proposed model of the research. The purpose of the research study is to propose a multi-cultural counselling model that would provide a holistic and culturally sensitive framework for counsellors working in a multi-cultural context with culturally diverse clients.

2.2 Multi-culturalism

Multi-culturalism is a much-debated concept among the social science disciplines ranging from sociology (Hall 2000), anthropology (Vertovec, 2007; Turner, 1993), political philosophy (Taylor, 1992; Kymlicka, 1995), psychology (Berry, 2011; Fowers & Richardson, 1996), social and cross-cultural psychology (Chryssochoou, 2004; Crisp & Turner, 2010; Van de Vijver et al., 2008)

The beginnings of the concept of multi-culturalism could be traced to Horace Kallen (1915) who advocated for cultural pluralism in America and arguing against assimilation and melting-pot theories of his times. However, it was sociologist, Stuart Hall (1932-2014) who became known as the godfather of multi-culturalism because of his influential contributions in the fields of sociology and cultural studies, especially in the area of race, ethnicity and gender. He defined multi-culturalism as “strategies and policies adopted to govern and manage the problems of diversity and multiplicity which multicultural societies throw up.” Also according to him, the term, ‘multi-cultural’, when used adjectivally then “describes the social characteristics and problems of governance posed by any society in which different cultural communities live together and attempt to build a common life while retaining some of their ‘original’ identity. (Hall, 2000, p. 209).

In relation to strategies in governing and managing diversity, multi-culturalism is a highly controversial ideology in the political discourse. There have been many controversial debates over whether multi-culturalism really contributes to the progress in equality through the recognition of socio-cultural differences. Critics have argued that it is simply a means of control, rationalizing oppression through the perpetuation of inequality through the categorization of people within racial/ethnic groups, by promoting tolerance & limiting access to resources, rights and privileges based on group rights (Kymlicka, 1995; Chua, 2003).

In countries like Singapore and Canada, multi-culturalism has contributed to some degree of social integration and harmony, as accommodation and tolerance of different cultures is being institutionalised into legislation, so that it becomes part of the country’s value and over all culture. In 1971, Canada adopts multi-culturalism as an official policy. Such an ideology in theory validates the dignity and value of all citizens regardless of racial or ethnic origins, language, or religion. The purpose of

such a policy is for the integration of people from diverse ethnic origins into the Canadian society by promoting equality through active participation in the country's social, cultural, economic and political affairs (Beiser, 2005; Berry, 1982; Pascal & Wagner, 2011).

However, in reality, the practice of multi-culturalism is much more complex, and its impact much often debated. Critics of this official multi-culturalism policy have argued that there is less emphasis on shared rights and identities of Canadian citizenship, and more emphasis on differences between minority groups. This has led to the limitations of freedom as a result of perpetuating differences between groups through confining them to "geographic ethnic enclaves of social ghettos" (Giuliana, 2009, p. 16).

Contemporary critics have expressed concerns over negative outcomes of Canadian's multi-culturalism policy such as the perpetuation of conflicts within and between groups, the marginalization of rights of those who are linguistically not integrated, as well as the abolishment of minority cultural practices in favour of a dominant national culture (Stoffman, 2002 & Garcea, 2008). Others also argued that multi-culturalism has led to much inequality in the labour markets for ethnic minorities and immigrants in Canada (Hasmath, 2012). Likewise in America, multi-culturalism seems to require collectivistic minority groups to make changes in order to fit into the more individualistic dominant culture (Pedersen, 2000). Hence, the policy of multi-culturalism seems more ideal in theory than in practice.

Critics of multi-culturalism have gone as far as criticizing it for rationalizing oppression by perpetuating social and economic inequality among social groups. Nelson Mandela and his government's "rainbow nation" campaign in 1994 of post-apartheid segregationist ideology aimed at ending racial discrimination and developing a unique South African identity. While there has been some measure of success, even till today, creating a rainbow nation remains an obscure challenge. Due to the scars left by years of fragmentation that has contributed to much mistrust, suspicion and unequal access to resources especially among the lower classes of the society, contributing to the persistence of violence and poverty in the nation (Mwakikagile, 2008; Nigel, 2000; Bekker & Leildé, 2003).

Feminist scholars have also argued that multi-culturalism has led to the tolerance of cultural practices that perpetuate gender inequality and thereby undermining women's rights (Phillips, 2007). In recent years, increasing disillusionment over multi-culturalism has even led to considerable discussions about the "death of multi-culturalism" in the U.K (Modood, 2007; Kundnani, 2002).

The different academic disciplines would provide different varying perspectives, insights and critique to the subject of multi-culturalism. For example, from an anthropological perspective, "anthropology and its various concepts of culture are not principally oriented towards programs of social change, political mobilization, or cultural transformation" (Turner, 1993, p. 3). The social psychology approach would study multi-culturalism from the perspective of social representation of a collective shared system of "values, ideas and practices" (Moscovici, 2000; Jovchelovitch, 2007; Wagner & Hayes, 2005) and propose the "conceptualisation of multi-culturalism as a system of social knowledge embedded in everyday practice and ways of thinking" (Howarth & Andreouli, 2012, p. 9).

Therefore, in order to clarify the definition of multi-culturalism for this study, there is a need to understand it in the specific context of counselling. In the field of counselling and psychology, the concept of multi-culturalism needs to extend beyond ethnic and cultural categories to include diversity factors. This is because a person's cultural identity is influenced and shaped by cultural, contextual, as well as diversity factors (Arredondo et al., 1996; Collins & Arthur, 2010a, 2010b & 2010c; Pedersen, 2001).

Cheung (1998, 2000) emphasizes the important relationship between culture and psychopathology. She suggests, "culture defines what constitutes problems and explains the nature and cause of these problems" (Cheung, 2000, p. 124). A multi-cultural psychology would be concerned with "the psychological reactions of individuals and groups caught up in culturally heterogeneous settings" including the "behaviours, perceptions, feelings, beliefs, and attitudes" that result from living in such conditions (Bochner, 1999, p. 21). When applied specifically to the context of the counselling relationship between the counsellor and the client, it is interested in how the interaction of different cultural identities in the context of counselling affect the outcomes of the counselling process.

Hence, for the purpose of this study, the definition of multi-culturalism in the context of counselling is defined as the process of understanding how dimensions of cultural diversity such as ethnicity, culture, values, beliefs, norms, attitudes, behaviours communicative styles; together with contextual and systemic factors like age, gender, ability, religion, language, socio-economic status, political factors, sexual orientation and the global environment; influence both the counselling process and the relationship between the counsellor and the client (Arredondo et al., 1996; Collins and Arthur, 2010a, 2010b & 2010c; Pedersen, 2001). According to Cheung (1998, 2000) counselling needs to be deconstructed in the context of the specific culture that it is being applied to, for it to be effective and relevant. This study then seeks to understand the multi-cultural counselling as it is applied to the context of multi-cultural Singapore.

In Singapore, multi-culturalism has become the national policy in nation building since her independence in 1965. The multi-racial composition of a society's population constitutes the empirical reality of everyday life in many post-colonial states such as Singapore (Chua, 2003). Singapore, a multi-racial, multi-lingual, multi-cultural society was originally a country of immigrants mainly from Malaya, Indonesia, China and Europe. Initially the Malays, who were the natives, formed the majority of the population. By 1871, the Chinese took over the number one position as the largest ethnic group, pushing the Malays to second place.

As immigrants converge from different countries in the initial stages of building up the modern Singapore that we know today, a high degree of ethnic and cultural diversity characterised the island. The national policy of multi-culturalism is instrumental to the process of ethnic integration that is key to the cultural development of Singapore. National integration was dependent on the interactions between ethnic groups and the perceptions one group has of another. Till this day, many policies, campaigns, services and even daily decision-making processes may be profoundly impacted by these interactions and perceptions. The counselling practice is not any different (Wielemans & Chan, 1992).

As mentioned, the rapid influx of migrant workers and foreign talents, has contributed to changing demographic trends in multi-cultural Singapore. The influx of foreign talents and immigrants into Singapore has also contributed to a rise in transcultural

marriages and families. A rising cause of concern for the Singapore government is the noticeable intensifying of anti-migrant sentiments over social media especially during 2008 and 2010. During that period, there are also considerable backlashes against the government pro-migrant workers' immigration policies.

Hence, the multi-culturalism policy of Singapore today faces the challenge of cultivating an inclusive attitude of cultural tolerance and social integration towards the culturally diverse of migrant populations (Yeoh & Lin, 2014; Chan, 2013). In its practise of multi-culturalism as a national policy, Singapore continues to face the intrinsic tension between "trying to create a common unifying Singaporean identity while, on the other hand, persistently emphasising the racial and the ancillary cultural differences between Singaporeans" (Vasu, 2008).

Changes in the demographics of society has indeed brought with it new challenges to the workplace, as well as to the counselling profession in Singapore. One such challenge is the need for counsellors to be better equipped in multi-cultural counselling competencies in their professional training, so they can be more effective in building a culturally sensitive working alliance with the culturally diverse.

Counselling in the context of multi-culturalism therefore needs to consider not just ethnic and cultural factors but diversity issues such as age, gender, ability, religion, language, socio-economic status and issues, political factors, sexual orientation and the global environment. Since both the client and counsellor bring their unique cultural identities into the counselling, the interaction that happens between them is a process of multi-cultural interaction (Laungani, 1997; Pedersen, 2001; Sue et al., 1992). If therapeutic alliance is so key to effective therapeutic outcomes, then counsellors need to work at building culturally-sensitive working relationship with their clients (Roysircar et al., 2003; Meissner, 2006; Patterson, 1996). To do so they need to develop multi-cultural competencies as part of their core professional competencies (Collins & Arthur, 2010a, 2010b; Pedersen, 1990, Sue et al., 1996).

Globalisation has contributed to the growth of a culturally diverse workforce in the world, including Singapore. The prevailing influx of foreign talents and immigrants in the last decade has led to growing diversity and multi-cultural issues in the workplace. There is a growing need not only for a framework that provides a systemic and multi-dimensional, contextual approach to understanding clients and

their problems, but also a framework to help develop awareness, knowledge and skills related to multi-cultural competencies needed for counselling.

2.3 Multi-cultural Counselling

Defining and understanding multi-culturalism in the context of the field of counselling is a key foundational concept of this study. It is therefore, pertinent to discuss the literature review related to multi-cultural counselling and consider its implications to this study.

Multi-cultural counselling originated in the 1950s (Jackson, 1995) in the US in response to a growing diversity in race, culture and language (Sue, Arredondo & McDavis, 1992). Since it originated, the multi-cultural counselling movement increasingly advocates for the recognition and consideration of diversity issues including that of culture, language and race in the counselling process (Sue et al., 1992). In those early years, issues such as systematic discrimination, prejudice and racial segregation were becoming increasingly prevalent due to social inequality and political policies in the United States.

The history of multi-cultural counselling has been closely linked to these social and political developments in the United States, such as the civil rights movement. “The multi-cultural movement in counselling began in the 1960s and 1970s to challenge the cultural bias behind the Eurocentric counselling theories and practice. The movement called attention to forces of racism, discrimination, and prejudice that caused much injustice in the U.S mental health delivery system, as well as in the larger social and cultural system” (Gerstein et al., 2009, pg. 22). The counselling theories and techniques of the white, European middle-class also did not seem effective when working with clients from minority ethnic cultures, of lower economic statuses, or from non-Western cultures (Wohl, 1989).

Counselling objectives were perceived by some as an attempt to blend clients of colour into the white dominant culture. The misery faced by minority groups due to these inequalities then, gradually led to a push for a change in the society, and in the counselling profession as well. Increased studies, publications and formation of professional bodies in the 1960s created greater awareness of the counselling

profession in addressing multi-cultural differences, resulting in the development of standards for counselling training and practice requiring counsellors' awareness and understanding of clients' environment and diverse life experiences (Sue & Sue, 2003). By the 1990s, multi-cultural counselling became a subject of priority in the counselling profession (Jackson, 1995).

In the 1980s, the first framework of multi-cultural competencies was initially published in *The Counselling Psychologist* with 11 foundational competencies. A decade later a revised version was published with 31 competencies categorised into (a) "Counsellor's awareness of own assumptions, values and biases" (b) "Understanding the worldview of the culturally different client;" and (c) "Developing appropriate intervention strategies and techniques" (Sue et al., 1992, pg. 481). In the 1990s, intentional efforts were made to operationalise the competencies, as well as extending them to include systemic and organisational issues. Organisational development was included as a fourth category of multi-cultural competence by the end of the decade (Arredondo et al., 1996; Sue et al., 1998).

The influence of culture is so pervasive that it plays an important role in every area of practice, from assessment to case conceptualisation, the counselling process, as well as supervision (Sue et al., 1992; Liu et al., 2004). Multi-cultural Counselling and Therapy (MCT) has been defined as a helping role that uses culturally-appropriate modalities and defined goals that are aligned with the cultural values and life experiences of clients (Sue et al., 1992). It also promotes the use of culture specific and universal methods in the therapeutic process. The three components of awareness, knowledge and skills of the tripartite model proposed by Sue et al. (1992) became the core competencies in multi-cultural counselling. Awareness has to do with one's "sensitivity in multi-cultural interactions and experiences"; knowledge measures the practitioner's "case conceptualization, treatment ability and cultural knowledge"; skills has to do with counselling skills needed to for developing an effective working relationship with clients (Liu et al., 2004, p. 326).

Multi-cultural counselling seeks to examine the role of socio-cultural influences in relation to psychological issues (Axelson, 1994; Marsella, 1985). Some significant contributions of multi-culturalism to counselling include the consideration of the influence of culture on human behaviour; the influence of how cultural norms, values

relate to the problems in therapy, and ways of coping developed within each culture to deal with these problems (Das, 1995; Kleinman, 1988).

Multi-cultural counselling competency is then defined as “the ability to integrate multi-cultural and culture-specific awareness, knowledge and skills into counselling interaction (Arredondo et al., 1996, p.43). Counsellors’ awareness of their own cultural values and biases is an important aspect of multi-cultural competency. Arredondo et al. (1996) identified specific counselling competencies related to the attitudes and beliefs of the culturally competent counsellor. They include counsellors being self-aware of how and their own cultural background, personal and cultural experiences shape their own values, beliefs, biases and prejudices. Competencies would also include being able to acknowledge their own limitations in multicultural competency and being able to mitigate the socio-cultural differences or misalignment that may arise in the therapeutic process (Arredondo et al., 1996, pp. 57–58).

The concept of multi-cultural competence is connected to inter-cultural interaction where the need to develop an understanding for the culture of others are to be appreciated (Beamer & Varner, 2001; Kim, 2008; Seelye, 1996; Taylor, 1994). From a broader perspective, multi-cultural competence comprises of four different dimensions: skills, cognition, attitudes and action (Banks, 1994; Nieto, 1999; Noel, 1995). Multi-cultural competence is not to be learnt by memory, but to be internalised and evident in an individual’s attitudes, behaviour and actions (Clough & Holden, 1996).

An inter-culturally competent person understands cultural diversity and is skilfully adept in working with different kinds of people, with different cultures in different situations (Kim, 2008). They are also capable of making decisions that are not bounded by bias or prejudices, which are not congruent to their values, beliefs, norms and culture. This competence can improve with more experience in working with clients from multi-cultural backgrounds and enhanced communication skills. Through this, the counsellor can learn to look beyond his or her stereotypes, assumptions and discriminations.

In counselling culturally diverse clients, empathy, specifically cultural empathy is extremely pertinent to the therapeutic relationship. Empathy in counselling is described as the counsellor’s ability to experience the world as the client does, both

cognitively and emotionally (Chung & Bemak, 2002). When this also takes into consideration dimensions of cultural diversity of the client, it is known as cultural empathy. Ridley and Lingle (1996) describe cultural empathy as the counsellor's ability to experience and communicate concern for diverse clients in a relatable fashion by going beyond simply understanding cultural knowledge to including emotional understanding specific to the client.

Egalitarian relationships may be most suitable for some culturally diverse clients, especially those who have been disempowered by chronic oppression (Cheatham et al., 2002; Slattery, 2004). Many concepts that gave rise to egalitarian relationships can be traced back to feminist therapy that run contrary to the ideas of traditional counselling theories which attribute more power to the counsellor in the counsellor-client relationship.

According to Sue and Sue (2011) and Arredondo et al. (1996), counsellors who wish to use socially and culturally appropriate interventions need to be familiar with theoretical approaches and be able to be culturally sensitivity in their communication with clients. They would also need to design interventions that would cater to the unique needs of clients based on their strengths and weaknesses, be creative and open to the possibility of using interventions that go beyond traditional counselling such as folk healing, and also consider systemic interventions.

Adapting traditional interventions for culturally diverse clients can be as simple as providing some context to the purpose of the intervention or as complex as infusing unique cultural variations. It is important to note that working with diverse clients does not mean discarding all traditional counselling practices (Sue & Sue, 2011) but rather, orientating those clients to the interventions and the counselling process and aim (Arredondo et al., 1996). By orientating the clients to the purpose of the session, clients may share insights as to what they feel comfortable with, to help counsellors adopt more culturally appropriate interventions that are aligned with their worldviews, cultural values and perceptions.

A major criticism of multicultural competencies is that too much emphasis is given to race and ethnicity, while other dimensions that make up one's personal cultural identity have been either excluded or neglected (Coleman, 2004; Vontress & Jackson, 2004). In recent years, more authors in the field are arguing for the need to

consider a broader definition of culture, to include diversity issues such as gender, ability, religion, age, economic status, sexual orientation and even language (Daya, 2001; Pedersen, 2001).

They proposed a more multi-dimensional approach to understanding one's personal cultural identity by including the consideration of diversity issues, social-cultural and contextual, as well as personal identity factors (Arthur & Collins, 2007; Collins & Arthur 2010a, 2010b; Mollen et al., 2003). Arthur & Collins (2007) notably introduced the model of culture-infused counselling which focuses on building culturally-sensitive working alliance between counsellors and client.

Due to significant demographic changes that took place in the United States, multiculturalism grew in importance such that it became "fourth force" in helping to complement the three classical dimensions of psychodynamic, humanistic/existential, and behavioural psychology (Pedersen, 1999). According to Pedersen (1991), multiculturalism is a powerful force within the school counselling profession as it aids individuals to better understand diverse cultural groups, as well as promote self-awareness and greater understanding of one's own culture. With increased cultural diversity due to the influx of increasing number of migrants to the Singapore society and workplace, it has become pertinent for counsellors to be better equipped in multi-cultural competencies so that they can be more effective when working with a transnational and culturally diverse workforce.

It appears that in the area of enhancing awareness and knowledge of multi-cultural competencies, much of multi-cultural research emphasis has been on exploring and defining multi-cultural competencies (Arredondo et al., 1996, Arthur & Collins, 2007; Collins & Arthur 2010a, 2010b; Constantine & Ladany, 2001; Mollen et al., 2003; Sue et al., 1992). The next section will explore some existing multi-cultural models that seek to address this two specific areas of multi-cultural competencies and surface some gaps and limitations in the operationalisation these models.

2.3.1 Limitations of Some Existing Multi-cultural Models

The tripartite model of MCT proposed by Sue et al. (1992) highlighted 3 key components of multicultural counselling competencies categorized as awareness, knowledge and skills. It emphasizes on awareness of the counsellor's own values, biases, stereotypes, prejudices and worldview, as well as the knowledge of client's cultural contexts and cultural identity for more effective therapeutic outcomes in multi-cultural counselling (Sue & Sue, 2010).

Sue's cultural identity models are social identity development model useful in understanding and treating culturally diverse clients. This model progresses from dominant culture acceptance to minority culture acceptance. The model has a more complex level where minority culture acceptance is connected to other cultures including the dominant ones (Sue & Sue, 2011). It is important to note that with various dimensions of diversity, a single individual may relate to a few of them simultaneously.

According to Reynolds and Pope (1991), people live in a blend of social identities that give rise to a very complex experience and understanding of themselves and society. Thus, they may experience different levels of identity development and may have different views regarding the various identities they relate to. Since each level of development is related to different feelings and experiences, social identity development models can be applied to help counsellors and therapist to better understand their clients' experiences and feelings. One example would be having an African American therapist attend to a client who may have trust issues due to past racial discriminations.

Social identity development models not only help counsellors and therapists to understand their clients better but also, understand themselves better during their counselling process (Helms & Cook, 1999). While useful, we should note that even social identity development models have their limitations when used too rigidly. Reynolds and Pope (1991) advised against over-simplifying the use of identity development models or subscribing clients too strictly to specific categories in the models.

Aside from social identities, counsellors also need to understand their clients' unique experience of the world. This is where the concept of worldview is useful. The concept of worldview include the consideration of individual, group and universal dimensions, cultural upbringing, life experiences, as well as clients' perceptions that influence how they make decisions and ascribe meaning to things (Ibrahim, 1991). Other worldview considerations include family, history, language and biological, ecological and environmental influences (Kehe & Smith, 2004).

The model developed by Ibrahim (1991) is the Scale to Assess Worldviews, which encompasses five categories. These five categories are view of nature, human nature, relationships, activity and time orientation. Locus of control assesses how much influence a person believes he or she has on his or her own life. On the two end of the spectrum are internal and external loci of control respectively. Internal locus of control at one spectrum indicates that the person believes he or she has more control while external locus of control on the other spectrum indicates that the person believes that external factors have a stronger influence. Locus of responsibility assesses where a person believes responsibility lies. The two extremes involve attributing responsibility to either the individual or the system (Sue & Sue, 2003).

Individualism and collectivism are two other characterizations of worldviews. Individualism is where the individual places his or her own goals at the centre of importance whereas collectivism is where people as a collective, such as family or nation, are placed at the centre of importance (Oyserman, Coon & Kemmelmeier, 2002). By understanding their clients' worldviews, counsellors and therapists are able to understand their clients' unique experiences, perceptions and issues more accurately.

A significant limitation of social identity models and worldview models is that they are difficult to operationalise and they do not provide a practical framework that allows for the holistic and systemic understanding of the client in counselling. Without considering the impact of systems on the client and the influence of the contexts that the client is embedded in, it could hinder the counsellor's capacity to intervene in an integrated and culturally appropriate manner. This is because it is not just about understanding one's cultural identity but one's dynamic inter-relationship with his

cultural and socio-political contexts and systems, that would provide a more holistic understanding of what is contributing to the client's problem.

Other multi-cultural models that are helpful in increasing counsellor's own self-awareness and providing greater understanding of client's cultural identity include D'Andrea & Daniels' RESPECTFUL Counselling Cube model (2001), Pamela Hay's ADDRESSING framework (2001), McFadden's transcultural model of stylistic counselling (1996), as well as Locke's increasing multicultural understanding (IMU) model (1998). The RESPECTFUL model identifies 10 domains that act as cultural lenses through which counsellors experience their clients and also assess how differing views of these domains by diverse clients may affect the counselling process.

The domains are religion and spirituality (R), economic class background (E), sexual identity (S), psychological maturity (P), ethnic and racial identity (E), chronological stage (C), trauma (T), family background (F), unique physical characteristics (U), and geographical location (L). The ADDRESSING framework emphasizes on **A**ge and generational influences, **D**isability status (developmental and acquired physical/cognitive/psychological disabilities), **R**eligion and spiritual orientation, **E**thnicity, **S**ocioeconomic status, **S**exual orientation, **I**ndigenous heritage, **N**ational origin and **G**ender.

A significant area that is lacking in both these models is their limitation in understanding client's correlation and interaction with the socio-cultural, political and economic systems around him or her, leading to a less than holistic view of client. It is insufficient to understand one's cultural identity apart from considering how the individual is both interacting, and being shaped by the systems around. The addressing framework is also limited in providing a holistic view by neglecting to consider the impact of family, developmental histories, as well as psychological/emotional aspects of the client.

McFadden's model of stylistic counselling focuses on 3 primary dimensions including cultural historical, psycho-social and scientific-psychological-which comprise of a plan of action in relation to issues related to ethnic/race relations, media, institutional and individual goals (McFadden, 1996). According to McFadden (2003), effective multi-cultural counselling involves the ability to transcend cultural differences so that

active interaction with people from other ethnicity or cultures would consider issues of cultural identity and contextual assimilation.

Locke's IMU model emphasises heavily on the cultural dimensions of identity that considers 10 dimensions from acculturation, poverty and economic concerns, history of oppression, language and the arts, racism and prejudice, socio-political factors, child-rearing practices, religious practices, family structure & dynamics to cultural values & attitudes (Locke, 1998). His model promotes awareness of one's own cultural identity in order to better understand others.

Both of these models may place more emphasis on socio-cultural influences and the family on the individual, they are however limited in providing a holistic view of the individual without considering the emotional, cognitive, behavioural-issues related to the individual schema of the client, and it also seems to neglect aspects related to religious, spiritual and other philosophical issues. In addition, they also do not take into consideration the dynamic interaction and correlation between the social-cultural systems and the individual, but emphasize more on understanding the individual based on static racial/ethnic/social-cultural categories.

In recent years of multi-cultural counselling research, there has been more studies that investigate the relationship between the counsellor's self-awareness of his own ethnic identity and multi-cultural counselling competency. One such model is the Person(al)-As-Profession (al) (P-A-P) trans-theoretical framework proposed by Delsignore et al. (2010). Their framework is based on Helms' (1990) racial identity development (RID) theory and multi-cultural counselling competency. RID explores how one's racial and ethnic background and experiences influence one's attitudes, beliefs, perceptions towards people of other ethnic groups. The premise of the P-A-P framework is that "aspects of one's person(al) attributes and identity are not mutually exclusive from one's profession (al) perspective or identity as a mental health practitioner" (Delsignore et al., 2010, p. 353).

The findings among White mental health practitioners support a direct relationship between an individual's RID and multi-cultural counselling competency. The implication of the study shows that the ethnic background and personal experiences of counsellors shape their attitudes and beliefs towards clients of different ethnic-cultures, and thereby affecting their professional multi-cultural competency in

counselling (Delsignore et al., 2010). Like many of such research literature in this area, while the study provided insights to the importance of counsellor's self-awareness to multi-cultural competency, it is lacking in terms of its practical application as in providing practical handles or tools that could aid in the development of counsellor's self-awareness aspect of multi-cultural competencies.

More recently, Arthur & Collins (2005) notably introduced the model of culture-infused counselling which focuses on building culturally-sensitive working alliance between counsellors and client. Their framework "illustrates how the three core competencies-cultural awareness of self, cultural awareness of clients & culture-centred working alliance, interact with the personal cultural identities of the counsellor and the client" (Collins & Arthur 2010b, p. 220). While their model provided much insights by broadening the understanding of cultural dimensions to understanding the client, as well as the related competencies needed for developing a culturally sensitive working alliance; it is limited in its operationalization in practical ways to help counsellors develop those core competencies. It is also lacking in terms of empirical validation as it is based more on conceptual material.

The limitations of these existing models reflect the need for a more systemic and, contextual framework to understand clients and their problems more holistically in the context of multi-cultural counselling. There is a growing need to develop tools that could help in the operationalization of multi-cultural competencies so as to help counsellors develop the awareness, knowledge and skills needed to build culturally-sensitive working alliance and adopt culturally appropriate interventions in counselling.

2.4. Counselling Theories and Limitations

A major criticism of counselling and psychotherapy that have been conceptualized in Western is that these Western theories are based on individualistic western values that do not consider the cultural values, beliefs and norms of other ethnic groups, hindering the effectiveness of counselling. "Counselling professionals who use theory and training based on the monocultural perspective often make the assumption that such a theory base can be applicable to all populations" (Ivey et al., 1980, p.89).

The Western theories in counselling are largely developed from existential and humanistic philosophy. A common assumption of existential and humanistic philosophy is that human beings are capable of making choices and would naturally move towards self-actualisation. Hence, they emphasise on concepts such as “freedom, choice, values, personal responsibility, autonomy, purpose, and meaning” (Corey, 2009, p. 166). However, a lot of these ideas are drawn from the influence of Western values of individualism and independence, which might not sit well with clients from Asian cultures who may highly value collectivism and inter-dependence instead. Another example would be that of the universal feature in psychotherapy of having good relationship with client to enhance therapeutic process. What constitutes good relationship could be very different in different cultures.

Another significant limitation of traditional western counselling theories is their dependence on the etic approach that is based on the assumption of universal principles to explain human behaviour and psychology. The concepts of etic and emic approaches were initially proposed by Pike (1954). Both approaches have different assumptions about culture. The etic approach emphasizes on using universal principles to explain human behavior and seeks to find universal processes that transcend across cultures or to produce new theories that can be utilized across cultures (Fukuyama, 1990; Ridley, Mondoza & Kanitz, 1994). The danger here is the assumption of the *universal man*, that we are all the same and culture does not influence our behaviour.

In contrast, the emic approach seeks “to identify culture-specific aspects of concepts and behavior, which cannot be comparable across all cultures” and that “the best way to understand a culture as an integrated system” (Lu, 2012). The endeavor of cultural anthropologists to understand culture from “the native’s point of view” was the main foundation of the emic approach (Malinowski, 1922). The emic perspective challenges counselors and therapists to re-examine their ideas of “truth” with regard to culture. In most cases, truth may be relative, based on the culture in which one is raised. In that case, it is important to recognize these cultural variations in order to best understand members of other cultural groups.

In counseling terms, the etic approach views clients as “culturally universal” while the emic approach views clients as “culturally specific”. (Sue & Sue, 2011). These

different approaches can influence the way one does counseling especially in the diagnosis of psychopathology. For example, a counselor taking an etic perspective believes that disorders such as schizophrenia or depression and the behaviors that come along with them occur the same way in every society. Usually this is based on the counselor's ethnocentric beliefs that what is considered normal and abnormal in Western cultures is the same in every culture, which may lead to a false and even dangerous assumption that mental disorders are universal and all clients should and can be treated and diagnosed in the same matter. On the other hand, a counselor coming from an emic perspective believes that many factors come into play when diagnosing and treating a client especially with regards to their culture. Some factors can include cultural values, morals, and lifestyle. Clients should be looked at as individuals, not as a whole from a Euro-American standpoint (Sue, 2001).

Different cultures have different ways of life and every factor should be considered when treating and diagnosing clients from different cultural backgrounds. Sommers-Flanagan & Sommers-Flanagan (2012) noted that human distress may not be seen primarily through a psychological lens, as it may be viewed religiously or philosophically instead and also there are great variations within different cultures for the attribution of disorders or psychopathology. There is a need to be discerning when using standardized assessment instruments and diagnoses or pathological labelling based on Western norms and avoid projection of own culture's diagnostic categories onto culturally diverse clients.

An integration of both etic and emic approaches would provide a more holistic view towards understanding the culturally diverse client. While there is a need to understand the theories and universal principles of human behaviour, there is also a need to take a more phenomenological and culture-specific approach to better understand the client as an unique individual and understand culture through the client's personal experiences. This would help the counsellor to better apply and contextualise western theories in a way that is more culturally relevant and appropriate to the client. Contextualisation is important because "special techniques such as interpreting, advising, and reassuring may not be equally appropriate in all cultures" (Das, 1995, p. 48). When counsellor's intervention conflict with the values and beliefs of the client, it could affect the effectiveness of therapeutic outcome. This section will discuss some of the major western counselling theories and their limitations from a

multi-cultural perspective, when applied to counselling culturally diverse clients.

Psychodynamic therapy that has its origins in Freudian psychology emphasizes on how one's past may potentially be continually and perpetually affecting one's emotions and behaviours in the present (Corey, 2009). A significant limitation is that it did not seem to consider how external factors, or factors outside and the surrounding contexts that the individual is embedded in may also be contributing, precipitating or perpetuating the way problems are being manifested and managed in the life of the individual. The lack of consideration of external, contextual and systemic factors may contribute to a limited view of the individual and the associated presenting issues.

The humanistic-existential counselling theories, such as Carl Roger's person-centred approach, takes a more client-centred approach to therapy (Rogers, 1951). Such an approach provides a growth-promoting environment where the client is free and able to discover and change as much as the person wants and needs to. Key therapeutic skills required in person-centred therapy include active listening, empathy, acceptance, genuineness and unconditional positive regard (Corey, 2009). The client has the best knowledge of how to overcome his or her problems, and is fully capable of changing and growing into what they want to be with the appropriate guidance from the counsellor. Essentially, the client requires favourable conditions in which to develop and grow.

The underlying assumption is that the client is capable of making his own decisions. However, conditions of impaired mental condition, poor physical health, or the influence of medication or drugs may render a client incapable of making rational decisions. It is therefore necessary for counsellors to explore how external and other systemic factors may be affecting the client's behaviours and perpetuating the client's problems, and not just focus therapy on the individual. In addition, person-centred therapy driven by individualistic western values may conflict with collectivistic values of Asian societies. For example, western values of independence and freedom would conflict with more collectivistic, Asian values of inter-dependence that tend to lead one to make decisions that consider the interests of others before one's own self-interests.

Strengths-based theories, cognitive behavioural and solution focused therapies tend to emphasise on events that hinder positive growth in clients' life. The help extended by the counsellor focuses on encouraging positive thoughts and focusing on what is going right in their client's life. The counsellor works together with the client to identify past and present successes and leverage on these to address challenges faced. Specifically in solution focused therapy, counselling focuses on what the client hopes to achieve through therapy rather than on the problem(s) that brought them into therapy. This approach does not focus on the past, but instead, focuses on the present and future. The client is asked to envision how the future will be different should the problem no longer exist (Berg & DeJong, 2002; Walter & Peller, 1992).

These therapies focus more on changing the way the client thinks or perceives their world by challenging or reforming unhelpful, self-limiting and/or maladaptive thoughts or beliefs. These approaches are limited in that they also do not consider how factors extrinsic to the client, as well as how systemic issues may be contributing and perpetuating the client's problems. Holistic health asserts that we have physical, intellectual, social, emotional, vocational and spiritual needs - the neglect of which reduces one's ability to withstand the effects of stress. As a result, we live in a socio-economic condition that can enhance or demean our long-term well-being. Therefore, a holistic view of the client is necessary in counselling to ensure that counsellors gain a complete picture of the how the different bio psychosocial dimensions are affecting the client positively and/or negatively, for potentially more targeted and holistic intervention in the treatment of the client.

The existential approach, also known as "Meaning Therapy", focuses on the person as a whole functioning person who is unique, capable of making choices and taking responsibility, which leads to having freedom and the ability to find meaning in life. The existential approach also focuses on the present experiences lived by and through the eyes of the person, being here and now rather than on the past or the future. As Viktor Frankl (1985) puts it, when one knows the "why" for his existence, will be able to bear almost any "how." This therapy is concerned with creating one's identity and establishing meaningful relationships with others.

The existential approach differs from the systemic approach in that its focal point is on the individual instead of factors extrinsic to the individual. In systemic therapies,

the therapist works within the systems, such as the family or community, to enquire how the system is both an influencer and is “influenced by the individual and what interventions might lead to changes” (Corey, 2009, p. 413) that may be helpful. The systemic approach therefore intervenes into systemic factors such as through working in collaboration with members of the client’s family and extended family, as well as taking into consideration and being sensitive to the client’s ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Such cultural considerations are important because the counsellor needs to be aware that Western individualistic values of freedom of choice advocated by humanistic-existential therapies may be faced with resistance, if the client comes from a collectivistic culture. For example, even if through logotherapy the client discovers a newfound freedom to choose, such a change in perspective might not sit well with other members of the family.

Western values of individualism, freedom of choice, independence, and internal locus of control advocated by humanistic and existential therapies may conflict with collectivistic values of interdependence and community needs over that of self. In Singapore, the family and the nation are considered as the basic building blocks of society (Tan, 2001), whose opinions need to be respected and considered as priority over individual’s interest. The client might then feel limited and hindered in exercising the freedom to choose because of family, social and maybe even national pressures to conform to the dominant culture.

The United States Surgeon General Report of 1999, titled “Mental Health: Culture, Race and Ethnicity” highlighted that traditional counselling theories may not only be ineffective, but even harmful when applied in multi-culture situations. The counselling profession and her professionals need to be aware of existing multi-cultural issues in their practice because up until recently, counselling theories and techniques has been centred on western-centric practices (Lorelle, Byrd & Crockett, 2012). These practices might not be appropriate because they do not consider multicultural and diversity issues in an Asian context like Singapore. A potential pitfall for counsellors would be to prescribe ethnocentric western counselling theories and models learnt in their training in counselling, without critically considering how they might be culturally appropriate or fit into the worldview of culturally diverse clients.

As psychotherapy has been largely conceptualised in the West, it often makes the assumption that Western counselling theories can be applicable to all populations (Ivey et al., 1980). Most of these traditional counselling models advocate Western values of individualism and independence. In the context of Singapore, these values are likely not to sit well with the older generation of Chinese Singaporeans, who values collectivism and inter-dependence instead. Those who strongly adhere to the value of filial piety of Confucianism would struggle with therapeutic interventions that may challenge their compliance to authority. In addition, the universal feature in psychotherapy of what constitutes a good relationship with client in therapy could be very different in different cultures. "Culture is an evitable silent participant in all counselling because counselling is a culture-specific human invention. Each form of counselling is a reflection of the culture that produces it" (Das, 1995, p. 74).

Traditional models of counselling tend to treat race/ethnic issues and social/economic as additional factors instead of being intrinsic to the therapeutic process (Wachtel, 2011). However, we are all impacted and affected by the society and the systems in which we live in. We cannot treat psychological issues without considering the impact of "widely shared social, cultural and economic assumptions and with the concrete way of life those assumptions generate." What is needed is a contextualised perspective of the dynamics to the problem in which both external and internal factors, personal and social dimensions are considered intricately related and "mutually determinative of each other" (Wachtel, 2011, p. 47-48).

Due to the nature of multi-cultural counselling it is needful to be attentive to issues related to culture, ethnicity and diversity, it tends to advocate for a more holistic and contextual view of the individual as a product of culture and the socio-political systems that he or she is embedded in. Hence, it is pertinent in multi-cultural counselling, to consider a systemic perspective of the client and the issue that is presented. This is significant because the development of one's cultural and ethnic identity has been the influence of many different systems such as the family, the socio-cultural contexts, as well as the political-economic systems that one's is embedded in. One cannot view diversity merely in the paradigm of a person's cultural background, without considering the impact of systems upon the individual.

Given the limitations of existing Western theories, the use of culturally-appropriate modalities and defined goals that are aligned with the cultural values and life experiences of clients, would likely lead to more positive therapeutic outcomes (Sue et al., 1992). When the counsellor's therapeutic interventions conflict with the VBNC of the client, it could affect the effectiveness of therapeutic outcome. To adopt culturally appropriate interventions which are aligned to client's worldview and VBNC, counsellors need to be open to consider other non-traditional means of intervention such as tapping into indigenous cultural and spiritual resources, family & friendship networks, religion, alternative healing methods, in order to provide help that is more aligned to the client's cultural worldview.

Culturally appropriate helping are often "in direct violation of therapeutic taboos derived from ethnocentric standards of practice and codes of ethics. Therapeutic actions considered unhelpful and unethical from a Western perspective might actually be considered helpful to clients of different cultural groups (Sue & Sue, 2010, p. 278). The capacity to recommend culturally appropriate counselling treatment goals and interventions would lead to a more integrated approach in case management, because it requires the counsellor to contextualize and integrate counselling theories and interventions, to provide assistance in a culturally relevant manner.

The gap in literature research seems to reveal the need for a model that can help counsellors with the process of contextualization when designing their interventions. As such, a framework formulated with the Asian context in mind that provides a holistic view of the client, would likely add value to the process and improve multi-cultural competencies of counsellors. There is a need for such a tool especially in Singapore where counsellors are facing an increasingly culturally diverse workforce. The next section will explore the impact of cultural diversity in the arena of workplace counselling.

2.5 Impact of Diversity Issues to Workplace Counselling

The issues of diversity with respect to counselling are currently more widely discussed due to an increased drive in providing proficient counselling to diverse populations (Sue & Sue, 2011). The term "multi-cultural" and diversity in the

counselling profession usually refers to differences in race and ethnicity of individuals (Helms & Cook, 1999). Race is usually identified based on physical qualities such as skin colour, the birth place of ancestors and also the opinions of the dominant group. Ethnicity depends on citizenship, nationality, culture, socio-political history, religion or interactions of race (Kehe & Smith, 2004). Beyond the race and ethnicity, socio-economic status, disability status, age, spirituality, gender and sexual orientation are categories for consideration of diversity issues (Adams, Bell & Griffin, 2007). These categories are not exhaustive and other dimensions may be included if deemed relevant (Arredondo et al, 1996).

The term “culture” often stands for “characteristic values, behaviours, products, and worldviews of a group of people with a distinct socio-historical context” (Kehe & Smith, 2004). In counselling culturally diverse clients, cultural difference also include visible traits such as language, clothing, traditions and customs; as well as less noticeable traits such as family structure, social hierarchy, expectations of gender roles, parenting beliefs and communication styles. Pedersen also broadly defined culture “to include any and all potentially salient ethnographic, demographic, status, or affiliation identities” (Pedersen, 1999, p. 3).

The implication is that diversity issues and the cultural contexts one participates in, contribute to the shaping of our personal cultural identities, our beliefs regarding ourselves and others, and our inter-relationships with others (Daya, 2001; Arthur & Collins, 2005; Collins & Arthur, 2010a, 2010b; Mollen et al., 2003). “Each of us will bring our complex and unique multicultural selves into our social interactions with others and into our interpretation of events” (Lott, 2010, p. 14).

Terms involving status, numbers or power are sometimes used when discussing diversity. Some of these terms are “majority” and “dominant culture” for the groups that hold more power; and “minority,” “non-dominant culture” and “under-represented” for groups that hold less power and/or have fewer members. The impact of social and cultural differences is lately given more attention in the counselling profession due to the increasing diversity of the U.S. population (D’Andrea, 2000). While the presence of diversity could lead to a stronger society, other possible outcomes include conflict, misunderstanding and oppression (Bell, 1997).

Diversity issues permeating the business arena have significant implications for work place counselling. Progressive organisations seek a culturally diverse workforce in order to raise their standard of performance, to build competitive advantage and enhance organisational effectiveness (Gilbert & Stead, 1999). However, for this to succeed, the organisational culture and internal policies have to be supportive of this.

Diversity management has become a popular philosophy by organisations aspiring to be a leader in people developer. This concept has caught on so quickly that some successful organisations have seen this as a must-have strategy to increase economic performance and improve productivity. Labour market statistics indicates that the current workforce are becoming more diverse in terms of factors such as age, gender, race, ethnic, origin, sexual orientation, political and religious beliefs (CIPD, 2006).

Globalisation has impacted the change in working patterns geographically. The lack of skilled labour and economic growth are key reasons for the change (Philpott, 2002). To meet the growing business needs, organisations have little choice but to make changes to their recruitment, reward and retention policies to attract quality talents (CIPD, 2006). To survive the rising competitive climate, organisations cannot rely on traditional approaches but need to make radical changes to employee management so they do not lose their talents to competitors.

Organisational culture and values are now all the more critical to create a more inclusive environment for both their local and foreign workforce. As the playing field expands, capital management has become essential in order for organisations to progress and retain their competitive edge. Beyond knowledge and skills, the ability to adapt, innovativeness, responsiveness to change and teamwork have become valuable abilities required of professionals (Adler & Ghadar, 1990, p 253). To remain competitive, organisations have to attract and retain the best available talents (Cox, 1993). This strategic approach have shown to result in greater innovation, improved decisions, and increased organisational performance.

Diversity management of an increasingly culturally diverse workforce becomes important consideration for organisations, without which conflicts, reduced social cohesion and higher turnover rate may occur, thus affecting positive organisational outcomes. Individuals or group members who experience negative effects tend to

show lower levels of psychological commitment with higher levels of intent for turnover and absenteeism (Richard & Johnson, 2001).

For example, organisations with few women especially in senior management positions are more like to display stereotypical gender roles and have less regard for the contributions and support family-friendly initiatives (Kravtitz, 2003). A study involving a random sample of 410 publicly traded firms in five industry sectors between the period of 1978 and 1992 indicated a direct positive relationship between the percentages of female employees to organisations' profitability (Frink et al, 2003). Hence it is important for organisations to conduct regular diversity audits to ensure that the climates in their organisations are supportive of diversity (Mckay & Avery, 2005).

With growing diversity within the employment climate, the risk of biases, stereotyping and prejudices also increases. If these issues are not addressed well, communication and teamwork can be greatly affected giving rise to conflicts, misunderstandings and rigidities (Phillips, 1992). Proactive diversity management policies can help in mitigating these negative issues, and also increase the flexibility of the organisation to function effectively in the global market.

Mai-Dalton (1993) posits a set of important characteristics for effective diversity management, which include providing personal visibility of goals in the long-term that's relevant to employees of different ethnic and cultural groups. An awareness and broad knowledge of multi-cultural and diversity issues would lead to organisational change through encouraging employees' feedback. Mentoring and empowering talents may contribute to positive leadership changes that could bring organisational culture to a new level. Schein (2010) model for organizational culture and leadership also emphasises the importance of leaders understanding the culture they are embedded in, in order for them to lead effectively and bring about effective change to the organisation.

Adler (2002) claims that organisations would be able to benefit greatly through adoption of multi-cultural approaches, which would equip organisations in employing cultural sensitivity and diplomacy, foster relationships that create respect for all parties in order to improve communication and negotiate across cultures. The ability to be sensitive and communicate across cultures, technology competence,

knowledge management and team management are winning skills for organisations (O'Hara-Devereau & Johansen, 1994). Ability to balance conflicting demands in global platforms and responsiveness gives employees an edge in being efficient in working with people from diverse cultures (Tung, 1998). Leaders in organisations also have to be equally multi-culturally competent with strong communication skills, tolerance for ambiguity, exercise flexible behaviours, be empathetic, objective and be conscious of biases (Stahl, Maznevski, Voigt, & Jonsen, 2010).

Many other nations in the world indicate that many organisational leaders are focusing on managing diversity as it holds potential business competitive advantages for their organisations (Cox & Blake, 1991). Managers often wonder if gender or ethnicity improves organisational performance and how to define diversity. (Dass & Parker, 1999). These leaders guess that diversity has the potential to provide business competitive advantage through critical analysis and the right approach to problem solving and decision making (Cox, 1993).

After exploring the definitions of important concepts such as multi-culturalism, multi-cultural counselling, as well as limitations of Western counselling theories and diversity issues in relation to management; the next section will explain how systemic theories have influenced the development of the SPA model.

2.6 Systemic Theories and the development of SPA

Systemic Therapy is a form of psychotherapy that deals with interpersonal relationships and the dynamics between people within a group (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Prochaska & Norcross, 2007; Cook, 2012). It is concerned with interaction patterns and dynamics that occur within groups. The roots of this therapy can be traced back to Ludwig von Bertalanffy (1968), who developed system theory that asserts system as a whole constitutes more than its individual components.

Instead of focusing on the individual as a single entity, systems therapy is more concerned with the individual within the context of the environment. When the balance in a system is threatened, some individuals may develop strengths while others may develop disorders. The individuals who develop disorders can sometimes be excluded from the group or be blamed for certain conflicts. As a result, these

individuals are stifled from exploring all their resources. The task of the therapist is to facilitate these individuals to break the barriers barring them from access to their own resources. The therapy often involves reframing the individual's perception of their own actions, which may be unpleasant, to resources by placing the individual in a different context (Prochaska & Norcross, 2007).

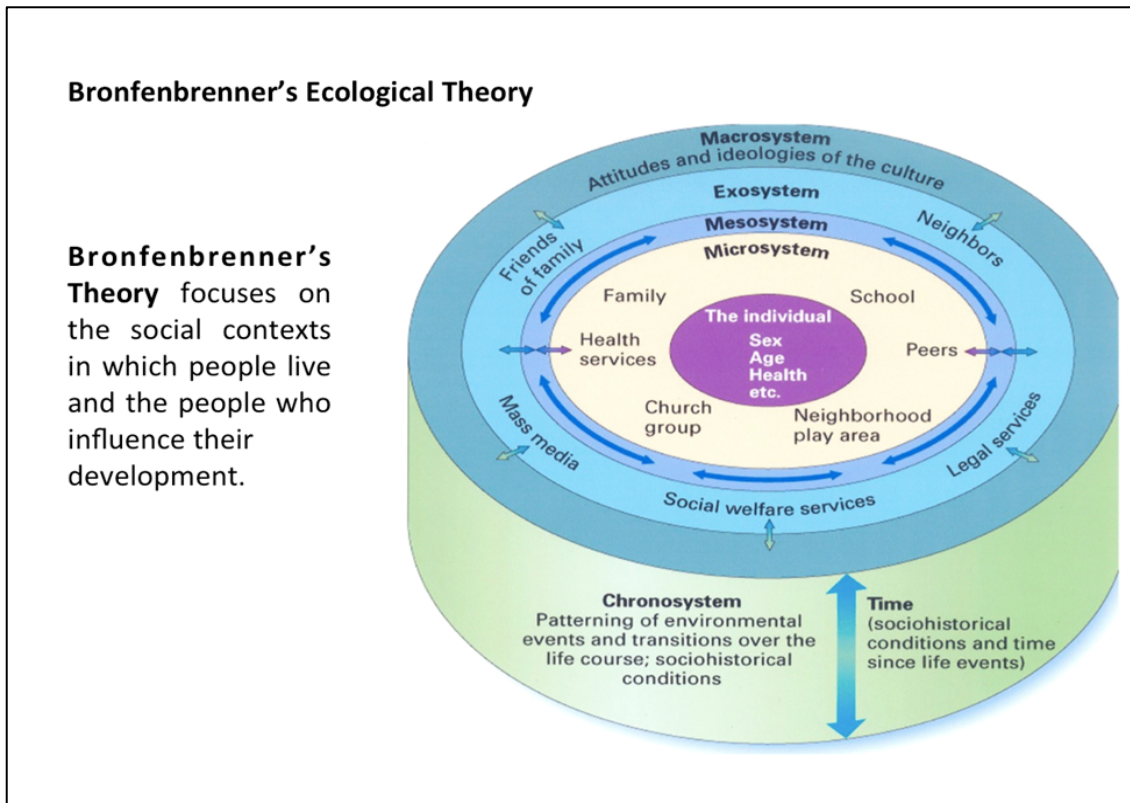
The goal of systems therapy is for a group to gain insight into each member's role as it relates to the healthy functionality of the whole. Systems therapy can be applied to organisations, couples, communities, or families. The technique relies on identifying specific behaviour patterns and how each member responds to anxiety within the dynamic. By doing this, the individual participants can begin to understand and transform their disruptive and unhelpful patterns of behaviour to more adaptive, productive behaviours.

Systems therapy has evolved from a rather single dimensional form of treatment to a multi-faceted method that is applied to many different situations. It strives to help the members of the group attain positive, secure relationships in order to improve their well-being and inter-relational experiences. Many different conflicting situations and issues can be effectively treated systemically. This dynamic and widely recognized form of psychotherapy believes that the family or community is a vital component in its own recovery and to its psychological health. Families, couples, or members of an organisation are directly involved in their own therapy in order to resolve the issue. One of the tools used in this type of therapy is communication. Dialogue is constructed in such a way as to facilitate the recognition and development of knowledge, strengths, and support for the entire entity.

Systems theory is the foundation upon which Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory is built upon. His five environmental systems of one's family, peers, school and neighbourhood, comprises a person's ecological system. Ecological systems theory on human development, postulates that the process of human development is being shaped by the interaction between an individual and his or her environment. His model (Figure 2.1) focuses on the patterning and interrelationship of five environmental factors that would influence and shape an individual's growth and development: the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem, the macrosystem and the chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1992). The social context is

particularly influential in a person's development. According to ecological system theory, changes in one part of the system will affect all others that are interconnected to that system.

Figure 2.1: Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model



Bronfenbrenner's ideas contributed to the rise of a new perspective in counselling and that is the ecological perspective in counselling. Post-modern and the systemic therapies tend to focus on how individuals manage their lives in the context of systems, interactions and social conditioning. The main emphasis of ecological perspective in counselling is that of understanding people in context by considering the interaction of different systems upon the individual.

As bio-psychosocial beings, we are shaped and influenced by social, environmental, cultural, and biological realities, conditioned by our learning and behaviour. At the same time, we are also living embedded in different contexts and within contexts are systems that we are constantly interacting with, and are being influenced by them. Often unaware, these systems play a significant part in shaping and influencing our VBNC.

When applied to multicultural counselling, the ecological perspective emphasises on the importance of understanding cultural and ethnic identity as resulting from interaction of different systems such as psychological, family, sociocultural, political-economic and global systems, that the individual is embedded in. The importance of ecological perspective in counselling lies in understanding people in context, because human behaviour is more interactional than personal (Cook, 2012). A multi-dimensional, systemic approach would help counsellors understand their clients' functioning in light of how they interact with systems around them.

The SPA model shares similar theoretical assumptions with ecological systems theory and also takes an ecological perspective to counselling because of its emphasis on understanding clients holistically by considering their inter-relationship with the systems that they are embedded in. This also includes considering the impact of the primary system that the client is embedded in, which is the family system which is related to the client's family of origin.

