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work experiences of asian immigrants:
impact on family wellbeing

DR AMRITHA SOBRUN-MAHARAJ
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SUN-WOONG KIM

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

Research on immigrant employment and work experiences has traditionally focused on the individual. While there is much literature on immigrant employment internationally and nationally, there is comparatively little available literature on the work experiences of Asian immigrants anywhere, and still less on the impact of Asian immigrant work experiences on family wellbeing. Furthermore, very little is known about the interaction between Asian culture and the assumptions that Asian people hold about the concept of work and family, and family wellbeing. Utilising an ecological approach, a mental health model and qualitative research methods, the present study explored the work experiences of immigrants of Asian origin living in the greater Auckland region, New Zealand: their concept of work and family; family wellbeing; and the impacts of these factors on family wellbeing. It also sought to identify the barriers and facilitators to a positive work experience and family wellbeing. Family interviews were conducted with a total of 78 Chinese, Korean, Southeast Asian, South Asian and 'Asian with refugee background' participants, which included 20 families comprising 43 adults and 35 children of various ages.

Of the 40 adults interviewed in this study (excluding the three grandparents), 35 participants were in the workforce and five (who were all women) were not. Two of the sample (with refugee background) reported being unemployed. Only a small proportion of the employed adults (under one-sixth) had been able to find employment that was equivalent to the jobs they did in their home countries prior to migrating to New Zealand. Almost one-third (30 percent) were self-employed, mostly because they could not find appropriate employment, two were under-employed and over one-quarter (28 percent) appeared to be 'misemployed'.

An analysis of family interviews identified a number of barriers to appropriate employment, positive work experiences and family wellbeing. These included negative attitudes such as: racism and discrimination; non-recognition of qualifications; lack of appropriate information and assistance; systemic and resource inadequacies; lack of social support; language and education deficiencies; cultural differences; and dysfunctional coping strategies. Facilitators included positive attitudes towards Asian immigrants; equal employment opportunities; institutional and social support; English language proficiency; and resiliency and functional coping strategies. Most of the families interviewed found that their work experiences impacted negatively on family wellbeing, often resulting in a poor work-life balance, stress, poor mental health and intergenerational conflict. All families faced similar challenges, to varying degrees.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This chapter introduces the issues topical to this report and provides background information on the research project. It is divided into six sections: global migration; migration to New Zealand; Asian immigrants in New Zealand; definitions of terms (as used in this study); aims, objectives and key research questions of the study; and strengths and limitations of the study.

1.1 Global migration

The ethnic landscape around the world has been changing dramatically over the last two decades. Global migration has become a common feature of the modern world, with movement not only to developed countries, but also to developing countries. New Zealand has also been experiencing a rapid increase in immigrant population over recent decades. Till the late 1980s, the traditional source countries for immigrants to New Zealand have been Western countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Canada, Australia and Western Europe. Another source of immigrants for New Zealand has been its neighbouring Pacific islands (eg, Samoa, Fiji, Tonga), which have also contributed to the immigrant population during recent decades, particularly throughout the 1970s (Brooking & Rabel, 1995). More recently, however, increasing numbers of immigrants have been entering New Zealand from non-traditional source regions such as Asia and Africa.

Immigrants migrate for new opportunities, health and educational services and exchange of cultures (Green, Kler & Leeves, 2007). For Western countries whose workforce has been affected by falling fertility levels and longer life expectancies, immigration is becoming increasingly desirable. The United Nations' long-range population projections to the year 2030 suggest that while life expectancy is predicted to continue to rise with no upper limit, the natural increase in the global population is expected to decline steadily. The average annual rate of population change is projected to be under 1 percent in Oceania (which includes New Zealand), and total fertility is expected to drop to around 2 percent in this region (United Nations, 2004). This will affect New Zealand's workforce. It is therefore likely that global migration to New Zealand, especially from non-Western countries with higher fertility rates, will increase in the near future.

1.2 Migration to New Zealand

Like other Western countries, New Zealand has experienced a severe shortage of skilled workers and an ageing population. Consequently, in the past two decades New Zealand's immigration laws have been changed to attract immigrants into areas of skill shortage. At present, one in five New Zealanders were born overseas (Merwood, 2008) and each of these immigrants contributes various skills and resources to New Zealand society. Statistics show that these immigrants make an immense economic contribution to New Zealand, which increases proportionately with the length of time they stay here (Department of Labour, 2008a; Nana & Williams, 1999). A significant majority of employers (>80 percent) say they are satisfied with their immigrant employees and feel that they have benefited by employing them (Department of Labour, 2006a). In 2006, Asians made up 28.6 percent of the immigrant population (Statistics New Zealand, 2006a) and contributed significantly to the New Zealand workforce.

