

Indo-Canadian Young Women's Career Decision Making Process to Enter the Applied
Social Sciences: A Case Study Approach

by

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Abstract

This study used a qualitative descriptive case study approach (Yin, 1994) to examine the influences on Sikh Indo-Canadian student selection of entering the applied social sciences at the university level. Seven students in the last two years of their undergraduate academic program participated in the study. The study examined (a) factors that had affected their academic and career path, (b) their perception of supports and barriers in pursuing their academic and career choice, and (c) and how they managed barriers.

An analysis was conducted using the social cognitive career theory of Lent, Hackett, and Betz (1994) as a theoretical base to understand the process by which Sikh Indo-Canadian young women made career decisions to enter the applied social sciences. Across the sample of participants', personal factors, such as interests and various forms of learning experiences, were cited as significant in forming an individual's career choices. Contextual factors, such as norms held by the family and ethnic community, and requirements of academic institutions, were cited as potential impediments to career choice implementation but were seen as manageable by the participants. Self-efficacy played an important role in moderating the participants' view of contextual factors and their ability to create various strategies of resistance or coping strategies to maintain their career choice. The educational decisions of these young women were influenced by factors such as parental influence, cultural expectations, and considering marriage and family plans.

Salient findings of the study in support of the social cognitive career theory (Lent et al., 1994) that applied to all the young women were that early immersion with helping

people within their ethnic community contributed to their current career interest. Based on early exposure to helping others within their ethnic community, the participants felt confident with exploring their interest helping people in settings outside of their ethnic community. The participants also had developed outcome expectations of making a personal, social and societal contribution through their work. The longer the young women persisted in the field their sense of self-efficacy grew and they would set higher outcome expectations for themselves. They also believed that their career choice was a reflection of their fate.

Findings from this study that were contrary to the social cognitive career theory (Lent et al., 1994) were that despite contextual influences in the educational system, family and ethnic community to engage in their career choice being perceived as not fully supportive, they still persisted in their career choice. The social cognitive career theory (Lent et. al., 1994) suggested that if contextual influences were perceived as low, the individual's commitment to pursuing that career goal would also be low. In this study, the participants' planning behaviour and career choice goals were maintained despite the barriers that participants perceived. Lent et. al. also posited that a lack of role models in the field would contribute to having lower levels of self-efficacy. In the study, having a lack of Indo-Canadian role models in the field did not have an effect on their sense of self-efficacy to do well in their chosen line of work.

Future studies are required to address how Sikh Indo-Canadian young women conceptualize fate, balance career, family, and marriage expectations, and make life-career decisions after completion of their academic program upon entrance into the world of work.

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Chapter 1- Introduction

The educational system of any society is inherently structured with the expectation that certain transitions occur within life. For instance, in Western cultures set transitions occur from middle schools to secondary schools and further, to college, university, or the world of work (Entwisle, 1990). One of the major transitions that young adults face is making plans in regard to their career choice. Preparing for a career is a developmental task that all adolescents face, thus making career decision making an age-graded normative task (Nurmi, 1998). Normative pressure increases during the adolescent years for young adults to work on the developmental tasks of preparing for a career or related education (Graber, Brooks-Gunn, & Peterson, 1996; Nurmi, 1998). As a result of these many institutional transitions, it is likely that an evaluation of expectations and norms related to life-span development in a specific culture is needed by career counsellors. In addition, individuals assess their motives and values (Brown, 2002) before they can set realistic, future-oriented goals (Nurmi, Seginer, & Poole, 1995).

Research regarding ethnic minorities and career decision making, to this point, has focussed predominantly on the immigrant process of adaptation to a new country (Hedge, 1998; Ogbu, 1991). Researchers have examined how language barriers become a critical factor for immigrants to consider in selection of a potential career choice (Ogbu, 1991). Presently, researchers are expanding their analysis and have sometimes grouped first- and second-generation youth together to explore factors that contribute to career choice. Recently, Toohey, Kishor, and Beynon (1998) looked at various factors considered by young first- and second-generation Asian and South Asian university and

high school students in choosing teaching as a career. In so doing, they grouped both first- and second-generation youth together, yet remarked on the need for more studies that separate Asian and South Asian students, as their concerns and difficulties appear to be different.

In order to add more understanding of career decision making among older adolescents and to reflect the diversity of Canadian culture, the study of children of immigrants needs further exploration. For instance, the understanding of how experiences of socialization in the family, community, and various other contexts contribute to the development of current career choices is important to explore. Very little research centers on children of immigrants (children born and brought up in their parents' host country) although they form an increasingly important component of the population and segment of society. Few researchers conduct in-depth studies with children of immigrants regarding their understanding of their future career roles (Rumbaut, 1994). In particular, limited research focuses on Indo-Canadian young women and the various factors that contribute to their career decision-making process.

A discrepancy between the ever increasing representation of ethnic minorities in the school system and their almost complete lack of representation in the career counselling literature is apparent (Fitzgerald & Betz, 1994). However, an interest is emerging in the career counselling literature that is starting to fill a long-standing gap. Still, little Canadian research focuses on the role that cultural background plays in individual educational and career planning (Maxwell, Maxwell, & Krugly-Smith, 1996).

The career development literature needs to explore the factors that contribute to career decision making on the part of older adolescents. More knowledge regarding the various factors that are considered by Indo-Canadian young women when making career choices would help enrich the field. The results of this study will help to enhance multicultural sensitivity on the part of career counsellors. The study attempts to examine the process and conflicts that Sikh Indo-Canadian young women experience in the career decision-making process. The results of this study may educate career counsellors as to the supports and barriers that Sikh Indo-Canadian women experience and could help them to formulate interventions that would be culturally specific.

Theoretical Framework for this Study: Social Cognitive Career Theory

Social cognitive career theory accepts Bandura's (1986) general social learning theory. Bandura's theory stated that variables, such as the person, environment, and behavioral factors, affect one another and serve to enhance or constrain personal agency in the career decision-making process. This interaction between the person, environment, and behavior is termed the triadic determinant of learning and behavior resulting from the reciprocal interaction of the person with the environment.

Lent, Brown, and Hackett (1994) acknowledged the importance of learning experiences, genetic factors, and environmental conditions in making career decisions. The social cognitive theory extends beyond the behavioral bases of learning theory and focuses more on the cognitive mediating factors that influence learning experiences in career decision making. Social cognitive career theory focuses on trying to understand the development and cognitive mechanisms in mediating career interests, choice, and career-related performance. Lent, Hackett, and Betz (1994) posited the cognitive

mechanisms that he considered important were self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and goal setting. Social cognitive theory focuses on how these cognitive variables interact with personal variables (gender, ethnicity) and environmental variables (socialization, social supports, barriers, and structure of opportunity).

In this study, the researcher focussed on the contextual determinants that Lent, Brown and Hackett (2000) described as environmental and personal influences that people consider in their career decision-making process. Lent, Brown, and Hackett (1994) identified that insufficient research has focussed on the contextual determinants in the social cognitive career theory and the effect they have on individual career choice. Individual cognitive appraisal of supports, opportunities, barriers, and outcome expectations influence the individual career decision-making process.

Propositions Based on Social Cognitive Career Theory

The propositions in the social cognitive career theory that were explored in this study consisted of the following:

1. An individual's occupational or academic interests are reflective of his or her concurrent self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations (Lent et al., 1994, 2000).
2. An individual's occupational interests also are influenced by his or her occupationally relevant abilities, but this relation is mediated by that individual's self-efficacy beliefs (Lent et al., 1994, 2000).
3. Self-efficacy beliefs affect choice goals and actions both directly and indirectly (Lent et al., 1994, 2000).
4. Outcome expectations affect choice goals and actions both directly and indirectly (Lent et al., 1994, 2000).

5. The relation of interests to choice goals will be moderated by opportunity structures and support systems. Interest-choice goal relations will be stronger when opportunity and support are perceived to be high versus low. Conversely, these relations will be attenuated when perceived barriers are high versus low (Lent et al., 1994, 2000).
6. People will attempt to enter occupations or academic fields that are consonant with their choice goals, provided that they are committed to their choice goal and that their goal is stated in clear terms, proximal to the point of entry (Lent et al., 1994, 2000).
7. The relation of choice goals to entry behaviours will be moderated by opportunity structures and support systems. Goal behaviour relations will be stronger when opportunity and support are perceived to be high versus low. Conversely, these relations will be attenuated when perceived barriers are high versus low (Lent et al., 1994, 2000).
8. Self-efficacy beliefs influence career/academic performance both directly and indirectly through their effect on performance goals (Lent et al, 1994, 2000).
9. Self-efficacy beliefs derive from performance accomplishments, vicarious learning, social persuasion, and physiological reactions (emotional arousal) in relation to particular educational and occupationally relevant activities (Lent et al., 1994, 2000).
10. Outcome expectations are generated through direct and vicarious experiences with educational and occupationally relevant activities (Lent et al., 1994, 2000).

Further discussion of the social cognitive career theory appears in chapter 2.

Research Questions

The central research question guiding this research was the following: What factors influence Indo-Canadian young women in their decision to enter the applied social sciences at the post-secondary level?

The sub-research questions that were used to structure the inquiry and guide the research were the following:

1. How do vocational interests develop for Indo-Canadian young women?
2. How does self-efficacy contribute to their vocational interests?
3. What role does socialization in the family, community, and school play in formulating educational and career interests for Indo-Canadian young women?
4. What are the opportunity structures and support systems as perceived by Indo-Canadian young women?
5. What are the barriers that Indo-Canadian young women perceive in their career decision-making processes and how do they manage barriers?
6. How does participating or viewing others' (role models) participation in relevant educational and career activities contribute to their experience of self-efficacy in career decision making?
7. What are the outcome expectations that Indo-Canadian young women have of engaging in their career choice?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to describe the perceptions made by Sikh Indo-Canadian young women between the ages of 20-25 regarding the different factors that affect their career decision-making process to enter an undergraduate degree program in

the applied social sciences. The purpose of the research was to describe their perception of supports and barriers and their sense of self-efficacy in managing the career decision-making process. The researcher also examined the intra-ethnic group variation of factors considered in career decision making by focussing particularly on Sikh Indo-Canadian women attending post-secondary institutions.

The research questions posed in this study can best be answered by a conceptual comparison to Lent's social cognitive career theory (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994). Propositions were developed that were reflective of both environmental (such as structure of opportunity in the workplace and educational institutions, support in the family, and socialization experiences) and cognitive mechanisms (such as self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and setting goals). Lent, Brown and Hackett (1994) provided a unified theoretical framework with propositions based on empirical testing with various individuals. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the usefulness of using the social cognitive career theory as an appropriate theoretical framework to study Indo-Canadian young women since no studies had attempted to do so.

On a broader level, the purpose of the research was to add to the literature on the educational experiences of Indo-Canadian young women in Canada and some of the reasons underlying their life choices, as there is a dearth of information available in the vocational psychology literature. As well, the purpose was to provide Indo-Canadian women with an opportunity to learn more about themselves through the process of reading about other women's experiences as a result of this study (Josselson, 1996). The study would provide Indo-Canadian women with a forum to think about issues relevant to themselves and would provide a space for further discourse.

Definitions

The following terms will aid the reader in conceptualizing the study:

Definitions that Relate to Lent's Social Cognitive Career Theory

The following are terms that Lent, Brown, and Hackett (1994) has used to describe central ideas within his theory:

Choice actions are how participants make educational and career decisions based on actions or plans made (Lent et al., 1994).

Choice goals are defined as an individual's determination to engage in a particular activity or behaviour to effect a particular future outcome (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2000).

Contextual affordance describes the individual's personal perception of the environmental factors that indirectly affect his or her career development (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994, p. 90).

Coping efficacy refers to the degree to which individuals possess confidence in their ability to cope or to manage complex and difficult situations (Bandura, 1997).

Interests are the patterns of likes, dislikes, and indifferences regarding career-relevant activities and occupations (Lent et al., 1994, p. 87)

Learning experiences are sources of information that a person uses to further his or her understanding of the self, the world, and the field of interest (Lent et al., 1994, p. 84).

Outcome expectations are defined as personal beliefs about the probable outcome of a behaviour (Lent et. al., 2000).

Self-efficacy is defined as “people’s judgement about their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances” (Bandura, 1986, p. 391).

Socialization is the beliefs, attitudes, norms, and values learned in different contexts (Lent et al., 1994).

Structure of opportunity describes individual perceptions of the options available through the world of work and through education (Lent et al., 1994, p. 106).

Support systems indicate the type of relationships that people create or have with others (Lent et al., 1994, p. 107).

Definitions of Terms that Relate to Culture and Ethnicity

Acculturation is a loss of traditional traits and acceptance of new cultural traits (Porter & Washington, 1993).

Culture is a system of knowledge which people construct to interpret their world. The multiple worlds theory developed by Phelon, Davidson, and Yu (1991) viewed individual acquisition of cultural knowledge as the meanings people construct from their experiences in different contexts (social worlds) and represented how people make sense of the various social worlds in which they engage (Cooper & Denner, 1998). As Phelan et al. (1991) stated, “each social world (family, community, peer group, and school) contains values, beliefs, expectations, actions and emotional responses familiar to insiders” (p. 53). The multiple worlds theory links individuals with contexts and conceptualizes people as agentic in negotiating cultural boundaries between various social worlds (Cooper & Denner, 1998).

Essentialism refers to individuals who use pan-ethnic labels to describe a minority group (Bohan, 1997).

Ethnic identification is the feeling associated with group membership and identity with a group (Porter & Washington, 1993).

Ethnicity refers to self-designated membership in a particular group (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999).

Intra-ethnic variation consists of differences in beliefs and behaviors of members within a self-defined ethnic group (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999).

Second-generation Indo-Canadian women includes young women who have a South Asian cultural background and have completed their kindergarten to grade 12 schooling in Canada (Zhou, 1997) and where both parents have been born and raised in India.

South Asian refers to the Statistics Canada classification to include students who identify themselves as having a Sikh, Muslim, or Hindu cultural background (Statistics Canada, 1996).

Definitions that Relate to Career

Career refers to interest and choice processes and subsumes academic development as well (Lent et al., 2000).

Career development refers to the total constellation of psychological, sociological, educational, physical, economic, and chance factors that combine to shape the career of an individual over the lifespan (Sears, 1982).

Delimitations of the Study

In this study, the researcher examined second-generation Indo-Canadian young women enrolled in the third or fourth year of their undergraduate program at the university level. The researcher interviewed seven young women enrolled in the applied social sciences. The young women were between the ages of 20-25. The university students that the researcher interviewed consisted of students who were Sikh second-generation Indo-Canadian young women. The parents were from India and immigrated to Canada in the period 1965 to the late 1970s.

Assumptions

The researcher conducted this research with a set of assumptions regarding the participants. The assumptions made were:

1. That perception of self-efficacy would be an important mediating factor in determining career choice.
2. That the views of the participants expressed in the study would be an honest representation of their experiences.
3. That by studying an ethnic community that the researcher was not directly a part of, would allow for easier recruitment of participants and increased level of disclosure during the interview process.
4. The selection of a descriptive case study was considered suitable to describe to the participants how their subjective experiences would be broken down into a more objective manner to ensure for their privacy.

5. By selecting participants that were of the same cultural background, but who did not represent the religious background of the researcher, it was assumed that it would enable the researcher to assume a more objective stance.
6. Based on the researcher's personal understanding of the Indo-Canadian community, the researcher made the assumption that the young women would be engaged in a career choice that did not represent the norm of their ethnic community.

The demographic variables of the researcher contributed to the above assumptions. The researcher is a second generation Indo-Canadian Hindu woman and conducted this research in her late 20's. The researcher was interested in understanding the career path of other Indo-Canadian young women who selected to enter the applied social sciences.

Summary

In sum, Indo-Canadian young women have been an under-represented group in the research literature of career decision making. This study addressed the significant gap in the vocational psychology literature that concerns itself with Indo-Canadian young women. As will be seen in the literature review, typical research on Indo-Canadian young women deals only with one aspect, such as intergenerational conflict, and is thus conceptually restrictive. The knowledge obtained from this study regarding Sikh Indo-Canadian young women and the supports and barriers perceived in their career decision-making process contributes to a broader understanding of how informed young women are about their educational requirements, labour force trends, and the changing world of work (Baker, 1985). The research data thus gathered will help career counsellors understand how these young women make decisions that shape their future.

The study used Lent's social cognitive career theory (Lent et al., 2000) to ascertain the extent to which self-efficacy mediates environmental and personal factors in the participants' career decision-making process. The aim of the research was to explore the fit between the propositions stipulated in the social cognitive career theory and the description of the Indo-Canadian young women's career decision-making process to explore the usefulness of the theory to understand an ethnic minority group. This study used a descriptive case study (Yin, 1994) to examine the career decision-making process among Sikh Indo-Canadian young women with the intention of addressing the lack of data on this topic. The research also contributes to career counsellors having a better understanding of the social and psychological forces that shape Sikh Indo-Canadian young women's career decision-making process and the personal strengths that they bring to address difficulties (Ponterotto & Casas, 1991).

Chapter 2- Literature Review

Introduction

Most of the research literature based in the United States and Canada that explores the South Asian and Asian experience of children of immigrants with the educational system has grouped South Asian and Asian children of immigrants together. This grouping is due to three reasons. First, both groups come from a common geographic location in the world. Second, the parents of Asian and South Asian children represent voluntary minorities (Ogbu, 1991). They share a similar history of motivations for choosing to immigrate to another country and choose voluntarily to migrate to another country (Ogbu, 1991). Third, the grouping together of Asian and South Asian children of immigrants within the literature is because both groups share a similar system of values, especially in regard to what constitutes educational success for their children (Min, 1995). For this reason, the reader needs to be aware that the research might refer to Asians, but that it also encompasses South Asians in the sample as well. For the purpose of consistency, the researcher has drawn primarily from studies that include South Asian children of immigrants in the sample. The term *South Asian* for children of immigrants is used to describe the sample of the research in the literature throughout this chapter. South Asian refers to the Statistics Canada classification to include students who identify themselves as having a Sikh, Hindu, or Muslim cultural background (Statistics Canada, 1996). The studies selected are also drawn from various countries such as Britain, United States, and Canada. In studies that are Canadian, the term Indo-Canadian is used to refer to children of immigrants. One reference has been made to an African American study, as no Asian or South Asian studies could be found that focussed on how parents helped their children confront potential barriers that they might face in society.

Here, the researcher presents a more detailed account of the literature that guided the research relevant to this study. First, the researcher presents a historical overview of South Asian immigration to Canada. Second, a discussion of how intergenerational conflict has an impact on South Asian children of immigrants' career decision-making process is presented. Third, the influence that family play in South Asian student career decision making and how to manage societal barriers are outlined. Fourth, the researcher discusses the literature on the educational experiences of South Asian students in the United States, Canada, and Britain by exploring the motivational factors impacting on their educational experiences. Fifth, the significance of the university years in young adult career development using Erikson's identity status theory (Erikson, 1987) and Bandura's self-efficacy theory are explored (Bandura, 1997). Sixth, traditional approaches to career theories are presented, as they form the basis for Lent's social cognitive career theory (Lent et. al., 1994). Seventh, the researcher examines women's career development, and finally, the researcher examines social cognitive career theory.

Contextual Influences for South Asian Children of Immigrants

Immigration of South Asians to Canada

South Asian immigration started in Canada in 1904 when a labour shortage required workers for British Columbia lumber mills. At that time, 2,124 South Asian immigrants were admitted to the country. Between 1905 and 1908, another 5,000 South Asians, the majority of individuals being Sikh, entered Canada (O'Connell, 2000). The majority of the Sikhs had grown up in the rural areas of India and resumed working in agriculture or the lumber industry in British Columbia. They were primarily single men whose main purpose was to save money and eventually return to India to marry. Sikhs

who could afford to do so were allowed to bring their wives and children to Canada. Between 1909 and 1949, South Asian migration dropped drastically due to discriminatory immigration practices. For example, according to the “continuous voyage stipulation” (Agarwal, 1991) in 1908, only immigrants who came to Canada by continuous journey from their country of origin were considered for admission into Canada. The fact that no ships left India directly for ports into Canada, combined with the high head tax of \$200 per person, prevented significant migration of South Asians to Canada until the 1950s.

During the 1950s, the Canadian government established a quota system that fixed the number of immigrants from India (Agarwal, 1991). However, in the 1960s immigration practices changed due to more liberal immigration laws. Legislation introduced a point system for all immigrants. The point system allocated points to potential immigrants based on age, education, work experience, occupational demand, skill, knowledge of English and French, and the ability to adapt to Canadian life. All potential immigrants had to contend with the point system whether they were of European background or from the Asian subcontinent. This change in immigration policy resulted in increased numbers of South Asian immigration to Canada and changed the composition of the immigrant population. The early immigrants were primarily farmers and peasants engaged in occupations such as trucking, farming, and milling once in Canada. Over time, more professionally and technically trained people migrated from India to Canada with their families (Dusenbury, 1989).

Many reasons might be offered to account for South Asians’ immigration to Canada and the United States. First, financial and professional opportunities motivated many individuals to come to North America (Helweg & Helweg, 1990). Second, South

Asians believed that opportunities for employment and growth were substantially greater in the West. Third, educational opportunities gained in Canada or the United States were prestigious in India and could lead to promotion and advancement in one's field. Many of these reasons continue to hold true for present day immigration. The prestige associated with living in Canada or the United States, as well as educational opportunities, is still a factor that appeals to South Asians. This sentiment is evident in matrimonial advertisements on the Internet or in the newspapers, as many individuals seek to highlight Canadian or United States citizenship or green card possession as a means to appear more marketable (Helweg & Helweg, 1990).

Ogbu (1991) stated that certain values and motivations that were held by South Asians, irrespective of social or economic standing, distinguished the selective sample of South Asians who immigrated to the United States or Canada. In both Canada and the United States, South Asians (post 1965) were highly educated, as many of them immigrated as graduate students. As well, due to an occupational immigration clause in Canadian regulations, a large number of health professionals were allowed to immigrate in certain professions requiring skilled labour. The South Asians who immigrated typically came from middle or upper class homes and were well educated. They had both familial and financial support to immigrate and entered as immigrants to fulfill professional labour shortages in certain fields (Min, 1995). Since the 1980s immigration laws have changed and have placed stricter limitations on the number of occupational immigrants to Canada and the United States. Currently, immigrants now consist more of family members sponsored by South Asians who are already living in Canada or the United States (O'Connell, 2000). As such, some of the newer immigrants do not

necessarily have the high educational qualifications that were part of the point system, and a decrease in the number of highly educated South Asians who can partake in the professional labour market is apparent. South Asians now participate in different sectors of the labour market, such as taxi driving, owning a small business, or working newspaper stands (Min, 1995).

The main institution among Canadian Sikhs is the *gurdwara*, which is the temple (O'Connell, 2000). It provides the community with various sociocultural services for Sikh immigrants in Canada. It is a spiritual retreat and used as a meeting place for Sikh families. Families bring together their children, and it becomes a common meeting ground for youth. For families, it is a place where their children can learn more about the Sikh way of life and practice speaking and learning the language (Dosanjti, & Ghuman, 1997). The *gurdwara* becomes a place where people network and share news of other Sikhs spread throughout Canada. Problems facing the community on a macro level are discussed and initiatives established to address the issues by the members (O'Connell, 2000).

A number of young Sikh women are involved in voluntary women's causes that are not associated primarily with Sikh community activities (O'Connell, 2000). A growing number of Sikh young women are being educated and assuming more roles in professional fields (O'Connell, 2000). The young Sikh women are concerned primarily about Sikh women in India and issues pertaining to women of different ethnic minorities.

For South Asian families who have immigrated to Canada, many changes in the family unit have emerged. One change that has emerged is that wives often have been forced to assume work outside of the home, as their husbands are unable to find work,

causing conflict in the family. However, Saran (1985) stated that despite women working outside of the home, familial roles have not changed. It would be useful to see if young Indo-Canadian women are influenced in their career decision-making process when viewing both parents working. Another change that has occurred within the family unit is that children are placed in a position of authority within the family, as they know more about Canadian society than their parents (Foner, 1997). A role reversal takes place within the family in which children socialize their parents within Canadian society. In some cases, children of immigrants also assume a “brokerage” position when their parents are not familiar with English and need their children to act as interpreters (Chazottes & Abramsen, 1977; Ghuman, 1994; Patal, Power, & Bhavnagri, 1996). The reversal of roles within the family can cause conflict in parent and child relations within the family.

Since many South Asians have settled in Canada, the experience of raising their children in a culture that does not represent their own base of experience presents these families with some challenges. Researchers currently explore the challenges described by parents and children of immigrants, as intergenerational conflict, that South Asian parents experience with their children.

Intergenerational Conflict in Families

Researchers described the socialization process of second-generation children of immigrants as conflictual due to their having to contend with two different value systems that cause intergenerational conflict in the family (Ghuman, 1997; Khan, 1979; Segal, 1991; Wakil, Siddique, & Wakil, 1981). The researchers conceptualized the problem as an adolescent experience of a clash of values between home and mainstream culture and

exposure to two sets of competing cultural practices (Goodnow, Miller, & Kessel, 1995). For example, a clash of tradition occurs when parents with a collectivist ethnic orientation attempt to raise children in a society with an individualistic orientation and culture conflict emerges (Ghuman, 1997). Children of immigrants experience culture conflict when they are caught between the cultural expectations of their parents and the social expectations of the mainstream culture (Watson, 1977).

A common metaphor used to describe the culture conflict experienced by children of immigrants is “walking between two different worlds” (Phelon, Davidson, & Yu, 1991). The metaphor presupposes a straightforward clash between two different value systems, resulting in an unbridgeable gap between generations that causes youth to be in a forced-choice dilemma (Kim-Goh, 1995). Often, when researchers mentioned the challenges of second-generation children of immigrants, as in Saran’s (1985) work on the South Asian experience, they described the South Asian experience as a pathology. These tensions between the generations were also discussed as a problem of incomplete assimilation (Das Gupta, 1997; Kar, Campbell, Jimenez, & Gupta, 1996). The process can be complicated by the tensions that youth experience when moving between two different cultures and value systems, reinforced around Eastern values in the home and Western values in the dominant society. Implicit in the idea of culture conflict is that the children of immigrants see their lives as problematic (Ballard, 1979). Further studies are required to discover how Indo-Canadian young women experience culture conflict in making various decisions regarding how to live their lives.

One perspective that has been presented within the literature suggests that children of immigrants manage the tensions of living between two different cultures and

value systems by going through a process of acculturation (Goodnow, Miller, & Kessel, 1995). Acculturation is a process by which individuals undergo a loss of traditional traits and adopt new cultural traits that would enable the individual to decrease their level of culture conflict (Porter & Washington, 1993). Acculturation is based on the premise that the new cultural traits that are adopted by the individual are not just a reflection of the dominant society, but a combination of two different value systems.

As do members of other minorities, Indo-Canadian adolescents in Canada have the task of negotiating two ethnic identities: their South Asian identity and their Canadian identity (Baptiste, 1990). Phinney (1993) referred to this negotiation process as “multiple group identities,” meaning that children of immigrants identify with more than one ethnic group. It is important to see if Indo-Canadian young women receive conflicting messages regarding making a career choice and how they might manage opposing messages. For example, the central message in the dominant society might be to view career decision making as an individual process of self-discovery based on personal interests, values, and aspirations (Hartung, Speight, & Lewis, 1996) rather than seeing career decision making as an interpersonal process that incorporates a family perception of what course one should take. It is important to explore whether Indo-Canadian young women consider intergenerational conflict as a potential barrier to career and educational decision making and, if so, how they make decisions.

Parental and Family Influence on Educational Decision Making

The literature on career counselling has explored the role that parents play in the educational lives of their children. Results suggested that parents have a strong influence on the career and social choices of their children. The studies that are explored in this

section were centred on the relationship of family members and their children in relation to career decision making. The studies documented encompass individuals who are Sikh, Hindu, and Muslim. The studies also include participants who lived in Canada, the United States, or Britain.

Segal's (1991) study outlined the generational issues faced by both the parents and their adolescent children in the family context. The research was conducted with the intention of developing interventions to help families deal with potential emotional difficulties. Segal noted four themes that emerged for both the parents and youth. First, parents tended to be controlling. They did not think that their children had the ability to make their own decisions. The youth tended to rebel against their parents in covert manners and tended to exercise their freedom outside their home. Second, communication tended to be one-sided in that children were expected to listen to and agree with the parents. The youth felt that they could not share their personal concerns with their parents and that they would not be able to help, understand, or listen to them. Agarwal (1991) also noted that the parent child relationship is far more authoritarian in South Asian families than in American families. Third, parents expected their children to have an arranged marriage, and the youth had concerns about not being able to date and having to accept an arranged marriage. Fourth, Segal found that parents who were professionals expected their children to be high achievers. Educational conflicts would arise based on the youth not feeling that they could meet their parents' expectations. The study demonstrated that for both men and women students, career choices reflected their parents' cultural model of success, internalized as part of the South Asian students' own career identity (Schneider & Lee, 1990). The cultural model of success that the South

Asian students carry could be a psychological burden characterized by guilt and frustration if they are not able to meet parental expectations (Saran, 1985).

Gibson and Bhachu (1991) conducted a study with Punjabi Sikhs in both Britain and the United States, exploring the role that parents play in their child's education. They noticed that these parents insisted that their child put schoolwork first and then other social activities second. The difference being that in the United States case, young women were encouraged to complete only high school, whereas British Sikh communities placed pressure on young women to attend post-secondary school. Gibson (1988) also conducted a study that looked at first- and second-generation Sikh adolescents and their experiences within the educational system. The study emphasized that since the parents were voluntary minorities, they developed a "folk theory" of success in the host society in which education played a crucial role. Voluntary immigrant parents socialized their youth with a folk theory of success that was optimistic about the educational system as a vehicle to attain one's occupational dreams. In effect, the children of the Sikh parents internalized their parents' belief in education being the main mechanism by which advancement could be sought in society and enacted the success expected of them, thereby producing a self-fulfilling prophecy. While their perceptions of the educational system may not always have been accurate, as social constructions, the perceptions held by individuals led to what Bellah (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1985) called a community of memory (Fernandez-Kelly & Schauffler, 1997). It was seen in the study that children succeeded in school based on their parents' interest in their education and in spite of the parents' lack of education and inability to help their children with the schoolwork. The parents also would pass on to their children their dual

status frame of reference, which entailed comparing their present situation as being better than their previous situation in India. They would communicate to their children the “advantages” that were available in the host country that they did not have access to while growing up and maintain a positive outlook for their children’s future.

Consequently, children of immigrants often felt intense pressure to do well academically. Furthermore, children were taught that success or failure rested primarily on individual effort.

Ghuman (1997) completed a study in Canada that looked at Indo-Canadian youth and noted that boys and girls equally completed high school, and subsequently, parents encouraged them to plan for professional careers. Further studies need to be conducted to explore what reasons may exist behind parental educational expectations for their children and the influence this has on children of immigrants in their career decision-making process.

For British South Asian Muslim girls, Siann and Knox (1992) explored factors that contribute to career aspirations, types of guidance provided, and influences on career choice and attitudes towards work. They interviewed teachers, parents, and adolescent girls. Results indicated that adolescent girls considered education and careers within the family context and that a negotiation process occurred in career choice. In Gibson’s study (1988), career decision making also was seen as a joint process, rather than an individual one. Siann and Knox (1992) emphasized that academic and career aspirations were made by the young women, not as individuals in isolation, but were focussed on the well-being of the family. The study found that the young women were proud of their religious background and accepted that they would take a traditional role in the home, but that they

did not feel that it detracted from their educational or occupational aspirations. Based on the students interviewed, it was reported that there was little restriction placed on their career choice by their parents. The study also indicated that students would select work that was seen as having a higher status in the community, rather than assuming work that would enhance self-development. Very little intergenerational conflict was reported in the study regarding career decision making.

Basit (1996) analyzed the career hopes and guidance provided to adolescent Muslim girls in Britain. Interviews were conducted with 24 girls in the final year of high school, with their parents, and with 18 of their teachers. The findings indicated that the young women believed that they could attain upward mobility in society by attaining an education and a career. Parents would support their daughters' career choice as long as it was perceived as safe and respectable. The young women also wanted to attain occupations that held more status and were nontraditional roles. The young women were socialized to hold certain professions in high regard but would also assess their own skills. If their abilities were in the caring professions, they would pursue it as a choice but for pragmatic reasons. The young women felt that they could persuade their parents regarding entering professions that their parents would perceive as dangerous and eventually receive support. Very little intergenerational conflict was documented on behalf of the young women.

Beynon and Toohey (1995) conducted interviews regarding factors that influenced career choice to either teaching with students of first- and second-generation Chinese and Punjabi-Sikhs in Canada. The study looked at both men and women for each ethnic group. The parental influence was pervasive, and parents seemed to be more

willing to accept teaching as a career choice for women than for men. It was noted that if someone in the family were a teacher, this would be more supported as a career choice. However, the parental expectation was for the youth to enter a career that was considered to be practical and to offer financial security, such as business. If parents did not view their daughter's career choice in a favourable light and did not approve, the student reported more conflict with the parents, feelings of inadequacy, dissatisfaction, or uneasiness with self. In a few cases, the young women reported that their academic pursuit to complete their education degree was not perceived by their parents as being as important as the goal of getting married and having a family. All the young women communicated that their parents' opinions were of concern to them but that their father had the most influence over their career choice. In their study of South Asian and Muslim families in Canada, Wakil et al. (1981) also identified that fathers' career preferences held more weight for the youth.

Agarwal (1991) documented South Asian immigrant parental expectations regarding children's choice of occupation. She claimed that over half her sample wanted their children to be physicians. Agarwal also noted that the parent child relationship is far more authoritarian in South Asian families than in American families. These parental expectations have many implications for children of these immigrants, particularly women. As she interviewed second-generation young women, concerns became apparent regarding the dual role expectations of being a dutiful daughter as well as an assertive and excellent student. Understanding these conflicts with dual role expectations is an important step to understanding the educational experiences of Indo-Canadian young

women. The conflicts experienced by South Asian young women regarding educational decision making and future career plans still need to be explored.

Family Role in Helping Young Women Manage External Societal Barriers

Recently, the focus on families of different ethnicities has shifted to an understanding of the adaptive strategies that parents of ethnic minorities develop in response to difficulties experienced in society (Basran, 1993). Harrison, Wilson, Pine, Chan, and Buriel (1990) discussed how interdependence between extended family, ethnic pride, being able to adopt two cultural orientations, role flexibility, and exposure to an ancestral worldview are adaptive strategies that parents use in socializing their children to manage difficulties experienced in society. Emerging out of the adaptive strategies employed by parents, an understanding of the goals that they wished their children to learn involved helping their children to meet the challenges in their environment that parents knew they would face (Harrison et al., 1990; Parke & Buriel, 1998). For example, Leadbeater and Way (1996) recognized that the relationships that exist among family members need study as separate units embedded in a variety of social systems, including both informal and formal support systems. They demonstrated that adolescents remain typically close to family relationships that provide the context for development that can reinforce girls' strength and buffer some of the adversities associated with racism and poverty. Ward (1996) explored how African-American parents foster their daughters' inner strength and perseverance in a social context that has negative images of African-Americans.

Using interview data, Ward (1996) described two approaches that parents used with their daughters to deal with difficulties they might face in their environment. One

approach Ward labeled as “tongues of fire truth telling” and the second approach, “resistance-building truth telling.” The tongue of fire approach is a form of telling the truth in a bold, harsh manner. hooks [sic](1993) argued that “telling it as it is” may have a demoralizing effect on young women. The second strategy of resistance-building truth telling helps young women to evaluate their position in society critically and to maintain a positive sense of self (Ward, 1996). Ecological models have been useful in explaining how parent socialization goals for children derive from a parent’s own adaptive strategies that have helped them meet the ecological challenges they face (Bronfenbrenner, 1986, 1998). It would be important to explore if South Asian young women hear similar messages from parents and if this has an impact on their perception of supports and barriers that they might experience in the workplace.

Educational Experiences of South Asian Students

Mainstream educational institutions in Canada often use a conceptual and cultural framework that differs from the reality of most minority groups. In addition, since the notion of what constitutes competency in academic endeavors is socially and culturally defined, children from different cultures may not necessarily hold the same values regarding academic achievement. Further studies should explore in-group variation and may show that the students Ogbu labelled as voluntary minorities actually had that psychological profile ascribed to them. More recently, a number of studies have focussed on in-group variability for each ethnic group.

In the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Tang (1997) documented that South Asian Americans and Asians were highly represented in colleges and universities. It also was widely believed that South Asians and Asians attain high educational achievement and

excel in technically related occupations. Tang, Fouad, and Smith (1999) suggested that due to the few studies conducted that reflect this trend, South Asian American and Asian American interests and aspirations have been stereotyped and segregated into those technical areas. Fouad and Arbona (1994) found by the use of the 1994 revision of the Strong Interest Inventory, that South Asians and Asians were highly represented in the engineering and physics field. Studies also suggested that South Asians and Asians were predominantly in fields such as engineering and computer science (Leong, 1993). Leong conducted a study that also reflected that people who represent the mainstream also perceived South Asian and Asian students as more likely to succeed as engineers, in the computing field, or in areas that required skills in mathematics. Leong and Serafica (1995) felt that such beliefs held by the public could lead to establishing occupational stereotypes for South Asian and Asian students. Very little research exists related to the educational experiences of a wide variety of Asian and South Asian Americans or Canadians in various academic fields (Nakanishi, 1995; Schneider & Lee, 1990).

Recent studies challenged the notion of occupational stereotype reported in the literature. The model minority myth refers to the idea that Asian and South Asian students do well in fields that require analytical and mathematical skills. For example, Leong (1993) noted that Asian and South Asian students typically occupy certain fields of study, such as engineering and computing science, contributing to occupational stereotypes that might become imposed on Asian and South Asian students. Pang (1995) noted that while more Asian and South Asian Americans enrolled in post-secondary schooling, these students experienced more test anxiety and had a lower sense of self-esteem than students who represented the majority. Toupin and Son (1991) also studied

the concept of the model minority with college students in the United States. They compared Asian and South Asian American students who majored in mathematics and sciences with the majority of students from the dominant culture and found that their grade point averages were not significantly higher than their counterparts. They also found that a significant number of Asian and South Asian American students withdrew or received academic probation at the college. Their explanations suggested that Asian and South Asian Americans had trouble in coming to terms with their Asian and South Asian American identities as they adjusted to college life. In addition, the authors pointed out that Asian and South Asian students often felt that they must be able to carry out their parents' dreams and accomplish their parents goals. Students often remained in programs that did not reflect their talents, which impeded their success. Leong and Hayes (1990) further argued that stereotyping was an external barrier to vocational exploration for Asian and South Asian students and that it could become an internal barrier if South Asian and Asian students were to internalize the stereotyped message.

Studying the factors that contribute to accepting an educational or career plan that involves college or university might shed some light on the challenges that some students face (Leung, 1995). It is important to explore the range of variability that occurs within a particular group and to help increase student awareness of career choices, to help them identify internal and external barriers, and to help them develop strategies to address these challenges (McWhirter, 1997).

Motivational Factors Impacting South Asian Student Educational Experiences

Markus and Kitayama (1991) distinguished two types of achievement motivation: an individually oriented achievement style, and a socially oriented achievement style. He

defined an individually oriented achievement style as a functionally autonomous desire in which an individual selects behavior and a standard of excellence and proceeds to evaluate performance. However, in socially oriented achievement motivation, the motivation is not assumed to be an intrinsic evaluation of behavior. Rather, evaluation is based on how others perceive the individual and is mainly extrinsic. Gibson's (1998) study mentioned that Asian and South Asian individuals displayed a "socially oriented" achievement motive in their educational decision making. Gibson (1998) explored the motive patterns of South Asian students, claiming that student goals are socially rooted. For example, once Asian and South Asian students accept jobs that please their families, they are no longer interested in the intense striving or achievement that characterized their educational history (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Exploring the motivation behind career choice and identifying the particular achievement styles of people of different ethnicities would help shed some light on how students make career choices.

Value orientations also serve as a major dimension for understanding cultural differences and can have a significant impact on individual career behavior. Individualism and collectivism represent a value orientation that plays a potentially significant role in career development (Leong, 1993, Sheth, 1997). Individuals from groups that have a more collectivist orientation may conceive the self as interdependent and career decision making as an interpersonal process, whereas individuals who have a more individualistic worldview may view career decision making as an individual process of self-discovery based on personal interests, values, and aspirations (Hartung et al., 1996). Assessing participant cultural value orientation helps counsellors to become

more culturally sensitive and helps career counsellors establish appropriate goals for or in collaboration with their clients throughout the career continuum.

It is important to study an individual's decision to pursue post-secondary education, as education acts as a life-action context to prepare young adults for skilled, technical, and professional work (Evan & Poole, 1991). Richardson (1993) proposed that researchers should shift their focus from studying careers to studying the role that work plays in peoples' lives or in individual academic development. Seen in this way, Richardson viewed education and training as a whole, differentiated only in terms of the type of institution that a student decides to attend. Nurmi et al. (1995) noted that individual knowledge of different institutional alternatives was important in planning.

One of the major milestones during early adulthood is making decisions regarding post-secondary studies. Students need to make decisions and plans concerning their future life roles and the careers they want to pursue. They need to make decisions about relationships and commitments they wish to have. Students are in a position to clarify goals, make plans, and develop a sense of who they are and what they want to be (White, 1980). The career decision-making process is not just a path one must navigate; it is a set of values, rationales, and emotional responses (LeTendre, 1996).

Identity Achievement as a Developmental Task for Young Adults

White (1980) characterized post-secondary education as an "institutionalized form of psychosocial moratorium" (White, 1980, p.56). Individuals are in the process of experimenting with different roles that potentially they can play in society. Individuals are expected to enroll in a field of interest and see if their capabilities match their interests. Erikson (1968) has been a primary researcher in the area of career and identity

development. Erikson suggested that exploring the role of career decision making in connection to identity development helps conceptualize that the career decision-making process can be considered part of an individual developmental process.

Since the 1960s, psychological research has explored the concept of identity. Many researchers have used Erikson's theory of identity development as a foundation for their own research. Erikson (1968) developed an eight-stage theory that covered the full life span of the individual. According to Erikson, at each stage of development the individual faces a crisis. At each stage, the crisis with which the individual must contend is exploring the opposing positive and negative poles associated with the task of the particular stage (for example, stage one: trust vs. mistrust). Successful resolution of each crisis prepares the person for the next step in the struggle for identity. Erikson made it clear that the resolution of a crisis is never absolute and that no optimal end can be reached that can be termed maturity. How an individual decides to cope with the developmental concerns presented in life reflects his or her psychological health. Most theoretical attention has focussed on stage five, the formation of identity versus identity diffusion (Phinney, 1990), which occurs during adolescence when individuals are faced with the challenge of career decision making.

According to Erikson (1968), developmental change is due to both individual change and historical change. The eight stages outlined in his theory reflect normative, age-graded influences. The expression of appropriate behavior to demonstrate the achievement of conflict resolution varies according to cultural context. One's historical and cultural context determines how one copes with each stage and its core related conflicts. Normative history, for example, looks at how the consequences of an economic

depression or a war impact occupational choice as an issue of identity formation. Non-normative life events can also influence and have an impact on an individual's life and how the individual decides to approach resolving conflicts at different stages of development. Non-normative life event, for example, looks at how the unexpected death of a loved one impacts occupational choice as an issue of identity formation.