Minuchin's structural family therapy (1974) may be helpful in providing insights to understanding how family and social systems are interrelated to the individual and may be contributing and perpetuating one's problem at a systemic level. It is a strength-based, outcome oriented treatment modality based on ecological systemic principles that behaviours are a function of the relationship with others. The success of the family functions is not measured by the absence of distress but viewed from the way members respond to the developing needs in the changing environment. The counsellor help the family enhance their family functions by identifying and activating their strengths. The aim is to help the family develop interaction patterns by leveraging on their existing resources.

The SPA is then similar to the humanistic approach which asserts that, clients are "viewed more than their behaviours, thoughts or feelings" but rather they are viewed as a "combination of all these parts plus spirituality and the impact of the environment" (Herr, 2001, p. 153). It also seems to echo Viktor Frankl's (1984) logo therapy, which states that human beings comprises of physical, psychological and spiritual dimensions, and they should never be confined to just one of the dimensions (Guttman, 2008).

To understand human functioning, it is imperative to account for the physical, emotional, mental, social, cultural, political and spiritual dimensions (Corey, 2009). Even George Engel's (1980) bio-psychosocial model that grew out of behavioural medicine and health psychology which focuses on the psychological, social, and biological dimensions that contribute clients' illnesses, is limited in its lack of consideration of how cultural, ethnic and diversity issues such as gender, economic status, religion, political systems and the impact of global environments. The SPA is therefore, a more holistic framework to aid counsellors in understanding their clients better by providing a framework that considers how different dimensions and systems that are interrelated may be contributing and perpetuating the presenting concern.

The SPA model's emphasis on the consideration of the VBNC of the client would also help the counsellor to become aware of underlying cultural or diversity issues such as one's religion, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, might be contributing to the client's problem and affecting how one think, feel, act and behave. By considering both culture and diversity factors including the client's VBNC, environment, social circles, mentality, emotions, economic and biological predisposition, it enables counsellors to have a more complete view and holistic understanding of the client.

Multi-cultural counselling differs from the other mainstream counselling theories in that it provides a more contextual view of the individual as a product of culture and the socio-political systems that he or she is embedded in. The SPA model is one such multi-cultural counselling model. Hence, to understand human functioning, it is imperative to account for the physical, emotional, mental, social, cultural, political and spiritual dimensions. The systemic model is a holistic framework to aid counsellors in their case formulation process by helping them consider how different dimensions and systems that are interrelated may be contributing and perpetuating the presenting concern.

SPA also considers how one's biological, developmental and environmental predisposition would affect one's cognitive, emotive, perceptive and behavioural development. As according to Kahn (2002), psychodynamic therapy hypothesises that the "early relationships with the people in our environment have a great impact on our subsequent development" (p. 37). The individual schema of the SPA model,

therefore considers how one's childhood developmental history and experiences might have influenced the development of one's VBNC, as well as how patterns and quality of relationships with one's family of origin might be negatively contributing and perpetuating the client's problems.

Hence, the SPA model is holistic and multi-dimensional in that it is not only concern with the external systems surrounding the client, but it also gives attention to understanding what is going on internally in the client. The individual schema is the part of the model that focuses on the internal development of the client's cognition, perception, emotions and behaviours. The way a person feel, act, see, think and the development of one's VBNC are influenced by factors that are biologically, developmentally and environmentally predisposed.

Having an understanding of how different systemic theories undergirds the conceptual framework of the SPA model, the next section will provide explanations of concepts related to workplace counselling, workplace counselling models, work-life balance and the role of EAP.

2.7 Workplace Counselling

Workplace counselling aims to improve the ability and functioning capacities of staff to handle obstacles at work and life in general. When staff are functioning well, it would likely lead to increased productivity and contribute to greater efficiency in the organisation's performance and development. On the contrary, poor ability in managing or coping with work or life stresses have contributed to higher absentee rate, turnover rate as well as lower productivity, which could negatively affect organisational performance.

Workplace counselling is one of the proposed ways to support staff wellbeing and create a healthy work community. Employing workplace counselling spurs better business growth because it not only supports organisational development from a strictly management angle but also, from a more humanistic angle (Cheng, 2010). It is important to note that when we discuss the term workplace, we are not referring to just a physical location but rather, the network of interactions and relationships

among staff, systems, jobs, organisations, inter-relationships and intra-relationships (Cheng, 2010).

There are different schools of thought in workplace counselling. From the perspective of social betterment theory, we would maintain staff welfare while diminishing the influence of unions (Coles, 2003). From the Taylorism perspective, we would be more focused on actions that boost finances and social Darwinism would emphasise on the survival of the fittest (Coles, 2003). Organisations, such as Urban Group, offer Employee Assistance Program (Labour Department, 2009) because counselling for family or personal crises seems to significantly impact work-life issues (Toomer, 1982).

According to the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (2006), the aim of counselling is to “explore a difficulty the client is having, distress they may be experiencing or perhaps their dissatisfaction with life, or loss of a sense of direction or purpose.” It involves a predicament of human functioning (Orlans, 1989) that stems from a thorough understanding of the authentic self (Coles, 2003) and simple restructuring of personality (Orlans, 1989). An employee spends significant portion of his time in the workplace and so what happens at work would inevitably affect one’s personal life as well. The way one functions at work may reflect one’s relationship with family and vice versa (Walker & Jacobs, 2003). Therefore, we see a close interrelationship between one’s work life and personal life. The employee’s personal life could affect work performance, and his work life could also affect his personal life.

There are three stages in the development of workplace counselling (Pickard, 1997). The first stage involves counselling in an organisation that applies counselling to organisational settings. The second stage involves counselling for organisations that merge their counselling services with their organisational needs. The Employee Assistance Program is an example of that. The third stage is organisational counselling. Workplace counselling can transform an organisation to become more welfare-centric for the employees.

One of the main objectives of workplace counselling is to boost the employees’ personal care and reassure their autonomy (Carroll, 1996). Through workplace counselling, employees are better at understanding themselves and obstacles they face at work. This leads to increased maturity and happiness at the workplace

(Coles, 2003). The increased self-understanding and awareness also directly improves their interactions at work and their work performance in general (Carroll, 1996). In a fast evolving modern business environment, it is important to have a workforce that is both physically as well as mentally healthy.

An overview of some common workplace counselling models used in the context of workplace counselling within organisations would provide insights into the tools that are used by counsellors to mitigate workplace counselling issues.

2.7.1 Workplace Counselling Models

There are different models for workplace counselling such as counselling-orientation model, brief-therapy model, problem-focused model, work-oriented model, manager-based model, externally based model, internally based model, welfare-based model and organisational-change model. Explanations of these workplace counselling models are adapted from Carroll (1996)'s "Workplace Counselling: A Systematic Approach to Employee Care" (pp. 25-31).

The counselling-orientation model refers to counsellors using the same counselling approach for working with organisational clients, as with their other clients. Different counsellors may subscribe to different orientations in their counselling. Some popular counselling theories and orientations include cognitive-behaviour therapy, psychodynamic, rational emotive behaviour therapy, transactional analysis, Carl Rogers' person-centred counselling, gestalt and existential therapy.

In this model, the counsellor's main interest is still focused on individuals and their problems, while interventions into systemic issues within the organisation are limited. Historically, these are the most traditional counselling approaches in workplace counselling. A significant limitation of these western-based counselling theories and approaches is that they are not contextualised for use in non-Western contexts like Asian societies. Hence, they may not be culturally sensitive and be limited in effectiveness when therapeutic interventions are not aligned or consistent with the culture and world view of culturally diverse clients.

Brief-therapy model and problem-focused models are common in workplace counselling. These models are effective when the work of an EAP counsellor involves that of crisis intervention, assessment and short-term counselling of individual clients. Brief-therapy, also called “focused counselling” a good choice for many organisations due to its cost-effectiveness and time-saving aspect (Carroll, 1996, p. 28). Problem-focused model of counselling sees the counsellor’s role as helping individuals to work with the immediate problems they bring. This is a five-stage model also known as “life-skills counselling” which Nelson-Jones developed. His five-stage, DASIE model involves the following steps: Develop the relationship, identify and clarify problems; assess problems and redefine in skill terms; State working goals and plan interventions. Intervene to develop self-helping skills; and End with consolidating self-helping skills (Palmer, Dainow & Milner, 2006; Carroll, 1996). The limitations of these two types of models include the lack of holistic and systemic approach to understanding the client and in their application of counselling interventions, as well as the lack of the consideration of the influence of culture and diversity issues in the counselling process.

Work-oriented model of counselling is centred solely on issues blocking an individual in his or her work. Counselling focuses only on issues interfering with effective employment. The purpose of counselling is to improve performance and productivity. Counselling is expected to fix the problem and fix it fast. The role of the counsellor is to get the employee fit and ready for work. This is not the place to help the client self-actualize or work on personal problems unrelated to the workplace. This is an attractive counselling model for organisations that are profit-driven and want value for money. From their perspective, the time spent in counselling is for the welfare of the organisation through the individual.

Provision of counselling comes in different arrangements for different organisation. Some organisations view managers as quasi-counsellors for their staff. Managers spend much of their time working with and managing people. Managers are equipped with counselling skills through training to help them recognise potential issues, limitations, challenges and opportunities around inter-personal and communication functions among employees. Other organisations may adopt an externally based model where they use the services of counsellors from outside the organisations. The strengths of external counselling services are that the counsellor

takes a neutral stance that the problem is not part of politics of the organisation, and that the organisation is not responsible for malpractice of counsellors. The counsellor is then in a position to challenge what is taken for granted within the company, advocate for their clients where necessary, offer a wide range of other services other than counselling such as executive coaching, mentoring, training and consultancy that may benefit the organisation as well.

Internally based model is where organisation provides in-house counselling by engaging part-time/full-time counsellors or a team of counsellors to work with employees. The counselling service can be part of an already existing department or an independent unit. Sometimes internal and external counselling can work in tandem. The use of individual and group counselling may potentially effect personality change at the employees' level. This transition is a valuable asset to the organisation. Some organisations have sought to integrate counselling into their growth and development as well.

A significant limitation of these workplace-counselling models is that they tend to take a limited view to understanding the employee's problems, and fail to consider other internal and external factors, beyond one's work arena, that could affect performance at the workplace. In addition, many of these models, do not take into consideration the impact of culture and diversity issues in the counselling process. Hence, many of these models are not culturally sensitive for the treatment of culturally diverse clients

In recent years, there has been a growing awareness and appreciation for workplace counselling. Counselling may itself be a source of organisational change. Counselling may reinforce the values, energise the change, bring meaning and enhance the dynamics of workplace life. Counselling can potentially help bring about the realisation of the importance of change, as well as provide the empowerment and support clients to make the necessary changes for growth. Counselling could also potentially influence organisational culture towards that which is more adaptive in serving the needs of the company. Having counselling service available in the workplace means that problems can be dealt with fairly quickly and can be worked through in the very environment from which they often emerge (Carroll, 1996, p. 25).

With the understanding of some of these workplace counselling models, the next section will explore issues and trends related to work-life balance and how they affect

the psychological health of employees, leading to the rise of work-life balance interventions and counselling as ways to support the workforce.

2.7.2 Work-Life Balance

For many years, workplace counselling has been limited to work-related issues (Muchinsky, 2003). One potential source of stress for employees may be trying to balance work, personal and family issues. Contemporary EAPs involves the identification, assessment, monitoring and providing referrals, short-term counselling relating to employees' emotional, financial, legal, and family problems (Nakao, 2010). The emergence of working mothers and dual-income families have led to growing interest in family-related problems and issues related to work-family conflict or better known as work-life balance. Work-life balance involves the "complimentary pursuit of work and personal goals, so that employees can be effective and engaged in both their work and personal life to meet personal and organisational objectives" (Tripartite Committee on Work-Life Strategy, 2010).

Rao and Indla (2010) reported that shifts in the workplace demographics might have resulted in the potential strain on work-life balance and burnout. At the same time, work itself has undergone major changes with the advent of new technologies that made it possible for telecommuting of work, thereby redefining spatial-work boundaries. It is no longer as easy to detach from work after office hours for one who has poor boundaries. The pressure to work longer hours and remain contactable at all times is affecting work-life balance.

An effective work-life strategy creates win-win outcomes for employers and employees. According to the National Work-Life Harmony Study conducted in 2012, employees with high work-life harmony are more likely to be engaged at work (94%), compared to those with low work-life harmony (71%). Employees who are engaged at work are more likely to go the extra mile for their organisations. As a result, profit-driven organisation are also being persuaded to look into better work-life strategies in hope of enhancing their labour force performance and productivity.

A rising trend may be observed as organisations place more emphasis on implementing a more holistic work-life strategy for their employees. A holistic work-

life strategy is geared to enhance the three workplace characteristics pertaining to work conditions, the structure of work such as work hours and job designs; organisational culture and norms about the domination of work-non-work relationships; and human resource policies and practices supporting work-life balance (Baltes, Kossek, & Matthews, 2011). Work-life initiatives and programmes can generally be classified into the three broad categories of flexible work arrangements, enhanced leave benefits, and employee support schemes.

Despite the current applications of psychological instruments in organisations to achieve organisational success, the business environment is constantly evolving. Both organisations and counsellors need to adapt according to the changing business landscape. In the discussion on the future role of EAPs and work-life balance in the organisations, it is important to first look at the megatrends impacting the workplace of the future.

Technology will continue to increase the mobility and flexibility of the workforce. With the expectations of a round-the-clock workforce, the work-life boundaries would become increasingly blurred, and employees may suffer from heightened level of stress, burnout and exhaustion. This may contribute to the rise of new phenomenon known as workplace spirituality which involves dealing with stress, pain, burnout, exhaustion of the soul because of work through aligning one's work with one's faith and values; working with integrity and meaning; and the desire to work with others in an accommodating, cooperative and respectful manner (Sullivan, 2012).

With the increasing challenge of attaining work-life balance, many organisations are already favouring terms such as "work-life integration", "work-life harmony" and "work-life effectiveness" over the concept of work-life balance. A top-down one size fits all policy or programme will no longer work. To create a culture of work-life flexibility, workplace counsellors could help employees better understand where their VBNC may align or conflict with that of the organisation's VBNC, in order to better manage one's work-life priorities with organisational needs and demands.

A key problem in current organisations' practices in the support for work-life balance is that these policies are often implemented in silos, without considering other workplace characteristics such as the conditions of employment or workplace cultural support (Kossek, Baltes & Matthews, 2011). The next evolutionary phase will thus

be towards mainstreaming work-life fit as a continual business practice, with work-life fit at the heart of organisations' employment practices.

This calls for a systemic view, where the functions and systems are interrelated and complement one another. It will also require a change in management process with the adoption of new processes, structures, resources and management practices and technology (Hammer, Kossek, & Lewis, 2010). Traditionally the change in management process has been in the form of EAPs. However, their efficacy and application requires renewal.

2.7.3 The Role of EAPs in Workplace Counselling

Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs) were originally developed to help troubled employees with affected job performance (Colantonio, 1989). To better understand the roots of EAPs, we would first have to examine this concept called occupational health. The term occupational health refers to the “constellation of issues that affect the mental, emotional, and physical well-being of employees as they engage in “work” (Muchinsky, 2003). Warr (1987) proposed that the concept of occupational health must first be understood from the perspective of mental health.

In recent years, there has been a growing awareness and appreciation for workplace counselling. Counselling may itself be a source of organisational change. Counselling may reinforce the values, energise the change, bring meaning and enhance the dynamics of workplace life. Counselling can potentially help bring about the realisation of the importance of change, as well as provide the empowerment and support clients to make the necessary changes for growth. Counselling could also potentially influence organisational culture towards that which is more adaptive in serving the needs of the company. Having counselling service available in the workplace means that problems can be dealt with fairly quickly and can be worked through in the very environment from which they often emerge (Carroll, 1996).

Research in this topic has largely centred on work stress, which is defined as “the harmful, physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of a job do not match the capabilities, resources or needs of the worker” (US National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, cited in Nakao, 2010). Among the many

models of stress that have been designed, perhaps the most useful model for organisations is the one developed by Kahn and Byosiére (1992).

Due to the undesirable consequences of stress, interventions are thus needed to reduce or eliminate stress. Stress management has traditionally focused on reducing the presence of stressors, with efforts targeted at increasing individual resistance to stressors generated at work. These days, stress management takes on a two-pronged approach of prevention and intervention. Organisational initiatives in the former include onsite physical fitness, exercise and meditation and time management programmes; while the latter involve counselling, social support groups and EAPs.

Nurturing a positive climate is important for engaging employees. Engagement has a direct impact on organisations' financial performance. The Corporate Leadership Council (CLC) defined engagement as "the extent to which employees commit to something or someone in their organisation and how hard they work and how long they stay as a result of that commitment". A study by Towers Perin involving fifty multinational companies indicated that organisations with high levels of engagement achieved financial success in the areas of operating income, net income growth and earnings per share annually. Organisations have to increase the number of engaged employees in their organisation to achieve continued financial performance (Watson, 2005).

Engagement is important for enhancing employee productivity and performance. It is a state of intense, concentrated attention and effort in the service of a task or problem that is highly valued by the individual (Shepell, 2007). Disengagement has a significant impact on organisations' bottom lines. The annual cost of disengaged employees for an organisation of size 1,000 employees is 1.8 million (Shepell, 2007). A positive workplace culture has to exist to improve the emotional climate and this can be achieved through minimising stress levels, leveraging on employees' strengths and promoting well-being with an interest to improve employees' quality of life.

Role overload, role ambiguity and role conflict are typical job stressors (Shepell, 2007). For example, to build resiliency and self-efficacy, organisations can reward employees by providing benefits that can help develop their talents, reduce stress

and improve health. Resiliency describes employees' abilities to bounce back from setbacks. With a greater sense of purpose, commitment from employees will be high. Research suggests that self-efficacy has demonstrated a correlation between employees' confidence in skills and superior job performance than extrinsic rewards (Luthans, Avolio & Youssef, 2006).

PPC Worldwide is a leading global provider of employee assistance programmes (EAP), work/life, well-being and personal development services. PPC Worldwide conducted a study in United Kingdom between 2011 and 2013 to measure the effectiveness of EAP counselling as the Occupational Safety & Health legislation requires for employers to assess and deal with risks and hazards, including that which are psychologically and emotionally related. PPC study showed that 20% of UK's working population was highly stressed, with half of employee absenteeism being related to stress. It also indicated that 90% of employees attributed distraction at work and losing one day per week to life events. Organisations who put in place EAP reported a reduction in absenteeism rate of between 25% and 60%. They also showed an improvement in morale, productivity, relationships and retention.

A research in 2013 conducted by the Employee Assistance Trade Association of the twenty-four largest EAP vendors in US, indicated that the top three most commonly occurring problems handled in 2009 and 2010 were marital and family problems, stress and depression. EAP Consultants cannot simply play the role of counsellors, but a wider role as advocates and champions for social justice. They may do so by going into organisations as consultants or advisors in organisational policies, as well as through mitigating employees' engagement surveys and other 360-degree feedback, which might not be transparent if not administered by a neutral external party.

These are important issues as they are precipitating factors highlighting retention and recruitment challenges today at the workplace, particularly in Singapore. Promoting healthy work cultures would help to better meet the needs of an increasingly culturally diverse work force in multi-cultural Singapore. The "Dads for Life" research project is a national project that reflects the government's concern with the impact of work on family life. The project seeks to better understand the needs of fathers in the workplace and assess how effective pro-family policies have been in helping fathers

to manage work-related stress, as well as balance between work and family demands. The SPA model is the framework that is being applied to the project to provide a multi-dimensional and multi-cultural perspective to better understand fathers at the workplace.

2.8 Conclusion

The outcomes of the literature review identified and ascertained certain critical gaps in multi-cultural counselling in the context of a culturally diverse workplace. This chapter began with critically discussing the concept of multi-culturalism and defining it in the context of multi-cultural counselling for the purpose of this study. It then went on to explain the importance of multi-cultural counselling in the context of growing cultural diversity in a globalized world. It also explained gaps in major Western-centric counselling theories with regards to their respective limitations due to their lack of multi-cultural considerations, as well as the limitations of other multi-cultural counselling and workplace counselling models. It also provided the background of how systems theories and therapies have influenced the development of the SPA model.

The literature review reveals that much emphasis in multi-cultural research in the area of awareness and knowledge of multi-cultural competencies, has been given to exploring and defining multi-cultural competencies. There has been a lack of emphasis in the area of development of models that could aid counsellor's development of multi-cultural competencies specifically in the components of awareness and knowledge.

Given the limitations of existing multi-cultural counselling models and workplace counselling models, as well as western-centric counselling theories, counsellors continue to face the challenge of mitigating multi-cultural and diversity issues in a culturally diverse workplace. As pertaining to this study, there is a lack of a viable multi-cultural framework to help identify multi-cultural issues, conflicts and misalignments in VBNC that may arise in the counselling process, when working with an increasing culturally diverse workforce in Singapore.

The SPA is the proposed model of this study, to mitigate the identified gaps by providing a holistic and multi-dimensional framework that seeks to improve counsellors' effectiveness in multi-cultural counselling. The SPA adopts a systemic perspective, considering how the interaction of systems would influence the individual within the context of the individual's schema, the social and global construct. In addition, the SPA's emphasis on VBNC could raise the cultural awareness of the counsellor and help the counsellor to adopt more culturally appropriate interventions that are more culturally sensitive and therapeutically effective.

It appears that in the area of enhancing awareness and knowledge of multi-cultural competencies, much of multi-cultural research emphasis has been on exploring and defining multi-cultural competencies (Arredondo et al., 1996, Arthur & Collins, 2007; Collins & Arthur 2010a, 2010b; Constantine & Ladany, 2001; Mollen et al., 2003; Sue et al., 1992). The next section will explore some existing multi-cultural models that seek to address these two specific areas of multi-cultural competencies and surface some gaps and limitations in the operationalisation these models.

The application of the SPA model to the DFL project aims to explore the validity and reliability of the model in the context of understanding how pro-father workplace interventions are supporting the wellbeing and work-life balance of Singaporean fathers. Chapter 3 will explain in detail the research design and methodology adopted for this study.

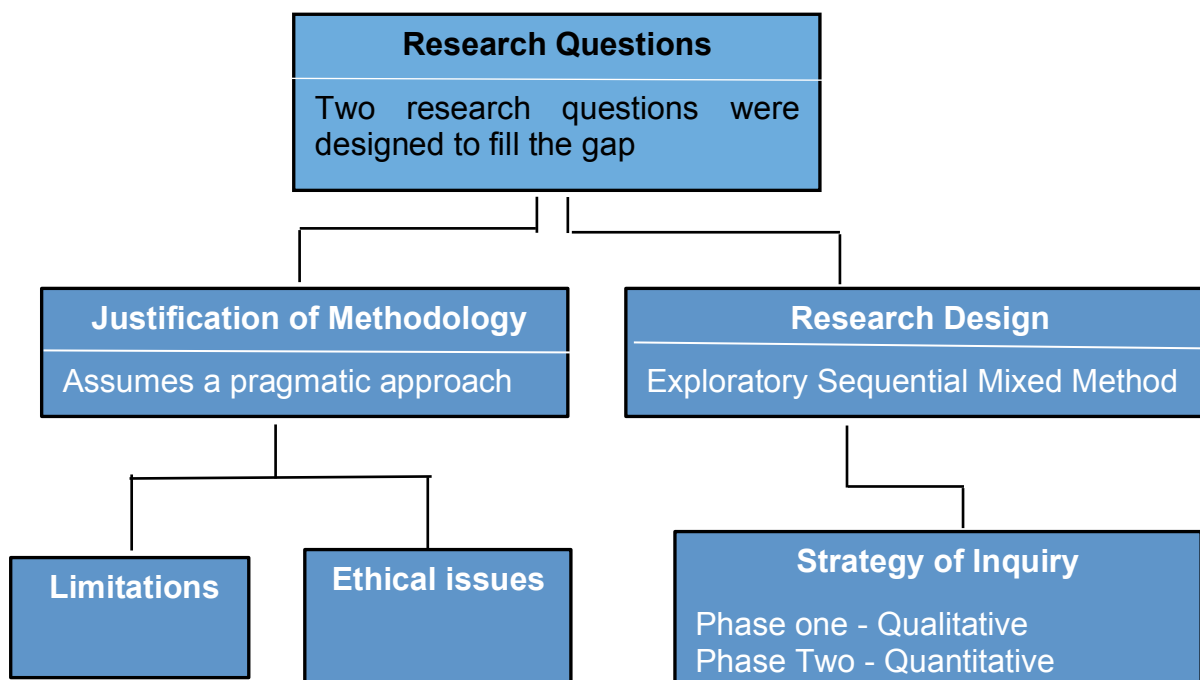
CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided an outline of the literature related to the study and provided a conceptual framework upon which the research is based. This chapter presents the research methodology adopted for the study, its purpose and how it was designed and implemented. The structure of this chapter is outlined in Figure 3.1. Having outlined the structure of the chapter, this section deals with reasoning of the research design, ethical considerations, and sampling strategy to systematically collect data to address the research questions.

Figure 3.1 Structure of Chapter Three



As explained in chapter 1, the methodology adopted by the study assumes a pragmatist paradigm and uses exploratory and sequential mixed methods, as discussed by Creswell and Clarke (2011). This study is conducted in two phases. The first phase involves qualitative focus group discussions and the second phase involves survey administration. The next section revisits the research questions.

3.2 Research Question

A review of the literature in chapter two provided multidisciplinary definitions of multiculturalism along with relevant definitions frequently cited in the counselling field. It identified and ascertained certain critical gaps in multi-cultural counselling in the context of a culturally diverse workplace. The review further showed that there has been a lack of emphasis in the area of development of models that could aid counsellor's development of multi-cultural competencies specifically in the components of awareness and knowledge.

To fill the above gaps in counselling practice, two research questions along with two sub-questions were designed based on literature review and the current challenges identified in the field of multi-cultural workplace counselling.

Research Question 1: *How and to what extent is the SPA a valid and reliable multi-cultural framework for identifying multi-cultural issues in counselling practice in Singapore?*

Research Question 2: *How and to what extent do pro-father workplace interventions support the wellbeing and work-life balance of fathers in Singapore?*

In order to answer the second research question, 2 sub-questions are designed to provide deeper insights.

Sub-Question 2a: *What is the profile of Singaporean fathers at work in terms of the multi-cultural dimensions of the SPA, and to what extent is the profile influenced by each dimension's VBNC?*

Sub-Question 2b: *To what extent do workplace interventions promote the wellbeing and work-life balance of fathers, and how do their perceptions relate to their SPA profiles?*

In any research, the decision regarding methodology is dictated by the research questions that are asked (Merchant & Dupuy, 1996). The next section discusses the selection of research design and strategy of inquiry.

3.3 Selection of research design and strategy of inquiry

Selection of research methods needs to be made after the research questions are asked. The researcher brings to the choice of a research design assumptions about knowledge claims. In addition, operating at a more applied levels are strategies of enquiry that provides specific directions for procedures in a research design (Creswell & Clarke, 2011). So, this section discusses the choice of research design and strategy of inquiry so as to justify the most appropriate methodology for meeting the purpose of this study and answering the research questions. The research design includes the adoption of the research paradigm, research approach, and data gathering techniques, sampling process, data analysis strategies and addressing ethical issues.

3.3.1 Research design

A review of the relevant literature and the development of a conceptual framework led to the posing of the research question for this study. This section addresses the issues related to establishing how to conduct the most appropriate research and to justify its design. This includes justification of the research paradigm and the most appropriate method for gathering data to answer the research questions. Research designs are types of inquiry within qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches that provide specific directions for procedures in a research design (Creswell, 2014).

3.3.2 Research paradigm

A paradigm is a way of looking at the world (Mertens, 2005). Paradigms are models or frameworks that are formed from a worldview or belief system that describes and analyses the nature of knowledge and existence (Cohen, 2006). Paradigms are shared by a scientific community and guide how a community of researchers act with regard to inquiry. The research aims to conduct a systematic investigation (Burns, 1977) through data collection, analysis and to interpret such that it delivers an understanding of the study in the context of the psychological phenomenon. By putting together the logical assumptions and propositions, the framework for gathering of knowledge, methodology and validity criteria is being formed. There are various theoretical paradigms such as the positivist, transformative,

constructivist/Interpretivist, pragmatism and deconstructivist are applied based on the nature of research (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006).

Three fundamental questions may be asked to define the basic beliefs underpinning choice of paradigm, and ultimately, lead a researcher to defend the research design in a way that is compelling yet recognizing that it can never be reported as absolute truth (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The three questions are focused on ontological, epistemological and methodological beliefs. While designing this research, these three questions guided the researcher to select the paradigm most aligned with the research intent and nature of the research questions. Figure 3.2 summarizes these three questions

Table 3.1: Questions for defining paradigm approaches

Ontological questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ What is the form and nature of reality? ➔ What can be known about it? 	What is real?
Epistemological questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ What is the relationship between the knower and would be knower? 	What can be known?
Methodological questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ How does one go about finding out what can be done? 	Based on the answers to the previous questions, what method is used?

Paradigm approaches have been considered to be essential components of the counselling researcher's enquiry for qualitative enquiry (Hays and Woods, 2011). The first phase of this study involves qualitative focus group discussions (FGDs) to determine the perception of fathers and the efficacy of workplace interventions in promoting wellness and work-life balance among culturally diverse Singaporean fathers in the workplace. Counselling researchers are urged to locate their inquiry approaches within identifiable research paradigms (Ponterotto, 2005). This has encouraged the researcher to adapt a pragmatist approach.

3.3.2.1 Ontology and Epistemological Considerations

Guba and Lincoln (1986), had suggested positivistic, interpretive and critical as three key research epistemologies. Such an inductive approach will yield construction and quality in the development of frameworks while producing interpretive data analysis. Adopting this approach will result in multiple social constructions and provide deeper meaning that supports the aim of the project. Through multiple perspectives and synthesis, all involved in the project including the participants would benefit from the knowledge based on objectivity with subjective input to support the quantitative research and holistic approach. Common research paradigms include post-positivism (Hays & Woods, 2011).

3.3.2.2 Post-Positivism

Psychology generally, and counselling psychology specifically, has been dominated by positivist and postpositivist research paradigms and associated quantitative methods (Ponterotto, 2005). This study uses the accepted approach to research by postpositivists, which entails the researcher beginning with a theory, collecting data and then making necessary revisions.

The positivist assumption has represented the traditional forms of research (Creswell, 2014) and also represents the thinking after positivism, challenging the traditional notion of the absolute truth of knowledge (Philips & Burbules, 2000).

3.3.2.3 Interpretivist/Constructivist Paradigm

This interpretivist/constructivist Paradigm is based on hermeneutics, the study of understanding by interpretation (Mertens, 2005). It adopts a social construction approach and depends on how respondents make meaning of experiences for analysis (Creswell, 2003). This approach utilises qualitative data collection method or sometimes the mixed methods (combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods) to make meaning of the study. The quantitative data is used to support the results of the qualitative data. This study adopts this approach.

3.3.2.4 Transformative Paradigm

A more recent paradigm is that on transformation that arose in the 1980s (Mertens, 2005). This Transformative Paradigm takes reference to sociological and psychological theories that consider social justice (Creswell, 2003). A mixed method approach utilising quantitative and qualitative data for collection and analysis is applied to this study. As discussed in chapter one, research is conducted in two phases. The first phase involves qualitative focus group discussions (FGDs) while the second phase is quantitative and involves surveys. This provides for a more complete view with the multiple perspective approach. It enables an understanding and appreciation of diverse values (Somekh & Lewin, 2005).

3.3.2.5 Pragmatic Paradigm

The Pragmatic Paradigm takes on a neutral approach and does not go with any particular system of philosophy. It focuses on the research problem and utilises the mixed methods approach to provide insights to the research question (Creswell, 2003). With this paradigm, the researcher need not be limited to one method, have various worldviews and form several assumptions by adopting the mixed methods in the research study (Creswell, 2003). This flexible method combines the subjective (qualitative) and objective (quantitative) data to strengthen the research and achieve more significant results.

3.3 Designing the study

Previous studies have noted that research design involves the interaction of philosophy research, strategies of enquiry and specific methods (Creswell, 2009; Mason, 2010). The previous section looked at this interaction and now the process of designing the exploratory studies has to be discussed in detail. This study adopted an explorative sequential mixed methods design (Creswell & Clarke, 2011). The pragmatic approach involves using the method that best suits the research problem without having to debate about which is the best approach. Pragmatic researchers therefore grant themselves the freedom to use any of the methods, techniques and procedures typically associated with quantitative and/or qualitative research. It also

recognises the limitations of every method, and therefore, having a combination of different approaches can provide better validation of the research outcomes.

The pragmatic approach uses different techniques at the same time or one after the other consecutively. For example, they might start with face-to-face interviews with several people or have a focus group and then use the findings to construct a questionnaire to measure attitudes in a large scale sample with the aim of carrying out statistical analysis. Studies recommend that counselling researchers and educators having strong quantitative backgrounds use exploratory sequential mixed method in two phases (Hanson, Creswell, Plano, Petska, & Creswell, 2005; Creswell & Clark, 2011).

With the increased popularity of qualitative research, researchers in counselling psychology are expanding their methodologies to include mixed methods design (Hanson, et al., 2005). It is in this context that the pragmatism paradigm asserts that research questions themselves determine whether a quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods research would prove appropriate for this study. An examination of the research methods and research designs employed suggests that on the quantitative side structured interview and questionnaire research within a cross-sectional design tends to predominate, while on the qualitative side the semi-structured interview within a cross-sectional design tends to predominate (Bryman, 2006).

Neuman (2000) suggests that researchers who adopt a quantitative approach to their research start with an abstract idea, followed by a procedure for measurement and culminate with empirical data that represents the relevant ideas of the research. Quantitative researchers write research questions or hypotheses (Creswell, 2014) while qualitative research is often depicted as a research strategy whose emphasis on a relatively open-ended approach to the research process frequently produces surprises, changes of direction and new insights (Bryman, 2006). The purpose of this type of research is to generate knowledge about an individual's experiences within context (Merchant & Dupuy, 1996).

In order to answer the research questions, the researcher uses a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. For this purpose, this research is conducted in

two phases: phase one is quantitative and phase two is qualitative. The intention of this approach is to develop better measurements with specific samples of population and see if data from a few individuals can be generalized to a larger sample of population. The researcher employs a three-phase procedure with first phase as exploratory, the second as instrument development and third administering instrument to a sample of population.

3.3.1 Exploratory

A theoretical orientation for a mixed methods study would be the use of an exploratory framework from the social sciences that predicts and shapes the direction of a research study (Creswell & Clark, 2011). Typically, the researcher writes the independent variable (s) first, followed by the dependent variable (s). One model for ordering the questions in a quantitative proposal is to begin with descriptive questions followed by the inferential questions that relate variables or compare groups (Creswell, 2014).

Exploratory Sequential Design, a sequential design in which a qualitative study conducted in the first phase informs a quantitative study conducted in the second phase. When using this design, qualitative findings can be used to guide the development of a quantitative instrument or theory development when hypotheses from qualitative findings are validated or tested using quantitative methods (Chaumba, 2013).

Table 3.2 Designing and conducting this study

Timeline	Study phase	Methodology	Purpose
Phase 1 (6 Months)	Qualitative data collection	Focus group discussion	To collect data and use findings for the second quantitative phase
Phase 2 (6 Months)	Quantitative data collection	Survey administration	To provide quantitative evidence needed to confirm the desired outcomes of integrating findings from phase 1

3.3.2 Instrument Development

This study follows a set of rules of practice and assign values when the researcher wants to measure something. The four scales of measurement comprising of nominal, ordinal, interval and ratio was articulated by Stevens (1946, 1951). In later years, Meyers, Gamst and Guarino (2006) added a fifth scale called that Summative Response Scale. A nominal scale also sometimes referred to as categorical or qualitative scale has no quantitative value. Examples of nominal attributes are usually demographic like information such as gender, ethnicity, and nationality. The values of 1, 2 and 3 are used to differentiate the variety of information. Ordinal scales of measurement are used to convey the “more than” or “less than” values and has some quantitative value. If there was a group that plays a game and we accord those that finish earliest as first, followed by second and third and so on, the information we have is on the ranking order. However, we do not have the gauge on how far apart from each other did they finish their game as the time difference between each may not be same.

The Summative Response Scale has an underlying value which runs in a continuum. It usually has a four-point, five-point, or seven-point scale, developed by Rensis Likert (1932), known as Likert scale. The Likert scale has no zero value and runs on anchored points such as 1= Strong Agree, 2= Agree, 3= Disagree, 4= Strongly Disagree. We can then group the responses received for each anchored point to provide a summary of composite total score or average total score. A comparison of scores can also be made to obtain a difference in total scores. The information gathered can be analysed to provide information and meaning to the scores. The interval scale has a combination of nominal, ordinal and summative values. In addition, it has a fixed interval scale and has a zero value. A good example is the measurement of temperature where the information can be totalled and summarised like the summative scale. The ratio scale then has all the values of the nominal, ordinal, summative and interval scales. In this scale, the zero has an absolute point value that denotes absence of the item. Meaningful ratios can be formed of the results and statements such as “Jack is twice the age of his son, John”.

As with information commonly seen in surveys, the details gathered would be categorised as quantitative and qualitative data. The qualitative data including feedback are categorised to provide a better understanding of information received. The quantitative data also considered as continuous or metric variables can be computed to provide statistical knowledge to provide greater meaning when analysed. For example, organisations use the combination of all these scales mentioned to gather information on their employees' job satisfaction.

Literature review shows that there are few frameworks for evaluating and assessing multi-cultural counselling, and most of them are qualitative. Quantitative data is useful to develop frameworks and to evaluate specific areas of intervention. For this study, a combination of the nominal, ordinal, summative, interval and ratio scales were utilised to obtain information of fathers at the workplace without compromising on the confidentiality of the respondents' information. The study included both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods and analysis.

3.3.2.1 Design of FGDs and Online Questionnaire

A set of focus group discussions (FGD) questions was developed by the researcher, in consultation with Dads For Life (DFL) Secretariat, and delivered with three different groups of participants. A total of 83 participants were involved in the three FGDs. The participants comprised of male and female respondents, of which a majority held designations of manager and above. This demography would provide sufficient insight on management's perspective towards work-life balance and efforts taken to encourage fathers to be more involved in caring for their children.

Online Questionnaire: The online questionnaire took reference from objectives outlined by DFL Secretariat, and leveraged on literature reviews such as "Fatherhood@Workplaces". A sample of the online questionnaire has been appended in Annex B.

3.3.3 Instrument Administration

In dealing with any real life problem it is often found that data at hand are inadequate, and hence, it becomes necessary to collect data that are appropriate. It is necessary to utilise methods and instruments of data collection that consider current conditions that are practical and closer to reality. Denzin (1989) describes a perfect social research as that which considers external influences, and not just purely relying on scientific research usually conducted in controlled environments. The project will be executed in a time controlled and systematic manner. Survey data conducted by means of structured questionnaires can be technically processed readily. In such a situation, questions as well as the possible answers may be coded using available online software.

3.3.3.1 Triangulation of Data

Triangulation is the application and combination of different research methods, to overcome possible bias of data collection (Massey & Walford, 1999) and is considered one of the most significant strategies for strengthening the credibility of qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Miller & Crabtree, 1994). The underlying assumptions of triangulation are that if multiple sources, methods, investigators, or theories provide similar findings, the validity of the study is strengthened. It also needs to be acknowledged that all these approaches have both strengths and weaknesses, but that using a number of methods allows a more robust set of data to be analysed.

These methods need to be applied carefully within the scope of the project, balancing time and availability of the researcher and the participants, against the depth of the theory that can be developed using these approaches. The multiple sources of evidence will complement each other, as neither one has advantage over another. Denzin (1989) argues that there are four main modes of triangulation of which the first three are pertinent to this project:

- (1) Data triangulation, or the use of a variety of data sources
- (2) Investigator triangulation, using several different researchers or evaluators to look at the same phenomena

- (3) Theory triangulation, where multiple perspectives are used to interpret a single set of data

3.4 Sampling

Convenient sampling to reach a wide cross-section of the population was conducted. Online survey participants were solicited based on Singapore Human Resource Institute's (SHRI's) online database, which represents a cross section of organisations and industries in Singapore, including Public Service Divisions. Public Service Division (PSD) also assisted to send emails to all public service employees.

A sample size of 1,098 respondents was obtained for the DFL survey. The sampling for the population sample of the survey was done through convenient sampling to reach a wide cross-section of the population was conducted. Online survey participants were solicited based on an online database which represents a cross section of organisations and industries in Singapore, including the Public Service Division (PSD). The PSD also assisted in sending emails to all public service employees. The online questionnaire was pilot tested prior to its implementation.

The study was not limited to just a quantitative survey. The employee survey yielded information about the state of work-life practices in an organisation. However, the researcher found it useful to construct an inventory list of organisational practices through stakeholder interviews with specific organisational representatives. A qualitative approach, through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) or structured interviews with working fathers, served as the starting point for such a study. Given the complex interaction of individuals, family and workplace factors in influencing fathers' work-life experiences, a qualitative study could help reveal underlying concerns or themes unique to a Singapore context. Three focus group discussions (for female employees, male employees and managers) for a qualitative measurement will be conducted to better understand the research problem. Each discussion group will have eight to ten respondents.

3.5 Data Analysis Strategy

The primary purpose of this study is to develop a systematic framework, the SPA, as a practical tool for multi-cultural counselling. Statistical analysis was performed using SPSS. To test the validity and reliability of the model, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and reliability analysis (Cronbach's Alpha) is used. Pearson correlation and regression analysis is conducted to explain statistically significant indicators and predictors within the model.

3.6 Limitations

Every research has some limitations and this study is no exception. Although the research was based on exploratory mixed methods design, the predominant emphasis of the research was qualitative. A researcher as the primary instrument often has certain shortcomings.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

The last section of this chapter deals with the ethical considerations taken into account by the researcher while conducting this study. Ethical issues are an integral part of any research and it is generally acknowledged that researchers should anticipate ethical issues that may arise during their study (Creswell, 2009).

The term ethics usually refers to the general principles of what one ought to do (Robson, 1993). The researcher ensures that all his practice complies with ethical guidance, based on notable texts (Holloway & Wheeler, 2006; Streubert & Carpenter, 1995; Robson, 1993). Abiding by ethical standards in research, practice and work, the researcher ensures that staff and organisation confidentiality is never breached, submits his planned approach and ethics considerations periodically to his supervisors and the faculty for approval.

The commitment to social action, made by action researchers, necessarily, opens them up to ethical scrutiny, including the need to be able to justify action on ethical grounds. The very act of collaborating, for example, means that we are all involved in behaving ethically and are collectively (as well as professionally) accountable for

the actions we take (Cooper, 2000). This action research project needs to consider ethical dilemmas related to participant selection and voluntary participation, informed consent, decision-making, anonymity and confidentiality, as well as conflict of interest. To ensure that all aspects of ethical issues and principles are covered, different sources of ethics of an action research project were considered.

Ethical principles include those of a professional relationship itself, often elaborated in codes of practice, being the duty of care, respect for the individual, irrespective of race, gender, age, disability, respect for cultural diversity, respect for individual dignity and protection from harm (Cooper, 2000; Winter & Munn-Giddings, 2001).

Before commencing this work, advice was sought, regarding governance of the study, in relation to the organisation. Whilst recognising the enormous benefits, in terms of learning from the delivery of the projects, the potential risks must not be forgotten, such as the power and influence related to having expert specialist knowledge. Recognising also that the ability to conduct credible insider research involves the need for an explicit awareness of the possible effects of biasness that may arise in the data collection and analysis process, as well as ethical issues relating to the anonymity of the individual participants, as discussed by Smyth and Holian (1999). The ethics approval from the university relating to this study was sought and approved as shown in the appendix.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter described the approach the study was carried out for the research design, paradigm methods adopted throughout the study. It also detailed the efforts taken to ensure safety and ethical considerations towards this study in order to achieve a comprehensive study. The chapters following this will highlight the details of the research process, the analysis of data with its findings and appropriate recommendations.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT ACTIVITY

4.1 Introduction

The SPA model seeks to provide counsellors with a multi-dimensional and multi-cultural sensitive approach, towards understanding their clients, and developing a more effective therapeutic relationship with their clients through the conscious and deliberate efforts to be mindful of the eight major dimensions, and the VBNC within the dimensions. These dimensions include mindset, affect, physical, philosophy, ethnicity, social, political/economics and globalisation. Counsellors will adopt a multi-cultural counselling approach, which requires them to consider the client's VBNC and integrate them into the therapy session. Such an approach will provide counsellors with the knowledge to help them understand their clients better and gain insights on developing plans that addresses the clients' issues better.

Multi-cultural issues may arise when VBNC do not aligned or when there is a conflict of VBNC, contributing to SPABOD (stereotyping, prejudices, assumptions, biases, oppression and discrimination) responses. Multi-cultural issues that may arise in the context of counselling in a culturally diverse workplace include negative behavioural responses and reactions such as SPABOD.

The SPA model is designed to address these multi-cultural issues in different contexts, be it human services, human development, as well as organisational processes and systems.

This framework portrays that as an individual's VBNC is influenced by biological, developmental, environmental factors, as well as the VBNC of systems around the individual such as one's family, community and workplace, religious and societal institutions. The perpetuating influence of these systemic VBNC may be that which is causing one's SPABOD responses in different situations.

For the purpose of testing the SPA model, the DFL project has been chosen to analyse the relationships between the eight dimensions, and the VBNC so as to establish the validity of the SPA model in measuring multi-culture elements.

4.2 Background to “Dads for Life” (DFL) Project

Research on family development indicates that families may either strengthen or weaken economic levels in a country. The contributions made by both parents, especially young parents are important and sources of family cultures, such as behaviours, customary practices and life experiences are passed on from one generation to the next. Parenting roles and family functioning may be affected by family culture and family responsibilities. This includes balancing home and workplace responsibilities.

The lack of focus on men’s work-life conflicts conceals and discourages the growth in the number of fathers who take on more family responsibilities and who centre their identities less on their work. One study of employees of large organisations across three emerging countries (Brazil, China and India) and three developed countries (Germany, the UK, and the US) found that in terms of work identity and personal/family identity, there is little difference among men and women; rather, differences are found between emerging and developed countries, with work identity much higher in emerging and developing nations than in developed ones (Linkow et al., 2001).

Such patterns are likely to strengthen over time not just because of changing gender norms but also changing career patterns especially in developed countries. Downsizing efforts over the last decade combined with changing employee aspirations have led to employees seeking more self-directed careers versus long-term affiliations with a single organisation or profession. This could result in more employees, particularly men, who may have traditionally rooted their identities in work, to seek more subjective measures of wellbeing and success (Harrington et al., 2010).

New trends and challenges are emerging as Singapore’s birth rate continues to drop, and a rapidly changing workforce. Fathers have an equal role and responsibility in

procreation and raising children. Since males dominate the workforce and work-life dynamics is evolving, it has become important to conduct a focused research to understand the various aspects of fatherhood and its relationship to the workplace.

The Singapore government has already been introducing a number of initiatives and pro-family programmes to encourage couples to have more children in the attempt to increase the birth-rates. Employers, on the other hand, have evolved good HR best practices such as flexi work arrangements, child care benefits, family bonding programmes and a host others to address parenthood needs and improving their employee value proposition and employer branding.

4.3 Purpose of the DFL Project

There are two key trends that have shaped Singapore's growing concern with fatherhood as seen in the rise in the number of policies related to it. The first is women's growing participation in the labour force, which has disrupted the traditional division of roles between the "breadwinner dad" and "homemaker mum". The second, related to the first, is shifting gender norms, which has led to men's greater involvement in family life. Amidst these changing cultural trends, the SPA model is applied to identify and better understand multi-cultural concerns using a systematic approach.

This study focused on fathers in the workplace as the specific cultural group in exploring the applicability of the SPA model in an organisational context. Fatherhood in itself is a specific cultural group and within this category, you find diversity because you have fathers of different ethnic groups, different religious background, different economic status, educational background, as well as different age and years of marriage. Organisations that are attentive to cultural and diversity issues within cultural groups are better able in implementing pro-family policies, which would provide fathers with the support they need in their parenting roles.

4.4 Objectives of the Project

The project aimed to have an impact at both organisational and national level. The gap and needs analysis conducted are designed to lead towards a review of employee-related policies to address specific multi-cultural concerns.

The research study was convened to outline the connection between fatherhood and the workplace, in the Singapore's context, with the following objectives:

- a. Understand the challenges that fathers face at the workplaces in balancing their roles as fathers and their roles as employees;
- b. Understand the level of work-life conflict for fathers as compared to mothers;
- c. Find out the family-friendly benefits offered to fathers in the workplaces and the take-up rate of such benefits;
- d. Find out the impact of father-friendly supports on organisational performance from the employee's perspective.

The project called for a stronger understanding of the relationship between fatherhood and the workplace, in order to support national and social efforts to promote involved fatherhood in Singapore. The project sought to use the SPA model to identify and address the multi-cultural challenges faced by fathers at the workplace. It aimed to provide recommendations to the respective ministries of the Singapore government such as the Ministry of Social, Family and Development (MSF) and Ministry of Manpower (MOM), in reviewing and improve the existing and future national guidelines and manpower framework. In this project, the SPA model was being applied as a multi-dimensional human scorecard.

4.5 Scope of Project

The report of the project is to support national and social efforts in promoting more involved fatherhood in Singapore through deeper understanding of the relationship between fathers and the workplace.

The report will cover the following areas:

- a) The relationship between (supports for) involved fatherhood and business outcomes in the workplace, including productivity, employee engagement, and absence, among others;
- b) The relationship between supportive workplaces and involved fatherhood, including specific benefits for fathers, children and families;
- c) Best practices in policy and programme development related to fathers and workplaces, including key approaches, elements, challenges, success factors, and examples/ideas;
- d) Spotlight on related international research initiatives, including objectives, approaches, scope and methodology; and
- e) A potential conceptual framework for a proposed local study, covering and logically organising possible concepts and relationships for a local study on fatherhood and workplaces.

4.6 Defining a Father-Friendly Workplace

A father-friendly workplace is one that cultivates a culture that supports working fathers by creating a positive working environment that provides business sense and enabling men to be effective fathers (Levine & Pittinsky, 1977). Trends influence and shape emerging efforts to create not just “father-friendly”, but also “family-friendly” workplaces, where male employees with children are accepted or even encouraged in their roles as fathers. One indication of this is the inclusion and participation of men in various work-life practices, which may be categorised as follows (Beauregard & Henry, 2009; MOM, 2005).

- a) Flexible work arrangements: Flexible work arrangements move away from fixed work schedules and include options such as flexi-place, telecommuting, flexible start and end times, compressed work schedules (where employees work a full week’s worth of hours in four days and take the fifth off), and job-sharing (sharing a full-time job between two employees (job sharing)). These are aimed at helping employees manage their time around their family or personal responsibilities.

- b) Leave benefits (paid/unpaid): These are days off that employers provide employees, generally in recognition of important life events such as childbirth, exams, dependent care and bereavement.
- c) Employee support schemes: These schemes help employees manage the non- work aspects of their lives. Some examples include health and wellness programmes, flexible benefits, onsite childcare, counselling services, and other informational assistance related to care giving or parenting.

However, fathers' access to such benefits remains disparate in different organisations and compromised by various factors that will be discussed in this report.

4.6.1 State of Father-Friendly Workplace Practices in Singapore

The government-led work-life movement in Singapore has been in place since 2000, beginning with the formation of the Work-Life Unit (WLU) in the Ministry of Community, Youth and Sports (MCYS), within the Family Policy Unit. The origin of the WLU reflected the early focus on supporting women in balancing work and family responsibilities. The WLU has since moved to the Ministry of Manpower (MOM).

The current policy regime to promote work-life balance to some extent reflects the origin and evolution of the work-life movement. Mothers today enjoy a legislated sixteen weeks of maternity leave. The Singapore government provides for one week of paternity leave for fathers, which is a share of the mother's maternity leave, although there are some employers who provide paternity leave on a voluntary basis. MOM's statistics shows that about 53% of companies offered paternity leave in 2012, compared to 47% in 2009.

With the growing diversity in the Singapore workforce, the government decided to embark on a national project, DFL which is a study of current thesis and diverse challenges faced by fathers at the workplace which caused imbalance to their roles as fathers and as employees.

4.7 Applying the SPA Model to the DFL Project

A climate survey is conducted on a national level to gather information about the workplace challenges faced by working fathers. The data collected will be analysed and organised using the SPA model. The analysed and organised data will form an integral part of the recommendations to be made to MOM; to support their focus on mitigating work place challenges faced by fathers in each specific organisational context. These recommendations would be organised to support the usage of the SPA model as an important tool in identifying and addressing multi-cultural issues related to fatherhood, and as an integrated and multi-dimensional scorecard, as oppose to a one-dimensional, to measure and alignment an individual to any given VBNC and vice versa. The next section presents the profile of respondents.