The National-led Government elected in 2008 has acknowledged that New Zealand needs immigration for its economic future, and that, without immigration, the economic outlook for the country looks bleak. New Zealand's Immigration Minister, Dr Jonathan Coleman, noted in November 2009: "Without current levels of inward migration, both our population base and economy would shrink dramatically. By 2021, our population would drop by 9.6 percent and our GDP would drop by 11.3 percent. There would be a 10.9 percent drop in the available labour force and the export sector would be savaged with volumes dropping by 12.9 percent" (Beehive, 3 November, 2009. http://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/research+confirms+immigration039s+ contribution+new+zealand). The Government has decided to foster immigration to New Zealand by further changing immigration rules, including introducing new Business Migration and Recognised Seasonal Employer policies. As Asia has already proved to be a fertile source of skilled immigrants to New Zealand (as outlined previously) and recent population projections (as discussed in the following section), it seems likely that the number of Asians entering the country will continue to be comparatively high.

The *New Zealand Settlement Strategy* (Department of Labour, 2007a) is a Department of Labour-led whole-of-government strategy which plays a vital role in fostering positive immigration experiences. The strategy envisions: "New Zealand's prosperity is underpinned by an inclusive society, in which the local and national integration of newcomers is supported by responsive services, a welcoming environment and a shared respect for diversity" (p. 9). The strategy's seven intermediate-level goals are that immigrants, refugees and their families:

> are accepted and respected by host communities for their diverse cultural backgrounds and their community interactions are positive

> obtain employment appropriate to their qualifications and skills and are valued for their contribution to economic transformation and innovation

> become confident using English in a New Zealand setting or are able to access appropriate language support

> access appropriate information and responsive services that are available in the wider community

> form supportive social networks and establish a sustainable community identity

> feel safe within the wider community in which they live

> accept and respect the New Zealand way of life and contribute to civic community and social activities (pp. 9-11).

1.3 Asian immigrants in New Zealand

These legislative changes to immigration rules have helped New Zealand attract immigrants from around the world, particularly from Asia (Tse, Fernando, Wong, & Kumar, 2004). However, while Chinese and Indian peoples have long histories of settlement in New Zealand, dating back almost 140 years (Ip, 1996; Leckie, 1995), these groups remained relatively small until the 1980s when Asian immigration to New Zealand began to increase.

Asian immigrants have become the fastest growing population in New Zealand and make up the fourth largest ethnic group in New Zealand after European, Mäori and 'Other' Ethnicity; totalling 354,552 people (9.2 percent) in 2006 (Statistics New Zealand, 2006a). About one-fifth of all Asians in the 2006 Census were born in New Zealand. Of the Asians born overseas, the majority come from Northeast Asia, including China, Japan and Korea, followed by India and the Philippines (Bedford & Ho, 2008). Statistics New Zealand (2006a) estimates that 9.5 percent of New Zealand's current population is Asian, compared with 6.6 percent in 2001, and only 3 percent in 1991. Moreover, this growth is expected to continue, with projections estimating that Asian ethnic groups will account for almost 15 percent of the total population in New Zealand by 2021 (Statistics New Zealand, 2006a). In comparison, the Pacific Island population totalled 265,552 (6.9 percent), and the Middle Eastern, Latin American and African groupings totalled 34,743 people (0.9 percent), made up of 17,514 Middle Easterners, 10,647 Africans and 6,657 Latin Americans in 2006. In 2006, of the total immigrant pool, including those from Western countries, Asians made up almost 29 percent. Furthermore, India (5,600), China (3,500) and the Philippines (1,500; total: 10,600) were three of the top five source countries for immigrants in 2010, collectively surpassing the United Kingdom (6,800) and Germany (1,400) in immigrant numbers (Emigrate New Zealand, 2011).