Most theoretical attention in the career literature has focussed on stage five, the component of identity versus identity diffusion. Erikson identified three elements necessary for the formation of identity at this stage (Erikson, 1987). First, the individual must experience consistency regarding values and actions so that actions and decisions are not random. Second, the individual must discover a continuous feeling of inner sameness over time, that is, that one's actions in the past and hopes for the future are related to the self of today. Third, the individual must acknowledge that identity lies within a community in which one experiences social validation.

A major feature of Erikson's theory is that identity is developed within a social context (Erikson, 1987). Identity is developed through the interaction of psychological, social, and cultural factors. The idea of the self developing in context also was emphasized by Phinney and Rosenthal (1992) and Goossens and Phinney (1996). Both these researchers stressed that adolescents form a healthy identity within a supportive social context that includes the following elements: (a) feedback and validation, (b) acceptance, (c) emotional support, and (d) opportunity for experimentation.

Cote (1996) emphasized that a central task during adolescence is to achieve a coherent sense of identity. The stronger a person's sense of identity, the more "identity capital" they possess. Identity capital denotes what individuals invest into who they are.

After individuals establish a stable sense of who they are, this sense is supported by the following: social and technical skills in various areas, advanced psychosocial development, and associations with key occupational networks.

Identity Status Research

Building upon Erikson's work, James Marcia (1980) developed the identity status approach to study identity formation. Marcia described four distinct statuses of identity development: identity diffusion, foreclosure, moratorium, and identity achievement. These identity statuses depend on their position in two dimensions: exploration and commitment. Exploration involves an active questioning in arriving at identity decisions regarding personal goals, values, and beliefs. A person in exploration gathers as much information as possible in order to make a decision. During the early phases of identity exploration, the individual may experience curiosity and later, may experience subjective discomfort when unaware of clear-cut answers (Marcia, 1980). Commitment involves making a firm choice regarding identity and engaging in significant activity directed to the implementation of that choice. It is important to note that identities are not static and absolutely permanent. Changes in the environment can influence level of commitment and trigger the exploratory process.

Identity diffusion means an identity status that includes individuals who do not have firm commitments and who are not trying to form them. Foreclosure reflects an individual who has never experienced an identity crisis but is committed to particular goals, values, and beliefs. He or she generally establishes these commitments early in life when identifying with parents or other authority figures. Moratorium refers to a person who is currently undergoing identity exploration and who is actively seeking among

alternatives in an attempt to arrive at a choice. A person characterized as identity achieved has gone through a period of exploration and has emerged from it with relatively firm identity commitments. The choices made are personally expressive and provide a sense of future direction.

The identity status of an individual can be determined through a semi-structured interview centring on various domains of a person's life. Many researchers have used the identity status interview in exploring individual identity status in particular domains of interest, using the whole interview to explore all domains. Researchers have also modified and adapted the interview over time (Marcia, 1996). Domains that the interview explores consist of vocation, family roles, political ideology, and religious beliefs. Numerous studies have used Marcia's identity status interview to determine the identity status for a particular group of people, to examine differences among individuals who fall into different identity statuses in different domains, and to explore how groups that fall under the same status category differ. Marcia (1996) recognized that often researchers use his identity status interview to study people at the college or university level because participants are more accessible and because it is a life stage at which students are struggling with their identity and to make life decisions.

Decisions regarding educational attainment lend themselves to career development regardless of an individual's race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic background (Arbona, 1996). However, Arbona found that the effects of race, ethnicity, and culture are rarely considered when examining career or academic decision-making behavior. He stipulated that for academically successful students of different ethnic minorities, developing a sense of ethnic identity constitutes an additional developmental task with

which they need to contend as they make career and further educational decisions. Similarly, Phinney (1993) and her colleagues demonstrated that exploration of ethnic identity is more of an issue among students of different ethnic minorities and young adults than among students belonging to the mainstream culture. The understanding of ethnic identity and how it relates to career or educational decision-making processes needs further exploration (Bowman, 1993).

Development of a Sense of Self-Efficacy during Young Adulthood

According to Bandura, an important developmental task that young adults face during their young adulthood that has an impact on their career decision-making process is their development of a sense of competence (Bandura, 1986). A sense of competence is similar to the knowledge that one can adjust to and handle tasks and can achieve goals successfully. A sense of competence enables the individual to adapt to the environment, making use of personal resources. Bandura formalized this reflection of competence through his concept of self-efficacy. He defined self-efficacy as “people’s judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of actions acquired to achieve a good developmental outcome” (1986, p. 81). One uses personal resources and adapts to the environment to achieve a goal and learn from the experience. Personal resources can include specific skills, abilities, and self-esteem.

Bandura suggests that efficacious people can handle a variety of tasks and can predict a number of outcomes, such as academic achievements, social competence, and career choice (Bandura, 1986; Lent et al., 1994). Bandura identified three ways in which self-efficacy effects psychological functioning. First, activities in which people choose to engage are those that they believe they can master. Second, self-efficacy determines the

amount of motivation to achieve goals in the face of obstacles or difficulties. Third, one's level of self-efficacy determines if a person's thinking process is self-aiding or self-hindering. In sum, Bandura posited that a strong sense of self-efficacy determines the amount of control people exercise in their lives to help them translate self-belief into accomplishment and motivation.

Deciding to pursue post-secondary education has effects other than gains of knowledge and skills in a particular domain. Other general outcomes correlate with competence, interpersonal skills, adapting to new situations, attitudes, and the development of personal agency. Students appear to differ considerably in the orientations they bring to their studies. A sense of competency is related to the ability to achieve goals and adapt to the environment by making use of personal resources (Cote, 1996). These tasks are of particular significance as young adults make the transition to university and the world of work.

Developing a strong sense of self-efficacy is essential for individuals in transition. Self-efficacy is related to whether resources will be properly used in the transition process and whether certain tasks will be attempted and/or accomplished (Lent et al., 1994). A sense of control or mastery is important for young adults to deal with the multiple challenges and demands in their ever-changing context. Perception of support and barriers within one's environment becomes crucial to consider as people develop within a social context. The development and use of coping skills and a sense of coping efficacy in overcoming barriers in the environment need to be addressed. In addition, how individuals create a supportive environment for themselves to address the challenges associated with their career choice becomes essential. A social cognitive approach to

career development, focussing on the processes through which academic and career interests develop, would be useful as self-efficacy and contextual factors are emphasized. Due to ethnic and cultural differences in perception of one's environment, researchers have recognized the importance of using a social cognitive framework to extend research (McWhirter, 1997).

Review of Traditional Career Development Models

Social cognitive career theory attempted to form conceptual linkages and theoretical convergence with other key career theories (Lent et. al., 1994). Lent attempted to create an integrative framework by noting the commonalities among various career theories (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1996). Social cognitive career theory works to unify Holland's typology theory, Krumboltz's learning theory, and Super's life-span theory. These three theories will be explored briefly, since parts of them have been interwoven into the social cognitive career theory (Lent et. al., 1996).

Holland's Typology Theory

John Holland (1985) is one of the prominent figures in the trait and factor theory of career development. He stated that individuals could be described using six personality types. The types that he defined are realistic (activities requiring motor coordination), artistic (esthetic), investigative (intellectual), social (supportive), enterprising (persuasive), and conventional (conforming to rules and regulations). He listed characteristics for each type that reflect distinctive styles in which individuals relate to the world and process information about it. He contended that individuals do well in environments that allow them to exercise their skills and express their needs. The factors that influence individual behaviors reside in an interaction between personality and

environmental characteristics. Holland believed that congruence between personality type and environment was crucial for individual success.

Holland's personality types have generated a great deal of research (Holland, 1985). Researchers have used the instruments that Holland developed, including the vocational preference inventory and the self-directed search, to test his theory. His instruments have also provided counsellors with data about client personality types and personal characteristics. Currently, research is being conducted to test the cultural validity of his instruments. Researchers are assessing how well the tests reflect a representation of various cultural groups to help explain and predict behavior (Fouad, Harmon & Borgen, 1997). Identifying the conditions of the dominant models and career tests used in career psychology with different cultural groups could help to identify new directions for exploration (Leong & Chou, 1994).

Holland's theory has practical utility, as the trait and factor theory represents career development as a linear process (Vondracek, 1992). Holland recognized a need to look at the link between personality and vocational behavior, but many considered it too simple and noted that it does not take into account the link of career development to the life cycle (Vondracek, 1992). Many considered the theory inflexible in explaining the complex process involved in career decision making. Holland did not acknowledge such factors as socialization, socioeconomic status, and availability of opportunity. Researchers recognized that contextual factors play a significant role in the career development of wom. 1.

Super's Developmental Theory

Super presented a theory of vocational development over the lifespan, which he termed a lifespan/life-space theory (Super, 1994). He brought together life-stage psychology and social role theory to address individual career development over time. Super believed that the individual translates a self-concept into occupational terms over the course of development (Super, 1990). Super proposed that the more one invests a self-concept into work the greater the degree of work satisfaction. Betz and Fitzgerald (1987) supported Super's ideas. They found that self-concept played a significant role in the career development of women. Women with higher levels of self-esteem are more likely to pursue non-traditional occupations, are more motivated to achieve and are more committed to their careers.

Super's life-span developmental approach to career development viewed people's careers as unfolding across time at different stages in their development (Super, 1994). He defined five stages in his theory: growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and decline. At each developmental stage, an individual decides how they want to be. Super believed that people "recycled" through developmental stages and made many "mini-decisions" along the way to their career decisions. People explore and re-explore their career options and re-establish their career as situations around them develop. They incorporate career planning into life planning, which they see as a life-long process. Considering that individuals today meet with frequent work transitions, Super's notion of recycling and mini-decisions made concerning career choice reflects the flexibility that exists in today's changing world of work.

The life-career rainbow that Super conceptualized as representing people's career development presented a holistic framework (Super, 1994). According to the rainbow, a person engages in multiple life roles over the course of a lifetime, perhaps including daughter, student, citizen, worker, spouse, parent, and homemaker. The rainbow depicts how each role represents a life career and how each of the major life roles varies over the life course.

Most empirical studies that explored Super's theory focussed primarily on a male population. Osipow (1983) stated that Super's theory might not describe accurately women's career development. Hackett (1995) also criticized the theory for a lack of attention to economic and social factors that contribute to career choice. Hackett also felt that Super's theory did not account for the differences in the socialization process for men and women. The socialization process contributes to an individual's beliefs about his or her ability and aspirations and could influence an individual's decision to engage in various roles across the life span, which Super did not acknowledge within his theory.

Krumboltz's Learning Theory of Career Decision Making

Krumboltz (1996) based his theory of career development and choice on Bandura's social learning theory. The roots of his theory also arise from reinforcement theory, classical behaviorism, and cognitive information processing (Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1996). The assumption that Krumboltz made is that people's personalities and behavioral patterns stem from unique learning situations. Krumboltz maintained that genetic endowment, environmental conditions including socioeconomic and cultural factors, and learning experiences influence career decision making.

Social learning theory posits that instrumental learning experiences and associative learning experiences result in an individual's gaining behavioral and cognitive skills to help him or her with career decision making (Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1996). Instrumental learning occurs with the positive or negative reinforcement of particular behavior. The second type of learning that Krumboltz mentioned is an associative learning experience. An associative learning experience occurs when an individual associates a previous emotional event with a future event that could be similar. For example, an individual might associate a hospital setting with the death of a loved one and may be reluctant to engage in any activities associated with hospitals. The individual may avoid occupations such as being a nurse. People can also experience associative learning via indirect means, such as vicarious experiences. An individual observing role models, through the media or through reading, may learn to make choices about how to engage in the environment and make decisions. For example, an individual may love history, but, if he or she does not see many people employed in the field of interest, may decide not to pursue a career in history (Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1996).

Another feature of Krumboltz's theory is the concepts of self-observation generalizations and worldview generalizations (Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1996). People may form self-observation generalizations about whether they possess the required skills to perform tasks adequately based on their prior learning experiences. As a result of individual learning experiences, individuals generalize about their task efficacy, interests, and values. Based on learning experiences, the individual can also make worldview generalizations. Worldview generalizations occur when an individual generalizes about the environment to predict future events. Krumboltz used the concepts of self-

observations and worldview generalizations to explain individual differences in career decision-making processes.

Krumboltz (1996) proposed that individuals are more likely to pursue an occupational choice if they are exposed to positive role models, job or training opportunities, and/or receive encouragement to engage in a particular occupation.

Hackett (1995) recognized that experiences helpful for career planning may be limited for women and ethnic minorities, which may partially explain why individuals who do not represent the mainstream culture often restrict their occupational choices and underutilize their potential and abilities (Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987). This theory emphasizes external barriers, lack of role models, occupational stereotypes, and family or societal expectations as issues that women and ethnic minorities have to overcome. Internal barriers that women and people of different ethnicities also face include lack of confidence, low self-esteem, and fear of success and/or failure (Byars & Hackett, 1998).

Krumboltz's theory is an improvement on previous theories. However, a review by Hackett (1995) noted a lack of empirical support for the theory. Hackett also criticized the theory for failing to account for behaviors after initial career decisions. When considering the career development of women, this could indicate some problems since women's career paths are more likely than men's to be disrupted by childbirth and other family obligations. Exploring women's decisions to postpone, abandon, or resume their career path may help to understand their career patterns. The validity and applicability of the theory may be in question, as it does not account for the frequent life and career transitions that are characteristic of today's world of work.

Critique of the Traditional Theories

The main criticism of traditional career models revolves around the fact that the models appear to be more suited to men's development and have been tested primarily with men who represent the majority (Patton & McMahon, 1999). Researchers have questioned the relevance of these theories to other groups, such as women and individuals from different cultural, ethnic, and/or socioeconomic backgrounds (Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987). To use a mainstream male norm to which to compare women and other diverse groups is detrimental to the contrasted group.

Within research literature, considerable theoretical uncertainty remains regarding how to view the career development of women. For example, traditional career theory is based mainly on studies of men and their development and does not account for the different socialization and choices made by women in their career development.

Traditional career theories reflect an essentialist framework for understanding human behaviour (Gilligan, 1993). Women of different ethnicities have objected to essentialist feminist positions in which women have claimed to speak on behalf of all women, without acknowledging within-group variability (Song & Moon, 1998). Current career theories focussing on women's development do not represent an essentialist construal of gender in which differences between women and men are emphasized. It is recognized that polarization of gender constructs can lead to stereotypes and can deny the diversity within groups of women or men and situational contexts that lead to differences. An essentialist position confines the researcher's conception of the individual under study and limits possibilities as it emphasizes similarities and minimizes differences (Bohan,

1997). Therefore, a deficit approach to dealing with women's issues may arise in which contextual factors are not taken into consideration.

Most traditional theories assume that all individuals are free to choose among an array of alternatives available to all. Such an assumption ignores the social realities of everyone, including special groups, such as women and ethnic minorities (Song & Moon, 1998). Career development is constrained by various factors, such as discrimination (Patton & McMahon, 1999). Traditional theories appear to represent a psychological understanding of career development. They do not acknowledge factors such as environmental and contextual influences. Many researchers suggest that a broader theoretical base is needed to incorporate both psychological and contextual factors, such as the rapid changes in economics, family structure, socialization practices in the family, and ecological systems, to understand the career development of women.

Review of Women's Career Development Theories

A few career theories have been developed to specifically account for differences that might be significant for women's career development. All the career theories listed below considered the career development of women to be a reflection of various social systems that shape their lives (Bohan, 1997). All the career theories pertaining to women's career development that are discussed focussed on the contextual factors that shape women's lives. The theories allow the diversity that exists within groups of women to be examined. The following career theories that relate to women's career development are discussed below. Astin's sociopsychological theory, Gottfredson's theory of circumscription and compromise, Farmer's individual differences theory, and Hackett and Betz's self-efficacy theory. These theories will be explored briefly, since various

aspects of each have formed the basis of Lent's social cognitive career theory (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994). Finally, the social cognitive career theory will be explored (Lent et. al., 1994).

Astin's Sociopsychological Theory

Astin's (1984) sociopsychological theory is similar to Krumboltz's (1996) theory. They both emphasize the significance of both psychological and cultural-environmental factors that interact and influence career choice and work behavior for both men and women. The four factors affecting career choice in Astin's model are

1. Motivation: the driving force that directs individual behavior towards the satisfaction of three basic needs: survival, pleasure, and making a contribution to society;
2. Expectations: individual perceptions of capabilities and strengths;
3. Socialization: a process through which social norms, values, and sex-role behaviors are internalized through play, family, school, work, and volunteer experiences; and
4. Structure of opportunity: individual perception of the options available through the world of work.

Astin believed that motivation to work was important for both men and women. Motivation to work addressed the various needs of survival, pleasure, and contributing to society.

Astin (1984) stated that what differentiates men and women in regard to work expectations and career outcomes can be attributed to the interaction of the other three variables. She contended that expectations could be different for men and women due to their socialization experiences as well as to their perception of the structure of opportunity. In addition, the opportunity structure was not static and changed over time.

As women become aware of the changes in the opportunity structure, their career aspirations and work behaviors may change. The structure of opportunity is a distinctive feature of her model that expands on various theories in the career psychology field and helps one to conceptualize the career and educational decision-making process in a changing society.

Since Astin's publication in 1984, few researchers have conducted studies to test the validity of her theory. Betz and Fitzgerald (1987) noted that this is because her model lacked operational definitions of the proposed constructs and did not have specific hypotheses, which makes empirical tests of the model difficult. Astin also did not develop an instrument to test her model, making it difficult to determine its validity. Others have questioned a number of her propositions. For example, a recent study conducted by Hoi (1998) testing Astin's theory with first year university students revealed no direct path linking motivation to work expectation and discovered only a weak relationship between socialization and structure of opportunity, both of which are antithetical to Astin's claim that the constructs are interrelated. Hoi (1998) had no empirical data with which to compare the findings and no manner in which to test the empirical validity of the model and the instrument that she had devised. Hackett (1995) pointed out a lack of theory driven studies and that few theorists integrate Astin's model.

Gottfredson's Theory of Circumscription and Compromise

Gottfredson's (1981) theory of circumscription and compromise addresses the career development of women and men by exploring how individuals reach a compromise when faced with conflicting goals and how individual perception of opportunities plays a significant role in determining occupational choice. Gottfredson

also suggested that during the period of adolescence, the individual is capable of narrowing occupational choices based on personal knowledge of his or her own interests and values. In the decision-making process, one often makes compromises based on a lack of opportunity. The process of circumscription involves the inclusion and elimination of alternatives. Gottfredson postulates that individuals will sacrifice their vocational interests first, then their desired prestige level, and their preferred socialized work role associated with sex type last. She believed that early socialization was the main determinant in the formation of occupational choices and aspirations. Other researchers (Pryor & Taylor, 1989) stated that the process was more complex than Gottfredson proposed. Some viewed the model as inflexible and felt that it ignored the dynamic of development.

Farmer's Individual Differences Theory

Farmer (1997) developed a career theory of individual differences. She presented a multidimensional model of career and achievement motivation for women and men. While Farmer's work focussed on individual differences between men and women, her primary focus of research was to explore concerns regarding women's career development. Farmer also based her work on the tenets of Bandura's social learning theory, accepting that "psychological functioning involves a continuous reciprocal interaction between behavioural, cognitive, and environmental influence" (Bandura, 1986, p. 344). Farmer (1997) proposed that background variables (gender, ethnicity, social class standing, age), various personal variables (self-esteem, values, success attributions, attitude), and environmental factors (social support, social attitudes toward women) interact to foster the aspiration, mastery, and career commitment of men and

women. She explored how the sex role socialization process can affect beliefs, attitudes, and self-concepts, which in turn, have an influence on motivation, behavior, and choices made by an individual. Leadbeater and Way (1996) used Farmer's model in their research with adolescent career development and felt it important to consider the aspect that gender plays as individuals learn cultural schemas of what it means to be male or female.

According to Farmer (1997), background variables shape self-concept, which in turn, influence the perception of the environment. Interactions within the environment, occurring at school and in the community, further influence a developing self-concept. Personal variables then set limits as to how one decides to engage in the environment and have been found to influence career and achievement motivation. Farmer considered the relationship between personal and environmental variables to be a reciprocal one.

Farmer based her model on the basic tenets of Bandura's triadic reciprocal model of causality. The first basic tenet is a belief that learning and behavior result from the reciprocal interaction of the person with the environment. The second basic tenet is the element of personal agency. Both Bandura and Farmer believed that each individual has the ability to shape his or her own attitudes and is capable of planning for the future (Farmer, 1997). It is therefore important to take into consideration both the structure of the environment within which an individual operates and the element of personal agency.

In her most recent work, Farmer (1997) explored differences among ethnic and socioeconomic groups, as well as the influence of family on the career development of young women. Lugin (1996) based her work on Farmer's longitudinal data and explored the career development of first-generation children of immigrants of different cultural groups. Farmer focussed on sex role socialization outcomes, such as attitudes, beliefs,

and self-concepts, that in turn affect motivation, choices, and behavior of women. She proposed that three sets of variables interact to influence aspirations. These three sets of variables are background variables (age, gender, and ethnicity), personal variables (academic self-esteem), and environmental variables (support from parents and teachers). It is important to note how environmental influences shape views of the self and future opportunities (Leadbeater & Way, 1996).

Hackett and Betz Career Self-Efficacy Theory

Hackett and Betz (1981) formulated a theory on career self-efficacy. The basis of their work was Bandura's (1987) social learning theory. Hackett and Betz attempted to understand how gender role socialization influenced individual evaluations in relation to career choice and behavior.

Two concepts were important in Hackett and Betz's (1981) theory: efficacy expectations and outcome expectations. Efficacy expectations refer to an individual's belief that he or she can perform a certain task effectively. The initiation of certain activities depends on efficacy expectations. Likewise, the amount of effort exerted and the persistence of behaviors in the face of obstacles depend on efficacy expectations. Efficacy expectations result from four sources of information:

1. Performance accomplishments, which refers to successful performance of a particular behavior
2. Vicarious learning, referring to the observation of others as they perform a behavior
3. Verbal persuasion, that is, the encouragement from others that one can successfully engage in specific behaviors

4. Emotional arousal, referring to the level of anxiety concerning the behavior performed

Through these four sources of information, an individual acquires and modifies efficacy expectations.

Outcome expectations refer to individual beliefs about the consequences of performance. Outcome expectations will also determine whether individuals decide to engage in a certain task or not. For example, Hackett and Betz (1981) noted that women's self-efficacy beliefs about their lack of mathematical ability predicted avoidance of particular occupations even when they were not actually deficient in mathematics skills. Hackett and Betz emphasized that individual belief about skills and likely outcomes of tasks form a good predictor of the behavior in which individuals will engage. Self-efficacy theory delineates cognitive factors that play a significant role in determining the course of behavior undertaken by an individual.

Hackett and Betz also believed that different socialization processes for men and women are factors in different career patterns. They stated that due to a lack of strong female role models from which to draw, women lack strong self-efficacy expectations regarding career-related behaviors. They also maintained that women probably are not encouraged as much as men to develop their own careers. Both efficacy outcomes and outcome expectations are important concepts to consider in understanding the career development of women. Applying these two concepts to women representing various ethnic groups may be useful.

Lent's Social Cognitive Career Theory

More recently, Lent, Brown and Hackett (2000) have based a social cognitive career theory on Bandura's (1986) work that incorporated an understanding of the person, context, and behavior to understand career development. Lent et al. explored how self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations, and personal goals help to regulate individual career behavior. Their social cognitive career theory explained how academic and career interests develop, how people make career choices, and how personal agency affects career outcomes (Patton & McMahon, 1999). This theory was intended to incorporate conceptual linkages with other career theories, such as Holland's trait factor theory, Super's life-span theory, Hackett and Betz's self-efficacy theory, and Krumboltz's social learning theory. The theory also offered propositions for theory extension and theory building efforts by bringing together conceptually related concepts, such as self-concept and self-efficacy, explaining outcomes that are common to a number of theories, such as satisfaction and stability of career choice, and accounting for the relations among constructs that seem diverse, such as the connection between self-efficacy, interests, and abilities. The goal of the social cognitive career theory was to explicate the mechanisms through which career and academic interests develop, career relevant choices are made and enacted, and performance outcomes are achieved.

The social cognitive career theory does not attempt to offer one grand theory to describe career development over the lifespan. The theory is divided into three segmental models of career choice that are associated with preparation and implementation of career choice. As such, the theory is best suited for exploring career development for individuals who are in late adolescence or early adulthood, which the researcher felt was suitable to

consider for the study. Lent, Brown, and Hackett (1994) also viewed his theory as relevant to both academic and career behavior. Lent viewed academic development as closely aligned developmentally with career development. Interest and skills developed within academic settings are closely connected to career selections. Social learning theory principles developed by Bandura have been used as a base for the social cognitive career theory. The social learning theory has been applied to a wide variety of psychosocial issues, providing the social cognitive career theory with an extensive knowledge base from which career relevant propositions could be formulated. The three mechanisms that shape career development are self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations, and goal representations.

Self-efficacy refers to people's judgements of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of actions required to obtain particular outcome performances. Personal agency is built on the notion of self-efficacy beliefs, as it will guide one's choices, effort expenditure, and emotional reactions when confronted by obstacles. Self-efficacy is considered a dynamic set of beliefs that are associated with particular domains. For example, people differentially recall, weight, and integrate past performance information in arriving at efficacy appraisals. According to social cognitive career theory, efficacy appraisals are not static over time. Hackett and Betz (1981) demonstrated that self-efficacy was predictive of career and academic related choice and that it was found that self-efficacy was not related to objectively assessed skills. Lent et. al. stipulated in the theory that to use one's resources most effectively required both an objective assessment of one's skills and a strong sense of self-efficacy.

Outcome expectations are individuals personal beliefs about a probable outcome, which is another important part of the social cognitive career theory. Outcome expectations involve the imagined consequences of performing particular behaviors. Bandura (1982) also posited that “people act on their judgements of what they can do, as well as their beliefs of likely effects of various actions” (p. 231). Lent et. al. took into account that people may anticipate valued outcomes from certain actions but may avoid doing so if they doubt their capabilities. Lent et al. believed that self-efficacy is more influential than outcome expectations (1994).

Choice goals help people to organize and guide future behavior. Bandura’s theory also emphasized self-referent thinking as guiding motivation and relevant career behavior. Social cognitive theory takes a cognitive constructivist view on career development. Constructivist theory emphasizes feedback and feed-forward loops that determine behavior. A feed-forward loop is characterized as a person’s ability to plan actively, to have forethought, and to construct actively new meanings while interacting with events. Lent et. al. viewed people as proactive shapers of their development and environment and as capable of personal agency. Goals can be expressed as career plans, decisions, aspirations, and expressed choices and will vary in terms of commitment and follow-through for individuals, depending on how close the ideas are to actual implementation.

Lent, Brown, and Hackett’s (2000) version of social cognitive career theory incorporated what they termed as “three interlocking segmental models” that comprise Lent et. al. theory. For each interlocking model, they developed propositions to reflect the patterns that they expected to emerge. In each interlocking segmental model, Lent et

al. outlined predominant causal pathways. The three interlocking models are the interest development model, the career choice model, and the performance model.

The first interlocking model in the social cognitive career theory is the interest development model. Lent et. al. defined vocational interests as patterns of likes, dislikes, and indifferences regarding career relevant activities and occupations. Lent et. al. created propositions that centred on career interest formation. Lent et. al. posited that individuals form enduring interests in areas where they view themselves as efficacious and in which they anticipate positive outcomes. The interest model holds that self-efficacy and the outcomes expected of a chosen activity have a direct effect on the formation of career interests. Lent et al. (1994) stated that how one regards one's level of competence in a given activity determines how new interests emerge and how they are engaged. New interests are not just accepted based on previous learning experiences or simple exposure, rather, their acceptance depends on how an individual views him or herself and how capable one imagines oneself in handling the task and prospective expectations of obtaining valued outcomes. Propositions formulated based on the interest model are outlined below:

1. An individual's occupational or academic interests at any point in time are reflective of his or her concurrent self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations.
2. An individual's occupational interests also are influenced by the relevant abilities, but this is mediated by the individual's self-efficacy beliefs.

The second interlocking model in the social cognitive career theory is the choice model. The model is an extension of the interest interlocking model. According to Lent et al. (1994), the academic and career choice process includes the following parts:

1. expression of a primary choice or goal influenced by self-efficacy and outcome expectations
2. actions undertaken to implement one's choice
3. evaluation of performance to form a feedback loop affecting the shape of future career behavior

Lent et. al. makes the distinction between choice goals and choice actions within this interlocking model. Choice goals are defined as an individual's determination to engage in a particular activity or behaviour to effect a particular future outcome (Lent et al., 2000). Choice actions are defined as how participants make educational and career decisions based on actions or plans made (Lent et al., 1994). et. al. viewed interests as shaping one's career choice goals and actions. Lent et. al. emphasized that the implementation of personal learning and the individual's ability to create goals is a dynamic act in which the individual engages. It is important to note that a choice goal helps to orient an individual toward a particular career field. An example of a choice content goal is the type of career field that a person wants to pursue.

Lent et. al. also postulated that firmly held goals tend to exert a stronger motivational effect on behavior as long as the goals are clear and specific and implementation of action is close to time of entry into the career field. et. al. created various propositions within his career theory between choice goals and choice actions that the individual engages in to address their career choice. Lent et. al. developed the following propositions in relation to the career choice interlocking model:

1. Self-efficacy beliefs affect choice goals and actions both directly and indirectly.
2. Outcome expectations affect choice goals and actions both directly and indirectly.

3. People will aspire to enter occupations or academic fields that are consistent with their primary interest areas.
4. People will attempt to enter occupations or academic fields that are consonant with their choice goals, provided that they are committed to their goal, and their goal is stated in clear terms, proximal to the point of entry.
5. Interests affect choice actions indirectly through their influence on choice goals.

The third interlocking model incorporated into the social cognitive career theory is the performance model. The performance model is concerned with the level of accomplishment and persistence of behavior in people's career-related pursuits (Lent et al., 1996). Lent et al. (1994) stated that stronger self-efficacy and outcome expectations promote more ambitious goals, helping people to mobilize and sustain their performance behavior for a given task. For example, a performance goal is the grade one strives for in a particular course. Lent et. al. saw a performance goal as the quality of attainment.

et. al. described a feedback loop between performance attainments and subsequent behavior. Having successful experiences promotes the individual's engagement in various behaviors associated with the original behavior. Lent et. al. developed the following propositions to address the performance interlocking model that is embedded within the social cognitive career theory:

1. Self-efficacy beliefs influence career/academic performance both directly and indirectly through their effect on performance goals. Outcome expectations influence performance only indirectly through their effect on goals.
2. Ability will affect career/academic performance directly and indirectly through its influence on self-efficacy beliefs.

3. Self-efficacy beliefs derive from performance accomplishments, vicarious learning, social persuasion, and physiological reactions (emotional arousal) in relation to particular educational and occupationally relevant activities.
4. As with self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations are generated through direct and vicarious learning experiences with educational and occupationally relevant activities.

Lent et. al. acknowledged that external factors affect career choice. Lent et. al. described contextual factors that affect career behavior as:

(1) distal influences (such as opportunities for skill development, sex role socialization, and role models) that help shape career interests, and

(2) proximal influences (job availability, social support, financial support, and emotional support) that help form career choices.

In conceptualizing contextual or environmental influences, Lent et. al. drew upon Vondracek, Lerner, and Schulenberg (1986) contextual affordance and Astin's (1984) proposed "opportunity structure." Lent et. al defined contextual affordance as the individuals' personal perception of the environmental factors that affect their career development (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994, p. 106). Contextual affordance is distal in nature and acts as a background influence that shapes interests and cognitions. Structure of opportunity is defined as the individual's perception of the options available through the world of work and through education (Lent et al., 1994, p. 106). The individual's personal perception and cognitive appraisal of supports and barriers that individuals perceive in the structure of opportunity are considered proximal in nature. The individual takes an active role in appraising and making meaning out of what is immediately available in his or her environment.

Lent et. al. developed propositions that explore how the individual's perception of the opportunity structure moderates the relations of interest to goals and to the actions that individuals take, which are outlined below:

1. The relation of interests to choice goals will be moderated by opportunity structures and support systems. The relation of interest to choice goals will be stronger when opportunity and support are perceived to be high versus low. Conversely, these relations will be attenuated when perceived barriers are high versus low.
2. The relation of choice goals to entry behaviors will be moderated by opportunity structures and support systems. Goal behavior relations will be stronger when opportunity and support are perceived to be high versus low. Conversely, these relations will be attenuated when perceived barriers are high versus low.

Lent et al. theoretical basis for understanding career development drew on the traditional career theories of Krumboltz, Holland, and Super's developmental models, but it also integrated various theories that are central to women's socialization and career development.

Summary

Patton and McMahon (1999), who provided a comprehensive account of career theories, have suggested that the social cognitive career theory would be a useful broad theoretical platform from which to draw to understand the career development of women. Lent et. al. social cognitive career theory centers on self-efficacy theory and the cognitive mechanisms that mediate how career decisions are made. The theory offers itself as a means to understand the different career patterns and difficulties that women confront in their career decision-making processes. Applying concepts such as self-efficacy and the

cognitive mechanisms that mediate how career decisions are made by women representing various ethnic groups would be useful.

In the career development literature, the explanation of the career decision-making process is still in its infancy. Research has yet to be conducted to determine what contributes to Indo-Canadian young women's career decision-making processes. It is important to explore how people perceive making choices, in order to reflect the diversity of Canadian culture. Lent et. al. social cognitive career theory encompassed many theories and addressed these issues. By shifting the focus from traditional career development theories and using a career theory that encompasses contextual and cognitive factors, the social cognitive career theory addressed some of the main issues that theorists have been exploring when considering the career development of women. In addition, the theory focussed on how the individual is an active agent in the career decision-making process who is capable of reflexivity and forethought. It is an attractive model designed to explain individual variability in the career decision-making process and is encouraged to be used with women with different ethnic backgrounds (Patton & McMahon, 1999), and as such, it has been selected as the basis for this study.

Chapter 3- Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this research study was to examine some of the factors that influence Indo-Canadian young women in their career decision-making process to enter the applied social sciences at the university level. The social cognitive career theory (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2000) has been chosen as a theoretical framework to understand the career decision-making process for Indo-Canadian young women. This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section will provide a rationale for the selection of a descriptive qualitative case study approach based on Yin (1994), as it formed the basis for the research methodology. The second section will focus on the criteria of designing this qualitative descriptive case study, considering the first five steps that Yin (1994) outlined. The five steps were: (1) selecting a case study approach that fits the central research question and developing guiding research questions, (2) selecting a theoretical framework and identifying propositions of the theory that would act as a conceptual comparison for the study, (3) identifying units of analysis under investigation, (4) selection of cases, and (5) instrumentation- linking the data to the propositions. The third section will describe the data analysis for this study, which is reflected in steps (6) and (7) of Yin's (1994) approach, (6) formulating validity and reliability procedures, and (7) data analysis-setting the criteria for interpreting the findings. The third section will also integrate the pilot study for this research to illustrate how it contributed to formulating validity procedures and to clarifying the different phases of data analysis.

Selecting a Qualitative Approach

The qualitative approach to inquiry was selected for this study because very little research has been conducted in the research literature regarding career decision making

for Indo-Canadian young women (Schneider & Lee, 1990). Researchers have not yet identified the variables or experiences that might be present for Indo-Canadian women making career decisions to enter the applied social sciences. Engaging in a qualitative inquiry allows the researcher to focus on establishing meaning in context regarding the phenomena under study. Qualitative research is interested in exploring contextual factors and understanding the phenomenon of interest from the participants' perspective (Wellington, 2000).

Case Study Research Design

The qualitative case study research method was selected because it permits a multi-methods approach to study individuals' decision-making process by outlining various contextual factors pertinent to the phenomenon of study (Yin, 1994). Yin defined the case study research method as an inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context. Since all participants were enrolled in the applied social sciences, none of the participants were studied in isolation from the research question. Each participant was studied in context with the issue under investigation.

The case study research approach also represents a bounded system. Yin emphasized the importance of delimiting the phenomenon under study by establishing boundaries within which the study can be conducted. Careful discrimination at the point of selection helps create boundaries around the case. It is important to "fence in" or establish parameters around one's study (Merriam, 2001). A bounded case study includes deciding on the type of case study, establishing a theoretical framework, identifying units of analysis, determining sampling criteria, formulating validity and reliability procedures,

and creating consistent data analysis procedures. Case studies emphasize detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and their relationships (Yin, 1994). Researchers have used the case study research method for many years across a variety of disciplines, such as anthropology, education, psychology, and sociology. Social scientists in particular have made wide use of this qualitative research method to examine contemporary real-life situations.

Yin (1994) outlined seven specific steps that the researcher followed while designing the case study. These steps were outlined in relation to the design of the two pilot studies and actual study data. The first five steps were (1) establishing the central research question, developing guiding research questions, and selecting a case study approach, (2) selecting a theoretical framework and identifying propositions of the theory that would act as a conceptual comparison for the study, (3) identifying units of analysis under investigation, (4) selection of cases, and (5) instrumentation: linking the data to the propositions. Steps six and seven integrated two pilot studies that were conducted by the researcher. One pilot study was used in (6) formulating validity and reliability procedures, and the second pilot study was used in (7) data analysis-setting criteria for interpreting the findings.

Step 1. Establishing the Central Research Question and Selecting a Case Study

Approach: A Deductive Approach to Qualitative Case Study Research Chosen For This Study

The central research question the researcher posed was this: What factors influence Indo-Canadian young women in their decision to enter the applied social sciences at the post-secondary level?

Guiding research questions form the structure of this inquiry but do not form the literal questions asked of the participant (Yin, 1994, p. 70). The research questions that the researcher used to structure the inquiry and guide the research were as follows:

1. How do vocational interests develop for Indo-Canadian young women?
2. How does self-efficacy contribute to their vocational interests?
3. What role does socialization in the family, community, and school play in formulating educational and career interests for Indo-Canadian young women?
4. What are the opportunity structures and support systems perceived by Indo-Canadian young women?
5. What are the barriers that Indo-Canadian young women perceive in their career decision-making processes and how do they manage barriers?
6. How does participating or viewing others (role models) participating in relevant educational and career activities contribute to their experience of self-efficacy in career decision making?
7. What are the outcome expectations that Indo-Canadian young women have of engaging in their career choice?

Prior to engaging in the research process, the researcher must select to engage in a deductive or an inductive case study (Yin, 1994). An inductive process, such as an exploratory case study, requires the researcher to engage in a process of conceptualizing and working with the data to derive a general principle from a specific case. It is concerned with establishing the parts of the case to try to create a whole framework to conceptualize the data by seeing what theory emerges based on the data. Within an

inductive case study, there is no pre-established theory with which to compare and contrast one's results.

A deductive case study, such as a descriptive case, is based on applying a general theoretical proposition to a particular case to see if that proposition will hold. A process of abduction is applied to a descriptive case in which the whole case is conceptualized in relation to a theory, and then parts of the whole case are broken down to see what types of patterns emerge (Patton & McMahon, 1999). Abduction still requires a process of lateral thinking and it is not as linear as it appears. However, using a deductive approach is more concerned with finding patterns and relationships among the data in relation to a pre-established theory.

A descriptive case study, based on a deductive framework of conceptualizing research, has been selected as the method for this study. A descriptive case study requires the researcher to begin with a descriptive theory stipulated from the literature (Yin, 1994). From the theory, one can illustrate a set of propositions that covers the depth and scope of the case under study. The descriptive theory that the researcher used was the social cognitive career decision-making theory developed by Lent, Brown, & Hackett (1994). A descriptive case study approach draws on a theory in the literature that has established descriptive theoretic patterns. Selecting a descriptive case study approach allows a deductive process to be applied to the analysis of the data. The case study inquiry benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis based on a theory established within the literature (Yin, 1994). The intent of a descriptive case study approach is to see if the patterns that emerge within the data fit the theoretical propositions under consideration.

Step 2. Selecting a Theoretical Framework and Identifying Propositions of the Theory that would Act as a Conceptual Comparison for the Study

A theoretical framework is derived from the researcher's orientation or stance that is brought to the studies (Merriam, 2001). A researcher's interpretations are based on the data collected, which are influenced by the theoretical framework. Whenever a researcher is conceptualizing data, he/she is also in the process of interpreting it. Qualitative research requires interpreting data and findings from a theoretical orientation. Researchers need to state their theoretical orientation in an explicit manner prior to starting the research and this is important to establish. Conceptualizing the data based on a pre-determined theory prevents the researcher from interpreting the data based on their own personal worldview (Merriam, 2001).

The researcher selected the social cognitive career theory as the theoretical framework to frame the study for four reasons (Lent et. al., 1994). First, the theory explores the process by which career decisions are made using self-efficacy as a base and consequently addressing the guiding research questions that the researcher had established. Second, it also offers a constructivist framework from which to view individuals. Viewing individuals as being proactive shapers of their environment fits for the cognitive mechanisms that the researcher wanted to explicate behind the Indo-Canadian young women's career decision process. Third, contextual factors were also addressed as being important, which differed from previous theoretical frameworks in the career literature and were an aspect of the guiding research questions. Fourth, a unified theoretical orientation was developed within the theory in which propositions were presented to organize existing findings and guide future research. The researcher thought

that the theoretical propositions based within the framework would best suit as a comparison for the study under investigation.

The propositions based on the social cognitive career theory drew attention to what would be examined through the scope of the study and helped to make the study a bounded case. The propositions formed the conceptual comparison with which the results of the study could be compared. The following propositions based on the social cognitive theory are the main areas explored within the case study:

1. An individual's occupational or academic interests are reflective of his or her concurrent self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations (Lent et al., 1994, 2000).
2. An individual's occupational interests also are influenced by his or her occupationally relevant abilities, but this relation is mediated by one's self-efficacy beliefs (Lent et al., 1994, 2000).
3. Self-efficacy beliefs affect choice goals and actions both directly and indirectly (Lent et al., 1994, 2000).
4. Outcome expectations affect choice goals and actions both directly and indirectly (Lent et al., 1994, 2000).
5. The relation of interests to choice goals will be moderated by opportunity structures and support systems. Interests and choice goals will be more strongly connected when opportunity and support are perceived to be high rather than low. Conversely, these relations will be attenuated when perceived barriers are high versus low (Lent et al., 1994, 2000).

6. People will attempt to enter occupations or academic fields that are consonant with their choice goals provided that they are committed to their choice goal and that their goal is stated in clear terms, proximal to the point of entry (Lent et al., 1994, 2000).
7. The relation of choice goals to entry behaviours will be moderated by opportunity structures and support systems. Goal behaviour relations will be stronger when opportunity and support are perceived to be high rather than low. Conversely, these relations will be attenuated when perceived barriers are high rather than low (Lent et al., 1994, 2000).
8. Self-efficacy beliefs influence career and academic performance both directly and indirectly through their effect on performance goals (Lent et al., 1994, 2000).
9. Self-efficacy beliefs derive from performance accomplishments, vicarious learning, social persuasion, and physiological reactions (emotional arousal) in relation to particular educational and occupationally relevant activities (Lent et al., 1994, 2000).
10. Outcome expectations are generated through direct and vicarious experiences with educational and occupationally relevant activities (Lent et al., 1994, 2000).