4.8 Profile of Respondents

In general, the 1,098 respondents reflected a wide cross-section of the target population. The demographic characteristics of the sample are outlined as follows:

- a. Citizenry: 92.3% (1,013) were Singaporeans, and 7.7% (85) were Permanent Residents or Expatriates
- b. Ethnicity: 75.8% (832) were Chinese, 12.2% (134) Malay, 8.3% (91) Indians and 3.7% (41) from other races
 - a. Monthly Income: 4.1% (44) respondents earned S\$10,000 and above, 42.4% (450) between S\$5,000 and S\$9,999, 50.3% (534) between S\$2,000 and S\$4,999, and 3.1% (33) below S\$2,000.
 - d. Education Level: 62.2% (683) had completed University Degree or Post Graduate Degree, 22.8% (250) Diploma, 4.3% (47) ITE, 2.6% (29) A-Levels, 7.7% (84) O/N-Levels, 0.4% (4) PSLE and 0.1% (1) below PSLE

- e. Age: 45.5% (500) were 30 to 39 years, 30.1% (330) were 40 to 49 years, 12.4% were 50 to 59 years, 9.4% were 20 to 29 years, 2.6% (28) were 60 years and above, and 0.1% (1) was below 20 years old
- f. Designation: 54.6% (599) were categorized as 'All Others', 34.7% (381) were 'Middle Management', and 10.7% (118) were 'Senior Management'.

Description of these categories are as follows:

- (1) Senior Management (CEO, CFO, CLO, COO, CTO, CHRO/ AVP, VP or Snr VP/ Assistant Director, Director, Snr Director/ Self- Employed)
 - (2) Middle Management (Assistant Manager, Manager, Snr Manager, GM/ Independent consultant/ University professor or college instructor or trainer)
 - (3) All Others (Admin assistant /Executive/Senior Executive/Individual contributor or independent employee/ Full time student/ Unemployed)
- g. Industry: Participants of the survey came from the following industries:

Table 4.1: Breakdown of Participants by Industries

Professional Service Sector	4.84% (53)	Construction or Real Estate	4.75% (52)	Healthcare	3.11% (34)
Retail and Wholesale Trade	0.91% (10)	Manufacturing, Oil, Gas, Marine	4.11% (45)	Travel, Hotel and Tourism	0.27% (3)
Information Technology	3.11% (34)	Transportation, Communication or Utilities	3.11% (34)	Government Sector (Statutory Boards & Other Government Bodies)	57.59% (630)
Banking, Finance and Insurance	2.10% (34)	Education (Govt & Private Education)	16.09% (176)		

The study had also included responses from 414 fathers and 145 mothers, with children below the age of fifteen years (559 in total) which facilitated the objective of comparing work-life conflict for fathers as compared to mothers.

4.9 Key Findings: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

The three FGDs facilitated by SHRI were conducted over three days and focused on five key themes. The transcripts of the FGDs were analysed by using a coding process of marking the transcripts according to various sub-topics or areas of interest to indicate what participants are talking about. For instance, in analyzing data at the end of each page, therefore, the transcripts will have various code words running down the side. This makes it easier for us to identify areas of interest. We prepare as many code words as necessary to meet information needs, but try to keep these simple and short. Note also that not all responses will fall into the neat categories of information that we hope to obtain. The final task of the analysis involves using the list of information required to check what information you have actually obtained. This will tell you whether the objectives of study are being met or not.

General findings from the three FGD sessions are as follows:

- a. Question: How do working fathers perform their family responsibilities?
 - Fathers tend to participate less than mothers in the children's lives even though majority feel that fathers should participate more. Fathers are now taking more interest in their children's lives
 - Lack of participation could be due to up-bringing of father as well as mother
 - Fathers are more involved in sports and games, computers, cars, technology and gadgets, and current affairs
 - Socio economic data and status of both parents play an important factor in father's participation in child(ren)'s lives
- b. Question: What strategies do employers use to support parents at work?
 - Most organisations have provide at least 2 days of paternity leave especially for fathers. However, most work-life

- arrangements in organisations cannot be used unless they are strategically planned and aligned to company's long term goals.
- Difficult to set a formal policy as fathers and children have different needs at different stages of life.
 - Given the globalised environment, flexi-work arrangements are a boon for working couples to take care of children, furthermore technology can be leveraged to maintain productivity
- c. Question: What are the challenges related to helping fathers balance work and home responsibilities
- Societal expectations (Asian Mindset) that fathers are the bread winners for family, and thus are expected to put in longer hours at work. Taking time away from work to be with family, is not seen in a positive light.
 - Organisations are profit-driven thus well-being of working fathers not top priority.
 - Perception that caring for children and domestic chores is the women's role.
- d. How can companies provide recognition to 'model fathers' and provide a support group (Fathers' Network)
- Provide counselling and education programmes to support would-be fathers and existing fathers
 - Provide opportunities for fathers to spend quality time with children (example, mini breaks, child's birthday off, bring child to work day)
- e. Question: How can community movement promote greater involvement of fathers in their children's lives?
- The community movement is a good effort to promote positive involvement in all phases of fatherhood, whilst maintaining a balanced work-family relationship.
 - Today's fathers are more willing to get involved in their children's lives as there is more partnership in a family.
 - Should encourage organisations to:
 - Attend training to change/shift mindset
 - Change mindset with a change in company policy

- Promote trust of employees
 - How it affects workload of HR
 - Additional role with new initiatives
 - HR can take lead but representatives from departments to form a fatherhood movement group
 - Better involvement at all levels (especially from those with passion) will find ways to overcome challenges

Generally, the FGD sessions had provided good qualitative inputs that would subsequently complement findings highlighted by the quantitative online survey.

4.9.1 Section A – Experience at Work

4.9.1.1 Experience at Work

a. By Gender

The responses indicate that male respondents had consistently more positive work experiences, higher career expectations and greater satisfaction at work, as compared to female respondents (Figure 4.1). Areas of greatest gaps are, “I have a strong desire to advance to a position in senior management” (16.48%), “I have participated in networking opportunities within my organisation” (9.34%), and “I am satisfied with the progress in my income over the course of my career” (8.57%).

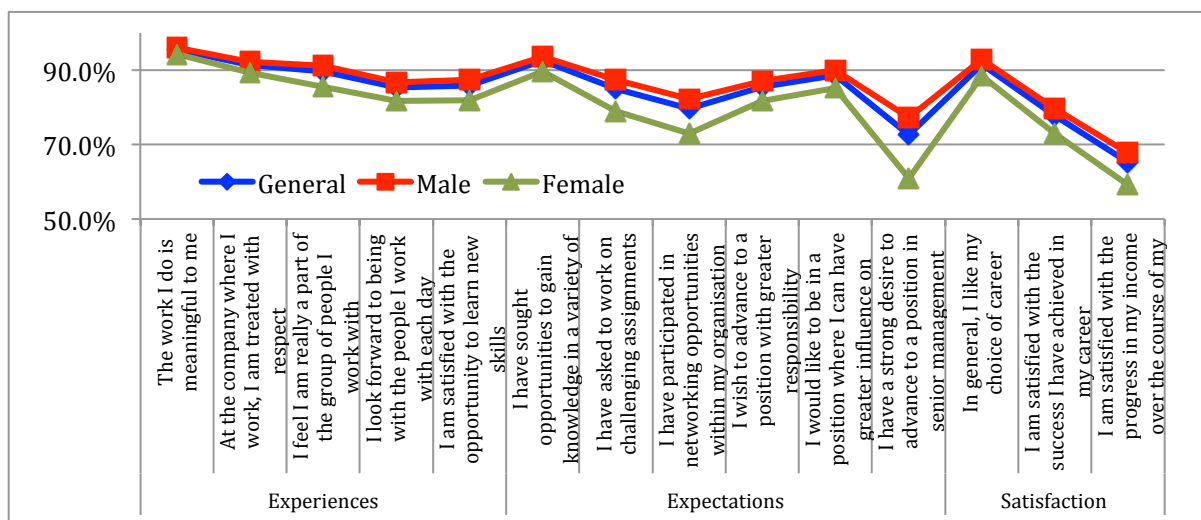


Figure 4.1: Experience at Work (By Gender) Strongly Agree & Agree (Q1, N=1,098)

Below (Figure 4.2) provide evidence that these perceptions towards work experiences, career expectations and satisfaction at work were consistent with gender results. It was notable that gaps between fathers and mothers were greatest for “I have a strong desire to advance to a position in senior management” (20.5%) and “I have participated in networking opportunities within my organisation” (15.3%).

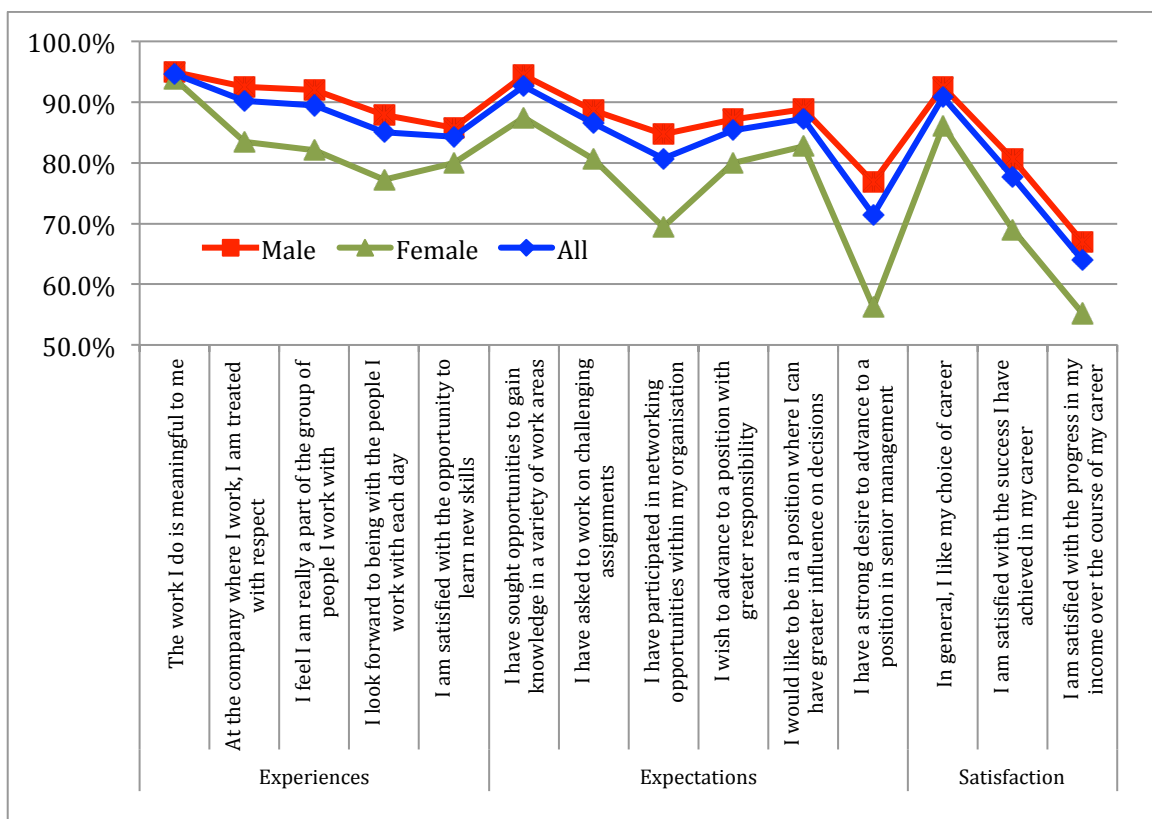


Figure 4.2: Experience at Work (Children 15 years & below, by Gender) Strongly Agree & Agree (Q1, N=559)

- c. By Fathers with children aged 15 and below (by Income)
- Responses of fathers with differing income levels show that respondents with income levels of \$1,999 and below, has the greatest disparity in responses as compared to other income groups (which tend to gravitate closely to each other). Responses showing greatest disparity are “satisfied with the success I have achieved in my career”

(36.4%) and “satisfied with the progress in my income over the course of my career” (31.3%). Interestingly respondents with income levels of \$1,999 and below, registered highest responses in the area of being “treated with respect” and “wish to advance to a position with greater responsibility”. Amongst different age groups of fathers, there are no significant differences with regards to how each age group rates their experience at work.

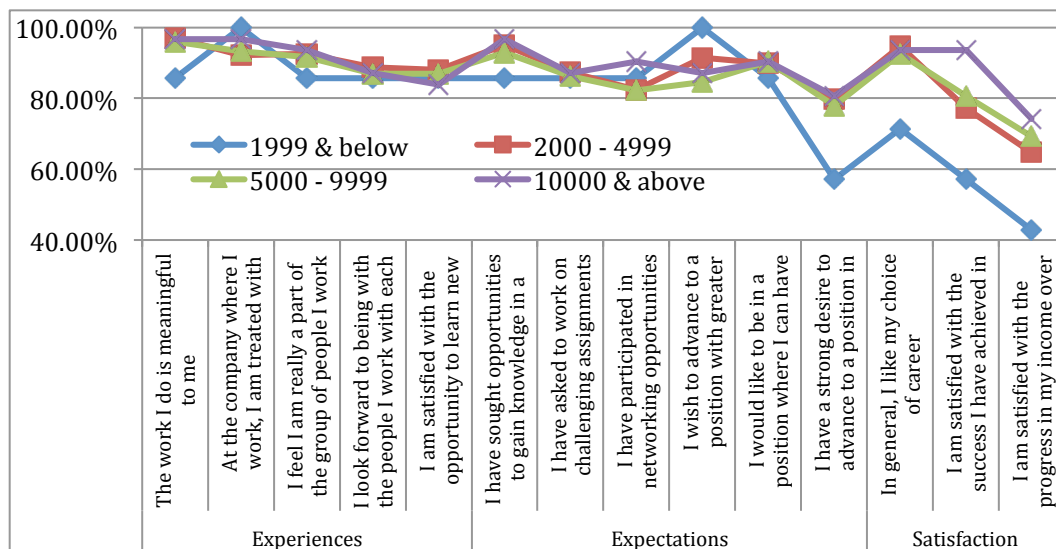


Figure 4.3: Experience at Work (Fathers, By Income) Strongly Agree & Agree (Q1, N=605)

- d. By Fathers with children aged 15 and below, (by Job Designation)
- Responses were mixed across Experiences and Expectations, though fathers in Senior Management had consistently highest scores in Satisfaction. Greatest disparities amongst different job designations are as follows:
- I am satisfied with success achieved in career (9.9%)
 - I am satisfied with progress of income (9.9%)
 - I wish to advance to a position with greater responsibility (7.2%)
 - I participated in networking opportunities within my organisation (6.7%)
 - I have asked to work on challenging assignments (6.5%)

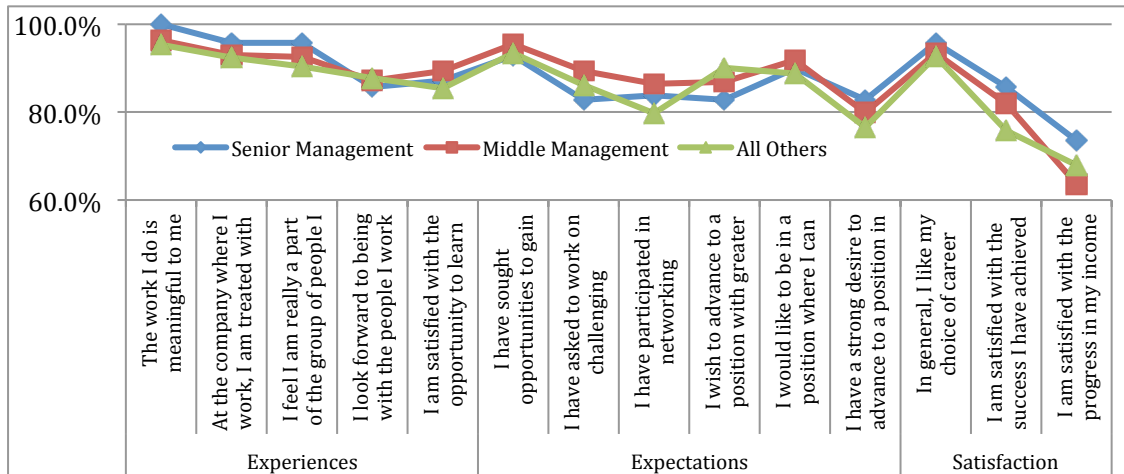


Figure 4.4: Experience at Work (Fathers, By Designation) Strongly Agree & Agree (Q1, N=617)

e. **Some Observations:**

- The findings suggest that males had consistently more positive work experiences, higher career expectations and greater satisfaction at work, as compared to female respondents, regardless of whether they have had children or not.
- However it is notable that the gap in terms of experience at work between fathers and mothers were consistently wider, than those of males and females in general. This suggests that mothers, after having children, tend to have poorer work experiences than fathers.
- Amongst fathers, we have found no significant trends across age groups, though we acknowledge that, respondents with income levels of \$1,999 and below, has the greatest disparity in responses as compared to other income groups. In terms of fathers in different job designations, responses were mixed across experiences and expectations, though those in Senior Management had consistently highest scores in satisfaction.

4.9.1.2 Value in a Job

a. General Statistics and By Gender

Generally, male respondents registered higher aggregate responses than females, in all aspects of the job except for ‘allows flexible working arrangements’. When the responses are ranked by gender, male respondents rated ‘sense of accomplishment’ and ‘job security’ as their top responses, whilst female respondents rated ‘allows flexible working arrangements’ and ‘good advancement opportunities’ as top responses as shown in [Figure 4.5](#). The ranking of job security for men suggests the prevalent breadwinner role of men, whilst the greatest gender differences of “sense of accomplishment” and “flexible working arrangements” suggests that men tend to be more career-focused and less attentive to considerations around work-life balance.

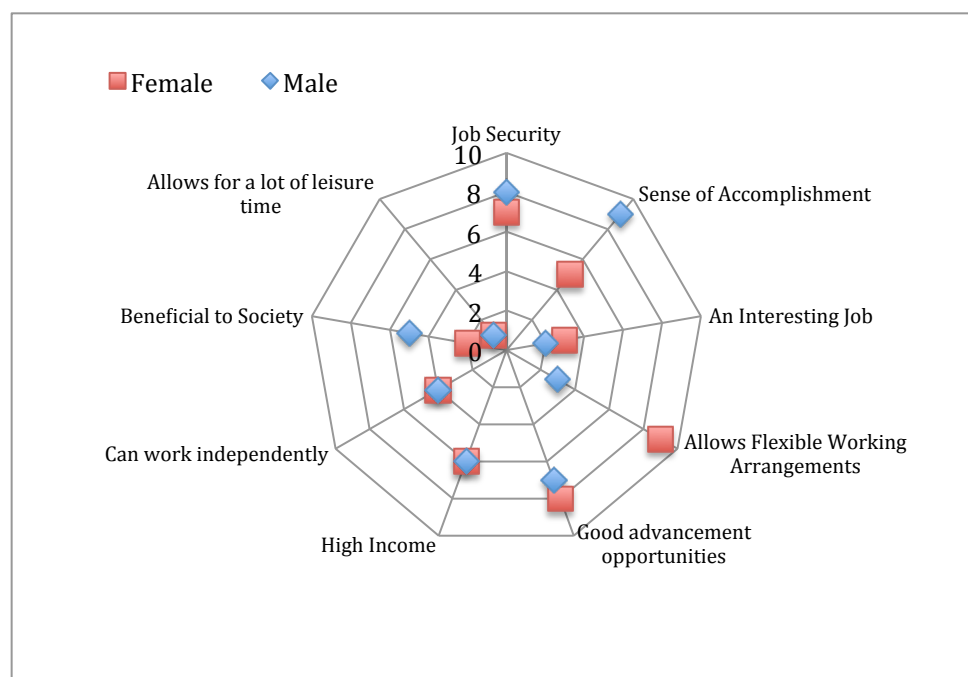


Figure 4.5: Value in a Job (Children 15 years & below, by Gender)⁴ (Q2, N=559)

³ Ranking of ‘extremely important’ & ‘important’ variables (Outer values reflect higher rank order for the Gender)

b. By Gender, With children aged 15 years and below

For those with children below the age of 15 years, both male and female respondents differed slightly in terms of what is most valued in a job, as shown in [Figure 4.6](#). Mothers valued 'flexible working arrangements' most followed by 'job security', whilst fathers valued 'sense of accomplishment' most followed by 'job security'. Whilst the most valued criteria differed, the similarly ranked second criteria denotes the common concern of parents – job security which may be related to the ability to provide for the family.

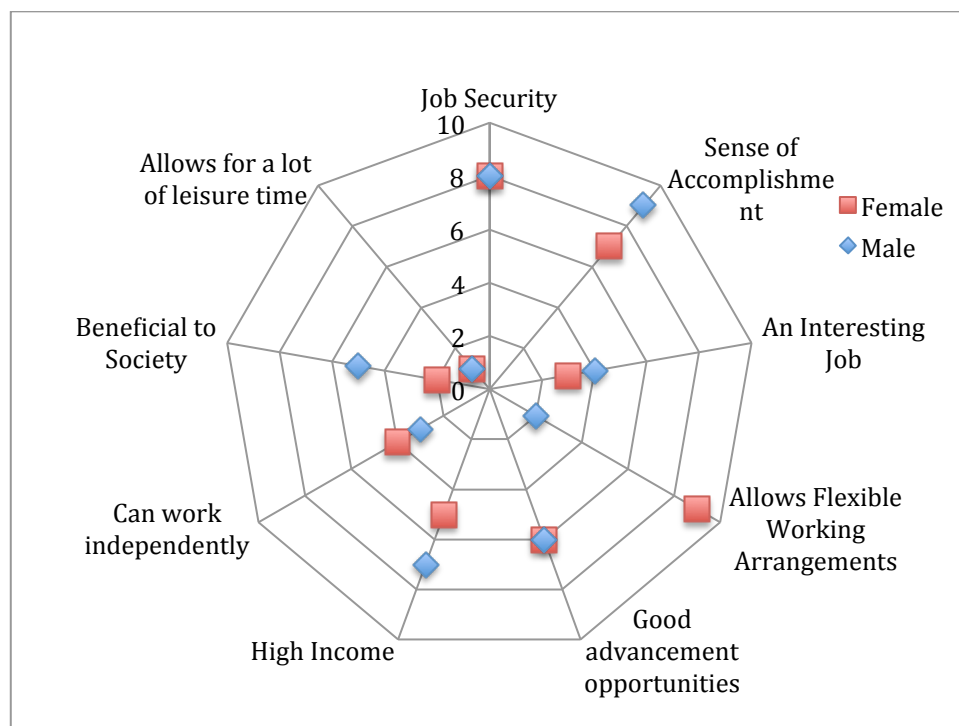


Figure 4.6: Value in a Job (Children 15 years & below, by Gender)⁵ (Q2, N=559)

c. By Job Designations, With children aged 15 years and below

The spread of markers on [Figure 4.7](#) indicated that fathers with different job designations value different things in their jobs. Whilst

⁴ Ranking of 'extremely important' & 'important' variables (Outer values reflect higher rank order for the Gender)

⁵ Ranking of 'extremely important' & 'important' variables (Outer values reflect higher rank order for the Gender)

fathers in Senior and Middle Management respondents both rated 'Sense of Accomplishment' as the most important thing they valued in their job, All Others respondents rated 'Job Security' as being most important. The greatest spread in terms of ranking was seen for "Interesting Job" and 'High Income' suggesting an inverse marginal utility relationship between income and interest.

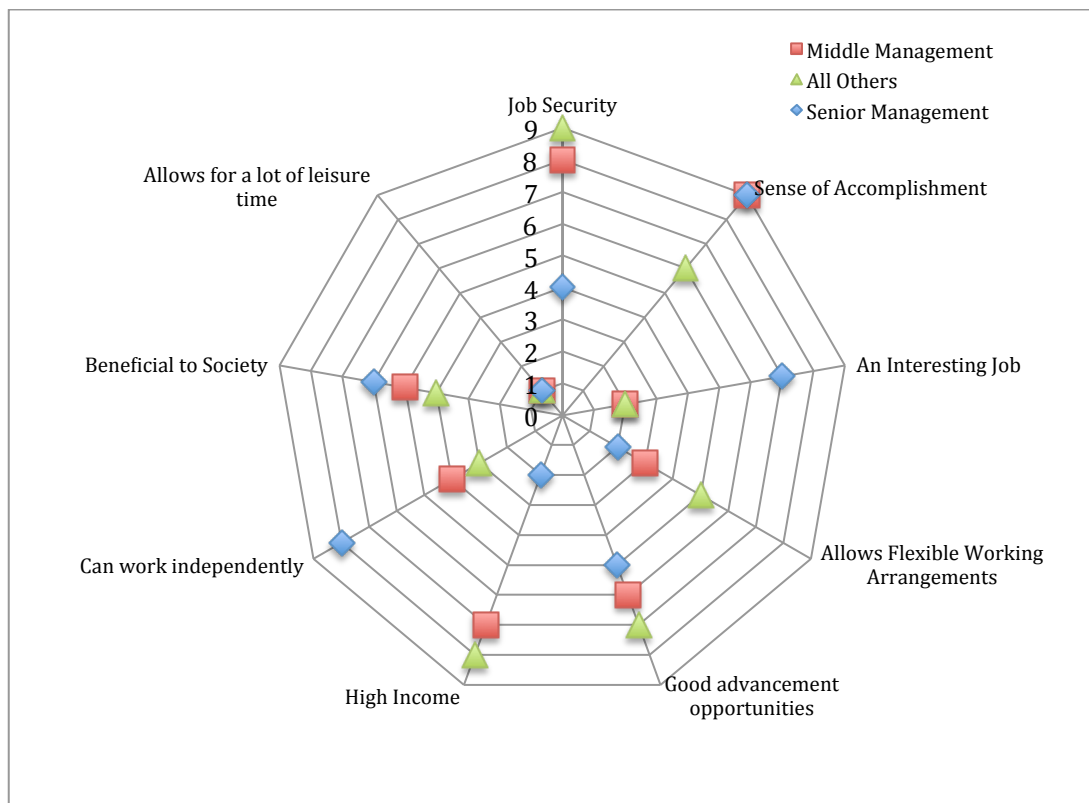


Figure 4.7: Value in a Job (Fathers By Job Designations)⁶ (Q2, N=616)

d. By Income, With children aged 15 years and below

Similar to the previous data, the spread of markers on [Figure 4.8](#) indicated that fathers of different income groups value different things in their jobs. Respondents earning more than \$5,000 rate 'sense of accomplishment' as being most valued, whilst respondents earning less than \$5000 rate 'job security' as being most valued. The greatest

⁶ Ranking of 'extremely important' & 'important' variables (Outer values reflect higher rank order for the Job Designation)

gap occurs at 'job security', 'interesting job' and 'high income', which supports the earliest hypotheses of an inverse relationship of 'high income' and 'job security' in relation to 'interesting job'.

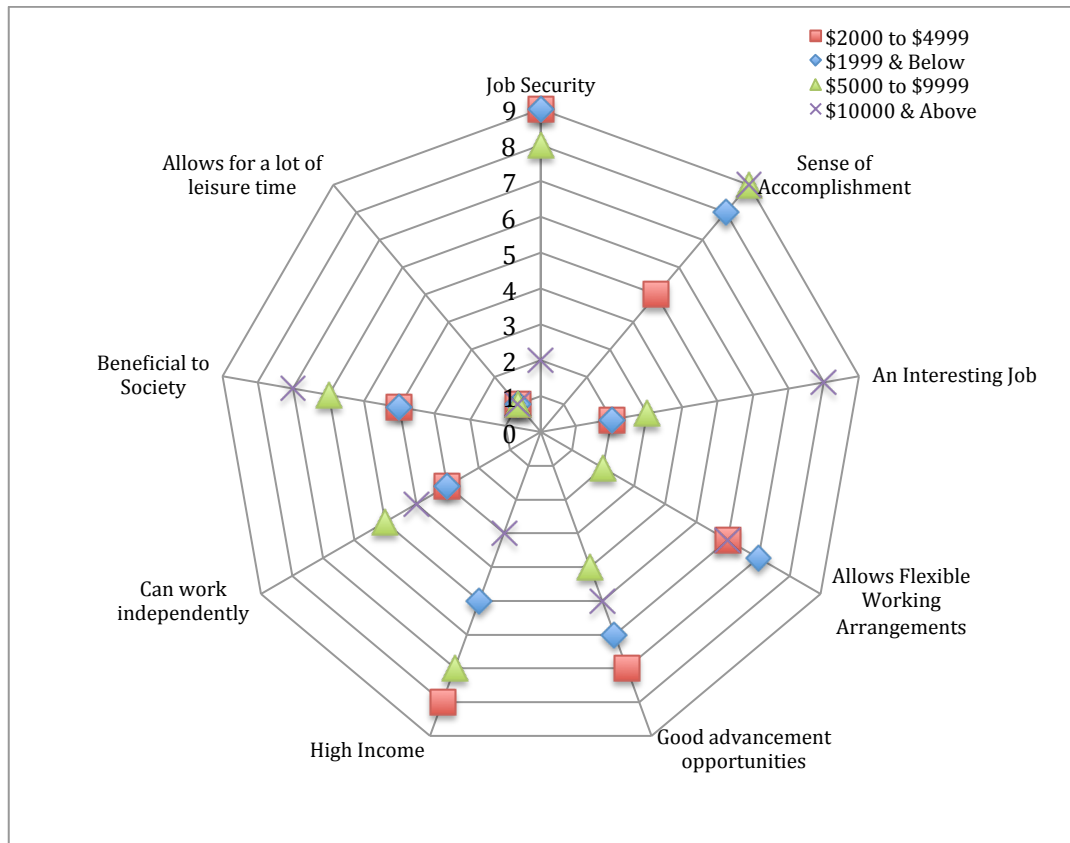


Figure 4.8: Value in a Job (By Monthly Income)⁷ (Q2, N=605)

e. Some Observations:

- Data indicated that male respondents registered higher aggregate responses than females, in all aspects of the job except for 'allows flexible working arrangements'. Though 'sense of accomplishment' and 'allows flexible working arrangements' are consistently top ranked for male and female respondents respectively, a notable shifts in values for mothers with children below the age of 15 years, as 'job security' had replaced 'good

⁷ Ranking of 'extremely important' & 'important' variables (Outer values reflect higher rank order for the Job Designation)

advancement opportunities' as the second most valued aspect in a job. This suggests that mothers value job security more than their career aspirations.

- It is also worth noting that responses of fathers holding different designations and income levels, suggest an inverse relationship of 'high income' and 'job security', in relation to 'interesting job'. Fathers with higher income and designation would gain more utility (satisfaction) in having an 'interesting job' whereas those of lower income and lesser designation place greater value to 'high income' and 'job security'.

4.9.1.3 Number of Hours Worked Per Week

a. General Statistics and By Gender

Whilst all segments indicated that majority worked 41 to 45 hours per week, it is notable that majority of male respondents (56.2%) and fathers (58.2%) worked more than 46 hours a week ([Figure 4.9](#)). There were no significant differences for respondents with children aged 15 years and below. It is notable that data suggests that fathers and mothers work longer hours as compared to the general sample population.

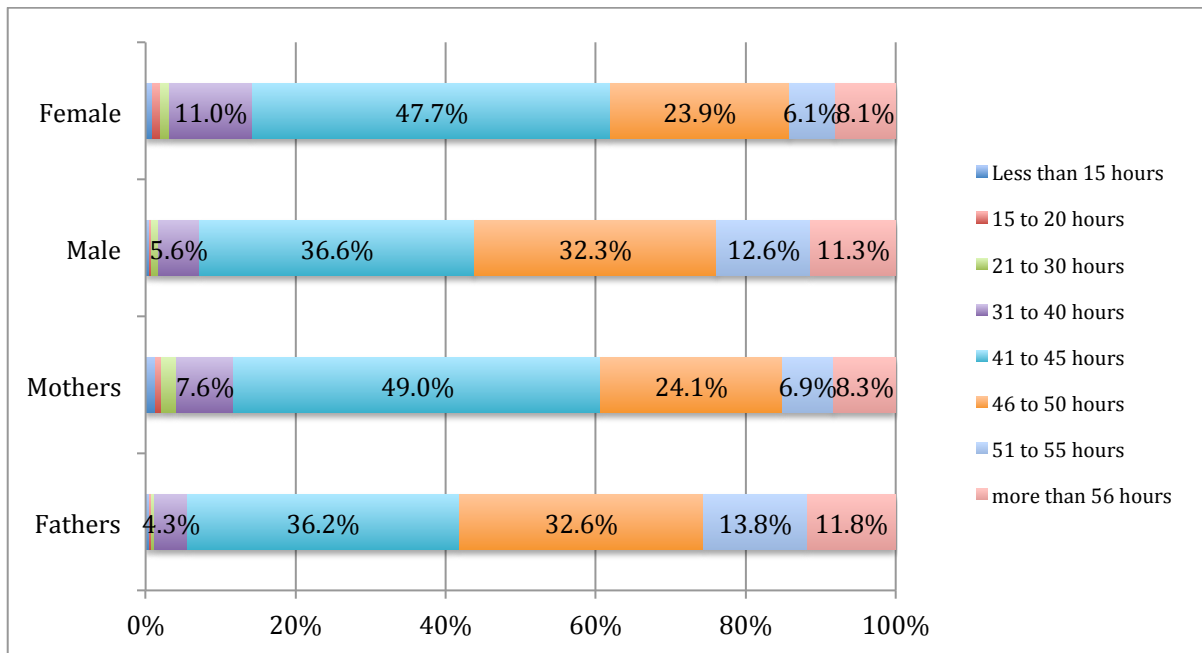


Figure 4.9: Number of Hours Worked Per Week (By Gender & With Children) (Q3, All N=1097, With Children Age 15 & Below N=559)

- b. Fathers With children aged 15 years and below, By Job Designations
Fathers holding more senior designations were more likely to spend more than 46 hours at work, as compared to those holding junior designations.

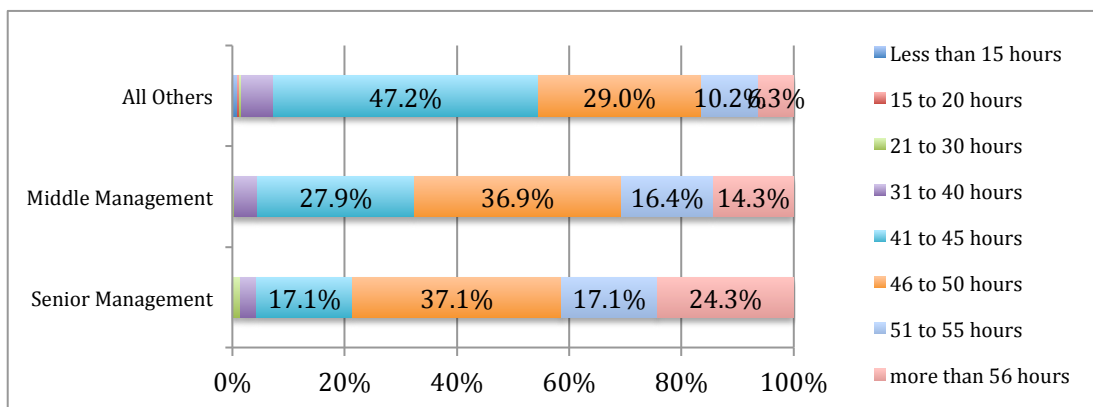


Figure 4.10: Number of Hours Worked Per Week (Fathers by Job Designations) (Q3,N=617)

- c. Fathers With children aged 15 years and below, By Income

Fathers with higher income tend to work more hours than those with lower income. This suggests a direct correlation between level of income and the number of hours worked per week.

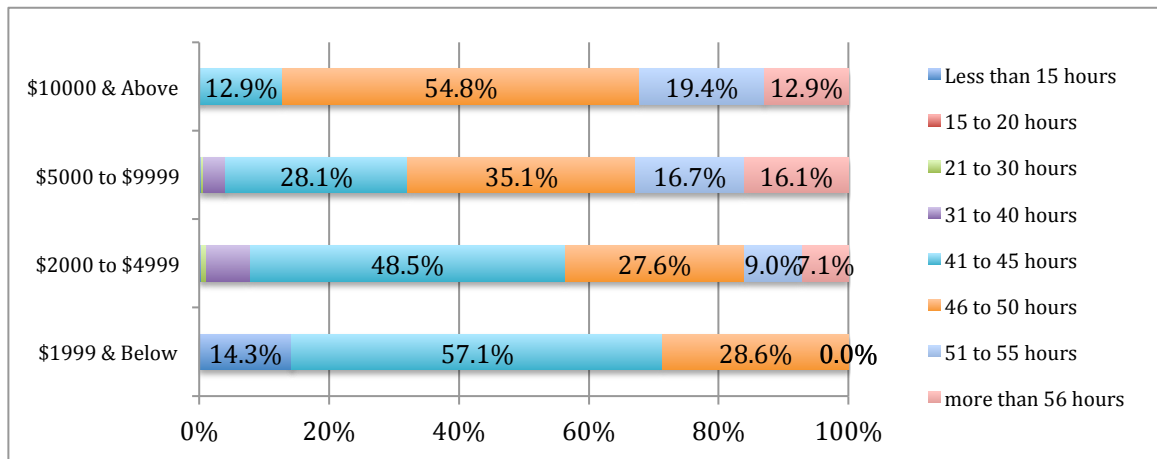


Figure 4.11: Number of Hours Worked Per Week (Fathers by Income) (Q3, N=605)

4.9.1.4 Overall analysis of Section A:

- a. Generally, male respondents had consistently more positive work experiences, higher career expectations and greater satisfaction at work, as compared to female respondents. 'Sense of accomplishment' and 'good advancement opportunities' are most valued in jobs by male and female respondents respectively. Data suggests that female respondents with children aged 15 years and below (mothers) prioritize 'job security' above 'career advancements', compared to the female population sample.
- b. Data also suggests an inverse relationship of 'high income' and 'job security' in relation to 'interest', as fathers with higher income and designation prefer having an 'interesting job' whilst those of lower income and lesser designation prefer 'high income' and 'job security'.
- c. In terms of working hours, it was notable that, fathers of higher designations and income tend to spend more hours at work, and that the number of hours committed at work was significantly reduced for those with children above the age of 15 years old, regardless of gender.

4.9.2 SECTION B - PARENTS' EXPERIENCES WITH THE FAMILY

Sections B and C of the questionnaire were meant for respondents with children aged 15 and below. There were only 617 male and 211 female respondents who were qualified to complete questions under Section B and Section C.

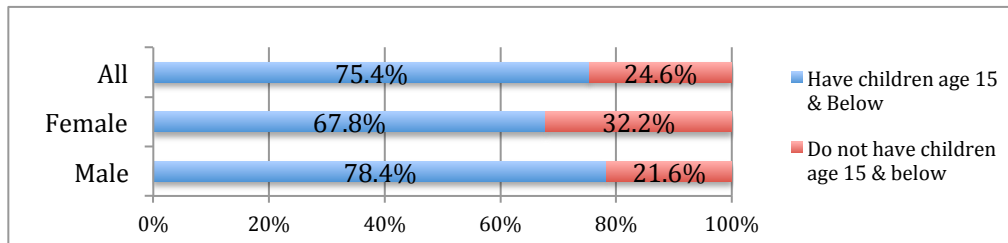


Figure 4.12: Respondents with Children Aged 15 & Below (Q4, N=828)

4.9.2.1 Responsibility towards children

a. General Statistics and By Gender

Although majority of respondents (male and female) agreed that they hold both responsibilities for caring for their children and earning money to meet financial needs, more female respondents (than male) were inclined towards caring & emotional support, and more male respondents (than female) felt their responsibilities were inclined towards meeting financial needs.

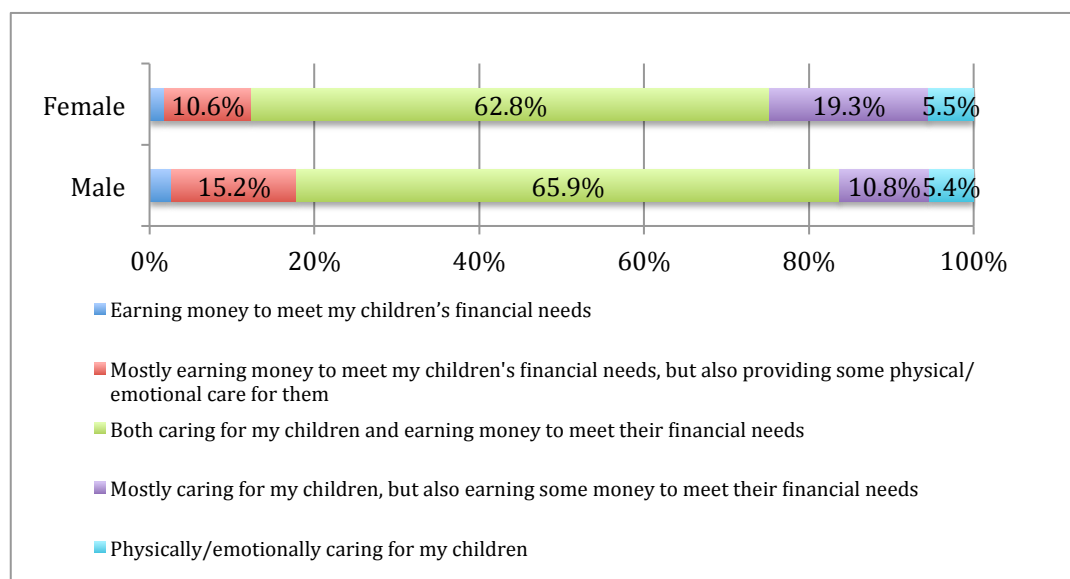


Figure 4.13: Responsibility towards children (By Gender) (Q5, N=828)

b. Fathers With children aged 15 years and below, By Age

Responses indicated that fathers who were below 30 years old were more inclined towards meeting financial needs whereas fathers above 30 years old adopted a more balanced position with regards to financial and physical/emotional needs of children.

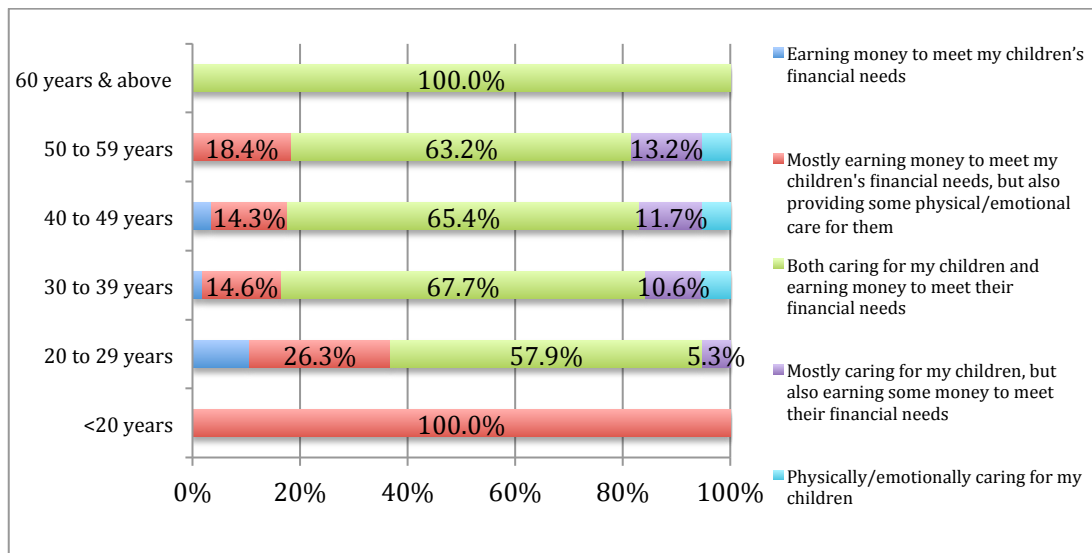


Figure 4.14: Responsibility towards children (Fathers by Age)

c. Fathers With children aged 15 years and below, By Ethnicity

Responses indicated that whilst majority of respondents from each ethnic group (>60%) adopted a balanced position, fathers from 'Malay' and 'Others' were more inclined to meeting financial needs (>20%), as compared to 'Indian' and 'Chinese'.



Figure 4.15: Responsibility towards children (Fathers by Ethnicity)

d. Fathers With children aged 15 years and below, By Income

Responses indicated that fathers with income lower than \$2,000 were more inclined towards either financial needs or physical/emotional needs. As the income levels increased, more fathers took a balanced position, with a majority (60-70%) adopting the middle ground.

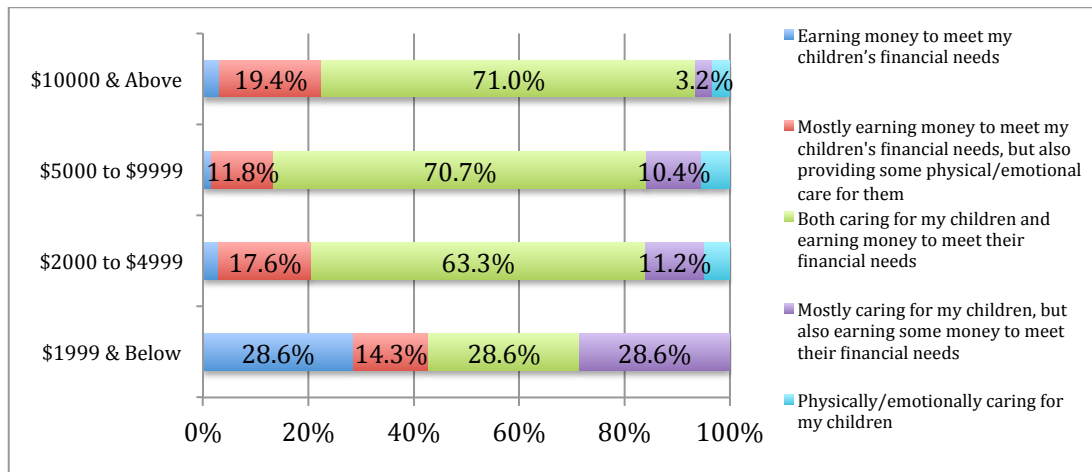


Figure 4.16: Responsibility towards children (Fathers by Income)

4.9.2.2 Leave or Time-off taken following birth of most recent child

a. By Gender

Responses indicated that most male respondents (40%) took less than 1 week leave of time-off following the birth of the most recent child, as compared to most female respondents who took more than 6 weeks (maternity leave).

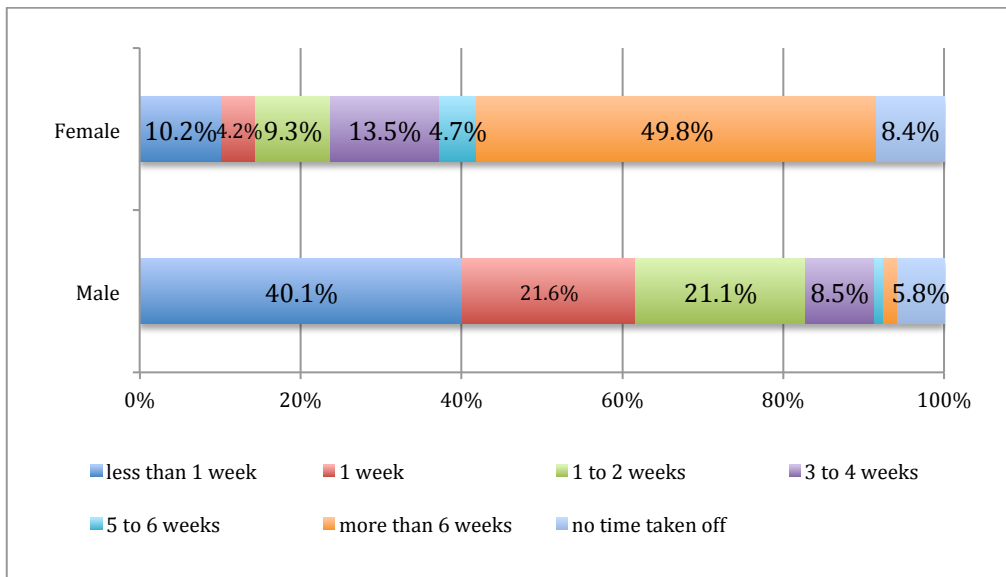


Figure 4.17: Leave or Time-off taken following birth of most recent child (By Gender) (Q6, N=828)

4.9.2.3 Work adjustments made / experienced after birth of most recent child

a. By Gender

Female respondents tended to indicate higher incidence of increased job responsibilities and increased supervisor expectations after birth of most recent child, as compared to male respondents. Female respondents were almost twice more likely to negotiate for formal flexible work arrangements than male respondents. This suggests that female respondents were more affected and thus more proactive in adjusting work arrangements after birth of most recent child.

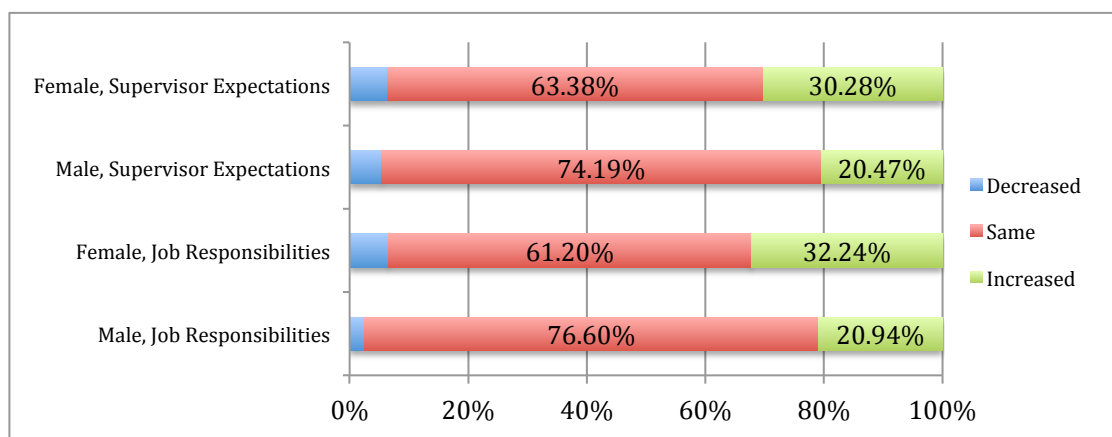


Figure 4.18: Leave or Time-off taken following birth of most recent child (By Gender) (Q6, N=828)

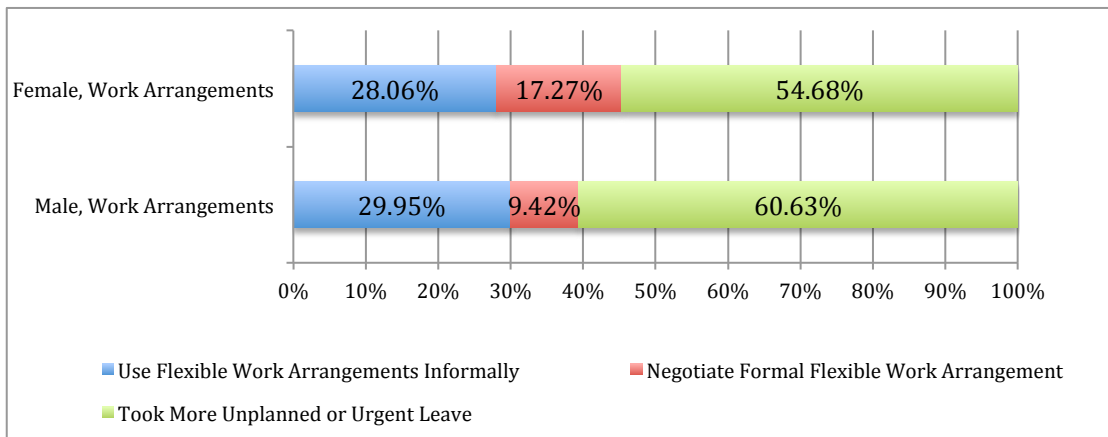
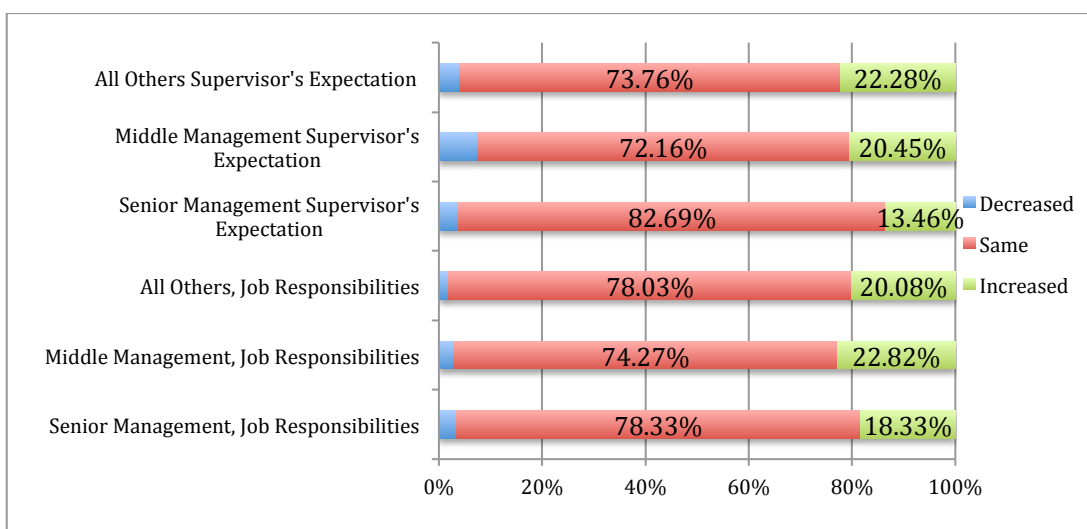


Figure 4.19: Work adjustments after birth of most recent child (By Gender)

Likely to use flexible work arrangements informally whilst a comparatively greater percentage of fathers of ‘All Others’ would have to negotiate formal flexible work arrangements. The comfort to adopt flexible work arrangements informally suggests that fathers of ‘Senior Management’ felt more secure and assured of organisation’s support for work-life balance than others.