Asian immigrants with families are now making up a significant part of the New Zealand workforce and are contributing significantly to the social, economic and political life of the cities in which they settle, and all New Zealand. *The Social Report* (Ministry of Social Development, 2008) highlighted a number of positive effects that Asian immigrants bring to New Zealand. They possess skills and experiences that the country requires to improve its future infrastructure, as well as the social structure of all the communities in New Zealand. In addition, many Asian immigrants are found to be very energetic and passionate in their jobs, are highly motivated, reliable and conscientious (New Zealand Immigration Service, 2003b). Coates and Carr (2005) also reported that the skills and experiences of Asian immigrants are constructively contributing to corporate resources and knowledge-sharing, which makes them particularly valuable in sectors such as information technology.

There is a need to ensure that Asian immigrant families settle well, experience wellbeing and good mental and physical health in their new country – New Zealand researchers agree that securing appropriate

employment and gaining a work-life balance after they migrate are crucial factors for a successful transition (Berry, 2001; Harker, 2001; Sonderegger & Barrett, 2004; Sonderegger, Barrett, & Creed, 2004; Ward, 2006; Ward, Masgoret, Berno, & Ong, 2004). However, anecdotal evidence and data from related Asian studies (eg, Spoonley & Meares, 2009; Trlin, Henderson, & North, 2004; Tse, Sobrun-Maharaj, & Hoque, 2006) suggest that some Asian immigrants find it difficult to secure appropriate employment, and that this may affect their family's wellbeing (Dixon, Tse, Rossen, & Sobrun-Maharaj, 2010). Moreover, some evidence suggests that the needs of immigrant families are poorly understood and that many are not receiving the necessary levels of support, especially in relation to work-related needs (eg, Dixon et al, 2010; Ho, Bedford, & Goodwin, 1999; Spoonley & Meares, 2009; Trlin et al., 2004). For example, some Asian families who are self-employed in small businesses (eg, running a dairy or takeaway business), who work several low-income jobs and/or shift work, tend to work extremely long hours and appear to be struggling with these issues (Dixon et al, 2010; Tse et al, 2006). As such, many immigrant families are experiencing a number of settlement difficulties that relate to their work experiences.

There is little empirically-based data that address the issues that affect the work experiences of Asian immigrants in New Zealand, and still less on the impact of these on family wellbeing. Most studies focus on the impact of unemployment on an individual (eg, Basnayake, 1999; Department of Internal Affairs, 1996; Henderson, 2003; Henderson, Trlin, & Watts, 2001; Trlin et al, 2004). The Families Commission has undertaken research on work arrangements amongst New Zealand families, and has identified a gap in information on issues faced by immigrant families, especially Asian families (Families Commission, 2008). This information is critical for improving the knowledge within communities, service providers and policymakers, and this study aims to address this gap and contribute to the field in several ways:

1. As an ecological framework was adopted, the importance of familial impacts and work experiences were recognised, as opposed to pursuing individual perspectives.
2. The research questions elicited information on the experiences of Asian immigrants in relation to employment, and the impacts of these themes on family wellbeing.
3. The research sought information on cultural assumptions about the nature of work and how the concepts of 'family' and 'work' are understood by these communities.
4. The research gained information on the perceived barriers and facilitators to Asian immigrant families accessing favourable work arrangements in New Zealand. This information will assist in facilitating better outcomes for these families.

The research team hopes that their work will broaden the knowledge of the Families Commission, and the knowledge of Asian and other communities, service providers and policymakers about the impact of employment-related issues on the wellbeing of Asian immigrants and their families. The team envisages that improved understanding of these will not only produce better outcomes for Asian immigrant families in New Zealand, but also help immigrant families contribute to the growth of the New Zealand economy and ease skill shortages in the workforce.

1.4 Definitions of terms (as used in this study)

Asian: The term 'Asian' refers to the broad group of peoples in New Zealand from Afghanistan in the west to Japan in the east, and China in the north to Indonesia in the south. Note, however, that the scope of the present study only allowed for participants to be drawn from the four main Asian ethnic groups present in New Zealand, namely Chinese, South Asian, Korean and Southeast Asian. Refugees of Asian ethnicity were also included in the research.

Immigrants: The term 'immigrants' refers to peoples from abroad who have settled in New Zealand, and for the purposes of this report includes those with refugee backgrounds. Note, however, that refugees differ significantly from other immigrants. While this report is not intended to provide a full discussion on these differences (see Department of Labour, 2004a for a more thorough discussion) some issues that impact upon the settlement experience and differ according to refugee or immigrant status include: the applicable

immigration legislation, policies and available support; background circumstances and the context under which immigration occurs; and the extent of choice, resources and preparation for immigration. As such, Asian refugee families were included in this study as a stream in its own right. See Chapter 3 (Methodology and Methods) for further details.