The intent of the research was to identify whether the social cognitive career theory could act as a basis for conceptual comparison to study Indo-Canadian women and their career decision-making process.

Step 3. Identifying Units of Analysis

The unit of analysis is defined as the central concept that will be studied and used as the basis of comparison in the analysis of the data (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). The unit of analysis in this study was the career decision-making process of Indo-Canadian young women. The embedded units of analysis are cognitive mechanisms that consisted

of self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and goals, and contextual factors that consisted of barriers and supports experienced by participants in career decision making. The embedded units of analysis were determined by recognizing the embedded units of analysis within the social cognitive career theory and ensuring that the same embedded units were applied in the study to help aid in consistency of data analysis.

Step 4. Selection of Cases

Case studies can use single- or multiple-case designs. Researchers use single-case studies to look at selected cases that are unique in some way (Janesick, 1994). For example, if one were to study individuals with a rare disease, few or no other cases may be available for replication. In this event, the researcher is limited to single-case designs. However, a multiple-case study explores cases considered typical when several cases of a particular event can be studied.

In this research, the researcher conducted a multiple-case study of the various factors that contribute to the career decision-making process of Indo-Canadian young women. Many young Indo-Canadian women attend university, and the context of the university environment presupposes their engagement in the career decision-making process. Conducting a multiple case study was manageable within these parameters. Two separate departments within the university, the School of Child and Youth Care (CYC) and School of Social Work, within the Faculty of Applied Social Sciences were sought out as sites for participants of this study to create variation in chosen careers.

It is important to study men and women independently, since gender could have an impact on how individuals approach the educational decision-making process (Patton & McMahon, 1999). The researcher chose to restrict the study to Indo-Canadian young

women since detailed study regarding their educational decision-making process has never been examined in the manner in which the researcher conceptualized the study. The limited research that existed on women and career planning focussed primarily on women representing the Canadian or American majority, whose experiences could be very different from those of Indo-Canadian young women.

For the selection of participants, the researcher used a criterion case selection strategy. A criterion case selection strategy refers to choosing cases because of their similarity to central characteristics of interest to the researcher (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). Prior to entering the field, selection of participants for the study was pre-determined based on creating a sample by which within-group differences could be explored. The selection of participants included the following criteria to create a relatively homogeneous sample:

1. Each Indo-Canadian young woman would have completed her kindergarten to grade 12 schooling in Canada, which would identify the individual as being a second-generation Indo-Canadian (Zhou, 1997).
2. Both parents of each participant would have been born and raised in India.
3. Each participant needed to be enrolled in her third or fourth year of an academic program and be between the ages of 20 and 25.
4. Each participant needed to be enrolled in undergraduate programs focussed in the applied social sciences. The applied social sciences included Social Work and Child and Youth Care programs. These academic programs focussed on preparing students for assuming a particular career role within the social services sector by incorporating various practicum experiences into their program of studies.

Data was collected by surveying seven full-time Indo-Canadian young women attending university who were enrolled in either Social Work or Child and Youth Care (CYC) undergraduate degree programs. They were all of the same religious background and were Sikh young women. The researcher intended to draw a specific sample of young women from particular academic programs to reflect a purposive sample of Indo-Canadian young women, as it served the objectives of the research. Participants selected for the research were between the ages of 20 and 25, which is considered to be young adulthood.

A poster was developed and displayed on various bulletin boards on campus outlining the study. The researcher also obtained permission from various departments in the applied social sciences to place an advertisement regarding the research in student mailboxes in order to increase the research base. Placing advertisements in student mailboxes only elicited one response to the ad. The most influential method by which to gain participants was by randomly approaching various individuals whom the researcher would meet on campus.

At first, the researcher was hesitant to approach individuals, she was concerned about not receiving a favourable reception. She was cognizant of the fact that the individual's level of ethnic identification would determine if an individual would appreciate being approached by a researcher studying Indo-Canadian issues. The researcher was aware that the level of ethnic identification would determine if an individual would be comfortable being acknowledged for her difference. An individual who did not have a strong sense of ethnic identification might not want to be acknowledged as different from the mainstream, whereas, an individual who had a high degree of ethnic identification

would not necessarily mind being acknowledged for her differences as she would take pride in her cultural heritage and in the fact that she was different (Phinney, 1993).

Fortunately, all the individuals received the researcher favourably, were all comfortable in their difference and took pride in their cultural heritage, which created a select sample to work with.

Based on feedback from all the participants, the researcher believed that approaching individuals at random was most effective due to four reasons. First, they had the chance to meet the researcher and assess whether they found the researcher trustworthy. Second, due to the lack of Indo-Canadian women in the applied social sciences, individuals perceived the researcher as being able to understand their line of work. The third reason that individuals were open to the researcher approaching them was based on the commonality of a shared cultural background. Fourth, based on the researcher's level of graduate education, the researcher also represented to the participants a cultural model of "success." According to the achievement goals and value placed on education held by the South Asian community and by the Indo-Canadian young women, the researcher was able to establish credibility with participants based on having completed one level of graduate school and striving to complete the next level.

The researcher approached 87 individuals at random, out of which 15 individuals expressed interest in participating in the research. Out of the 15, 9 people qualified for the study, and 7 people completed both sets of interviews and the questionnaires. After the first interview, two of the original nine people withdrew. One of the two people who withdrew decided to do so only after viewing her interview transcript. After reading the interview transcript, the participant recognized the depth of her responses and wanted to

maintain the transcript for her own personal records, but did not want it used in the research. In the end, the researcher had a sample of seven people to draw from who qualified for the study. The researcher also asked the research participants who volunteered for the study to refer peers who they thought would be willing to participate in the study (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). Asking for referrals elicited one participant who ended up becoming the seventh participant for the study.

All interviews took place in an office provided to the researcher by the department on campus to ensure privacy for the participant. All participants had a copy of the advertisement, and prior to the first and second interviews, the researcher went over the consent form which was approved by the University's Human Research Ethics Committee (see Appendix G). Participants were informed that their responses would be tape-recorded and that their tapes would be discarded and interview transcripts shredded five years after the first publication of the research. The participants' anonymity was protected as they were given pseudonyms in the final report. In the majority of cases, the participants wanted to create their own pseudonym, which then was used in subsequent case reports.

Many of the participants had looked up various qualitative studies in the library on their own accord prior to committing to be part of the research process, thus they were able to make an educated decision for themselves regarding participating in the research and under what conditions they were willing to do so. Subsequently, participants were aware of the different styles granted to the researcher to document the findings. A negotiation process between researcher and participant ensued in which the participant discussed how she wanted the data of the interview and questionnaires to be depicted in

the report write-up. Many of the participants asked the researcher to refrain from making direct quotes from their interview transcript in their individual case reports in Chapter 4. They also personally requested the researcher to refrain from including the questionnaires along with their case report. They were concerned about being identifiable, as they represented a minority within a minority group based on their selection of career choice.

The researcher obtained permission to use quotes that were common language used by all the young women in their interview transcripts, as the information would then not be identifiable. Words such as “obligation,” “breaking my parents in,” or phrases such as “this is what I am meant to be doing” were used consistently across all seven participants, and were thus maintained in Chapter 4. They understood that the faculty that they were enrolled in would not be disguised as it was central to understanding their career decision-making process, but that the general geographic area of the university that they attended would not be documented in the study.

Step 5. Instrumentation- Linking Data to Propositions

An important strength of the case study research method involves using multiple sources and techniques in the data gathering process (Yin, 1994). The researcher determines in advance what evidence to gather and what analytical techniques to use with the data to answer the research questions. The data gathered were qualitative in nature. Presented below is a description of three qualitative instruments used in the research. The first instrument was the questionnaire, the second instrument was the career information brochure given to participants during the interview, and the third instrument was the one-on-one interview.

The questionnaire is a two-part modified non-standardized questionnaire. Prior to the first interview, each of the participants was given the questionnaire and asked to complete it at home. After completion of the first interview, the researcher asked participants to hand the questionnaires in and specified to the participants that they might ask for any clarification needed. The researcher informed each participant that she might ask questions prior to handing in the questionnaire. The researcher reviewed the questionnaires after transcribing the first interview, compared the findings of the questionnaires to the interview, and formulated questions to clarify ideas for the second interview.

The questionnaire consisted of two parts, and it took the participant approximately 20 minutes to complete both sections at home. The first part was called the Factors that Influence Career Decision Making Questionnaire (see Appendix A). The second part of the questionnaire was called the Functions of Coping Efficacy Questionnaire (see Appendix B). The first part of the questionnaire was a modified version of Julien's questionnaire (1997) entitled *The Search for Career-Related Information by Adolescents*, which was generated on the work of Baker (1985), Jepsen (1989), Kidd (1984), Wilks (1986), and Young (1991). Julien's questionnaire consisted of a chart and a series of questions that were used in a quantitative study with high school students. Julien used a five-point Likert scale and had a series of questions that were also based on a Likert scale response. The researcher modified Julien's questionnaire to fit the qualitative study by not using any of her formal questions and by maintaining Julien's chart, but only using a three-point Likert scale. The researcher also added the following categories to the chart: volunteer experience, courses related to field of interest, community members (ethnic

community), career placement services on campus, siblings, instructors, co-op experiences, and the Internet. The researcher also included a subjective column as an addition to the chart in which the individual documents how the source of information was used and how it was helpful in her career decision-making process. The researcher modified the questionnaire to address the factors that affect career decision making with university students that would fit for a qualitative study. The second part of the modified non-standardized questionnaire, the Functions of Coping Efficacy Questionnaire, was based on the tenets of the social cognitive career theory (Lent et al., 2000) and the work of Hackett and Betz (1981). The researcher considered the theoretical concept of self-efficacy and generated this part of the questionnaire based on the theorists who have explored it.

The interview questions formulated by the researcher are found in Appendix C. The source of the descriptive case study interview relies on the theoretical propositions of the social cognitive career theory. It was a semi-structured interview in which the questions were targeted to focus on the case study topic. The interview took approximately one-and-a-half hours to complete and consisted of 12 questions. One week after the first interview, the researcher scheduled a second interview with the participant, which was expected to last up to one hour. After the first interview, the researcher transcribed the tape and sent a copy of the transcription to the participant via email. This procedure allowed the participant time to review the transcript prior to the second interview, to check for veracity. The researcher went over the transcript, filled in the case study notes (see Appendix E), and compared the responses to how participants filled out their questionnaires and answered questions regarding a specific document that the researcher

would have them analyze. The researcher then asked for any clarification regarding their responses during the second scheduled interviews. The case study notes followed the format specified by Miles and Huberman (1984).

The researcher tape-recorded all the interviews and transcribed the tapes within two to three days after the initial interview. The transcription of the first interview ranged from 16 to 26 pages in length, typed in 10-point font, and single-spaced per participant. The second transcription of the interview ranged from 9-14 pages in length, typed in 10-point font, and single spaced. After the second interview, the researcher transcribed it, emailed it to the participant, and asked for any feedback or changes that she wanted made. Only one out of the seven participants wanted to make a few minor changes to her own transcript. In two cases, the researcher chose to omit material from the participants' transcripts, as the information provided could place the participant in a vulnerable position. The first interview elicited the most information and demonstrated both breadth and depth in their responses. The second interview was a review of the main concepts explored in the first interview.

Documents from the career and counselling center on campus that were also part of the interview process are found in Appendix D. During the first interview, the researcher presented a basic pamphlet produced by the career and counselling center of the university that was distributed and available to all students. The researcher presented this pamphlet to the young Indo-Canadian women. After they had a chance to peruse the documents, the researcher presented them with six questions to answer. The questions took approximately 15 minutes to answer. The researcher tape-recorded their responses and transcribed these. The documents that the university produces reflect specific

messages and objectives regarding various supports offered to help students with career decision making and personal barriers. The young women looked at the document and reflected on internal or external barriers that could influence their career decision-making process. Documents are useful to the researcher as they represent a stable source that can be reviewed repeatedly after the interviews are over. However, a weakness in using documents is that the researcher exhibits a bias concerning the selection of documents to be shown to the participant (Yin, 1994).

Step 6. Formulating Validity and Reliability Procedures-Data Analysis Procedures

Throughout the design phase, researchers must ensure that the study is well constructed. First, the researcher tested the design of the study by engaging in 2 separate pilot studies. The first pilot study was conducted to inform the researcher of how to structure the interview process. The researcher also built in measures that the study was well constructed by ensuring internal validity, external validity, and reliability.

The purpose of a pilot study is to refine data collection plans in relation to the content and the procedures to be followed and to enhance the internal validity of the research instruments used within the study (Yin, 1994). The first pilot study was used more informally to assist the researcher to develop appropriate lines of inquiry. The researcher was able to ask the participant for feedback regarding difficulty or ambiguity experienced with any of the questions, and questions could be discarded or reworded as a result. It was helpful to engage in a pilot study as the researcher was able to assess whether each question posed would give an adequate range of responses and to establish that the responses generated could be interpreted in terms of the original research questions that were central to the study. Engaging in the pilot study provided the

researcher with a clear definition of the focus of the study, and it helped to ensure that the data collected was consistent with the projected research question for the study.

The first pilot study was conducted by interviewing one individual to sort out and clarify data collection procedures prior to beginning the final data collection. The individual was a Sikh Indo-Canadian woman who fell within the parameters of participants for the study. Since she lived outside the Pacific Northwest, the interview was conducted over the telephone. The questionnaire and the documents were mailed out to her, on which she was requested to comment. The researcher was unable to tape-record the interview based on not having a speakerphone. The interview lasted for one hour and fifteen minutes.

Suggestions from this participant were incorporated into various aspects of the data collection procedure and particularly the interview. She had stated that she preferred questions that were more specific and less oriented on “feelings” and more focussed on cognitions. Accordingly, the researcher reviewed the feeling-oriented questions and made a few adjustments. The feeling-oriented questions were revised as they were supplemented with questions exploring the thought process behind the emotion. The individual who participated in the pilot found that the questionnaires were clear and that she had no questions about the wording or what was expected of her. The information gleaned from the interview and questionnaire reflected issues that were pertinent to the research question of exploring the factors that contributed to her career decision-making process. The researcher found that the embedded units of analysis of the study, the cognitive mechanisms and contextual factors, were also communicated to the researcher. The instruments selected to engage in the research design were appropriate. The

individual also communicated to the researcher that she felt comfortable with the interview process and that she felt that sufficient time was provided for her to reflect on and answer each question. She also mentioned that she liked having the questionnaires prior to the first interview as it allowed her more time to process information. Subsequent participants of the study were also given a set of the questionnaires to complete prior to the first interview, and many of the participants stated to the researcher their appreciation for being able to complete the questionnaire at their own convenience.

One of the advantages of conducting a pilot study was that it gave advance warning as to possible methodological dilemmas that the researcher could face (Yin, 1994). In regard to methodological issues, the participant had mentioned to the researcher that the researcher needed to be clear regarding how Indo-Canadian would be defined for the study. From her perspective, she thought that the researcher would have difficulty finding individuals who would fit the sampling definition, as many South Asian parents who immigrated to Canada also might have been born and brought up in Britain, Trinidad, or Africa. The parents would have ancestral ties to India and actively practice the religious base. The parents would raise their children in Canada in respect to religious and cultural practices based in India, and as such, the young women would self-identify as Indo-Canadian. This was a dilemma that the researcher had to face and to make a decision regarding sampling criteria.

The rationale for the researcher not changing the sampling criteria was that the researcher did not want to situate the research in an essentialist position by adopting a pan-ethnic label for representing the Indo-Canadian young women. For example, Indo-Canadian could incorporate Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs. Allowing individuals to self-

identify for the study would be equivalent to stating that all Indo-Canadian women were the same regardless of differences in cultural, religious or historical influences, thus creating an essentialist perspective in the research. Within-group differences were cited in the research as an aspect that was important to consider when engaging in minority research (Ponterotto & Casas, 1991). The researcher wanted to explore within-group differences in the research and maintained the original sampling criteria.

The second methodological aspect that the individual shared with the researcher, prior to the researcher entering the field, was to recognize that it might be difficult to maintain participants in the research because discussing personal issues to be used in a public forum might not be perceived favourably by the participants. Accordingly, the individual from my pilot study pointed out to the researcher questions that she felt would be considered too personal to answer, and they were omitted from the interview set of questions. The other aspect that the individual mentioned to the researcher was to structure the questions in the interview from the most general question to more personal questions at the end of the interview to account for an increase of rapport. The researcher incorporated her suggestion and found that as participants developed more trust with the researcher, they were better able to address the more personal questions.

The third methodological dilemma the individual from the pilot pointed out was that it would be important to select participants who were not directly related to the researcher's ethnic community. It would help to maintain confidentiality for the future participants of the study as the researcher's and the participants' social worlds would not intersect. During recruitment of participants, this aspect did come up as an important aspect for some of the research participants. Since the ethnic community could be

perceived by some participants as a barrier to their career decision-making process, preserving participants' anonymity would be crucial, as the participants already represented a minority within a minority group who had chosen a career that did not represent the norm. As such, the participants selected for the study were Sikh Indo-Canadian young women, who represented the same cultural background as the researcher of the study, but not of the same religious background. The researcher engaged in research with an ethnic community of which the researcher was not directly a part.

According to Yin (1994), internal validity demonstrates that certain conditions lead to other conditions. The proof of internal validity requires the use of multiple pieces of evidence from multiple sources to uncover convergent lines of inquiry. Yin (1994) believed that the researcher needs to corroborate interview data with information from other sources. Hence, the researcher also used documents and a comprehensive questionnaire for the participant as a form of triangulating the data. Second, consistency within the data is found through pattern matching, when the researcher notices consistency of patterns across cases that enhances internal validity. Third, a purposive sample, specifically the criterion based sampling approach, facilitates internal validity as it increases the ability to represent a phenomenon. Fourth, giving the interview transcripts back to the participants and asking them to check the veracity of their statements also helped to enhance internal validity.

External validity reflects the generalizability of findings beyond the immediate case or cases to an established theory. The more variations in places, people, and procedures a case study can withstand and still yield the same findings, the more external validity accrues to the tested theory (Yin, 1994). In the study, maximum variation was

not the primary focus for selection of the sample. The only aspect that varied was that the participants were students enrolled in two different departments within the applied social sciences. However, Yin pointed out that one makes generalization of results from a multiple case study to theory rather than to populations. If the propositions of the theory hold for each case, then external validity has been established through analytical generalization, when the researcher strives to generalize a particular set of results to a broader theory (Yin, 1994).

Reliability refers to the extent to which research findings can be replicated. Reliability is problematic in the social sciences because of the difficulty of finding new situations that exactly match the original study (Merriam, 2001). Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested that researchers think instead of “consistency” of the results obtained from the data. Merriam (2001, p. 206) suggested that researchers need to see if the results are consistent with the data collected. The case study design ensures that procedures are well documented and can be repeated by another researcher given the same data set to analyze (Yin, 1994). Establishing external audits and establishing researcher bias can help check for “consistency” of the results of the data (Cresswell, 1998).

In this study, the researcher established two inter rater reliability checks. Inter rater reliability checks refer to what a number of judges observe regarding a certain phenomenon (Kvale, 1996). The researcher had two second-generation Sikh graduate students who were familiar with working with qualitative data as inter-reliability checks. The researcher provided them with 25% of each interview transcript and had all the statements grouped into pre-defined domains. The statements represented a balanced cross-section of each category that they needed to code. There were between 40 to 50

statements per interview transcript that were extracted for the inter rater reliability checkers. The researcher asked each coder to look at each statement within each domain and state whether they saw an occurrence (+) or a non-occurrence (-) for each statement (Kvale, 1996). In one case, there was 100% agreement, and in the second case, there was 98% agreement.

The second manner in which reliability was maintained was by stipulating the theoretical framework from which the researcher analyzed the data at the beginning of the research process. The reason that the inter rater reliability checks were high was that the domains for analysis were pre-defined and communicated to the checkers. Having pre-set definitions formulated from the social cognitive career theory (Lent, Hacket, & Brown, 1994) for each domain of analysis ensured agreement over the meaning of terms and shaped their interpretations of the statements. The third manner in which reliability was maintained was through maintaining an audit trail of all of the flow charts that represented the various patterns of statements within the interviews.

Step 7. Pilot Study—Data Analysis

The second pilot study that was conducted for this study was done as a pretest to data analysis and acted as a formal “dress rehearsal” in which the intended data plan was used faithfully as a final test run (Yin, 1994). The purpose for conducting a pilot study at this point in the research was to clarify data analysis techniques. It provided the researcher with an opportunity to modify the procedures if necessary, based on the experience gained from analyzing a complete case in which formal methods were applied throughout the process. Yin (1994) discussed how engaging in a full analysis of a case can be beneficial to the researcher because the researcher can identify practical problems

that the researcher might encounter when following the research analysis procedure. Revising data analysis procedures can help in designing a case study protocol for analysis.

Upon completion of finding six participants who qualified for the study, the researcher recognized that she needed to have an additional participant and interview to work with to determine if the criteria for data analysis would work for the remaining six cases. The researcher found another participant, who was involved in the second pilot, and conducted a full interview with her, along with ensuring that the document analysis and questionnaires were completed. The original criteria or protocol for data analysis included four steps. The first step was to code the transcript according to the pre-defined domains of the social cognitive career theory, which included contextual affordance, structure of opportunity, support systems, learning experiences, self-efficacy, outcome expectations, interests, choice goals, and choice actions (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994). The second step was to represent the patterns of responses within the interview transcript for each domain of the social cognitive career theory through flow charts. The third step was to review the questionnaires and case study notes and compare this to the flow charts to check for consistency. The last step was to represent the patterns depicted in the flow charts in written form.

Upon engaging in the data analysis process for the pilot study, a few aspects needed to be added to the original protocol. The methodological dilemmas that the researcher faced included trying to create 11 flow charts on a computer program that was limited in capability to perform the function. Subsequently, the researcher purchased a

computer program called SMARTDRAW to aid in creating the 11 flow charts needed to represent the data per interview transcript.

The second difficulty that the researcher encountered was how many levels to incorporate into each flow chart, as the desire to keep it clear was paramount, but to find a manner of doing so that would not lose any of the data was also important. In the end, the researcher decided to limit each flow chart to represent four levels that would provide a simple layout for the reader. The four levels were labeled domain, factor, sub-factor, and item.

The third difficulty was writing the results for each section in a manner that would not repeat information that had been mentioned in previous domains of analysis. The reason that the repetition would occur was because all the domains in the social cognitive career theory were interconnected in some manner. Subsequent case reports of the remaining six participants were condensed and consisted of between 12 to 15 pages. Only salient features of each domain of the social cognitive theory were documented. The interconnection between domains was maintained, as it became apparent while doing the analysis for the pilot study that central concepts would automatically be present and repeated within various domains.

The fourth difficulty the researcher encountered while engaging in the pilot was from taking all the statements within an interview that reflected a particular domain and representing that information in flow charts. The researcher had to create an intermediary step in which a table was created that would outline the various factors and sub-factors to help guide the analysis. The fifth difficulty was to make a decision whether to include all the flow charts along with each case write-up. The pilot included all the flow charts that

represented different sections of the interview. According to Yin (1994), the report of the pilot is expected to be explicit. The researcher decided that for subsequent case reports, flow charts were used to conceptualize the data and aid in organizing and documenting the findings, but were not included with each case. The reason being that it would amount to approximately 72 flow charts for the reader to view, which might be seen as overwhelming. The researcher maintained copies of the flow charts as part of the case study notes, which were subsumed as part of the audit trail.

Data analysis of the pilot study.

The first phase of the data analysis consisted of creating a predefined method or protocol by which to conduct the data analysis. The raw data of the interview transcripts were examined in order to find linkages between the research phenomena and the outcomes, with reference to the original research questions. The table of analysis (see Appendix F) outlines the various domains based on the social cognitive career theory that the researcher noted as the researcher coded the transcripts. The predefined domains of the social cognitive career theory included (1) contextual affordance, (2) structure of opportunity and support systems, (3) learning experiences, (4) self-efficacy, (5) outcome expectations, (6) interests, (7) choice goals, and (8) choice actions.

The researcher used a “top down” analysis in the study of the transcript (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). In a “top down” analysis, the research theory (in this case the theory of social cognitive career choice) directs the researcher’s attention to the domains of interest. The researcher went through each transcript doing a line-by-line analysis of the data. Each domain in the social cognitive career theory was colour coded. The researcher selected a domain in the social cognitive career theory and went through the whole transcript looking for statements that reflected the domain that would fit how

Lent, Hackett, and Brown (1994) defined it. As statements that would fit the definition of a particular domain were found, the researcher highlighted the statement in the corresponding pre-established color. After the entire transcript for a particular domain was completed, the researcher cut and pasted the statements and placed all the statements together.

The second phase involved the researcher identifying factors in the interview statements that were reflected in a particular domain (Schensul, Schensul, & LeCompte, 1999). Top down analysis allowed the researcher to identify specific domains of interest prior to reading the transcript. As the researcher collected information from the transcripts according to the various domains, each domain was broken down or “unpacked” into factors. For example, one domain identified was support in the family. Within the domain of support in the family, various factors were expressed by the participant Meena from the second pilot study, that contributed to her perception of how she elicited support from her parents over time regarding her career choice. These factors were noted and categorized into the appropriate domain reflected in Table 1.

Table 1

Domain and Factor Analysis Table

DOMAIN	FACTOR 1	FACTOR 2	FACTOR 3	FACTOR 4
Support: Elicit support from family over time	Establish a sense of independence at an early stage	Defy parents in a respectful manner	Include parents in career activities	Emphasis on personal satisfaction

During the third phase of data analysis the researcher subdivided each factor into sub-factors. The sub-factors needed to be illustrated to represent the factor. The following table was used to help organize the sub-factors that emerged within Meena's transcript statements for the domain of support within the family.

Table 2

Domain, Factor, and Sub-Factor Analysis Table

Domain:	Sub-Factor # 1	Sub-Factor # 2	Sub-Factor # 3	Sub-Factor # 4
Support: Elicit support from family over time				
Factor # 1 Include parents/family in career activities	Action Research within the ethnic community	Include parents in your job search	Only two sub-factors mentioned for this factor by Meena	Only two sub-factors mentioned for this factor by Meena
Factor # 2 Defy parents in a respectful manner	Restrict amount of time spent talking with parents regarding career choice	Make a decision and defend choice in an "open" discussion in which it is within your control as the discussion has been pre-planned (Present Current and future plan)	Control type of information provided to the parent regarding career choice	Apparent compromise (try out what you want AND enroll in a program that your parents want you too- after one year demonstrate to your parents why your choice is a better one) Rational decision

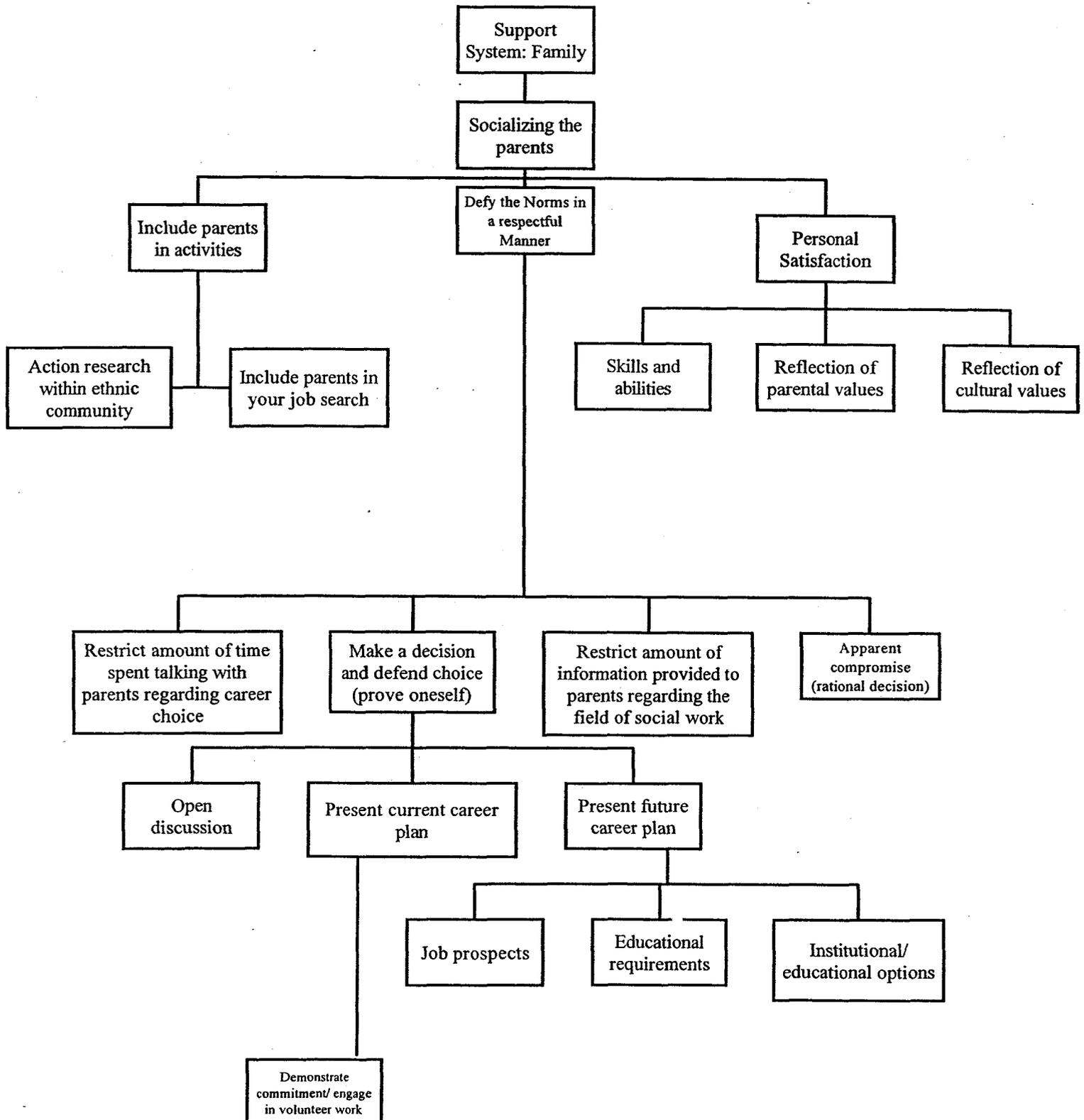
Domain: Support: Elicit support from family over time	Sub-Factor # 1	Sub-Factor # 2	Sub-Factor # 3	Sub-Factor # 4
Factor# 3. Emphasis on personal satisfaction	Skills and abilities are strong in this area	Career choice is a reflection of parental values	Career choice a reflection of cultural values	Only three sub-factors for this factor reported by Meena
Factor # 4. Establish a sense of independence at an early stage	Factor not mentioned by Meena, therefore no sub-factors identified	Factor not mentioned by Meena, therefore no sub-factors identified	Factor not mentioned by Meena, therefore no sub-factors identified	Factor not mentioned by Meena, therefore no sub-factors identified

After each domain was explored and the factors and sub-factors identified for one particular transcript starting with Meena, the researcher proceeded to the next participant transcript and completed the same process again. The researcher saw if new factors emerged and which factors were repeated. If factors were repeated, the researcher would maintain the factor in the table, but if new factors emerged, the researcher added those factors to the table and documented the findings. Upon completion of the coding and categorization of responses, the researcher created a flow chart of each domain and corresponding factors and sub-factors per participant transcript.

The domain was listed as the main heading for the first level of the flow chart, followed by the factors identified on the second level of the flow chart, and completed by the third level of the flow chart outlining the sub-factors. For example, for the pilot participant Meena, the researcher created the following flow chart to record how Meena conceptualized support in the family (see Figure 1). Support in the family and socializing the parents was the main domain outlined in level one of the flow chart. The second level of the flow chart outlined the specific factors that Meena had mentioned, such as, include parents in activities, defy parental norms in a respectful manner, and emphasize personal satisfaction. The third level of the flow chart consisted of the sub-factors that reflected the more specific nature of each factor for Meena. For example, for the factor to include parents in activities, the two sub-factors identified were to engage in action research within the ethnic community and to include parents in your job search. Further discussion of the flowcharts are presented in the pilot study analysis in which an analysis of the pilot study participant data is presented.

Flow Chart: Meena

Figure 1. Support System: Family.



The fourth phase of analyzing the data was for the researcher to do a within-case analysis. For a within-case analysis, the researcher categorizes participant responses into the appropriate domain and identifies various factors of that particular domain. The fourth step consists of comparing the data of each participant to the various domains in Lent et. al. social cognitive career theory. The process of decision making was broken down per domain and documented accordingly. An in-depth look at the process of the participant's decision-making process provided "thick description" of the phenomenon under study (Merriam, 2001). The following pilot case report of Meena represents a within-case analysis that incorporates all the flow charts per domain of the social cognitive career theory.

In the fifth phase of the data analysis the researcher analyzed the interviews, questionnaires, and case study notes for patterns of responses. Based on the participants' request to not have their questionnaires appear in the study, those questionnaires were subsumed under the researcher's case study notes. For each interview question and all the questionnaires, the researcher compared the responses of all the participants in an attempt to search for common patterns. The researcher described the patterns that emerged in the data and made connections to the propositions in the social cognitive career theory. Ratios of factors within domains across cases were documented and integrated into the discussion of findings. The main patterns would be documented by stipulating that x out of seven participants had demonstrated a specific pattern within a domain (Bachor, 2000). The researcher used a chart to help keep track of the patterns that emerged across

transcripts. An example of the chart representing a domain across cases is documented below in Table 3.

Each participant was listed in the table outlining the particular domain under consideration. The example provided in Table 3 was support in the family. The factors were noted and a documentation of which participant reflected a particular factor was represented by an X in the box. Patterns could then be found that existed across cases for each domain of analysis of the social cognitive career theory (Lent et al., 2000).

Table 3

Domain and Factor Cross-Case Analysis Table

DOMAIN	FACTOR 1	FACTOR 2	FACTOR 3	FACTOR 4
Support: Elicit support from family over time	Establish a sense of independence at an early stage	Defy parents in a respectful manner	Include parents/family in career activities	Emphasis on personal satisfaction
MEENA		X	X	X
JAZMINE	X	X	X	X
MIYA	X		X	X
REKHA	X	X	X	X
SIAMA	X	X	X	
REENA	X	X	X	X
KEISHA	X		X	X

The fifth phase consisted of doing a cross-case comparison of all the domains. The cross-case search for patterns keeps the researcher from reaching premature conclusions. Cross-case analysis divides the data by domain across all cases investigated. The researcher examined the data of each particular domain and the corresponding factors and sub-categories thoroughly. When a pattern from one data type corroborates the evidence from another, the finding is stronger (Yin, 1994). When evidence conflicts, deeper probing of the differences is necessary to identify the cause or source of conflict. The researcher described the common patterns and differences between the participants in relation to the propositions of the social cognitive career theory. In all cases, the researcher tried to treat the evidence fairly to produce analytic conclusions answering the original research question (Yin, 1994).

In the next section, the researcher presents the following eight domains of the social cognitive career theory. The eight domains were (1) contextual affordance, (2) structure of opportunity and support systems, (3) learning experiences, (4) self-efficacy, (5) outcome expectations, (6) interests, (7) choice goals, and (8) choice actions. These domains were used in analyzing the pilot study data from the pilot study participant Meena, who ultimately became one of the seven participants.

Pilot Study: Meena

Domain 1: Contextual Affordance, Socialization

Lent et al. (1994) defined contextual affordance as the individual's personal perception of the environmental factors that affect his or her career development (p. 106). Contextual affordance is distal in nature and acts as a background influence that shapes interests and self-cognition (p. 106). According to Lent et. al., certain contextual features

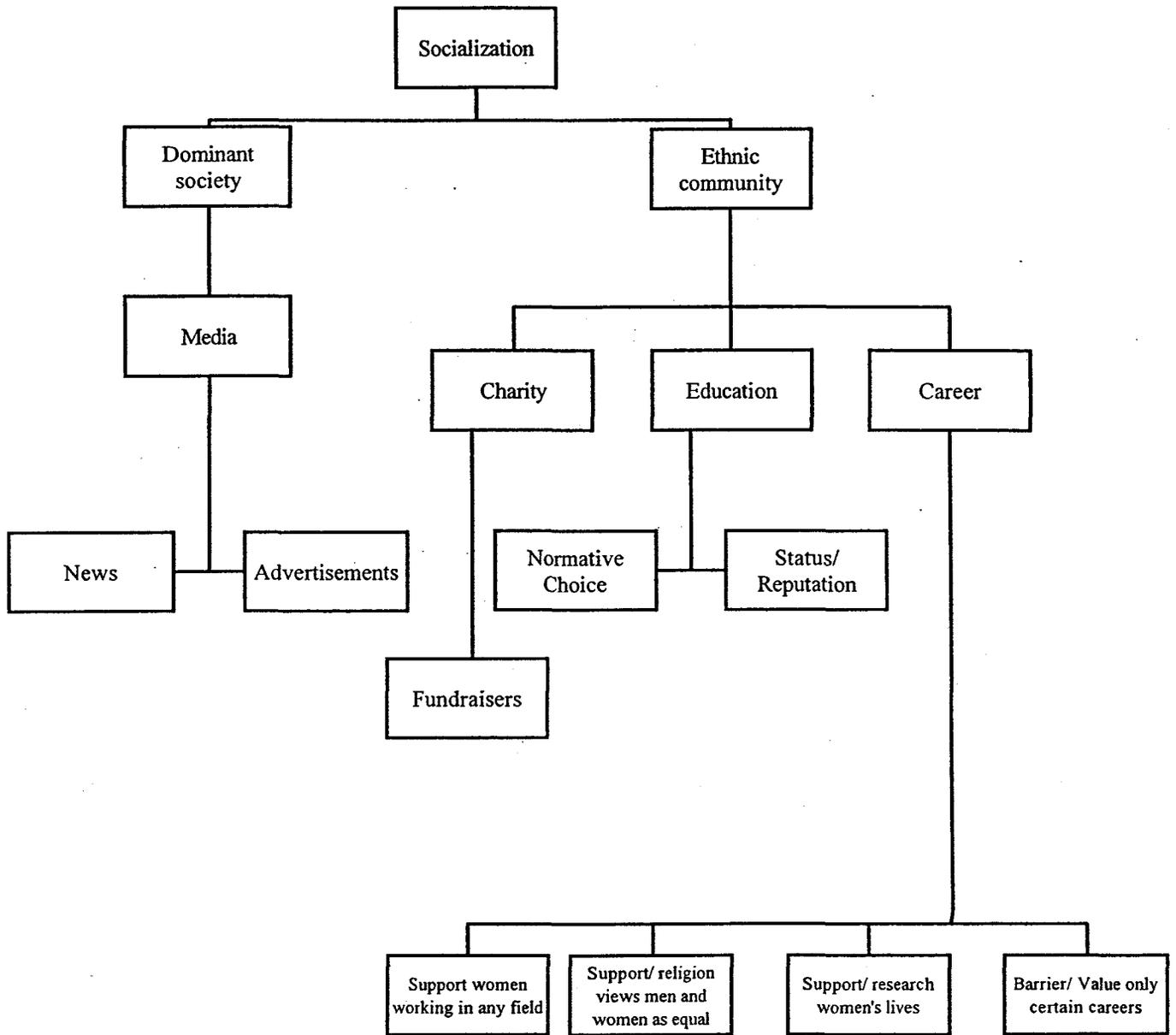
are ever-present, such as family and other social inputs, and play important roles in academic and career progression. The nature of contextual influences may vary over time, but it is important to examine the key contextual background influences affecting young Indo-Canadian women in the third and fourth year of their academic program focussed on the applied social sciences.

The interview participant, Meena, recognized that different social forces had helped shape her academic and career development, but she described them as remaining in the background of her experiences. Therefore, the interview statements were classified as contextual affordance because Meena did not see them as actively shaping her socialization process. She identified four important social systems that had an impact on her socialization: messages from the dominant society, the ethnic community, her family, and her school regarding her role in society. The three primary modes of transmission of messages from each social system to the participant were observation, direct messages, and indirect messages.

The first context of socialization will be termed dominant society (see Figure 2). One's dominant society is the general society within which one operates. Various norms and values are associated with the general population of any society. The primary form of transmission of ideas regarding careers identified by Meena was through the media. For Meena, the media consisted of the news and various advertisements on TV, such as career dot com ads that encouraged individuals to explore career opportunities on the Internet. Meena thought that the advertisements reflected the trend that people of her generation were adopting in conceptualizing career choice. The first central message that

Flow Chart: Meena

Figure 2. Socialization in Dominant Society and Ethnic Community.



Meena identified through the ads was that people need to pick careers that are enjoyable. The second message communicated to her was that people need to be challenged in their profession of choice by seeking career advancement. The third message communicated to Meena through the ads was that people need to be open to the possibility of experiencing many career changes within their lifetimes. By defining a career as multifaceted over a lifetime, she perceived that as one's needs change over the lifespan, one's career expectations also change. She understood that from society's perspective, the difference between a job and a career was related to the level of personal satisfaction and advancement that one may come to experience within a chosen career path.

The second context of socialization is termed ethnic community (see Figure 2). Ethnic community refers to a subsection of society that has its own values and norms by which it operates. Meena's ethnic community was the Sikh community. Her observations about the ethnic community referred to embedded messages within the social system. The messages were so deeply embedded in the ethnic community that Meena was unable to determine exactly how she absorbed them. She identified three main factors within her ethnic community that had a significant impact on her career choice: the emphasis the ethnic community placed on the value of charity, education, and the importance of having a career.

Meena's ethnic community attached a value to being charitable. She stated that the value placed on charity was grounded in the religious teachings of her culture. Through her religious associations, she attended various lectures by guest speakers about different aspects of performing "good service" to all people. Her ethnic community

strongly encouraged all members to take part in helping people in various contexts. The three main groups of people who could be helped were other people within the ethnic community, various groups that existed within the dominant society, and people in third world countries. In all three contexts of helping, her ethnic community emphasized the need to help the less fortunate. Her ethnic community organized various fundraising events, and it was expected that people of all ages would participate. She engaged in various acts of charity from a very young age. Participating in ethnic community events became a central component of her life-course development because it was an inherent value within the community.

Meena's ethnic community also placed a very strong value on every individual receiving an education. The value of education was a message learned through indirect means. The main message transmitted by the community was that all children aimed to pursue higher education and tended to follow normative career choices that her ethnic community held in high regard. The career choices that her ethnic community valued were in the sciences, computing, engineering, business, nursing, and law. These career choices were encouraged for young men and women. The majority of Indo-Canadian youth were expected to pursue sciences, computing, engineering, business, nursing, or law. Consequently, these careers became normative career paths within the ethnic community. The second message communicated to Meena regarding education was that a university degree would ensure higher status within the ethnic community. The third message was that if children pursued higher education, then the parents' reputation would be maintained within the community. Their peers would regard them as good parents.