Figure 4.20 Work adjustments after birth of most recent child (Fathers by Designation)⁸



⁸ Percentages based on total number of responses for Question 7 ((Variable N between 414 to 530))

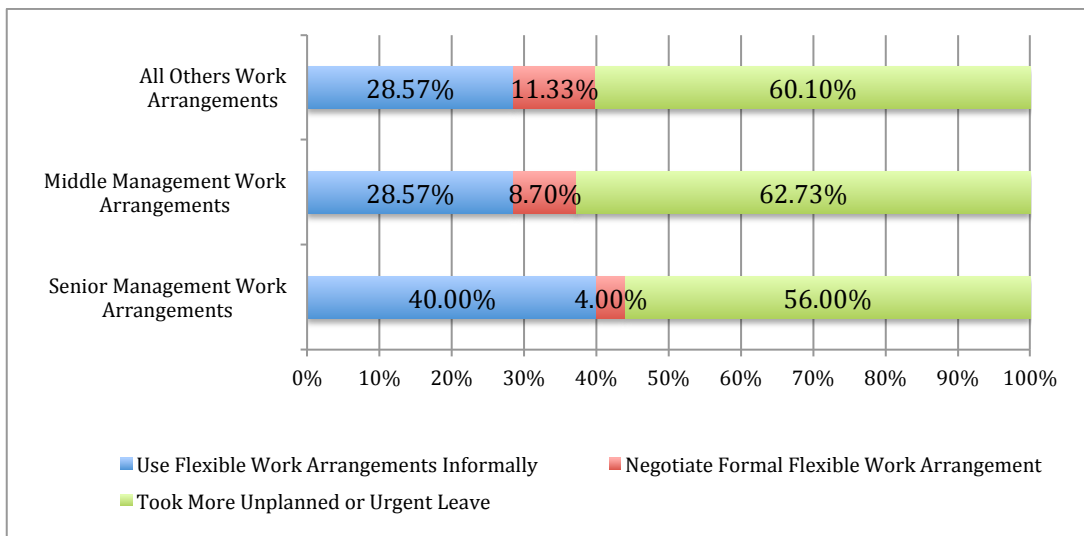
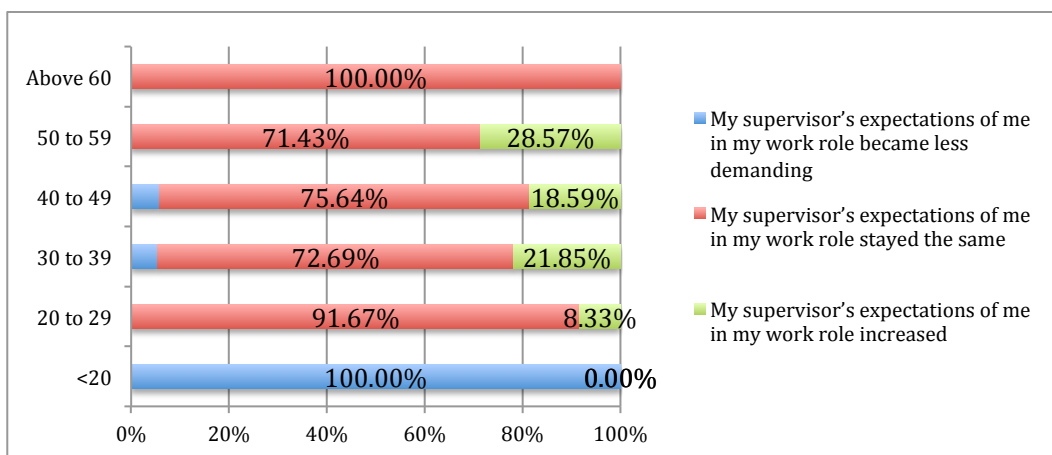


Figure 4.20: Work adjustments after birth of most recent child (Fathers by Designation)⁹

c. Fathers With children aged 15 years and below, By Age

Responses indicated that majority of fathers felt that job responsibilities remained same (>75%), and up to 20% believed that job responsibilities and supervisor’s expectations increased at after birth of child. Whilst majority of fathers (~60%) took unplanned / urgent leave, a third of fathers between ages of 20 to 59 would use flexible work arrangements informally.



⁹ Percentages based on total number of responses for Question 7 ((Variable N between 414 to 530))

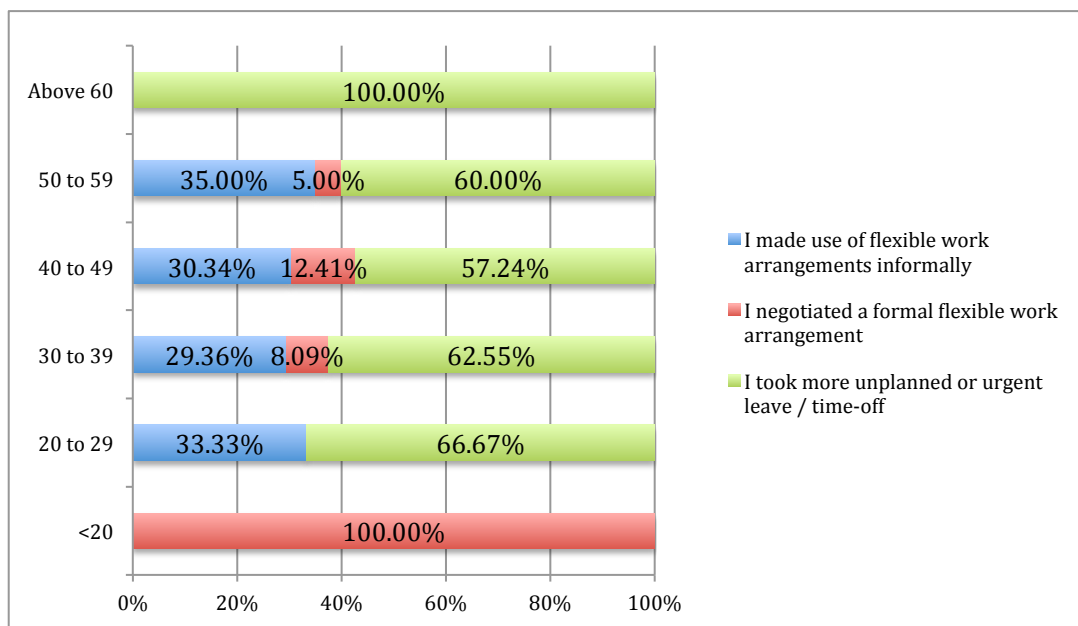
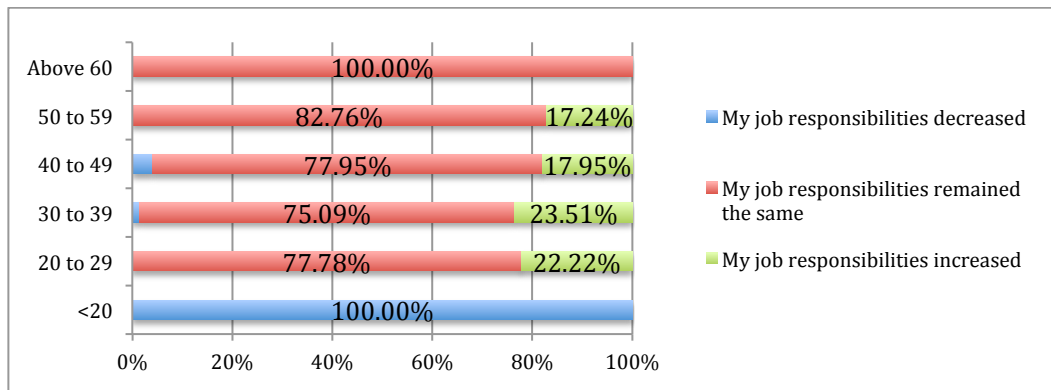


Figure 4.21 Work adjustments after birth of most recent child (Fathers by Age)¹⁰

d. Fathers With children aged 15 years and below, By Age of Youngest Child

Responses indicated that fathers with youngest child (2 to 6 years) were most likely to take urgent / unplanned leave, whilst fathers with older 'youngest child' were more likely to use flexible work arrangements informally or negotiate formal flexible work arrangements.

¹⁰ Percentages based on total number of responses for Question 7 (Variable N between 414 to 530)



Figure 4.22 Work adjustments after birth of most recent child (Fathers by Age Of Youngest Child)¹¹

4.9.2.4 Leave or Time-off taken for childcare purposes / to spend time with child (ren)

The mean number of leave and time-off taken by fathers and mothers are **8.38** and **8.63** respectively. This suggested that there are no significant gender differences with regards to leave or time-off taken for childcare purposes or to spend time with children.

Time spent interacting with child (ren) during typical week-day

¹¹ Percentages based on total number of responses for Question 7 (Variable N between 414 to 530)

a. General Statistics and By Gender

Most respondents spend between 1 to 3 hours on a typical weekday interacting with their child (ren), with fathers generally spending less time than mothers with children.

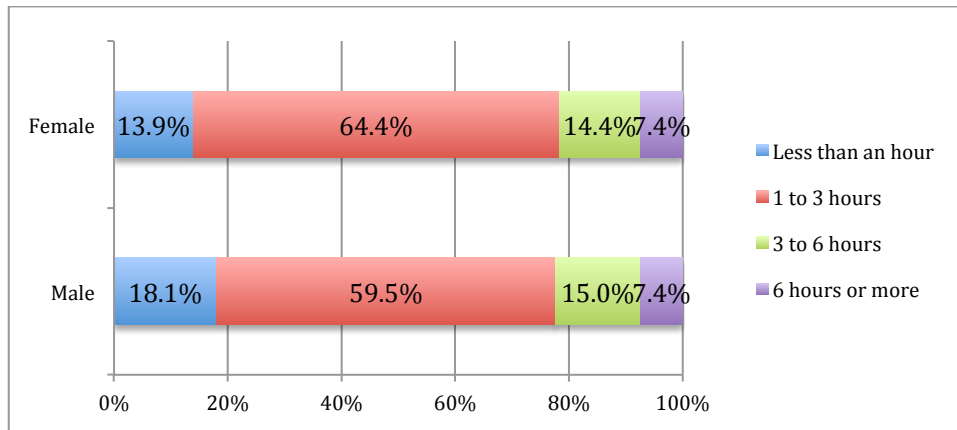


Figure 4.23 Time Spent Interacting with Children (By Gender) (Q9, N=828)

- b. Fathers With children aged 15 years and below, By number of children. Responses suggested that amount of time spent interacting with children does not increase proportionately with the number of children in the household, especially for families with 1, 2 or 3 children.

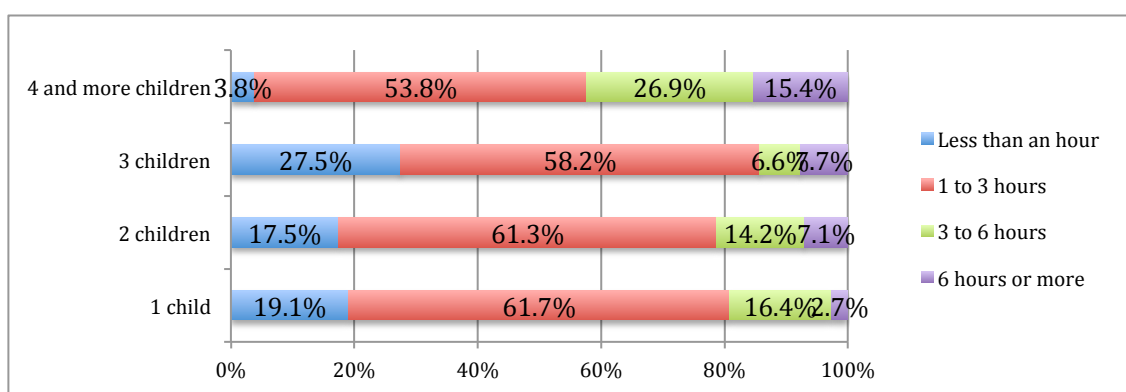


Figure 4.24 : Time Spent Interacting with Children (Fathers by Number of Children) (Q9, N=540)

- c. Fathers With children aged 15 years and below, By Age of Youngest Child

Respondents with older (youngest child) were more likely to spend less time interacting with their children as compared to respondents with younger (youngest child). This reflects the more intense caregiving needs of fathers with younger children.

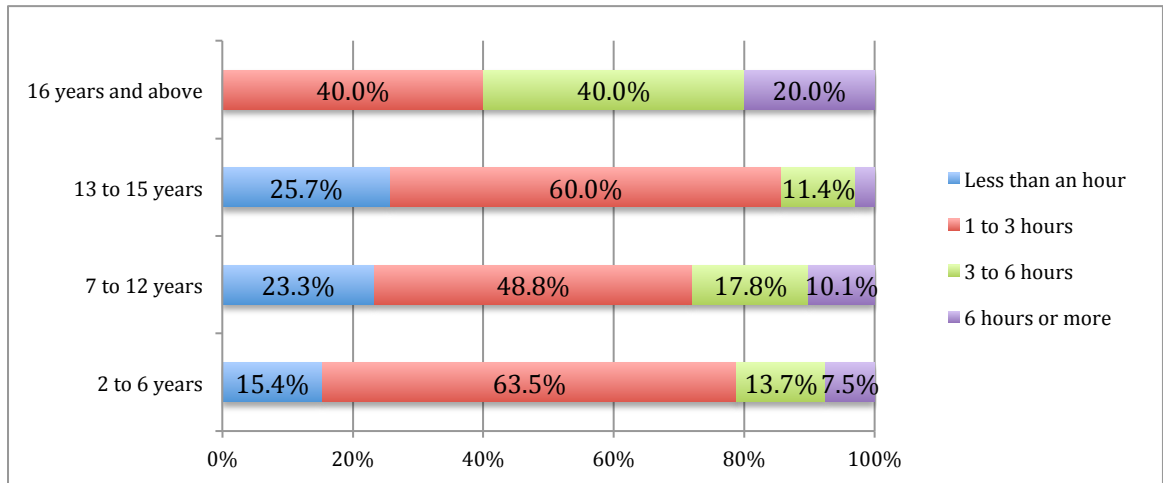


Figure 4.25: Time Spent Interacting with Children (Fathers by Age of Youngest Child) (Q9, N=410)

d. Father with children aged 15 years and below, By Ethnicity

Whilst the most common response (mode) across ethnic groups was 1 to 3 hours, significantly more Malay respondents spend 3 to 6 hours a day interacting with their children as compared to other ethnicities.

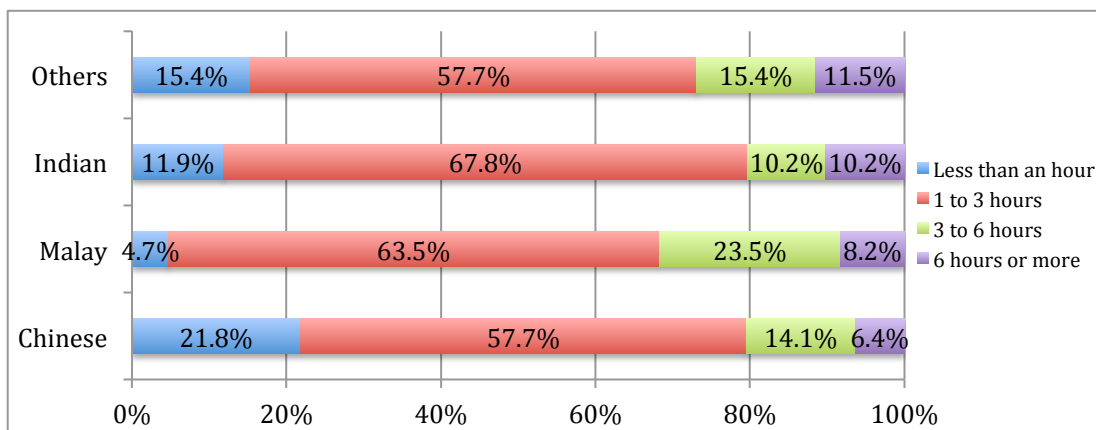


Figure 4.26: Time Spent Interacting with Children (Fathers by Ethnicity) (Q9, N=610)

- e. **Father with children aged 15 years and below, By Education**
Responses indicate that across education levels, at least 50% of fathers spent 1 to 3 hours interacting with children. More than 20% of father with degrees spent less than an hour, which suggests that fathers of higher education (degree) spent comparatively less time with their children.

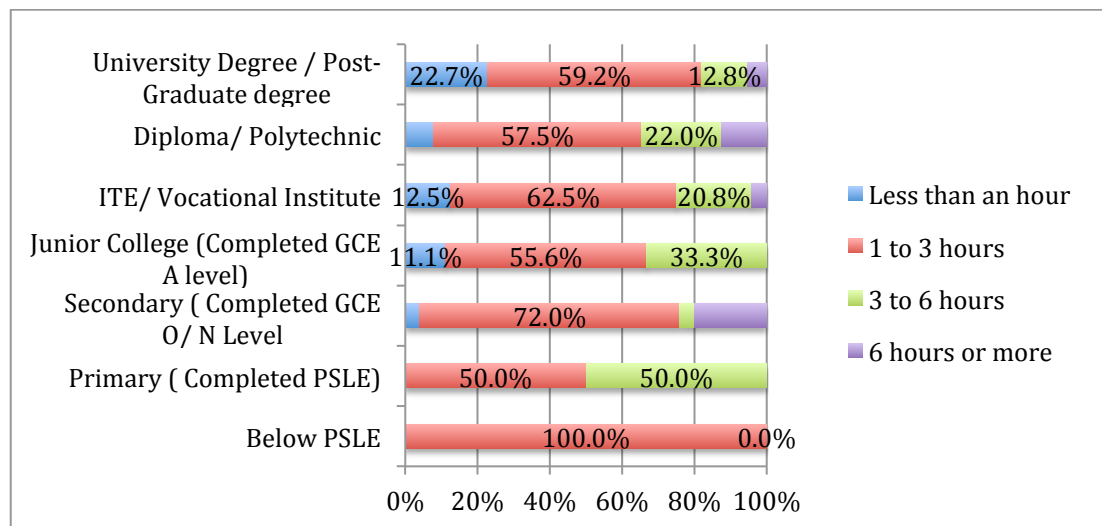


Figure 4.27: Time Spent Interacting with Children (Fathers by Education) (Q9, N=610)

- f. **Father with children aged 15 years and below, By Income**
Responses indicate that across all income levels, most fathers spent 1 to 3 hours with their children. Fathers with higher income increasingly - either spend less or more time with their children (narrowing of mode).

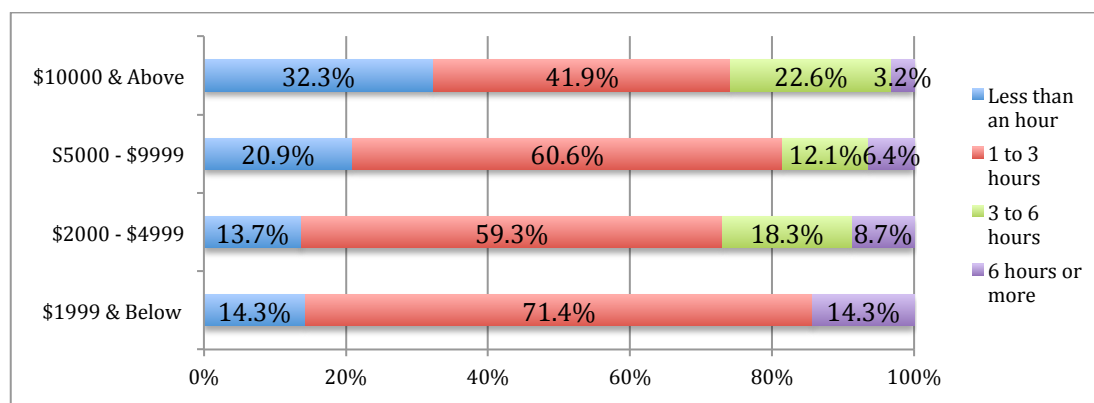


Figure 4.28: Time Spent Interacting with Children (Fathers by Income) (Q9, N=598)

4.9.2.5 Aspects of Being a Good Father

a. General Statistics and By Gender

Respondents indicated that the most important role of a father was, to provide love and emotional support to their children. Female respondents however, felt that the most important role of a father was, to be a teacher, guide and coach to the child.

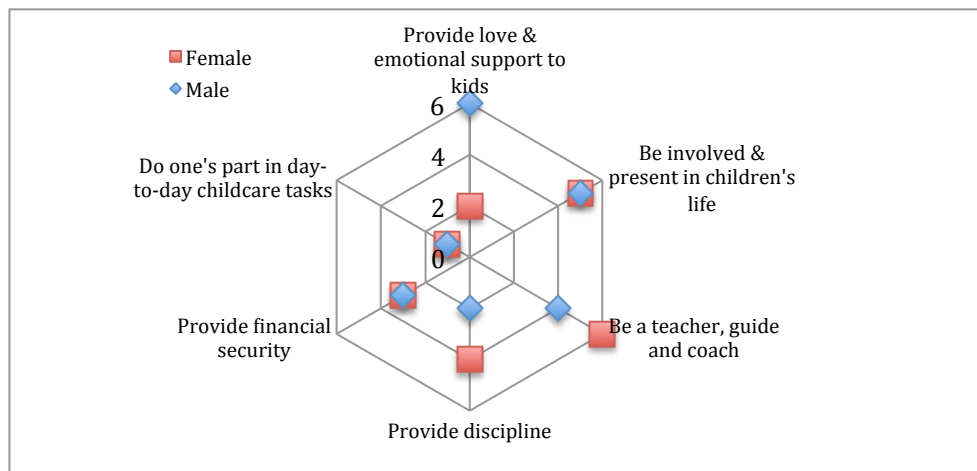


Figure 4.29: Aspects of Being A Good Father (Fathers By Gender)¹² (Q10, N=842)

b. Fathers With children aged 15 years and below, By Age Group

Fathers across most age groups ranked 'providing love and emotional support' as being most important, except fathers of (20 to 29 years old) who rated 'be involved and present in children's life' as top. The greatest disparity in ranking was for 'providing financial security' and 'be involved and present in children's life' as seen in [Figure 4.31](#).

'Be involved and present in children's life' is basically the provision of financial and minimum time with the children whereas "provides love and emotional support for kids" goes beyond the traditional Asian mode of parenting. It involves more quantity and dispensing love in a quantifiable manner. Such contextual information was explicitly presented to the parents during the course of completing the questionnaire.

¹² Ranking of 'extremely important' & 'important' variables (Outer values reflect higher rank order for the Gender)

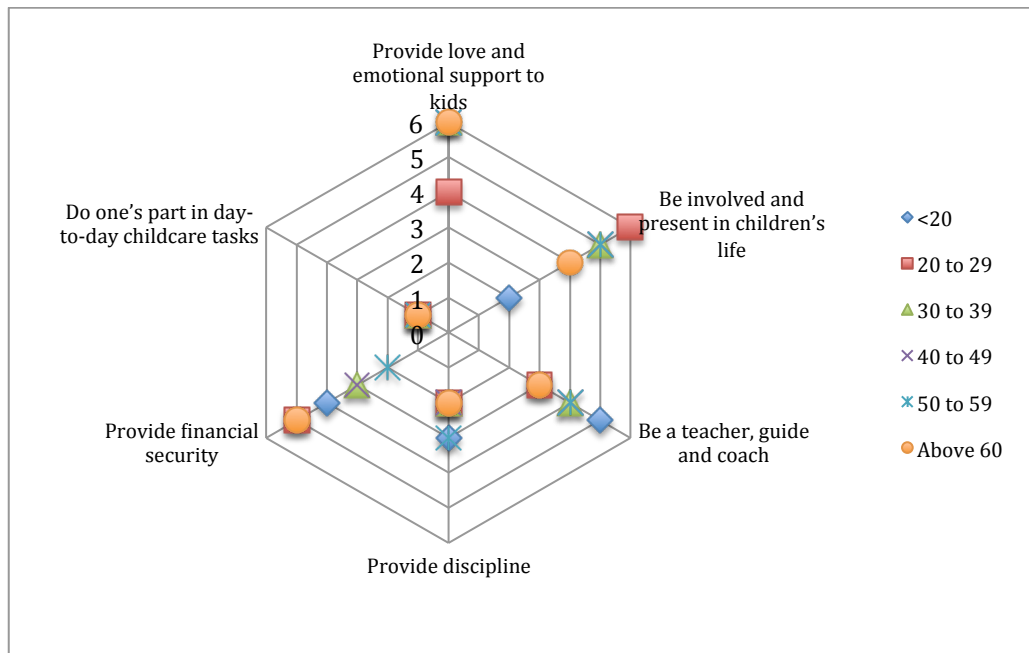


Figure 4.30: Aspects of Being A Good Father (Fathers By Age Group)¹³ (Q10, N=615)

Note: Counters which appear to be 'missing' from certain sections are actually hidden behind other counters as the different groups may have ranked the section at the same level

c. Fathers With children aged 15 years and below, By Ethnicity

Responses indicated that fathers of Chinese, Malay and Others ethnicity ranked 'provide love and emotional support to kids' first, whilst fathers of Indian ethnicity ranked 'be involved and present in children's life' first.

¹³ Ranking of 'extremely important' & 'important' variables (Outer values reflect higher rank order for the Age Group)

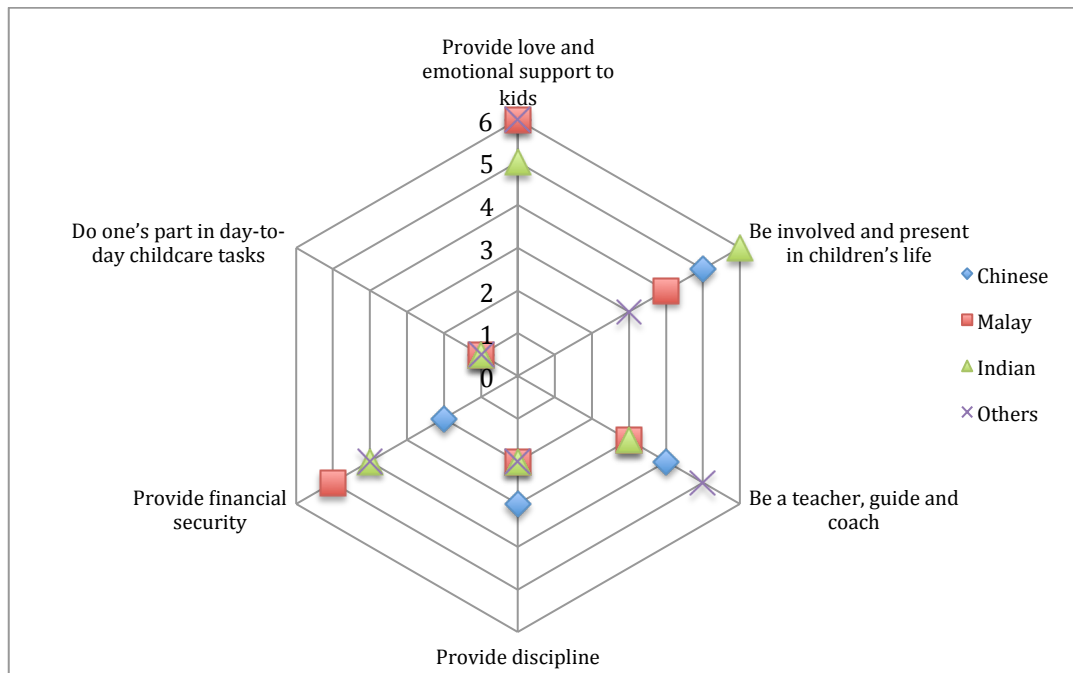


Figure 4.31: Aspects of Being A Good Father (Fathers By Ethnicity)¹⁴ (Q10, N=615)

Note: Counters which appear to be 'missing' from certain sections are actually hidden behind other counters as the different groups may have ranked the section at the same level

d. Fathers With children aged 15 years and below, By Education

Responses indicated that fathers across all education levels except those of Junior College and ITE qualifications, ranked 'provide love and emotional support to kids' first. Beyond that, fathers of differing educational levels ranked aspects of being a good father differently. This suggests that educational level has an effect on what fathers deem as key aspects.

¹⁴ Ranking of 'extremely important' & 'important' variables (Outer values reflect higher rank order for the Age Group)

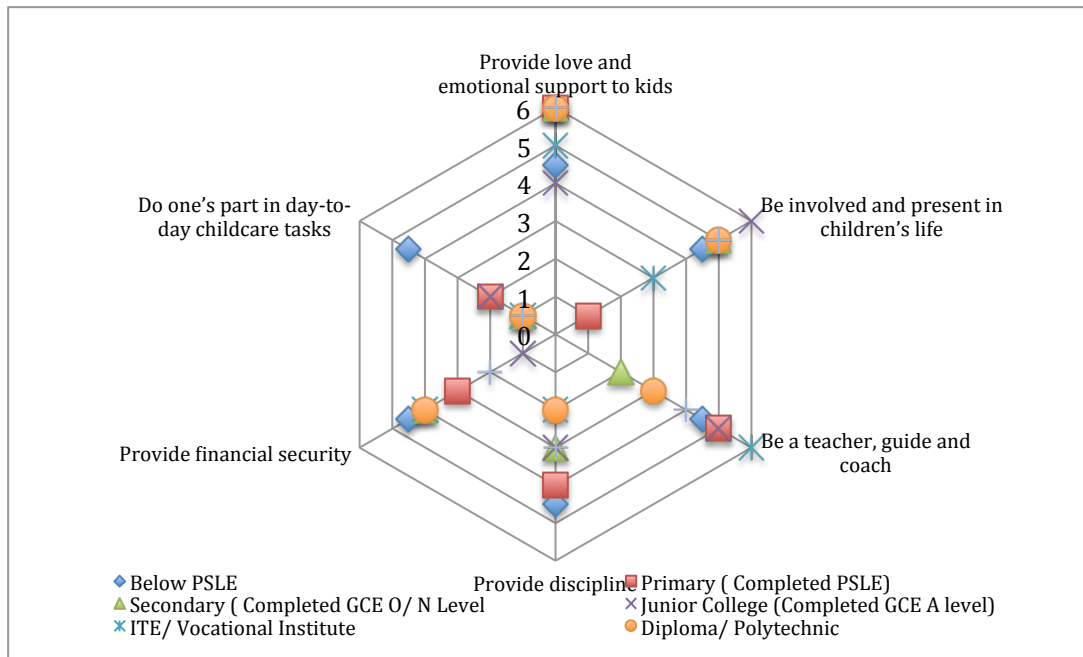


Figure 4.32: Aspects of Being A Good Father (Fathers By Education)¹⁵ (Q10, N=615)

Note: Counters which appear to be 'missing' from certain sections are actually hidden behind other counters as the different groups may have ranked the section at the same level

4.9.2.6 Personal perspective of role as parent

a. General Statistics and By Gender

Responses indicated that female respondents were more likely to consider their ability to care for child when considering a new job and sacrificing for children as part of parenthood. They were also more likely to be less proud of what they do for their children as a parent, and less confident in their ability as a parent.

¹⁵ Ranking of 'extremely important' & 'important' variables (Outer values reflect higher rank order for the Age Group)

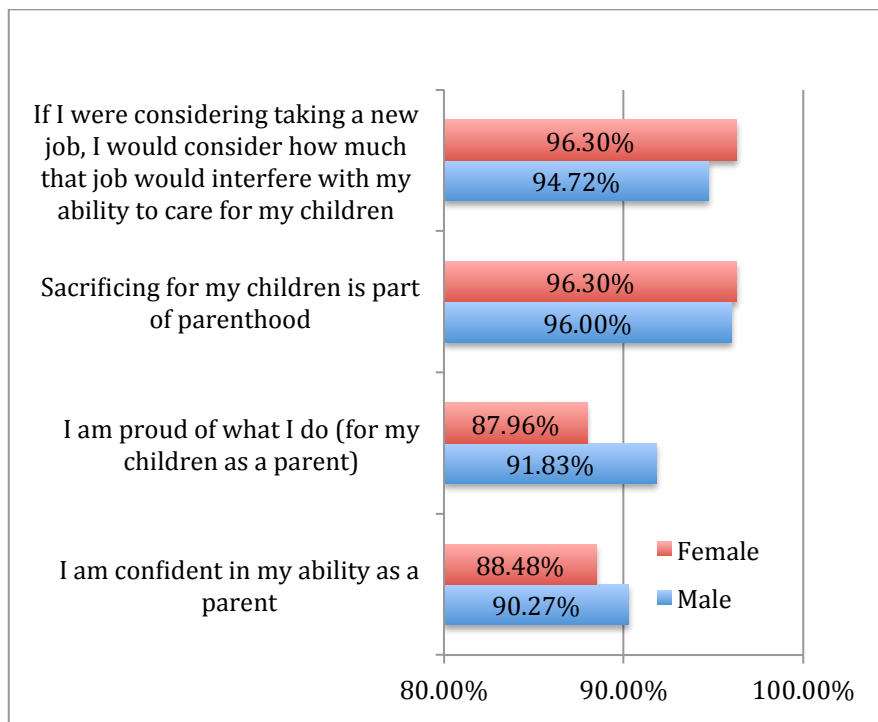


Figure 4.33: Personal Perspective of Role as Parent (By Gender)¹⁶ (Q11, N=828)

b. Fathers With children aged 15 years and below, by Age

Responses indicated that older fathers tended to have more confidence in their ability as a parent, and have greater pride of what they would do (for their children) as a parent. Although all age groups indicated their strong willingness to sacrifice for children as part of parenthood, it was least amongst fathers of age groups 30 to 49 years old. The same groups of fathers indicated the highest disagreement (albeit low percentages) that they would consider whether their new job would interfere with their ability to care for children.

¹⁶ Percentage of 'Strongly Agree' & 'Agree' variables

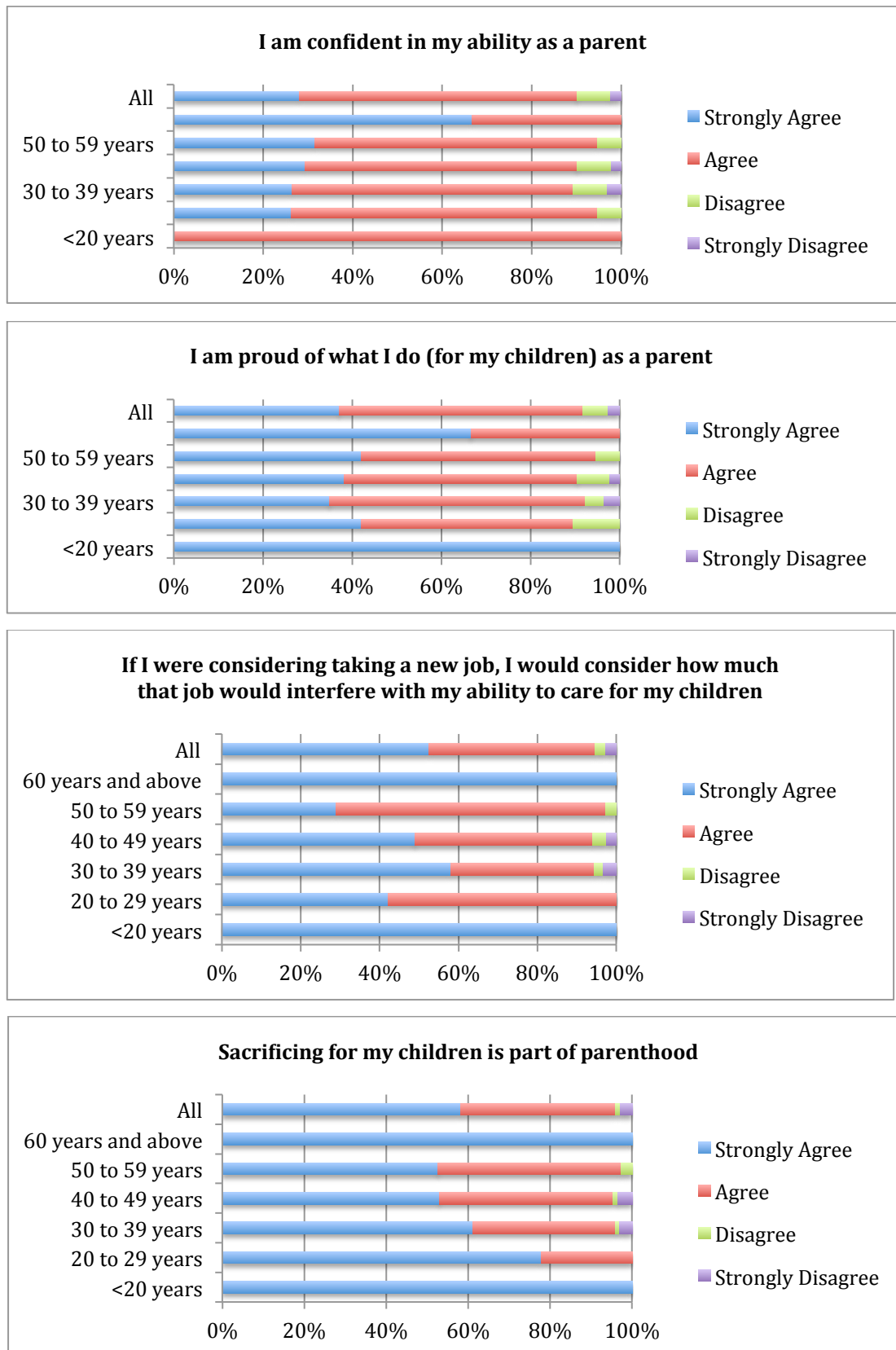
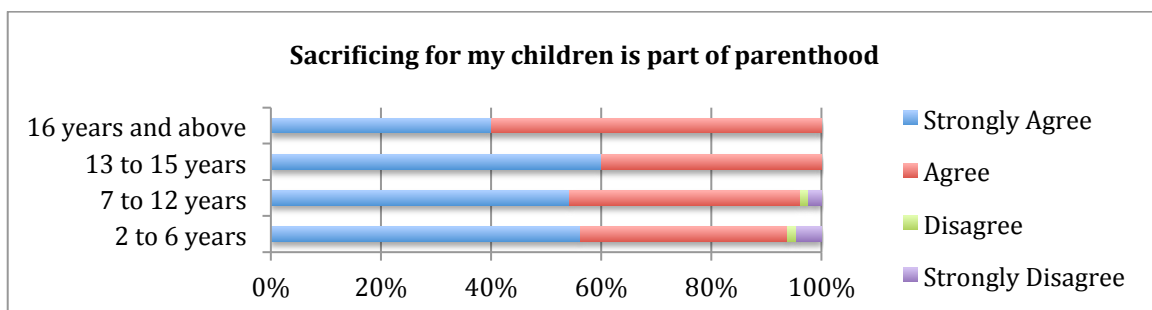
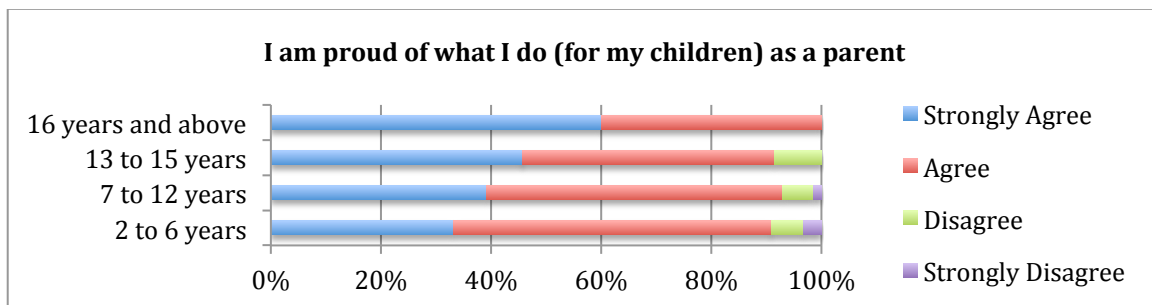
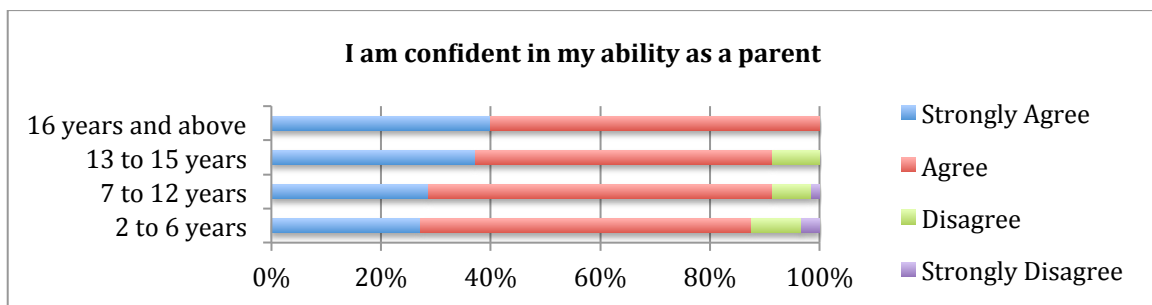


Figure 4.34: Personal Perspective of Role as Parent (Fathers By Age) (Q11, N=615)

c. Fathers With children aged 15 years and below, By Age of youngest child

It would appear that fathers with younger children tend to have less confidence in their ability as a parent and are less proud of what they do (for their children) as a parent. This could be a result of fathers' increased expectations of their role, or their lack of experience in the role.



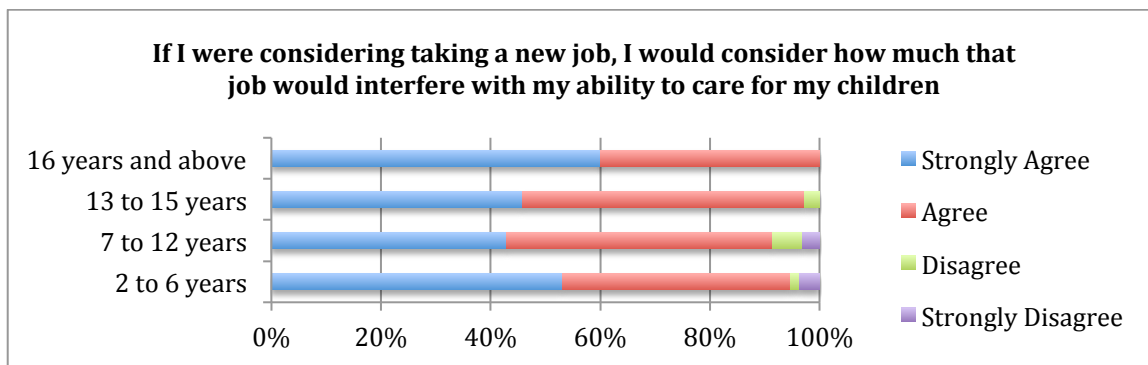


Figure 4.35: Personal Perspective of Role as Parent (Fathers By Age of Youngest Child) (Q11, N=411)

- d. It would be worth noting that the portion on confidence in ability and proud of what they have done, could be influenced by personal expectations of the respondent, and may not be reflective of their actual ability or what they have actually done for their children.

4.9.2.7 Overall analysis of Section B

- a. In terms of responsibility towards child (ren), most respondents provided a balanced response (financial and caring), though female respondents were more inclined to caring, and male respondents were inclined to financial. Respondents with older (youngest child) provided more extreme responses than others, though the norm was still to hold both responsibilities. Across ethnic groups, Indian respondents registered the most central response, whilst Malay respondents were inclined to financial and Chinese respondents were inclined to caring.
- b. In terms of work adjustments, it seems that parents with younger children may face greater expectations in terms of work adjustments. Younger respondents were more likely to negotiate for formal flexible work arrangement. Across ethnic groups, Malay respondents were most likely to negotiate a formal flexible work arrangement and make use of flexible work arrangements informally. Chinese respondents were most likely to take more unplanned or urgent leave.

- c. In terms of leave or time off taken for childcare, there were no differences between gender in terms of the number of taken, and that it does not increase in proportion to number of children that the respondents have. Across ethnic groups, the common number of days taken differed slightly, with Malays and Others (6 to 10 days) and Indians and Chinese (5 days or less).
- d. In terms of time spent interacting with children, there were no significant differences across gender. However Malay respondents were more likely to spend 3 to 6 hours per day with their children as compared to other ethnic groups. It is notable that time spent interacting with children does not increase proportionately with the number of children that a family unit has.
- e. On aspects of being a good father, significant differences were noted in terms of ranking across gender and ethnic groups. This denotes a disparity of how different ethnic groups and gender ascribe the important aspects of being a father.
- f. On role as a parent, whilst the data implied that Chinese female respondents were most likely to be least confident in their ability and less proud of what they have done, it would be worth noting that the it could be influenced by personal expectations of the respondent, and thus may not be reflective of their actual ability or what they have actually done for their children.

4.9.3 Section C – Co-Parenting Experiences

4.9.3.1 Share of Responsibility for Childcare

- a. By Gender
Data suggested that female respondents were more likely to take most responsibility for childcare, whilst male respondents were more likely to share responsibilities of childcare with their spouse. The data also

indicates that husbands were most likely to take less responsibility than wives for childcare.

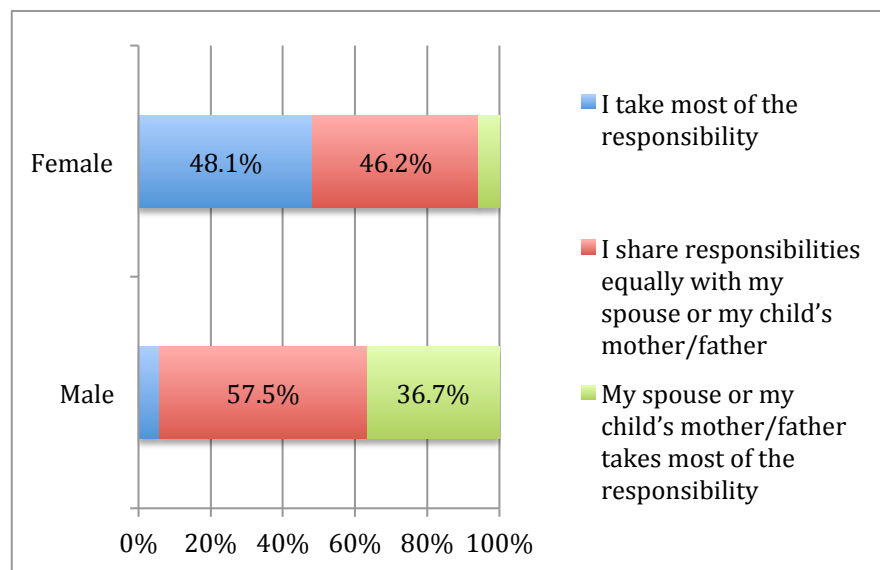


Figure 4.36: Share of Responsibility for Childcare (By Gender) (Q12, N=824)

b. Fathers With children aged 15 years and below, By Age

Whilst fathers across all age groups, except 60 years and above, share responsibilities equally with their spouse, greater percentage of fathers from 30 to 39 years were likely to depend on their spouse to take most of the childcare responsibilities, as compared to other age groups.

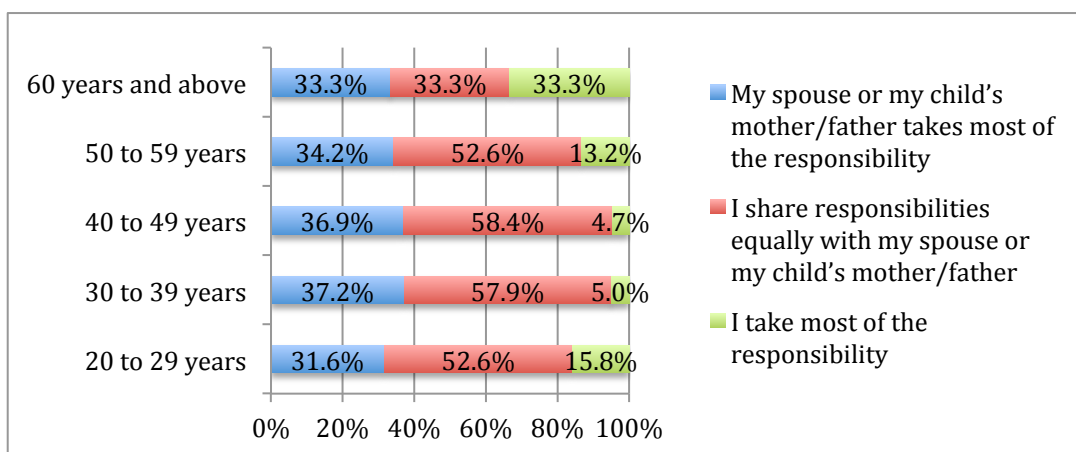


Figure 4.37: Share of Responsibility for Childcare (Fathers By Age) (Q12, N=616)

c. Fathers With children aged 15 years and below, By Ethnicity

Responses indicate that fathers of Malay ethnicity have greatest tendency to have shared responsibilities (76.5%), whilst a greater percentage of Others (42.3%), Chinese (39.6%) and Indian (38.3%) fathers depend on their spouse (wife) to take most of the responsibility for childcare.

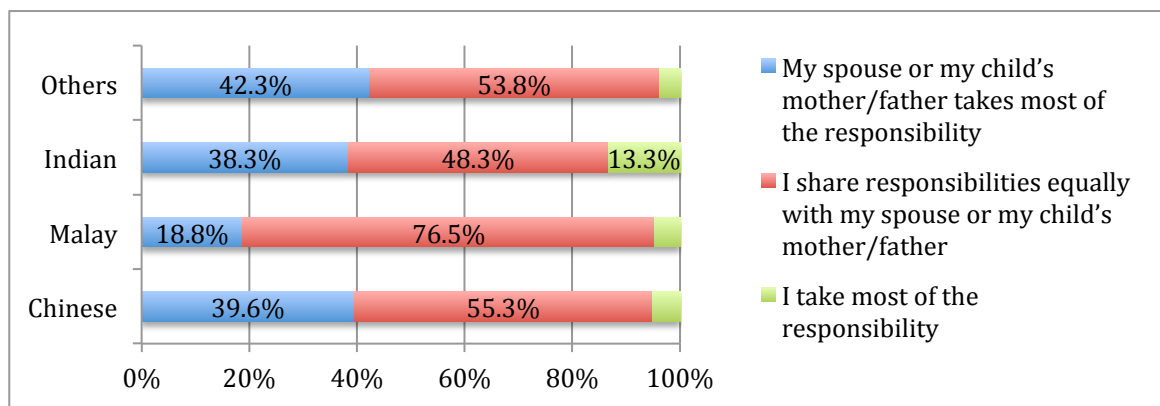


Figure 4.38: Share of Responsibility for Childcare (Fathers By Ethnicity) (Q12, N=616)

d. Fathers and Mothers by Income

Responses indicate that as income levels of fathers increase, the greater the likelihood that the spouse (wife) takes most of the responsibility for childcare. However as income levels of mothers increase, the likelihood that the spouse (husband) takes most of the responsibility for childcare decreases to the point that they share responsibilities equally.