1.5 Aim, objectives and key research questions of the study

The aim of the research is to explore the work experiences – including barriers and facilitators to accessing appropriate employment – of Asian immigrants living in New Zealand, and the impact of these on family wellbeing. The cultural assumptions about work and family and the impact of these assumptions on family wellbeing were also of interest. Specifically, the study sought to address the following key research questions:

1. What are the patterns and experiences of work (both flexible and inflexible) amongst Asian immigrants living in New Zealand?
2. What are cultural assumptions about the nature of work, and how are the concepts of family and work understood by these communities?
3. What impacts do these cultural assumptions and concepts, and work patterns and experiences have on family wellbeing, including the positive and adverse impacts (eg, having time to do things as a family; blurring the boundary between work and family)?

1.6 Strengths and limitations of the study

The main limitation of this study is that our sample is a small one and by no means represents the larger Asian community, hence generalisations cannot be made. Furthermore, although we sought to recruit families with diverse experiences, it seems that many of the families who volunteered to participate in the study were experiencing difficulties with employment, hence may have focused on negative experiences and barriers to appropriate employment. This does, however, relate to the literature which shows that many Asian immigrant families are experiencing employment difficulties (see Chapter 2). Nonetheless, the data provided by this sample give us a good picture of the work experiences of 20 Asian immigrant families in New Zealand and the impacts on their family wellbeing. While the participants came from four Asian ethnic groups only, there was little difference between the experiences across the groups. The greatest differences were between refugee families and other immigrant families who had chosen to come to New Zealand.

The role of power dynamics in families, and therefore family-based interviews, is another factor to be considered in the context of this report. While efforts were made to ensure that all family members had equal opportunity to participate in and have input into the family interview, it was noted that some family members, particularly adults, were more vocal than others. Although children were vocal in some interviews and provided important data, it is possible that their views have not been fully captured through this research.

It is also worth considering that many of the interview transcripts were translated into English from the participating families' native language. These transcriptions were carried out by each of the field researchers who had also conducted the interviews. We ensured that these transcriptions were of a high standard by selecting field researchers with strong bilingual skills, and they were, where necessary, guided by the principal investigators and/or cultural advisory group. However, it is possible that some of the original meaning was lost during the transcription process.

On the other hand, the study has many strong points. It used a model established for undertaking culturally safe research with potentially vulnerable ethnic minority groups. The model includes features such as the establishment of a cultural advisory group drawn from key stakeholders and service providers involved with Asian immigrant communities, ethnically matched field workers, provision of written information, including consent forms, in the participants' first language and the mentoring of field researchers by a lead researcher.

Furthermore, there appears to be no other study to date that has considered the interaction between Asian culture and concepts of work and family, and their impact on family wellbeing. This study provides a model that illustrates this relationship and explains it using a mental health framework.

On another level, while most research into immigration and refugee issues is conducted on an individual basis, this study involved families as a unit and maintained a focus on how these issues affect families as a whole. However, while the family interview method allows researchers to observe the family dynamics, this approach can also influence the type of data gained. Although the field researchers were trained in family interview techniques, including how to gain input from all family members, it is likely that responses could vary if participants are segregated according to age (eg, parents and children) or interviewed individually. In this study, the research team felt that the family-based information was better achieved through interviewing whole families.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Much has been written internationally about the employment experiences of people, including immigrants, and there is a wide range of literature on unemployment, and on inappropriate employment and its effect on wellbeing, such as the health effects of economic insecurity (eg, Baker & Benjamin, 1997; Basnayake, 1999; Dooley, Fielding, & Levi 1996; Lidgard & Yoon, 1999; Miller & Neo, 1997; Rodriguez, Frongilla, & Chandra 2001; Watts & Trlin, 2000 Winkelmann & Winkelmann, 1998).

These studies on immigrant employment acknowledge that host countries benefit from inward migration of labour, gaining both skilled people and people willing to do jobs that do not interest locals. Furthermore, immigrants can positively affect local economies through their consumption of goods and services, housing and entertainment, and as they increase local business diversity. They also bring an increasing cultural diversity to the wider society (eg, Baker & Benjamin, 1997; Bell, Jarman, & Lefebvre, 2004).