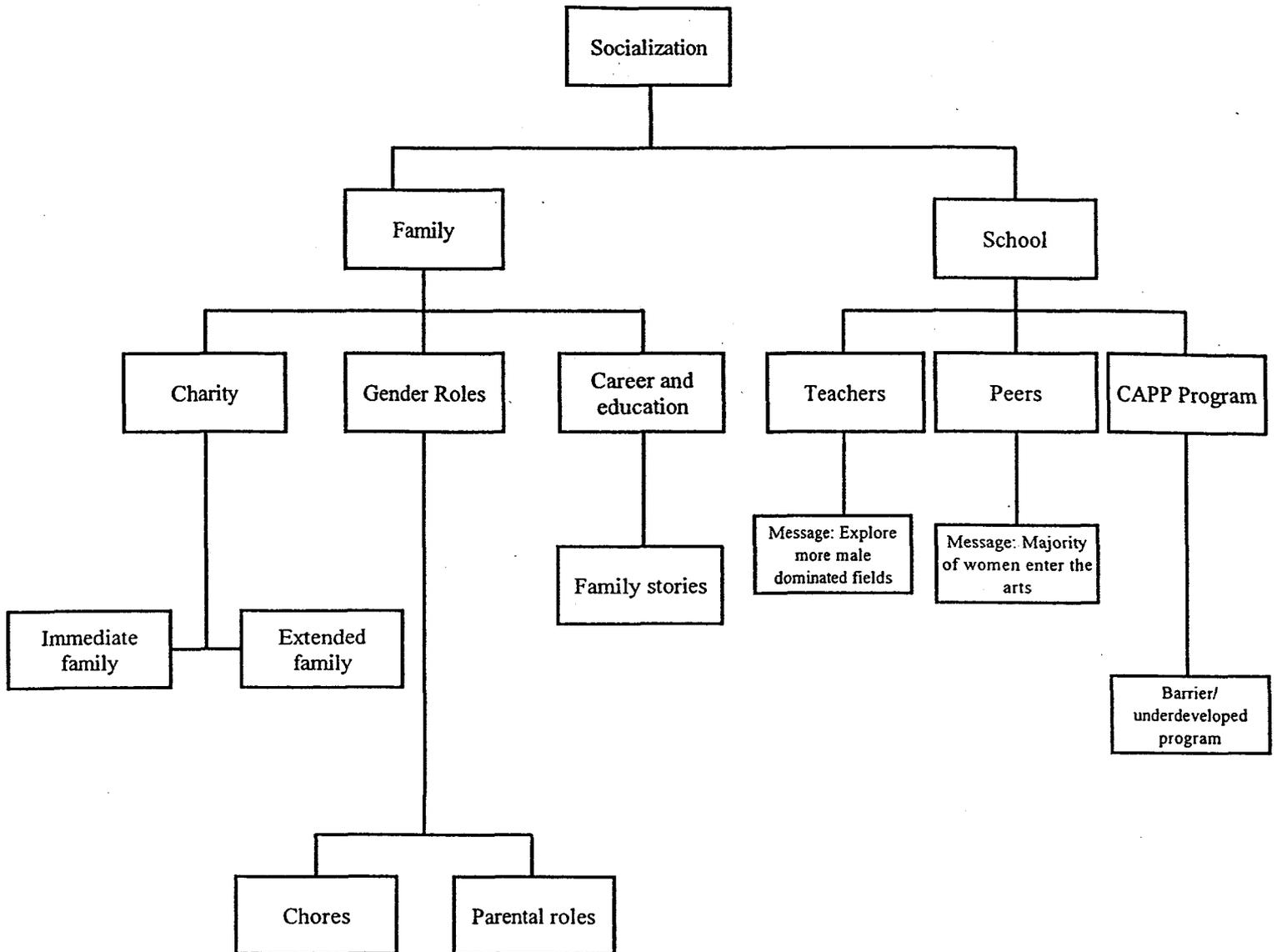
Meena also stated that her ethnic community placed importance on women having a career. Meena viewed her ethnic community as being supportive of women having a career in three ways. First, Meena felt that her ethnic community supported women working, and the main message was that women were capable of working in any field. Second, the religious teachings of her ethnic community said that women and men should be regarded as equal in terms of intellectual ability. Third, she also noticed that her ethnic community was actively committed to improving the lives of women by encouraging research projects within the community that addressed women's position within the community and women working in society. The only barrier she noticed regarding her ethnic community was that people within the ethnic community devalued professions in which the individual would choose to work in traditional female roles.

The participant also mentioned the family and the messages received at school as socializing influences regarding her career choice (see Figure 3). She identified family as a primary agent of her socialization process. The three main factors that influenced her development in the family were the value they placed on charity, gender role expectations, and messages regarding career and education. Being charitable was a strong aspect of her upbringing within the family. She learned the value of charity through observing her parents and extended family engaging in acts of charity. Regarding gender role socialization, Meena's family encouraged her to engage in the traditional female role of caregiving within the family unit. She learned what her role was in the home by engaging in various chores and by observing the distinct roles of her parents in the home. She saw how her mother balanced her multiple roles, but still placed the priority on "obligation to the family," and in this way, she learned what her primary role was as a woman. In regard to career and education, her parents shared their own educational and career stories with Meena, thus reminding her that they wanted their child to have a better life than their own. They would also state that they wanted her to take advantage of the opportunities available in society to ensure her happiness and success in the future.

Meena mentioned the school environment as being influential in regard to her socialization. Her high school teachers had a significant impact in helping her form impressions regarding possible career choices. The basic message communicated to her via her teachers was that women could pursue any field they wanted to. Meena mentioned that when she was going through high school the media/news was focussed on research suggesting that girls were not encouraged to go into the sciences. She found that

Flow Chart: Meena

Figure 3. Socialization in Family and School.



teachers accepted the results of that research and were encouraging young women to pursue the sciences, engineering, and computing. She thought that girls were being pushed to explore more male-dominated fields. Despite the push from teachers, she observed a second aspect that dealt with the influence of peers. She noticed that the majority of her female peers chose option classes focussed in the arts. Observing that the majority of her female peers were engaged in the arts had more of a bearing on her choices than the direct messages she received from her teachers.

The third aspect of the high school environment that Meena mentioned as being important was the CAPP (Career and Personal Planning) program. The CAPP program had just been introduced into the school system when she was in high school, and she felt that it was under-developed. She viewed the CAPP program as a barrier to appropriate exposure to various career options. The exploration of various careers, a significant component of socialization, was restricted and did not allow her to make an educated choice about a career path by the end of grade 12. She felt that the CAPP program teachers had an increased awareness of the careers in the sciences, but had a lack of awareness regarding career choices in the human sciences.

Domain 2: Structure of Opportunity

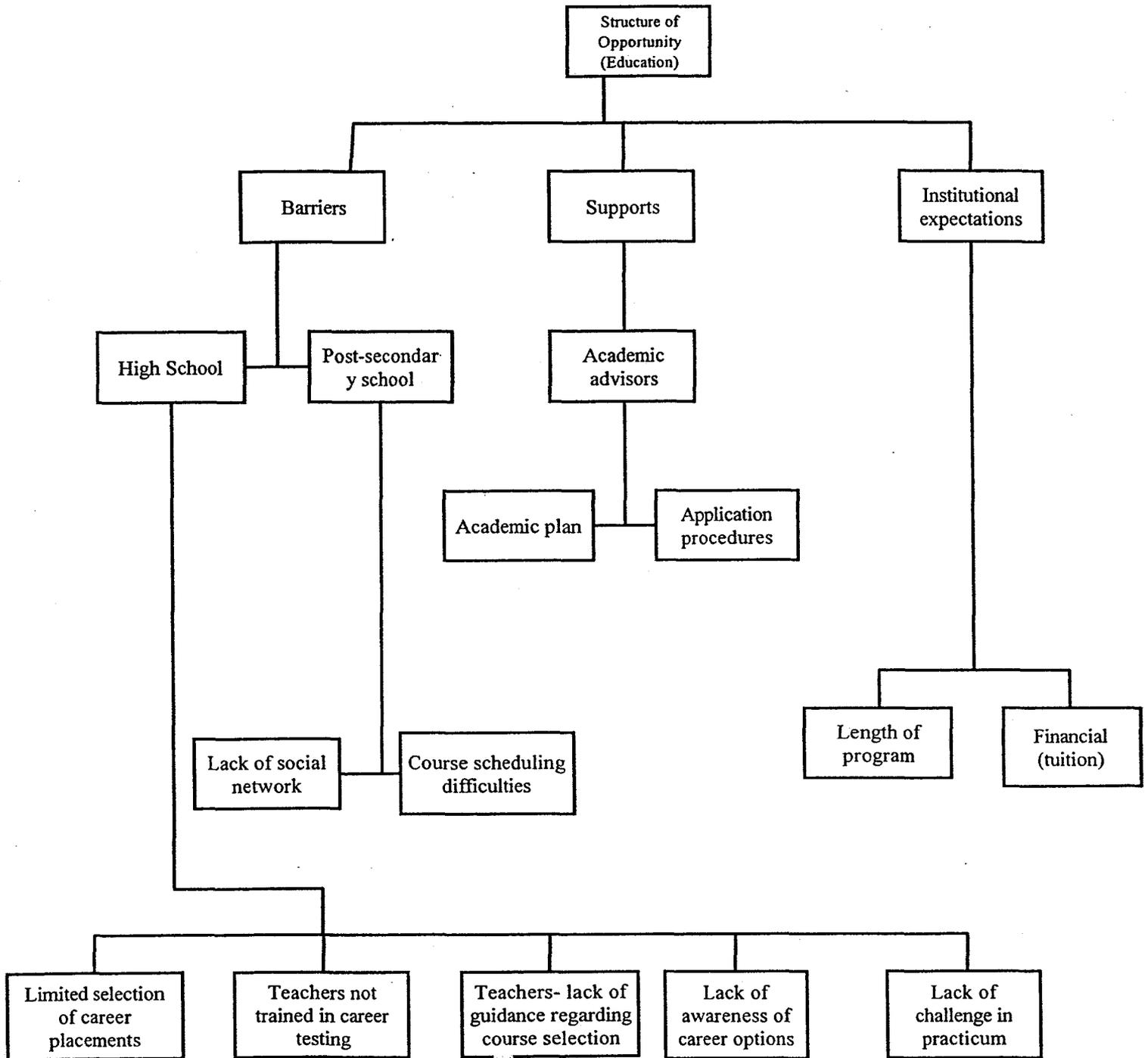
Educational institutions.

Lent et al. defined the structure of opportunity within the educational environment as the individual perception of the options available in the educational system (Lent et al., 1994, p. 106). Understanding how educational institutions operate is a vital component of an individual's success within the educational environment. Understanding how institutions operate allows the individual to navigate academic and career paths. The barriers that Meena experienced in the high school environment and post-secondary institutions will be explored, and the supports that she experienced and her expectations of the educational institution will be discussed (see Figure 4).

Meena identified five barriers in high school that prevented her from using her educational environment to the maximum benefit. The first barrier that she experienced in high school involved a limited selection of practice career placements set up by her CAPP instructor. Second, she felt that the teachers responsible for career testing were not properly trained to interpret the test results and left a lot of the interpretation up to the student. She thought that she would have benefited from trained career counsellors who could discuss with her how to interpret the tests and guide her through the process. The third barrier was that her teachers did not encourage her to continue studying all the math and sciences in high school. Consequently, only when she completed high school did she realize that she had closed off many career options for herself. As much as teachers encouraged students to engage in the sciences, the message was communicated on a global scale and was not done on an individual level with students. Thus, she did not have

Flow Chart: Meena

Figure 4. Structure of Opportunity in Education.



an awareness of the potential impact of her immediate choices and could have benefited from more guidance at the individual level throughout her high school years. The fourth barrier was that CAPP teachers lacked information about careers in the human sciences. She was unaware of the various options open to her and thought that she could have benefited from attending information sessions set up by her teachers. The fifth barrier that she experienced in high school was that the practice placements assigned were not challenging. The responsibilities expected of the student during the placements were very basic and did not allow the student to become immersed in the field. Consequently, she was unable to gain a better perspective of what the field involved.

When Meena went on to university, the barrier she experienced was living away from home for the first time. She did not have a social network to draw on for support and was unaware of the various clubs and programs available at the university level to help her with the transition. In regard to her university experience, she had concerns about accessing specific programs set up within the social work program. In order to qualify for a specialization in social work that would qualify her for government positions, she had to complete certain course requirements before her practicum experiences could start. If she were unable to take all the specialization courses, she would not be qualified to take the specialization as a minor. The manner in which the program offered the specialization courses made it difficult for her to see how she could obtain the courses needed before being able to do a practicum with the specialization. Consequently, due to course scheduling difficulties, she feared that she would not be able to obtain the experience in her chosen specialization, which might bar her from pursuing career options within her field upon completion of her degree. She considered exposure

to career fairs, various practicum placements, procedures for qualifying for a specific minor, and awareness of programs offered within educational institutions crucial to ensuring her academic and future success.

Meena also had mentioned that teachers' expectations of their students increased from college to university. Consequently, knowing what services were available in both academic support was crucial for academic success in college and university. While she was in college, she accessed academic advisors for support to help her plan her advancement to university and to help her create a smooth transition. They ensured that she had the proper number of credits to transfer into her program of choice and helped her with the application procedures for the social work program. The university informed her that most of the information regarding the social work program could be found on the Internet. She experienced difficulty accessing the web pages on the Internet, and she asked her academic advisors at the college level for assistance.

Post-secondary institutions included both college and university for Meena. Her definition of what it meant to be a student and her understanding of the different institutional expectations changed when she entered college and university. Her role as a student changed and became more refined when she made the transition from high school to college and then to university. After high school, she was presented with the choice of going on to college or university. Two factors influenced her decision to attend college and then go on to university. First, she had to consider the cost of tuition. Second, she had to consider the length of the programs. Since she was not clear about her career path and wanted to explore by taking general courses, she decided that going to college would be a good choice. She could not justify the extra cost of tuition at the university level only to

explore her career options. She only wanted to go on to university after deciding which program to focus on. The length of programs at the university level was approximately two years after the completion of the two-year bridging program at the college level. She felt that completing two additional years at university would be manageable, as it would result in an undergraduate degree, which is typically four years.

Paid work and volunteer work.

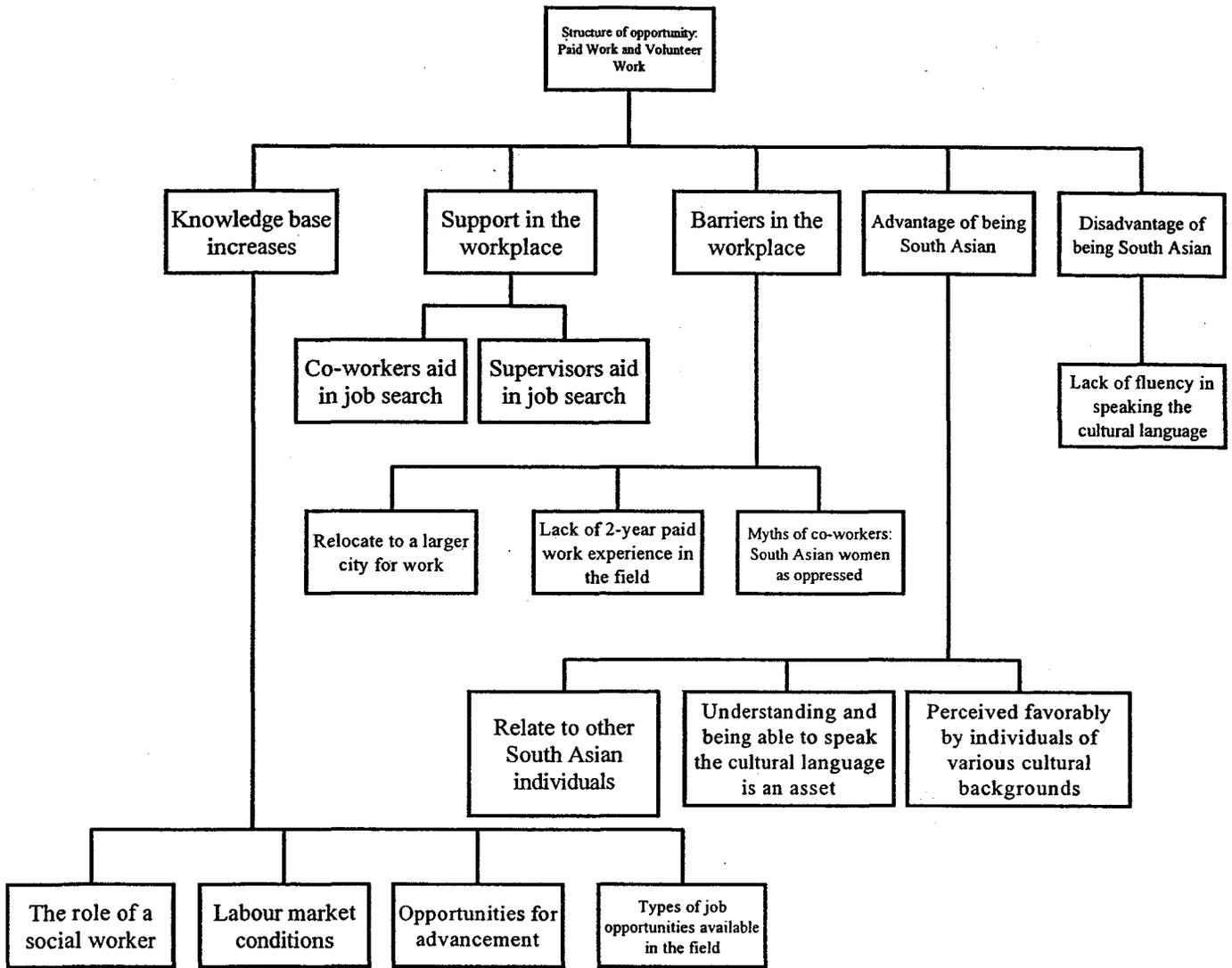
Lent et. al. described the structure of opportunity within the workplace as the individual's perception of the options available in the workplace (Lent et al., 1994). Figure 5 outlines the various factors that Meena identified regarding her perception of the structure of opportunity in the workplace.

Meena found that through her volunteer and paid work experiences her knowledge base increased. Her knowledge base regarding her role as a social worker grew from her experiences in the field. She also learned more about the gaps in society where more social workers were needed. Her awareness of labour market conditions, opportunities for advancement, and the types of job opportunities within her field increased. While she was working in her field, she was building a base of job information by drawing from her accumulated resources. Meena identified two supports that she experienced in the workplace. She realized that she could draw on the support of her co-workers and on her supervisors to help her in her job search.

Meena identified three barriers in regard to future work experiences in her field. First, she recognized that she might have to move to a larger city in order to advance her career after completion of her degree, which she outlined as a disadvantage in her program. Second, she also recognized that many organizations within her field required people to have two years of work experience before being hired. She was concerned about finding her first job due to lack of paid work experience in her field. Third, she also considered the myths held by her co-workers regarding South Asian women as having a disadvantage. Her co-workers tended to assume that she was oppressed and would have a common base of experience with other individuals who defined themselves as oppressed.

Flow Chart: Meena

Figure 5. Structure of Opportunity in Paid Work and Volunteer Work.



Meena was concerned that other people's assumptions might have an impact on the type of job opportunities open to her. As potential employers thought she had experience with oppression, this perception could lead to work focussed primarily on that specific role.

She also pointed out the advantage within her field of being South Asian within her field. First, she thought that since she was South Asian, she would be able to relate to other South Asian families and bicultural issues because she had an understanding of the norms and expectations of that culture. Second, she considered speaking Punjabi an asset in the field as she could communicate effectively with various South Asian families. Knowledge of the language would allow her to notice cultural nuances. Thirdly, she thought that as a member of a visible minority she would not only be able to communicate effectively with other South Asians, but would also be perceived favourably by individuals of various cultural backgrounds. She thought that her own experience of being a member of a visible minority would help her relate to any minority group with whom she had the chance to work. However, she felt that being South Asian could pose some disadvantages in her field. She felt that her lack of fluency in Punjabi might be a disadvantage. She was concerned that some South Asian clients would interpret her lack of fluency as a sign that she was not connected to her culture. She was also aware that when talking to South Asian adults a certain tense should be used, and she was concerned that she might unknowingly speak in a manner that would be interpreted as disrespectful.

Support system in the family.

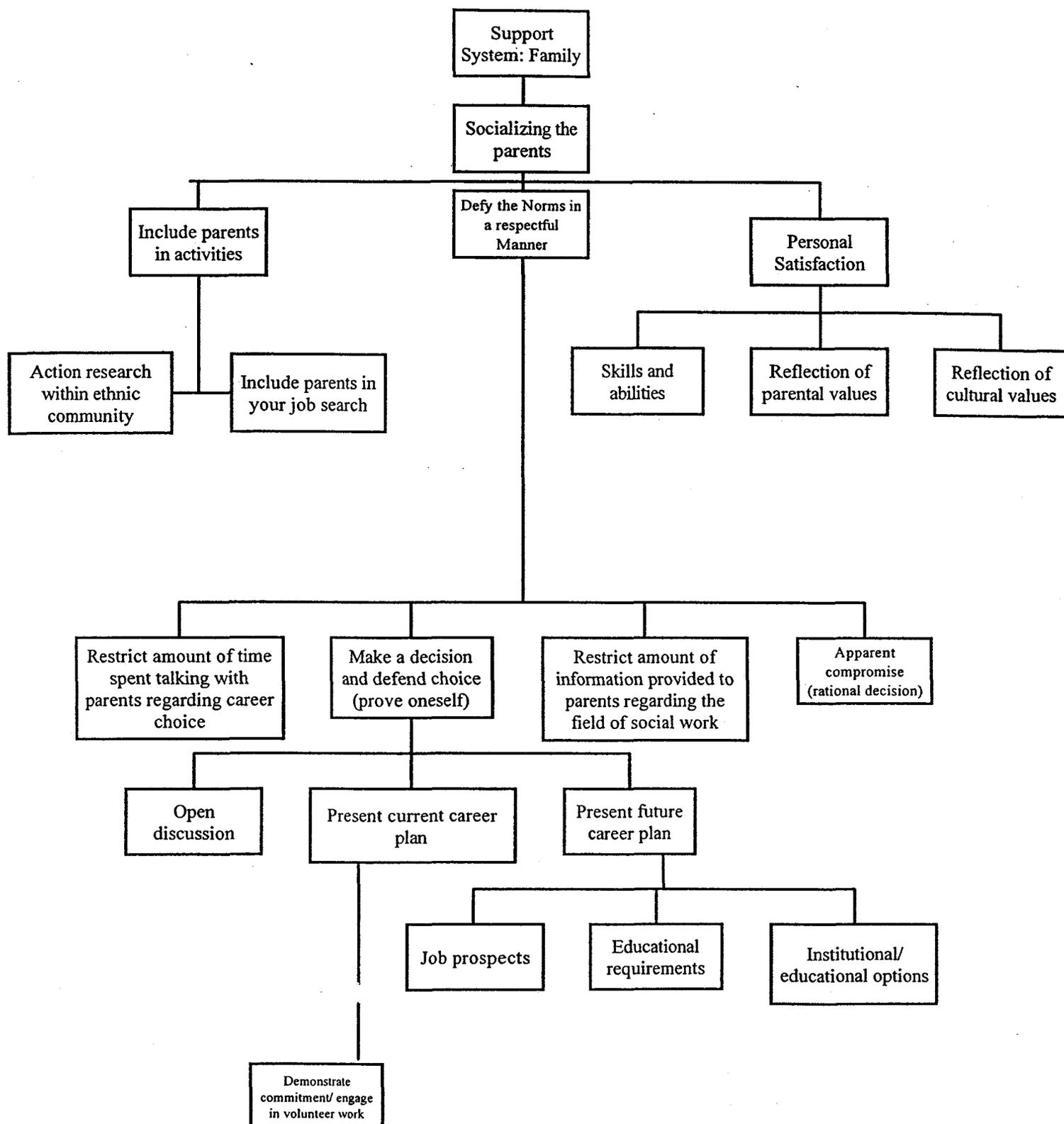
Support in the family is another contextual factor that Lent, Hackett, and Brown (1994) describes in his theory. Meena made many references to the role that her family played in her career decision-making process (see Figure 6). Most importantly, she discussed how she created opportunities for herself within the family and how she gained parental support regarding her career decision. Since her career decision was different from the choices of her peers within the ethnic community, the process whereby she created opportunities to engage in her chosen field deserves attention.

The process by which she was able to gain support for her decision involved various strategies to ensure parental support. Meena used various strategies to socialize her parents regarding her career interests and values. First, she included her parents in various activities in her field of interest, thereby showing her parents first-hand why she was interested in the field. Second, she had her parents take part in activities emerging from her volunteer research work within her ethnic community. The activities were set up to educate community members about the changing role of women in society and to instigate a change in attitudes towards the independence of women. Third, she asked her parents to help her in her job search. Her parents were thus forced to explore with her the different opportunities that existed within her field. Consequently, her parents saw the variety of work opportunities and felt more confident that the area was a stable field for employment.

The next step that Meena engaged in to gain the acceptance of her parents regarding her career choice was to defy the norms of her parents and the expectations of her ethnic community in a respectful manner. She engaged in various forms of strategies

Flow Chart: Meena

Figure 6. Support System in the Family.



of resistance (Cooper, 1994; Faith, 1994) to demonstrate to her parents her own sense of independence regarding decision making. First, she restricted the amount of time spent talking to her parents about her career decisions. Second, only when she had made her final decision did she defend her choice by engaging in an open discussion with her parents in which she outlined her present and future educational plans in a decisive manner. She proved to her parents that her interest in her present current career plan was genuine by engaging in various types of volunteer work in her field of interest to demonstrate a commitment to her present career choice. She also presented a plan of her future educational program outlining her job prospects, educational requirements, and institutional options for her program of choice. Third, she restricted the amount of information regarding her career choice available to her parents. She did so in order to prevent her parents from worrying about her entering a position portrayed as potentially dangerous by the media.

Fourth, she engaged in a process of apparent compromise with her parents. She agreed to enter college, take courses in the area that her parents hoped she would go into, and adopt a “wait and see” attitude as to whether she would do well in those subjects. In addition, she took courses in areas in which she was interested. She then looked at the results and demonstrated to her parents why her career choice was the preferred choice, since she had tried out her parents’ suggestions. She focussed on how she did and how she felt engaging in both fields. As a result, she proved to her parents why her favoured career path was better for her to pursue. By appearing not to rule out her parents’ preference for a career, she was not perceived as a disrespectful child by her parents.

However, she was still able to defy her parents' norms in a subtle manner that came across as a rational decision reflecting her strengths and abilities.

The final strategy that she engaged in was to emphasize the personal satisfaction that she derived from her career choice. She explained to her parents that she was happier and more interested in the courses in which she was doing well that reflected her skills and abilities. She also emphasized that she was choosing to work in a field that embodied her parents' value system, and that her career choice could be seen as being of "good service" to others and a reflection of the cultural values.

Domain 3: Learning Experiences

Learning experiences were described by Lent et. al. as sources of information that people use to further their understanding of themselves, the world, and the field in which they are interested (Lent et al., 1994, p. 87). Lent et. al. views individuals as proactive shapers of their environments. The statements within the interview that related to Meena's learning experiences are educational experiences, volunteer work experiences, work experiences, and balance of life issues (see Figure 7).

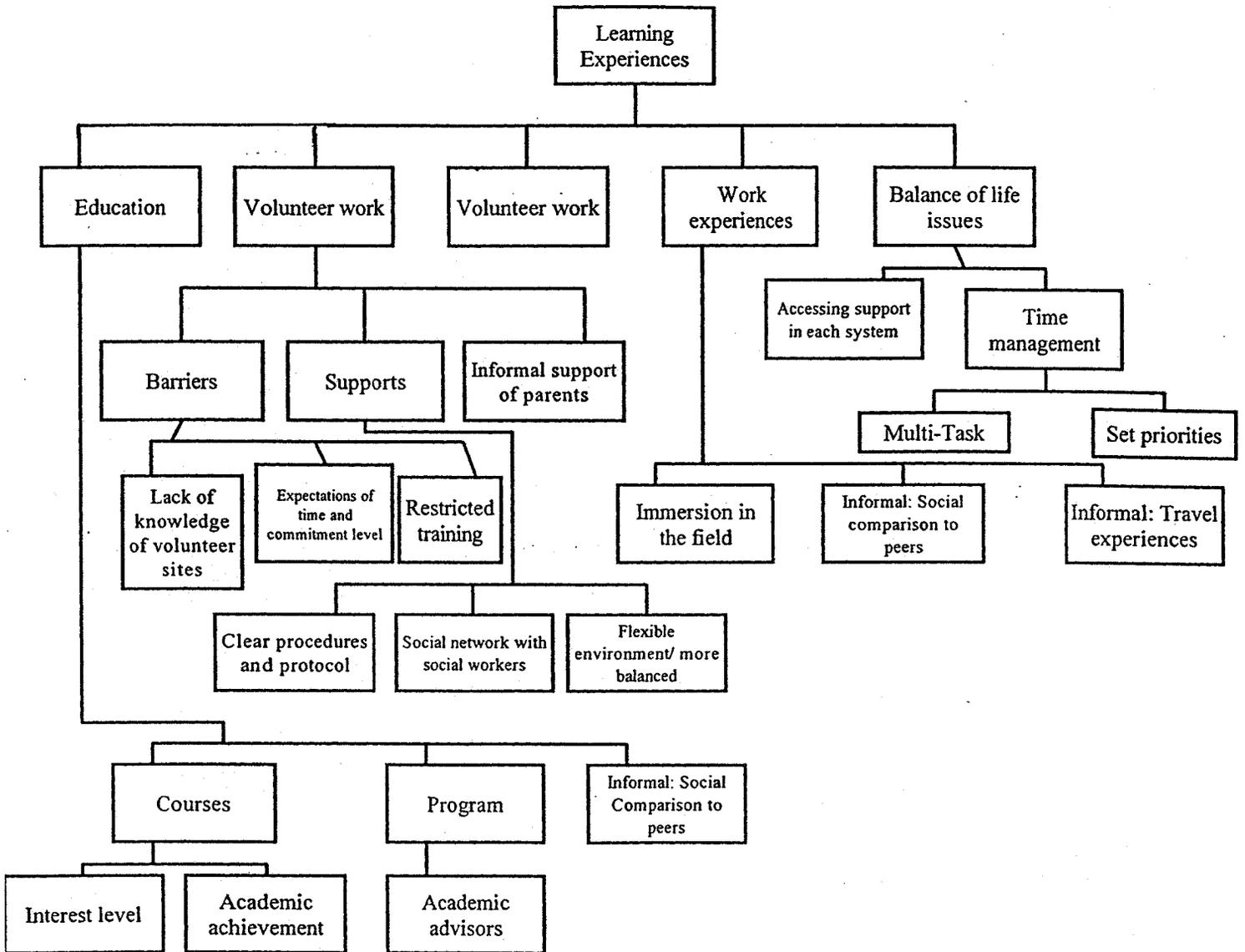
Educational learning experiences.

Meena's learning experiences in college and university helped to develop her interest in entering social work. Her educational learning experiences consisted of taking various courses in college and entering a specific program in university. The college courses that she enrolled in were general in nature. She developed a feed forward loop of experience while taking these general courses. Lent et. al. defined a feed forward loop as a situation where individuals gain positive reinforcement for their efforts and create new meanings for themselves, which are strengthened in future actions. In Meena's case, her interest level and academic achievement in a course would determine whether she pursued more courses in that particular area; thus creating a feed forward loop based on her interests and aptitudes. In addition, by listening to her teachers in class and reading course materials, she was able to refine her interests and create new meanings for herself by envisioning herself working in the social work field. When she entered the program of social work at the university level, she was able to take more courses that were specific to her discipline, helping her to narrow her areas of interest.

Meena also started to acquaint herself with the different programs offered at both the college and university levels. The programs that she used at both levels included

Flow Chart: Meena

Figure 7. Learning Experiences.



becoming familiar with academic advisors and consulting with them regarding possible career directions and educational programs. Consulting with academic advisors became part of her educational learning experiences and helped her to keep her academic records up to date and to focus on the goal of getting into social work. She learned from the advisors how to plan her program to include all the requirements to enter her chosen field.

She also started to compare herself to her peers within the program, and her peers then became an informal source for her to draw from to learn more about herself. When she entered her specific program at university, she found that peers with similar worldviews surrounded her. This form of social comparison in relation to her peers served as a feed forward loop of reinforcement for Meena as it provided evidence for her that she was a good match to her current program.

Volunteer experiences.

Through volunteer experiences, Meena sought out opportunities to engage in the helping field both in her ethnic community and within the dominant community. She volunteered as a social worker in both contexts and had the opportunity to learn about the supports and barriers that exist within each community while doing volunteer work.

Meena identified three barriers to pursuing volunteer work. The first barrier that she encountered was her lack of knowledge of volunteer sites that limited her volunteer opportunities in both settings. Second, Meena learned that organizations had different expectations of time and commitment level from volunteer workers in the dominant community and in the ethnic community. She found that the level of responsibility expected was the same in both communities, but the amount of work that a volunteer was expected to carry out differed across communities. She found organizations in her ethnic

community more flexible and less restrictive regarding time commitments. There was an understanding within her ethnic community that volunteer work was “volunteer” and not so much “work.” Third, she recognized that training and skill development as a volunteer was restricted due to lack of resources and understaffing in agencies. She suggested that the opportunity to shadow people in the field before having to assume the responsibility of helping clients would have been beneficial.

Meena mentioned three supports that emerged from her volunteer experiences. The first support was that organizations with clear procedures and protocol were good learning environments. Second, by engaging in volunteer work she was able to connect with other social workers. She learned more about what the job of a social worker entailed by talking to them, and by doing so, she also was forming her own social network. Third, she discovered that organizations that were flexible allowed her to feel balanced. She found that organizations within her ethnic community were more flexible and had a greater appreciation that people had other commitments. These organizations tended to view volunteer work as one part of a balanced lifestyle. Organizations within the dominant society, on the other hand, tended to view volunteer work as “work,” which she felt contributed to leading a less balanced lifestyle.

Paid work experiences.

In regard to work experience in her field of interest, Meena had the chance to immerse herself in a responsible role in the helping field. She learned through the experience that once an individual is being paid, more training is provided, and she was gradually given more responsibility. Consequently, her work experience led to dealing with more challenging cases that sparked her interest in the field even further. Being considered a regular employee also had an impact on her feeling of responsibility and the

level of commitment that she invested into her job. She sought out more learning opportunities within the job by investigating the issues more deeply and keeping abreast of current research. Her amount of reading in the field increased as she was working. She found that immersing herself in her field contributed to her learning more about the field and generated more interest.

Meena identified two informal sources that she would draw from to inform her of her learning experiences. First, she found that compared to her peers working in the field, she demonstrated more interest and commitment than the norm. Through this informal source of information, she realized that her interests were unique in relation to her peers in regard to the sub-division of social work that she wished to explore. The second informal source of information Meena used that contributed to her interest in her work was her travel experiences. She had had the opportunity to travel to India at various points in her life and compared the issues emerging from her work situation to issues that existed in third world countries. She created a feed back loop in which her insights from her work experiences coincided with her travel experiences, confirming that her global perspective was important in the field.

Balance of life issues.

Through her educational, volunteer, and work experiences Meena started to increase her base of social contacts. By trying to maintain each of her social systems: educational, volunteer work, and work experiences, she recognized that balance of life issues emerged as a new learning experience. At first, before she attained all the additional learning experiences, she kept each social system separate. As she developed each social system by engaging in relevant educational, volunteer, and work experiences, she started to recognize that her experiences would sometimes overlap. She found that

she needed ways of accessing the support system within her educational, volunteer work, and work settings to help her balance her life, thereby creating a new feed forward loop in which she was constructing new meaning from her experiences. She also found that she was developing time management skills and learned more of how to multi-task and set priorities in each system.

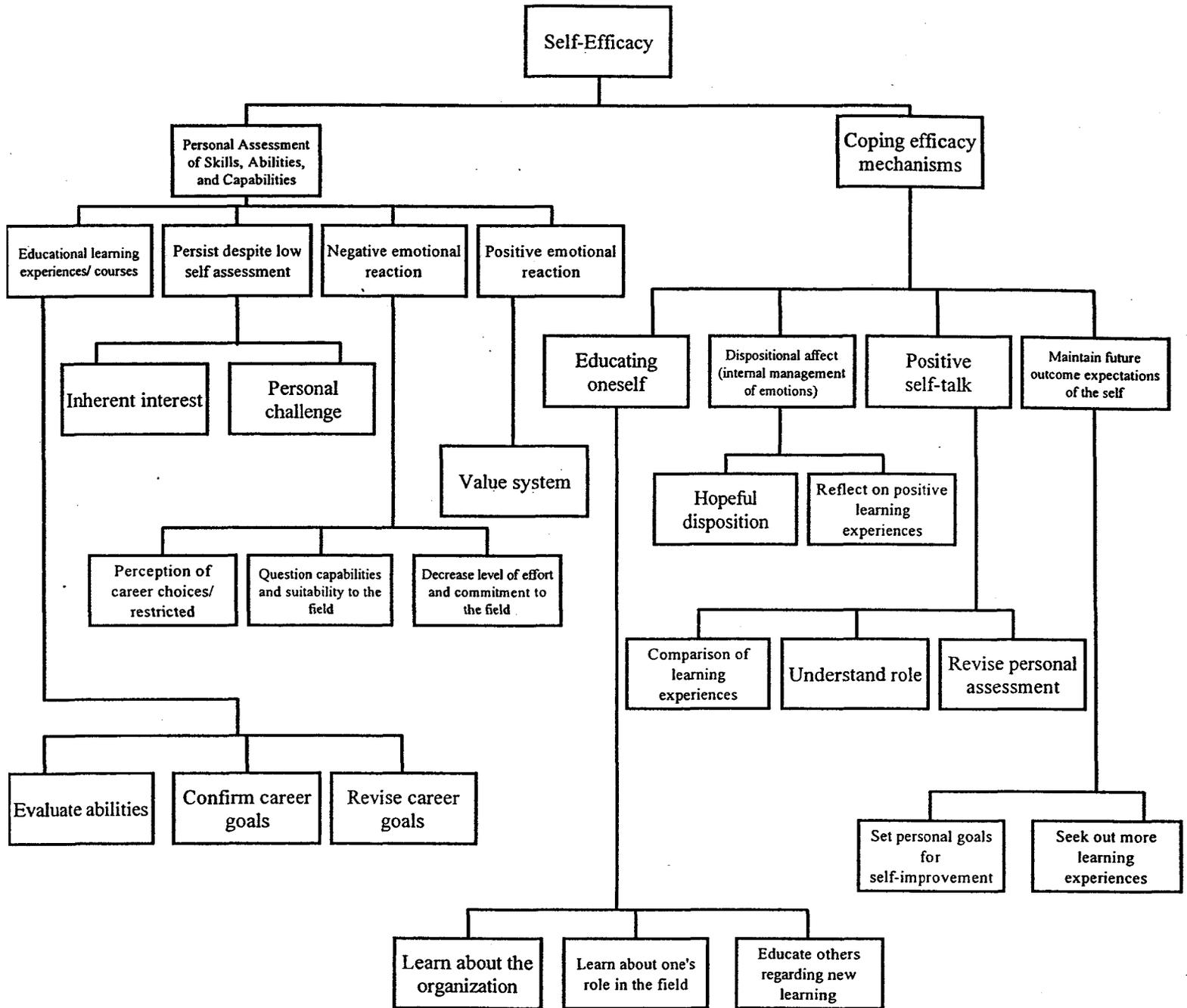
Domain 4: Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy involves the process by which individuals make personal assessments of their skills, abilities, and capabilities regarding their career interests (Lent et al., 1994). For Meena, many of her educational learning experiences in high school had a significant impact on her career options (see Figure 8). In high school she started to evaluate her abilities in various subjects and to confirm or revise some of her career choices and goals accordingly. For instance, at one point she became interested in pursuing more courses related to her interest in art. As she took more art courses, she realized that as much as she was interested in the area of art, she did not have enough talent to commit to becoming an artist as a career choice. She persisted in the area of the arts by continuing to take courses despite a low self-assessment. She felt that she had an inherent interest in the area and liked being able to challenge herself on a more personal level. Her parents also had an influence on her global self-assessment regarding pursuing the arts as a career choice. They had specified that due to the lack of stability and limited opportunity to work in the field, the arts could remain an interest but not a career choice.

Her self-assessment of her negative emotional reaction regarding experiencing difficulty with math had an impact on her perception of career choices open to her. Since math was not her strongest subject, she felt that she needed to restrict her career choices to the field of applied social sciences. She assumed that if one did not do well in math, one would not do well in the sciences. She did not explore further how much math was required for careers in the sciences. While she was engaged in volunteer work in the dominant community, she experienced some negative emotions that led her to question

Flow Chart: Meena

Figure 8. Self-Efficacy.



her capabilities and suitability for the field of work. The negative experience in the field also affected the level of effort and commitment that she wanted to invest in the field.

As she worked in the field, her self-assessment of her emotional reactions was positive. She experienced positive emotions because she felt that the field represented her value system. She liked the fact that the field was based on charity and making a social contribution, and experiencing this in her volunteer experiences helped her to solidify her career goal

In order to counter her negative perceptions of self, she engaged in many coping efficacy mechanisms that helped her to reassess her situation and persist in her chosen field. She discovered that she could handle the negative emotions about the difficulties she experienced by exerting more effort into educating herself regarding her understanding of how organizations worked and her position within the organization as a worker. She viewed any learning as an opportunity to educate herself or others about her new knowledge. She found that by educating herself and others about the organization, she could feel better about her role in the field.

She also maintained a hopeful disposition by internally managing her feelings. Another manner in which Meena maintained a hopeful disposition was by reflecting on positive learning experiences. Even if the learning experiences were not directly related to her field of social work, she recognized the potential possibility of transfer of skills to the social work field.

Meena also engaged in positive self talk in which she re-evaluated the volunteer work environment and compared her experiences to other volunteer experiences, which was another coping efficacy mechanism. By comparing her experiences, she was able to

assess the situation more objectively, understand her role, and revise her own personal assessments accordingly. She was able to recognize that training in one site was better than at other sites and that her lack of skill development was not based on lack of ability, but more due to lack of proper exposure.

Meena also maintained outcome expectations for herself to aim for in the future, which was another coping efficacy mechanism. She had certain personal goals for self-improvement that she wanted to achieve in her future, but her plans were vague as to how she intended to implement the changes. The main method through which she hoped to make personal improvement was to seek out more learning experiences by selecting an educational program with practicums. She felt that the practicum experiences would provide her with feedback and allow for active engagement and guidance regarding the skills needed to become a good social worker. Her self-doubts were kept in balance by the various coping efficacy techniques she used to maintain her level of commitment, effort, and interest in pursuing social work.

Domain 5: Outcome Expectations

Outcome expectations are defined as the individual's beliefs regarding probable outcomes and actions (Lent et al., 2000). As demonstrated in the flow chart (see Figure 9), the researcher classified all the statements made within the interview under the domain outcome expectations of the self.