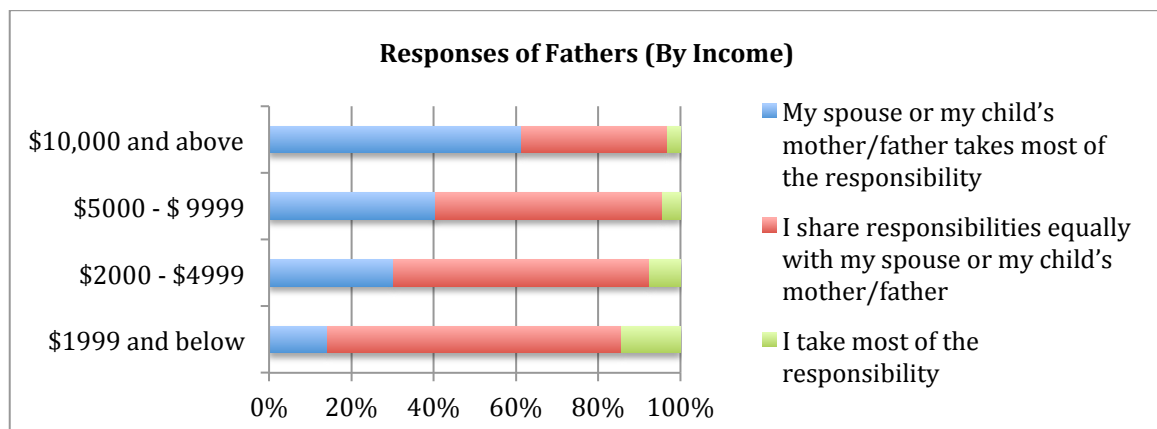


Figure 4.39: Response of father by income

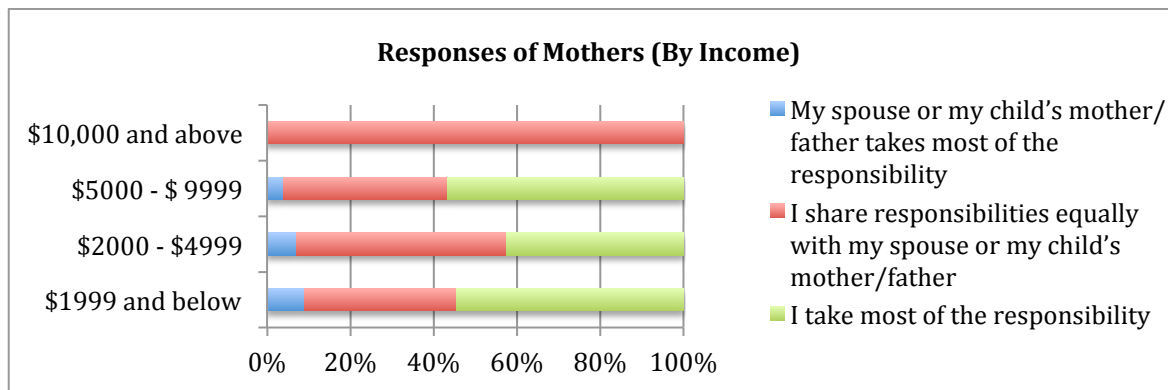


Figure 4.40: Response of Mothers by income

4.9.3.2 Spousal Support

a. By Gender (Fathers and Mothers)

Data suggests that that male respondents (fathers) were more likely than female respondents (mothers) to say that their spouses supported them at work and at home.

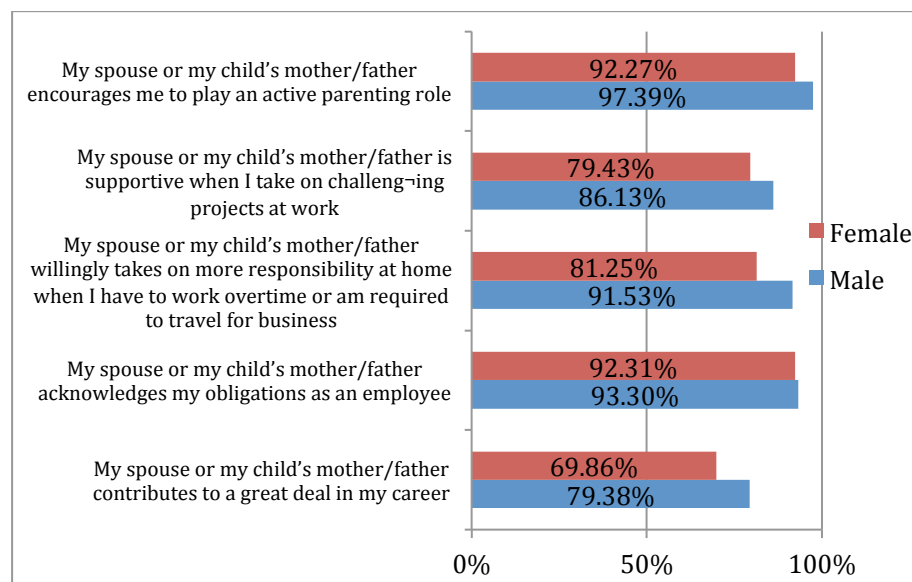


Figure 4.41 :Spousal Support (By Gender)¹⁷(Q13, N= 616(Fathers), 209 (Mothers)

¹⁷ Percentage of 'Strongly Agree' & 'Agree' variables

4.9.3.3 Overall analysis of Section C

- a. In terms of share of responsibility for childcare, the data implied that wives were more likely take most responsibility for childcare. Across ethnic groups, Malay respondents were more likely to share responsibilities as compared to other ethnic groups. Lower income respondents were more likely to take most of childcare responsibility whilst those of higher income take would entrust responsibility of childcare to the spouse.
- b. In terms of spousal support, male respondents acknowledged that they received more support at work and at home from their spouse, as compared to female respondents.

4.9.4 Section D – Blending Work with Other Aspects of Personal and Family Life

This section applied to all respondents regardless of whether they are parents.

4.9.4.1 Experience interruptions of time at work to deal with family matter

a. General Statistics

Responses indicated that respondents regardless of gender, are more likely to interrupt time at home (away from work) to address work related issues than to interrupt time at work to address family related issues. A point of consolation was that both genders were least likely to interrupt time with children to address work related issues. Notably, males say they interrupt their time on all fronts more than females. This could be due to a stronger work-orientation and time spent at work and working in general.

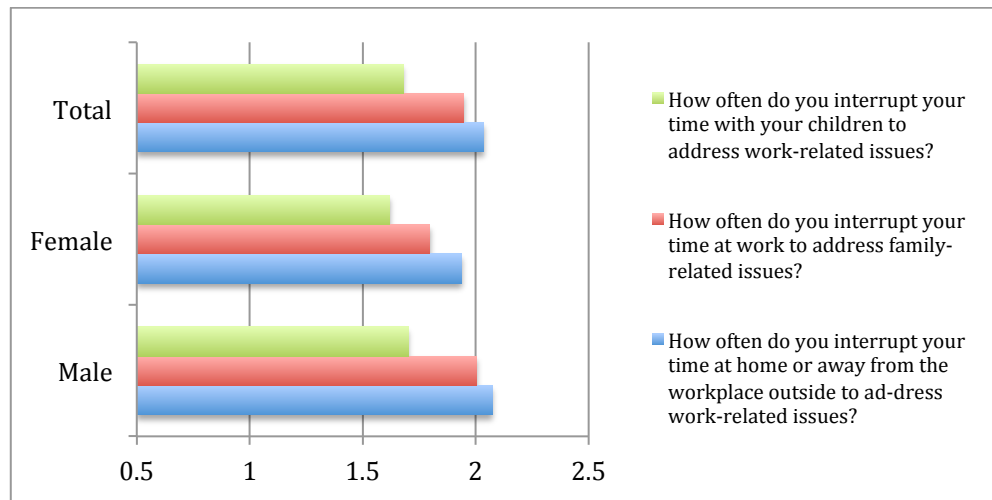


Figure 4.42 :Blending Work with Personal & Family Life (By Gender)¹⁸(Q14, N=786 Male, 311 Female)

- b. Fathers With children aged 15 years and below, By Age
- Responses indicated that fathers (60 years and above) were most likely to interrupt time with children to address work related issues, whilst fathers (30 to 39 & 40 to 49) were most likely to interrupt time at home to address work related issues. Fathers (less than 20 years) were most likely to interrupt work to address work related issues.

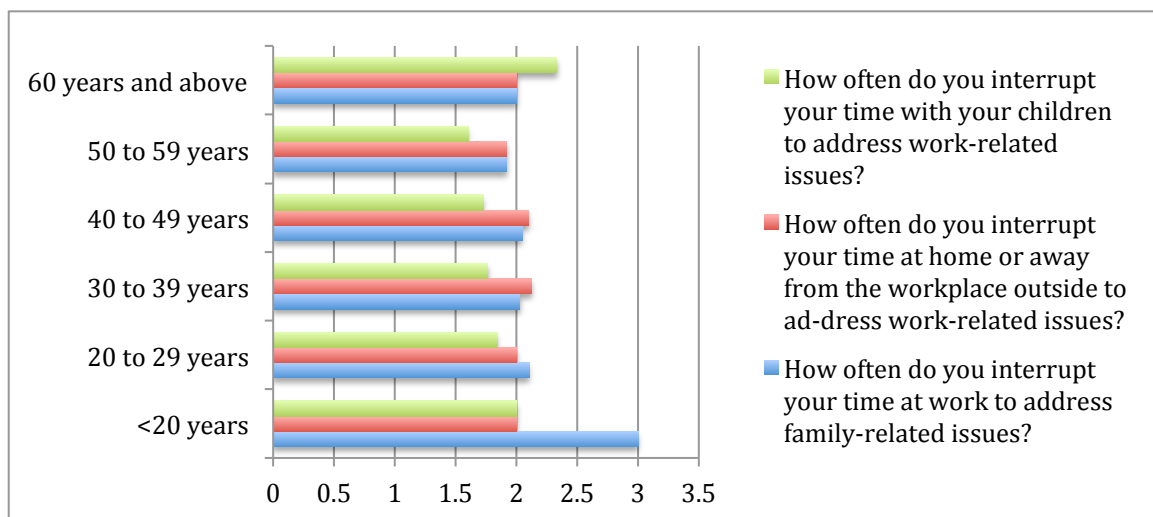


Figure 4.43: Blending Work with Personal & Family Life (Fathers By Age)¹⁹(Q14, N=616)

¹⁸ Mean scores calculated using weights: 0-never, 1-rarely, 2-sometimes, 3-quite often, 4-very often

¹⁹ Mean scores calculated using weights: 0-never, 1-rarely, 2-sometimes, 3-quite often, 4-very often

- c. Fathers With children aged 15 years and below, By Number of Children
Responses indicated that the number of children does not influence the frequency of interruptions between children, home and work issues.

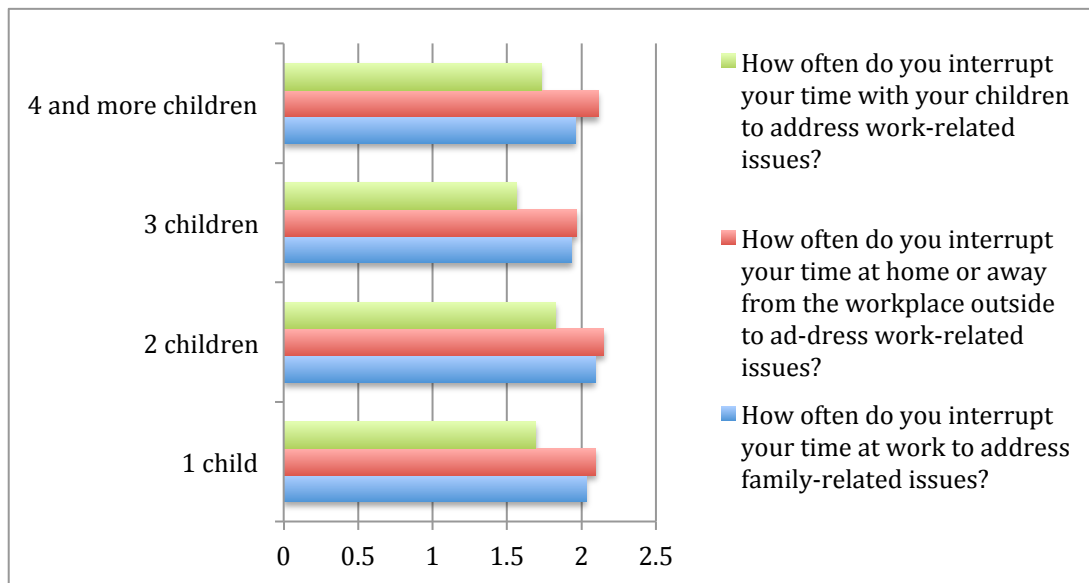


Figure 4.44: Blending Work with Personal & Family Life (Fathers By No of Children)²⁰ (Q14, N=545)

- d. Fathers With children aged 15 years and below, By Education
Responses indicated that fathers with higher education had greater difficulty blending work with family and children given that they were more likely to experience interruptions in all aspects – children, home and work.

²⁰ Mean scores calculated using weights: 0-never, 1-rarely, 2-sometimes, 3-quite often, 4-very often

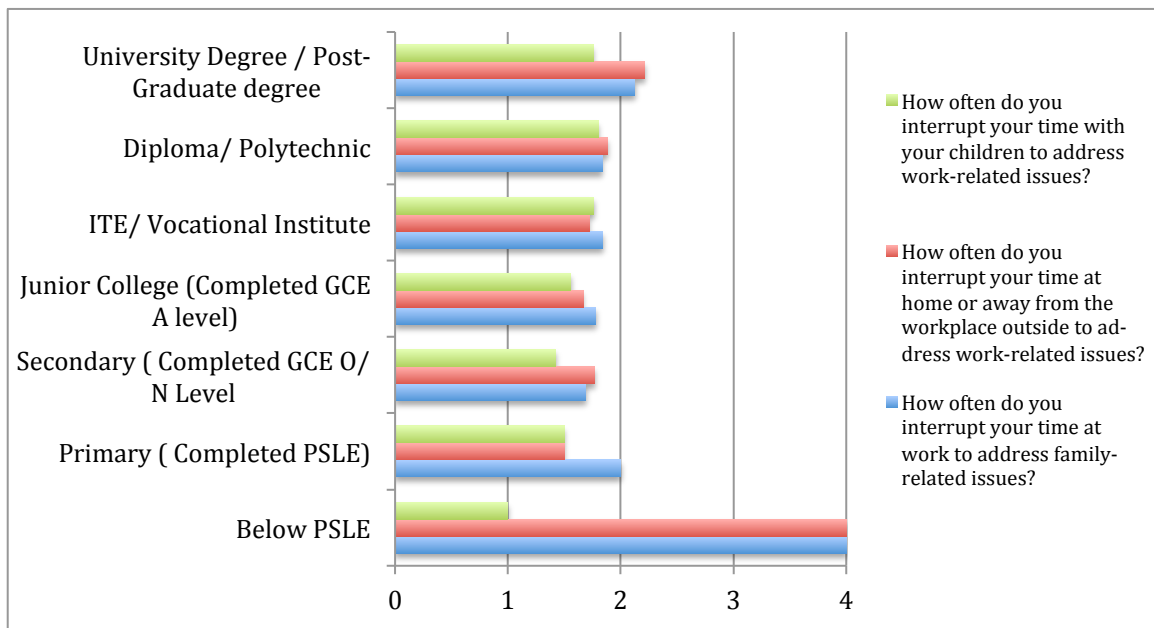


Figure 4.45: Blending Work with Personal & Family Life (Fathers By Education)²¹ (Q14, N=616)

- e. Fathers With children aged 15 years and below, By Income
Responses indicated that fathers with higher income were more likely to experience interruptions in all aspects – children, home and work.

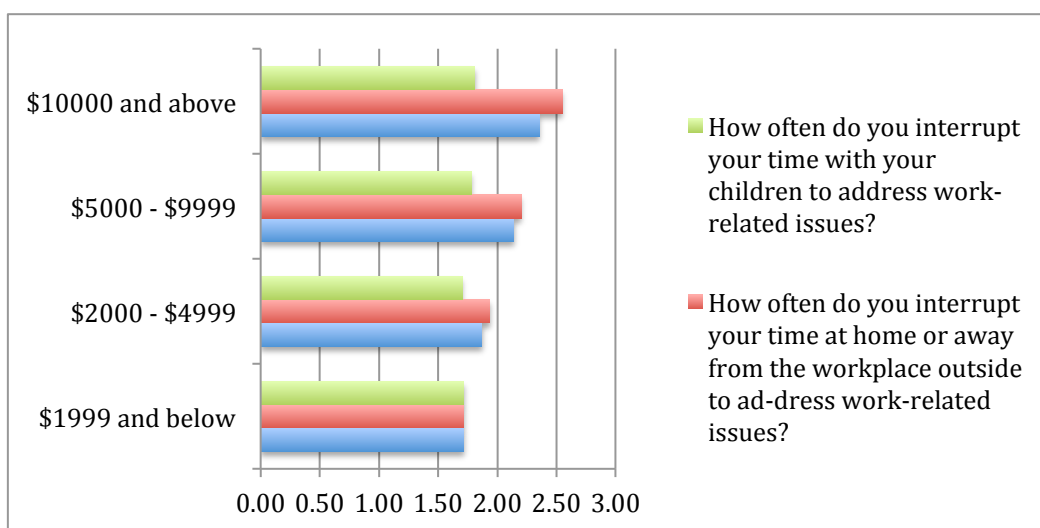


Figure 4.46: Blending Work with Personal & Family Life (Fathers By Income)²² (Q14, N=604)

²¹ Mean scores calculated using weights: 0-never, 1-rarely, 2-sometimes, 3-quite often, 4-very often

4.9.4.2 Work-life conflict

a. General Statistics and Gender

Responses indicated that both male and female respondents experienced similar levels of work-life conflicts. More than 50% of each expressed that there were some amount of work-life conflict.

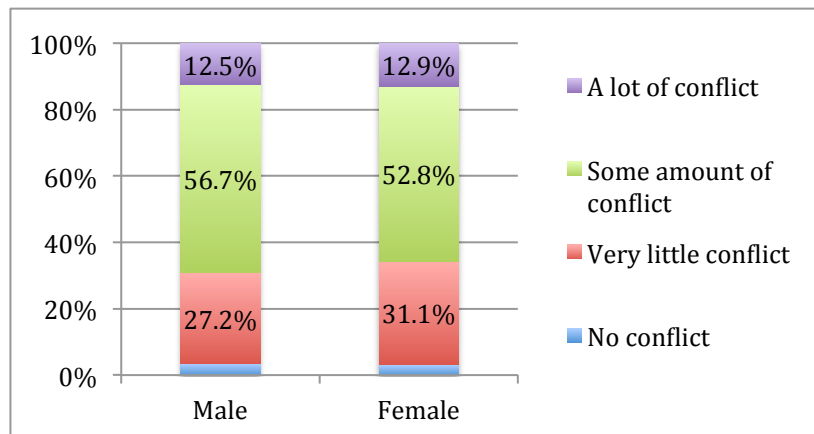


Figure 4.47: Work Life Conflict (By Gender) (Q14, N=604)

b. By Ethnicity

Responses indicated that Malay respondents perceived comparatively less work-life conflict than other ethnicities. Malay respondents also registered the lowest frequency of interruptions of work for family, as well as family / child for work.

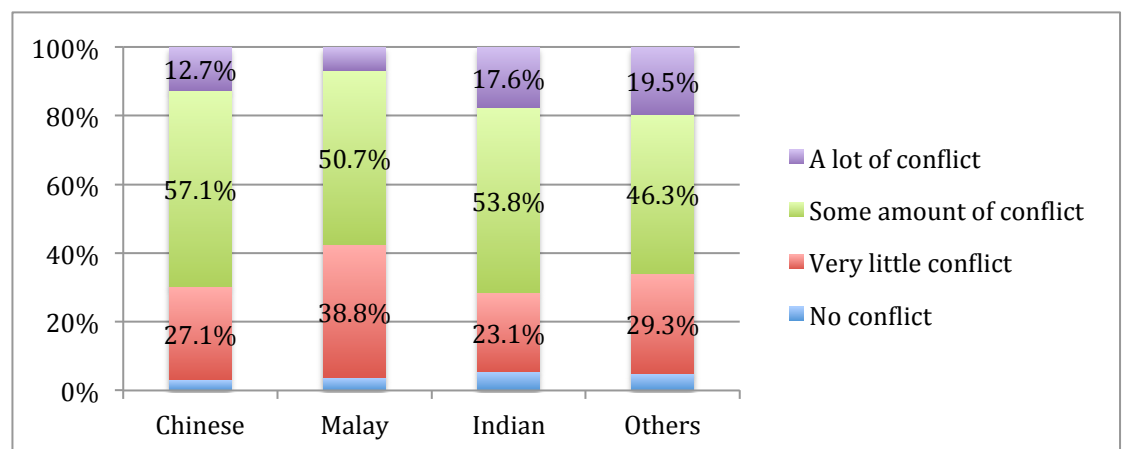


Figure 4.48: Work Life Conflict (By Ethnicity) (Q15, N=1,095)

²²Mean scores calculated using weights: 0-never, 1-rarely, 2-sometimes, 3-quite often, 4-very often

c. Fathers and Mothers With children aged 15 years and below, By Income

Responses indicated that regardless of gender, parents with higher income levels experienced greater levels of work-life conflict. At each level of income, mothers consistently experienced greater levels of work-life conflict than fathers.

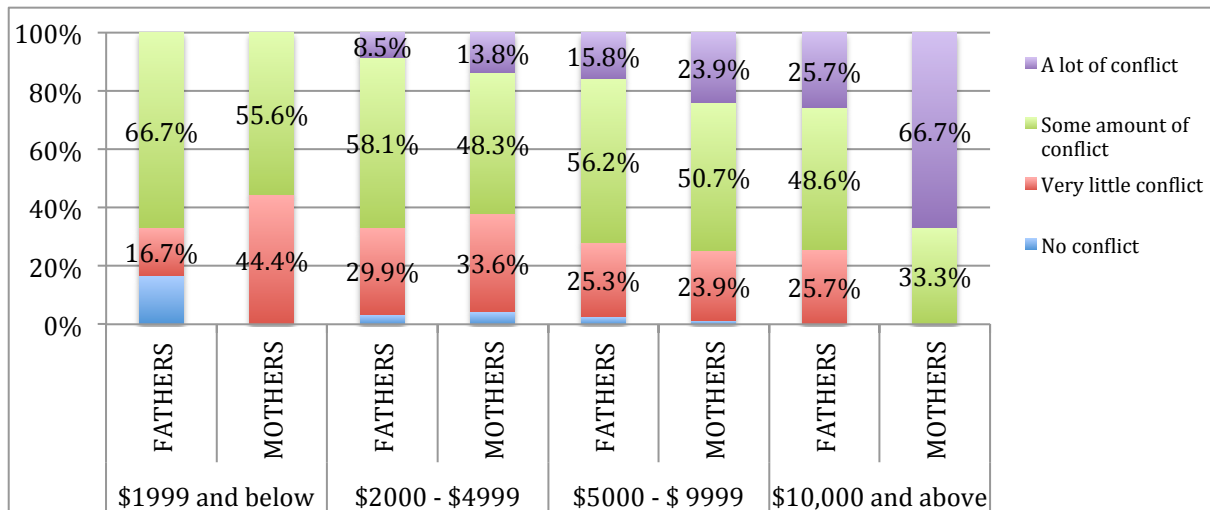


Figure 4.49: Work Life Conflict (Fathers and Mothers By Income) (Q15, N=771)

d. Fathers and Mothers with children aged 15 years and below, By Number of children

Responses indicated that work-life conflict does not increase in proportion to the number of children. However, whilst mothers tended to experience more work-life conflict than fathers with 1, 2 and 3 children, mothers with 4 or more children indicated less work-life conflict than fathers of similar category.

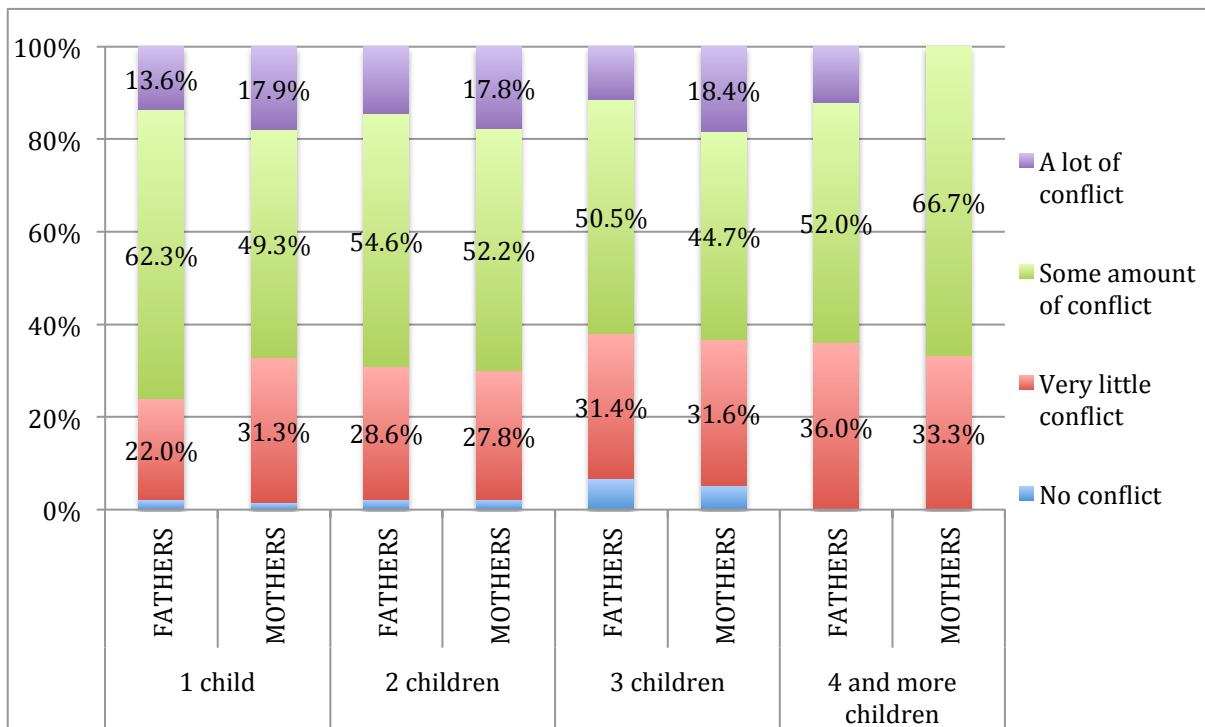


Figure 4.50: Work Life Conflict (Fathers & Mothers By No of Children) (Q15, N=784)

e. Fathers with children aged 15 years and below, By Age of Youngest Child Responses indicated that work-life conflict seemed highest for fathers with youngest child aged (2 to 6 years) and (16 years and above).

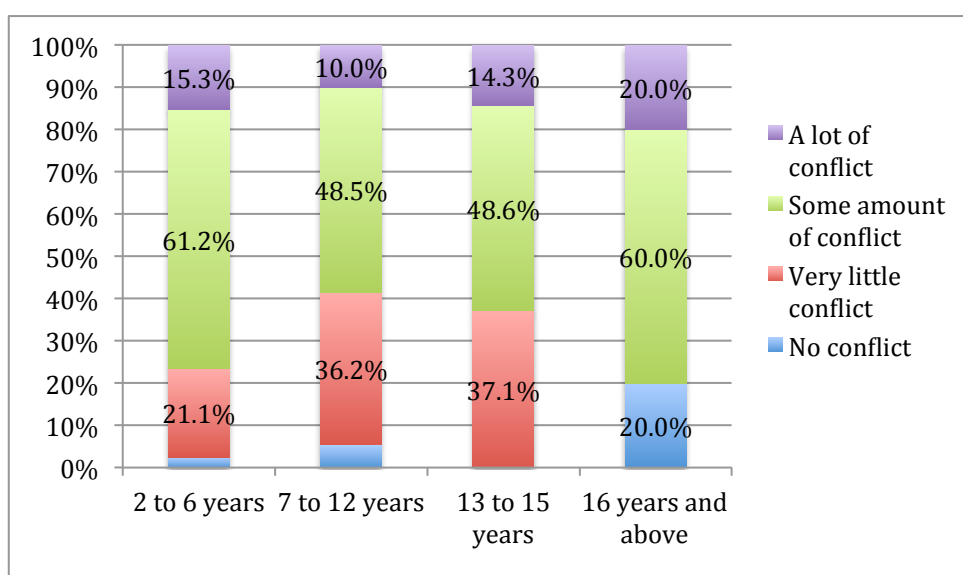


Figure 4.51: Work Life Conflict (Fathers By Age of Youngest Child) (Q15, N=412)

4.9.4.3 Overall Analysis of Section D

- a. In terms of interruptions at work or at home, generally respondents were more likely to interrupt time at home to address work-related issues, than interrupt time at work to address family-related issues. A point of consolation was that respondents were least likely to interrupt time with children to address work-related issues.
- b. It was notable that there was a positive correlation between income levels and frequency of interruptions, but no correlation between number of children and frequency of interruptions. Respondents of age groups (30 to 39) and (40 to 49) experienced the most amount of interruptions, which was expected as these were considered 'prime' ages in the workforce.
- c. In terms of work-life conflict, there were no differences between genders. However Malay respondents perceived comparatively less work-life conflict than other ethnicities. Malay respondents also registered the lowest frequency of interruptions of work for family, as well as family / child for work.
- d. It was notable that respondents with higher income were more likely to have greater amount of work-life conflicts, and that respondents with more children did not experience more work-life conflict.

4.9.5 SECTION E - WORKPLACE SUPPORTS AND FAMILY FRIENDLY POLICIES

4.9.5.1 Organisation Culture

- a. By Gender

Responses indicated that female respondents were consistently more likely than males, to perceive that personal matters and work commitments are exclusive functions that cannot co-exist as shown in [Figure 57](#).

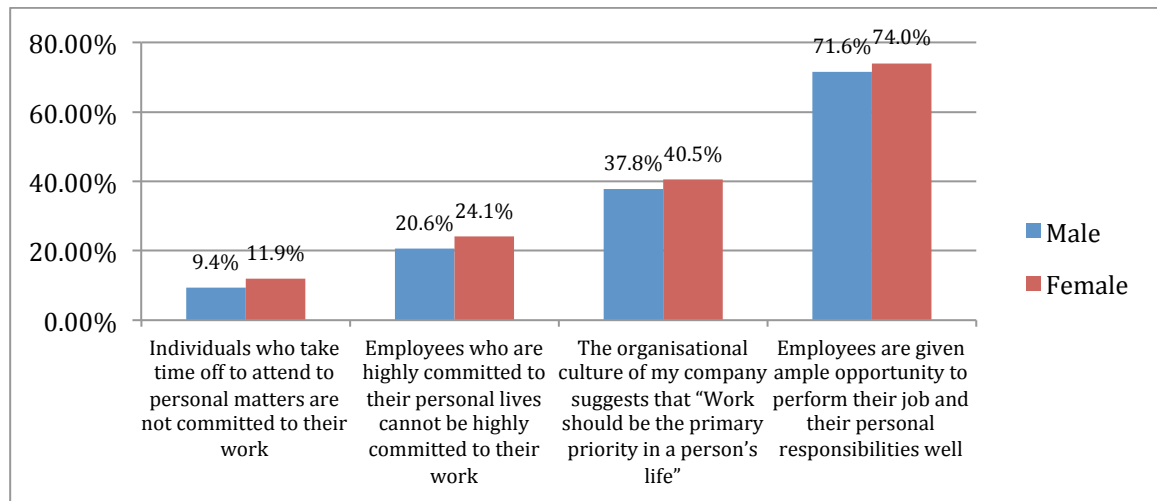


Figure 4.52: Organisation Culture (By Gender)²³(Q16, N=1,047)

b. By Designation

Responses indicated that Senior Management were more inclined towards the work life balance culture than Middle Management, given that their responses on all statements were consistently lower

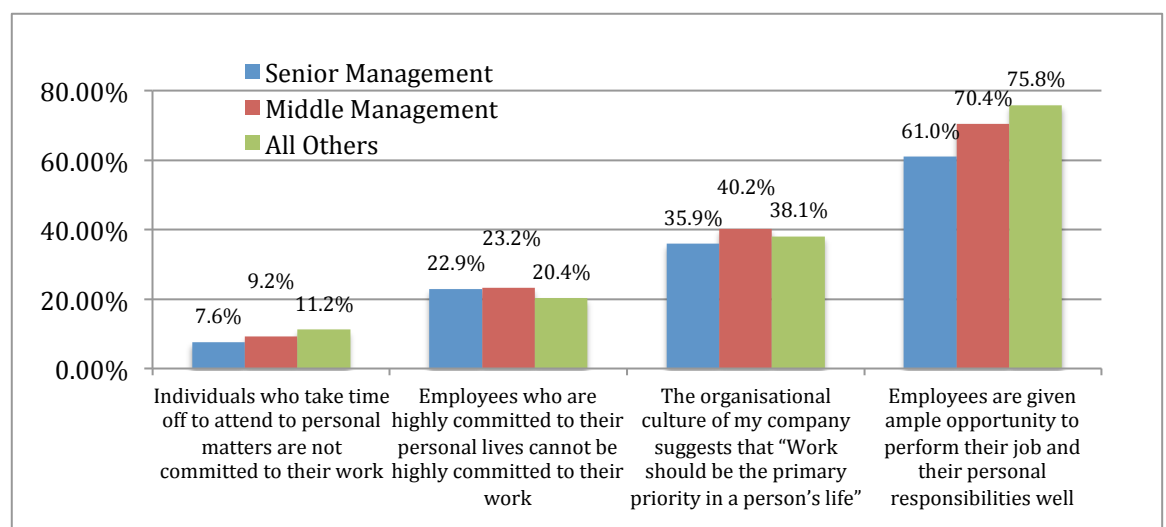


Figure 4.53: Organisation Culture (By Designation)²⁴(Q16, N=1,047)

²³ Percentage of 'Strongly Agree' & 'Agree' variables

c. By Income

Responses indicated that respondents with higher income were more receptive to possibility of work-life balance in the organization and that the organisation does not only prioritize work.

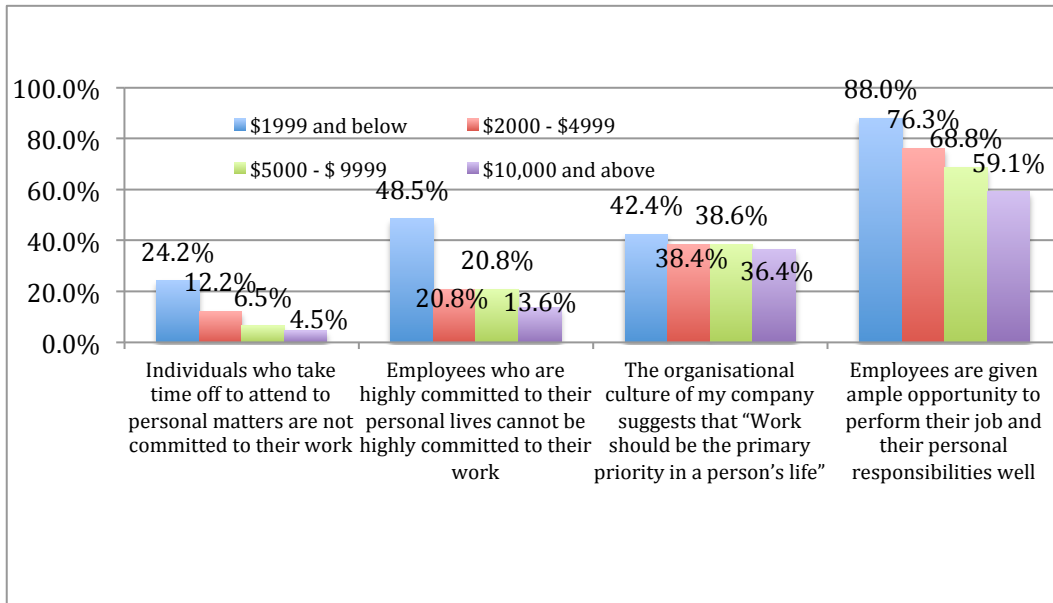
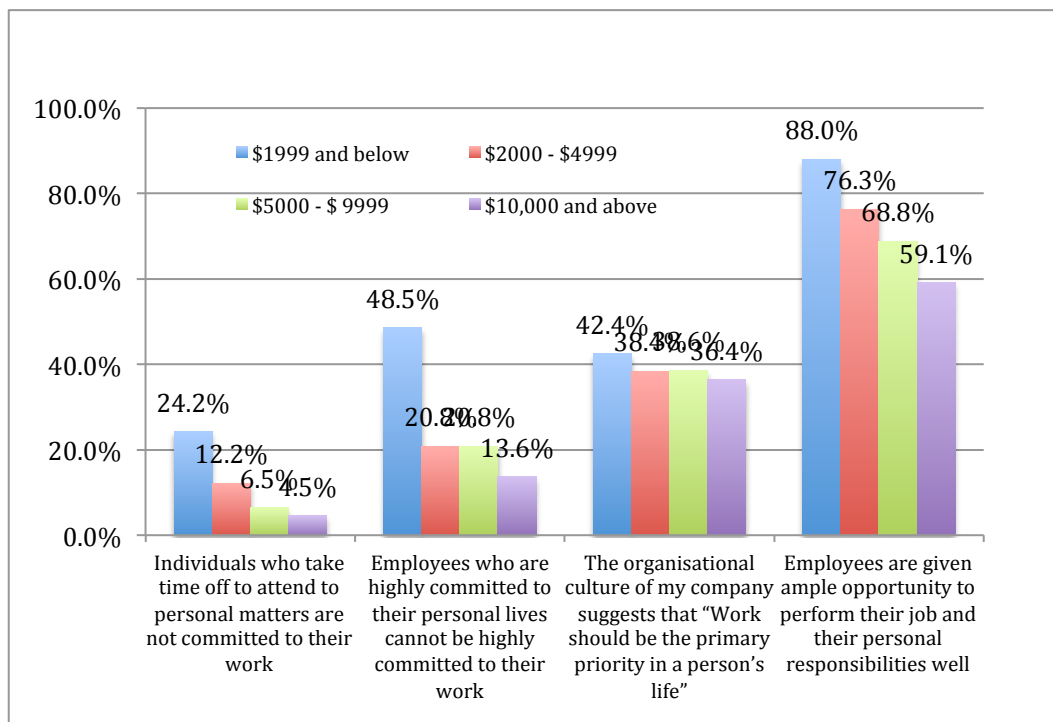


Figure 4.54: Organisation Culture (By Monthly Income)²⁵(Q16, N=1,014)



²⁴ Percentage of 'Strongly Agree' & 'Agree' variables

²⁵ Percentage of 'Strongly Agree' & 'Agree' variables

d. By Ethnicity

Responses (Figure 4.56) indicated that Chinese and Indian respondents were more likely to identify work as the primary priority for companies, and that employees who were highly committed to their personal lives cannot be highly committed to their work. Malays and Others were more likely to believe that employees are given ample opportunity to perform their job and responsibilities well.

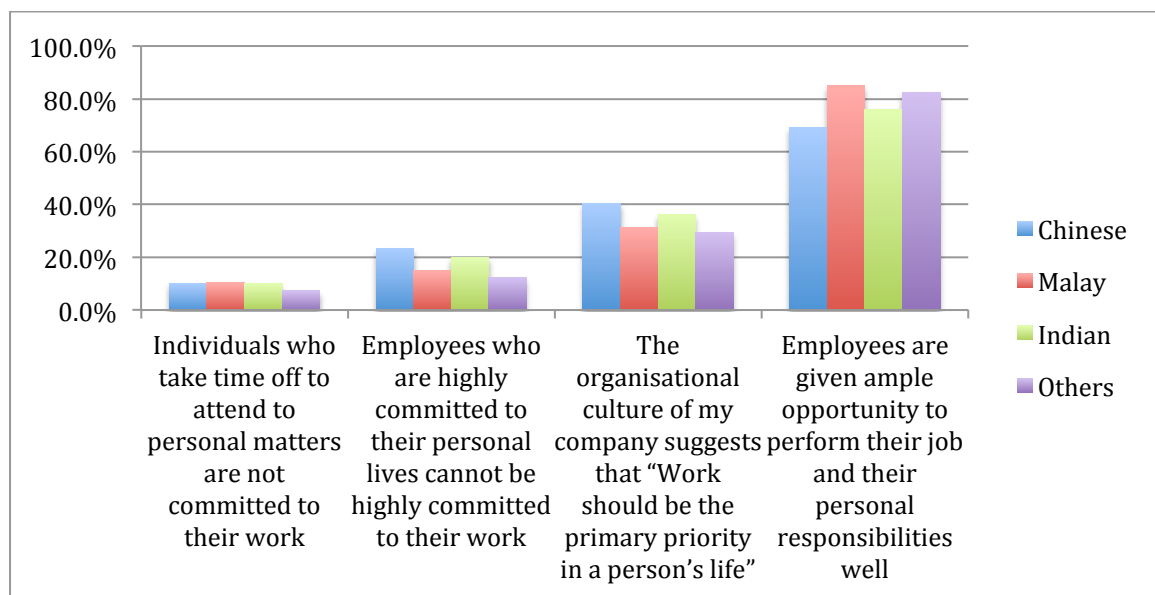


Figure 4.55: Organisation Culture (By Ethnicity)²⁶(Q16, N=1,047)

e. By Industry Sector

Responses showed that government sector have a stronger work-life balance culture as compared to the private and education sector. Whilst the education sector enjoys a more balanced culture than the private sector, it has the strongest work priority culture than other sectors, and least opportunity to perform at their job and responsibilities well.

²⁶ Percentage of 'Strongly Agree' & 'Agree' variables

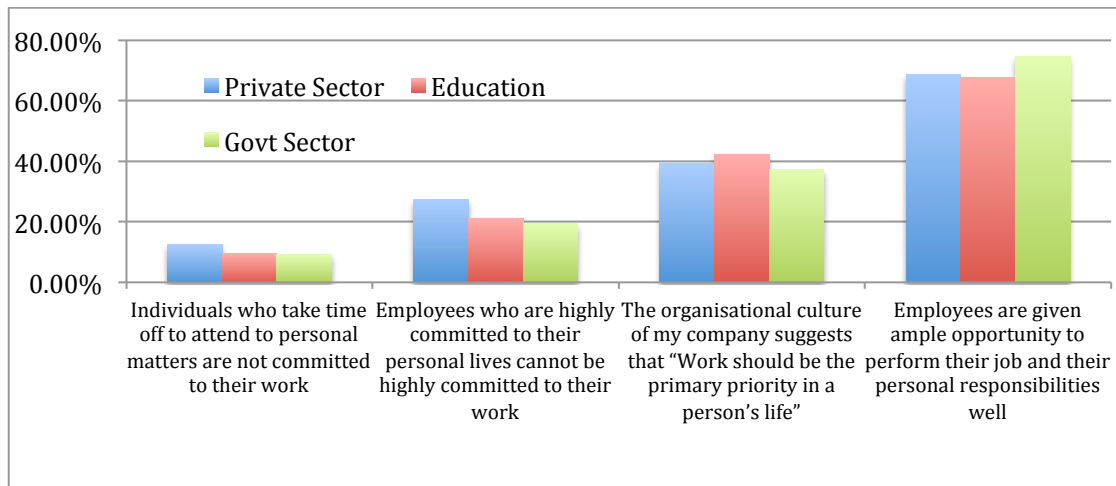


Figure 4.56: Organisation Culture (Fathers By Industry Sector)²⁷ (Q16, N=1,044)

4.9.5.2 Management / Supervisor Support

a. By Gender

Responses indicated that more male respondents reflected that managers were supportive, did not show favouritism and really cares about effects that work demands have on personal and family life.

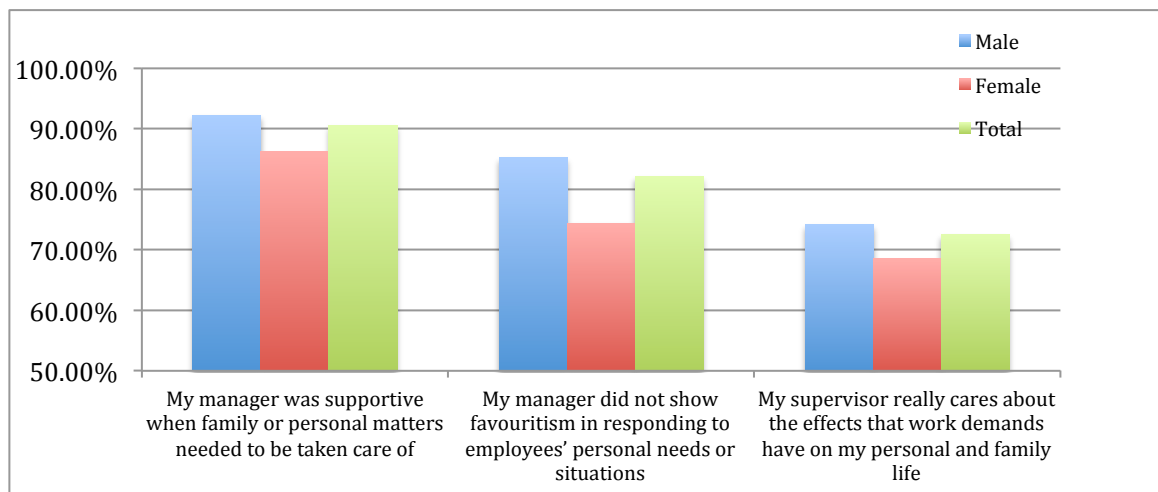


Figure 4.57: Management / Supervisor Support (By Gender)²⁸ (Q17, N=1,097)

²⁷ Percentage of 'Strongly Agree' & 'Agree' variables

²⁸ Percentage of 'Strongly Agree' & 'Agree' variables

b. By Designation

Responses indicated that Senior Management respondents reflected that managers were supportive, did not show favouritism and cares about effects that work demands have on personal and family life.

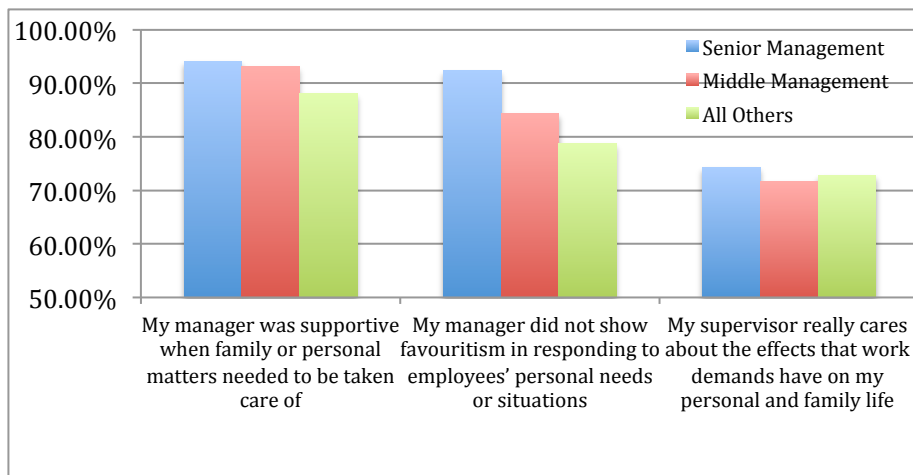


Figure 4.58: Management / Supervisor Support (By Designation)²⁹ (Q17, N=1,097)

4.9.5.3 Work-life benefits and/or employee support schemes

a. Organisation Benefits Provided, By Gender

The highest number of respondents indicated that organisation provide benefit for 'Company Events for the Whole Family' (879) and 'Designated "Eat with Your Family" Day' (858). This is consistent across gender, as shown in [Table 4.2](#).

Table 4.2 Work-life benefits and/or employee support schemes (By Gender) (Q18, N=1,089)

Benefits Provided	Male	Female	Total
Childcare assistance (e.g., onsite childcare centre)	349	142	491
Designated "Bring Your Child to Work" days	306	128	434
Company events for the whole family	644	235	879
Designated "Eat with Your Family" day	624	234	858

²⁹ Percentage of 'Strongly Agree' & 'Agree' variables

Telecommuting	448	186	634
Flexible start and end times	532	208	740
Part-time work	422	193	615
Other flexible work arrangements such as compressed work week and job-sharing	238	85	323
Flexibility or time-off to attend parent-teacher meetings at child's school	360	126	486
Health and wellness programmes	524	213	737
Design of individual work-life plan (with manager or Human Resources)	205	73	278
Regular review and feedback related to work-life issues (with manager or Human Resources)	248	87	335
Unpaid parental leave	371	NA	371
Paid paternity leave	561	NA	561
Parent education seminars	289	104	393
Parent education seminars for fathers specifically	208	59	267
Resource groups for parents	229	78	307
Resource groups for fathers specifically (e.g., on fathering skills, work-life balance)	197	NA	197
Counselling or coaching services	318	121	439

b. Utilisation Rate, By Gender

Organisation benefits which were most utilized, based on the percentage usage are also 'Company Events for the Whole Family' (34.3% Male & 38.3% Female) and 'Designated "Eat with Your Family" Day' (41.3% Male & 37.6% Female), as shown in [Table 4.3](#). We observe that women generally have a higher utilisation rate on most initiatives.

Utilisation Rates	Male	Female
Childcare assistance (e.g., onsite childcare centre)	15.8%	22.5%
Designated "Bring Your Child to Work" days	17.0%	26.6%
Company events for the whole family	34.3%	38.3%
Designated "Eat with Your Family" day	41.3%	37.6%
Telecommuting	25.7%	26.3%

Flexible start and end times	24.1%	26.0%
Part-time work	5.5%	9.3%
Other flexible work arrangements such as compressed work week and job-sharing	13.4%	16.5%
Flexibility or time-off to attend parent-teacher meetings at child's school	26.7%	34.1%
Health and wellness programmes	29.6%	27.2%
Design of individual work-life plan (with manager or Human Resources)	13.2%	19.2%
Regular review and feedback related to work-life issues (with manager or Human Resources)	15.7%	20.7%
Unpaid parental leave	12.9%	NA
Paid paternity leave	30.7%	NA
Parent education seminars	14.5%	26.0%
Parent education seminars for fathers specifically	16.8%	23.7%
Resource groups for parents (e.g., on parenting skills, work-life balance)	14.0%	24.4%
Resource groups for fathers specifically (e.g., on fathering skills, work-life balance)	15.7%	NA
Counselling or coaching services	9.1%	14.0%

Table 4.3: Utilisation of Work-life benefits (By Gender) (Q18, N=1,089)³⁰

c. Utilisation Rate, Fathers and Mothers, By Designation

Amongst fathers and mothers, there were prevailing patterns of benefit utilization as seen in [Table 4.4](#). Please note the acronyms below represent the following designations: Senior Management (SM), Middle Management (MM), All Others (AO).

- Mothers were more likely to use
 - Childcare Assistance (twice more likely)
 - Designated 'Bring Your Child to Work' Day (twice more likely, except SM)

³⁰ Utilisation rates is measured by (No of respondents who 'used benefits' divide by total number of respondents whose 'organization provides benefit' and 'used benefit')

- Fathers were more likely to use
 - Flexible start & end times (except for AO)
 - Unpaid Parental Leave (Twice more likely for SM only)
 - Paid parental leave
 - Parent Education Seminars for Fathers (Only for SM & AO)
 - Parental Leave (Twice more likely for SM only)

Utilisation Rates	Senior Management		Middle Management		All Others		Overall		Remarks
	FATHERS	MOTHER	FATHER	MOTHER	FATHERS	MOTHER	FATHERS	MOTHER	
Childcare assistance (e.g., onsite childcare centre)	10.3%	33.3%	15.2%	20.0%	14.9%	30.5%	14.5%	27.6%	Mothers twice more likely to use
Designated "Bring Your Child to Work" days	22.6%	11.1%	20.2%	38.1%	13.3%	32.1%	17.3%	31.4%	Except SM, mothers twice more likely
Company events for the whole family	30.6%	33.3%	41.8%	44.2%	35.2%	44.9%	37.3%	43.8%	
Designated "Eat with Your Family" day	52.4%	33.3%	48.7%	46.8%	39.9%	35.7%	45.1%	38.7%	
Telecommuting	40.7%	50.0%	21.7%	38.1%	21.9%	20.9%	25.1%	30.4%	Except All Others, Mothers more likely to use
Flexible start and end times	40.0%	33.3%	25.2%	23.8%	19.4%	28.8%	24.8%	27.9%	Father more likely (Senior & Mid), Mothers more likely (Others)
Part-time work	9.4%	0.0%	2.3%	9.5%	3.5%	9.2%	4.0%	8.1%	Except SM, mothers twice more likely
Other flexible work arrangements such as compressed work week and job-sharing	31.3%	0.0%	8.2%	28.6%	10.8%	6.1%	11.8%	11.5%	For MM, mothers three times more likely

Flexibility or time-off to attend parent-teacher meetings at child's school	50.0%	57.1%	28.9%	44.4%	20.7%	39.3%	27.5%	42.0%	Except SM, mothers twice more likely
Health and wellness programmes	45.9%	33.3%	32.9%	44.4%	25.0%	20.7%	31.5%	29.7%	
Design of individual work-life plan (with manager or Human Resources)	30.0%	0.0%	12.2%	44.4%	6.6%	19.4%	10.4%	23.3%	Except SM, mothers twice more likely
Regular review and feedback related to work-life issues (with manager or Human Resources)	15.8%	28.6%	6.8%	30.8%	17.4%	25.7%	13.5%	27.3%	Mothers more likely to use (across all designations)
Unpaid parental leave	19.4%	9.1%	9.3%	13.0%	14.6%	15.1%	13.2%	13.8%	
Paid paternity leave	37.0%	0.0%	32.1%	8.3%	35.4%	12.8%	34.2%	10.3%	
Parent education seminars	9.1%	12.5%	10.1%	37.5%	16.2%	26.2%	13.0%	28.4%	Mothers more likely to use (across all designations)
Parent education seminars for fathers specifically	26.7%	0.0%	12.1%	60.0%	20.3%	13.6%	17.8%	24.3%	
Resource groups for parents	12.5%	0.0%	10.4%	54.5%	12.5%	18.2%	11.7%	24.5%	Except SM, mothers more likely
Resource groups for fathers specifically	28.6%	0.0%	9.6%	80.0%	18.4%	18.2%	15.6%	26.7%	
Counselling or coaching services	16.7%	11.1%	7.4%	17.9%	5.9%	10.9%	7.6%	13.3%	Except SM, mothers twice more likely

Table 4.4: Utilisation of Work-life benefits (Fathers & Mothers by Designation)
(Q18, N=6)³¹

³¹ Utilisation rates is measured by (No of respondents who 'used benefits' divide by total number of respondents whose 'organization provides benefit' and 'used benefit')

4.9.5.4 Impact of family-friendly initiatives on organisation

a. By Gender

Respondents from both genders considered family-friendly initiatives were most likely to increase employee retention, increase productivity, improve staff morale, reduce absenteeism and enhance working relationships. Also, both genders assess increase business costs and increase work disruptions, to be comparatively less than its benefits.