We searched for international and national literature on the employment patterns and work experiences of Asian immigrants, and were limited to peer-reviewed sources (journals, books and book sections, technical reports etc). While a number of items were retrieved, overall there is little literature that examines immigrants' work experience issues in relation to their families, and the unique challenges they face in relation to employment in New Zealand. Several empirical studies were found that report on employment of all immigrants. Authors of these New Zealand and international studies include: Henderson, Trlin, and Watts (2006); North and Trlin (2004); Watts and Trlin (2000); Watts, Trlin, White, and North (2007); Miller and Neo (1997); Winkelmann and Winkelmann (1998); New Zealand Immigration Service (2003a, 2003b); Department of Internal Affairs (1996); Forsyte Research (1998); Watts and Trlin (1999); Flatau, Petridis, and Wood (1995). A few studies were located that focus on Asians, mainly Chinese, and their work experiences (eg, Ho & Lidgard, 1997; Ho, et al, 1999; Lidgard & Yoon, 1999; Basnayake, 1999; Henderson, et al, 2001; Trlin, et al, 2004; Tse et al, 2006; Sobrun-Maharaj, Tse, Hoque, & Rossen (2008); Dixon et al, 2010; Spoonley & Meares, 2009). Another study, from the United States, asked why immigrant husbands tend to work less than natives while their wives work more, and suggested that wives initially work more to finance their husbands' training and education (Baker & Benjamin, 1997). This literature review identified a need for research that explores cultural understandings of work, family and family wellbeing within Asian immigrants, the barriers and facilitators to employment and their impact on family wellbeing, and the factors that facilitate employment and settlement in New Zealand.

2.1 Employment of Asian immigrants in New Zealand

It is easier to understand the employment of Asian immigrants within the context of employment of all immigrants in New Zealand. Reports (cited above) show improving employment levels for all immigrants over the past decade. The Ministry of Social Development (2008) reported in the Household Labour Force Survey that censuses conducted in 2001 and 2006 detected a significant drop in the unemployment rate among immigrants.

In 2005-06, 94 percent of 'principal applicants' who came to New Zealand through the 'skilled migrant' category were employed one year after gaining residence (Merwood, 2006). Note, however, that the revised immigration policy of 2004 requires a valid job or offer of job to qualify for residency (Merwood, 2006), and that 82 percent of principal applicants approved in 2005-06 had a job or job offer at the time of immigration approval, which may account for the high level of employment at the end of that period. Moreover, nearly 60 percent of approved immigrants during the period of 2005-06 came from English-speaking or Western countries (eg, United Kingdom, Germany, South Africa, United States), and their employment rates are similar to those of those born in New Zealand (Boyd, 2003). Note, however, that this report did not consider two additional factors that may impact significantly on employment statistics: the employment situation of accompanied dependants of principal applicants; and immigrants who came to New Zealand before 2005-06 under a different immigration policy.

A report by Boyd (2003) which examined labour market outcomes based on the 1996 and 2001 census data suggests that immigration policy changes may explain high levels of successful applications in the 2005-06 period. It found that, in 2001, recent work-age immigrants (including refugees) had employment rates of 29 percent, which is less than one-half the rate for their New Zealand-born counterparts. This study also found that employment rates were lowest for recent immigrants from North-East Asia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands, while rates for recent immigrants from the United Kingdom, Ireland and Australia were similar to those of those born in New Zealand. These findings are supported by other New Zealand studies (Benson-Rea, Haworth, & Rawlinson, 1998; Spoonley & Meares, 2009; Trlin, et al, 2004; Henderson, et al, 2001; Ho, et al, 1999; Lidgard & Yoon, 1999, and Ho & Lidgard, 1997) which suggest that the employment rate amongst highly skilled ethnic minority immigrants, from the Asia-Pacific region, in their own professions is much lower than immigrants from Western countries and is influenced by factors such as English language skills, cultural differences, local work experience and recognition of qualifications.

However, a recent report by the Department of Labour (2009) showed that, while employment rates are lower for Asian immigrants who have been in the country for less than five years, after residing in the country for 15 years or more, their employment rates reached 67 percent, which is higher than a number of other groups and close to the total population average of 69 percent, and unemployment rates decreased to 4 percent, which is lower than the national average of 5 percent. This report also showed that, after more than 15 years in the country, 29 percent of Asians are high-income earners compared to the New Zealand average of 30 percent. Recent qualitative studies undertaken in New Zealand (Dixon et al, 2010; Sobrun-Maharaj et al, 2008; Trlin et al., 2004; Tse et al, 2006) suggest that an increase in employment rates and income is often a result of the Asian work ethic, self-employment and long work hours or multiple jobs. The role of self-employment has been acknowledged in earlier reports by the Department of Labour (2004b; 2004c) that showed that in the early 2000s, within 18 months of arriving in New Zealand more than 60 percent of immigrants were employed, with the majority being self-employed.