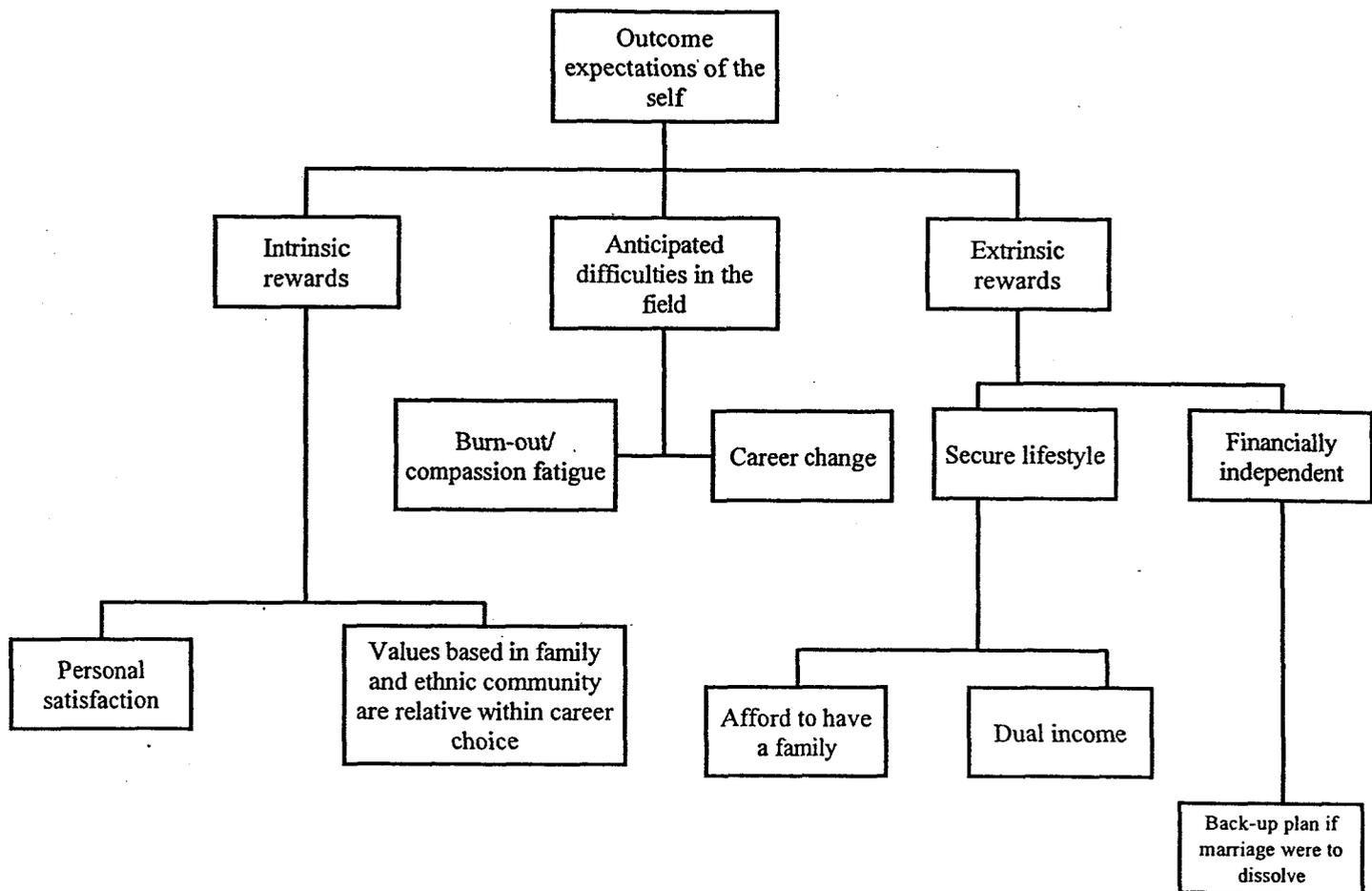
For Meena, intrinsic rewards were the main motivator for her career choice. She viewed her personal satisfaction as an important outcome of her career choice. However, engaging in a career for intrinsic satisfaction was not a motivation suggested to her by her parents or her ethnic community. The values entrenched in her ethnic community and in her family regarding charity were what guided her interest and outcome expectation to engage in the field of social work. Meena was exposed to various acts of charity on a social and societal level within her ethnic community from a young age. She transferred her need to feel that she was making a social and societal contribution based on her acts of charity in her ethnic community to her work life.

Her intrinsic satisfaction with her potential job outweighed the difficulties that she expected in her chosen field. She anticipated burn-out and recognized that if she were to remain in the field for a long period, she might need to consider a career change. She recognized that due to the shortage of social workers and the fact that many organizations were under-staffed, she would face many challenges, but this did not deter her from her career path. She also anticipated the challenge of balancing multiple roles and expected her career to play only one part of a multifaceted life.

Meena expected various extrinsic rewards from working in her field. She thought that one of the advantages of working within her field was that she would be able to

Flow Chart: Meena

Figure 9. Outcome Expectations.



afford to have a family in the future and to play an active role as a mother and wife. She expected, as her parents did, that due to the high cost of living, both partners would need to work outside the home to provide a dual income in order to ensure a secure lifestyle for their children. Unlike her parents, she also considered the fact that being financially independent would allow her to provide for herself if her marriage were to dissolve. Having her own career would allow her to support herself and her future children. She created her own back-up plan through her career, although this was not a function of the career anticipated. Her parents expected their daughter to have a career in order to secure a stable future for her potential family, while she also saw the potential of having a career to help her if her marriage were to dissolve.

Domain 6: Interests

All the statements in Meena's interview transcript that related directly to interest development regarding her career choice are shown in the flow chart (see Figure 10).

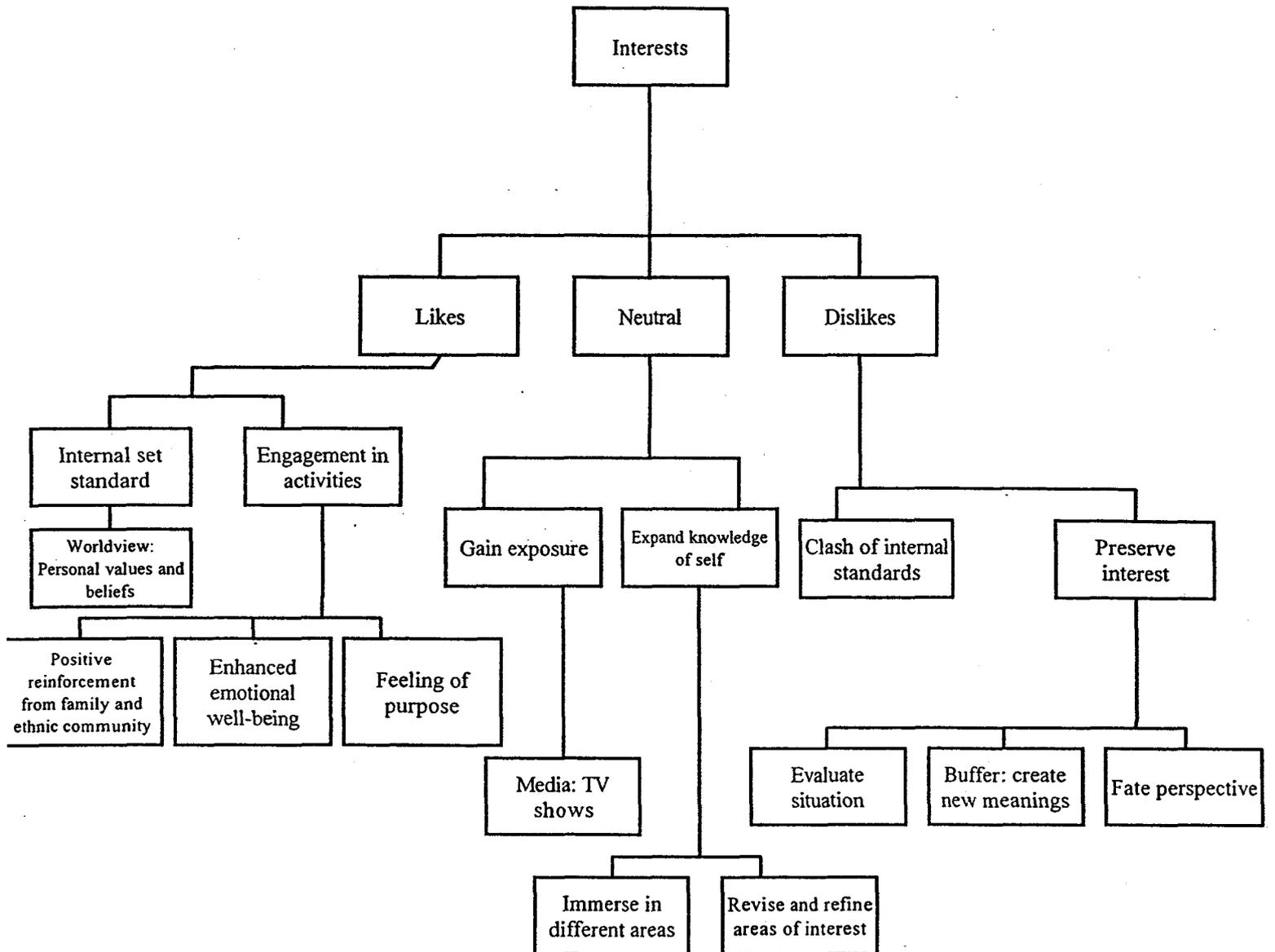
According to Lent et al. (2000), interests are a pattern of likes, neutral areas, and areas of dislike for the individual.

Meena communicated her interest area and likes based on internal set standards and engagement in activities by others. Her internal set standard helped Meena to discern what her likes were, and it was apparent that her interest in wanting to help people stemmed from her personal values and beliefs, which encompassed her worldview. She experienced positive reinforcement for engaging in acts of charity based in her family and ethnic community. Through engaging in charitable acts, she experienced enhanced emotional well-being and a feeling of purpose. Her early exposure to charitable community events was narrow in focus and limited to activities within her ethnic community.

Meena felt neutral regarding many areas in her career and felt that she had a lot of uncharted territory within herself to explore to determine her other interests. To gain exposure to new activities and expand her knowledge of herself, Meena watched TV shows that allowed her to obtain entrance into social worlds to which she did not have immediate access. Through watching TV shows regarding various career options, she identified what areas she found interesting and would like to try to pursue. She looked for opportunities to immerse herself in particular areas to see if the career choice would indeed be a good fit for her. Within the educational system, she took further courses in her field of interest to explore whether the career path would be a good fit between her interests and abilities, thereby expanding her knowledge about herself. As she immersed

Flow Chart: Meena

Figure 10. Interests.



herself in various fields, she had the means to revise and refine her areas of interest. Her dilemma about pursuing a career in the fine arts, sciences, or applied social sciences was eventually narrowed down as she became more immersed in the subject areas and her interest areas became more defined. Meena allowed herself the opportunity to explore her interests and areas that she was unsure about, and the areas became less neutral as she gained more learning experiences through work, volunteer experiences, or educational experiences.

Meena defined areas as dislikes, when her internal standard clashed with what she needed to accomplish within her particular career. However, even when she was confronted with potential clashes, she would evaluate the importance of the clash and see if new meaning could be derived to preserve her interest in working in the field. For instance, social workers in the field had already outlined to her the negative aspects of the career due to the shortage of workers and cutbacks in the field. Meena chose to not be deterred by their comments and buffered her interest in the area of social work by creating new meanings for the negative aspects that were outlined to her. She adopted the perspective that the negative attributes of the field were challenges that could be overcome with effort. For example, she viewed the lack of Indo-Canadian social workers in her field as being a motivation to enter the field. She also adopted a fate perspective that incorporated the idea that the difficulties in the field were a sign that she was needed in the field. She saw the challenges as an indication that social work was what she was “meant” to do.

Domain 7: Choice Goals

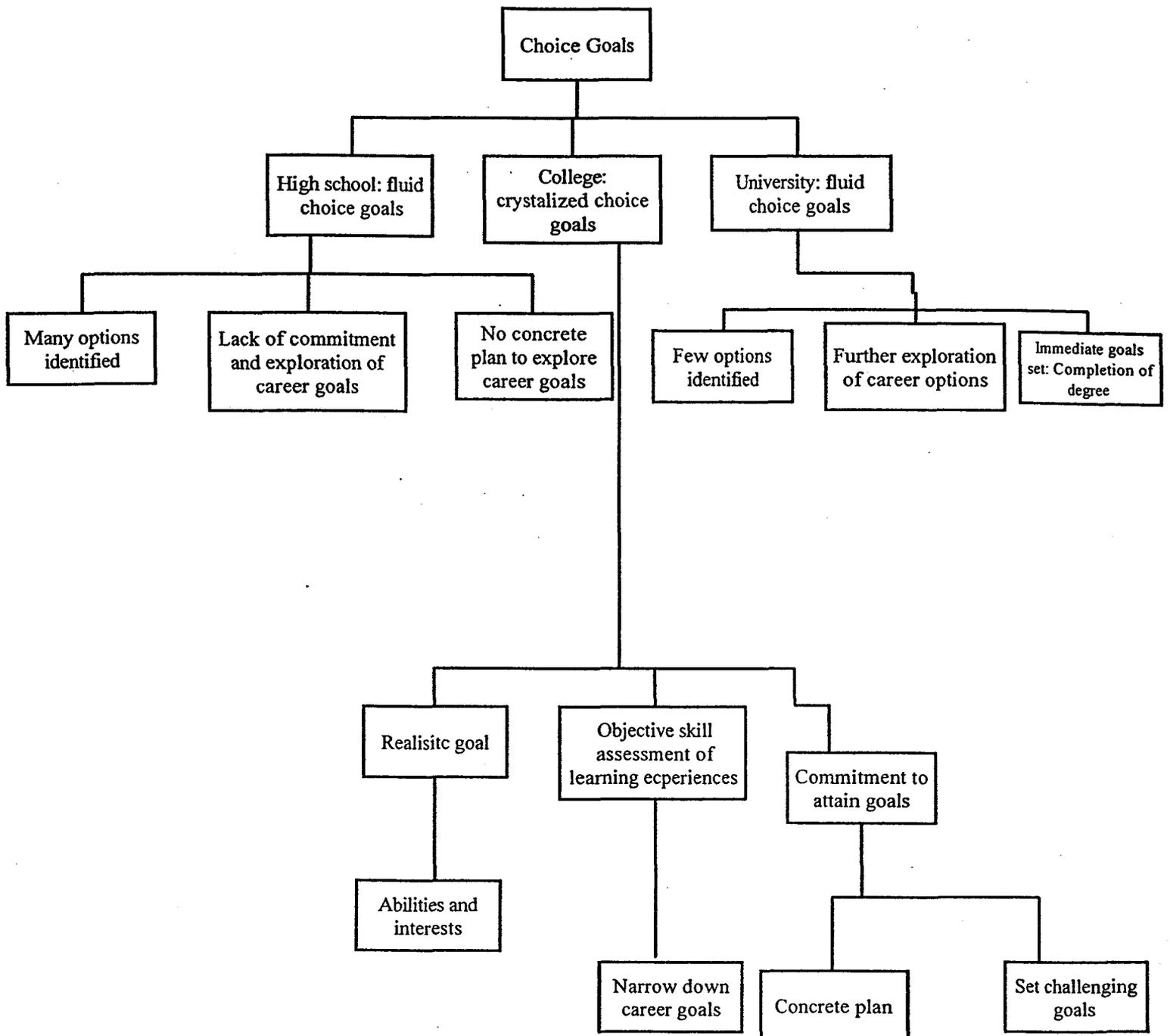
Choice goals are defined as the process by which individuals organize and guide behaviour over long periods of time (Lent et al., 1994, p. 84). Figure 11 outlines how Meena perceived her choice goals in high school, college, and university.

When Meena was in high school her choice goals were very fluid in nature. She identified many areas which she was interested in exploring and could picture herself in many potential career options. At this time, her career goals were in a fluid state because she demonstrated a lack of commitment to follow through and explore the career goals in a concrete manner. She had no concrete plan to see if the career goals fit her ability and interest areas. Meena also did not have a consistent thread between the various career goals she was considering, which led her to having a variety of fluid choices but no clear path to explore her interests seriously.

It was only when Meena was in college and taking some basic courses in the social sciences that she started to narrow down her career goals. After being exposed to various learning experiences in college, she was able to narrow down her interests and look into the possibility of social work as a crystallized career goal. Meena then had a clear goal to aim for that was also a realistic goal, as it appealed to both her abilities and interests. She revised her choice goals through an objective skill assessment based on how she performed in her courses, volunteer, and work experiences. After she established a stable career goal, she researched the requirements for acceptance into the social work program at the university level. She worked very hard on the courses she took in college and aimed for a scholarship as well. She was able to meet the university requirements, obtained her scholarship, and demonstrated to herself her level of commitment to her

Flow Chart: Meena

Figure 11. Choice Goals.



commitment to her goals. Her commitment helped her to organize her behaviour and attain her goals. She also felt that she had set a challenging goal for herself to obtain the scholarship and that motivated her to keep focussed on her career goal.

While studying at the university, Meena did not have a crystallized career goal for a specific social work position in the workplace. She had a fluid set of career goals that allowed her to identify the type of work she wanted to pursue after the completion of her degree. Very few specific career options were identified, and she mentioned that further exploration would be needed to learn what options were available after the completion of her degree. At this point in her program, she was not thinking that far in advance and was only focussed on the immediate goal of completing her degree.

Domain 8: Choice Actions

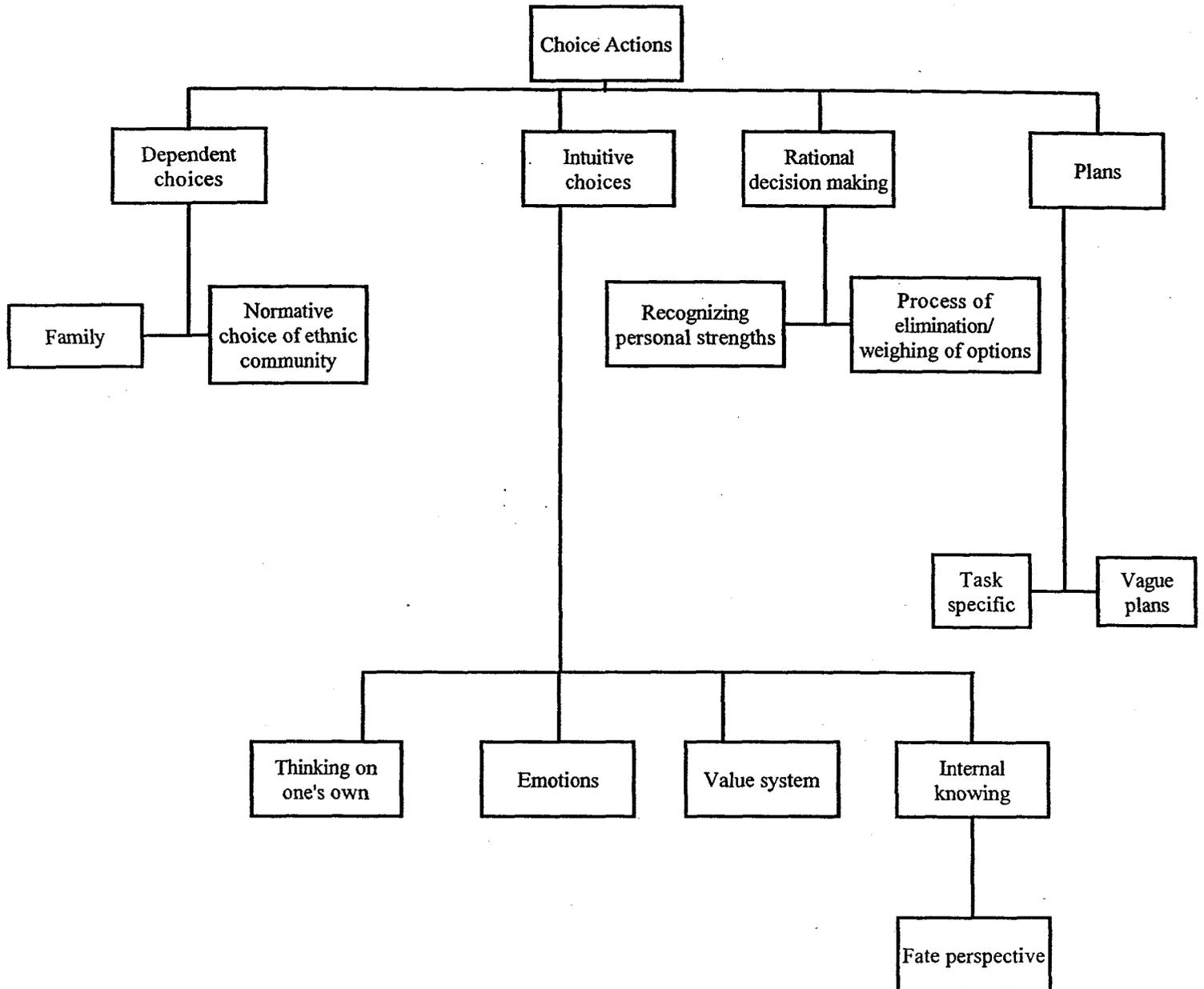
Lent et. al. defined choice actions as educational and career decisions made by individuals (actions taken or plans made) (Lent et al., 1994). Meena had several strategies she used to create her career actions and plans (see Figure 12). She engaged in dependent decision making, intuitive decision making, and rational decision making as part of her planning process. Meena's present and future plans regarding her career direction were also explored.

One of the methods Meena used to make career plans was dependent choices. Dependent choices are made when an individual relies primarily on the external environment, and other people are primarily responsible for the decisions the individual makes. Meena was influenced by her family's perception of her career goals and modified her goals over time. She did not follow the career path that the majority of her female Indo-Canadian peers were making by pursuing careers in the non-traditional female roles. However, when her goal of entering the arts was challenged by her parents, she modified her goals to incorporate some of the basic values her parents wanted for her future. She narrowed down her career goals towards a more stable career goal in the applied social sciences.

The second strategy that Meena engaged in for making a career choice was intuitive means. Intuitive choices are career decisions based primarily on awareness of one's emotions, strengths, abilities, values, and personal beliefs. Meena came to understand her interests primarily by thinking on her own and focussing on her emotional reactions while engaging in various activities. If she felt that she was engaging in an

Flow Chart: Meena

Figure 12. Choice Actions:



activity in a productive manner, she would want to engage more in the activity. She persisted in fields where she could build on the strengths that she was able to identify within herself. Reflection on how her interests fit in with her value system was also important to her and helped guide her plans. She thought that she was “meant” to be working with people in a helping profession and attributed her interest area to fate.

The third strategy that Meena employed to make career action plans involved a rational decision-making process: systematically exploring her career goals. She listed potential ideas, weighed each choice, and eliminated career goals less suitable, based on her increasing knowledge of her skills and abilities. She consciously made specific plans to explore her career interests and sought out various volunteer experiences in order to broaden her understanding of the field. When she enjoyed her volunteer work experiences, she would demonstrate an increased commitment to working for that particular organization and to exploring the field even further as a serious career goal. Alternatively, if she did not find her volunteer work satisfying, she would limit her exploration, prematurely exit the particular field and eliminate a potential career goal.

The plan that she developed to explore the career goal of social work involved engaging in various volunteer work experiences, exploring university calendars, and choosing an educational program at the university level, which represent task specific plans. When she selected the educational program at the university, she wanted to ensure that there would be enough practicum experiences to help develop and enhance her skills. Presently in university, she is primarily concerned with developing skills that she will need to be a good social worker.

In regard to her future, she has one concrete task specific plan: how she intends to implement self-care into her work life. She is clear about the various steps she will take to ensure that she has a balanced life: pursuing her religious practice, engaging in activities set up by her ethnic community, and being assertive by establishing boundaries and saying “no” to projects at work. Her religious teachings first encouraged her to recognize that maintaining a balanced life means balancing multiple roles and activities in order to be happy. Second, she observed her parents managing multiple roles and activities and remaining strong. Third, she was exposed to the importance of caring for the self because various instructors in her educational program at the university discussed at length the challenge of social workers having to combat compassion fatigue.

Her plans for social work in the future are vague, and she is unclear about what her life will be like after the completion of her degree. She does not have a concrete plan for conducting her job search and does not know exactly what type of organization she wants to work for, or the type of social work position she would be interested in. Her plans are vague because her career goals after the completion of her degree are also vague and not defined. If one is unsure what one is aiming for, it is difficult to make concrete plans for the future. Her plans for job searching after the completion of her degree are vague, due to her present lack of information regarding the various resources to draw from in the city. Another reason that she does not have very defined plans for a job search is that she does not feel pressured at this point to begin looking for a career. She feels that when she is closer to completing her program she will educate herself more about the resources available to help her with her job search.

Chapter 4-Within-Case Study Results According Lent's Theory

Introduction

In this chapter, the findings from the other six women interviewed are presented. The manner of presentation is in the same style as the pilot study that was conducted with Meena. All areas of Lent, Hackett, and Brown's (1994) social cognitive career theory will be explored in relation to the following six participants' perception of career decision making. First, the contextual influences that the young women mentioned are explored. Second, structure of opportunity and support systems that the participants used to facilitate their career decisions will be stated. Third, the various learning experiences that they sought out to aid them in their decision making will be documented. Fourth, their sense of self-efficacy and their outcome expectations of engaging in career decision making will be noted. Fifth, how their interests were formed will be explored. Sixth, the role that Choice Goals and Choice Actions have in their career decision making will be explored.

Jazmine

The interview participant, Jazmine, recognized that different social forces had helped shape her academic and career development.

Contextual Influences

Jazmine identified four main messages received from the dominant society that had an impact on her career development. First, she noticed that the news tended to emphasize that more women were needed in the male-dominated professions. Second, she felt that individuals in the mainstream tended to view her cultural identity as being a matter of balancing two distinct separate worlds. Whereas, she felt that her cultural

identity was concerned with an integration of the two worlds. Third, she liked how the dominant society viewed women. She appreciated how people in the dominant society encouraged women to voice their opinions and seek out equality. Fourth, she recognized that the dominant society held the view that education was a lifelong process and that there were no negative perceptions attached to people pursuing an education at any age.

Jazmine identified three main ideas that her ethnic community held in regard to women and career development. She identified messages that were embedded within her religion as having an impact on her career development. She felt that her ethnic community encouraged individuals to learn more about religious activities and engage in volunteer work at the temple. She also was taught that her religion viewed women and men as equal, regardless of gender, class, or ethnicity, and that women were viewed as sacred. She recognized that there was a discrepancy between the religious teachings and how people within her ethnic community interacted with each other in regard to these issues and did not speculate as to why, but chose to hold on to the “ideals” of her religion and live her life according to the principles of her religious teachings. She also felt that her religious teachings helped her appreciate the part that fate played within her culture. She felt that she had control over her life, but that the end result was left to fate. Therefore, if an event did not turn out in the manner in which she had envisioned, she could view it as “not meant to be” and attribute her own meaning to the event because she believed that “everything happened in life for a reason.”.

Jazmine also identified messages that revolved around education that her ethnic community held as a group norm. She had mentioned that obtaining an education would be an age-graded normative task. She mentioned that her ethnic community would expect

young women to either enter college and complete a certificate program or go on for university and complete a four-year degree. There was an emphasis within the ethnic community on young women entering more male-dominated careers, as they were viewed as more lucrative, stable, and offering a secure future. If the young women were not interested in pursuing a career for themselves, then the expectation of the community was for a young woman to be married early and to go on to college to complete a certificate program in more female-dominated fields to have as an employment possibility after being married. After the completion of high school, the community expected that the youth would know what they wanted to do, and there was no allowance made for exploration or for taking a few years off to work and then enter into a specific program.

The ethnic community placed a high value not only on the program of entry but also on completion of a program by age appropriate norms. If one did not complete an educational program, one's reputation within the ethnic community would be in question. Personal barriers that might prevent a person from completing a program were kept silent and were generally not discussed with community members.

The ethnic community also held beliefs regarding the role that having a career played in women's lives. The life-career plan that the ethnic community valued involved the completion of a certificate program or a degree by one's early twenties. After completion of educational requirements, the next step in the life plan was to see the young women become married. The ethnic community as a whole viewed having an education as separate to engaging in a career. The ethnic community would support a woman completing her degree, then becoming married, and then having a career to

supplement the need for a dual income to account for the high cost of living. If the woman were to be single and working in her field, then she was encouraged to live with her family until she was married.

Jazmine identified three main aspects of her family that had an influence over her career development. First, her family was influential in helping her develop her cultural identity. She was taught how to write, read, and speak Punjabi, and her parents exposed her to various aspects of her culture through activities. By being immersed in her culture, the outcome was that she developed a sense of self-pride and an interest in exploring issues pertaining to her ethnic community.

Second, in regard to gender role expectation, her parents held the same educational and career expectations for her brother and herself. The central message that her parents communicated to both Jazmine and her brother was that both men and women could pursue any field that they desired and that there were no career restrictions based on gender. Her mother also taught her daughter about the importance of equality for all women in regard to obtaining an education and pursuing a career. The only area that differed in the family was the type of chores expected to be completed by herself and her brother. Jazmine was expected to complete more chores in the family than her brother, and she questioned the double standard at home.

Third, Jazmine thought that her parents placed a high value on having an education and a career. Her parents would use “social comparison” as a form of trying to influence their daughter’s career choice, whereby parents would compare other L. 10-Canadian youth, and their experiences of being in more male-dominated fields, to their own children’s choices.

Her parents would also share their educational and career stories with her, passing down their values for her to have a “better” life than their own and telling her how having an education would enable her to have more options for herself. She knew that obtaining a university degree would be “her parents dream come true.” In regard to age normative tasks, her parents also valued entry and completion of a program and did not understand the value in exploration for career development. They placed a high value on Jazmine having a set career goal and action plan and demonstrating the completion of an academic program to reflect a commitment to a career choice.

While Jazmine was in college, she found that by taking a course in career exploration she received various messages about how to make a career choice from her instructors. The first message that she received was that she should be aware of market conditions before selecting a career. Jazmine was also aware that there were a shortage of Indo-Canadian women in the field, but it did not deter her from her interest. The second message that she received from her teachers was that she should select a career that she felt passionate about and that eventually she would find her niche within society to work within her interest area.

Structure of Opportunity

Educational institutions.

Jazmine identified three systems of support within the educational system that contributed to her pursuing her career choice in social work. First, while she was in high school she was part of the CAPP program. She was encouraged in the program to explore career options by looking through various academic calendars and discovered the social work program. She felt that the CAPP program within high school allowed her to feel

supported in exploration of a career choice. While she was in high school, she also was exposed to an Indo-Canadian youth group run by a counsellor in the school. The support group helped her feel that she had access to support to help her handle the personal barriers and challenges that she experienced with intergenerational conflict with her parents. Being around other individuals who were undergoing similar experiences helped her to normalize her set of experiences and acted as a source of support through her educational experiences. Second, when she entered her college social worker diploma program, she felt supported by her peers and her professors. Her social worker diploma program was a cohort program in which she was immersed with her peers for a full year. She found that her teachers would foster a supportive atmosphere by becoming a source that students also could rely on for advice or guidance. Third, she found that her peers in her college and university program were accepting of individual differences and held the multicultural values of Canadian society. The mandate of her educational program was supported by her peers and reflected her value system. Third, she found that her academic advisors at the college level provided her with support once she started to use their services. She found that they helped to ensure that she experienced a smooth transition into her university program. She was able to access information regarding program requirements and was able to strengthen her application.

Jazmine specified three barriers at the educational level that prevented her from accessing the maximum benefit from the system. First, she did not know of the importance of accessing an academic advisor in college. As a result, she had to take additional courses that would qualify her for university transfer, causing her to delay applying to her university program. Second, she found that the career exploration course

that she took at college did not add to her understanding. She felt that she could have benefited from talking to an Indo-Canadian counsellor of any religious background who would have had more understanding of the family and societal pressures that she was experiencing in regard to completion of an academic program. Third, since she moved to a new city for university, she felt that she had a lack of support to draw from and noticed that there were no South Asian clubs to join on campus. She had moved from a city where the South Asian population was high, to a smaller city where the South Asian population was low in comparison. She felt that having a South Asian club on campus could have helped to ease her sense of culture shock and create a smooth transition.

Jazmine had attended college before entering her university program. While she was in high school, she knew that she was interested in social work, but upon entrance to college, she also wanted to explore her career options within the applied social sciences before confirming her decision to enter social work. She wanted to attend college because it presented a decreased tuition rate. When she made the decision to pursue university, she decided to work for a year in her field to save for her education. She also had taken out some student loans and wanted to claim ownership for her degree by paying her way through school. At the college level, her parents helped her financially with her education, and they offered to help her with her university degree, but she insisted on paying for her university degree.

Upon completion of her diploma, she knew that she wanted to go on to university and felt that an extra two years of schooling would be manageable. At first she felt that because she was 24 years of age, and the majority of her peers in other academic programs were graduating by the time they were 21 or 22, she was not meeting the

normative milestones. She also felt that she could shorten the duration of her program to a year and a half by taking summer courses. After entrance into her program, she recognized that the majority of her peers were between 30-35, and she no longer felt pressured to fast track her degree.

Paid work and volunteer work.

The support that Jazmine received in her volunteer and work experiences included four areas. First, she found that by volunteering she could form a social network of co-workers on whom she could draw for support and as a formal network of job contacts that she could access in her future. Second, her co-workers modeled to her how they incorporated spirituality into their work and personal life leading to a more balanced lifestyle. Third, she found that her work experiences in the field were invaluable as they helped to strengthen her application to university and broaden her worldview. Fourth, due to her awareness of cultural issues she was involved in developing programs for South Asian clients and was able to assume more responsible roles in the workplace.

In regard to cultural capital, she identified three areas that were significant to her. First, she felt that she had a good understanding of immigration policy and the challenges that new immigrants faced, based on her observation of people within her ethnic community, that would help her in her work. Second, she saw knowing how to speak Punjabi as being beneficial in her field. Third, she felt that she could relate to other minority groups based on similarities experienced between all cultural groups in Canada.

In regard to barriers, she identified three areas of concern in the workplace. First, she felt that there was a lack of exposure of possible volunteer sites. Second, she felt that she did not have the skills to know how to handle conflict in the workplace. Third, she

was concerned that her co-workers would have the misconception that she would be passive based on being young and an Indo-Canadian and that she would then have to “prove” herself in the workplace.

Support system in the family.

Jazmine’s parents were originally not supportive of her career path. She perceived her family as a challenge that she needed to address rather than as a barrier in her career development. Jazmine engaged in various strategies to elicit parental support for her career decision over time. She socialized her parents regarding her interests and values. First, she told her parents about various topics that she studied within her courses that appealed to her. She also discussed with her mother various topics pertaining to women’s issues to establish a common bond and emphasize the importance of her chosen field. Jazmine also emphasized the personal satisfaction that she derived from her field. She asked her parents to reflect on their educational stories and to relate to her experiences of being pressured to pursue a career choice that they did not like.

Second, to buy more time to make a career decision, she told them how distraught she felt over not being able to solidify a career choice for herself and that she was actively working towards a goal. She gave voice to her feelings of being pressured and reminded her parents that their love and happiness for their child would outweigh the importance they attached to her career choice or the completion time of an academic program.

The third strategy that she engaged in was to defy parental norms in a respectful manner. She restricted the amount of information she would share with her parents regarding making a career choice. She also only engaged in a discussion with her parents

after she had finalized a career plan and had engaged in volunteer work in her field. She also engaged in an apparent compromise with her parents. She originally wanted to proceed to university and complete her social work program after her exploration period in college, but her parents wanted her to demonstrate a completion of an academic program before allowing her to consider going on to university. She compromised with her parents and decided to complete an extra one-year diploma program to please her parents but decided to do it in social work. Only after completion of this program did she gain parental support to pursue her social work degree at the university level.

She had started to test the boundaries and had been establishing a sense of independence in the family. She would let her parents know when she intended to break the rules and then honour the terms she would set with them, thereby establishing their sense of trust in her. After the completion of her diploma program, she was able to earn her parents' trust, and they permitted her to live on her own and work as an independent young woman before entering university.

Learning Experiences

Jazmine identified three learning experiences in the educational system that helped to inform her career choice. First, she liked being able to take a wide assortment of courses in college to aid in her exploration of her interests. Second, she liked being in her social work program in college and university as she was surrounded by like-minded peers who reflected her beliefs and value system based on how to view and work with people. Third, she found the course material in her social work program to help her question social practices in her family and ethnic community.

Her volunteer and work experiences helped her to form a base of life experiences. She felt that both types of work required the same level of commitment, time, and responsibility. She was able to immerse herself in the helping role and learn more about her role. She had volunteered in her ethnic community and within the dominant society and felt that she had more to offer when working with women who were South Asian, based on her intimate knowledge with the culture. She also found that the manner in which she was nurturing her clients was based on how she had been socialized in the family. She found that in the family nurturing was shown to individuals through indirect means. Jazmine also showed through her actions her level of commitment and caring without necessarily verbalizing her caring.

Balance of life issues involved three areas. First, the life plan that her parents expected her to accomplish after the completion of her degree was not in sync with her own career life plan. She was in the process of redefining what a balanced life might look like, based on her needs to pursue graduate studies and not get married soon after the completion of her degree. Second, she wanted to travel after the completion of her degree to achieve a more balanced perspective regarding her worldview. In the past, travelling to India with her parents helped her to achieve a more balanced perspective of life. Third, she felt that exploring what role spirituality played in her life would help her to lead a more balanced lifestyle.

Self-Efficacy

When Jazmine was in high school, she started to assess her skill development in various subjects to determine where her strengths and weaknesses were. She found that she enjoyed subjects pertaining to First Nations issues, family management, and math.

She felt that her math skills were fairly strong but that her interest level in pursuing math was not high. She also found that she required more effort to do well in the sciences and did not derive personal satisfaction from engaging in the field to sustain her efforts.

When she entered college, she took a wide range of courses in the social sciences. She derived a lot of personal satisfaction from the prospect of helping people, and even when she was not doing as well academically as she had hoped, she sustained her efforts in the field. She attributed her low grades to not being committed to a career goal within the applied social sciences. Once she committed herself to completing her social work diploma program and was immersed in the field, she attained straight As and had her name on the dean's list. Her sense of confidence increased as she started to see herself accomplish her goals and being admitted into a selective program due to her performance accomplishments.

Upon completion of her social work diploma, she was concerned whether she could perform well at the university level. She was concerned that she might not live up to her own standard and experience of success already accomplished. She now had the encouragement of her family, and she had a co-worker who helped her confront her own self-doubts. Their belief in her ability to do well, combined with a change in her own perception of her role as a student, helped her to view herself as capable of handling the university environment and future challenges.

While engaging in various volunteer and work experiences, she would assess her areas of strengths and areas for improvement. She coped with the gaps by seeking out new learning experiences for herself through stepping out of her "comfort zone," educating herself about issues, and educating other people about issues and thereby

solidifying her own understanding. She compared her emotional reactions across a range of learning experiences to assess what would be a good fit. She also relied on feedback from supervisors based on her performance to help her make self-assessments. She would internalize their comments and believe more in her capabilities of working in the field.

Outcome Expectations

Jazmine identified that she expected to obtain intrinsic satisfaction from being a social worker. She expected to be able to make a social contribution to people's lives. She believed that she could engage in advocacy work on behalf of her clients and believed that her life experiences as a South Asian woman would help inform her practice with other South Asian women.

She also felt that she could make a societal contribution through her work in three ways. First, she wanted to educate people in the mainstream about her culture and demystify the South Asian experience. Second, she felt that with a master's degree she could attain higher positions within organizations and make changes on a systems level. Third, she wanted to "give back" to her ethnic community by providing them with more resources by implementing programs in the city and rural areas geared towards South Asian issues.

She anticipated deriving a sense of personal satisfaction from engaging in her work in three ways. First, she felt that by being in social work she would become a part of the fabric of society and experience a sense of belonging to a community by contributing to the field. Second, she did not perceive her work or education as being "work" and enjoyed it. Third, she felt that being in social work would help her develop into the type of person that she wanted to become. She believed that it was more

important to create one's life path than to follow the normative expectations of the ethnic community without understanding one's motivations or desires for engaging in particular forms of work.

Jazmine also identified four extrinsic factors for engaging in her field. First, she was seen by her ethnic peers as being a role model for "breaking the cycle" by going on to university and pursuing her degree as opposed to completing a diploma program and soon becoming married. Second, she believed that having her master's degree would provide future employment opportunities as her degree would be more recognized in the field. Third, the public recognized her university as having a solid program. Fourth, she expected that by obtaining her degree she could obtain recognition and "make her parents proud" of her accomplishments.

Interests

Jazmine's interest in social work was guided by her personal values. She found that engaging in various cultural issues held her interest and it reflected her value system. She also felt a feeling of purpose in her field, as she wanted to "give back to the community." She also found that she needed to buffer her interest area to prevent questioning her career choice. She had to let go of some of her peers who did not support her decision to move on for further education in order to move forward and develop her interests. She also buffered her interest by ignoring media portrayals of social workers and did not pay much attention to the news regarding cutbacks in her field.

Jazmine remained neutral about areas in her field that she had not explored. She maintained a value for keeping an open mind to new learning experiences. If she engaged in an area in which she received positive feedback from others but did not feel a sense of

personal satisfaction, she would define the situation as being neutral. If she engaged in an activity where she did not feel that she was making a personal contribution or where she did not have a feeling of purpose, she would define the area as a dislike. She also found that if there was a definite clash between her value system and program expectations, she would also define the area as a dislike.

Choice Goals

Within high school, Jazmine knew that she wanted to be a social worker or work in the applied social science field. When she entered college, she started to narrow down her interests in the field and decided that social work would be a good fit for herself as it emphasized her values and personal strengths. After she made a commitment to her chosen field, she set standards for achievement to gain entrance into her program of choice at the college and university level. After entrance into university, she set her next goal on completion of her degree program. She intended to work in her field and then pursue entrance into a master's-level program in her field. By setting goals and accomplishing them, she created her own life path of personal expectation that helped her to "break the cycle" of what the majority of her female ethnic peers had done. She had broken the age normative expectations that her parents had of her. She had attained her personal goals, and those of her parents as well, but on a different timeline. She was able to demonstrate to herself that setting goals was viable and still valuable to do. Her choice goals were fluid as to the type of work she expected to do upon completion of her program. She wanted to keep her options open in acknowledgement that the job market would determine her future employment in her field.

Choice Actions

At one point, Jazmine engaged in dependent choices to help her make educational and career decisions. By engaging in an apparent compromise by completing the diploma program to please her parents, she was able to demonstrate to them that she was capable of finishing what she had started. She also engaged in intuitive decision making. When she had stumbled across the description of a social worker in high school, she felt connected to it. She believed in fate and felt that being in social work was what she was “meant to be doing.” She believed that all her life experiences had led her to being a social worker. She also engaged in rational decision making to help her create her career plans. After a period of exploration in college, she weighed out her options, considered an objective assessment of her skills, and considered outcome expectations of careers that she was interested in, before narrowing down her choice to social work.

Her present plans in university involve immersing herself in the program through the practica and course work. She has task specific plans as to the type of work experience she wants to gain from her practicums and educational experiences and is focussed primarily on the completion of her degree. In regard to plans formulated upon completion of her degree, she has not formed task specific plans regarding her job search. She intends to consult with her volunteer, work, and practicum supervisors for leads in the field, but is not clear about any formal sources of support to draw from. She also recognized that one way to avoid the age normative expectation within her ethnic community to get married upon completion of her program, would be by pursuing a master’s degree. This plan would avoid the pressure and buy more time. She also currently discussed with her parents the possibility of doing a master’s as a way to “break

them in” to the idea. She felt that she still wanted to exercise control over her life plan upon completion of her academic program.