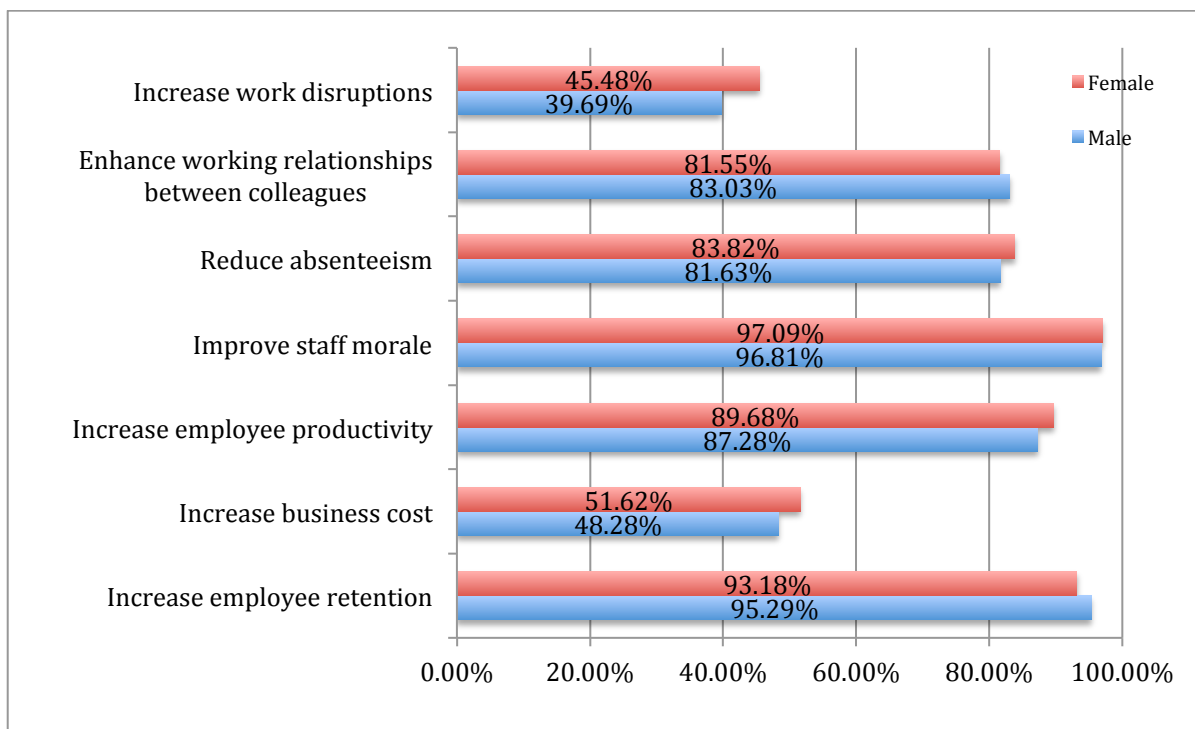


Figure 4:60: Impact of Family Friendly Initiatives (By Gender)³²(Q22, N=1096)

b. By Industry

Respondents from different industries have differing perspectives on how family-friendly initiatives may affect the organization. Respondents from Travel, Hotel & Tourism industry were most negative - rating 'increased costs' and 'increased disruptions' highest, whilst benefits such as 'increase productivity', 'reduce absenteeism', 'enhance working

³² 'Strongly Agree' & 'Agree' variables

relationship', 'staff morale' and 'increase employee retention' were lowest when compared to respondents from other industries.

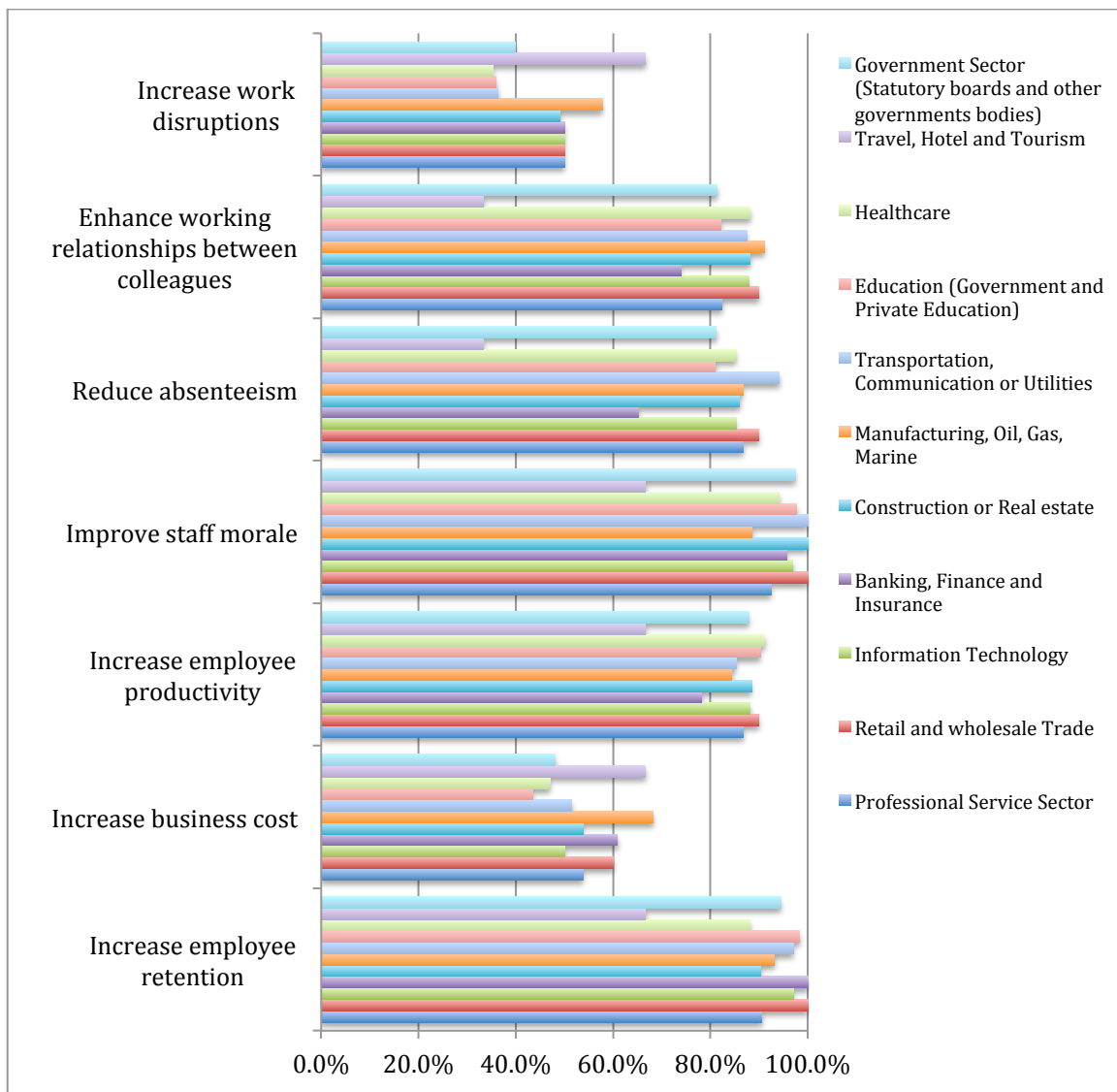


Figure 4:61: Impact of Family Friendly Initiatives (By Industry)³³ (Q22, N=1092)

c. By Designation

The perceived impact of family friendly initiatives showed no significant differences across designations.

³³ 'Strongly Agree' & 'Agree' variables

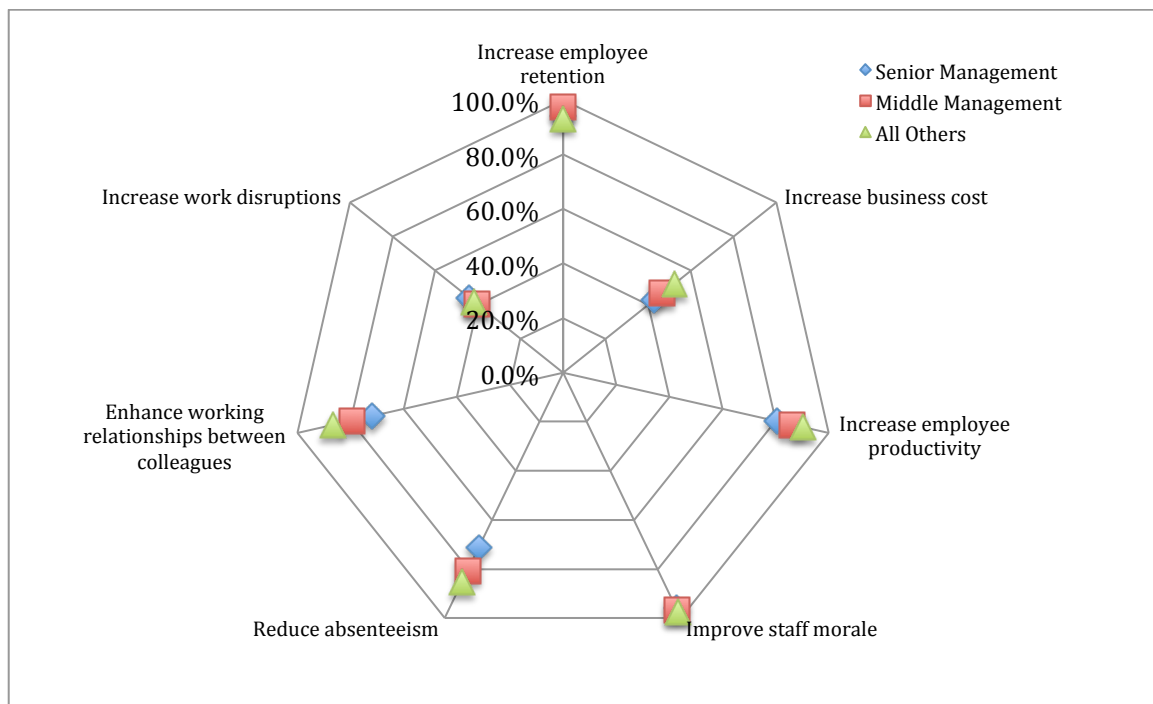


Figure 4:62: Impact of Family Friendly Initiatives (By Designation)³⁴ (Q22, N=1096)

4.9.5.5 Overall analysis of Section E

- a. In terms of organisation culture, female respondents were more likely to perceive that personal matters and work commitments are exclusive functions that cannot co-exist. Across designations and income levels, the higher designations and income levels were more receptive to the concept of work-life balance. Differences across ethnicities were marginal, with Chinese and Indians more likely to identify work as primary priority for companies, and that employees who were highly committed to their personal lives could not be highly committed to their work. Across industry sectors, education sector enjoyed a more balanced culture than other sectors.
- b. In terms of management support, male respondents and Senior Management were more likely to reflect that managers were

³⁴ Percentage of 'Strongly Agree' & 'Agree' variables

supportive, did not show favouritism, and cared about effects that work demands have on personal and family life.

- c. In terms of work-life benefits and employee support schemes, the most common Organisational benefit is “Company Events for the Whole Family” and “Designated Eat with Your Family Day”. Incidentally, these benefits also registered the highest utilization rates, consistent across gender. Common open responses on why certain initiatives / benefits were not taken up, included ‘no opportunity/too much work to use benefits’ and ‘no necessity to use benefits’.
- d. In terms of impact of family friendly initiatives on organisation, different industry sectors appear to respond differently to these initiatives, although there were no observable differences across gender or designations.

4.10 Key Findings: Online Survey

4.10.1 Section A – Experience at Work

4.10.1.1 Experience at Work

a. By Gender

The responses indicate that male respondents had consistently more positive work experiences, higher career expectations and greater satisfaction at work, as compared to female respondents ([Figure 4.63](#)). Areas of greatest gaps are, “I have a strong desire to advance to a position in senior management” (16.48%), “I have participated in networking opportunities within my organisation” (9.34%), and “I am satisfied with the progress in my income over the course of my career” (8.57%).

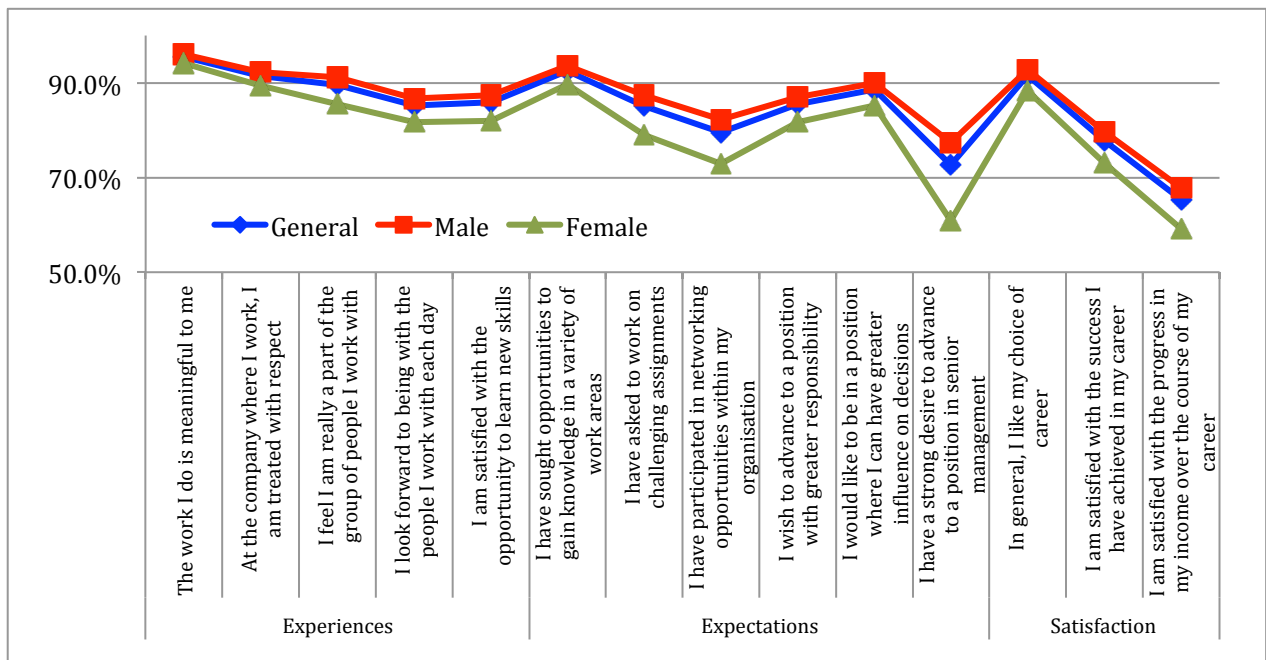


Figure 4.63: Experience at Work (By Gender) Strongly Agree & Agree (Q1, N=1,098)

b. By Gender, With children 15 years and below

Responses of fathers and mothers with children aged 15 years and below (Figure 4.64) provide evidence that these perceptions towards work experiences, career expectations and satisfaction at work were consistent with gender results. It was notable that gaps between fathers and mothers were greatest for “I have a strong desire to advance to a position in senior management” (20.5%) and “I have participated in networking opportunities within my organisation” (15.3%).

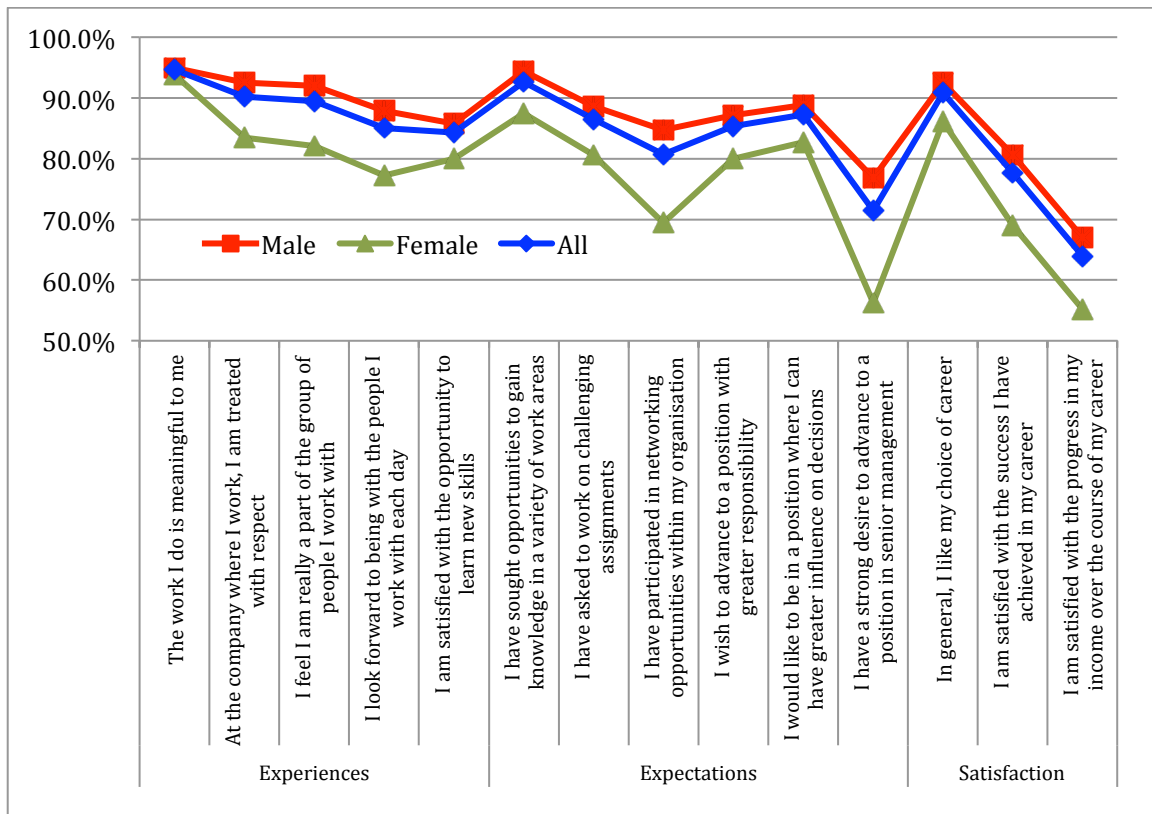


Figure 4.64: Experience at Work (Children 15 years & below, by Gender) Strongly Agree & Agree (Q1, N=559)

c. By Fathers with children aged 15 and below (by Income)

Responses of fathers with differing income levels show that respondents with income levels of \$1,999 and below, has the greatest disparity in responses as compared to other income groups (which tend to gravitate closely to each other). Responses showing greatest disparity are “satisfied with the success I have achieved in my career” (36.4%) and “satisfied with the progress in my income over the course of my career” (31.3%). Interestingly respondents with income levels of \$1,999 and below, registered highest responses in the area of being “treated with respect” and “wish to advance to a position with greater responsibility”. Amongst different age groups of fathers, there are no significant differences with regards to how each age group rates their experience at work.

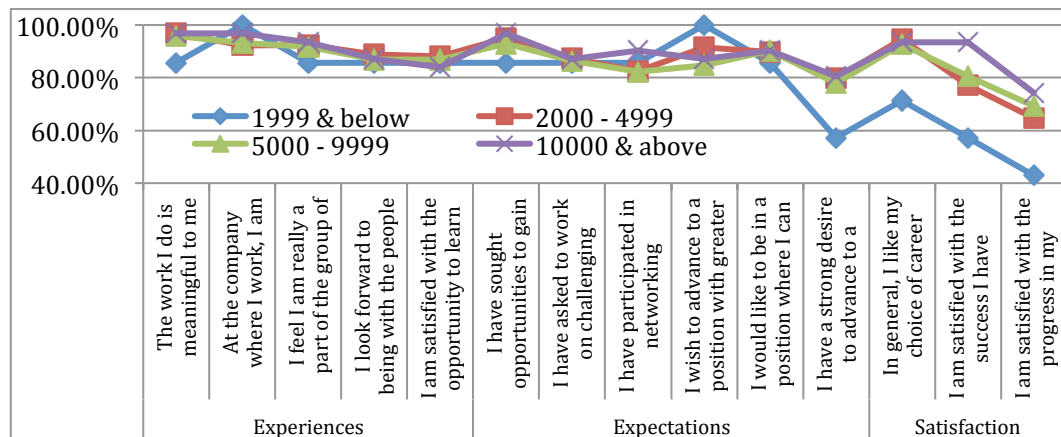


Figure 4.65: Experience at Work (Fathers, By Income) Strongly Agree & Agree (Q1, N=605)

d. By Fathers with children aged 15 and below, (by Job Designation)

Responses were mixed across Experiences and Expectations, though fathers in Senior Management had consistently highest scores in Satisfaction. Greatest disparities amongst different job designations are as follows:

- I am satisfied with success achieved in career (9.9%)
- I am satisfied with progress of income (9.9%)
- I wish to advance to a position with greater responsibility (7.2%)
- I participated in networking opportunities within my organisation (6.7%)
- I have asked to work on challenging assignments (6.5%)

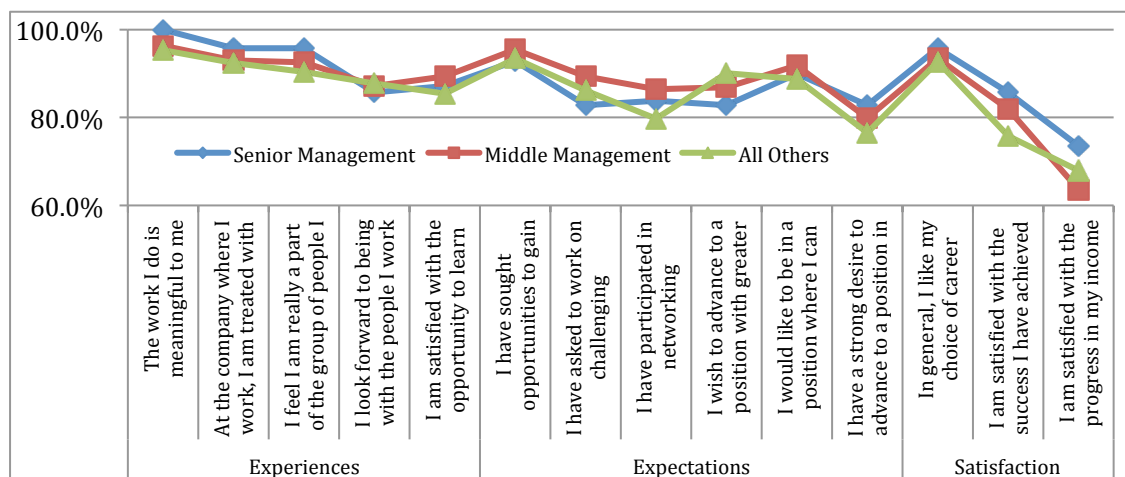


Figure 4.66: Experience at Work (Fathers, By Designation) Strongly Agree & Agree (Q1, N=617)

e. Some Observations:

- The findings suggest that males had consistently more positive work experiences, higher career expectations and greater satisfaction at work, as compared to female respondents, regardless of whether they have had children or not.
- However it is notable that the gap in terms of experience at work between fathers and mothers were consistently wider, than those of males and females in general. This suggests that mothers, after having children, tend to have poorer work experiences than fathers.
- Amongst fathers, we have found no significant trends across age groups, though we acknowledge that, respondents with income levels of \$1,999 and below, has the greatest disparity in responses as compared to other income groups. In terms of fathers in different job designations, responses were mixed across experiences and expectations, though those in Senior Management had consistently highest scores in satisfaction.

4.11 Summary

In summarising outcomes of the research project, it would be prudent to take reference to the research objectives as follows:-

Objective 1: Understand the challenges that fathers face at the workplaces in balancing their role as fathers and their role as employees

Key findings:

- Responses suggest that males respondents have more positive work experiences, higher career expectations and greater satisfaction at work
- Fathers with higher income may be better engaged by making their jobs more interesting jobs, whilst fathers with lower may be better engaged through monetary and job security benefits
- Fathers tend to have stronger spousal supports, and are inclined towards meeting financial needs of family, trusting their spouses with the caring needs

Objective 2: Understand the level of work-life conflict for fathers as compared to mothers

- Responses suggest that fathers experience less work-life conflict as compared to mothers, though the level of work-life conflict and interruptions tend to increase with income and job designation
- Respondents of more senior designations and income level were seen to be more receptive towards work-life balance
- It is notable that number of children is not correlated to the amount of work-life conflict

Objective 3: Find out the family-friendly benefits offered to fathers in the workplaces and the take-up rate of such benefits

- The low take up rate of many family friendly benefits suggest that they do not meet the actual needs of fathers

- Responses also suggest that respondents' personal values towards work and their perceived company values (work culture) are key deterrents towards the taking up family-friendly benefits

Objective 4: Find out the impact of father-friendly supports on Organisational performance from the employee's perspective

- Responses suggest that most of the general population acknowledge that the positive impact of family-friendly supports outweighs the costs of having them
- Senior management especially, believe that father-friendly policies and supports would provide greater benefits than costs
- Different sectors / industries have indicated different level of expectations and preparedness to implement father-friendly supports
- Female respondents were more likely to perceive that personal matters and work commitments are exclusive functions that cannot co-exist

4.11.1 Points of Interests

Some interesting points of interest, with regards to work life balance are as follows:

- “If I earn more money, I can spend more time with my child(ren)”**
The greater the salary, the more likely that the spouse will bear greater responsibility in looking after the child(ren), and the more likely that the respondent will spend less time with the child(ren). Respondents of higher income registered incrementally increased amount of work-life conflicts.
- “The more children I have, the more time I need to spend with them”**
Findings suggest that the total time spent does not increase proportionately to the number of children in a family. The amount of

work-life conflict does not increase with the number of children a family has. In fact it seems to indicate a slight decline (after 2 children).

- c. **“Family-friendly initiatives will help foster better work-life balance”**
Findings suggest that personal values and perceived corporate values may be the key deterrents to the achieving work-life balance. Verbatim responses on Question 20 (Annex C) provide an insight on the reasons for poor take-up of family-friendly initiatives.

There is evidence of significant variance amongst ethnic groups could be attributed to up-bringing or family values.

An over-emphasis toward meritocracy may be a causal factor to the work-life balance issue, as findings suggest an inverse correlation between economic pursuit and work-life balance.

4.11.2 Possible Courses of Action

Whilst the research project had highlighted the community’s response and reactions to company and government policies imposed upon them, it would be prudent to investigate further to understand the underlying values, beliefs, norms and culture that results in such outcomes.

*“Rather than focusing on inductive or deductive logic skills, or on critical thinking as a process of inquiry, reflective judgment assessment problems acknowledge that epistemic assumptions - **assumptions about knowledge** - are central to recognizing a problematic situation³⁵”.*

Based on the findings, summary and points of interest highlighted in the report, the research team offers the following possible courses of action, to the Dads for Life Secretariat.

³⁵ King & Kitchener (1994)

- a. Study of community's values, beliefs, norms and culture that results in the reactions and responses towards government and company policies on work-life balance. It is suggested that the Dads for Life Secretariat adopt systemic perspective approach to understand the community's values, beliefs, norms and culture, when government develop policies to address work-life balance challenges.
- b. Study of innovations and policies implemented by developed countries which have successfully dealt with fathers' involvement. These innovations and policies provide a platform on which subsequent policies may be drafted. However it is essential that the study adequately considers the values, beliefs, norms and cultures of the 'model' community, vis-a-vis the community in Singapore.

4.11.3 Implications of findings from SPA perspective

A significant area of interest in the findings of the project is how different ethnic groups seem to share different views on the role of the father because of their differing VBNC with regards to fatherhood due to their ethnic and cultural background. From the perspective of VBNC which the SPA model provides, it allows for a more in-depth understanding of how ethnic and cultural background may shape and influence the definition of fatherhood. For example, traditional Chinese family values and prioritises the role of the father as bread-winner and the one who is responsible to provide financially for the family and children. The role of providing emotional support for children is often delegated to the mother instead.

It is therefore interesting to note that on shared responsibilities, fathers of Malay ethnicity indicates the highest percentage (76.5%) as compared to the other ethnicities such as Others (42.3%), Chinese (39.6%) and Indians (38.3%), that registers a comparatively lower percentage and so seems to depend more on their spouse to care for the children. It seems that disparities in responses may be better understood only if we consider the socio-cultural dimensions that shape one's values

and beliefs about fatherhood, work and commitment to family and as a result, drives one's decisions in relation to one's priorities regarding family and work.

Such information may be useful for both companies and counsellors in the designing of policies and benefits that are more culturally relevant. Culturally relevant policies and benefits could likely lead to higher take up rates as they are designed with cultural considerations of VBNC. This would lead to policies and benefits that would better support and promote fatherhood and work life balance for fathers in the workplace.

The SPA model is helpful by providing a holistic and multi-dimensional perspective that looks into the individual schema shaping one's VBNC and how ethnic and cultural values may be significant in shaping and influencing attitudes towards fatherhood, family and work life. Hence, the SPA becomes a strategic tool to help identify the areas that hinders or foster father's involvement in the family. This could support and contribute to the design and implementation of more culturally appealing and relevant policies or interventions that are more tailor-made for the employees of the organization, as well as more well-informed national policies that would be more strategic in supporting fatherhood in Singapore.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS: QUANTITATIVE MEASUREMENT

5.1 Introduction

Chapter three described the research design and strategy adopted by this study to collect data. It also described the adopted statistical data analysis technique and its justification. Chapter four described the project activity and the findings. This chapter presents a discussion of the research results. The structure of chapter five is presented below.

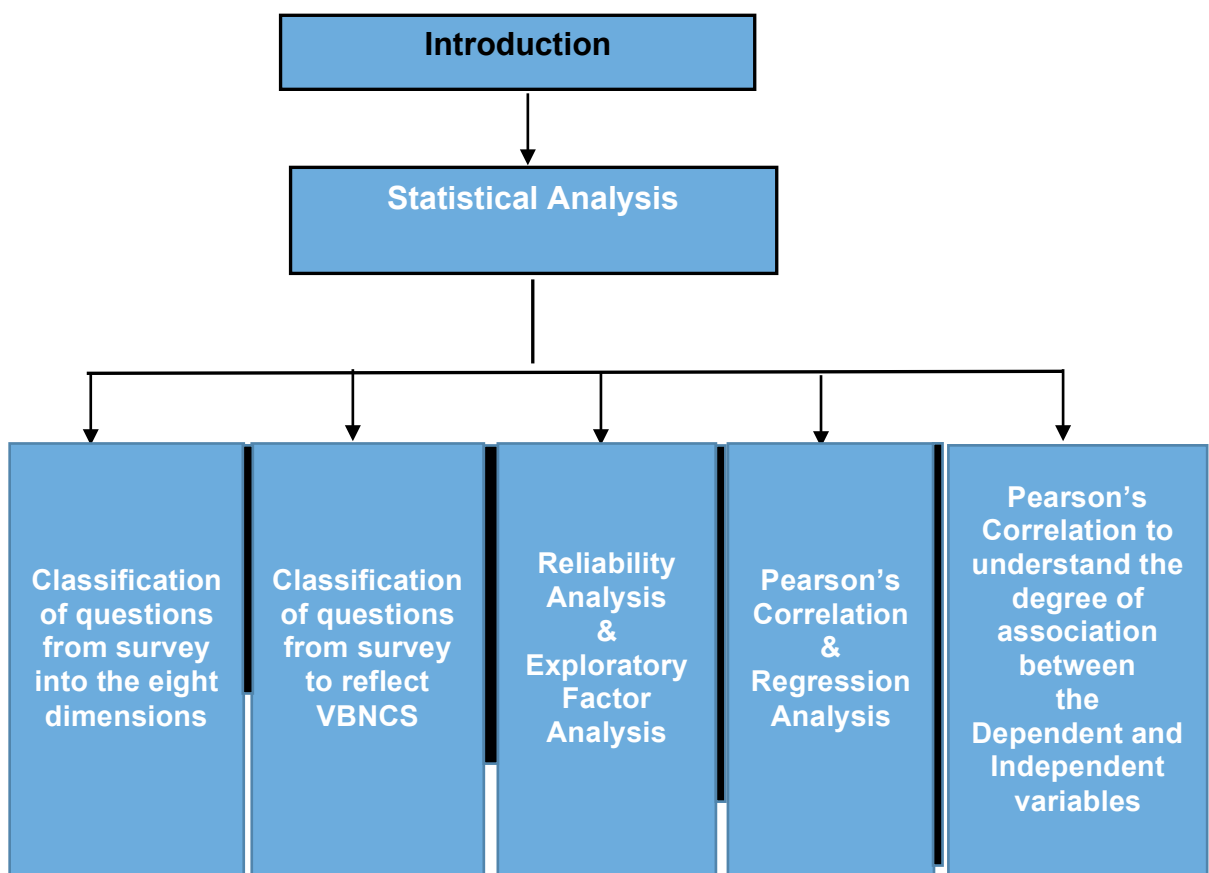


Figure 5.1 Structure of Chapter Five

The purpose of this study was (a) provide insights as to the impact of multiculturalism in the workforce as described the objectives of the DFL project and (b) investigate the validity and reliability of the SPA model. It was against this background that the research questions for this study were developed.

5.2 Methods of Data Analysis

In validating the SPA model, the approach taken was to use statistical analysis as a means of exploring the relationship between the eight dimensions within the SPA model and the VBNCs. The research design strategy encompasses the implementation of the survey design, data collection and statistical testing of the research problem. This was done by utilising multivariate analysis techniques including factor analysis, reliability analysis, correlation analysis (specifically Pearson Correlation) and Regression.

Prior to any data analysis taking place all data were cleaned, missing values identified and data assessed for skewness and kurtosis. The identification of outliers was conducted next to identify any abnormal data. All data was normal and no cases were removed.

The statistical analysis work involved the following steps:

- Classification of questions from the “Dads for Life” survey into the eight dimensions of the SPA model based on existing theory. The dimensions consist of; Mindset, Affect, Physical, Philosophy, Ethnicity, Social, Political / Economics and Globalization. The eight dimensions of the SPA model were then used as the independent variables in the conceptual model. .
- Classification of questions in the “Dads for Life” survey to reflect the VBNCs. These were identified as the dependent variables in the conceptual model..
- Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and reliability analysis (Cronbach’s Alpha) for model validation and indication of reliability.

- Pearson correlation and regression analysis between the dependent and independent variables to explain statistically significant indicators and predictors within the model.
- A Pearson correlation was first carried out in order to understand the degree of association between the dependent and independent variables. The eight dimensions (Mindset, Affect, Physical, Ethnicity, Social, Political/Economics, Philosophy and Globalisation) were tested against questions related to each VBNC element.
- Regression was subsequently carried out, to describe the causal effect of each dimension (Mindset, Affect, Physical, Ethnicity, Social, Political/Economics, Philosophy and Globalisation) to the dependent variable VBNCs.

The exploratory factor analysis was required at the outset to determine the validity of the dimensional constructs, the strength of the items in relation to the constructs and the reliability of the measurements.

Based on acceptable validity and reliability results of the exploratory factor analysis and Cronbach's Alpha, the analysis can proceed on to establishing the degree of association between independent variables, independent variables and dependent variables, and finally the dependent variables. Regression is then applied to determine the predictive value between the independent variables and the dependent variables.

The development of a hypothesis is crucial prior to analysing and testing data that was obtained from the DFL survey. The hypothesis was carefully constructed in order to be tested and to understand the relationships, if any, between the eight dimensions of the SPA and the VBNCs. The appearance of any relationship and the strength of such relationships, if any, will demonstrate the application and statistically significant relationships of the SPA model within a multi-cultural workplace society especially that of Singapore.

The hypothesis that was developed for this research was designed with the purpose of demonstrating relationships between all eight dimensions that form the SPA model and that of the VBNCs. As such, the hypothesis that was developed and put forth for this research is:

Hypothesis:

To show relationship between the eight dimensions and VBNC, we defined the null hypothesis as follows:

VBNC₀: The values, beliefs, culture, norms of a father is not affected by Mindset, Affect, Physical, Ethnicity, Social, Political/Economics, Philosophy and Globalisation.

After developing the null hypothesis, the study then proceeded to set out to reject the null hypothesis using the two statistical analyses based on a significance level of 0.05. At the same time the analyses will allow one to understand the relationship and dependence (if any) between the dimensions and VBNC. The knowledge gained here may be used to set out future research areas for the SPA model and its application in a multi-cultural setting.

5.3 Statistical Modelling and Analysis**5.3.1 Exploratory Factor Analysis and Reliability Analysis**

This study utilised Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) as the primary statistical technique to assist with validating the SPA model. EFA is typically used as an exploratory means to identify complex interrelationships among items and group items that are part of unified concepts. In addition, EFA assists to extract the fewest number of factors that explains the largest amount of variation (among the observed variables) in the survey questionnaire. Here, EFA is used alone without the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) as it was noted that measurement scale of the variables measured in the survey questionnaire was inconsistent.

The first step undertaken was to ensure that all the statistical assumptions were met. The analysis was initiated by conducting a Measures of Appropriateness of Factor Analysis. This was achieved through a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy. This was done to ensure that the questions for the survey in the DFL survey are adequate to measure the hypothesis. Next is to conduct a Bartlett's test of sphericity which tests the hypothesis that the correlation matrix is an identity matrix; i.e. all diagonal elements are 1 and all off-diagonal elements are 0, implying that all of the variables are uncorrelated. If the significant value for this test is less

than our alpha level, we reject the null hypothesis that the population matrix is an identity matrix.

By executing an EFA with varimax rotation on the relevant parts of the data, we have used both the raw data treated for missing values and the variable MEANS data. Varimax rotation is chosen as the factors of the TPSA model are considered to be uncorrelated. This study also looked at the following items to interpret the results from EFA:

a. Eigenvalue

An eigenvalue is simply the sum of the squared factor loadings for a given factor. The higher factor loadings suggest that more of the variance in that observed variable is attributable to the latent variable. The eigenvalue determines the appropriate number of factors to extract. Following Kaiser Criteria, this study pick factors with eigenvalues > 1.0 .

b. Communalities

Communalities can be thought of as the R^2 for each of the variables that have been included in the analysis using the factors as IV's and the item as a DV. It represents the proportion of variance of each item that is explained by the factors. This is calculated of the initial solution and then after extraction. Values in the Extraction column indicate the proportion of each variable's variance that can be explained by the retained factors. Variables with high values are well represented in the common factor space, while variables with low values are not well represented. We are keen to pick up variables with high values.

c. Rotated Factor Matrix

This table contains the rotated factor loadings (factor pattern matrix), which represent both how the variables are weighted for each factor but also the correlation between the variables and the factor. Because these are correlations, the possible values range from -1 to $+1$. We are interested in the high correlations for our analysis.

d. Reliability (Cronbach's Alpha)

Cronbach's alpha is the most popular method of examining reliability (Bindak, 2013). However, few researchers have questioned Cronbach's alpha (Uraschi et al., 2015). In this study, Cronbach's alpha is used to assess the reliability. George and Mallery (2003", p. 231) provide the following rules of thumb: "≥.9 is Excellent, ≥.8 is Good, ≥.7 is Acceptable, ≥.6 is questionable, ≥.5 is poor and ≤ .5 is unacceptable). High Cronbach's alpha indicates strong internal consistency among all items. Essentially this means that respondents who tended to select high scores for one item also tended to select high scores for the others. Had alpha been low; this ability to predict scores from one item would not be possible.

5.3.2 Multivariate Correlation and Regression Analysis

Secondly, the study utilised two statistical techniques: Correlation (specifically Pearson Correlation) and Regression to examine the data and establish significant relationships between the eight dimensions and the Values, Beliefs, Norms and Culture (VBNCs). The data variables in each factor grouping with the dependant variables measured in VBNCs. The rationale is to be able to explain the key indicators in each factor which are strong predictors to the VBNCs.

a. Pearson correlation – Is a statistical method to understand the degree of association between variables. In the DFL Climate Survey Work, the questions under each of the eight dimensions (Mindset, Affect, Physical, Ethnicity, Social, Political/Economics, Philosophy and Globalisation) are tested against questions of VBNCs.

Correlations measure the relationships between variables in psychometric research. They are the foundation for quantifying how well we are measuring (reliability) and the relevance of what we are measuring (validity). They are based on identifying covariance: i.e. the variation shared between two distributions of scores. The correlation coefficient (r) quantifies the relationship between two variables.

The correlation coefficient uses a number from -1 to +1 to describe the relationship between two variables. It tells us if more of one variable predicts more of another variable.

- a) -1 is a perfect negative relationship
 - b) +1 is a perfect positive relationship
 - c) 0 is no relationship
 - d) Weak .1 to .29
 - e) Medium .3 to .59
 - f) Strong greater than .6
- b. Regression – to describe the causal effect of the variables.

Regression is to test the causal effect of each dimension (Mindset, Affect, Physical, Ethnicity, Social, Political/Economics, Philosophy and Globalisation) to the independent variable VBNC. Again, the questions under each dimension (Mindset, Affect, Physical, Ethnicity, Social, Political/Economics, Philosophy and Globalisation) are also tested against questions of VBNC.

For the Regression analysis of the model, when p is < 0.05 , it indicates that overall, the regression model statistically significantly predicts the outcome variable. At the coefficient level, the p -value for the term tests the null hypothesis that the coefficient is equal to zero (no effect). A low p -value (< 0.05) indicates that you can reject the null hypothesis. In other words, a predictor that has a low p -value is likely to be a meaningful addition to your model because changes in the predictor's value are related to changes in the response variable. Conversely, a larger (insignificant) p -value suggests that changes in the predictor are not associated with changes in the response.

R - R is the square root of R -Squared and is the correlation between the observed and predicted values of dependent variable.

R -Square - This is the proportion of variance in the dependent variable (VBNC) which can be explained by the independent variables (Provide love and emotional support to kids). This is an overall measure of the strength of association and does not reflect the extent to which any particular independent variable is associated with the dependent variable.

Adjusted R-square - This is an adjustment of the R-squared that penalizes the addition of extraneous predictors to the model. Adjusted R-squared is computed using the formula $1 - ((1 - R^2) \cdot (N - 1) / (N - k - 1))$ where k is the number of predictors.

Standard Error of the Estimate - This is also referred to as the root mean squared error. It is the standard deviation of the error term and the square root of the Mean Square for the Residuals in the ANOVA table.

5.4 Statistical Results

This section presents the results of the multivariate analysis applied to the data. After data cleaning, identification of missing values and identification of outliers the analysis yielded the following results.

5.4.1 Exploratory Factor Analysis and Reliability Analysis

Finally, the study look at the results obtained from the EFA statistical analysis. The *value of the KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy for this set of variables is 0.824*, which would be labelled as 'meritorious'. Since the KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy meets the minimum criteria, we do not have a problem that requires us to examine the Anti-Image Correlation Matrix. The Significant value for the Bartlett's test of sphericity leads us to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there are correlations in the data set that are appropriate for factor analysis.

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.824
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	10508.564
	df	435
	Sig.	0.000

Table 5.1 KMO and Bartlett's Test

The results have turned out positive for a seven factor model with thirty items (where these items can be found from the below rotated component matrix) as the

Cronbach's Alpha scores (reliability statistics) for both raw data and variable MEANS data are consistently above 0.7. For investigating survey reliability and validity of this factor, Cronbach's alpha has been run for the 30 domain items and the overall alpha .75, which is high and indicates strong internal consistency among all items. Essentially this means that respondents who tended to select high scores for one item also tended to select high scores for the others. Had alpha been low; this ability to predict scores from one item would not be possible.

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.723	.754	30

Table 5.2 Reliability Statistics

Observations from the iterative EFA analyses indicate that the following seven-factor solution was the best of fit, which explained 65.4% of the total variance. From below table, the first seven factors are meaningful as they have Eigenvalues > 1. Factors 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 explain 20.37%, 10.61%, 8.65%, 7.83%, 6.89%, 5.86% and 5.23% of the variance respectively – a cumulative total of 65.4% (total acceptable).

Total Variance Explained									
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	6.112	20.374	20.374	6.112	20.374	20.374	4.220	14.065	14.065
2	3.184	10.612	30.986	3.184	10.612	30.986	3.272	10.906	24.971
3	2.595	8.650	39.636	2.595	8.650	39.636	2.683	8.943	33.914
4	2.349	7.828	47.465	2.349	7.828	47.465	2.628	8.761	42.675
5	2.066	6.888	54.353	2.066	6.888	54.353	2.542	8.474	51.149
6	1.759	5.864	60.217	1.759	5.864	60.217	2.521	8.404	59.553
7	1.570	5.232	65.449	1.570	5.232	65.449	1.769	5.896	65.449
8	.934	3.112	68.561						
9	.772	2.573	71.134						
10	.766	2.554	73.689						
11	.674	2.246	75.935						
12	.617	2.057	77.992						
13	.578	1.927	79.918						
14	.550	1.832	81.751						
15	.516	1.721	83.471						
16	.498	1.659	85.131						
17	.482	1.605	86.736						
18	.453	1.511	88.247						
19	.425	1.415	89.662						
20	.385	1.284	90.946						
21	.368	1.227	92.173						
22	.354	1.180	93.353						
23	.300	1.000	94.353						
24	.291	.969	95.322						
25	.280	.933	96.255						
26	.255	.851	97.106						
27	.246	.819	97.925						
28	.235	.784	98.709						
29	.205	.683	99.392						
30	.182	.608	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 5.3 EFA Analysis

Since communalities is the proportion of each variable's variance that can be explained by the principal components, it is also noted as h^2 and can be defined as the sum of squared factor loadings. From the communalities table, we ranked the questions by the extraction value from largest to smallest, as extract value = % variance explained by factors. The ranked factors are 'interrupters', 'career aspiration - ambition'; 'current role as parent'; 'a good father is'; 'experience at work'; 'family support'; and 'employer benefits for family friendly policy'. Hence, this finding is also validated by the earlier inter-item correlation table whereby seven clusters of moderately higher-correlated variables were observed of the same factors.

Communalities	Initial	Extraction
How often do you interrupt your time at home or away from the workplace outside to address work-related issues?	1.000	.854
How often do you interrupt your time at work to address family-related issues?	1.000	.854
I wish to advance to a position with greater responsibility	1.000	.845
I would like to be in a position where I can have greater influence on decisions	1.000	.842
I have a strong desire to advance to a position in senior management	1.000	.811
My spouse or my child's mother/father is supportive when I take on challenging projects at work.	1.000	.734
I feel I am really a part of the group of people I work with	1.000	.731
My spouse or my child's mother/father acknowledges my obligations as an employee	1.000	.731
Be a teacher, guide and coach	1.000	.729
I am proud of what I do (for my children) as a parent	1.000	.727
My spouse or my child's mother/father willingly takes on more responsibility at home when I have to work overtime or am required to travel for business	1.000	.712
I am confident in my ability as a parent	1.000	.710
Be involved and present in children's life	1.000	.702
Provide discipline	1.000	.636
Provide love and emotional support to kids	1.000	.632
Sacrificing for my children is part of parenthood	1.000	.620
I look forward to being with the people I work with each day	1.000	.618
Increase employee productivity	1.000	.617
Improve staff morale	1.000	.611
In general, I like my choice of career	1.000	.609
At the company where I work, I am treated with respect	1.000	.600
If I were considering taking a new job, I would consider how much that job would interfere with my ability to care for my children	1.000	.581
The work I do is meaningful to me	1.000	.572
I am satisfied with the opportunity to learn new skills	1.000	.564
Do one's part in day-to-day childcare tasks	1.000	.554
My spouse or my child's mother/father contributes to a great deal in my career	1.000	.552
Increase employee retention	1.000	.516
Reduce absenteeism	1.000	.472
Enhance working relationships between colleagues	1.000	.451
I am satisfied with the success I have achieved in my career	1.000	.447
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.		

Table 5.4 Communalities 1

Communalities	Initial	Extraction
How often do you interrupt your time at home or away from the workplace outside to address work-related issues?	1.000	.854
How often do you interrupt your time at work to address family-related issues?	1.000	.854
I wish to advance to a position with greater responsibility	1.000	.845
I would like to be in a position where I can have greater influence on decisions	1.000	.842
I have a strong desire to advance to a position in senior management	1.000	.811
My spouse or my child's mother/father is supportive when I take on challenging projects at work.	1.000	.734
I feel I am really a part of the group of people I work with	1.000	.731
My spouse or my child's mother/father acknowledges my obligations as an employee	1.000	.731
Be a teacher, guide and coach	1.000	.729
I am proud of what I do (for my children) as a parent	1.000	.727
My spouse or my child's mother/father willingly takes on more responsibility at home when I have to work overtime or am required to travel for business	1.000	.712
I am confident in my ability as a parent	1.000	.710
Be involved and present in children's life	1.000	.702
Provide discipline	1.000	.636
Provide love and emotional support to kids	1.000	.632
Sacrificing for my children is part of parenthood	1.000	.620
I look forward to being with the people I work with each day	1.000	.618
Increase employee productivity	1.000	.617
Improve staff morale	1.000	.611
In general, I like my choice of career	1.000	.609
At the company where I work, I am treated with respect	1.000	.600
If I were considering taking a new job, I would consider how much that job would interfere with my ability to care for my children	1.000	.581
The work I do is meaningful to me	1.000	.572
I am satisfied with the opportunity to learn new skills	1.000	.564
Do one's part in day-to-day childcare tasks	1.000	.554
My spouse or my child's mother/father contributes to a great deal in my career	1.000	.552
Increase employee retention	1.000	.516
Reduce absenteeism	1.000	.472
Enhance working relationships between colleagues	1.000	.451
I am satisfied with the success I have achieved in my career	1.000	.447
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.		

Table 5.5 Communalities 2

From the rotated component matrix, it is can see how the thirty variables (extracted from the survey indicators) are loaded against the seven components and their corresponding component loadings. Findings from the table indicate that:

- ‘Interrupters’ – coded by orange-coloured box, are the highest loaded (above 0.9) against the 2 variables measured;
- ‘Career aspiration – ambition’ – coded by yellow-coloured box, are next highly loaded (range between 0.85 to 0.9) against 3 variables measured;
- ‘Current role as parent’ – coded by green-coloured box, are highly loaded (range between 0.7 to 0.85) against 5 variables measured;
- ‘A good father is’ – coded by blue-coloured box, are highly loaded (range between 0.7 to 0.85) against 4 variables measured;
- ‘Experience at work’ – coded by red-coloured box, are moderate-highly loaded (range between 0.65 to 0.85) against 7 variables measured;
- ‘Family support’ – coded by purpled-coloured box, are highly loaded (range between 0.7 to 0.8) against 4 variables measured;
- ‘Employer benefits for pro-family policy’ – coded by pink-coloured box, are moderate-highly loaded (range between 0.6 to 0.8) against 5 variables measured.