2.1.1 Unemployment, underemployment and low income

The discussion above illustrates some differences between the employment rates between ethnic minorities and other immigrants. Relevant to this report is the finding that Asian immigrants took some time to reach their employment potential in New Zealand. Winkelmann and Winkelmann (1998) found that Asian immigrants and immigrants from English-speaking countries differed in their initial incomes and employment situation in the late 1990s. The authors also found these differentials to increase during their study period; and some immigrants did not expect to reach parity with natives during their working career. This situation may not have changed much during the following decade. New Zealand Immigration Service reports (2003a, & 2003b) state that immigrants from Asia do not do so well in the New Zealand labour market, with a higher proportion not in the labour force and higher rates of unemployment despite high qualifications, amongst Southeast Asians in particular. A study conducted by Guerin et al (2003) revealed that Asians from Afghanistan and Bangladesh experienced the highest unemployment rates, together with those born in Somalia, Kuwait and Iraq. The authors conclude that this was mainly due to their refugee status in New Zealand, their appearance and their cultural beliefs and attitudes.

Empirical studies undertaken in the late 2000s (Dixon et al, 2010; Mattoo, Neagu, & Ozden, 2008) revealed that many immigrants face underemployment issues, often struggling to find a job that matches their qualifications and skills and pays them sufficiently. This can be due to employer attitudes towards immigrants who are culturally different and have unfamiliar qualifications (eg, Basnayake, 1999; Department of Internal Affairs, 1996; Henderson et al, 2001; New Zealand Immigration Service, 2003b; Spoonley & Meares, 2009; Trlin et al, 2004; Ward & Masgoret, 2007).

Disproportionate representation of Asians in low-income thresholds:

Asian ethnic groups appear to be disproportionately represented in low-income brackets, experience the lowest increase in real median hourly rates and have lower job satisfaction than European, Mäori and Pacific peoples (Ministry of Social Development, 2007; Statistics New Zealand, 2007).

The Ministry of Social Development (2007) has defined 'low income' as the proportion of the population in households with equivalent disposable incomes which are, after deducting tax and housing costs, below the low-income threshold.[1] In 2006, Statistics New Zealand found the lowest median annual personal income for people aged 15 years and over was for those who identified with the Asian ethnic group ($14,500). This is illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1: Median annual personal income by ethnic group

Median Annual Personal Income by Ethnic Group* 2006 Census	
	Median annual income
European	$25,400
Mäori	$20,900
Pacific peoples	$20,500
Asian	$14,500
Middle Eastern, Latin American and African	$16,100
Other Ethnicity	$31,200

* People can choose to identify with more than one ethnic group, therefore percentages may not add up to 100. The 'Other Ethnicity' category includes responses for a number of small ethnic groups and for New Zealanders. In 2006, 'New Zealander' responses made up the largest proportion of the 'Other Ethnicity' category.

Note: In the 2006 Census, total personal income information was collected for people aged 15 years and over, who usually lived in New Zealand. It relates to the 12 months ending 31 March, and includes income from all sources.

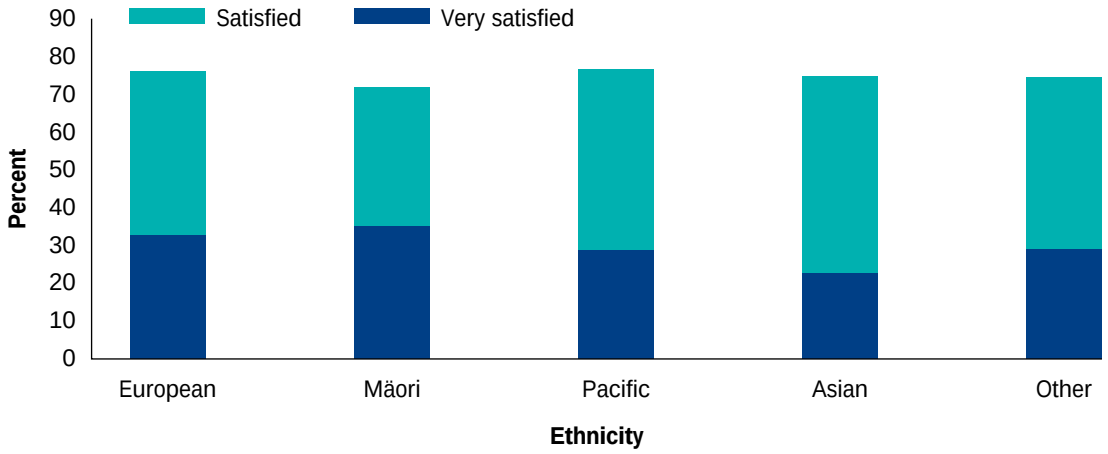
The 2006 Census also reported that the ethnic group with the greatest proportion of people reporting an income of less than $20,000 per year was Asian (58 percent). However, the Asian ethnic group has higher proportions of people in the younger age groups, including international students with lower incomes, so this may partially account for the low median annual income.