Miya

Contextual influences

Miya identified three aspects of the dominant society. First, she enjoyed the feminist thought and the focus on equality and the idea that voicing one’s opinions on controversial issues was encouraged. Second, she also viewed the process of identity development as being more one of integration as opposed to balancing separate worlds. Third, she thought that the multicultural values in the Canadian fabric of society would be represented in the helping professions, as people would be expected to work with diverse clients. Fourth, she believed that multicultural values would be held at varying degrees, depending on whether one was working in a rural or urban centre.

Within Miya’s ethnic community, she identified three central messages. First, community members would not discuss personal difficulties with one another and silence would prevail. Second, the community held male-dominated fields in higher regard than work in the applied social sciences. Third, there was a lack of knowledge of what constitutes work in the applied social sciences. Fourth, there was a focus on the family unit and on fostering support and generosity amongst its members.

Miya identified four aspects of her school experiences that had an impact on her socialization process. First, she felt that her teachers in high school placed an emphasis on women entering the sciences. Second, her instructors at the university level gave her information regarding the barriers that she might face in the workplace. Third, the mandate of her social work program included diversity, and she felt supported. Fourth,

even if her peers did not understand her choice to pursue the social sciences, they supported her decision, based on the premise that all people need to engage in work that is personally satisfying regardless of the field.

Miya identified four ways in which her family contributed to her socialization. First, as she was the eldest child she assumed added responsibility in guiding her siblings academically and personally. Second, she felt that she obtained her leadership skills and her voice by observing her mother and that she obtained an appreciation for her culture and discussion of politics with her father. Third, her parents' educational stories centered on the value of using education as a vehicle for advancement to improve one's life. She viewed her parents as "education promoters" who wanted her to have more opportunities in her life than they did. Fourth, support for one another was shown through one's actions. Fifth, her mother was involved in the helping field and exposed Miya to her field at a young age. She also observed relatives who engaged in volunteer work.

Structure of Opportunity

Educational institutions.

Miya identified three aspects of support through the educational system. First, in high school the CAPP program allowed her to explore various career roles, and she could determine what would be a good fit for her. Second, she felt that by taking all her sciences and math courses in high school she had kept her options open to pursue various programs in university. Third, while doing her undergraduate degree in psychology, she had the opportunity to immerse herself in a full-year social work course that helped her make an educated decision as to her future degree choice. She learned that being in the social work field would fit her personal value system, expectations of work, and variety of positions she could assume in the field.

Miya identified three barriers in the educational system that she viewed as challenges that she could overcome. First, she felt that she had limited access to public documents regarding academic programs offered in the social sciences at the post-secondary level. Second, being in a new city, becoming aware of the resources and practicum placements to assume was difficult. Third, she felt having a multicultural counsellor at the university counselling centre would encourage more people to use the services.

Miya did not report having any difficulties adjusting to the rules, procedures, and regulations at the post-secondary level upon completion of high school. After high school, she went directly to university, completed a BA focussed on the social sciences, and then progressed at a different university to pursue her BSW program. After the completion of a four-year undergraduate degree, she was prepared to explore a two-year program. The length of the program factored more into her decision to enter social work than the cost of the degree. She used the two-year framework as a method to evaluate whether certain programs would be considered a viable option for herself. She was prepared to take an additional two years, but was not prepared to accept another four-year academic program. She wanted to obtain a degree that would allow her to enter the work force at an earlier date to gain practical experience in her chosen field.

Paid work and volunteer work.

Miya identified two supports that she anticipated experiencing within her work environment. First, she anticipated that she would be able to rely on her co-workers as a support system. She did not anticipate experiencing any difficulty as she believed that people in the helping profession would all respect one another, based on the principles of being in the field. She believed that diversity would be respected and that if it were not

respected, she would attribute that to lack of education on the part of the person, which could be rectified easily. She felt confident that she could manage any challenges that would emerge in the workplace and would consult with her peers, teachers, and supervisor for advice. Second, she wanted to work in an environment that practiced from an anti-oppressive framework, as it would also reflect her school mandate. She felt that she would feel supported in a work environment that reflected her own value system.

Miya anticipated two barriers in the workplace, based on information that she obtained in her university program. First, she anticipated that attaining advancement in her field would be difficult. She observed that women dominated the helping profession, but that men mainly held higher management positions. Second, she felt that for her efforts to be noticed she would have to work extra hard in her field because she was a woman.

Miya had mentioned that being South Asian was of benefit in her field for various reasons. First, she felt that when dealing with clients of different cultural backgrounds there would be a commonality of experience. Second, she felt that knowing how to speak, read, and write Punjabi would help her communicate effectively with other South Asian clients. Third, she felt that she could bring to her employer a further understanding of the cultural norms of the South Asian community and offer a bicultural perspective to help in working with the youth. She felt that she had access to both sectors of the community—of the youth and of parents of the youth within the cultural community—as she had an understanding of both perspectives. She anticipated having difficulty with two challenges due to being South Asian. The first would be working with a client who was a South Asian man. Second, she thought that some South Asian women might not approach her,

as she did not represent the norm of being a reserved and quiet young South Asian woman.

Support system in the family.

Miya had three strategies that she used to elicit support from her family over time regarding her career decision. The first step that she engaged in was to establish a sense of independence within her family during her high school years by engaging in sports. By doing so, she demonstrated to her parents that life extended beyond the social network of school and family. She honoured her commitments and informed her parents of her decisions, thereby gaining their trust. While she was engaged in her first BA degree, she established her sense of independence while living with her parents by making decisions regarding career, education, and volunteer work on her own and then informing her parents of her decisions. At the time of this research, Miya was living away from home for the first time and her parents trusted that she could make responsible decisions for herself as she had demonstrated this fact to them over time.

The second step that Miya engaged in to elicit support from her family was that she only engaged in open discussion with her parents regarding any decisions after she had finalized her plans. She also educated her parents about the field by providing them with more information. The third step that she engaged in was that she communicated her personal satisfaction with her career decision to her parents. She knew that her parents valued her entering a stable career that would also make her happy, and she demonstrated both points to her parents. As her parents started to notice their daughter's level of happiness for being in the field, they became supportive of her decision and developed a sense of pride in her career choice.

Learning Experiences

Miya recognized that when she had to balance work, school, peers, and sports in the past it helped her to become very effective with time management. She had not experienced feeling overwhelmed with her commitments and felt that the increased activities led her to having a more balanced life. Through her current program, she was made aware of the potential of burnout in the workplace, the importance of self-care, and the need to maintain a healthy support network outside of work. She felt that she already had a good support system in place but that she was in the process of including a spiritual base to draw from to bring a sense of solace during difficult times. She was concerned that her eagerness to accumulate a wide range of experiences along with her desire to help people could become problematic within the workplace. She was unclear as to how she would manage a balance within her work life.

Miya engaged in work experiences, such as working in retail and in a high-pressured grocery store for three years. She learned through her work experiences that she was good at working with people. She compared herself to her peers and recognized that her social skill set was unique. Her volunteer work experiences included working with recent immigrants and their children. This experience enabled her to revise her own myths regarding her ethnic community and expand her own worldview.

Miya sought out various learning experiences within her educational environment through formal means. While she was in high school, she set up a South Asian club in which they would educate the public regarding South Asian issues, and by researching the issues, they would educate themselves about their culture. While Miya was in university, she drew on her courses to help inform her of issues that were prevalent in

society to help form her perspective. The informal educational experiences she drew on consisted of her travel experiences with her family to India to help her form a global view and a deeper cultural perspective that contributed to a more realistic view of life.

Self-Efficacy

While Miya was in high school she was a “strong” science student and excelled at the sciences and at math. By the end of high school, she made the decision to enter the arts. Her decision to enter the arts was primarily motivated by her emotional reaction. She did not feel that being in the sciences would be emotionally satisfying for her. She was unclear as to what skill set she would need to do well in the arts, but felt confident that she had the internal resources to handle any difficulties. She enjoyed the prospect of entering an unknown field and exploring where her strengths could be. She took one biology course at the university level, and since it did not meet her performance or personal satisfaction, she used the experience to reconfirm her decision to enter the arts.

While Miya was in university, she engaged in volunteer and work experiences that helped her make further assessments regarding her abilities. She learned through her volunteer experiences that she had the ability to do well in the applied social sciences, but that she still needed to develop a skill set. She experienced positive emotions in her field and feedback from her supervisors, which reinforced her decision to enter social work. She also sought out new experiences to address her challenges. She assumed more leadership roles in her work, and her confidence grew as she saw herself handle new situations effectively. She internalized her positive experiences, and this helped her to form future outcome expectations for herself. Her outcome expectations became a part of

the future opportunities that she sought for herself. Her confidence in herself helped her to persist in her field, even when the results of her actions were unknown.

Miya viewed facing unknown territory as an opportunity to engage in the “search for the self.” She felt confident that she had the internal resources to draw from to confront any challenges along the way and that she would set challenging goals for herself that were personally driven. Her sense of confidence was used as a springboard for further exploration. The unknown did not frighten her, and she viewed it as an opportunity to confront her challenges, as opposed to viewing them as fears that needed to be avoided. For example, she viewed the shortage of South Asian social workers in the field as a stimulus to want to be one even more versus viewing lack of South Asian social workers as a deterrent to her career choice.

Outcome Expectations

Miya expected to gain a sense of personal satisfaction from engaging in the field of social work in three ways. First, she looked forward to the variety of issues to which she would be exposed and felt that her working environment would never become static. Second, she felt that her work in the field would contribute to an expansion of her worldview. Third, she felt that the enjoyment that she derived from working with people would contribute to her doing well in the field and would allow her to build on her personal strengths.

Miya identified intrinsic expectations based on her career choice. First, she expected to make a social contribution to her clients. She wanted to draw on her leadership skills and support her clients with difficult decisions. She wanted to help her clients discover their voice and speak up on issues on which they had remained silent.

Second, she wanted to complete her master's degree eventually so that she could make a difference on a societal level. She also wanted to work with youth within her own ethnic community and "make a difference." Third, she felt that being in social work was a good match to her interests.

Miya identified two extrinsic factors that related to her career choice. First, she expected that regardless of the cutbacks in the field, there would always be a need for social workers and that she would not have difficulty finding employment. Second, she expected that her work in the field would be valued and appreciated by her clients and co-workers. Third, she felt that her work with South Asian women could lend itself to being viewed as a role model by other South Asian women.

Interests

Miya mentioned three aspects that shaped her interest in the field. First, she felt an internal knowing and attributed her interest in being in social work due to fate. She felt that this was "what she was meant to be doing." Second, she found that when she immersed herself in the field that matched her value system, it became an interest for herself. Third, when she had no objective assessment to use to validate an area, she would remain neutral and explore the field. She would refine her interest areas based on obtaining more information. Fourth, she would buffer her interest in social work by not paying attention to the statistics of jobs available in her field. She would also ignore negative media portrayals of social workers and limit discussing her career choice with people in her ethnic community, as they did not understand or value her chosen field.

Choice Goals

When Miya was in high school her career goals were very fluid. When she was focussed on the sciences, she was not clear as to the various roles she could assume within the field. She only thought that being in the sciences would restrict her to lab experiences, but she was unclear what her options were. She knew that she wanted to help people, and wanted to enter the arts to see what career options would feel personally satisfying for herself.

Upon entrance into her BA program in university, she was unclear as to what her career goal was. She started to identify a variety of fluid choice goals near the completion of her program, including social work, counseling psychology, and law. Based on her personal self-assessment and exposure to various courses, her choice goal became more crystallized, and she started to aim to complete the requirements for entrance into the social work program.

Now that she is in the social work program, her choice goals are again fluid in nature. She is not sure what type of social work position she would like to assume upon completion of her program. She is more concerned with completion of her academic program as being the next goal. She also hopes that through the variety of practicum placements she will be able to form a more concrete picture as to the type of work in her field that she would like to aim for. She also identified that after working in her field for two to three years, she would like to complete her master's degree. She also would like to be stable in her work life before getting married. She felt that as long as she was married before the age of 30 years, this would provide her with enough time to establish herself.

She also hoped to find a partner who would be supportive of her decision to complete her master's degree.

Choice Actions

Miya identified intuitive means as her primary method to making a career choice. She believed that one's career choice needs to be autonomous, as the individual's future life decisions will incorporate work. She also believed that if a person based her career choice on her interests, then there was no such thing as a "bad" decision. She believed that all people had the internal resources and self-knowledge to discover what their interests were. She felt that the answers to her career choice were already within herself and that she only needed to do a self-assessment of her self-knowledge to know which direction to take. She felt that her career choice was representative of her personal value system. She also found that she allowed her emotions to be a strong guide for helping her to assess her likes and dislikes. She was also very open to "taking a chance" when she felt that she needed more emotional knowledge to help guide her decision making. She would pose questions to herself and self-reflect about her experiences and then make a determination regarding her current career direction.

The second strategy that Miya engaged in that she identified was a rational decision-making process. She would evaluate her abilities and strengths in various work settings to help inform her of her future choice goals. She made the decision to engage in various practicum experiences and volunteer work to help make objective self-assessments. She would consider her careers options and engage in a process of elimination, which would include an objective assessment of her strengths, consideration of effort expenditure within her field, and determination if the work would fit her value

system. Intrinsic rewards would outweigh the extrinsic rewards when considering eliminating options.

Her plans for gaining admission into the social work program were task specific. She knew that social work was what she wanted, and she took a full-year course during her first undergraduate degree to confirm her interest. She also knew of the amount of volunteer experience she would need for entrance into the program and sought it out in advance. She also attained all the necessary forms for admission into her program in advance.

Her future goals regarding what she intends to do after the completion of her program were fluid in nature and her plans were also vague. She did not have a concrete plan as to how she would attempt the job search as she was unclear what type of social work position she wished to assume. In regard to her future life plan, she intends to access the support of her peers and potential marriage partner to help her attempt to complete a master's degree. She was unclear as to the challenges of how she would address balancing career, marriage, and her future educational plans for herself.

Rekha

Contextual Influences

Rekha identified four aspects of the dominant society that had an impact on her socialization. First, she felt that she lived in a society that was ageist where people did not value the experiences of youth or the elderly. Second, people in society had difficulty dealing with cultural differences, which was expressed in either overt or covert forms. Third, the dominant society had a set definition as to what constituted assertive behavior

that went against her conceptual cultural framework. Fourth, dominant society held more value in making direct verbal feedback regarding its impressions of an individual.

Rekha identified three aspects of her ethnic community that had an impact on her socialization. First, the ethnic community had definite views on the life plan of young women in the community and the role of education. If a young woman was not going to pursue her higher education, the ethnic community would expect the young woman to achieve a certificate program (ten months to two years) at the college level, with the primary purpose then to get married. There also was an emphasis for young women to pursue an academic track at the university level in the sciences, business, or engineering fields rather than the arts. It was also encouraged within the ethnic community for young women to pursue a master's, but they still expected or pressured the young woman to get married within a certain time frame, or it was believed that one's life was "ruined." The community valued people who would commit to a particular career goal and complete the program. There was inflexibility regarding changing career interests and not completing what one had started. Second, Rekha received messages regarding the attitudes towards community. There was a value for the elderly. She felt that the community helped each other in times of need and demonstrated connection more through one's actions and indirect means than through verbal demonstrations. She felt that a cycle of support was built into the community. Third, she drew on her religion to inform some of her basic belief systems. What she maintained from her religion was what it meant to be a good person and how equality should exist between all people. She also took away the idea of trying to add to the betterment of society by helping individuals meet their needs through establishing a system of support.

Within Rekha's family, the basic life messages she received were the following. First, her parents taught her the importance of responsibility to the family and the different "obligations" involved by observing how they provided a secure environment for her. Second, she was taught that life was unpredictable and that another person's misfortune could become one's own. Third, her parents taught her the value of money, hard work, and the importance of being dedicated as reflected through their actions. They encouraged her to work while she was in high school. They would provide her with support, such as rides, making her meals, and not expecting her to engage in as many chores to help decrease her responsibility in the home, to help her balance her commitments. Third, her parents exposed her to various acts of charity and religious teachings. They taught her the value of helping others indirectly through their actions of volunteering at the temple or helping other people in the community, as they also did with their acts of affection. In regard to religious teachings, her parents would share stories with her based on various religions with embedded meanings as to what it meant to be a good person and how to contribute to the betterment of humankind. She was also taught the role that wishing/prayer played in life, as it would contribute to having a more hopeful disposition. She was taught that if one wished from a "pure" spot in one's heart, the wish would manifest itself, as it would be a true extension of the person and would be entwined with that person's fate. Fourth, her parents wanted her to have her own career to ensure her own financial stability so that she would be self-sufficient and able to "stand on her own two feet." They expected that upon completion of her degree, she would get married. They were aware that if the marriage were to dissolve due to negative

circumstances, their daughter could walk away and take care of herself by relying on her career as a “backup plan.”

Rekha identified three aspects of her school experiences that have contributed to her socialization. First, she experienced that her peers and teachers had difficulty dealing with difference. She felt that while growing up her peers did not understand her value for volunteering and working as they were more interested in socializing. In regard to her teachers, she found that they had a cultural ideal as to what assertion looked like and a preference for particular learning styles in the classroom that she did not fit, due to differences in socialization experiences in the family. Second, her peers held the belief that for women having a career would foster a sense of independence and contribute to a sense of identity. They also believed that people need to pursue work that they would find to be personally satisfying. Third, she found that there was a push in the school system to encourage more women into the sciences, but that the majority of women were still entering female-dominated professions. Fourth, she found that the school supported doing charity work and provided her with opportunities to immerse herself in fundraising activities and be able to “contribute to the greater good.”

Structure of Opportunity

Educational institutions.

In high school, Rekha experienced support based on the influence of her teachers. They provided feedback regarding her performance, encouraged her to explore her potential, and respected her learning styles. Her teachers helped her set up and run individual programs in the school to help raise money for various social causes. She also found that the CAPP program was helpful as it provided her with time to research calendars and talk to academic advisors in college before entrance into college. The

barriers that she experienced in high school involved accessing academic advisors in her high school. She felt that she could not access their services because they were understaffed and extremely busy. She also wanted to buffer her interest in social work and did not want to hear any negative impressions of her choice by the academic advisors. She also did not feel “known” by them. She felt that they would base their recommendations based only on her grades and not on her personal strengths.

Rekha identified two supports that she experienced in college. First was access to the resource centre, as she liked to work with the calendars independently and at her own pace. Second, she encountered one academic advisor who encouraged her to go on to the social work program and who also had overcome the age barrier in personal experience. Third, she found that the cost of college was half that of university and a good way to complete the first two years of her undergraduate degree. The barriers that she faced at the college level were dealing with academic advisors who would try to dissuade her from social work. They thought that she did not have the age, experience, or academic standing to get into the program. From her perspective, she did not feel that they took the time to see her history and the amount of experiences she had accumulated up to that point to make that type of assertion. Second, she knew that the social work program would consider age as a factor in their admission standards. They tended to equate age with life experience, and in order to combat the age barrier, she worked very hard to accumulate as much volunteer experiences as possible.

At the university level, she experienced various supports as part of the social work program. She felt that there were many advantages to having a degree in social work. She felt that obtaining her degree in social work would enable her to have more access to jobs

in the market, as her degree would be more recognized by the public. Since the program also was known to be difficult to gain entrance into, she felt that there would be more value attached to the completion of her degree and that the public would attach more prestige to it. She also felt that being able to pursue a master's in her field would open more doors of opportunity for her to explore. She was comfortable with an additional two years in the length of the social work program. The financial cost of university was something that she had to plan for and was prepared to accomplish. She felt supported by the institution as she qualified for various scholarships and bursaries. She also liked being a part of the program and felt supported by her peers who were like-minded. The barriers that she experienced at the university level involved dealing with practicum supervisors who had their own perception of what assertiveness and a mainstream social worker was like and did not take into account cultural differences.

Paid work and volunteer work.

Rekha identified three advantages to being South Asian in her field. First, she felt that knowing how to speak, read, and write Punjabi helped to gain access to communicate with people within the ethnic community and created a shared bond of understanding. Second, she felt that knowing her language allowed her to experience inclusion within her community and helped her to understand cultural nuances that might be easily missed by others. Third, she felt that because she could communicate with recent immigrants who were South Asian, she had a better understanding of the barriers that they experienced because they could discuss it with her.

Within her volunteer and work experiences in the field, Rekha identified three barriers in the workplace. First, she felt that she had to deal with ageism in the field. She felt that she had to present herself in a professional manner in order to establish her

credibility. She also felt that even when she was granted a higher-level position within the workplace, because of her age she would have to work extra hard to prove to her co-workers that she was capable and deserved her position. The manner in which she dealt with ageism was that she would set a boundary between herself and her co-workers, and as she established credibility, she would let “them in.” She would also dress professionally and present in a more reserved manner. Second, she felt that challenging people in the workplace was difficult, as it was not part of her socialization experiences. She would manage the barrier by discussing her options with a peer, role playing with her peer, and draw from her personal value system to ensure that her solution fit for her. Third, a potential barrier was that men tended to hold higher management positions in her field and that these might be more difficult for her to attain.

Rekha identified supports in her work environment. First, she enjoyed being in work environments where people had the same interests as herself and were “like-minded.” Second, she was able to create an informal support system for herself in which her co-workers provided her with information about her future role as a social worker and the benefits of completing a master’s program. They also provided her with emotional support and encouragement to pursue her career goal. Second, they provided her with direct feedback on her contributions in the field. Third, she learned of the various career options open to her in the field and the structure of organizations.

Support system in the family.

Rekha used various strategies to socialize her parents regarding her career interests and values. First, she educated her parents about her field and the difficulty of gaining entrance into the program, thereby generating her parents’ respect over time for her field. She provided information to her family regarding what social work was so that

they could answer questions to the rest of the community when asked direct questions. Second, Rekha established her sense of independence within her family from a young age. She engaged in various extracurricular activities and demonstrated to her parents that her life extended past her family life and included volunteer work, work, and sports. She established that career decision making was an independent undertaking and wanted to claim autonomous ownership over this domain of her life. She felt that this was the one area in her life where she had “movement,” whereas the other areas of her social life were restricted by her sense of responsibility to her family. She set the boundary indirectly with her parents by applying for programs without her parents’ knowledge and informing them of her decision when she had positive results. She presented her future plan in a direct manner, included future job prospects in the field, and followed through with what she said to demonstrate that she was committed to her career path. Third, she tried to find a youth who was Indo-Canadian and was respected in the community and who represented her career interests and used that person as a base of comparison for her parents. In her case, she felt that it was important to have allies in the family for her decision and to draw support from them. Fourth, she proved to her parents her level of dedication and commitment to her career goal. They saw how much work she was putting into her volunteer work, work, and schooling and over time, wanted to support her in her endeavors as opposed to trying to deter her from her choice goal. Fifth, she practiced being an advocate on behalf of her sisters and brothers regarding their diverse career choices. She educated her parents in different way, of perceiving what her siblings might be going through. She hoped that her advocacy skills would transfer to her need to be

assertive for herself when it came to negotiating the domain of marriage with her parents, which she felt she would face upon completion of her degree.

Learning Experiences

Rekha identified three aspects of her educational environment that had an impact on her career development. She specified that throughout her education, specific teachers provided her with positive feedback regarding her strengths. The courses that she took in college in social work also reinforced her career choice. While she was in high school, she was involved in various clubs and discovered her leadership skills. While she was in college, she was involved more in volunteer work and work experiences and did not participate in any clubs on campus as she was focussed on strengthening her application to the social work program. While she was in university, she became more heavily involved in clubs pertaining to social work through her department, thus enabling her to become part of the university community. She enjoyed being immersed in her social work program as it provided her an opportunity to consolidate her worldview as to the type of social worker she wished to become. She engaged in social comparison of herself to her peers in the program as a manner by which to reaffirm her career choice, as she saw that she was now surrounded by “like-minded” people.

Rekha learned through her volunteer and work experiences what type of work setting she liked to operate within. She tried to gear all her work and volunteer experiences around the helping profession. She also wanted to develop her leadership capabilities and obtained administrative positions in various organizations. She found that her co-workers were an invaluable support for providing information and encouragement in her career choice. The positive feedback that she received from all her experiences

helped her to reaffirm her career choice. She also liked working as it provided her with financial independence and allowed her to save for her education.

Rekha had been involved in school, work, and volunteer work since she was in high school and that continued until she entered university. Based on the fact that she drew on various social systems, balance of life issues became important for her. She learned how to multi-task, engage in time management, set priorities, and access her support system to help her balance the different areas of her life and to facilitate a smooth transition. The main support system she accessed was her family. She also drew on her co-workers as a support system as they provided her with a sense of community. She recognized that in her work placements she worked extra hard to “prove” herself to her co-workers. She learned through her experiences that she would not feel compelled to work harder than any other working employee, helping her to lead a more balanced life in the workplace.

Self-efficacy

During high school, Rekha derived a lot of enjoyment and did very well academically in the sciences and in English. She had trouble with math and felt that she needed to restrict her career choices to the applied social sciences, as math was a requirement in the sciences. Before deciding not to invest more effort into math to pursue the sciences, she engaged in volunteer work in a hospital setting for three years. Based on her practical experiences in the hospital setting, she wanted to explore whether being a nurse or being in the applied social sciences was what she should aim for. Based on her practical experiences and her negative physiological reaction to the sight of blood she recognized that being a nurse and entering the sciences was not a realistic choice for her.

What Rekha did learn about herself through her work experiences based on feedback from patients and her co-workers was that she had a wonderful ability to connect with people. She wanted to build on her strengths and decided to change her choice goal based on the new information obtained. She loved working at the hospital with patients and increased her effort expenditure by increasing the amount of time and emotional commitment that she invested into the work setting.

Based on her volunteer and work experiences in the field, she received ample feedback from people in the field that her strength was that she was good with people and handled responsibility well. She incorporated the feedback into her own self-assessment. She also set challenging goals for herself in the different work settings, and if her performance accomplishments were recognized by others, she would then feel validated in her experience. This recognition served as confirmation of her skills and fostered her level of confidence.

Her co-workers would also help her to moderate her level of self-doubt by reminding her of the good they saw in her work, entrusting her with increasing levels of responsibility and verbally acknowledging her efforts. She described the process of building confidence as “building from the outside and in” as she would need to have feedback from others in order to feel more confident in her actions in the workplace. She attributes this process to growing into her role as a worker. She hopes one day that she can reverse the process and that confidence can be a process of “building from the inside and being reflected outside” on herself.

Outcome Expectations

Rekha identified two aspects of intrinsic satisfaction she expected from being in social work. First, she expected to be able to make a social contribution and aid in the improvement of individual lives. She wanted to create a cycle of empowerment in which through empowering others, she would feel empowered in the process. Second, she wanted to make a societal contribution and hoped to make systemic changes within organizations by starting her own “grass roots social movement” that would start on a local level and extend to a global scale.

She identified deriving personal enjoyment from engaging in the field. First, she recognized that if her level of personal satisfaction was high, she would increase her commitment. Second, she found that helping people was a mutually beneficial experience as she felt good knowing that she helped someone and that she would grow from the experience. Third, she felt that she was entering a field where she could grow on a professional level as she built on her strengths. Fourth, the work allowed her to engage in genuine interaction with her clients.

Rekha identified various factors that would need to be in place to ensure her personal satisfaction. First, she recognized that she would have to learn how to handle “burnout” within her field by having a more balanced life. Second, she recognized that she would need to work within an organization that had a similar worldview to her own as she recognized that not all work environments would be a positive setting. Third, she expected to work in various organizations that would reflect her new emergent interests, as she recognized that as one’s priorities in life change, so does one’s interest area.

Rekha identified five extrinsic factors that she anticipated in her field. First, she wanted to gain a reputation within her field as being a good social worker. Second, she enjoyed having the verbal feedback from her co-workers regarding her work performance as it made her feel valued in her field. Third, she felt that by completing her degree and pursuing her master's she could earn the respect of her parents. Fourth, she felt that she would always be employable in her field. She also believed that if she had difficulty finding work, she could create her own opportunities through private practice.

Interests

Rekha's interests were guided by various factors. First, she learned more about her likes by immersing herself in the field. Second, she would reflect on her emotional reactions to various learning situations and evaluate whether it fit with her personal value system. Third, she felt an internal fit between herself and her career choice, felt that "she was meant to be doing" this, and attributed it to fate.

Rekha was open to exploration of areas that were related to her career choice in which she had limited exposure. She believed that only active exploration within her field would help her to generate areas that could become a "passion." She felt that one's strengths lay within and that through exploration, potential could be discovered.

Rekha identified an area as a dislike if she recognized that the amount of effort expenditure did not reflect on her performance accomplishments. She also identified a dislike if she felt that there was a clash of her internal set values and the mandate of an organization. She felt that if a clash existed, this could contribute to a person experiencing burnout. She also felt that if she were working with an organization in which the work expectations did not fit her strengths, it would not be a good match.

Choice Goals

While Rekha was in high school, a college academic advisor provided her with a brief description of the social work program. She had a crystallized goal to aim towards, and she started to obtain more volunteer experiences to help her enhance her application. She recognized that through the hospital she could aim towards a scholarship to help with tuition costs at the college level. She set her goal for the scholarship, attained the grades needed, and committed more time to her placement to gain the scholarship. While she was in high school, she researched the educational requirements to gain admission into the social work program and explored her institutional options. She wanted to access the bridging program through college to the university program as she could then save more money for university tuition through working and have more time to plan.

While Rekha was in college, her goal to enter social work never wavered. She continued to set challenging goals for herself to attain within her volunteer and work experiences. She also aimed for more scholarships and bursaries at the college level to help fund her way through school. Rekha's parents recognized that her choice goal was solid and saw her hard work as commendable but were also concerned for how hard she had to work to gain her goal. She also made it her personal goal to address entering the field and working with cultural diverse people as she recognized that there was a shortage of Indo-Canadian social workers in the field.

After being admitted into the university program, her primary goal now was completion of her social work degree program. Her choice goals of the type of work she wanted to engage in after the completion of her program were fluid in nature. She was open to exploring various social work positions and was actively researching master's

level programs to apply for prior to the end of the school year. She wanted to explore and keep all her options open as she wanted to see what would transpire. The only barrier that she identified with pursuing a master's was considering the financial cost, but she felt that she could plan and handle that barrier.

Choice Actions

Rekha relied primarily on intuitive decision making to help inform her career decisions. She relied on her own internal resources to guide her in her decision and included thinking on her own about her personal assessment of her strengths, values, and emotional reactions, and comparing and contrasting her experiences. She drew on her sense of internal knowing and drew on her spiritual base for guidance. She believed in wishing, daydreaming about her wishes, and praying for her dreams to come true as part of her process. She also believed that if something was "meant" to be that it would reflect in her fate. When she was a child, she would also daydream about a utopian community and wish that to exist. As she became older, her daydreams became more refined and task specific as to how she would develop this sense of community through her work life.

The second strategy she engaged in was a rational decision-making process as part of her planning process. She weighed various career options and considered these in relation to an objective self-assessment of her strengths at the educational and practical level of experience. She reflected on her various learning experiences to help her make an informed decision. She also assessed her performance goals and made task-specific plans to see if she could attain the standard needed in order to do a good job within the field.

After the completion of her degree, her parents had different expectations regarding life plans for Rekha. They hoped that she would find employment and soon

become married. Rekha mentioned that she did not feel ready to be married and was not sure what her plans would look like upon completion of her program.

She had mentioned that one manner to buy herself more time to establish her sense of an independent self and not get married was by entering a master's program and stalling the process of getting married. It would be considered socially acceptable within the ethnic community for parents to say to other members that their daughter was focussed on more schooling and was not ready for marriage. She was concerned that she would be faced with a lot of normative pressure to be married if she were to enter the field of work soon after the completion of her degree.

She felt that if she could engage in a two-year master's program, this would buy her enough time to establish more of an independent self, become more established in a career, and still be married before the age of 30, which would please herself. She was applying actively for graduate programs. She mentioned that if graduate school did not work out, she would also be open to working for a few years in her field, helping her to save enough money for graduate school and then completing her master's. If she were to engage in the job search, she mentioned that she would access her supervisors and co-workers from her practicums and volunteer experiences to help her form some leads. Her plans were fairly vague and the choice goal that she was aiming for was very fluid in nature because she wanted to keep herself open to different possibilities in her field.

Siana

Contextual Influences

Siana mentioned two aspects of the dominant society. First, that people who represented the mainstream devalued the helping profession based on the low wages

distributed to people in the field. Second, she found that people in the mainstream viewed her cultural identity as being a separate aspect of herself, when in fact she saw it as an integration of values based in both communities. She saw the value of respect for women and equality for people to be apparent in both communities, but the ideas served different purposes.

Within her ethnic community, Siama mentioned two main ideas. First, that professions in sciences, engineering, business, or law were more valued by the community because the fields were deemed to be more stable and secure and were encouraged for both men and women to enter. Second, the purpose of a woman having a career would be to supplement a dual income to support a future family.

Siama identified five messages that she learned from her family. First, based on her position in the family, she needed to practice using her voice in order to be heard, which helped her develop her determination. Second, her parents had preferences for what her career choice would be but left the final decision primarily up to her. Third, her parents passed on their belief that an education would help her to establish a sense of independence for herself and help her deal with the unpredictability of life. They also felt that her education would always be recognized in the workplace and help her become more established within her field. Third, her parents demonstrated their value for helping people through indirect means through observing their actions. Fourth, she questioned women's role in the family and the role that assertiveness played in the family.

Siama stated five messages that were relayed to her through her school experiences. First, there was a push for women to enter the sciences, but the majority of her female peers were entering the social sciences. Second, her peers valued post-

secondary education as it was seen that one was strong minded, dedicated, and motivated. Her peers also maintained that people should pursue their interests. Third, she felt that multicultural values were reinforced throughout all her school experiences. Fourth, her peers understood that high school formulated a normative step where one would have to start forming one's own career path independently of one's peers.

Structure Of Opportunity

Educational institutions.

Siama identified three support systems that she drew on in her educational environment. First, she looked through brochures to see if the Child and Youth Care (CYC) program would fit her interests. Second, she found that taking courses that were specific to her interest of being in the helping field helped her to become aware of the options available in the field. Third, she talked to people who had just completed the CYC program to achieve a better understanding of what the program entailed.

Siama identified five barriers that she experienced in her educational environment. First, she felt that there was a lack of information available for the public of potential programs to pursue in the social service sector. Second, she found while she was in high school that teachers did not stop to question her and point out the consequences of not taking all of one's sciences or math options, thus barring her from career options in the future. Third, at the college level there was an age requirement to enter a particular diploma program focussed on the social service sector. She managed it by accumulating additional volunteer experiences and showing her commitment by enrolling in classes for the program ahead of time. Fourth, in the placements she had, she was given roles that did not allow for immersion or responsible roles in the field, due to her age. She confronted this by becoming more assertive with her supervisor and outlined what her

expectations were. Fifth, she experienced administrative difficulties that affected her admissions into the social work program at the university level.

Siama identified four aspects that she considered when deciding on a post-secondary education. First, she considered the cost of university programs in her decision to go on into CYC. Second, she considered the length of the CYC program. She and her parents were concerned that by the time she graduated from the CYC program, it might be difficult to be married. Third, she selected going to college first because of the decreased tuition and because it would allow her to adjust to the system. She recognized that going to university would require her to move and incur higher costs, but she felt that it would be worth it for a more focussed program. She thought that a university degree was different from a diploma because it would allow her more options in the job market, as her degree would be more recognized by employers. Fourth, she recognized that there were a higher proportion of Indo-Canadian women enrolled in the CYC program than other helping professions and felt that there would be more balance of representation of Indo-Canadian women in her field.

Paid work and volunteer work.

Siama mentioned two supports that she experienced within her work environment. First, she felt that her work and volunteer experiences increased her exposure to people in the field. Her social network increased, and she had a pool of people to draw from for information to help guide her future career and educational endeavors. Second, when she was employed as a CYC worker, her supervisor supported her professional development by sending her to workshops and by immersing her in the field by increasing the level of responsibility with the job.

Siama identified three barriers that she experienced working. First, she was concerned that employers might have a myth that Indo-Canadian women were not assertive, which might bar her from gaining certain experiences in the field. Second, she felt it would be hard assuming higher management positions as men hold the majority of positions. Third, she felt that being young could be a barrier to gaining work experience with families. She felt that overtime she could manage these challenges as she had more work experience in the field.

Siama identified three aspects of being South Asian that might have an impact on her CYC experiences. First, she was concerned that an employer might restrict her to only working with South Asian issues because she was South Asian. Second, she felt that knowing how to speak Punjabi would be an asset as more recent immigrants were using mental health services. She was concerned that her fluency was not as deep as she would like it to be and that some South Asian families might take offence that she did not know Punjabi as well as she ought to. Third, she felt that she would be able to identify with various minority groups and also with her South Asian clients based on her understanding of the cultural norms and knowledge of the tensions that they might experience.

Support system in the family.

Siama identified four strategies that she used to gain the support of her parents for her career decision. First, she defied the expectations and norms of her parents in a respectful manner by presenting her career choice after she had been accepted into her academic program of choice. She outlined her academic plan in a decisive manner, explained her field to her parents, and let them know what different career options would be open for herself. Second, she engaged in an apparent compromise with her parents before entering the CYC program. Her parents wanted her to be in business, so she

enrolled in business and took some courses in the applied social sciences on the side. She then had an objective measure of her marks to draw from to support her decision to switch into the applied social sciences. She knew that ultimately her parents wanted to see her happy and to see her complete her post-secondary education and would eventually support her decision. Third, she encouraged her parents to talk with other people within the community who were affiliated with the social services to educate themselves about the field. Fourth, she had established her independence from her family at an early age. She engaged in volunteer work that her parents did not approve of and maintained her position regarding her career decision. She felt that if she did not convince her parents to support or listen to her ideas in regard to career, then it would be harder to address some of the bigger issues, such as conflicts regarding marriage.

Learning Experiences

Siama identified three aspects of her educational experiences that she found valuable. First, when she was immersed within a specific program she learned the best about her interest areas. Second, she found the practicum experiences to be helpful as they provided her with a chance to develop her skills and build on her “toolkit” of skills to draw from. Third, through comparison and exploration of various practicum sites, she was able to determine the work setting and role that would be a good fit for her.

Siama identified two aspects of her volunteer and work experiences that she gained. First, she learned how to become responsible with money. She also found that she was granted more responsibility in her role as a CYC worker and developed a more realistic picture of what the field entailed. Second, through her experiences in the field she developed a base for networking. She talked to many people in the field to learn

about what her future prospects were and what challenges she could expect to face. Her co-workers also acted as a base of emotional support as she could approach them for help or assistance when she felt unsure of herself.

Siama identified four aspects that related to balance of life issues. First, she viewed the challenges that people in her community faced and transferred her learning to the various clients in the CYC field. Second, she felt that it would be difficult trying to separate self from work. Helping people was already a part of her value system and was an integral aspect to how she perceived herself in all spheres of her life. Third, she found that as her social worlds grew, it became harder to integrate having a social life into balancing school, work, and volunteer work. She found that setting priorities and drawing from each social support in each aspect of her life became important for her to do. Fourth, she felt that her spiritual base would help form an aspect of her self-care. She felt that it would allow her to learn from her experiences and create a balanced perspective.

Self-efficacy

While Siama was involved in high school, she took various subjects in the arts, such as psychology, law, and business courses. She perceived the courses as being manageable, and she derived a lot of enjoyment from learning about something completely “new.” She also completed her Math 12, but not based on a positive self-assessment. She completed Math 12 as a way to “prove” to her teacher that South Asian women could complete it, since the teacher did not believe it to be so. She enjoyed the sciences, but found that she had to exert a high degree of effort expenditure to do well and did not feel that her performance accomplishments made the pursuit of the subject

worthwhile. Since she did not pursue her sciences in grade 12, she had to consider career goals that were focussed in the arts.

While in college and university and when she had made the decision to be enrolled in the social service sector, she received a lot of negative messages from her ethnic community and extended family regarding her career choice. Within her course in college and university, she was taught how to handle the public's negative reactions to people working in the social service sector, and she decided to transfer that learning to how she managed her own extended family and ethnic community. As she started to speak up more and defend her choice by questioning people's assumptions, her confidence in herself grew through her actions. The more confident she appeared with her choice, the fewer people around her would make negative comments regarding her career choice. While she was immersed within her field, her confidence level within herself grew, and she integrated the feedback based on her supervisors to help her confirm her choice goal. She also learned over the course of her academic program that it was a sign of strength to ask for help or assistance, and she was open to accessing her professors and peers more when faced with a challenge.

Outcome Expectations

Siama identified two aspects that related to her outcome expectations of work. First, she identified intrinsic satisfaction and believed that she needed to engage in a career that would focus on her interests and strengths. She also wanted to make a social contribution in individuals' lives by "making a difference." She wanted to make a societal contribution in which her efforts would be to better the community so that the next generation could have their needs easily met. She felt that if she entered the field

that she would address the lack of South Asian CYC workers and help her ethnic community. Second, she felt that she would derive extrinsic satisfaction from her work. She felt that she was fairly easily employable, as there was always a need for CYC workers in her field. She also could see how she could create her own employment opportunities within the field. She also felt that her degree would be more valued and recognized by the employment sector. Third, she expected to experience personal satisfaction from engaging in the field. She expected to experience a sense of empowerment from empowering others. She also felt that she could establish her sense of identity through her career path. Siama expected to learn more about herself through the process of helping others. She recognized that since the field was not lucrative, that it would have to be personally rewarding to sustain efforts at remaining in the field.

Interests

Siama identified four aspects that contributed to identifying a career interest. First, being immersed in her field validated her experiences and allowed her to engage in the subject matter in a meaningful manner. Second, courses that she did well also helped her to identify areas of interest. She felt that her interests needed to be based on her strengths, and her marks were an indicator for her to measure that by. Third, she evaluated her courses to see whether they were meeting her expectations, thus enabling her to further commit to her field. Fourth, she felt that she was always interested in helping people and attributed this internal knowing to the role of fate in her life.

Siama knew by the end of high school that she did not want to pursue the sciences and wanted to explore the arts. If she felt neutral about an area, she would keep herself open to new experiences to help her gain more insight on herself. She welcomed the

“newness” of experiences and enjoyed the prospect of confronting new challenges. After she took a few courses she would evaluate her emotional response and performance accomplishment and whether the course fit her value system, to determine if she should pursue the subject further.

Sياما would identify a dislike if it conflicted with her internal value system. For example, she valued making a difference on an individual level versus trying to help individuals on a systems level. Therefore, she did not think that social work would be a good fit for herself. She would also define an area as a dislike if the amount of effort expenditure in an area did not meet her outcome expectations.

Choice Goals

While Sياما was in high school, she set challenging academic goals for herself to attain, and if she did not do well in a particular course, she would revise her self-assessment and choice goals. She took various courses in the arts and in business in high school as her choice goal was fluid in nature. She knew that she wanted to go on to college and then university, but she was unclear as to what she wanted to specialize in. It was only after her first year in college that she researched various academic career options in her field of interest and decided on a diploma program related to the social service sector and aimed her behavior to fit entrance requirements. She took additional courses and engaged in more volunteer work to enhance her application.

After the completion of her college diploma, she decided to work in her field for a year before advancing on to university. She worked as a CYC worker, and she decided after her experiences to aim for the CYC program at the university level. She debated

between the social work and CYC program, but because she had a clear picture of what a CYC worker was, she decided to aim towards that.

Currently, she defined the next clear goal as the completion of her CYC program. She then identified some fluid career options that she could consider for entry in the workforce. She was willing to explore various CYC positions as work alternatives that were present in the market.