Table 5.6 Rotated Component Matrix

Rotated Component Matrix ^a							
	Component						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The work I do is meaningful to me	.731						
At the company where I work, I am treated with respect	.761						
I feel I am really a part of the group of people I work with	.845						
I look forward to being with the people I work with each day	.773						
I am satisfied with the opportunity to learn new skills	.729						
I wish to advance to a position with greater responsibility					.886		
I would like to be in a position where I can have greater influence on decisions					.897		
I have a strong desire to advance to a position in senior management					.872		
In general, I like my choice of career	.723						
I am satisfied with the success I have achieved in my career	.658						
Provide love and emotional support to kids		.766					
Be involved and present in children's life		.820					
Be a teacher, guide and coach		.835					
Provide discipline		.783					
Do one's part in day-to-day childcare tasks		.729					
I am confident in my ability as a parent							.809
I am proud of what I do (for my children) as a parent							.810
							.757
If I were considering taking a new job, I would consider how much that job would interfere with my ability to care for my children							.716
My spouse or my child's mother/father contributes to a great deal in my career			.711				
My spouse or my child's mother/father acknowledges my obligations as an employee			.807				
My spouse or my child's mother/father willingly takes on more responsibility at home when I have to work overtime or am required to travel for business			.834				
My spouse or my child's mother/father supports my career or encourages my professional development			.818				
How often do you interrupt your time at home or away from the workplace outside to address work-related issues?							.921
How often do you interrupt your time at work to address family-related issues?							.915
Increase employee retention					.697		
Increase employee productivity					.777		
Improve staff morale					.760		
Reduce employee turnover					.676		
Enhance working relationships between colleagues					.649		

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

The current variables under "Career aspiration – ambition' and 'Experience at work' factors can be mapped against the earlier classification under 'Affect', 'Globalisation', 'Political/Economics', 'Social', 'Philosophy' and 'Mindset' dimensions, with the exception of 'Physical' and 'Ethnicity'. This is rather consistent with the earlier regression analysis.

The statistical methods applied above assisted in testing out the hypothesis (H_0 : values, beliefs, culture, norms of a father is affected by mindset, affect, physical, globalisation, social, political/economics, philosophy, ethnicity factors) for the SPA model and the VBNCs. It can be summarised into three key findings:

- a. Though generally the correlation results tend to demonstrate a weak relationship between the Independent and Dependent variables at each question, what we see at a collective level is that the relationship is stronger or more pronounced for each dimension. This result is also later validated by the results of EFA analysis, for there exists seven natural clusters of variables with moderately high correlations, namely 'interrupters', 'career aspiration - ambition'; 'current role as parent'; 'a good father is'; 'experience at work'; 'family support'; and 'employer benefits for family friendly policy'.
- b. The multiple regression model shows good data fit for six dimensions of the SPA model against the VBNCs of a Father, other than 'Physical' and 'Ethnicity', while it was noted that 'Social' and 'Mindset' dimensions have a high number of rejected variables at the question level. A factor to consider for future research is fine tuning the questions or dropping less relevant questions to ask to garner the right response that will address the dimensions better.
- c. The EFA analysis has enhanced understanding of the SPA model, with a seven factor model of thirty variables considered to be best of fit, which explained 65.4% of the total variance and has Cronbach's Alpha scores (reliability statistics) for both raw data and variable MEANS data consistently above 0.7. These factors are 'interrupters', 'career aspiration - ambition';

5.4.2 Correlation Analysis

Ethnicity, the study obtained results which ranges from -0.08 to – 0.14. This indicates a negative relationship that is weak. It signifies that an individual's self-perception of one's cultural fit at the work environment is not a strong predictor, whether this individual will be more involved in parenting. This result aligns with the notion that parenting is a fundamental core social responsibility that an individual has within a marriage & family structure, regardless a worker is accepted or unaccepted within his office culture.

An analysis of the data was carried out. The following set of tables below provides a reference to the results obtained from the statistical analysis that was done. We begin with **Table 5.8 Correlations: Ethnicity**, we obtained results which ranges from -0.08 to – 0.14. This indicates a negative relationship that is weak.

TSPA Dimension Question / VBNCs	Provide love and emotional support to kids	Be involved and present in children's life	Be a teacher, guide and coach	Provide discipline	Provide financial security	Do one's part in day-to-day childcare tasks
At the company where I work, I am treated with respect	-.13	-.11	-.14	-.12	-.13	-.08

Table 5.8 Correlations: Ethnicity

Going on to Table 5.9 Correlations: Social, the study obtain results that range from - 0.08 to as high as 0.37. Three of the questions under the Social Dimension indicated a negative relationship that is weak. It is interesting to note that of 4 questions that were on job security and other related time based and leisure time questions, the score indicated a low to medium positive relationship. It shows that the self-perception of the value in one's job, especially in the area of job security and other job indicators of promoting work-life balance (such as flexi-working arrangements & more leisure time) tend to positively influence and promote one's VBNCs in being more involved in parenting. This makes sense as time availability is the common denominator used here either at parenting or in one's career. When one is not feeling

insecure or less driven to achieve more accomplishment at work thru' spending longer time to prove one's capabilities, this person is more likely to have other outlets of focus in life, for example the family.

TSPA Dimension Questions / VBNCs	Provide love and emotional support to kids	Be involved and present in children's life	Be a teacher, guide and coach	Provide discipline	Provide financial security	Do one's part in day-to-day childcare tasks
I feel I am really a part of the group of people I work with	-.16	-.12	-.15	-.13	-.14	-.13
I look forward to being with the people I work with each day	-.17	-.09	-.14	-.14	-.12	-.15
I have participated in networking opportunities within my organisation	-.08	-.08	-.14	-.10	-.07	-.06
Job Security	.34	.29	.25	.28	.37	.26
Allows flexible working arrangements	.22	.27	.30	.32	.28	.26
Beneficial to society	.32	.28	.33	.26	.26	.27
Allows for a lot of leisure time	.21	.24	.26	.32	.28	.31

Table 5.9 Correlations: Social

Moving on to Table 5.10 Correlations: Affect, we obtain results that range from -0.07 to as high as 0.33. It was equally divided for negative and positive relationships between the six questions. However, the negative relationship demonstrated tended to be low, while those for positive relationship were from low to medium. The result signifies that an individual's emotional well-being is crucial, to (i) promote pro-parenting VBNCs; and (ii) for one to be a positively affective provider and giver to people around them. It is not surprising that there is a positive correlation between one's self-perception of one's self-esteem in relation to one's career accomplishment and progression with one's VBNCs in parenting. Often, one's perceived ability to

provide brings about a motivation and willingness to actualise this emotional and physical contribution in their parenting responsibilities. It is true that what one does not have, one cannot give.

TSPA Dimension Questions VBNCs	Provide love and emotional support to kids	Be involved and present in children's life	Be a teacher, guide and coach	Provide discipline	Provide financial security	Do one's part in day-to-day childcare tasks
The work I do is meaningful to me	-.24	-.14	-.18	-.14	-.15	-.14
I have a strong desire to advance to a position in senior management	-.07	-.10	-.13	-.07	-.11	-.07
I am satisfied with the success I have achieved in my career	-.10	-.08	-.12	-.09	-.10	-.14
Sense of accomplishment	.33	.30	.31	.29	.26	.21
Good advancement opportunities	.25	.29	.32	.30	.32	.27
Can work independently	.26	.26	.27	.25	.23	.23

Table 5.10 Correlations: Affect

For Table 5.11 Correlations: Mindset, we obtained results that range from -0.01 to as high as 0.29. Most of the VBNCs questions (5 in all) demonstrated a low negative and relationships between Mindset dimension and VBNCs' six questions. However, the negative relationship demonstrated tended to be low, while those for positive relationship were from low to medium. This indicates that an individual's perception about challenges and growth in his career are not strong predictors, whether this individual will be more or less involved in parenting. However, it is interesting to note that when one perceives his job to be interesting, this individual is likely to have a relatively positive outlook in life and thus, promotes one's receptivity to be pro-parenting as well.

TSPA Dimension Questions VBNCs	I am satisfied with the opportunity to learn new skills	I have sought opportunities to gain knowledge in a variety of work areas	I have asked to work on challenging assignments	I wish to advance to a position with greater responsibility	I am satisfied with the progress in my income over the course of my career	An interesting job
Provide love and emotional support to kids	-.17	-.25	-.14	-.09	-.01	.28
Be involved and present in children's life	-.14	-.22	-.14	-.11	.02	.29
Be a teacher, guide and coach	-.16	-.19	-.15	-.14	-.03	.28
Provide discipline	-.15	-.18	-.10	-.11	-.03	.27
Provide financial security	-.14	-.13	-.10	-.16	.03	.23
Do one's part in day-to-day childcare tasks	-.14	-.17	-.13	-.08	-.06	.24

Table 5.11 Correlations: Mindset

For Table 5.12 Correlations: Political/Economics, the results obtained range from -0.09 to -0.18. The negative relationship demonstrated tended to be low. The result signifies that an individual's self-perception about the political influence of his career is not a strong predictor, whether this individual will be more or less involved in parenting, once it is expected of an individual within a marriage and family structure, to be socially responsible for their family as parents. However, the mildly negative relationship between the variables seems to hint that one is unlikely to be interested

in child-bearing and parenting, if they are enjoying high visibility and political influence due to the status of one's career.

TSPA Dimension Questions / VBNCs	Provide love and emotional support to kids	Be involved and present in children's life	Be a teacher, guide and coach	Provide discipline	Provide financial security	Do one's part in day-to-day childcare tasks
I would like to be in a position where I can have greater influence on decisions	-0.14	-0.13	-0.18	-0.12	-0.15	-0.09

Table 5.12 Correlations: Political/Economics

For Table 5.13 Correlations: Philosophy, the results obtained range from -0.09 to -0.16. There was a low negative relationship between the Philosophy dimension and VBNCs. Likewise, it indicates that an individual's perception about his career choice is not a strong predictor, whether this individual will be more or less involved in parenting, once it is expected of an individual within a marriage and family structure, to be socially responsible for their family as parents.

TSPA Dimension Questions / VBNCs	Provide love and emotional support to kids	Be involved and present in children's life	Be a teacher, guide and coach	Provide discipline	Provide financial security	Do one's part in day-to-day childcare tasks
In general, I like my choice of career	-0.16	-0.11	-0.13	-0.10	-0.10	-0.09

Table 5.13 Correlations: Philosophy

For Table 5.14 Correlations: Ethnicity, the results obtained range from -0.06 to 0.12. The data indicates a largely positive relationship between the Ethnicity dimension and VBNCs. A detailed analysis of the data by ethnic groups substantiate this finding that there are indeed cultural basis to support this observation, for example Malays are relatively more pro-parenting and likely to have more child(ren) as compared to Chinese, who tend to put more emphasis on career and delay plans to start a family.

TSPA Dimension Questions / VBNCs	Provide love and emotional support to kids	Be involved and present in children's life	Be a teacher, guide and coach	Provide discipline	Provide financial security	Do one's part in day-to-day childcare tasks
Q26 Ethnicity	.08	.09	.10	.07	.12	.09
Q27 Education	.07	.08	.06	-.01	-.03	-.06
Q28 Marital Status	.02	.00	.04	.03	.04	.01

Table 5.14 Correlations: Ethnicity

For Table 5.15 Correlations: Physical, the results obtained range from -0.13 to 0.05. The data indicates a largely negative relationship between age grouping and VBNCs, while those for Gender tended to be positive relationship to VBNCs. Again, there qualitative observations which align with this result, where as one ages and starts a family at a more matured age, one's perception on their ability to physically cope with child-bearing and parenting decreases and thus, reduces the likelihood of pro-parenting VBNCs.

TSPA Dimension Questions / VBNCs	Provide love and emotional support to kids	Be involved and present in children's life	Be a teacher, guide and coach	Provide discipline	Provide financial security	Do one's part in day-to-day childcare tasks
Q23 Age group	.02	-.10	-.11	-.12	-.12	-.07
Gender	-.13	-.04	.01	.05	.02	.01

Table 5.15 Correlations: Physical

The analysis highlights the significance of the eight dimensions. Their Pearson Correlation means ranges from 0.5 to -0.8. Looking at the questions individually, the correlation results do not suggest any strong relationship. However when we look at the dimensions collectively, they do exhibit medium and strong correlation. Three of the dimensions namely Social, Affect and Ethnicity exhibit positive correlation whose strength range from 0.5 for Social and Affect while 0.3 for Ethnicity. As for the other five they exhibit medium to strong negative correlation. Mindset is at -0.3, Physical at -0.5, both Philosophy and Globalisation at -0.7 while Political/Economics is at -0.8.

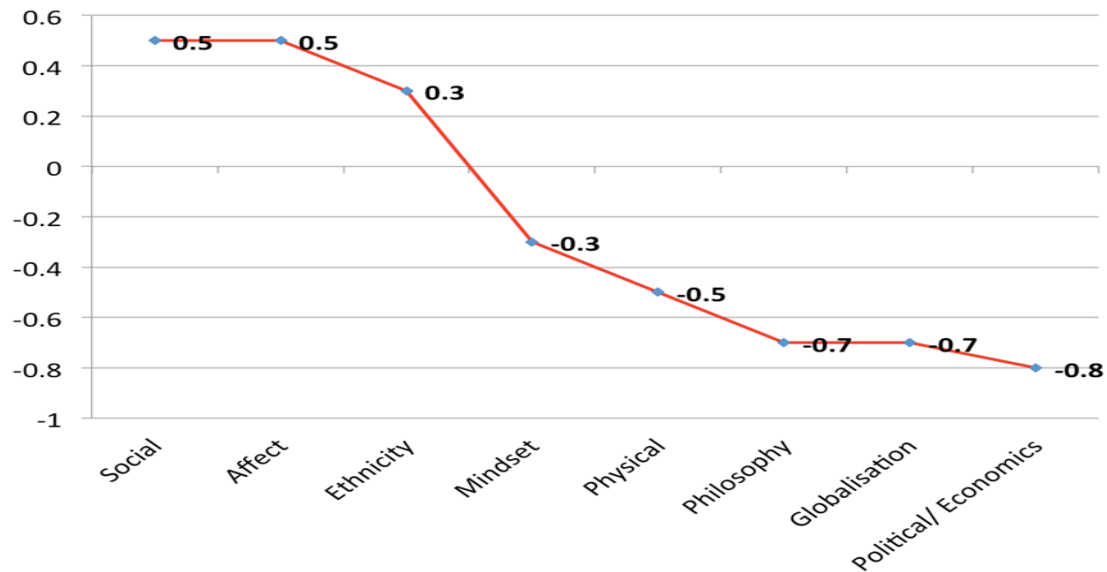


Figure 5.3: Summary of Research Findings of SPA Eight Dimensions of the Project

This signifies that pro-parenting VBNCs tend to be explained and supported by one's social and emotional well-being to connect with others in a family setting and the perceived ability to provide affectively/economically for their family, while Mindset, Physical, Philosophy, Globalisation and Political factors of an individual (influenced by the present societal and company/work culture) tend to work against pro-parenting VBNCs, which is evident by the low birth rate and marital rates in today's Singapore and an increasing pressure on the family unit in various fronts. This will lead to implications on how national policies should be engineered and applied against these dimensions to influence a pro-parenting environment, for them to be effective.

5.4.3 Regression Analysis

The study then proceed with the next step of analysis by utilising Regression analysis on the data for all eight dimensions in the SPA model against the six VBNCs. The key statistical result tables used for this analysis are Model Summary, ANOVA & Coefficient tables. An example of the regression analysis will be: Coefficients Table (Provide love and emotional support to kids) under Regression: Mindset.

	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Significance
(Constant)	4.13	.18	.00	22.67	.00
I am satisfied with the opportunity to learn new skills	-.06	.05	-.06	-1.31	.19
I have sought opportunities to gain knowledge in a variety of work areas	-.23	.06	-.17	-3.91	.00
I have asked to work on challenging assignments	.00	.05	.00	.05	.96
I wish to advance to a position with greater responsibility	.03	.04	.03	.85	.40
I am satisfied with the progress in my income over the course of my career	.07	.03	.08	2.14	.03
An interesting job	.18	.03	.22	6.16	.00

Table 5.16 Predictor Variable Coefficient Table

The coefficient table shows the predictor variables. The first variable (constant) represents the constant, also referred to as the VBNCS intercept, the height of the regression line when it crosses the VBNCS axis. In other words, this is the predicted value of Provide love and emotional support to kids when all other variables are 0.

- B - These are the values for the regression equation for predicting the dependent variable from the independent variable. The regression equation is presented in many different ways, for example:

- $$\text{VBNCS predicted} = b_0 + b_1 \cdot x_1 + b_2 \cdot x_2 + b_3 \cdot x_3 + b_4 \cdot x_4$$

The column of estimates provides the values for b_0 , b_1 , b_2 , b_3 and b_4 for this equation.

“I am satisfied with the opportunity to learn new skills” - The coefficient for (I am satisfied with the opportunity to learn new skills) is -0.06. So for every unit increase in “I am satisfied with the opportunity to learn new skills, a -0.06 unit increase in Provide love and emotional support to kids is predicted, holding all other variables constant.

- Std. Error - These are the standard errors associated with the coefficients.

- f. Beta - These are the standardized coefficients. These are the coefficients that you would obtain if you standardized all of the variables in the regression, including the dependent and all of the independent variables, and ran the regression. By standardizing the variables before running the regression, you have put all of the variables on the same scale, and you can compare the magnitude of the coefficients to see which one has more of an effect. You will also notice that the larger betas are associated with the larger t-values and lower p-values.
- t and Sig. - These are the t-statistics and their associated 2-tailed p-values used in testing whether a given coefficient is significantly different from zero. Using an alpha of 0.05:
 - o The coefficient for I am satisfied with the opportunity to learn new skills (-0.06) is not significantly different from 0 because its p-value is 0.19, which is larger than 0.05.
 - o The coefficient for I have sought opportunities to gain knowledge in a variety of work areas (-0.23) is statistically significant because its p-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05.

In this section, the researcher will focus on highlighting areas where there could be statistical significance to reject the null hypothesis (Ho). The regression model summary constructs of the eight dimensions within the SPA model are analysed to explain the correlation (R) and the total variation (R Square) in which the dependent variable can be explained by the independent variables:

Model Summary	R	R Sq.	Finding (Variation Explained)	Model Summary	R	R Sq.	Finding (Variation Explained)
1) Dimension: Mindset				2) Dimension: Physical			
Variable a	0.33	0.11	Moderate	Variable a	0.01	0	Null
Variable b	0.33	0.11	Moderate	Variable b	0.08	0.01	Weak
Variable c	0.31	0.1	Moderate	Variable c	0.1	0.01	Weak
Variable d	0.29	0.08	Weak	Variable d	0.12	0.01	Weak

Variable e	0.28	0.08	Weak	Variable e	0.11	0.01	Weak
Variable f	0.26	0.07	Weak	Variable f	0.07	0	Null
3) Dimension: Affect				4) Dimension: Globalisation			
Variable a	0.4	0.16	Moderate	Variable a	0.12	0.02	Weak
Variable b	0.37	0.13	Moderate	Variable b	0.11	0.01	Weak
Variable c	0.4	0.16	Moderate	Variable c	0.14	0.02	Weak
Variable d	0.37	0.13	Moderate	Variable d	0.12	0.02	Weak
Variable e	0.36	0.13	Moderate	Variable e	0.12	0.02	Weak
Variable f	0.33	0.11	Moderate	Variable f	0.07	0.01	Weak
5) Dimension: Philosophy				6) Dimension: Social			
Variable a	0.15	0.02	Weak	Variable a	0.43	0.19	Moderate
Variable b	0.1	0.01	Weak	Variable b	0.4	0.16	Moderate
Variable c	0.12	0.01	Weak	Variable c	0.44	0.19	Moderate
Variable d	0.1	0.01	Weak	Variable d	0.44	0.2	Moderate
Variable e	0.09	0.01	Weak	Variable e	0.45	0.21	Moderate
Variable f	0.09	0.01	Weak	Variable f	0.41	0.17	Moderate
7) Dimension: Political/Economics				8) Dimension: Ethnicity			
Variable a	0.14	0.02	Weak	Variable a	0.07	0.01	Weak
Variable b	0.12	0.02	Weak	Variable b	0.08	0.01	Weak
Variable c	0.18	0.03	Weak	Variable c	0.1	0.01	Weak
Variable d	0.12	0.01	Weak	Variable d	0.07	0	Null
Variable e	0.15	0.02	Weak	Variable e	0.12	0.02	Weak

Variable f	0.08	0.01	Weak	Variable f	0.09	0.01	Weak
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Table 5.17 Regression SPA Model Summary

Where Variable a: Provide love and emotional support to kids;

Variable b: Be involved and present in children's life;

Variable c: Be a teacher, guide and coach;

Variable d: Provide discipline;

Variable e: Provide financial security;

Variable f: Do one's part in day-to-day childcare tasks.

Next the ANOVA results are analysed to see how well the regression equation predicts the dependent variable. From the below table we can tell that two of the dimensions (Physical and Ethnicity) contain variables which are not good fit, while the rest of the dimensions fit the data significantly.

ANOVA	F	Sig	Finding	ANOVA	F	Sig	Finding
	Stats		($p < 0.05$: Good Fit)		Stats		($p < 0.05$: Good Fit)
1) Dimension: Mindset				2) Dimension: Physical			
Variable a	16.01	0.00	Good Fit	Variable a	0.05	0.82	Not Good Fit
Variable b	16.8	0.00	Good Fit	Variable b	5.54	0.02	Good Fit
Variable c	14.02	0.00	Good Fit	Variable c	7.92	0.01	Good Fit
Variable d	12.15	0.00	Good Fit	Variable d	11.86	0.00	Good Fit
Variable e	11.19	0.00	Good Fit	Variable e	10.93	0.00	Good Fit
Variable f	9.76	0.00	Good Fit	Variable f	3.73	0.05	Not Good Fit
3) Dimension: Affect				4) Dimension: Globalisation			
Variable a	25.05	0.00	Good Fit	Variable a	12.54	0.00	Good Fit

Variable b	20.93	0.00	Good Fit	Variable b	10.08	0.00	Good Fit
Variable c	25.01	0.00	Good Fit	Variable c	15.90	0.00	Good Fit
Variable d	20.81	0.00	Good Fit	Variable d	12.69	0.00	Good Fit
Variable e	19.99	0.00	Good Fit	Variable e	14.49	0.00	Good Fit
Variable f	15.95	0.00	Good Fit	Variable f	4.56	0.03	Good Fit
5) Dimension: Philosophy				6) Dimension: Social			
Variable a	19.42	0.00	Good Fit	Variable a	26.18	0.00	Good Fit
Variable b	8.91	0.00	Good Fit	Variable b	22.3	0.00	Good Fit
Variable c	12.37	0.00	Good Fit	Variable c	26.71	0.00	Good Fit
Variable d	7.46	0.01	Good Fit	Variable d	27.71	0.00	Good Fit
Variable e	6.21	0.01	Good Fit	Variable e	29.49	0.00	Good Fit
Variable f	5.99	0.01	Good Fit	Variable f	23.77	0.00	Good Fit
7) Dimension: Political/Economics				8) Dimension: Ethnicity			
Variable a	15.76	0.00	Good Fit	Variable a	4.41	0.04	Good Fit
Variable b	12.95	0.00	Good Fit	Variable b	5.79	0.02	Good Fit
Variable c	27.15	0.00	Good Fit	Variable c	7.56	0.01	Good Fit
Variable d	12.3	0.00	Good Fit	Variable d	3.75	0.05	Not Good Fit
Variable e	18.54	0.00	Good Fit	Variable e	12.92	0.00	Good Fit
Variable f	5.88	0.02	Good Fit	Variable f	6.32	0.01	Good Fit

Table 5.18 ANOVA Results Analysis

Where Variable a: Provide love and emotional support to kids;

Variable b: Be involved and present in children's life;

Variable c: Be a teacher, guide and coach;

Variable d: Provide discipline;

Variable e: Provide financial security;

Variable f: Do one's part in day-to-day childcare tasks.

Thus, two of the dimensions (Physical and Ethnicity) need to be researched further in order to strengthen the support of the SPA model. Variable a (Provide love and emotional support to kids) and variable f (Do one's part in day-to-day childcare tasks) were not able to predict the regression outcome variable (Physical) well. In the same way, variable d (Provide discipline) was not able to predict the regression outcome variable (Ethnicity) well.

At the coefficient table level, it was also observed that the variables measured by the survey questions mapped to the dimensions, do not all support the prediction of the outcome VBNC variables. Dimensions, namely Social and Mindset, have a high number of rejected variables.

a. Dimension: Mindset

- 1) Provide love and emotional support to kids (3 out of 6 variables rejected at 0.05 sig level)
- 2) Be involved and present in children's life (3 out of 6 variables rejected at 0.05 sig level)
- 3) Be a teacher, guide and coach (5 out of 6 variables rejected at 0.05 sig level)
- 4) Provide discipline (5 out of 6 variables rejected at 0.05 sig level)
- 5) Provide financial security (2 out of 6 variables rejected at 0.05 sig level)
- 6) Do one's part in day-to-day childcare tasks (5 out of 6 variables rejected at 0.05 sig level)

Finding: The results vary across the six VBNCs, but common points observed were that "An interesting job" was the only variable not rejected and "I have asked to work on challenging assignments" was the only variable rejected across the six VBNCs.

b. Dimension: Affect

- 1) Provide love and emotional support to kids (1 out of 6 variables rejected at 0.05 sig level)

- 2) Be involved and present in children's life (2 out of 6 variables rejected at 0.05 sig level)
- 3) Be a teacher, guide and coach (2 out of 6 variables rejected at 0.05 sig level)
- 4) Provide discipline (2 out of 6 variables rejected at 0.05 sig level)
- 5) Provide financial security (3 out of 6 variables rejected at 0.05 sig level)
- 6) Do one's part in day-to-day childcare tasks (1 out of 6 variables rejected at 0.05 sig level)

Finding: The results vary across the six VBNCs, but common point observed was that "Sense of accomplishment", "Good advancement opportunities" and "Can work independently" were the only variables not rejected across the six VBNCs.

c. Dimension: Physical

- 1) Provide love and emotional support to kids (1 out of 1 variable rejected at 0.05 sig level)
- 2) Be involved and present in children's life (0 out of 1 variable rejected at 0.05 sig level)
- 3) Be a teacher, guide and coach (0 out of 1 variable rejected at 0.05 sig level)
- 4) Provide discipline (0 out of 1 variable rejected at 0.05 sig level)
- 5) Provide financial security (0 out of 1 variable rejected at 0.05 sig level)
- 6) Do one's part in day-to-day childcare tasks (1 out of 1 variable rejected at 0.05 sig level)

Finding: The results divides the six VBNCs into two categories, and since age group was only one variable measured, it seems that there could be common perspective across the same age groups on the above VBNCs.

d. Dimension: Philosophy

- 1) Provide love and emotional support to kids (0 out of 1 variable rejected at 0.05 sig level)
- 2) Be involved and present in children's life (0 out of 1 variable rejected at 0.05 sig level)
- 3) Be a teacher, guide and coach (0 out of 1 variable rejected at 0.05 sig level)
- 4) Provide discipline (0 out of 1 variable rejected at 0.05 sig level)
- 5) Provide financial security (0 out of 1 variable rejected at 0.05 sig level)

- 6) Do one's part in day-to-day childcare tasks (0 out of 1 variable rejected at 0.05 sig level)

Finding: "In general, I like my choice of career" is consistently not rejected across the six VBNCs.

e. Dimension: Globalisation

- 1) Provide love and emotional support to kids (0 out of 1 variable rejected at 0.05 sig level)
- 2) Be involved and present in children's life (0 out of 1 variable rejected at 0.05 sig level)
- 3) Be a teacher, guide and coach (0 out of 1 variable rejected at 0.05 sig level)
- 4) Provide discipline (0 out of 1 variable rejected at 0.05 sig level)
- 5) Provide financial security (0 out of 1 variable rejected at 0.05 sig level)
- 6) Do one's part in day-to-day childcare tasks (0 out of 1 variable rejected at 0.05 sig level)

Finding: "At the company where I work, I am treated with respect" is consistently not rejected across the six VBNCs.

f. Dimension: Social

- 1) Provide love and emotional support to kids (5 out of 7 variables rejected at 0.05 sig level)
- 2) Be involved and present in children's life (4 out of 7 variables rejected at 0.05 sig level)
- 3) Be a teacher, guide and coach (2 out of 7 variables rejected at 0.05 sig level)
- 4) Provide discipline (3 out of 7 variables rejected at 0.05 sig level)
- 5) Provide financial security (3 out of 7 variables rejected at 0.05 sig level)
- 6) Do one's part in day-to-day childcare tasks (3 out of 7 variables rejected at 0.05 sig level)

Finding: The results vary across the six VBNCs, but common points observed were that "Job Security" and "Beneficial to society" were the only variables not rejected; and "I feel I am really a part of the group of people I work with" and "I look forward to being with the people I work with each day" were the only variables rejected across the six VBNCs.

g. Dimension: Political/Economics

- 1) Provide love and emotional support to kids (0 out of 1 variable rejected at 0.05 sig level)
- 2) Be involved and present in children's life (0 out of 1 variable rejected at 0.05 sig level)
- 3) Be a teacher, guide and coach (0 out of 1 variable rejected at 0.05 sig level)
- 4) Provide discipline (0 out of 1 variable rejected at 0.05 sig level)
- 5) Provide financial security (0 out of 1 variable rejected at 0.05 sig level)
- 6) Do one's part in day-to-day childcare tasks (0 out of 1 variable rejected at 0.05 sig level)

Finding: "I would like to be in a position where I can have greater influence on the decisions" is consistently not rejected across the six VBNCs.

h. Dimension: Ethnicity

- 1) Provide love and emotional support to kids (0 out of 1 variable rejected at 0.05 sig level)
- 2) Be involved and present in children's life (0 out of 1 variable rejected at 0.05 sig level)
- 3) Be a teacher, guide and coach (0 out of 1 variable rejected at 0.05 sig level)
- 4) Provide discipline (1 out of 1 variable rejected at 0.05 sig level)
- 5) Provide financial security (0 out of 1 variable rejected at 0.05 sig level)
- 6) Do one's part in day-to-day childcare tasks (0 out of 1 variable rejected at 0.05 sig level)

Finding: The results divide the six VBNCs into two categories, and since ethnicity was only one variable measured, it seems that the perspective of VBNC on "Provide discipline" is significantly different for particular ethnic groupings.

In addition, the questions may need to be fine-tuned or dropped, if they do not contribute statistical significance to the measured indicators. The regression results also indicate that a high number of the questions under the Social and Mindset dimensions do not satisfy the predictive strength threshold from a statistical viewpoint required. As for the other six dimensions of the SPA model, they support the hypothesis that they affect VBNCs. It is recommended that one of the methods that

can be taken in order to strengthen the research going ahead, is to expand the breadth of questions and fine tune them in order to get a better correlation between the dependant and independent variables.

5.5 Conclusion

The SPA model in its proposed multi-cultural approach and the eight dimensions provides counsellors with a better approach towards developing relationships with their clients if these eight dimensions are consciously taken note of. It is thus imperative, at this stage, to take a step further, by validating the SPA model through further analysis of the data from the large scale, national level, and DFL survey study.

To validate the eight dimensions of the SPA model, statistical analysis tools such as correlation will be applied to demonstrate relationships between variables and regression to describe the causal effect of the variables.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

6.1 Critical Reflections

Following the literature review, project implementation, data collection, research and analysis, areas of improvements have been identified be it from the organisational's, professional's and the researcher's perspectives. This chapter highlights the reflections and learning of the researcher in this study.

6.1.1 Experience as an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) Consultant

The Employee Assistance Trade Association defines an EAP as “an employer-sponsored service” designed for personal or family problems including mental health, substance abuse, various addictions, marital problems, parenting problems, emotional problems, or financial or legal concerns.

As an EAP Consultant, the researcher provides well-being consultancy and help support organisations through counselling employees with work-related issues of stress, interpersonal conflicts, absenteeism, trauma, and other psychological or mental health issues. If left unsupported, the work performance of these employees may be adversely affected. His profession involves partnering with organisations to support their employees through the delivery of management training and coaching, counselling, as well as implementing wellbeing and employee assistance programs. He has been providing employee support and training programs for about ten years to a wide spectrum of industries, from national and multi-national level organisations across Singapore, including organisations from both the public and private sectors.

From this study, he learned that EAP needs to play a much bigger role in better addressing systemic issues, and not just focus on functional counselling. The lack of a systemic approach could limit the holistic assessment of clients, leading to identifying and diagnosing the wrong symptomatic issues, and not address the fundamental root issue. This is because the client's problems may be caused and perpetuated by systemic issues. The study therefore, reiterated the importance for a

structured framework that could help guide counsellors in the counselling process, to ensure quality and consistency in the delivery of professional services.

6.1.2 Experience with Parents at the Workplace

His professional experience as an EAP Consultant, gave him the opportunity to observe and learn about the challenges of parents at workplace, especially with regards to balancing their roles as parents and employees.

The challenges of being a parent are dealt with differently by different individuals. To some parents, the role may be stressful while others cope with greater ease. The psychological and mental wellbeing of parents at their workplaces, do affect their relationships at home, with their spouses and children. Based on attachment theory, parents who have grown up with developmental deficits may find themselves struggling in their roles as parents. Finding parenthood overwhelming, they may often require help and support with their own roles as a parent. Some parents may with their own unresolved developmental issues feel ill-equipped in providing the appropriate emotional support and connectivity in relationship with their children.

Seeking help through counselling enable one to explore one's own internal difficulties and perception of his or her reality. Counselling can enable a parent to discover his or her existing inner resources, to help the father or mother to heighten his or her awareness to make meaningful choices so as to live a more satisfying life. EAP provides counselling to support parents by providing a warm, empathetic, safe, confidential environment for parents to discuss specific parenting issues that may be hindering them from performing their specific parenting role in a healthier and more fulfilling manner.

A father is capable of giving a profound impact on his child throughout the child's life, beginning from as early as the first twelve to eighteen months of the child's life. Many Asian men are culturally prohibited from expressing their feelings and have been taught to deal with issues in a logical and rational manner. Their cultural beliefs and practices may have instilled and reinforced consistently that being vulnerable is not an acceptable trait for a father." Regrettably, such social conditioning has made it common for some men to find it challenging to express their emotions and relate emotionally. The ability of parents to connect with their children at an emotional level

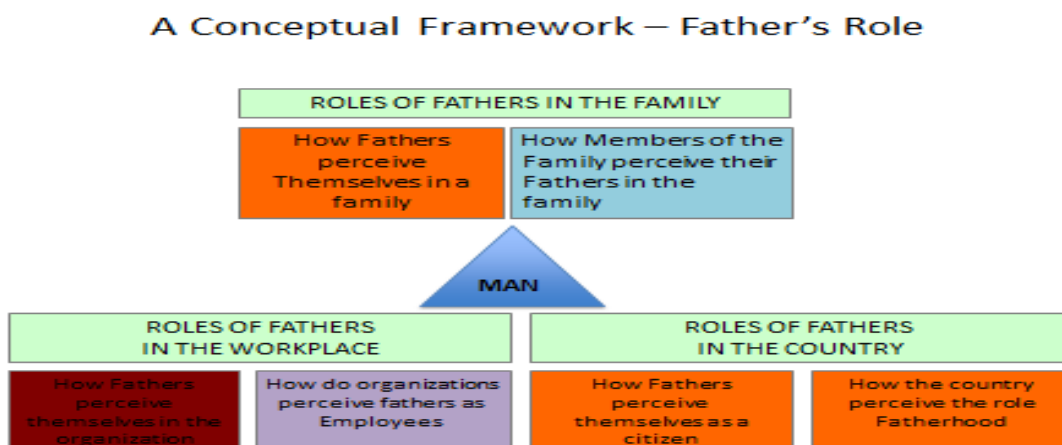
may impact on their emotional developmental process. Growing up in a stable family environment with healthy parent-child relationships would likely contribute to better mental health, healthier self-esteem, lower incidences of anxiety, depression and other psychological concerns. Counselling can help support parents in dealing with a variety of issues and challenges related to parenting.

Closely related to parenting, is the issue of work-life balance. Work-life balance is a pertinent factor that may influence the capacity of parents to cope with work responsibilities, as well as family commitments. Organisations may consider more pro-family policies such as allowing flexi work hours, the option to work from home, or other monetary benefits and leave policies to improve the welfare of employees, minimise workplace stress, and encourage work-life balance so as to promote employee engagement. Improving the wellbeing of employees could lead to better work performance and increased productivity that could benefit the organisation.

6.2 Reflections and Learning of the Researcher

The researcher's life experiences had provided him with insights that changed his worldview and challenged him to see things from different perspectives. The learning journey of this thesis in developing a systemically based model to understanding human beings, has contributed to growth in the breadth and depth of thinking, as well as outlook towards life.

Figure 6.1: A Framework on Father's Role at the Workplace



Through the involvement in the research project of this thesis, here are reflections from his learning, which include areas for personal improvement and growth.

1. The assumption was that policy makers governing a country like Singapore have considered the multiracial and multicultural issues in policy-making. During the course of this study, national events such as the strike by bus drivers from China of 26 Nov 2012, and the Little India riot of foreign workers of 8 December 2013, have highlighted the need to be more sensitive in considering multi-cultural issues in policy-making in an increasingly culturally diverse Singapore with the influx of FTs and foreign workers. The lack of understanding of the cultural VBNC of foreigners could have led to the perpetuation of biases, prejudices and discrimination against them through the social and mass media.
2. The application of the SPA model to the DFL national project with its research findings has shown that how 'fathers' are defined and interpreted differs amongst different racial groups. The implication is that the different cultural interpretations of what fatherhood means and the role of the father among the different racial groups may have affected the take-up rate of family friendly policies in the workplace. Hence, the SPA model with its systemic consideration of VBNC may contribute to greater cultural awareness in the policy-making process. It may be possible to use the model to advocate for social issues, particularly in a multi-cultural and multi-racial society.
3. In the context of the social service sector, the researcher's assumption that there already exist a standardised way for counsellors to do in-take interviews which would help in the case conceptualisation process of counselling case management. Unbeknownst to the researcher, each agency uses different templates for assessment in-take interviews. Based on the SPA model, the researcher developed a case in-take form for assessing clients from a holistic, systemic perspective. Recently, he also had the opportunity to introduce the new form to several social service agencies as a trial during training seminars. The feedback from the practitioners was that the forms provided counsellors with a framework for comprehensive case assessment and conceptualisation.

Attention to VBNC of the client in the different dimensions also was useful for working with clients from culturally diverse backgrounds, as it enabled counsellors to be more aware and attentive to cultural and systemic issues that could be impacting the client.

4. Through the study, it also became apparent that the eight dimensions in the SPA model defined the various systems need to be put into a context to make it relevant. The eight dimensions of the SPA model would only make sense if it is put into specific context for application. The SPA model would not have any relevance if it were not defined by a prescribed context. When applied in the practice of counselling, the SPA model needs to be applied to the client's specific presenting issue, and to consider each dimension in its prescribed context.
5. During the study, it became apparent that most research and studies were conducted in the West, and not in an Asian context. The Western worldview do not take into consideration an Asian context, therefore, applying counselling models in a non-western context requires contextualisation. The SPA model is applicable to different contexts because of its consideration of VBNC, which makes it an effective tool for increasing cultural awareness, which is necessary for effective contextualisation to take place. For the advancement of the research, it would be good to investigate and test the SPA model with its dimensions and VBNC in a different context, to further confirm the statistical validity of the model.

6.3 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

There has been a substantial amount of learning that has been gained in this research. The development of the SPA model by itself, has already provided many learning insights and the research work on the relationship with VBNCs has opened new possibilities to understanding in the area of multi-cultural and diversity issues. Studies on data collection and survey methodologies have increased his understanding and appreciation for philosophical and methodological landscapes.

Upon further reflection, some of the limitations and suggestions for future research of the SPA model could include the following areas:

- A larger scale research on the SPA model and its relevancy to the area of enhancing human relations issues by raising awareness on dimensions that may affect perception and subjectivity. It would be ideal it could be explored further on a National level with a differing sample size.
- A need to develop questions that are more specific and able to extract the essence of each of the SPA model's eight dimensions better. The classification of the current DFL survey questions may currently suffice, however, it has raised concerns as some of the questions do not classify cleanly within each dimension but may straddle between more than a single dimension. This in turn may have some effect on the data collected.
- Biases have been noted in the existing assessment instruments and procedures. There is a need to improve on the questions being asked, as well as to include more questions that would allow for a more balance range of the eight dimensions.
- It is proposed that for subsequent studies, other dependent variables may be considered beyond VBNCs in order to explore the relationship of the eight dimensions within the SPA model to other variables.

The researcher hopes that the efforts made in this research, has provided new insights and learning to the field of multi-cultural counselling. This learning journey in developing and validating the SPA model through research has also provided him with the impetus to dive deeper into understanding the complexity of human relation issues, and to continue improving the SPA model into a more robust and diverse approach for a multi-cultural society, especially in the researcher's key field of counselling.

6.4 Contribution of The Learning and Moving Forward

The researcher's desire is to contribute to the counselling industry through the knowledge gained. He hopes to make a difference to those in the industry by sharing knowledge and ideas that could improve the practice of multi-cultural counselling in the workplace. His hope is that the SPA model will become a helpful framework that would support counsellors in the area of multi-cultural counselling competency.

Based on the SPA model, he also introduced a systemic, standardised tactical approach to case management that could be used in the social service sector. It includes using the case in-take and assessment form that is based on the holistic SPA model. A holistic and culturally sensitive approach to assessment, conceptualisation and intervention would likely contribute to increased efficacy in counselling practice and more effective case management illustrated in Figure 69.

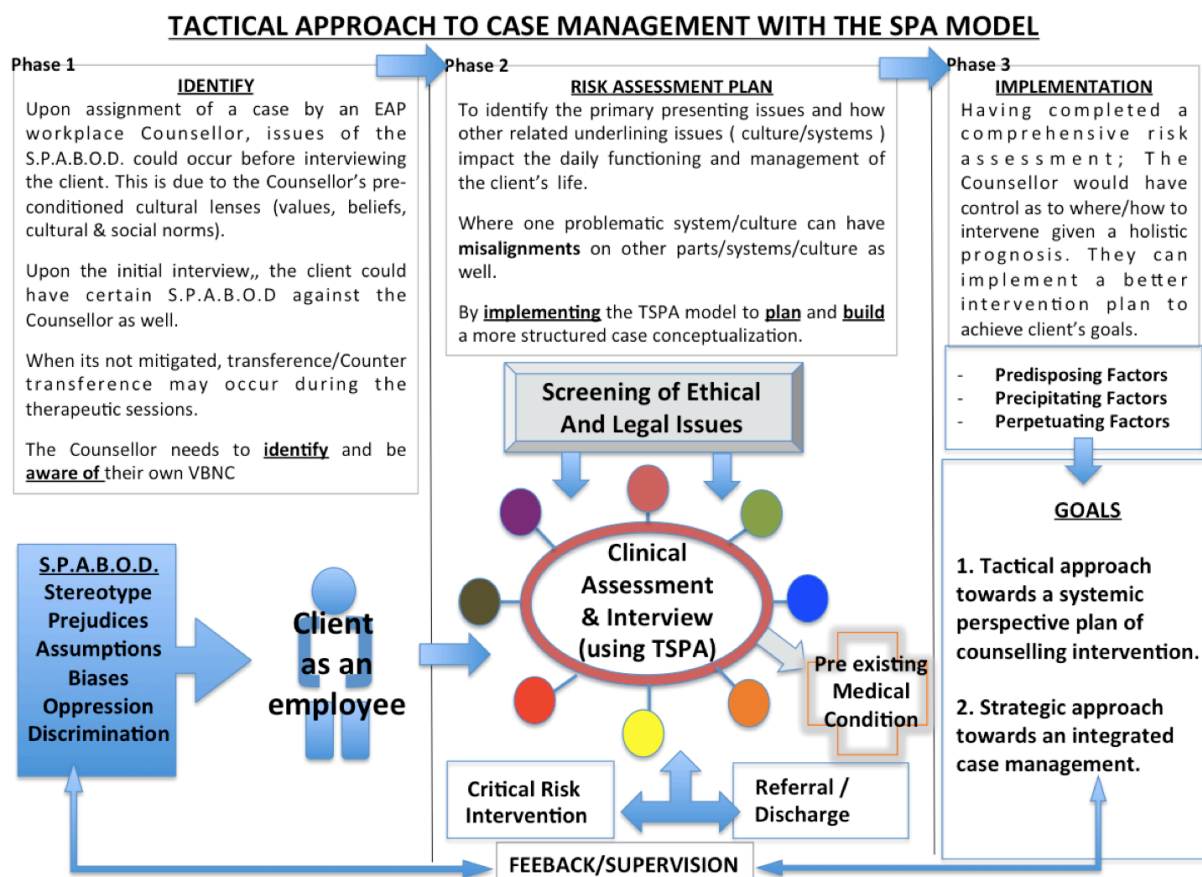


Figure 6.2: Case Conceptualisation and Intervention Framework

The SPA model not only has the capability to be operationalised at a tactical but strategic level as well. Within the context of a case intervention, its eight dimensions help to address systems that are affecting the client's presenting issue internally and externally. In a broader context, the eight dimensions of the SPA model goes on to identify systems that have an impact on social issues and causes respectively. This in turn provides a strategic landscape for both the counselling profession and professionals to have an influence in engaging consulting with these different organisational systems in advocating for social change (Lee, 1998).

Multi-cultural counselling which is concern with issues of culture, ethnicity and diversity in counselling will inevitably lead to a growing awareness of systemic issues that may be directly or indirectly perpetuating or maintaining client's problem. Then natural progression in the evolution of multi-cultural counselling is towards advocacy and social justice counselling, which looks at the negative societal factors that may be affecting psychological wellness of individuals.

The SPA model may help to identify the client's alignment or misalignment with VBNC of systems, which would potentially reveal injustices, prejudices, oppression, inequality, unequal access or gaps in systems that may be maintaining, perpetuating or contributing to the client's problem or psychological distress. Awareness and identification of these systemic issues may challenge counsellors to intervene beyond the intrapsychic level, if problem lies outside of the client, and within systems that he is embedded in. When this is so, it may call upon the counsellor to step into an advocacy role to deal with systemic issues affecting the client. Counsellors may work with systems directly to improve wellbeing of clients where possible. Advocacy also involves educating clients and raising their awareness towards these negative societal factors, as well as empowering them to deal effectively with them.

The SPA model's consideration of the impact of systems on the individual, would lead to greater awareness of systemic gaps and influences. Hopefully that would encourage counsellors to take on a more active role in advocating for their clients against injustices and oppression within systems that could be contributing to their problems.

In the field of EAP counselling and consultancy, the researcher's role has expanded to include advocacy work, such as advocating for clients in some cases to improve work conditions and benefits through providing recommendations and working more directly with organisations where possible to help cultivate a learning environment, that would promote the wellbeing, growth and development of their employees. Peter Senge (1990) has rightly expressed that learning organisations are “organisations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning to see the whole together.

A systemic perspective approach to counselling therefore may inspire a paradigm shift in counsellors to consider counselling as advocacy and take on a more active role in advocacy not just at an organisational level, but even at a social and national level in case management. Another potential area of development of the SPA model would be to apply it in the area of policy-making both at the social and national level. This is also advocacy in action that may potentially bring about systemic changes at the social and national level through the recommendation or introduction of new national policies. The SPA model can be a useful tool that can be practically applied to manage social issues in a multi-cultural society. It can do so by influencing the way policy makers draft relevant manpower guidelines as research findings of the DFL have shown, with respect to how ‘fathers’ are define and interpreted amongst different racial groups.

One of the recommendations of the DFL is for the Singapore government to consider community's values, beliefs, norms and culture in the reactions and responses towards government and company policies on work-life balance. The DFL project has evidenced that the definition of fathers is interpreted differently amongst the four major racial groups. The influx of foreigners is transforming Singapore into a multi-cultural global community. It is therefore pivotal in policy making that government agencies take a systemic perspective approach to understand the community's VBNC, in order to develop more culturally sensitive and strategic policies that would better meet the needs of a culturally diverse Singapore, both at organisational and national levels.

The recommendations made to the Singapore government through the DFL project is in itself an act of advocacy because it brings to attention the need for a more culturally sensitive approach to policy making and implementation in culturally diverse Singapore. A more culturally sensitive approach is more likely to be effective in generating more positive responses towards policies that are aligned to one's VBNC, resulting in more positive policy outcomes. Hence, the SPA model may inspire an integrated and systemic approach to counselling as advocacy with its emphasis on VBNC.

The researcher also intend to expand the applicability of the SPA model as an integrated model to identify and address multi-cultural issues, and thus, increasing cultural awareness and improving the human resource development of specific cultural groups in the organisations. It is a helpful tool not just in the field of counselling, but is practical in its application for a holistic and systemic understanding in other contexts beyond the social service sector such as in business, education and human resource management as well. However, further future research in these different contexts could help to validate its applicability and validity.

Finally, another potential future development of the SPA model would be to use cutting edge Information-Communication Technology (ICT) to advocate change by standardising case in-take forms for retrieval and repository purpose for more effective case management in the counselling practise of Singapore. As we move towards advancing the counselling profession in a modern age of technology, it may be worth considering embedding the SPA model into an electronic form by optimising current ICT platform for more effective case management.

6.5 Conclusion

Pursuing this doctorate program has provided the opportunity to analyse and validate the researcher's work through both theoretical and empirical research. He has learnt a lot in the process and hope that the knowledge gained would contribute to the research in the counselling industry.

The purpose of the SPA model based on a systemic perspective is to increase efficacy in the area of multi-cultural counselling in the workplace. It is proposed as a practical tool that would support a more holistic and integrated culturally sensitive approach to case assessment, case conceptualisation as well as in the counselling intervention process. The model's attention to systemic issues also provides workplace and EAP counsellors with a holistic framework when considering their interventions, expanding their roles to include advocacy through working directly with organisations to improve the mental wellbeing of their clients as seen in Figure 71.

STRATEGIC APPROACH TO INTEGRATED CASE MANAGEMENT WITH THE SPA MODEL



Figure 71 – Strategic Approach to Integrated Case management with the SPA model

The SPA model's systemic consideration of VBNC also makes it a helpful tool for supporting the policy-making process, as well as in the management of social issues in a multi-cultural society like Singapore. The SPA case in-take template, as well as the recently developed systemic, standardised tactical approach to case management have extended the applicability of the SPA model to the social service sector.

Given the limitations of the research project, the development of the SPA model is still an on-going learning journey. Further research is needed to better improve and develop the model. Moving forward, the researcher hopes future developments of the model may validate and extend its applicability beyond the counselling practice, to other related fields such as education, social services, human resource and organisational development. As a multi-cultural model for workplace counselling, he also hopes it would contribute to a shift in counsellors towards counselling as advocacy as they gain greater awareness of systemic and multi-cultural issues in their application and use of the model.

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APPENDIX A

Dads for Life Survey Questions

Questions to reflect the Values, Beliefs, Norms, Cultur (VBNC) were also selected. These will be the dependant variables.



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Section A. Experiences at WORK

Note: All respondents should complete this section.

1. The following questions ask about your job and career-related experiences. For each statement, state whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree.

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Emotional	The work I do is meaningful to me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Culture	At the company where I work, I am treated with respect	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social	I feel I am really a part of the group of people I work with	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social	I look forward to being with the people I work with each day	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mind-set	I am satisfied with the opportunity to learn new skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mind-set	I have sought opportunities to gain knowledge in a variety of work areas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mind-set	I have asked to work on challenging assignments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social	I have participated in networking opportunities within my organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mind-set	I wish to advance to a position with greater responsibility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Political/Economical	I would like to be in a position where I can have greater influence on decisions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emotional	I have a strong desire to advance to a position in senior management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Philosophy	In general, I like my choice of career	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emotional	I am satisfied with the success I have achieved in my career	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mind-set	I am satisfied with the progress in my income over the course of my career	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



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2. The following questions seek your views on what you value in a job.

Please rate the importance of various job characteristics on a scale from not important to extremely important

		Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
Social	Job Security	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emotional	Sense of accomplishment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mind-set	An interesting job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social	Allows flexible working arrangements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emotional	Good advancement opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Philosophy	High income	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emotional	Can work independently	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social	Beneficial to society	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social	Allows for a lot of leisure time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Typically, how many hours do you work in a week? (Please select one only)

Political / Economical

- Less than 15 hours
 15 - 20 hours
 21 - 30 hours
 31 - 40 hours
 41 - 45 hours
 46 - 50 Hours
 51 - 55 hours
 More than 56 hours



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Section B. Parents' Experiences with the Family

The following questions ask about your experiences with your family and children.

- Do you have children aged 15 and below?
 - Yes (Continue with Section B)
 - No (If No, Skip to Section D to continue with the survey)
- Which of the following statements most accurately describes how you see your responsibility towards your child(ren)? (Please select one only)

(all the 8 dimensions can be applied to this question)

 - Earning money to meet my children's financial needs
 - Mostly earning money to meet my children's financial needs, but also providing some physical/emotional care for them
 - Both caring for my children and earning money to meet their financial needs
 - Mostly caring for my children, but also earning some money to meet their financial needs
 - Physically/emotionally caring for my children

6. How many weeks of leave or time-off did you take following the birth of your most recent child? (Please select one only)

(social, emotional, culture)

- Less than 1 week
- 1 week
- 1 – 2 weeks
- 3 – 4 weeks
- 5 – 6 weeks
- More than 6 weeks
- No time off taken

7. Please describe the work adjustments, if any, that you made or experienced immediately after the birth of your most recent child. (Please select ALL that apply)



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10. The following statements describe the roles that fathers often play. In your view, what are the most important aspects of being a GOOD FATHER? Please rate the importance of each aspect on a scale from not important to extremely important.

		Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
Emotional	Provide love and emotional support to kids	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physical & Social	Be involved and present in children's life	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mind-set	Be a teacher, guide and coach	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Culture	Provide discipline	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Philosophy	Provide financial security	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social	Do one's part in day-to-day childcare tasks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

11. The following questions ask you to reflect on your own role as a parent. For each statement, state whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree.

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Mind-set	I am confident in my ability as a parent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Culture	I am proud of what I do (for my children) as a parent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Philosophy	Sacrificing for my children is part of parenthood	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emotional	If I were considering taking a new job, I would consider how much that job would interfere with my ability to care for my children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



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(all the 8 dimensions can be applied to this question)

- My job responsibilities remained the same
- My job responsibilities decreased
- My job responsibilities increased
- My supervisor's expectations of me in my work role stayed the same
- My supervisor's expectations of me in my work role increased
- My supervisor's expectations of me in my work role became less demanding
- I made use of flexible work arrangements informally
- I negotiated a formal flexible work arrangement
- I took more unplanned or urgent leave / time-off

8. During the past year, how many days of leave or time off did you take for childcare purposes or to spend time with your child(ren)?

(Emotional, culture, Social)

_____ (please provide number of days)

9. Given your responsibilities at work and in the family, how much time do you spend interacting with your child(ren) during a typical week-day? (Please select one only)

(Emotional, culture, Social)

- Less than an hour
- 1-3 hours
- 3-6 hours
- 6 hours or more
- None at all



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Section C. Co-Parenting Experiences

The following questions ask about how you share family responsibilities with your spouse or your child's mother/father. Please skip to Section D if you do NOT have children aged 15 and below, or if you are widowed.

12. How do you and your spouse or your child's mother/father share responsibility for childcare? Please respond in relation to your youngest child. (Please select one only)

(Emotional Social and Culture)

- I take most of the responsibility
- My spouse or my child's mother/father takes most of the responsibility
- I share responsibilities equally with my spouse or my child's mother/father

13. For each of the following statements, state whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree.

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Philosophy/ Social	My spouse or my child's mother/father contributes to a great deal in my career	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Culture	My spouse or my child's mother/father acknowledges my obligations as an employee	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Culture/ Emotional	My spouse or my child's mother/father willingly takes on more responsibility at home when I have to work overtime or am required to travel for business	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Culture/ Emotional	My spouse or my child's mother/father is supportive when I take on challenging projects at work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emotional/ Culture	My spouse or my child's mother/father encourages me to play an active parenting role	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



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Section D. Blending Work with Other Aspects of Personal and Family Life

Note: All respondents should complete this section.

This section focuses on how you combine your role as an employee with other roles you play in your life.

14. How often have you experienced interruptions of your time at work to deal with family matters?

		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Quite Often	Very Often
Social	How often do you interrupt your time at home or away from the workplace outside to address work-related issues?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social	How often do you interrupt your time at work to address family-related issues?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social	How often do you interrupt your time with your children to address work-related issues?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

15. How would you rate the level of work-life conflict you experience?

(Emotional, Mind-set, Culture, Social)

- Very little conflict
 Some amount of conflict
 A lot of conflict
 No conflict



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Section E. Workplace Supports and Family-Friendly Policies

Note: All respondents should complete this section.

The following section seeks your views on the culture and policies of the organisation you work in.

16. For each statement, state whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree.

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Culture	Individuals who take time off to attend to personal matters are <u>not</u> committed to their work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Culture	Employees who are highly committed to their personal lives <u>cannot</u> be highly committed to their work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Culture	The organisational culture of my company suggests that "Work should be the primary priority in a person's life"	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Culture / Mind-set	Employees are given ample opportunity to perform their job and their personal responsibilities well	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

17. For each statement, state whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree.

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Emotional, Culture, Social	My manager was supportive when family or personal matters needed to be taken care of	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emotional, Culture, Social	My manager did <u>not</u> show favouritism in responding to employees' personal needs or situations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emotional, Culture, Social	My supervisor really cares about the effects that work demands have on my personal and family life	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



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18. Please state whether your organisation provides each of these work-life benefits and/or employee support schemes, and whether you have used these in the past year.

(all the 8 dimensions can be applied to this question)

		My organisation provides this benefit/scheme	I have used this in the past year
18a	Childcare assistance (e.g., onsite childcare centre)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18b	Designated "Bring Your Child to Work" days	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18c	Company events for the whole family (e.g., Family Day, company functions where family members are invited)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18d	Designated "Eat with Your Family" day	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18e	Telecommuting (e.g., flexibility or provision of laptops/mobile phones to work from home)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18f	Flexible start and end times	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18g	Part-time work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18h	Other flexible work arrangements such as compressed work week and job-sharing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18i	Flexibility or time-off to attend parent-teacher meetings at child's school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18j	Health and wellness programmes (e.g., subsidies and/or time-off work for participation in gym, sports, and other recreational activities)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18k	Design of individual work-life plan (with manager or Human Resources)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18l	Regular review and feedback related to work-life issues (with manager or Human Resources)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18m	Unpaid parental leave	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18n	Paid paternity leave	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18o	Parent education seminars	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18p	Parent education seminars for fathers specifically	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18q	Resource groups for parents (e.g., on parenting skills, work-life balance)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18r	Resource groups for fathers specifically (e.g., on fathering skills, work-life balance)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18s	Counselling or coaching services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

19. If your organisation provides paid paternity leave, please indicate how many days are provided _____

20. If your organisation makes available any of the above initiatives, but you did not choose to use them, please tell us why.

21. Please answer YES/NO to the following questions only if you are a manager with direct reports.

		Yes	No
Mind-set / Culture	I have been trained on work-life issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Culture	My organisation has a designated Work-Life Representative/Team	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

22. What are your views on the impact of family-friendly initiatives on organisations?
For each statement, state whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree. Family-friendly initiatives...

(Political/Economical & or Environment/Global)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Increase employee retention	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increase business cost	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increase employee productivity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improve staff morale	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reduce absenteeism	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enhance working relationships between colleagues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increase work disruptions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



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Section F. Demography

(All 8 dimensions can be applied to demography)

19. What is your age group?

- < 20 years
- 20 - 24 years
- 25 - 29 years
- 30 - 34 years
- 35 - 39 years
- 40 - 44 years
- 45 - 49 years
- 50 - 54 years
- 55 - 59 years
- 60 - 64 years
- 65 - 69 years
- More than 70 years

20. Please indicate your gender (Compulsory):

- Male
- Female

21. You are a:

- Singapore Citizen
- Permanent Resident
- Foreign Employee/Expat

22. What is your ethnicity?

- Chinese
- Malay
- Indian
- Others, please specify _____

23. What is the highest educational level you have attained?

- Below PSLE
- Primary (completed PSLE)
- Secondary (completed GCE 'O' / 'N' Level)
- Junior College (completed GCE 'A' Levels)
- ITE / Vocational Institute
- Diploma / Polytechnic
- Post Graduate Diploma
- University Degree
- University Masters Degree
- PhD

24. Please provide your marital status:

- Married
- Remarried
- Separated
- Divorced
- Widowed
- Never been married

25. If you are married, is your spouse working?

- Spouse works full-time
- Spouse works part-time
- Spouse is a full-time homemaker
- Not Applicable / I am not married

26. Do you have any biological / adopted children?

- Yes
- No

27. How many biological / adopted children do you have?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- More than 5
- Not Applicable



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28. How old is your youngest child?

- Under 2 years
- 2-6 years
- 7-12 years
- 13-15
- 16 and above
- Not Applicable

29. What kind of industry do you work in?

- Professional Service Sector
- Retail & wholesale trade
- Information technology
- Banking, Finance and insurance,
- Construction or Real estate
- Manufacturing
- Transportation, Communication, or Utilities
- Education (Government and private educational institutions)
- Healthcare
- Travel, Hotel and Tourism
- Oil, Gas or Marine
- Government Sector (Ministry, Statutory boards and other Govt bodies)

30. Please indicate your job designation:

- CEO, CFO, CLO, COO, CTO, CHRO
- AVP, VP or Sr VP
- Assistant Director, Director, Sr Director
- Assistant Manager, Manager, Sr Manager, GM
- Admin assistant
- Executive/Senior Executive
- Individual contributor or independent employee
- Independent consultant
- University professor or college instructor or trainer
- Full-time student
- Self-employed
- Unemployed



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31. Please select your monthly income from work

- Below \$500
- \$501 to \$999
- \$1,000 to \$1,499
- \$2,000 to \$2,999
- \$3,000 to \$3,999
- \$4,000 to \$4,999
- \$5,000 to \$5,999
- \$6,000 to \$6,999
- \$7,000 to \$7,999
- \$8,000 to \$8,999
- \$9,000 to 9,999
- \$10,000 & Over

32. Please provide your email address for a chance to be one of the lucky winners of Apple's New iPad and 5 vouchers worth S\$150 each to attend any SHRI programmes.

Thank you very much for your participation

APPENDIX B

Conceptual Framework to the Project

Appendix B1 - Fathers in a Multi-cultural Workplace

This section hopes to provide an insight into past literature that have been conducted with regards to fathers in the workforce. This literature reveals a need for organisations to adopt a systematic systemic multi-cultural perspective to recognize the changing trends and requirements.

Fatherhood in itself is a specific cultural group, and fathers are further segregated to different cultural groups depending on factors such as spirituality and economic status. An organisation that recognizes the cultural groups and the change in mindset can set out to set policies that provide fathers with the support required to have a work-life balance.

Two key trends have shaped the growing policy and practice focus on fatherhood. The first is women's growing participation in the labour force, which has disrupted the traditional division of roles between the "breadwinner dad" and "homemaker mum". The second, related to the first, is shifting gender norms, which facilitate and even call for men's stronger involvement in family life.

Emerging discussions on fatherhood have thus focused on men's changing role within the family – why, when, how, and what happens when fathers get involved. Far less examined are men's experiences within their previously central space – the workplace.

Appendix B2 - WORK-LIFE INTEGRATION TENDS TO BE FRAMED AS A WOMAN'S ISSUE

While attention to "work-family" or "work-life" conflicts and balance has certainly intensified, these issues have largely – and understandably – arisen and been discussed in terms of women's experiences. Many women, whether in dual-career households or due to single parenthood, continue to shoulder a larger share of family responsibilities.

For example, recent local research (see Table 1) shows that mothers spend more time than fathers with children, even if both parents work full-time (Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports, 2009) [This corroborates with international research: even in marriages where wives earn more than US\$100,000 a year, only 8% of husbands take prime responsibility for helping children with homework (Hewlett, Luce, Shiller, & Southwell, 2001). These findings suggest that the “dual agenda” of work and family still falls more to mothers.

For these reasons, “work-life” tends to be framed, whether directly or not, as a “woman’s issue”. Likewise, initiatives aimed at helping employees manage their work and family commitments sometimes focus more on supporting women rather than men, the starkest example being the different allocations for maternity versus paternity leave.

Appendix B3 - MEN’S EXPERIENCES AT WORK ARE CHANGING

Yet, the lack of focus on men’s work-life conflicts conceals and discourages the growth in the number of fathers who do (seek to) take on more family responsibilities and who centre their identities less on their work. One study of employees of large organisations across three emerging countries (Brazil, China and India) and three developed countries (Germany, the UK, and the US) found that in terms of work identification and personal/family identity, there is little difference among men and women; rather, differences are found between emerging and developed countries, with work identification much higher in emerging markets than in developed ones (Linkow, Civian, & Lingle, 2001)

Such patterns are likely to strengthen over time not just because of changing gender norms but also changing career patterns especially in developed countries. Downsizing efforts over the last decade combined with changing employee aspirations have led to employees seeking more self-directed careers versus long-term affiliations with a single organisation or profession. This could result in more employees, particularly men, who may have traditionally rooted their identities in work, to seek more subjective measures of wellbeing and success (Harrington, Van Deusen, & Ladge, 2010).

Appendix B4 - DO FATHERS EXPERIENCE WORK-LIFE CONFLICTS DIFFERENTLY FROM MOTHERS?

However, there are indications that despite converging work and family roles, fathers and mothers experience divergent levels of work-life conflict. Men (25%) were found more likely than women (19%) to cite “finding time to spend with family” as a work-life challenge (Linkow, Civian, & Lingle, 2001). Another study comparing fathers in dual-earner couples with children under 18 to mothers in the same group found that the proportion of fathers reporting work-life conflict increased significantly from 35 % in 1977 to 60 % in 2008 , while mothers’ work-life conflict increased less dramatically from 41 % to 47% (Galinsky, Aumann, & Bond, 2008).

These findings could indicate that employed fathers seeking a stronger family orientation may experience more difficulty, relative to employed mothers, in being accepted or recognised at work as “family-centred”. They could also suggest that for various reasons, fathers struggle more than mothers to establish boundaries between work and family.

Appendix B5 - DEFINING A FATHER-FRIENDLY WORKPLACE

The above trends shape emerging efforts to create not just “family- friendly”, but also “father-friendly” workplaces, where male employees with children are accepted or even encouraged in their roles as fathers. One but not the only sign of this is the inclusion and/or participation of men in various work- life practices, which may be categorised as follows(Beauregard & Henry, 2009; Ministry of Manpower, 2005)Fathers’ access to such practices remains uneven and compromised by various factors discussed in this report.

a) Flexible work arrangements: Flexible work arrangements move away from fixed work schedules and include options such as flexi-place, telecommuting, flexible start and end times, compressed work schedules (where employees work a full week’s worth of hours in four days and take the fifth off), and job-sharing (sharing a full-time job between two employees (job sharing)). These are aimed at helping employees manage their time around their family or personal responsibilities.

b) Leave benefits (paid/unpaid): These are days off that employers provide employees, generally in recognition of important life events such as childbirth, exams, dependent care and bereavement.

c) Employee support schemes: These help employees manage the non-work aspects of their lives. Some examples are health and wellness programmes, flexible benefits, onsite childcare, counselling services, and other informational assistance related to care giving or parenting.

Appendix B6 - STATE OF FATHER-FRIENDLY WORKPLACE PRACTICE IN SINGAPORE

Origins of Work-Life Movement

The government-led work-life movement in Singapore has been in place since 2000, beginning with the formation of the Work-Life Unit (WLU) in MCYS, within the Family Policy Unit. The origins of the WLU reflect the early focus on supporting women in balancing work and family responsibilities. The Unit has since moved to the Ministry of Manpower (MOM).

Policy Regime for Work-Life Initiatives

The current policy regime to promote work-life balance to some extent reflects the origins and evolution of the work-life movement. Mothers today enjoy a legislated four months of maternity leave. There is no legislated paternity leave for fathers, though some employers provide paternity leave on a voluntary basis. For example, civil servants enjoy 3 days of paid paternity leave for each of the first four children. MOM's statistics also shows that about 47% of companies offered paternity leave in 2008, compared to 40% in 2004 and 43% in 2006.

Fathers can also tap 12 days of child-related leave provided for both mothers and fathers in legislation - six days of paid childcare leave for children up to seven years old (with no medical certificate required), and six days of unpaid infant care leave for children up to two years old. In addition, fathers, like mothers, may agree on alternative work arrangements with their employers, such as part-time work or no-pay leave, to support childcare responsibilities.

With the exception of different provisions for maternity and paternity leave, which alone send a signal reinforcing the smaller role for fathers at home, the work-life policies above reflect an approach that is in theory gender-neutral.

Nonetheless, differences in take-up between mothers and fathers exist, even if this is changing. In 2009, there were more than 25,000 claims made to the CPF Board in respect of Government-paid childcare leave taken by fathers, below the 27,000 claims for mothers (MCYS, 2010). The small difference of 2,000 claims is deceptive, given the significantly larger number of working fathers compared to working mothers. While publicly available statistics on the ratio of working fathers to working mothers with young children is not available, Table 2 illustrates the labour force participation rates of males compared to females as a proxy: participation rates for women during the prime child-bearing and child-rearing years are substantially lower than those for men (MOM, 2009).

Appendix B7 - THE BUSINESS OF FATHERHOOD AND FATHERS IN BUSINESS – THE CASE FOR INTEGRATION

Overview of Relationships between Family, Work, Work-Life Conflict, Work-Life Initiatives, and Business Performance

The growing focus on work-life issues is founded on the well-established premise that work can pose a challenge to family life, while employees who experience more work-life balance are happier and hence more productive. The business case for work-life balance practices thus rests on reducing work-life conflict among existing employees (a) to enhance organisational performance, as well as (b) to enhance the organisation's reputation among talented candidates, who may prioritise work-life initiatives.

This section deepens the discussion by exploring the relationship between family and work from the following angles:

- a) The adverse effect of fathers' work involvement on family life, and the adverse effect of fathers' family involvement on their work (conflict);

- b) The positive effect of fathers' work involvement on family life, and the positive effect of fathers' family involvement on work (enrichment); and
- c) Father-friendly workplace initiatives and their impact on both work-life conflict and organisational performance.

Important Considerations

There are three points to note here:

- a) The reverse impact of family on work, and the potential mutual enrichment between work and family are covered, to shift away from a singular focus on work-to-family conflict.
- b) While the impact of work-life conflict on employee performance and the benefits to organisations from making work-life initiatives available are well-established in the literature, there is less research evidence on whether and how work-life initiatives influence employees' work-life balance. Available findings are discussed below.
- c) Some points discussed relate to parents in general, though father-specific issues are highlighted where possible.

Appendix B8 - WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT FOR FATHERS

Clear Evidence of Work-to-Family Conflict

There is significant evidence that work conditions and responsibilities can be an obstacle for parents, including fathers, seeking to spend time with family.

- Singaporean fathers cite work responsibilities (63%) and financial concerns (53%) as chief obstacles to spending more time with their children (MCYS, 2009).
- Similarly, in a study of Indian fathers on what prevents them from getting more involved with their children, the largest share (38%) cited a lack of time and work pressure (Sriram & Kharkhanis, 2005).

- In a global study across six countries, male employees cite finding time to spend with family (25%) and financial stress (23%) as the top two work-life challenges they face (Linkow, Civian, & Lingle, 2001).
- Half of fathers surveyed in the UK believe they spend too much time at work. 42% think they spend too little time with their children, with this figure rising to 54% for fathers with children under one year (EHRC, 2009).
- Research on how fathers respond to particularly stressful work-days by Repetti (1994) found that in such circumstances fathers tend to withdraw from their children and be psychologically absent.
- 24% of working fathers feel work is negatively impacting their relationship with their children. 48% have missed a significant event in their child's life due to work at least once in the last year, and 18% have missed four or more (Careerbuilder, 2009, at cited in Fatherhood Institute, 2011).
- Another study of white-collar professional fathers in the US found that 57% of respondents agreed that "in the past three months, I have not been able to get everything done at home each day because of my job" (Harrington et al, 2011).

Family-to-Work Conflict Appears Lower Than Work-to-Family Conflict

However, family-to-work conflict (i.e. family responsibilities adversely impacting work) appears lower than fathers' reported levels of work-to-family conflict. The same study that revealed 57% agreement among fathers on work- to-family conflict found that 65% of respondents disagreed that "In the past three months, my family or personal life has kept me from doing as good a job at work as I could" (Harrington et al, 2011).

Furthermore, when fathers were asked to report how often they experienced interruptions of their time at work to deal with family matters, and vice versa, they reported interruptions in both directions. But

interruptions were far more often in family time in order to attend to work, than vice versa (Harrington et al 2011).

Fathers' Work-Life Conflict is directly linked to Negative Outcomes in Children

Various studies have shown the negative impact on children arising from fathers' work-life stress:

- Fathers' parenting stress in relation to their work, the number of hours they work and mothers' beliefs about father involvement predict externalising symptoms in pre-schoolers' who attend day-care (Hart & Kelley, 2006, as cited in Fatherhood Institute, 2011).
- Among fathers of young adolescents, negative work-to-family spill over has been found to predict (low) paternal knowledge of their children's daily activities (Bumpus et al, 2006, as cited in Fatherhood Institute, 2011).

Appendix B9 - WORK-FAMILY ENRICHMENT FOR FATHERS

Work-to-Family Enrichment through Enhanced Skills and Sense of Success but Not Happiness

In examining if work experiences are useful in parenting, Harrington et al (2011) found that:

- 50% of fathers surveyed agreed that their involvement at work helped them to understand different viewpoints, which helped them to be a better family member.
- 52% of fathers agreed that work helped them acquire skills and this helped them be a better family member.
- 60% of fathers agreed that work provided them with a sense of success and this helped them be a better family member.
- Fathers were less positive (only 29% agreement) about work making them feel happy, which helped them be a better family member.

Other research affirms the specific importance of work – or simply being stably employed – in creating a sense of success for men, with spill over benefits family roles. Fathers who are employed full-time express more happiness with family life and have better relationships with their children, compared to fathers who are underemployed or unemployed. (Pruett, 2000, cited in Rosenberg & Wilcox,

2006). On the other hand, poor, unemployed men, and men who undergo financial and employment crises are far more likely to shirk their economic and psychological responsibilities to children (Thomson, Hanson, & McLanahan, 1994). Unemployed men are less likely to be involved in childcare than employed men (Ruxton, 2002, cited in Featherstone, 2004).

Family-to-Work Enrichment Stronger Than Work-to-Family Enrichment

There is indication that the workplace benefits more from employees' family involvement than the other way around. The same study on work-to-family enrichment found that (Harrington et al, 2011):

- 64% of fathers agreed that involvement in their family helped them gain knowledge that made them a better worker.
- 61% of fathers agreed that family life encouraged them to use their time in a focused manner and that helped them be a better worker.
- 82% of fathers agreed that family life made them feel happy and that helped them be a better worker.

Another global study found that in India, China, Brazil and the US, employees with higher levels of personal/family identity had higher levels of employee engagement, a concept linked to employees' satisfaction and motivation at work. This study measured "employee engagement" with a seven-item validated scale capturing employees' affective attachment to the organisation, their alignment with organisational goals, and the amount of discretionary effort they put in at work (Linkow et al, 2001).

Appendix B10 - IMPACT ON ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE

Work-Life Conflict Can Negatively Impact Employee Performance

The negative impact of work-life conflict on organisational outcomes is well established.

- Employees reporting high levels of both work-to-life and life-to-work conflict tend to exhibit lower levels of job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Burke & Greenglass, 1999; Kossek & Ozeki, 1998)
- Both directions of work-life conflict result in reduced work effort, reduced performance, and increased absenteeism and turnover (Anderson et al, 2002; Greenhaus et al, 1997; Wayne et al, 2004).
- Both types of conflict have been linked with increased stress and burnout (Anderson et al., 2002), cognitive difficulties such as staying awake, lack of concentration, and low alertness (MacEwen & Barling, 1994), and reduced general health and energy (Frone, Russell, & Barnes, 1996).

Work-Life Initiatives Boost Organisational Performance

Efforts to evaluate the impact of family-friendly initiatives on organisational performance tend to centre on a few key indicators, including:

- Gains in productivity and shareholder value
- Improved employee engagement, satisfaction and motivation
- Improved attraction and retention of talent
- Reduced health-related costs (e.g. absenteeism, medical leave)
- Improved customer experience

In Singapore, the National Employers Federation conducted a study on 11 Singapore-based organisations in 2003 and found that work-life strategies indeed contributed to all of the outcomes above (MOM, 2011, MOM, 2005).

The provision of work-life initiatives can also boost existing and potential employees' perception of organisational support, regardless of whether employees actually use the initiatives. Grover and Crooker (1995) found that parental leave, childcare information and referral, flexible work hours, and financial assistance with childcare predicted both increased commitment to the organisation and decreased turnover intentions among all employees, not just users of the practices. Other studies have

found that flexible work schedules improve job satisfaction (Baltes et al, 1999; Gajendran & Harrison, 2007, as cited in Beauregard & Henry, 2009).

A pilot programme on workplace flexibility in the US found that initiatives such as tele-work, flexitime and compressed workweeks resulted in decreased overtime, fewer unscheduled absences, increased productivity, and more efficient work processes. Each firm involved in the programme also increased productivity by five per cent to 10% (Carlson, 2005).

These findings reinforce the conclusions of MOM's (2005) Work-Life Harmony Report, which compiles diverse local and international sources that make the business case for work-life initiatives.

Appendix B11 - BUT WORK-LIFE INITIATIVES HAVE MIXED IMPACT ON INDIVIDUAL WORK-LIFE CONFLICT

The above findings do not, however, explain exactly how work-life initiatives enhance organisational performance. Some studies suggest that while work-life conflict affects organisational performance, putting in place work-life initiatives to help manage work-life conflict does not mean work-life conflict is actually reduced (Galinsky & Morris, 1993; Premeaux et al, 2007, as cited in Beauregard & Henry, 2009).

Key reasons for this are:

a) Work-life initiatives can improve organisational performance via other routes. These include reduced overheads in the case of employees working from home, or improved productivity among employees working at their peak hours (Allen, 2001; Apgar, 1998; Shepard, Clifton, & Kruse, 1996, as cited in Beauregard & Henry, 2009).

b) Initiatives have a differentiated impact, depending on employees themselves. For example, participating in telework arrangements has been shown to benefit some workers, whereas for others, especially those with greater family responsibilities, it can blur the boundaries between work and home (Hill et al, 1998; Loscocco, 1997, as cited in Beauregard & Henry, 2009).

c) Availability does not imply usage. Work-life initiatives may boost the perception of organisational support (and hence outcomes like employee engagement and commitment) but not work-life conflict if employees do not use these initiatives (Beauregard & Henry, 2009).

Appendix 12 - RETURNS ON WORK-LIFE INITIATIVES MORE THAN MAKE UP FOR COST

Many work-life balance practices, such as flexible hours, tele-work, and informational assistance with caregiving (e.g., workplace parenting workshops), incur limited financial costs that are associated primarily with programme administration and do not require an extensive initial outlay of resources.

A US study of firms employing more than 100 people, found that 36% of organisations reported their flexible work arrangements to be cost-neutral, with 46% claiming a positive return on investment in these practices. Even for caregiving leave, often seen to be costly, regarded as a costly endeavour, 42% of firms viewed them as cost-neutral, with another 42% reporting a positive return on investment in their leave programmes (Galinsky and Bond, 1998).

In Singapore, likewise, it was found that for every S\$1 invested in family- friendly initiatives, an organisation reaped an average return of S\$1.28 in terms of increased productivity alone. When the additional benefit of reduced turnover was taken into account, the return on investment rose to S\$1.68 for every S\$1 invested (MOM, 2011, MOM, 2005).

Appendix B13 - MAXIMISING THE GAINS: FROM FAMILY-FRIENDLY TO FATHER-FRIENDLY TOO

Men and Women Differ in their Experience of Work-Life Conflict

If there are clear gains to families and employers from being family- friendly, it is less clear that these are being maximised through their effective extension to male employees, including fathers, who make up a significant proportion of the workforce. Multiple studies show that men's experiences of work-life conflict as well as their awareness, perceptions, and utilisation of work-life initiatives differ from women.

Men/fathers experience higher levels of work-life conflict

- Men (25%) are more likely than women (19%) to cite “finding time to spend with family” as a work-life challenge (Linkow et al, 2001).
- Fathers are less satisfied with their working hours than mothers are: 46% of fathers think they spend “about the right amount of time at work”, compared to 61% of mothers (EHRC, 2009).
- Men who work full-time are less satisfied than full-time working women with their work-life balance. 69% of men and 58% of women said that job demands sometimes interfere with family life. 29% of men and 19% of women said that family demands sometimes interfere with work (Park et al, 2007, as cited in Fatherhood Institute, 2011).
- 74% of fathers (compared with 64% of mothers) reported that spending time with the family or finding time for key relationships is their biggest concern in daily life (EOC, 2007).

Rate of increase in work-life conflict is much higher for fathers

- One study comparing fathers in dual-earner couples with children under 18 to mothers in the same group found that the proportion of fathers reporting work-life conflict increased significantly from 35% in 1977 to 60% in 2008, while mothers' work-life conflict increased less dramatically from 41% to 47% (Galinsky et al, 2008).

Perceptions of Organisational support

Fathers are less likely to perceive that work-life practices are available to them.

- 49% of fathers surveyed in the UK said some form of flexible working was available to them, with the most common being flexi time, staggered start and finishing times, and working from home. However, only 20% of fathers thought part-time work was available to them, compared to 51% of mothers (EHRC, 2009)

Utilisation of work-life benefits

Men are less likely to use benefits

- Compared to female employees, few men make use of family leave, choosing instead to take vacation or other discretionary days off upon the birth of a child or other family-related event (Berry & Rao, 1997; Pleck, 1993, as cited in Beauregard & Henry, 2009).
- Men are less likely to take advantage of flexible work arrangements or parental leave (Robinson & Godbey, 1997).
- Even as recently as 2011, in a sample of predominantly white-collared male employees of companies that had adopted work-life policies, only one per cent of fathers took more than four weeks off to be with their children after they were born, and only five per cent took as much as two weeks.

Appendix B 14 - WHY A FATHER-SPECIFIC VIEW IS IMPORTANT

These gender differences are not insignificant: for employers, they could mean non-optimised organisational gains from work-life strategies; for families, a toll not just on father-child relationships but also couple relationships; and for societies, the hidden costs of gender inequity at home and at work.

Implications for Employers

Studies suggest that whether the availability of work-life practice has a positive impact on organisational commitment depends on the employee's gender and on the actual use of the practice.

- Among men, the availability of flexible schedules increases commitment only when men's use of this practice is high. When the use of flexible schedules is low, the availability of this practice actually decreases commitment in men. The availability of work-life practices increases organisational commitment in women as long as they perceive the organisation as supportive, and regardless of whether they use it (Casper & Harris, 2008).
- Another study found that among men, the availability of work-life practices boosts organisational commitment only when they perceive a high level of organisational support for them. For women, there is a positive link between practices and commitment regardless of levels of perceived organisational support (Butts et al, 2007, as cited in Beauregard & Henry, 2009)

Such findings are likely a function of men not perceiving work-life practices to be designed for them or for their use. From this perspective, men's weaker perceptions and take-up of work-life practices is an organisational concern, as employers may be missing out on maximising the engagement and commitment of this group of employees.

Implications for Fathers and Families

Benefits for children. The argument that children gain when fathers manage a better work-life balance is not simply an inference from evidence that fathers' work-life conflict has a negative impact on the quantity and quality of father-child time. There is evidence that fathers' take-up of work-life practices directly shapes their involvement at home and benefits children.

- In Norway, where employed fathers have a quota of leave to be used during the first year of a child's life (and that cannot be transferred to the mother), it has been found that fathers who take this leave in a "home alone" manner become more aware of infant life than those who take parental leave with their partner present at home (Brandth & Kvande, 2003, as cited in O'Brien et al, 2007).
- Fathers' leave-taking has been linked to higher levels of father involvement later on in the child's life, but only for those fathers able to take two weeks of leave or more after the child's birth (Nepomnyaschy & Waldfogel's, 2007)
- Substantial use by men of leave entitlements is associated with many benefits to children and families both in terms of gender equity and child and family wellbeing (Kamerman, 2006, as cited in Fatherhood Institute, 2011)
- Swedish fathers who use a higher proportion of leave than average (20% or more of all potential leave days) appear to sustain more engaged family commitment, working fewer hours and being more involved in child-care tasks and household work, at least in the short-term (Haas & Hwang, 1999).
- A qualitative study of fathering in Canada and Belgium describes the different ways contemporary men with children are reducing their time at the workplace, for instance by working from home, and adopting less intensive and more flexible work schedules. According to respondents, home-based experiences enabled them to

build stronger associations with their children, and allowed more time to contribute to neighbourhood and school life (Doucet & Merla, 2007).

Benefits to fathers and the couple relationship. The other argument for extending family-friendly benefits to fathers draws on evidence of improved father, mother, and couple wellbeing when caregiving and domestic responsibilities are shared more equitably:

- Fathers are more satisfied with their domestic roles when they spend more time at home, and mothers more satisfied with their share of domestic responsibilities as they move into doing more paid work (Craig & Sawriker, 2006, as cited in Fatherhood Institute, 2009)
- In fathers, a higher parenting self-efficacy score is linked to lower work- family strain, where a key mechanism by which fathers' work/family strain decreases is by their doing more of what they regard as their "fair share" of child rearing tasks. Fathers who are able to rearrange work and family time so they contribute more to child rearing appear rewarded by less work-family strain, even though they take on more at home (Alexander & Baxter, 2006).
- Younger Australian fathers express less satisfaction with work-family balance when they do less housework and child care, and when they experience workplace disapproval of taking up family-friendly measures (Pocock & Clarke, 2004)

Implications for Society

At a more macro level, it is worth noting that any cost-benefit analysis of work-life strategies should consider the indirect impact of these programmes. Fathers' greater involvement at home also allows for better retention of working mothers and the greater likelihood of their working to their education or skills levels. Goldman Sachs has estimated an economic boost of 13% in Europe if gender equity were achieved within the workplace (Fatherhood Institute, 2011).

Appendix B15 - OBSTACLES AND OPPORTUNITIES TO FATHER- FRIENDLY WORKPLACES

As discussed, the business and social case for stronger fatherhood-workplace integration has not always translated in practice: various barriers prevent men from

utilising work-life offerings, and leaders and managers, from supporting the use of work-life options.

This section outlines individual-, family-, and work-related obstacles and opportunities to father-friendly places, in two parts:

- a) Factors found to either promote or hinder the optimal inclusion of men and/or fathers in work-life practices; and
- b) Factors that influence fathers' work-life integration.

Both areas should be considered when designing and implementing practices towards more father-friendly workplaces.

Factors Linked to Fathers' Take-Up of Work-Life Practices

Stage of fatherhood

- New fathers have the lowest workplace flexibility and autonomy, and report the most unhappiness, anxiety and general levels of stress (Bolzan et al, 2004). This may be due to difficulties experienced by both the father and employer in navigating the transition to fatherhood.

Father's age

- Young parents today spend more time per workday with children, though the increase in time spent since 1977 is greater for fathers than mother. Younger fathers under 29 spend an average of 4.1 hours with their children under 13 years per work day, compared to 3.1 hours for fathers aged 29 to 42, with the overall increase in time spent by fathers since 1977 an average of 1.2 hours (Galinsky et al, 2008).

Socio-economic status

Fathers who are poorer or facing financial difficulties face more challenges balancing work and family

- Fathers (and mothers) in low-income families are more likely to endorse traditional gender roles but least satisfied with the division of labour in their families (Thompson et al, 2005).

- Fathers facing financial difficulties (31%) are more likely than average (23%) to say their work-care arrangements cause “tension and stress” (EHRC, 2009)
- Organisational culture, Colleagues’ perceptions / behaviours influence work-life practice use
- Allen and Russell (1999) found that employees who used work-life balance practices were perceived by co-workers as having lower levels of organisational commitment, which was thought to affect the subsequent allocation of organisational rewards such as advancement opportunities and salary increases.
 - Accountants working flexible schedules were perceived less likely to be promoted and more likely to leave the firm (Cohen & Single, 2001 as cited in Beauregard & Henry, 2009).
 - The universality / widespread use of work-life practices influences the degree to which such practices are seen by employees as fulfilling their work-life needs and signalling support from the organisation (Ryan & Kossek, 2008).

Penalties for use of work-life strategies are not just perceived but also real

- Use of practices that make employees less visible at work (e.g. telework, flexible hours, or family leave) has been linked to lower performance evaluations, smaller salary increases, and fewer promotions (Bailyn, 1997; Perlow, 1995, as cited in Beauregard & Henry, 2009).
- Research of 11,815 managers in an American financial services organisation found that managers who took leaves of absence, both family and illness-related, received fewer subsequent promotions and salary increases than those who did not take leave, even after controlling for performance ratings (Judiesch & Lyness, 1999, as cited in Beauregard & Henry, 2009)

These cultural barriers appear strongest for men

- Men who take family leave are rated as less likely to help their co-workers, to work overtime, and to be punctual than men who do not take family leave, despite identical job performance ratings. Ratings for female employees, however, do not differ significantly based on their use of family leave (Wayne & Cordeiro, 2003).

Managers lack awareness / training in work-life practice

- Despite managerial discretion being built into a number of work-life practices and codified in staff handbooks, awareness of statutory family leave provisions is variable and often quite poor among line managers, who frequently have limited training in work-life related human resource policies (Bond & Wise, 2003).
- Supervisors may lack awareness of work-life practices in their organisation, and this influences their ability to refer employees to these practices (Casper et al, 2004).
- Supervisor support determines actual implementation and use of practices. Supervisor support for work-life practices critically determines implementation of such practices, and how employees perceive the practices and the organisation as supportive (Ryan & Kossek, 2008).

More recent studies show fair amount of supervisor support for fathers

- About 60% of fathers surveyed said their supervisor was supportive of employees using flexible work arrangements though the sample was predominantly white-collared and working in companies with flexible arrangement policies and practices (Harrington et al, 2011).

Manager Characteristics

- Supervisors with greater parental responsibility exhibit more flexibility in helping employees balance their work and home commitments (Parker & Allen, 2002, as cited

in Beauregard & Henry, 2009)

- Supervisors with a greater need for control display less flexibility in helping employees with work-life balance (Parker & Allen, 2002, as cited in Beauregard & Henry, 2009).

Fathers overwhelmingly prefer flexible arrangements to reduced work hours

- Fathers are more likely to want flexibility of working hours over the day and week whilst mothers prefer practices that entail greater reductions in discrete chunks

of working time, perhaps linked with children's requirements (O'Brien & Shemit, 2003).

- Women are far more likely than men to work part-time (BPW Foundation, 2004, as cited in Harrington et al, 2011)
- Fathers, especially those with high career aspirations, rarely work reduced hours. In one sample where 76% of the respondents are interested in higher level positions in their organisations and more than 58% aspire to a role in senior management, the use of reduced work hours was virtually non-existent. Only two of the nearly 1000 fathers surveyed (0.2%) worked part-time (Harrington et al, 2011).

Fathers are more likely to use "family-neutral" benefits than family leave

- Although the over 50% of Swedish fathers of children born in the 1990s took some paternity leave after their child's birth, fathers use only a small proportion of the days allocated to them. They are more likely to use temporary/occasional leave than regular parental leave. In Sweden, the U.S., and Canada, fathers often take some time after the birth of a child, typically a week or two, but often as vacation days or sick leave and sometimes using time set aside from overtime. This enables them to use fully paid days and avoid visibly declaring themselves as taking parental leave (Seward et al, 2002).

Route to flexible working

- Fathers who work flexibly are more likely to do so due to flexible working being a feature of the job when they started (41%) than through a formal negotiations (8%) or informal ones (18%) (EHRC, 2009).

Communication about work-life initiatives

- Two US surveys on awareness of work-life initiatives found that many male employees are not aware of the details of initiatives such as paternity leave, or believe these initiatives are only for women, even if they are also available to men. Furthermore, many employers do not clearly communicate their work/life programmes for new dads, and many men still feel sheepish about using them even if they are aware (Whiddon, 2005).

Access to work-life benefits varies widely by industry and job function

- In the UK, fathers in the following sectors are most likely to say flexible working is available to them: public administration, education and health; community and social work; and finance and business (60% and above of fathers in all three areas). In contrast, only 30% of those employed in manufacturing industries said flexible working was available (EHRC, 2009).
- Fathers' access to and use of different types of leave and flexible working arrangements is significantly greater in professional and administrative occupations than in skilled manual, semi and unskilled occupations (Dex & Ward, 2007).

Gender of employees

- Workforces with a majority of female employees are associated with high levels of fathers' use of flexitime (O' Brien & Shemit, 2003).
- Flexible working options are less available in male-dominated settings (Dex & Ward, 2010).

Factors Influencing Fathers' Work -Life Integration

Context Influences Work-Life Conflict for Fathers More than that of Mothers

Similar to the factors influencing fathers' take-up of work-life practices, factors at the individual, family, and work level affect fathers' work-life integration. One national US study found that fathers' work-life conflict is more contextually sensitive than that experienced by mothers, meaning there are more factors that predict work-life conflict in fathers than in mothers.

Factors that predict work-life conflict in fathers are (Galinsky et al, 2008):

- Hours worked per week: Each additional hour worked increases the probability of experiencing some degree of work-life conflict.
- Time spent on self per week: Each additional hour spent doing things for one decreases the probability of work-life conflict

- Dual-earner couple: Having a spouse/partner who works for pay increases the probability of experiencing work-life conflict
- Primary responsibility for childcare: The probability of experiencing work-life conflict is less for fathers in families where someone other than the parents takes most responsibility for child care.
- Orientation towards work and family: Fathers who are family-centric or “dual-centric” (oriented toward both family and work) are less likely to experience work-life conflict than those who are work-centric
- Supervisor support: Greater support from one’s supervisor decreases the probability of work-life conflict
- Autonomy at work: Greater autonomy on the job decreases the probability of work-life conflict
- Job pressure: High levels of job pressure increase the probability of work-life conflict

Predictors shared by mothers and fathers include:

- The total number of hours worked per week
- The number of hours per week spent on self
- Work and family orientations
- Job pressure

In addition, job satisfaction decreases the chance of maternal work-life conflict.

One notable difference between fathers and mothers in the experience of work-life conflict is the degree of influence of home or work conditions. Research emphasises that fatherhood is influenced, to a greater extent than motherhood, by contextual forces. For example, a father whose economic situation is poor is less likely to be a responsible father, with these effects stronger for fathers than for mothers (Doherty et al, 1996). The impact of a dual-income family structure on fathers is also notable; the adjustments that men have struggled to make to this “new norm” could explain the relatively higher increase in their work-life conflict vis-à-vis women.

Supportive Work Environments Lower Fathers' Work-to-Family Conflict, But Also Enhance Work-to-Family Enrichment

Other research indicates that the more supportive fathers perceive their work environments to be overall (in terms of a family-supportive culture, manager supportiveness and colleagues' supportiveness), the lower their work-to-family conflict and the higher their work-to-family enrichment. This highlights the role that the organisational context plays in fathers' work-to-family alignment (Harrington et al, 2011).

Job Insecurity and Financial Stress Are Critical Influences on Fathers' Work-Life Integration

Across diverse groups of working fathers, job security was rated the most important job characteristic, ahead of a sense of accomplishment or advancement opportunities, among other characteristics (Harrington et al, 2011). Across developed and emerging countries and gender, financial stress is a top work-life issue. Employees increasingly spend part of their on-the-job time addressing financial concerns (Linkow et al, 2001).

The stresses can be marked in socio-economically vulnerable families:

- A study of low-income, urban US fathers, which controlled for age, ethnicity, education, cohabitation and quality of relationship with the child's mother, found that the hours fathers spent "hustling" for work correlate with low involvement with their children (Cina, 2005 as cited in Fatherhood Institute, 2011).
- Children of the working poor have less time with both parents and less father-time than children in non-poor working two-parent families, partly due to their fathers' difficulties managing insecure and inflexible low paid jobs with irregular hours (Yeung & Glauber, 2007, as cited in Fatherhood Institute, 2011).
- In Singapore likewise, work responsibilities and financial pressures are most pertinent as barriers to father involvement for fathers with primary and lower education (70% cited work responsibilities vs 63% for the average father, and 66% of this group cited financial pressures vs. 53% for the average father). Fathers living in

one to three room HDB flats (62%) were also more likely than the average father (53%) to say financial pressures hinder involvement with children (MCYS, 2009).

Appendix 16 - RESEARCHING FATHERHOOD AND WORKPLACES

This section outlines some major research studies conducted on the relationship between fatherhood and workplaces, and proposes a conceptual framework and considerations for future study of this subject in Singapore.

Conceptual Framework for Future Local Study

There are multiple angles to the study of fatherhood and workplaces, given the complex factors related to fathers' work-family relationships. Figure 2 outlines a model for conceptualising these domains and inter-relationships, which can guide future study on this subject.

APPENDIX C

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 Human Research Ethics Committee
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11 November 2013

Mr Christopher Fong
 263 Waterloo Street
 #13-218
 SINGAPORE 180263

Dear Christopher

The USQ Human Research Ethics Committee has recently reviewed your responses to the conditions placed upon the ethical approval for the project outlined below. Your proposal is now deemed to meet the requirements of the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)* and full ethical approval has been granted.

Approval No.	H13REA211
Project Title	Doctor of professional studies
Approval date	12 November 2013
Expiry date	12 November 2016
HREC Decision	Approved

The standard conditions of this approval are:

- (a) conduct the project strictly in accordance with the proposal submitted and granted ethics approval, including any amendments made to the proposal required by the HREC
- (b) advise (email: ethics@usq.edu.au) immediately of any complaints or other issues in relation to the project which may warrant review of the ethical approval of the project
- (c) make submission for approval of amendments to the approved project before implementing such changes
- (d) provide a 'progress report' for every year of approval
- (e) provide a 'final report' when the project is complete
- (f) advise in writing if the project has been discontinued.

For (c) to (e) forms are available on the USQ ethics website:
<http://www.usq.edu.au/research/ethicsbio/human>

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Dr Tony Tan Keng Yam
 The President of the
 Republic of Singapore

Patron
Mr Chan Chun Sing
 Minister for Social and Family Development
 and Second Minister for Defence



24 September 2014

To Whom It May Concern,

**LETTER OF APPRECIATION FOR THE CONDUCT OF TRAINING –
 ‘MULTICULTURAL APPROACH TO CROSS-CULTURAL COUNSELLING’**

There is an increasing need for social services professionals to up skill their level of competence, particularly in the area of multicultural and diversity issues. As the population of Singapore becomes more diverse, it is critical for this sector to be more aware of the pervasive diverse cultures and how these different worldviews could have implications and misalignments between the professional practice and clients.

2. Christopher Fong’s training has definitely helped our senior professionals to look beyond their cultural lenses that might form certain SPABOD (Stereotype, Prejudice, Assumptions, Bias, Oppression and Discrimination) towards the clients they manage. The three-day intensive training has highlighted how different values, beliefs, norms and racial ethnicity underpin what defines as culture.

3. The introduction of The Systemic Perspective Approach (TSPA) has provided a holistic framework that is structured and specific in guiding case managers to gather salient information that might otherwise be a lack of or assumed. The participants have also provided positive feedback towards the systemic-ecological perspective framework and how it can better help them case manage and formulate a more comprehensive intervention plan for their clients.

4. We are certain this model will serve as the multi-dimensional framework when working with culturally diverse clients.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Belinda Tan'.

Belinda Tan (Ms)
 Director
 Social Service Institute

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30 June 2014



Recommendation on the use of the Systemic Perspective Approach (TSPA)



There is a need to increase the level of multicultural competence in teachers from Gan Eng Seng School (GESS) in the professional development of the teaching of Character and Citizenship Education, in order to be the 'Caring Educator' and 'Transformational Leader' that each individual GESS Teacher aspires to be. There is an increasing concern on how students are rooted to the Multicultural Singapore, and how globalisation may 'erode' values of individuals. Individuals' values, beliefs, norms and cultures (VBNC) often results in individuals' stereotypes, prejudice, assumptions, bias, oppression and discrimination (SPABOD). Without proper guidance or regulation, these may result in negative reactions.



The training designed and conducted by Dr Christopher Fong in 2013 and 2014 for GESS has helped to increase the multi-dimensional awareness of our staff to understand the VBNC of an individual, thus addressing the SPABOD and eventually leading to a more positive reaction, increasing students' rootedness to the nation and well anchored on sound values.



GESS has adopted the Systemic Perspective Approach (TSPA), developed by Dr Christopher Fong, in developing some lesson packages such as Mathematics, Science, Humanities, Physical Education, English and Art. TSPA is also used to manage at-risk students. This model helps teachers to understand that every student may have different values, beliefs, norms and cultures due to their multicultural diversity and different backgrounds and upbringing. The model helps us in how we can help students to be aligned with school's expectations and goals by considering and dealing with the 8 dimensions in the TSPA.



The school also used the WHAT approach during 2013 November Staff Seminar to identify what the staff in the school values the most. This information obtained from the staff using the WHAT approach helped in the strategic planning for 2014, to receive a greater buy-in from the staff.



I strongly recommend the use of TSPA in all organizations as this model can help the staff to develop greater alignment to the organizations, and able to minimize conflicts and disagreements in the organizations.

Staff Well-Being

Yours sincerely,

Academic Value-Added



Mr Lee Tzi Wang, Paul
 HOD/CCE
 Gan Eng Seng School



Discipline, Integrity, Respect, Resilience

From: **Veena Gupta** vguptaipc@gmail.com
Subject: Re: GREETINGS
Date: 3 June, 2014 12:14 am
To: CHRISTOPHER FONG midiman@singnet.com.sg

Dear Dr. Fong

Apologies for delay in responding to your mail due to personal preoccupations.

I have gone through TSPA Model of which you gave me a copy of abstract and model. It seems to be excellent as the eight dimensions you have included are quite inclusive.

I hope this will bring a fresh perspective in times of diversity and multicultural workforce.

It reminded me of Brofenbrenner's Systems Theory Perspective. I assume it includes the dimension of time. And gender should be covered under social/environmental dimension.

Thank you
Warm Regards

--

Dr. Veena Gupta
Associate Professor
Department of Psychology
Indraprastha College for Women
University of Delhi
Contact No. 9810866108

Hi Mr Fong,

Anyway, I would like to thank you for being an inspiration and giving a different perspective to counselling, especially since I am still relatively new in this industry. Your experience and input has definitely been a great help to me!


On to the workshop, I have tried keeping in mind the VBNC theories and systemic perspective to help in structuring my counselling sessions and have found it to be really useful. I feel that it reduces potential confusion, and can also give me a clear direction in my conversations to have a better grasp of the situation the person is in.

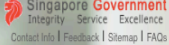
It was really interesting to attend your training, as I felt you were a really engaging speaker who challenges our mindsets at the same time.


Thank you and hope to attend one of your training sessions again, or even get to collaborate with you someday! ☺
Have a great week ahead!



Best Regards,

Loretta Chan
Community Mental Health Counsellor
Silver Ribbon (Singapore)
(65) 6385 3714
Visit us at: www.silverribbonsingapore.com





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To whom it may concern,

Reference for Dr Christopher Fong

I had the pleasure of attending the Workplace Interventions lectures at SHRI with Dr Christopher Fong during June 2014. I found his classes very interesting and inspiring.

Dr Fong has a wonderful rapport with people. His ability to connect with his students and his talent at teaching simple concepts, as well as more advanced topics, are both truly superior. He is consistently enthusiastic, respectful, innovative and always focusing on solutions.

I found him to be exceptionally talented with drive, imagination and an in depth knowledge of all things related to organizational psychology, leadership development and succession planning. I was particularly impressed by the Diagnostic models he taught, specifically the Systemic Perspective Approach where he again simplified content into a model that students can understand and use in the future.

Dr Fong was collaborative in his approach and continuously coached the class and got the best from each and every one of us in terms of performance.

I recommend Dr Fong to you without reservation. If you have any further questions with regard to please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Juanita Peter | HR Business Manager, Asia Pacific

Office: +65 6888 7058

Mobile: +65 9633 3413

juanitap@microsoft.com

From: Pamela Koh <pkly58@gmail.com>
Subject: Deepest Appreciation
Date: 3 October, 2014 9:30:32 pm GMT+8
To: Chris Fong
 <midiman.chris@gmail.com>

Dear Dr. Chris

Thank you so very much for your supervision in the last 1 year and teaching me how to apply your systemic perspective model. I've learnt so much from you. Your model has helped me to be more holistic in my assessment of clients, taking into consideration the 8 dimensions, including the physical dimension that I used to neglect.

My case conceptualization also improved after applying your systemic model. As I learn to consider the VBNCs in the various dimensions, it helps me to better understand factors that may be contributing and perpetuating client's problem, including considering systemic issues which I never used to think about. As a result, I realize I'm able to apply more strategic & targeted interventions in my counseling process. I have seen my clients improve and grow as a result of applying your model, as well as through your help and advice in supervision.

From: Helena Ho
 <helenaho77@gmail.com>
Subject: Feedback on Systemic Model
Date: 4 September, 2013 9:02:35 am GMT+8
To: CHRISTOPHER FONG
 <midiman@singnet.com.sg>,
 CHRISTOPHER FONG
 <midiman.chris@gmail.com>

Hi Mr Fong,

Below is my feedback on the model.

I was amazed of how comprehensive and detailed this model is. This model enables us to see the different areas in a client's life and how these areas affect individual's response and behaviour. Each area has its own unique set of values and beliefs. In order to really help the client, systemic model will advise us to see the client as unique individual that has different sets of values and beliefs. The counselors/therapists will need to take time to explore all the areas before they can make any accurate diagnosis and therapy methods. For example: an individual may have a set of values and beliefs which came from religion etc.

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