Choice Actions

Siama engaged in rational decision making as her primary mode for career decision making. After engaging in exploration and a weighing of her options, she engaged in a process of elimination of career choices. She researched her options, assessed her strengths and personal satisfaction, and made a determination of her choices.

Siama identified dependent decision making as an aspect of planning her choice goal. She recognized that she was not following the normative path of her ethnic community regarding career choice and felt pressured to conform. This was partly why she decided to try out business as well while she was in college, to please her parents and to try the normative path. When she decided on entering the social sciences, she felt that she needed to buffer herself from the negative comments of her ethnic community. At times, she wondered if she was strong enough to fight for what was necessary for herself.

Siama also identified intuitive choice as being a plan to help her make career decisions. First, she felt that taking the time to think on her own and make her own self-assessments of her strengths based on feedback from others was important. She was able to evaluate her strengths and emotions to consider whether the choices she was making fit her value system of how she conceptualized helping people. She also felt that all her

actions up to entering the CYC program “felt right” and that she was on the right “career path.” She felt that fate played a role in her choices and that she was doing “what she was meant to be doing.”

Her plans throughout her educational history were task specific in nature. She would always do a “background check” of her options, whether formally through reading material or talking to an academic advisor or informally through her peers, and systematically narrow down her options assessing her motivation to pursue a program. She would also create a “back up” plan for herself.

The plans that she had formulated by the end of her degree were vague in nature, as she was still unclear as to all the organizations that would accept CYC workers. She intends to engage in networking as a means of finding employment. She also had a plan in which she would like to create a program for other Indo-Canadian women to address the stresses that they experience. After the completion of her degree, she sees herself single, working, and living with her family. She hopes that she can live independently from her parents while she works, and will be discussing the idea with her parents. She also hopes to live independently until she gets married, and after she is married, she hopes to complete her master’s degree as a means to further her self development.

Reena

Contextual Influences

Reena cited three beliefs that the dominant society held. First, she felt that the majority of people in society did not value the social service sector based on the lack of pay in the field. Second, she felt that the majority of people held the belief that South Asian youth were spoiled by their parents and that youth did not have to work hard for

their achievements. Third, she felt that the dominant society held a belief that cultural identity involved living with two separate worldviews, whereas she felt that the two worldviews were “tied together.”

Within her ethnic community, Reena identified four messages that contributed to her socialization. First, her ethnic community placed an equal value for men and women to enter male-dominated fields in the workforce. Second, establishing one’s status in the community required pursuit of a university degree. Third, the temple provided a space where a sense of community was established. Fourth, the purpose of women working was to ensure one’s contribution to a future family by establishing a dual income to address the high cost of living.

Reena identified five messages that were part of her socialization experiences within her family. First, her parents immersed her in the culture, thereby establishing a sense of pride in being different. Second, her parents maintained the same level of expectations for all their daughters as they would if they had a son. Third, she was taught the importance of being responsible with money, working, establishing equity by having a car, and having a diploma or a degree to establish one’s sense of independence. The purpose for working would be to provide a dual income, but if the marriage were not successful, then one could leave knowing that one could take care of oneself. Fourth, her parents would reinforce that she was “privileged” to have access to an education and that it would provide her with future security. Fifth, she was taught not to take risks and to do what made her happy but not to forget her responsibilities to her family.

Reena identified four messages that she felt were part of her educational experiences. First, all her peers in high school valued having a post-secondary education.

Second, her peers all held the belief that one should follow one's interests and that women were capable of doing anything. They also felt that working contributed to a sense of self. Third, she felt that being involved in sports helped to develop a sense of community within the school. Fourth, she felt that teachers in high school emphasized a sense of community and the importance of relationships in people's lives.

Structure Of Opportunity

Educational institutions.

Reena identified five aspects of support throughout high school, college, and university. First, teachers in high school would provide feedback about her strengths and provide her with extracurricular activities in the school to build on them. She also found words of encouragement from her professors at university to help sustain her efforts to complete her program. Second, she found that at all levels her academic advisors helped her to explore her options and plan her education. Third, she found practicum experiences at the college and university level to be helpful as they provided her with exposure to various work settings for her to establish a good fit for herself. Fourth, she felt that the international counsellor could also relate to second-generation Indo-Canadian students who were new to the area. She felt that because the international counsellor would be familiar with issues relating to individual experience of culture shock of not being in a large Indo-Canadian community and what it is like to live in a new city. Fifth, she liked being in a program of "like-minded" individuals and felt that she could draw on their support and obtain a base of friends.

Reena identified three barriers while pursuing her educational objectives. First, she felt that the CAPP program was too broad and not informative. Second, while in college she wanted to enter a CYC program at that level, but it required being on a one-

year wait-list. She managed the barrier by obtaining permission to take some of the CYC courses ahead of time and accumulated her volunteer work experiences ahead of time. Third, in university she found that since she was living in a new city and did not have knowledge of the resources, this limited her practicum search. Fourth, she felt that to ease the transition to university the learning and study skills that were offered to students needed to be better advertised. Fifth, she felt that due to course scheduling difficulties she would not gain the courses required to work in child protection through the ministry, thereby barring her from a career option.

She felt that going to college before going into university would serve as a good “stepping stone.” She also felt that by obtaining a degree through university her chances in the market would be better, as her degree would be more recognized by future employers. She felt that the degree was becoming more “professionalized” and was advertised more in different calendars. For Reena, the cost of university was an aspect that she was prepared for, and she had researched the cost at various institutions and felt that it was reasonable. She did consider the length of her CYC degree at university prior to entrance, since she could not imagine living more than two years away from her family as they were very close.

Paid work and volunteer work.

Reena identified four supports that she experienced through her work and volunteer experiences. First, she would invest more time and years into volunteer experiences where she felt that her contributions were being valued and in which she received feedback based on her performance. Second, she felt that through observation she could learn from her co-workers aspects of how to deal with the work. Third, after completion of her college diploma, she obtained work as a CYC worker, was given

increasing levels of responsibility, and was immersed in her role. Fourth, she selected work and volunteer experiences based on the amount and level of training they could provide for her and where she felt she would be supported with her professional growth.

Reena identified four barriers that she experienced in her work and volunteer experiences. First, she found it challenging to attain the respect of the youth as they were close in age. Over time, she developed different strategies to overcome this. Second, she felt that she might have difficulty finding employment in the field, as there might be a demand for more men than women and because she might be perceived as too young. Third, she felt that due to cutbacks in the field, she might have difficulty finding employment. She was open to exploring the possibility of self-employment in the field. Fourth, she anticipated that it would be difficult to attain higher management positions in the field as men predominantly held them.

Reena identified various aspects of being South Asian in her field. The advantage that she mentioned involved being able to speak the language as a form of support for her clients and helping her clients feel more understood. A disadvantage of not knowing one's language could be perceived by a potential client as "not being in touch with one's culture," which might have an effect on their relationship.

Support system in the family.

In order to obtain potential support within the family for her career choice over time, Reena identified various strategies that she used. First, she educated her parents about the CYC program, as they did not know about it. Second, she researched her field, defended her choice with confidence, and presented it to her parents after she was sure of her direction. Since her parents viewed her volunteer experiences in the field as "dangerous," she engaged in open discussion with them about her work and slowly

“broke them in.” She demonstrated follow-through with all the decisions that she made to show her commitment. Third, she established a sense of independence for herself at a young age within the family by engaging in sports. Fourth, she demonstrated being responsible with her decisions to gain her parents’ trust. For example, she worked throughout high school to save money for her first car, thereby demonstrating that she was capable of making responsible decisions for herself. Fourth, her siblings also helped “break her parents” into the idea of Reena moving away from home to pursue university, as she was the first person in her family to do so. Fifth, she believed that eventually her parents’ concern for her happiness with her career choice would eventually outweigh their own career preferences for her, which helped her to persist in her own career direction. Sixth, she explained to her parents that her career choice of being a CYC worker was based on the values that they had passed on to her.

Learning Experiences

Reena identified three aspects of her educational experiences that contributed to her career choice. First, based on discrimination in school as a child, she wanted to help people who were different and needed support. Second, she felt that she had to “prove” herself to her peers and teachers and felt that she could not ask for assistance, as it might be considered a sign of weakness. Third, she found her practicum experiences to be useful as it allowed her to practice her skill set and apply the theory. Fourth, she found the career tests that she accomplished in high school were helpful, as they helped her recognize her strengths.

Reena identified that she drew on her volunteer and work experiences to help her inform herself of a career choice. She found, through the CAPP program in high school,

that she had the opportunity to gain paid employment experience. She was given increasing levels of responsibility and had the opportunity to accept a management position, but as it was not related to her field, she declined. She gained volunteer experience as a CYC worker, and by doing so, she increased her worldview. Through a process of social comparison to the youth she worked with, she developed a newfound appreciation for her family and defined herself as “privileged.”

As the social worlds of work, volunteer work, and school increased in importance in Reena’s life, she started to develop different ways to balance her life. First, she maintained a strong social circle as she completed her academics to maintain a balanced life. Second, she found that separating self from work could be difficult but was in the process of negotiating with herself how to do so. Third, she was developing a self-care system, which included her peers, spirituality, and talking to family to help avoid burning out.

Self-Efficacy

While Reena was in high school, she assessed her performance accomplishment in various subjects to determine if she should go into the sciences. She had found Math difficult and did not complete the science stream in high school. She found that pursuing courses in the arts was where her strengths were. Her teachers also recognized that she had leadership skills and provided her with opportunities, such as managing a sports team, to develop her skills. Reena also identified it as a strength.

While she was in college, she volunteered working with youth. At first, she questioned her capabilities of being able to handle this work effectively, but with the support and encouragement of her co-workers, she integrated their feedback and

persisted. She valued their feedback, and it helped her to develop more confidence within herself. She found it difficult to see what others valued in her and valued the positive feedback, as it helped to shape the outcome expectations that she set herself. She would set challenging goals for herself within her work settings and assess her emotional reactions and performance accomplishments to confirm if she was improving in the field. If she did not experience a positive feeling, she would attribute it to not having enough experience in the field, and she felt that she could also refine over time a more specific CYC role to assume that would match her strengths.

In university, her main concern was to complete her academic program. She noticed after admission into the program that her performance accomplishments were not as strong as she had hoped and developed various strategies to help her improve. First, she talked to a professor and asked for feedback concerning impressions of her as a student. The professor's positive comments provided her with the impetus to continue. Second, she noticed that when she invested more time and effort into her studies, her grades were improving. Third, she had the support of her elder sister, who believed that she could complete the program. Fourth, her parents' belief that she had set a goal that was too challenging to attain fostered in Reena a desire to "prove" to her parents that she was capable of finishing what she started. She liked setting challenging goals for herself, as it helped to foster a sense of pride in her accomplishments.

Outcome Expectations

Reena identified two aspects of intrinsic satisfaction that she expected to gain from being a CYC worker. First, she wanted to make a social contribution in people's lives. She wanted to model to people the support that she herself had received from her

family. Second, she wanted to model to youth how to take on challenges and empower individuals. Third, she also identified that she would experience personal satisfaction from being a CYC worker. She felt that being a CYC worker would allow her to be creative with solutions for her clients. She also felt that she would derive a lot of satisfaction from youth remembering her and appreciating her efforts.

Reena identified extrinsic factors that she would derive from being a CYC worker. First, she felt that the salary offered to CYC workers would fit her comfort zone. Second, she felt that having a degree in CYC would provide her with more employment opportunities, as it is more recognized in the field. Third, she wanted to prove to her parents that she could earn her degree and make her sister and parents “proud” of her accomplishment. Fourth, she wanted to be seen as a role model by the youth that she would work with.

Interests

Reena identified three aspects that contributed to her interest in CYC. First, she felt that she always knew that she was “meant to help people” and attributed it to her fate. Second, she would buffer her interest by not paying attention to the negative portrayals of child protection workers by the media. Third, she liked to watch positive portrayals of helping relationships in movies, such as *Good Will Hunting* to maintain interest in her field.

She was willing to explore areas in her field about which she felt neutral. She sought out a wide assortment of practicum experiences in order to see the variety of ways one could help people. She was then able to make more self-assessments, as she had a base for comparison to draw from.

If Reena identified an area of dislike in the field, it was because the work expected of her to complete in the work setting would not fit her value system. She experienced feeling “drained,” due to a sense that she was going against her nature. She would then evaluate her situation and revise the type of CYC work that she was willing to engage in.

Choice Goals

While Reena was in high school, she had clear goals of wanting to complete her university degree and complete the CYC program. She also knew that she wanted to leave home and complete her university degree. Her aspirations after the completion of her degree were more fluid in nature, as she identified various CYC positions she could assume but was not specific regarding which one she was aiming for. She also stated that she hoped to complete her master’s degree by her early thirties as another goal.

Choice Actions

The first strategy that Reena engaged in for planning was intuitive decision making. She felt that she was presented with various choices on her life path, but that all her decisions have lead her to being in the CYC program. She felt that being a CYC worker was what she was “meant” to be doing and attributed her choice to fate. She had done a lot of research at the high school level about the CYC program and felt after reading the description that it was a “good fit” for her.

The second strategy she engaged in while planning for her career was rational decision making. She took various courses and career tests and engaged in volunteer work in her field to assess where her strengths lay. She then evaluated what she enjoyed doing. She created a list of options and created a “back-up plan” if the first option did not

come through. She also considered the level of challenge present in a program to help sustain her interest and to help her complete her program.

Her plans for the future consisted of focussing on the completion of her academic program. She intended to consult with her supervisors at various practicums and ask them to help aid her with the job search. Her sister was already searching the Internet and passing on information to her about various job possibilities in her field. She intends to live independently and establish herself in her career prior to being married. She then hopes to complete her master's degree. She is unclear how to support her future plan and gain her parents' support for her hopes at this point.

Keisha

Contextual Influences

Keisha identified one aspect associated with the dominant society. She felt that her cultural identity was not in keeping with the public perception of "having to live within two systems." She believed that cultural identity involved a crossover between two systems of thought in which some aspects were common to both.

Keisha identified four aspects of her ethnic community. First, both women and men were encouraged to enter male-dominated fields, as the professions were seen as more secure. Second, teachers were regarded more highly than people in the social service sector, because teachers were seen as "professionals." Third, completion of a post-secondary academic program was seen as highly valued by the ethnic community. Fourth, women were not encouraged to live independently unless it were for the purpose of an education or for the purpose of marriage.

Keisha grew up with sisters and brothers and found that her parents treated all their children with the same level of expectation regarding obtaining further education. She mentioned that her parents placed a high regard on education and hoped that their children would have the chance to obtain more education than they did. She mentioned that her parents would be supportive of any career choice she would do as long as “she followed her heart and was true to herself.” They only wanted to have her “succeed to her fullest potential” in whatever she chose to do. Despite the fact that her parents would have a preference, she felt that she would be supported with any career choice that she were to make. She also learned the value attached to helping others by watching how her parents interacted with the extended family and other community members. Her parents also immersed her in the culture and taught her how to speak Punjabi.

Keisha mentioned four messages regarding her school environment. First, she felt that there was more emphasis placed on women entering the sciences, but she noticed that the majority of women were not going that route. Second, her peers held the belief that women could do anything that they wanted as a career choice and that their own interests should guide people. Third, she felt that there was a sense of community in all the schools that she had attended and that being in a large city helped to reinforce multicultural values.

Structure Of Opportunity

Educational institutions.

While going through the educational system, Keisha identified three supports that she experienced. First, she found that teachers, professors, and academic advisors developed a close connection with her and provided her with guidance regarding her strengths and career options. Second, she found that the peers whom she met in her ECE

program in college and in the CYC program were invaluable as emotional support. Third, she found that her sisters who had gone through college and university helped her to navigate through the institution and helped her to learn more about the system.

Keisha identified four barriers while being part of the educational system. First, she felt that the CAPP program during high school was too general in scope. Second, she had to enroll on a two-year wait-list to be admitted into the ECE program at the college level. Third, she felt that completion of her ECE diploma limited her employment opportunities, as most employers valued a degree over a certificate program. Fourth, she found at the university level that the CYC program did not offer practicums to cover all levels of working with young children, children, and youth. One was limited to two practicums, and she felt that she would need to volunteer for the experience that she would not be able to gain through her academic program.

While Keisha was in high school, she had the option of pursuing education through university or going to college and completing her ECE diploma. She decided to go to college first as she saw it as a good “stepping stone” before entering university. She did not feel that the cost of either institution had a bearing on her decision as she had her parents’ financial support. She also made a personal contribution of her part-time earnings to her family to demonstrate her appreciation for their support. The additional two years to complete her CYC degree program at university did not have a bearing on her decision to enter, as she knew that she was willing to spend the extra time if it meant earning her university degree.

Paid work and volunteer work.

Keisha engaged in various work and volunteer work in her field. She experienced four supports within her experiences. First, she was able to expand on her leadership

skills, as she was promoted in her work experiences. Second, she was able to develop her organizational skills. Third, she felt supported by an Indo-Canadian supervisor in her field who encouraged her to apply to the CYC program. Fourth, she felt supported and respected by her co-workers, as she felt valued because all the people in her organization were respectful of cultural differences.

Keisha mentioned that she had not experienced any barriers in the workplace but anticipated experiencing some difficulties. First, she felt that being young might bar her from various forms of employment within her field. Second, she felt that it might be difficult attaining the two years of paid work experience that seemed to be required by the majority of employers in her field. Third, she was concerned that employers might not view her as being assertive, based on being South Asian, and prevent her from gaining certain experiences. Fourth, she was concerned that CYC workers were not available in the smaller cities and that she would have to move to find employment.

Keisha mentioned that knowing how to speak Punjabi would be helpful for her to have in the CYC field. She mentioned that although there were a high proportion of Indo-Canadian women in her program, there was still a lack of representation in the field. She felt that since there were more South Asian recent immigrants accessing services, she could provide a valuable service to people in her field. She felt that knowing the language would help her to form attachments with her clients, which they would value.

Support system in the family.

Keisha identified that she did not have to convince her parents that her choice was “good,” as they primarily left decision making up to her. They trusted in her decision and told her to “follow her heart.” She mentioned that gaining her parents’ support regarding her career decision-making process as her autonomous choice was something that she had

to “earn” over time. She mentioned that for many years prior to being faced with the normative milestone of career decision making, she had been building on a trusting relationship with her parents, so that they would trust her decisions on minor issues to then transfer over to the larger issues. She built on a trusting relationship with her parents by discussing her options and plans with them over time and did so in various domains of her life. She also established a sense of her independence in the family unit at an early age, thereby establishing a confident manner to assert herself from. She engaged in sports while she was in school and would have to leave the city to attend tournaments with her team. She was able to establish at an early stage that she could handle her newfound freedom in a responsible manner, and her parents slowly started to grant her more liberties. She felt that she had “broken in” her parents a long time ago and established her credibility as an independent person who could assert herself in all decisions of her life.

Learning Experiences

While Keisha was involved in school, she took part in various clubs and sports. By doing so, she felt that she was establishing a sense of “community” within the school. While she was in college, she met regularly with the peers from her program and established a sense of “community” within her academic peer group as well. She decided to pursue university, as she believed that having her degree would contribute to a sense of her “life-long learning” and that she then would be part of an “academic community.”

Keisha found that she wanted to enter the ECE program in college by engaging in various volunteer and work experiences with youth. She found that her experiences contributed to helping her expand her worldview as to the issues that youth face, and it helped her decide on which age group to focus on. She found through her work

experiences that she enjoyed training people, as it integrated various aspects of her socialization experiences in the home. She was taught in a step-by-step manner, supported in her efforts, and shown patience by her parents. Consequently, she chose to exhibit these same qualities when working with others.

Keisha used various strategies to help her balance school, work, and her volunteer work experiences. First, she learned from observing her mother how to multi-task. Second, she recognized that all her social worlds were connected and that she could blend them to make her life experiences more meaningful. For example, she could write a paper for college on her volunteer experiences. Third, she accessed her spiritual base, sports, or talking with her co-workers as a form of self-care when having to deal with a difficult client case.

Self-efficacy

While in high school, Keisha took various subjects. She completed her Math but found that the amount of effort invested was not reflected in her performance accomplishment and did not enjoy it. She took her sciences and persisted in completing them, as her enjoyment and interest in the field outweighed her performance accomplishments. She took many electives in the arts and recognized that her performance accomplishment was high as well as her sense of enjoyment.

While Keisha was in college, she took two college-level math courses to see if taking courses that were more specialized would change her performance accomplishments. She set challenging goals for herself to see if she could meet them but was not happy with her performance and decided to focus more on the arts. She found in her ECE program that she liked to set challenging goals for herself and that she grew the

most from those experiences. She would devote more time and energy to the activity and become more invested. She sought out feedback from her supervisors, as it helped her to form self-assessments of herself in the field. She enjoyed the prospect of a challenge and felt that it contributed to her feeling like a “stronger” person.

Outcome Expectations

Keisha identified that she wanted to make a social contribution in the CYC field. She wanted to be in a position where she could make a life-long impact on children. She wanted to be supportive of individuals’ personal growth. On a societal level, she felt that since she had felt supported by various people along her own life path, she wanted to “give back to the community” and to a new generation of children. She wanted to help children, youth, and families to develop strong ties to the “community.” Keisha felt that she would derive personal satisfaction from her career choice. She wanted to replicate the type of nurturing support that she experienced within her family for the youth with whom she hoped to work. She wanted to form the base of a supportive relationship, as it made her happy to know that she could “make a difference” in the lives of children.

Through the process of being a CYC worker, Keisha also identified four extrinsic factors. First, she wanted to be seen by the youth whom she worked with as a “powerhouse of knowledge.” Second, she wanted to be remembered by these youth as being a significant person in their lives. Third, she wanted to complete her degree and make her parents “proud” of her. Fourth, she felt that obtaining her degree would contribute to furthering her chances for employment, as it would be more recognized by the public.

Interests

While Keisha was completing her first two years of college, as she was on a two-year wait list, she decided to keep herself open to experiences. She took a wide assortment of courses and evaluated which courses she liked and which areas she did not like, based on her performance accomplishments, emotional reactions, and value base.

Keisha enjoyed programs where she could immerse herself in a field of interest. She found that she would assess her practicum experiences and how she was doing in her courses and see where her strengths were. She determined whether the work she was engaged in was challenging and whether it was reflective of her value system. She then decided whether to classify the experience as an interest.

Choice Goals

While Keisha was in high school, she knew what the program requirements were to get into the ECE program and the education program and geared her selection of courses and her performance accomplishments accordingly. While she was in college, she had a clear goal of wanting to enter the ECE program in college. She originally aimed to become a primary school teacher but wanted to explore the ECE program first.

After the completion of her ECE program, she had the option to go into education, social work, or child and youth care at the university level. She made the decision to enter CYC, with the intention of completing a two-year education degree upon completion of her CYC degree, thereby increasing the different employment opportunities that she could explore. She could then be either a CYC worker in the field, a primary school teacher, or both in the educational setting.

Choice Actions

The first strategy that Keisha used to make plans was intuitive means. She felt that after her nieces were born when she was in grade 11, she established a very strong bond with them and started to contemplate working with children. She felt that fate introduced her to her nieces at the timely point in her life when she was making career decisions and that this was what she was “meant” to be doing. She also felt that she was “destined” to be working with people and that she was then “being true to following her heart.” She felt that her value for being open to explore and to “take a chance in something new” contributed to helping her make a decision to enter CYC. She felt that the CYC program reflected her values, as it emphasized the importance of family.

The second strategy that she engaged in was rational decision making. She weighed out her options before eliminating them. She engaged in research of all the programs and weighed the pros and cons to each choice. She then assessed her own experiences in the field, her own work preferences, and current interests as a manner to make decisions. She liked being able to keep her options open and was still exploring the idea of completing her education degree upon completion of her CYC degree.

Throughout her educational experiences, Keisha described herself as being task specific to achieve her career goals. She engaged in research and looked through calendars and brochures to help inform her of her options. She talked to people in the field who had already completed various programs, academic advisors, and instructors. In regard to plans upon completion of her degree, she was undecided as to whether to pursue her education degree directly or if she was going to work within her field first and apply for education at a later stage. Her sister was already researching Keishas’

employment opportunities as a Child and Youth Care (CYC) worker on the Internet.

Keisha decided that she would access her informal network of contacts in the field, look at job postings at various career sites, explore the Internet, and be open to various CYC work in the field. She felt that when she reached her early thirties, she would also like to come back to school and complete her master's but that she had not explored that option in depth up to this point.

Chapter 5- Across-Case Results in Comparison Lent's Social Cognitive Career Theory and Discussion

Introduction

This chapter summarizes the findings of the analysis with respect to the propositions in the social cognitive career theory (Lent et. al., 1994). As well, it examines research implications regarding theoretical implications, counselling practice, and implications for policy. Finally, the limitations of the research are discussed and directions for future research are explored.

The results of the study are discussed in more detail under Lent et. al. 10 propositions, stipulated in his social cognitive career theory. Each proposition is explored in relation to data obtained, based on the seven participants.

Analysis of the Social Cognitive Career Theory Propositions

Proposition #1

An individual's occupational or academic interests are reflective of his or her concurrent self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations (Lent et al., 1994; 2000).

All seven participants demonstrated that their academic interests were reflective of their self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations. Such interests were formed primarily when individuals were immersed in the field. Once immersed in a field, they had enough information to do a thorough inventory and assessment of their interest area. All participants had been immersed in the helping field through involvement in their ethnic community at an early age. They all were exposed both directly and vicariously to diverse acts of charity and were reinforced actively by family or ethnic community members for their "good service" to others. Through repeated activity engagement,

modelling, and feedback from people in the community they acquired a set of skills and developed a sense of their efficacy while engaging in particular acts of charity. By the time they engaged in volunteer work within the dominant society, they were in late adolescence, when they were granted more responsible roles in helping people, as they had accumulated a skill set at an early age. The participants formed enduring interests based on their sense of efficacy in the field. They anticipated positive outcomes and anticipated that engaging in the helping field would generate personal satisfaction through making a social contribution and societal contribution through working in the field. Evidence from all seven participants supported Lent, Brown, and Hackett (1994) proposition that individuals would aspire to develop choice goals for occupations or academic fields consistent with their primary interests.

If individuals were not immersed in a potential interest area, they became disinterested in the field at an early stage and disliked the field. If they did not experience rewards at an early age based on being granted limited responsibility, they would exempt themselves from the field at an early stage. The limited range of activities within a new interest area would then cause differential interest over time for particular fields of interest, as lack of exposure would decrease activity involvement in the field.

The data for all seven of the participants support Lent et. al. sub-proposition that interests will stabilize for an individual by late adolescence or early adulthood. By completion of high school all the participants recognized that they wanted to be in the applied social sciences. Only four of the seven (Jazmine, Rekha, Reena, and Keisha) had a crystallized career choice goal that they were clearly aiming towards while they were in high school. The other three participants (Meena, Miya, and Siama) discovered their

specific or stable career choice within their field of interest when they were in their first two years of college or university.

Proposition #2

An individual's occupational interests also are influenced by his or her occupationally relevant abilities, but this relation is mediated by one's self-efficacy beliefs (Lent et al., 1994; 2000).

Three of the seven young women (Jazmine, Miya, and Rekha) defined themselves in high school as being a relatively "strong" science or mathematics student. Despite having the ability to persist in the sciences, they chose not to do so, as they did not find the field personally satisfying. For these three participants, exploration and discovery of new interest areas was an important factor that they considered as part of their self-development. They felt confident enough to engage in self-exploration even when they did not have complete information about their academic abilities or strengths. Another two out of the seven young women (Keisha and Siama) felt that neither the sciences nor mathematics were their strongest subjects, but persisted in completing the subjects to see if their experiences would change over time. Despite low performance level in the area, they felt confident enough to complete and pursue the area before limiting their career options. They felt confident that they could manage the difficulty and develop the ability to do well. Only when they had accumulated enough evidence did they determine that the area was not a strength for them to pursue as a career choice. The remaining two of the seven participants (Meena and Reena) recognized that mathematics and sciences were not their best subjects, made the decision not to persist in the subject area, and did not complete the math or sciences stream in high school.

In regard to their ability to know that they could help people in the applied social sciences, all seven believed that they had the capacity to do so, based on volunteer and work experiences that they had accumulated over time. Their belief in their ability to do well in the field was based on the feedback that they had received from others about their ability to work with people. In regard to academic feedback, six of the seven participants knew by the end of high school that their academic strengths were in the arts. However, one participant (Miya) ventured into an area where she was unsure of her ability to do well. She did not know if her strengths were in the arts and was unsure of her ability to do well academically in the field. She still felt confident that she had the internal resources to draw from to develop the capability to do well in the arts. Upon entrance into college or university for their first academic program, all seven participants were able to assess their strengths and weaknesses based on the courses and practicum experiences to which they were exposed.

Proposition #3

Self-efficacy beliefs affect choice goals and actions both directly and indirectly (Lent et al., 1994; 2000).

Six of the seven participants (Jazmine, Miya, Rekha, Siama, Reena, and Keisha) mentioned that they felt confident regarding achieving their goal of gaining admission into their program of choice at the college and university level. They felt definite barriers, but they also felt that by engaging in a plan of action they could persist in their field. They communicated that they anticipated difficulty in obtaining entrance into their program of choice or work in their field based on being considered too young by the admission committee or a future employer. The plan of action that they sought for

themselves involved accumulating volunteer work to combat the age barrier that they perceived to exist, thereby proving to others that they could do well in the field. All seven of the young women also felt the need to prove their effectiveness in the field to others. They would prove themselves by demonstrating to people in their workplace, volunteer experiences, and school experiences their commitment to their field by taking on more projects than necessary and committing more time than was required or expected.

Proposition #4

Outcome expectations affect choice goals and actions both directly and indirectly (Lent et al., 1994; 2000).

All the young women said that they wanted to work within the applied social sciences, as it reflected an enactment of their personal values. From that stance, they then felt that they could make a social and societal contribution to society. By social contribution, they meant that they wanted to make a personal difference in individuals' lives. By societal contribution, they meant that they wanted to "give back" to the community the support that they felt they had received. They wanted to "give back" to people whom they perceived as being disadvantaged. They also acknowledged the personal satisfaction that they derived from their experiences. They all mentioned the importance of the role that fate played in their sense of personal satisfaction with the career choice they were seeking, as it felt like what they were "meant" to be doing. They also mentioned the sense of personal growth that they derived from helping other people. As well, they mentioned how working in the field contributed to an expansion of their worldview.

The participants also identified extrinsic outcome expectations. They wanted to be perceived by their clients as an important person who could be relied upon in times of need. In addition, they wanted to be remembered by their clients and seen as a potential role model by the youth with whom they would work. As well, they felt that if they were to obtain their university degree, they would earn the pride of their parents. They acknowledged that the degree for which they were enrolled was well recognized by the public and that it would help them to become more employable. The educational program they selected was perceived as partly based on a market-driven decision.

All the participants anticipated that their own cultural background would be an asset to working in their field of interest. They all thought that knowing how to speak Punjabi would be an asset in the field, as they could communicate effectively with various South Asian families. They had all mentioned that they felt that they could relate to other South Asian families, because they had an understanding of the norms and expectations of that culture. Two out of the seven participants (Miya and Meena) felt that having a bicultural framework was an asset to having access to working with second-generation youth and recent parents who were immigrants representing various cultural backgrounds. Four out of the seven participants (Jazmine, Miya, Meena, and Siama) thought that being of a different cultural background, they could relate to other minority groups, based on similarities experienced between all cultural groups in Canada.

The participants also communicated the disadvantages in regard to their cultural capital. Three out of the seven participants (Meena, Siama, and Reena) stated that they were concerned that their lack of fluency in Punjabi could be misinterpreted by South Asian clients as the participant not being in touch with her culture. Two out of the seven

participants (Meena and Siama) were also concerned that employers might assume that their South Asian background would lead to work focussed primarily on that specific role, limiting exposure in their field.

Proposition #5

The relation of interests to choice goals will be moderated by opportunity structures and support systems. Interest-choice goal relations will be stronger when opportunity and support are perceived to be high versus low. Conversely, these relations will be attenuated when perceived barriers are high versus low (Lent et al., 1994; 2000).

Lent et. al. proposition was not supported by any of the seven participants. Participants selected occupations even though they were aware of the challenges that they would confront. They viewed perceived barriers as challenges that needed to be addressed and found different ways to persist in their areas of interest, despite lack of support from their environment.

In all cases, support from the family for their career choice to be in the applied social sciences was limited, as their parents had preferences for their daughters to enter more male-dominated fields that represented more secure, stable, and lucrative futures. The participants selected the occupations in spite of low parental support. They persisted in their interest areas and developed various strategies within the family unit to elicit parental support over time for their career decisions. Once they were admitted into their university program of choice, they had “broken in” their parents over many years prior to entrance into their particular program. By the time all the young women were interviewed for this study, they had parental support for their career choice, which helped ease their transitions into their academic programs. Over time, both the participants and the families

came to an acceptance and also learned how to deal with ethnic community member reactions to entering the applied social sciences, as it was a field that was devalued as a career choice by the ethnic community.

In regard to the structure of opportunity within the workplace, all seven young women mentioned that they perceived attaining higher management positions in their field as being difficult, because primarily men held these positions. They all saw this as a challenge that they felt they could overcome with time and accumulated experience in their field. They did not see it as an aspect that would deter them from their career choice. Six of the seven young women (Miya, Jazmine, Rekha, Meena, Siama, and Keisha) also mentioned that they perceived the shortage of South Asian women in their field as an indicator of a “gap” that needed to be filled. They did not see it as a deterrent to entering the field. In actuality, they saw it as a challenge that they wanted to assume by establishing themselves in a field lacking in Indo-Canadian female representation. They wanted to be able to help a clientele that might otherwise be missed.

Proposition #6

People will attempt to enter occupations or academic fields that are consonant with their choice goals, provided that they are committed to their choice goal and that their goal is stated in clear terms, proximal to the point of entry (Lent et al., 1994; 2000).

Once all the young women had solidified their career choice goal, they were very committed to planning and following through with obtaining requirements necessary for entrance into the particular program of choice. For entrance into a specific program, whether at the college or university level, the plans made were detailed and task specific. When career choice goal commitment was high, the goals aimed for were specific in

nature and expressed close in time to choice implementation. The career choice goal was well defined, and they knew for which career role they were aiming. They were not as aware of the variety of social work or child and youth care positions that existed within the field. However, they all knew that they were aiming to be a “social worker” or a “child and youth care worker” upon entrance into the program.

As the interviews were done with students in their third and fourth year of their academic program, it was interesting to note that five of the seven participants (Meena, Jazmine, Miya, Siama, and Reena) communicated non-specific plans upon completion of their academic program. Their career choice goals were vague as to what specific work setting they would be open to working within, and the plans they had formulated for searching for work were non-specific in nature. The reason behind the non-specificity of the plans and goals was that some of the individuals in third year felt that planning for entrance into the job market was a distal goal for them to contemplate. Their most proximal goal was completion of their academic program. As well, the participants wanted to maintain an open mind to job possibilities so that they could enter the market where they would be needed. Additionally, the young women were not clear as to how they were going to negotiate life-career stresses, such as confronting the normative expectation of marriage by their family. They desired to buy more time before marriage to establish their career and an independent self and were unsure how they could accomplish their personal goals. Of the seven participants, five were not clear as to how they intended to create a balance between their parents’ plans for them and their own hopes upon completion of their academic program regarding career life planning.

Two of the seven participants (Rekha and Jazmine) mentioned that they intended to address career life planning by pursuing graduate studies upon completion of their undergraduate program to help establish a more independent self and buy more time before contemplating marriage. Both these individuals already desired to do graduate studies, but felt that if they could engage in the process soon after the completion of their degree, it would be easier for them to pursue their interests. At the same time, they could buy more time for themselves prior to facing the prospect of getting married. The other aspect of gaining entrance into a graduate program was that since education is highly regarded by the ethnic community, it would be considered socially acceptable for a young woman to pursue graduate studies before marriage. It would not be misunderstood by the ethnic community for a woman to concentrate on her studies and to remain single, since her focus would be on obtaining her education. Both these participants were engaged actively in researching graduate programs and had taken task specific steps to address career life planning. In one case, the participant had filled out the applications for graduate programs without her parents' knowledge and decided to deal with the consequences upon gaining admission. In the second case, the individual engaged in open discussion with her parents regarding her firm intention of applying for graduate school.

Proposition #7

The relation of choice goals to entry behaviours will be moderated by opportunity structures and support systems. Goal behaviour relations will be stronger when opportunity and support are perceived to be high versus low. Conversely, these relations will be attenuated when perceived barriers are high versus low (Lent et al., 1994; 2000).

Five of the seven participants (Jazmine, Rekha, Reena, Siama, and Keisha) communicated that they anticipated difficulty obtaining entrance into their program of choice based on being considered too young by the admission committee at the college and university level. Their subsequent plan of action involved accumulating volunteer work to combat the perceived age barrier. Once all the participants established a clear career and academic choice goal towards which to aim, they also established plans and engaged in planning in a confident manner. Despite the opportunity structure of education being perceived as a barrier by five of the seven young women, academic career choice goals were maintained and planning behavior was still strong, contrary to Lent et. al. proposition.

Proposition #8

Self-efficacy beliefs influence career and academic performance both directly and indirectly through their effect on performance goals (Lent et al., 1994; 2000).

For all seven participants, it was noted that as their ability to manage the educational environment increased, their level of performance also improved. The observation was linked to another of Lent et. al. propositions in which he stipulated that outcome expectations are partially determined by self-efficacy beliefs, particularly when outcomes are closely tied to levels of performance. Six of the seven young women (Meena, Jazmine, Rekha, Siama, Reena, and Keisha) also communicated that they set academic goals for themselves, such as achieving scholarships and higher grades, as their sense of self-efficacy increased. All seven young women stated that they set high performance standards for themselves and tried to improve their performance during their practicum and volunteer experiences as part of their professional development. Their sense of self-

efficacy helped them to determine personal outcome expectations for themselves. They would set and attain a performance level at both an academic level and a practical level in various aspects of their life related to their career choice.

Proposition #9

Self-efficacy beliefs derive from performance accomplishments, vicarious learning, social persuasion, and physiological reactions (emotional arousal) in relation to particular educational and occupationally relevant activities (Lent et al., 1994; 2000).

Successful accomplishments were considered important for the participants when making self-efficacy appraisals. It was noted in all seven participants that they would identify a success only if a personal goal was achieved under conditions that they felt were challenging. Success achieved under conditions of challenge appears to be more strongly related to self-efficacy than is success achieved under limited difficulty or challenge. Lent et. al. proposed as a sub-proposition that being exposed to role models and learning vicariously through them would have an impact on one's sense of self-efficacy. Five participants (Miya, Meena, Reena, Rekha, and Siama) mentioned that lack of Indo-Canadian women working in their field did not hinder their interest in the field. It did not have an influence on their sense of self-efficacy to enter the career role. They felt that they would have entered their career role regardless of having an Indo-Canadian role model. In regard to social persuasion, contrary to Lent et. al. sub-proposition that individuals value their own self appraisals over other direct feedback, all seven participants stated that they valued feedback regarding their performance from people who were working in the field over their own self-appraisals. Encouragement and feedback from people in the field helped all seven participants to sustain their interest in

their career goal and to enhance their sense of self-efficacy. In regard to task performance, the sense of self-efficacy was enhanced for all the participants when they felt positive and relaxed about their performance in the field. They were able to maintain their sense of excitement and stamina when they could acknowledge their own sense of personal growth as a professional in their field of interest.

Proposition #10

Outcome expectations are generated through direct and vicarious experiences with educational and occupationally relevant activities (Lent et al., 1994; 2000).

The learning experiences that all the young women sought for themselves helped them to determine the consequences of engaging in their field of interest. Following direct experiences in the field through practicum, volunteer work, and work experiences they were able to develop a better sense of the outcome expectations they could anticipate from working in the field. Direct experiences held more weight for all seven participants than vicariously experienced accounts of other people's experiences in the field. The aspects that they did allow to have an influence over their career and academic development were in regard to their siblings' advice regarding how to navigate the educational system. The practical advice given by family members who had been through the system held weight for the young women who had older siblings to draw on for support, apparent in three of the seven participants (Keisha, Reena, Siama). For two of the seven participants (Keisha and Reena), their older siblings were also actively searching for jobs in the participants' field of interest and passing the information to them. Four participants who were the eldest sibling in the family (Miya, Meena,

Jazmine, and Rekha) aided their younger siblings by providing academic assistance, advice, and support.

Results Based on the Social Cognitive Career Theory in Relation to the Research Questions

The aim of this research was to provide a selected account of Sikh Indo-Canadian young women's career decision-making processes. The central research question was: What factors influence Indo-Canadian women in their decision to enter the applied social sciences at the post-secondary level? Social Cognitive Career theory developed by Lent, Hackett, and Betz (1994) was used as a theoretical base from which to position the study as it focussed on the contextual and cognitive mechanisms by which career decisions were made. The researcher sought evidence that the propositions of the Social Cognitive Career theory describe Indo-Canadian young women's career decision-making processes. Toward that end, the researcher formulated sub-research questions to guide the research. Here, each of the sub-research questions posed in Chapter One are discussed in relation to the research results derived from the analysis of Lent et. al. propositions.

Research Question # 1

1. How do vocational interests develop for Indo-Canadian young women?

Proposition #1 and Proposition #2 of the Social Cognitive Career theory (Lent et al., 2000) correspond to this question. Lent et. al. posited that interests are reflective of self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations, and of the perception of having relevant abilities to engage in a vocational field.

The process by which vocational interests developed for the participants involved being within the field at an early age with the expectation of engaging in benevolent acts.

Immersion in the field provided the participants with a personal knowledge base of what they could anticipate in the field. It was apparent that even when participants had been exposed to other fields of interest through their educational experiences, they still aspired for goals that were consistent with their primary interest areas. Their primary interests were formulated when they were relatively young, and had stabilized by late adolescence or early adulthood. Early experiences and exposure in the field significantly contributed to the formation of their career interests.

Research Question # 2

2. How does self-efficacy contribute to their vocational interests?

Self-efficacy played a multifaceted role in the participants' developing an interest in entering the applied social sciences. The young women felt confident that they could perform well in the helping field based on their previous work experiences in their ethnic community and volunteer work experiences. Academic courses and practicum experiences in the field also served as a measure by which they could evaluate their abilities. Their career interests were influenced by their assessment of their abilities and were mediated by their sense of self-efficacy, which lent support to Proposition #2 of Lent's Social Cognitive Career theory (Lent et al., 2000).

Even if they had experienced some self-doubt regarding their ability to perform well academically in the field, they had enough confidence in their ability to relate to people to mitigate their concerns. Even in the face of exploring interest areas that were not potential strengths, the young women still engaged in the area with the belief that they could develop the ability and do well.

Young women, after accumulating enough evidence about their performance in learning a particular skill, assessed their ability and determined if it was an area to pursue as a career choice. As the young women made the transition from high school to college and to university, they selected fields that complemented their perceived personal strengths. Successful accomplishments achieved under challenging conditions were considered important to the participants when engaging in self-efficacy appraisals. As their appraisals of their ability to manage tasks improved, they started to set challenging goals to accomplish. This finding lent support to Lent et. al. Propositions # 8 and #9, that linked self-efficacy beliefs to levels of performance and goals set for oneself (Lent et al., 2000).

Research Question # 3

3. What role does socialization in the dominant society, family, ethnic community, and school play in formulating educational and career interests for Indo-Canadian young women?

Lent et. al. stipulated in his theory that contextual affordance would indirectly affect a person's career decision-making process and choice of occupation (Lent et al., 2000). Contextual affordance consists of the participants perception of social forces and determines if they have a positive, neutral, or a negative influence over the individual (Lent et al., 2000).

The idea that socialization remains in the background of experience and is not directly understood was not reflected by the participants. The young women demonstrated the opposite to what Lent et. al. proposes in his theory, as they were aware of the different social influences in their lives and were able to discuss the aspects that

were part of the background of their experiences, and those that were more proximal in nature. The process was a selected choice. They elected whether they wanted to integrate the messages from different social forces into their decision-making, or to leave certain social messages in the background of their experiences. The young women engaged in a process of negotiating their socialization experiences, which they linked to being an aspect of engaging in the process of developing a bicultural identity, and felt self-confident that they could manage the negotiation. One might posit, based on the young women's experiences, that if negotiation of bicultural identity is high, then self-efficacy appraisal is high, and the perception of contextual affordance is low. Those aspects that they defined as remaining in the background of their experiences, but that they could also draw on in the future if needed are discussed below.

All the young women perceived that certain values were embedded within the dominant society and had an influence over them. Since they lived in a multicultural society, the young women believed that the values of multiculturalism and respect for diversity would be reflected in the helping professions and felt supported in their career choice. They also believed that the dominant society held as a value the equality of women and encouraged women to be more assertive. The young women drew from the value of respect for diversity and equality for women, that they believed were held by the dominant society and wanted to enact the values within their chosen profession.

The family structure served as a socializing force in participants' lives. First, parents emphasized the value of having an education and encouraged their daughters to establish themselves within society. The parents also thought that it was more valuable for women to enter more male dominated careers than to enter the applied social

sciences, as male dominated fields represented a more stable career choice and held more prestige. A career was also perceived by the family as a “back up plan” if a marriage were to dissolve.

The young women felt that their mothers were a strong influence in their life, and noted that within the patriarchal structure of the family, their mothers still had a strong voice. The participants advocated more equality of roles within the family, but acknowledged that, based on their mothers' roles in the family, it paradoxically allowed their mothers to have more voice and control in the family unit. The participants acknowledged respect for the various roles that both father and mother played; the roles were seen as individual strengths that allowed the smooth functioning of the family unit. The young women also acknowledged that they learned how to multitask and balance life roles by observing their mothers manage the household.

The young women also acknowledged that support in the family was shown through actions and not through verbal demonstrations of affection. The participants learned the values of helping people by observing how their parents helped people within the ethnic community. They also had a strong sense of “obligation” that they felt towards their family in fulfilling certain responsibilities, such as aiding younger siblings. They had also been exposed to the concept of contributing to people who are disadvantaged in society through volunteer work in the temple or in the community.

Parents also exposed them to many cultural events and religious events at the temple to foster a sense of pride in being different. The parents also ensured that all the young women could speak Punjabi, which allowed them to communicate with their elders in their ethnic community and to gain more knowledge about their culture. The young

women found that they learned through their religious teachings what it means to be a good person, the value of prayer, and the underlying doctrine that men and women should be regarded as equal.

The ethnic community was a socializing force as it held certain norms in common with parents. Some of the norms that the young women mentioned regarding the ethnic community was that professions within male dominated fields were encouraged for women to pursue as they were deemed more valuable, more secure, more stable and more prestigious. Professions in the applied social sciences or the arts were devalued within the ethnic community. The general view held was that the purpose for women to pursue a career had less to do with fulfilling personal satisfaction and more to do with contributing to a dual income to accommodate the high cost of living once married. Being married was still considered a primary goal upon completion of a degree for young women. However, if the individual wanted to pursue a Masters degree, the delay in marriage was perceived as acceptable as it would represent attaining a potentially more stable position in society.

The educational environment acted as a socialization force. As they progressed from junior high, senior high, to college and university, the participants obtained a clearer conception of how they were perceived as a student. The practicum experiences in which they engaged throughout their educational programs provided them with more understanding of what was expected of them in an academic perspective. The perception of teachers, professors and practicum supervisors were internalized by the participants and acted as a strong socializing force. The feedback that the young Indo-Canadian women received from individuals in the field regarding their performance held more

value than their own self-appraisals. Encouragement and feedback from people in the field helped the participants to sustain their level of interest and sense of self-efficacy in career related endeavours.

It was noted in their educational experiences that their peers held the belief that one needed to pursue work that would be personally satisfying. Although there were fields within the work force that were considered more prestigious, personal satisfaction in work took precedence. Peers also held the belief that women needed to establish themselves in a career as it would serve as a form of self-growth and personal fulfillment. Peers also held the belief that women could enter any field and that no barriers prevented women from entrance into any field. Teachers also were viewed as encouraging more women to enter the sciences, but the participants observed that the majority of women still entered the arts or human sciences.

Research Question # 4

4. What are the opportunity structures and support systems perceived by Indo-Canadian young women?

Propositions #5 and #7 address the perception of how opportunity structures and support systems influence career interests and selection of a career goal (Lent et al., 2000). Lent et. al. posited that if one perceived support from such structures, then one would pursue interests and goals. However, Lent et. al. also posited that if one did not perceive support from such structures, then one would abandon interests and career goals. The supports that the young women perceived in their decision-making processes for selecting a career in the applied social sciences are documented below.

The opportunity structures that the young women commented on included educational institutions. The educational institution was perceived as a support, as teachers and professors would encourage students to pursue their areas of interest. They also appreciated career centres on academic sites that they could utilize independently to formulate ideas regarding their career interests. The educational institution was also perceived favorably based on the option to apply for scholarships and bursaries. Participants also liked having a bridging program to transfer from college to university programs and the opportunity to engage in various programs to further their interest areas, such as practicum experiences and partaking in various clubs in the educational settings. The participants also felt that their peers in their academic programs were a support system on which they could draw as they all had similar values. They felt that obtaining a degree from the university in their field of interest contributed to being more employable within their field, and that their educational experiences held them in good standing. They also liked the options that would open for them in the future, such as pursuing Masters level programs, as a result of having an undergraduate degree.

Volunteer and paid work experiences also served as a mechanism by which the young women received support. They found that they received support regarding their career decisions from individuals who were working in their fields. They benefited from feedback received from supervisors in the field and developed in their career role. They were granted an increasing level of responsibility through volunteer or paid work experiences, which helped confirm their selections of career. The young women reported that their experiences in the field also contributed to establishing a support network that they thought could help them in their future job searches.

At the time of the interview, the family was also seen as a system of support on which they could draw for their career choice. Parents for the most part were originally not supportive of their career choice, particularly if the career chosen did not represent a stable profession and was devalued by the ethnic community. However, parents supported their daughters' career selections over time. The young women described a process of how they obtained parental support for pursuing a career choice that parents did not approve of, by a process of "breaking them in." A reverse process of socializing the parents was used by the young women; they educated their parents about the various careers to be found in the applied social sciences. The participants discussed with their parents how pursuing their chosen field was a reflection of their cultural values and how they would feel a sense of personal satisfaction working in that field. They expected to show a level of commitment and follow through in their career choice to demonstrate their determination to complete what they had started. They found different ways to defy their parents in a respectful manner and establish a sense of independence for themselves within the family unit. They felt confident that they could obtain parental support for their career decision, and did not perceive it as a potential barrier, but viewed it as a challenge to be overcome. The participants knew it would be a long-term process, but, as well, that it would eventually work. The young women had "worked on" their parents for approximately three to four years prior to their parents' coming to a comfortable state of acceptance of their daughters' career choices. When the young women were interviewed for this study, they had obtained their parents' support for their career decisions.

Research Question # 5

5. What are the barriers that Indo-Canadian young women perceive in their career decision-making processes and how do they manage barriers?

Propositions #5 and #7 also address the perception of how opportunity structures and support systems will have an influence on career interests and selection of a career goal (Lent et al., 2000). The barriers that the young women perceived are documented below.

Some of the barriers that the participants mentioned were at the educational level. Barriers consisted of working with academic advisors who were not well informed of all career options available. They also found that some academic advisors were not supportive of their career decisions and did not perceive the young women as having an adequate base of experience; or they were perceived as too young to gain entrance into academic programs in the field. The manner in which the young women confronted this obstacle was to disregard the academic advisors' comments and pursue their interest area.

They also engaged in as much volunteer work as they could before applying to an academic program in order to combat the lack of life experience. Another educational institutional barrier that the young women mentioned regarding pursuing education at the post-secondary level was the cost affiliated with tuition. The young women valued having an education and found different ways to finance their way through their studies either by working part-time or accepting a student loan. The length of the academic program was a factor that they all considered in their decision at the university level, and whether it would be feasible. They also wanted to ensure that their choice of academic programs was market-driven, based on an assessment that work could be obtained within the field.

In the workplace, they anticipated that obtaining entry positions in their field would be manageable as it was a field dominated by women, but that attaining higher management positions might be more difficult to assume, as these positions were still maintained by men in the helping field. They felt that with time and more accumulated experience they might have a more equitable chance at such positions. Another barrier that the young women mentioned was that of being seen by the employer as able to work only with South Asian issues. They were concerned that they might be slotted into certain positions, which might limit the base of their experience.

The young women also mentioned that knowing their ethnic language (Punjabi) was a potential asset within an organization as they could communicate with South Asian clients who might have difficulty communicating and understanding some of the ethnic norms and barriers that they might experience. At the same time, they acknowledged some difficulties that they might experience in the workplace; they felt that their inability to speak the language fluently might be seen by clients as disrespectful, which could cause some difficulties in the workplace.

Another barrier in the workplace that the young women mentioned was a difficulty in being assertive. As it was not part of their experience in the home, dealing assertively with conflicts in the workplace was seen as something that they needed to work on. The young women mentioned that they managed this barrier by learning to be more assertive and by practicing the skills in various settings, and that it was a skill that improved over time.

The young women felt that in order to establish themselves in the field and to be recognized, they had to work harder than their peers did. The young women recognized

their own behaviour as a barrier, as it prevented them from seeking help when needed.

The young women communicated that they were working on learning how to ask for help and on not assuming more tasks than needed, as the same level of expectation and standard were in effect for all co-workers.

Research Question # 6

6. How does participating or viewing others (role models) participating in relevant educational and career activities contribute to their experience of self-efficacy in career decision-making?

The research question relates directly to Lent et. al. propositions #9 and #10 (Lent et al., 2000). He stated that individual expectations of engaging in the field were influenced by direct and vicarious experiences with occupationally relevant activities. It was apparent that engaging in directly related experiences in the field were valued and held more weight than drawing conclusions from observing others.

The young women acknowledged that they did not know many Indo-Canadian women in their field, and, nonetheless, that this did not deter them from entering the field. In actuality, it acted as further motivation for them to sustain their career interests and to enter the field. They wanted to address the lack of representation of Indo-Canadian women seen in the helping professions. They still aspired for a career in the helping profession regardless of not having an Indo-Canadian role model. What did influence their career choice was watching other individuals engaging in career related behaviour in their field, and vicariously learning from them. The observed individual was likely in a position of authority and did not have to be Indo-Canadian for their experiences to be meaningful to the young women. The young women also paid heed to advice from

siblings or relatives in regard to accepting feedback on how to navigate educational barriers that they might encounter.

Research Question # 7

7. What are the outcome expectations that Indo-Canadian young women have of engaging in their career choice?

Lent et al. (2000) stated in proposition #4 that outcome expectations have an impact on the career choice one selects. In answering this research question, the researcher also drew on analysis of proposition # 6, in which Lent et. al. discussed his claim that the perception and outcome expectation of attainment of a goal in the near future helps determine the career goals that one sets.

All the young women expected that by engaging in the applied social sciences they would be enacting their personal values and making a contribution to society. They felt that their personal values would be an acknowledgment that the career chosen was congruent with their own personal belief system of how people change. In regard to making a societal contribution, they wanted to ensure that they could work with people who were less fortunate than themselves and provide them with support.

They expected to receive personal satisfaction from engaging in the career of their choice while, at the same time, feeling that they could earn their parents' pride by completing their university degree. They also thought that they would experience a sense of personal growth by helping others, and that helping others would contribute to an expansion of their own world view. By engaging in their career choice, they seemed to be fulfilling an aspect of their fate, as they believed that being in the helping profession was what they were "meant" to do. This self-knowledge contributed to their experiencing a

sense of security within themselves that would buffer any setbacks that they might experience.

They also thought that working with South Asian issues would be an area of interest for them and knowing how to speak Punjabi would be an asset in that it would increase their ability to work with South Asian clients. They also anticipated being able to relate well to many potential clients who would represent various cultural backgrounds, as they also knew what it was like to be part of a minority group. The participants also anticipated that by working in their chosen field they would be respected and seen as role models by their clients.

They anticipated that finding employment would be challenging, but thought that obtaining a degree would enable them to find a job in their chosen field. The participants of this study also were highly motivated and task specific regarding reaching their current career goal of finishing their academic program. They had strategies and could develop a process to achieve the goal. However, the career goals to which they were looking forward upon completion of their academic program were vague, as it was not close to choice implementation. The outcome expectations of their career prospects and of how to pursue a course of action were not well-defined, as they did not know what specific career they might attain upon completion of their academic program; nor did they know how to negotiate life-career stresses with their families, such as confronting expectations of marriage in face of their desires to live and work independently within their field and remain single. The outcome expectations that they held for themselves upon completion of their academic program were not well defined based on the conflicts that they had experienced.

Summary Of Findings

The objective of this study was to provide a selected account of Sikh Indo-Canadian young women's career decision-making process. Lent et. al. social cognitive career theory was used as a theoretical framework to understand the career decision-making process of Indo-Canadian young women's decision to enter the applied social sciences. The overall findings regarding the applicability of using Lent et. al. social cognitive career theory were mixed. While some propositions of Lent et. al. social cognitive career theory were very well supported, other areas were found to be in need of improvement.

Salient findings of the study in support of Lent et. al. social cognitive career theory were as follows:

1. Early immersion in the field determined self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations, which contributed to formation of interest development during late adolescence or early adulthood.
2. The young women demonstrated self-confidence in engaging in exploration of their interests, despite having incomplete information regarding their skills and abilities to do well in the field. Based on their level of self-confidence they viewed any barriers that existed in their career decision-making process as manageable and regarded these barriers as "challenges" that could be overcome.
3. All the young women expected to make a personal, social, and societal contribution through engaging in their field. They viewed the field they were in as reflective of their fate and what they were "meant" to be doing. Participants mentioned that entering their chosen field included experiencing a sense of financial independence

based on finding work in their field, which would serve as a “back-up plan” in the event of future mishaps.

4. As their sense of self-efficacy increased regarding managing their educational environment, they would set higher performance standards and outcome expectations for themselves.
5. Direct experiences in volunteer, work, and educational spheres helped the participants form outcome expectations of engaging in the field.

The findings based on the study that were contrary to Lent et. al. social cognitive career theory were as follows:

1. Despite contextual influences and support for their career decisions being low in their family and ethnic community, the participants still persisted and maintained their interest. They elicited support from their parents over time by socializing the parents regarding their career interests and “breaking them in.”
2. Despite the opportunity structure of education being perceived as a barrier, academic career choice goals were maintained and planning behavior as still strong.
3. Contrary to Lent et. al. propositions, lack of Indo-Canadian role models in the field did not have an effect on their sense of self-efficacy. It was also found that participants valued feedback regarding their performance from people who were working in the field over their own self-appraisals.
4. Contrary to Lent et. al. social cognitive career theory, participants did not express specific plans close to completion of their degree. Participants expressed non-specific plans upon completion of their academic program, based on wanting to keep their options open for the job possibilities they could enter in the job market. As well, they

were unclear as to how to negotiate the life-career stresses of confronting the normative expectation of marriage within their ethnic community upon completion of their degree.

It is important to consider what further explanations could account for the results that were contrary to Lent et. al. social cognitive career theory. These results can best be conceptualized by Farmer's Individual Differences Theory (Farmer, 1997). It would be important for further studies to explore how the sex role socialization process within the family contributes to how the young women perceive approaching contextual impediments to career choice and how they set future plans. First, the findings suggest that the young women learned how to be assertive from observing their mothers in the home. It would be interesting to see if the strategies the participants adopted to overcome barriers in their environment were similar to the strategies that their mothers used within the home. Second, the results reflected that having a lack of Indo-Canadian role models in their field of work was not as important to the young women in forming career interests or choices. However, their parents may serve as role models that the young women may aspire to be like. It would be interesting to see if the manner in which the young women defined role models would exist within the family structure. Third, the planning behaviour of the young women was vague near the completion of their degree as they were undecided how to balance working in their field, living independently, and contending with the prospect of marriage. The young women were unclear as to how they were going to address these new life-career stresses. This may have made the participants confront their beliefs of what it meant to be a woman which is an important component of sex role socialization.

The following sections summarize the research implications on a theoretical level, counselling implications, and tentative implications on a policy level generated by the research findings.

Based on this study, various theoretical implications arise regarding Lent et. al. social cognitive career theory. Lent et. al. has not considered the influence of gender and culture on Indo-Canadian young women in their career decision making. Some subtle differences of patterns have emerged in relation to the propositions of Lent et. al. social cognitive career theory. First, incorporating a model of persistence into Lent et. al. theory which acknowledged the interlocking effects of gender and culture would be beneficial. Second, exploring the role of feedback in forming one's self-efficacy appraisals must be incorporated. Third, determining the function of role models in one's career decision-making process remains to be addressed. Finally, isolating the manner in which participants negotiate contextual affordance would be beneficial.

Incorporating an interlocking model of persistence would be an interesting addition to the social cognitive career theory (Lent et. al., 1994). One could then explore how people persist in career goals where support for the individual career goal is limited. Lent et. al. theory could benefit from an additional proposition stipulating how self-efficacy beliefs have an impact on the perception of lack of support. When proximal support systems, such as those derived from opportunity structures and family, were low, it was apparent that the participants' sense of self-efficacy helped them maintain a strong level of interest despite lack of support from the environment.

It would be important to explore the role that feedback plays in helping to form self-efficacy appraisals. Lent et. al. had a sub-proposition stating that individual self-

efficacy appraisals meant more to an individual than feedback gained from others regarding career performance. In all seven cases, evidence contradicts this proposition. Feedback from people in positions of authority held more weight for the participants and was internalized as part of their self-efficacy appraisals. Further studies need to be conducted to assess if attributing more importance to an authority's opinion than to one's own is attributed to a cultural orientation. Another explanation is that it could be attributed to lack of self-confidence in one's new professional role. Further studies could be conducted in which individuals might have had positive feedback regarding their performance throughout their work history and are then confronted with a negative experience in which they were not perceived as favourable in their position by someone in authority. One could study how the participants made sense of the experience and how they internalized it as part of their self-concept.

Determining the function that role models play in one's career decision-making process is an important aspect to consider. The participants that the researcher interviewed maintained that not knowing an Indo-Canadian worker in the field did not have a bearing on their career choices. They still aspired for a career regardless of not having an Indo-Canadian role model. Future research with various cultural groups who face the same situation of lack of cultural representation in their career could inquire into the function of role models in their life.

Lent et. al. considered that socialization experiences exist as a contextual affordance. Based on the study, it would be important to isolate the manner in which participants negotiate contextual affordance. What remains in the background of one's experience seems to be a selected choice. For example, the participants mentioned

consistently that they maintained aspects of their socialization and wanted to replicate it with their clients. Their values, situated in their upbringing, had a bearing on their career choice and they selected the values that they wanted to maintain in their working life. However, they chose to retain certain values and beliefs with which they grew up and to remove them from their work life. It could be important to see if the formation of one's bicultural identity is linked to the negotiation of contextual affordance. It could also be interesting to note if one's self-efficacy beliefs have a bearing on how one perceives one's ability to engage in negotiation of socialization experiences. One might posit that if negotiation of bicultural identity is high, then self-efficacy appraisal is high and contextual affordance is low. Contextual affordance would be low because of a heightened awareness as to the negotiation process with socialization experiences. Further studies need to address the relationship between bicultural identity and contextual affordance in relation to career decision making.

This study has implications for career counsellors. Due to the cultural background of the participants of the study, the research has a bearing on the manner in which career counsellors can orient their practice to address the needs and concerns of this particular cultural group. First, it is important for counsellors to know the norms of the Sikh ethnic community to which the participant is affiliated. Second, a counsellor needs to establish culturally relevant interventions with the client. Third, a counsellor needs to understand the worldview of clients and inquire about the role that fate plays in their life. Fourth, a counsellor needs to consider the level of ethnic identification of the client with whom they are working. Fifth, use of the questionnaires—Factors that Influence Career

Decision Making, and Functions of Coping Questionnaire—by counsellors could be beneficial.

Knowing the norms of the ethnic Sikh community could be beneficial for a counsellor. It is important for a career counsellor to have an understanding of the normative assumptions that exist within the ethnic community framework. If one is not aware of the norms expected of the client within the ethnic community, it may prevent a counsellor from addressing personal barriers that exist for the individual in regard to career decision making. It also helps a counsellor to address any life-career stresses that a client might be experiencing in relation to the normative expectation of their community and family.

The study can help in the development of culturally relevant interventions. The research generated various strategies that the young women used to elicit support from their parents over time in regard to their career preferences, which can be viewed as culturally relevant interventions. Other young Sikh Indo-Canadian women facing the same career choice dilemmas might benefit from learning more strategies to help them persist in a career choice that would not alienate them from their families. The strategies were viewed by the young women as ways to defy the norms and expectations of their family in a respectful manner. By providing a potential client with options that have been used effectively by other Indo-Canadian women, it might help a client increase a base of options in addressing a particular difficulty.

The counsellor also needs to understand the worldview of their Sikh Indo-Canadian clients. Based on the current study, it might be beneficial to inquire regarding the role that fate and spirituality play in a career decision-making process (Bloch & Lee,

1997). If fate were considered a part of these clients' conceptual framework, it would be important to see how they related the idea to themselves and to understand the role that it plays in their life. Perhaps they see life as being pre-determined, in which case they have no control over their life events. Alternatively, they may perceive fate as an empowering aspect that provides an inherent meaning in all life events. They may perceive themselves as proactive shapers of their environment based on the new meanings that they attribute to their experiences. Understanding the role that spirituality plays in life could be an important aspect to consider, as perception of fate might have an impact on self-efficacy appraisals. Individual spirituality could also act as a base for helping an individual cope with life-career stresses and add to an enhanced sense of self-efficacy.

It may also be important for a counsellor to consider the level of ethnic identification of clients. The level of ethnic identification of clients may determine the level of personal challenge they experience in relation to life-career stresses. If individuals are not highly affiliated with their ethnic community and do not hold the normative expectations of the community in high regard, such individuals would not necessarily feel that their ethnic community was a barrier to their career development. However, if individuals were connected to their ethnic community, they might perceive the norms and expectations as a challenge or a potential barrier to be overcome in order to persist in their career choice and life-career plans.

A counsellor could use the Functions of Coping questionnaire in a variety of ways with a client. It can be used to help collect information about self-efficacy beliefs that have an impact on career decision making at various stages of a person's career. The process of engaging in the questionnaires can help remind a client of strengths and

various coping mechanisms that he or she might have forgotten. The questionnaires allow the counsellor to help the client build on individual strengths and address future concerns based on new information gleaned from how previous challenges in life have been managed. It can help students reflect on and address their career development and assist students in developing skills in self-assessment, reflection, and potential goal setting. It encourages individuals to consider their future and the tentative plans that they are considering and how to address potential future challenges. Future plans that are vaguely stated can become an area to be explored in counselling. The Functions of Coping Questionnaire also allows for individuals to track their own development over time, to aid them in self-appreciation, and help them address areas with which they are not satisfied. Aspects such as balance of life issues increase knowledge and their perception of the world of work can be derived from looking over the questionnaire. Understanding how the individual perceives oneself in the face of life difficulty and how one copes can help facilitate the counsellor in encouraging specific skill development in regard to coping efficacy skills. Asking students to reflect on their abilities, on their perceptions of overcoming challenges, and on the meanings they attribute to their experiences encourages the individual to engage in self-reflection.

The Factors that Influence Career Decision Making questionnaire can help students' plan for their future. Exploring the list might help to generate more options for students to consider when engaging in career decision making. It also helps them to evaluate how sources of information are used and what role various factors play in their lives. Counsellors can build on the information and address the repertoire of strategies that have been explored and the reasoning behind the use of various aspects of

information. They can demystify the use of sources of information that might not have been perceived as valuable. The questionnaire could also be used with students who are confused and unsure of what direction to take in life-career planning, and it might help them to create a method by which options can be explored.

The conclusions of the study have implications at a policy level for educational settings. Based on the inclusion of various programs at the institutional level, it may help Indo-Canadian young women to feel more supported in their career choice. Since mentoring programs can be developed for and with Indo-Canadian young women entering university programs, introducing a career options program in the applied social sciences at the high school level, with a focus on a values based approach, may help in the recruitment of more Indo-Canadian women into the field. As well, creating a support group for Indo-Canadian young women facing alternative career choices at the high school and university level might decrease attrition in academic programs. Creating parent-youth, life-career planning workshops aimed at Indo-Canadian families could be helpful in easing the transition for both parties and provide opportunities for Indo-Canadian women to create programs to address concerns within their ethnic community.

Mentoring programs for students upon entrance within a specific academic program might be helpful. It could be helpful for students to be linked to others a year to two ahead in their academic program. Offering a choice to the student to be mentored by a fellow student of the same cultural background could be beneficial to the student. The student could then have a support system from which to draw and access more strategies on how to persist in a career choice that is not valued by the ethnic community. Even if a student were not necessarily paired up with a student of the same ethnic background, it

could still be beneficial. The new student could learn how to navigate the educational system to help ease the transition into the academic program. A mentoring program could be beneficial to new students of various cultural groups entering an academic program.

Within the ethnic community more value is attached to pursuing male-dominated fields. The young women in this study who decided to enter the applied social sciences attributed their career choice to the importance they attached to making a social and societal contribution in their field. At the high school level, some benefit may accrue from college and university representatives of the applied social sciences to talk to students in classes. Such lectures could be based on a value orientation to try to entice students to enter the field. It would also be important for academic advisors to emphasize the variety of work settings and the different employment opportunities that exist in the field. Young women can then incorporate the information in a strong argument for their choice. Demonstrating the opportunity for self-employment, as well as working in various government agencies and hospital settings, lends to viewing the field in a more stable light, encouraging more people to enter the field.

At the high school level, it may also be beneficial to form a support group for Indo-Canadian young women where they can discuss any life-career stress that they might be experiencing. Listening to how other women cope with various challenges could provide young women with more options to consider to help them engage in career decision making. It could also be helpful for counsellors to aid in creating parent-youth life-career planning workshops. The career decision-making process then can be explored between parent and youth. Many different ways of perceiving the process can be discussed and explored. Parent-youth life-career planning workshops can be created by

and with Indo-Canadian young women along with a counsellor to help facilitate the process. The young women know what the issues are for their ethnic community. Encouraging them to engage in action research within their own ethnic community would help to address their concerns in a culturally sensitive manner while encouraging parents to participate. The accuracy of information about vocational and stereotypical knowledge can be ascertained and addressed with the Indo-Canadian young women and with the parents.

Limitations of the Research

The limitations of the study should be noted. The sample size consisted of seven participants. Since the sample size is small, it limits the generalizability of the findings. The sample was also selected based on a criterion purposive sampling procedure. This procedure produced a very specific group of young women, thereby not representing a wide mix of second-generation Sikh young women. The participants were all in the applied social sciences, and all had relatively strong levels of self-efficacy, since they were willing to participate in the research. They all had a high comfort level with their career choice and were relaxed while engaged in the research process. It should be remembered that the sample of participants represented a very select group of young women. The researcher approached 87 individuals at random, out of which 15 individuals expressed interest in participating in the research. Out of the 15, 9 individuals qualified for the study, and 7 people completed both sets of interviews and the questionnaires. Counsellors can learn from research that focuses on the strengths of individuals. It helps aid counsellors in working with people who are not as self-confident by being informed as to what works for people. However, the findings are less open to generalization, as it is

unknown if similar experiences are held by individuals who vary in their level of ethnic identification and sense of self-efficacy appraisals or by Indo-Canadian women in various fields. Since maximum variation was not explored, less generalization of the findings can be claimed.

Two independent graduate researchers who were familiar with qualitative data conducted the inter rater reliability check. Each researcher coded 25% of all seven transcripts. Both researchers were second-generation Sikh women who had completed their master's degrees in the applied social sciences. That they understood the cultural background of the participants helped them to feel more connected with the data that they were asked to code. However, a limitation lies in the method by which they confirmed or disconfirmed findings. The primary researcher placed all the statements into the pre-defined domains of analysis and asked the inter rater reliability researchers to confirm or disconfirm findings. If there was a discrepancy, the graduate researchers indicated where they would have placed the data. One graduate researcher shared 100% agreement with the pre-coding of statements and the second graduate researcher shared 98% agreement. It took them approximately three hours to complete. As they were qualitative researchers themselves, the primary researcher felt that they took an invested interest in the activity. However, the volume of data that they needed to go through might have had an impact on the ratings. In addition, if the graduate researchers were left to their own devices to determine the coding of statements without seeing where the primary researcher had placed the statements, it might have had a bearing on the results.

The level of ethnic identification was not accounted for in the criterion sampling of the participants. No official measure was obtained to assess for individual levels of

ethnic identification. In the researcher's judgement, all the young women were moderately to strongly affiliated with their cultural background. All the young women could speak Punjabi, and all of them had an interest in furthering their understanding of their spirituality. This had a consistent bearing on the results of the importance of fate and language that would affect them in their career choice. What the experience would be like for Indo-Canadian young women who were not as affiliated with their cultural background and who decided to enter the applied social sciences, has not been explored and is a limitation to the study.

The representations of the participants' thoughts and ideas were distilled to protect the confidentiality of the participants, and their personal request to not use numerous quotes to represent their experiences was honoured. The process of distilling the data into flow charts and then writing a depiction of the flow chart maintained consistency of the findings and prevented identification of an individual. However, portrayal of the richness and texture of their experience was limited. Without being able to include many quotes, the context of what was said and the meanings established were more difficult to portray.

Ethical Considerations

A few ethical considerations need to be made when in engaging in minority research. It becomes important to ensure that data representation of the participants is portrayed within a manner that is considered acceptable to the participant. The participants of this study wanted to ensure that they could remain anonymous as some of the information that they wished to share could place them in uncomfortable situations if their identity were known. Specific demographic information, such as age and gender,

were limited and yet the description of their experiences depicted in a manner that represented their point of view became a challenge for the researcher. However, addressing this issue became of crucial importance as it helped to ensure a trusting and respectful relationship between the participant and the researcher.

The information that the young women provided also needed to be scrutinized carefully by the researcher. The researcher was concerned about sharing information that could be perceived as discrediting the participants or the Sikh community. The young women were also concerned about how they wished to be portrayed and wanted the researcher to represent a balanced view of them as the participants were concerned that readers would generalize their experiences. The researcher tried to represent the experiences of the young women in a balanced manner and attempted to highlight the variations of patterns that existed between participants. However, it must be noted that the individuals who agreed to engage in the research process represented a select sample.

Future Research Directions

One direction for future research would involve a micro perspective of career decision making for second-generation Indo-Canadian young adults. First, one could compare the career decision-making process of Indo-Canadian young women to how they make decisions in other life domains. The strategies that they use to elicit parental support over time for unsupported career choices might be similar to strategies that they would use to follow through with other choices that also might not elicit immediate parental support, such as being able to live independently and work before getting married. Second, one could explore the career decision-making process of Indo-Canadian young women in science and technology and see how similar or different their

experiences were from those who chose to enter the applied social sciences. Third, an investigation of the career decision-making process of Indo-Canadian young men might show different results from that which is expected from young women. Fourth, it might be interesting to understand how Indo-Canadian young men manage life-career stresses upon completion of their academic program and whether their experience is similar to that of young women.

As well, research at a macro level in regard to Indo-Canadian women could help to extend the understanding of the context in which decisions are made. Many research issues remain unconsidered. For example, after Indo-Canadian women enter the workforce, it would be interesting to study their experience of supports and barriers once they have become established in their field. Second, upon completion of an academic program, the resources Indo-Canadian young women access in relation to life-career stresses have not been assessed. Third, the researcher also noted a subtle difference between Indo-Canadian women interviewed who grew up in rural communities and those from urban settings. It could be valuable to explore the differences in life-career planning between rural and urban Indo-Canadian youth, as well as differences established by limited educational and economic opportunity and the effect it has on their life-career plans. Exploring the various contexts in which career decisions are made will shed more light on understanding how to serve the needs for Indo-Canadian women in their life-career choices that they will face in various capacities throughout their life span.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Factors that Influence Career Decision Making Questionnaire

The following chart of various factors that influence the career decision-making process is a modification of Julien's (1997) work, which was generated on the works of Baker (1985), Jepsen (1989), Kidd (1984), Loughlin (1993), Wilks (1986), and Young (1991).

Please indicate if you have used any of the following sources to help you in your decision-making process. Also state how helpful each source was for you by circling a number and state how it was helpful (e.g., it helped increase my understanding, I obtained some skills, I received support and/or reassurance, it helped me plan, decide, or prepare, I got motivated, it helped me reach my goal).

Source of information	Not Helpful 1	Moderately Helpful 2	Very Helpful 3	State how the information source was used
Work experience				
Volunteer experience				
TV, newspaper, radio, magazines				
Books/pamphlets on campus				
Library				
Courses related to your field of interest				

Talking to people who are working in careers that you are interested in				
Friends				
Community members				
Career placement services on campus				
Mother				
Father				
Siblings				
Relatives				
Instructors				
Co-op experience				
Thinking on your own				
Internet				

Appendix B: Functions of Coping Efficacy Questionnaire

Functions of Coping Efficacy Questionnaire

For points A to D please specify the various subjects and activities that you engaged in at various stages of your life. For points E and F please list any external or internal sources of influence that you experienced. External influences refer to family, teachers, institutions, community, or peers that had an influence over different periods of your life. Internal influences refers to your personal self-knowledge in relation to your skill set, ability, and of your capacity to approach various tasks and do well. For the last row entitled personal learning, please write down any significant learning that you formed about yourself at various stages of your life. For the category entitled challenges, please document any challenges that you experienced and your perceived ability to handle the challenge (1—unsure of being able to overcome it; 2—you feel that it can be dealt with but with effort; 3—you feel confident with the task/you feel confident that the difficulty can be overcome). The row entitled future pertains to what you anticipate for yourself after the completion of your degree (work, family, further education).

	Junior High	High School	College	University	Future / Work
A) Best subjects/ enjoyment					
B) Subjects that were difficult					
C) Activities engaged within school					
D) Activities engaged in outside of school					
E) External					

influences					
F) Internal influences					
Personal learning					
Challenges					
How you managed challenges					

Appendix C: Interview

Part 1. Interview

Probe: Only ask question if the participant has not discussed the issue fully

1. How did you make your decision to enroll in your program of study?
2. What is your current knowledge regarding labour market conditions and availability of jobs in your field?
3. Who (past, present, future) were/are the particular individuals who were influential in guiding and supporting your academic and career choices?
4. What type of career options do you think are available for you after you complete your education? What do you see as obstacles or challenges to pursuing the career of your choice? How do you see yourself being able to manage them?
5. How does the prospect of working in your field make you feel? Why?
6. Do you know of any other Indo-Canadian young women who are working in your field? If so, how has that contributed to your career decision-making process?
7. Have you ever been inspired or encouraged by an individual to go into a particular career?
8. What experiences have you had recently to motivate you in your chosen career choice?
9. Have you had any paid work, volunteer, or co-op experiences? How has that experience contributed to your career choice?
10. What messages have you received regarding women and type of work to engage in?

11. What barriers do you feel women face in the present job market? How capable do you feel of being able to confront the challenges that you have outlined? What resources would you draw from to manage potential obstacles?
12. If the local high school invited you to talk to other Indo-Canadian young women about educational/career planning, what would you want to be sure to get across?

Appendix D: Document

Part 2. Critique of documents used on campus at the career center by the Indo-Canadian young women

I will present the pamphlets that are produced by the career and counselling center on the university campus to the Indo-Canadian young women. I will then ask them to read them and answer the following questions:

- a) What information in the pamphlets did you find helpful?
- b) Was there any source of information listed that you did not find helpful?
- c) What information would you like to see incorporated into the brochure that you feel would be helpful?
- d) If I were a student at university, what help could I expect to get in terms of thinking or planning for a career?
- e) If you were invited to create a pamphlet for the career and counselling center that catered to Indo-Canadian young women, what points would you want to be sure to get across?
- f) Have your career decisions been influenced by information received at an academic advice center on campus? If so, in what way has your decision been influenced? If not, what makes it difficult to use this service?

Appendix E: Case Study Notes

Date of Visit:

Location:

Phone:

Code Name of the Participant:

1. What were the main issues that struck you during the interview process?

2. Brief summary of significant information communicated by the participant in regard to the documents, questionnaire, and interview:

Documents:

Questionnaires:

Interview:

3. Summarize the information the participant has presented in relation to the **original research** questions you had for this study:
 - (a) How do vocational interests develop for Indo-Canadian young women?
 - (b) What role does socialization in the family, community, and school play in formulating educational/career interests for Indo-Canadian young women?
 - (c) How does self-efficacy contribute to their vocational interests?
 - (d) What are the opportunity structures and support systems perceived by Indo-Canadian young women?

- (e) What are the barriers that Indo-Canadian young women perceive in their career decision-making processes and how do they manage barriers?
 - (f) How does participating or viewing others participating in relevant educational/career activities contribute to their experience of self-efficacy in career decision making?
 - (g) What are the outcome expectations that Indo-Canadian young women have of engaging in their career choice?
4. Note anything that struck you as salient, interesting, illuminating, or important in this contact.
 5. What new (or remaining) target questions do you have in considering the next contact with the participant or future participants?

(Miles & Huberman, 1984)

Appendix F: Table of Analysis

Domain	Note occurrence + or non- occurrence – of statements reflecting a particular factor in a domain	Factor (I will identify)	Factor (I will identify)	Factor (I will identify)
<p>Interests: Patterns of likes, dislikes, and indifferences regarding career relevant activities and occupations (Lent et al., 1994, p. 88)</p>		<p>Interview statements to reflect occurrence of particular factor within the domain of interest</p>	<p>Interview statements to reflect occurrence of particular factor within the domain of interest</p>	<p>Interview statements to reflect occurrence of particular factor within the domain of interest</p>
<p>Learning Experiences: Sources of information that</p>		<p>Interview statements</p>	<p>Interview statements</p>	<p>Interview statements</p>

<p>people use to further their understanding of themselves, the world, and the field that they are interested in (Lent et al., 1994, p. 87)</p>				
<p>Choice Goals: The process by which individuals organize and guide behaviour over long periods of time (Lent et al., 1994, p. 84)</p>		<p>Interview statements</p>	<p>Interview statements</p>	<p>Interview statements</p>
<p>Socialization: Beliefs, attitudes, norms and values learned in different contexts</p>		<p>Interview statements</p>	<p>Interview statements</p>	<p>Interview statements</p>
<p>Structure of opportunity:</p>		<p>Interview statements</p>	<p>Interview statements</p>	<p>Interview statements</p>

<p>Individuals' perception of the options available through the world of work (Lent et al., 1994, p. 106)</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Definition:</p> <p>Individuals' perception of the options available in the educational system (Lent et al., 1994, p. 106)</p>				
<p>Self-Efficacy:</p> <p>People's feelings and judgements of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain</p>		<p>Interview statements</p>	<p>Interview statements</p>	<p>Interview statements</p>

designated types of performances (Lent et al., 1994, p. 83)				
Outcome Expectations: Personal beliefs regarding probable outcomes and actions (Lent et al., 1994, p. 83)		Interview statements	Interview statements	Interview statements
Support Systems: The type of relationships that people create or have with others (Lent et al., 1994, p. 107)		Interview statements	Interview statements	Interview statements
Choices/Actions Choice Actions: How participants		Interview statements	Interview statements	Interview statements

make educational and career decisions (Actions taken or plans made)				
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Appendix G: Consent Form

Consent Form

Case study approach to exploring Indo-Canadian young women's career decision-making processes to enter undergraduate degree programs in the applied social sciences

Dear Participant;

You are being invited to participate in a study entitled Case study approach to exploring Indo-Canadian young women's career decision-making process in professional undergraduate degree programs that is being conducted by Priya Subra Mani. I am a doctoral student in the department of Educational Psychology at the University of Victoria, and you may contact me if you have further questions by telephoning me at (XXX) XXX-XXXX.

As a graduate student, I am required to conduct this research as part of the requirements for a degree in Educational Psychology. It is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Max Uhlemann and Dr. Wanda Boyer. You may contact Dr. Uhlemann at (XXX) XXX-XXXX or you may contact Dr. Boyer at (XXX) XXX-XXXX.

The purpose of this research project is to obtain more knowledge regarding Indo-Canadian young women's perceived supports and barriers in their career decision-making process.

Research of this type is important because the information gathered will help enrich the professional field and enhance multicultural knowledge on the part of career counsellors at the post-secondary level.

If you agree to participate voluntarily in this research, your participation will include the following. First, you will fill out two questionnaires that will take you approximately 25 minutes to fill out. Second, you will need to be available for a scheduled meeting in which you will review your questionnaires with me. The review of the questionnaires will occur in my office on the University of XXX campus in order to ensure privacy for you and limit outside distractions. Following the review of the questionnaires, I will conduct an interview with you that will take approximately one-and-a-half hours. I will audiotape record this interview. The interview will take place in my office at the University of XXXX. Third, a second meeting will be scheduled with you for me to ask for your comments regarding the interview transcripts. Reviewing the interview transcript with you will allow me to ask for further clarification of concepts that were mentioned in the initial interview. The review of the interview transcript will take approximately one hour of your time.

Participation in this study may cause some inconvenience to you, involving the amount of time required on your behalf to volunteer for this study.

The potential benefits of your participation in this research include helping career counsellors understand the career decision-making process for Indo-Canadian young women and help enhance multicultural knowledge. By participating in this research, it would also provide you with the opportunity to explore your own career decision-making process and increase your self-understanding.

Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any negative consequences or any explanation. If you decide to withdraw from the study, I would ask for your permission if I could still incorporate your data into my study. If you do not wish to include any of your data in the study, the questionnaires and taped interviews that you complete will be given back to you and regarded as your own private property.

To make sure that you continue to consent to participate in this research, I will inform you of your right to withdraw from the research before each meeting with you.

In terms of protecting your anonymity, I will not use your name or others' names that are mentioned in your interview. I will also not specify the University that you attend. The faculty you are enrolled in will be maintained as it is central to exploring the your career decision-making process.

Your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected by maintaining the audio taped interviews, interview transcripts, and questionnaires in a locked cabinet in my residence. Your information will be destroyed five years after my first publication of the research has been accomplished.

Planned uses of this data include being utilized for my dissertation research, publishing my results in a research journal, and possible conference presentations.

In addition to being able to contact the researcher and the supervisor at the above phone numbers, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by

contacting the Associate Vice-President, Research, at the University of Victoria (XXX-XXX-XXXX).

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study and that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researchers.

Name of Participant

Signature

Date

A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.