1 Note: The income thresholds have also been adjusted for inflation.

Majority of Asians 'satisfied' with work-life balance:

The Quality of Life Survey conducted in 2006 showed that, on the whole, employed individuals in different population groups had similar rates of work-life balance satisfaction – between 70 and 76 percent (see Figure 1). Within the Asian ethnic group, 74 percent said they were either 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' (22 percent) with their work-life balance. The percentage of 'very satisfied' Asians is slightly smaller than the 28 to 32 percent of 'very satisfied' respondents from other ethnic groups (Ministry of Social Development, 2007, p. 53).

Figure 1: Satisfaction with work-life balance among employed people by ethnic group (source: Ministry of Social Development, 2007, p. 53)



In 2008, the Life in New Zealand results showed that 83 percent of Asian skilled migrants were satisfied or very satisfied with life in New Zealand. This was slightly lower than other groups (average across all groups 89 percent), but just 4 percent were 'dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied'. However, quantitative surveys may not always take into account the Heisenberg effect on results; that respondents often provide answers that they believe are expected of them. This effect may be especially so with ethnic minority immigrants who may still feel insecure in their host country and who may provide answers that are safe and acceptable. Qualitative studies undertaken by ethnic minority researchers who are trusted by the participants may produce more reliable data.

2.1.2 Self-employment

As discussed above, Asian immigrant employment data of 2009 (Department of Labour, 2009a) show that employment rates increase significantly over time, unemployment rates for this group are lower than the national average and Asian levels of income increase over time. These data do not appear to take into account self-employment amongst Asian immigrants, which, as suggested by qualitative studies conducted with Asian communities (eg, Dixon et al. 2010; Sobrun-Maharaj et al, 2008; Trlin et al, 2004; Tse et al, 2006), is often an outcome of unemployment, amongst other factors.

Self-employment appears to be an increasing trend amongst Asian immigrants. A report prepared by the Ministry of Social Development (2008) revealed that there is an increasing percentage of immigrants who are self-employed and/or are employers. Asians, especially those from East Asia such as Korea, China and Taiwan, have the highest self-employment rates in New Zealand. Studies of Korean immigrants reported that 30 percent are self-employed, and in comparison, studies of Chinese, Taiwanese and German groups have reported that 25 percent are self-employed (Coates & Carr, 2005). An analysis of the 2001 Census data (New Zealand Immigration Service, 2003a) showed that immigrants from North Asia were more likely to be self-employed or an employer (19.6 percent and 9.6 percent respectively), and a survey undertaken

in 1999 (Watts & Trlin, 1999) found 21.2 percent of immigrants to be self-employed. This phenomenon is reported to be mainly due to the structural barriers to employment such as those that have been illustrated above (Bedford & Goodwin, 1999), and also that immigrants from these countries often obtain their permanent residency and work visas by investing money in a business (Ward & Masgoret, 2007).

2.2 Barriers to employment

There are some barriers to immigrants attaining a secure occupation, regardless of the length of time they have spent in a new country. According to reports from various agencies and authors (Department of Internal Affairs, 1996; Department of Labour, 2007; Equal Employment Opportunities Trust, 2000; Henderson, 2003; McIntyre, Ramasamy, & Sturrock 2003; Oliver, 2000; Podsiadlowski, 2006), some employers appear to be reluctant to employ immigrants. Some employers give reasons such as cultural differences; overseas qualifications and/or experience that an employer is not familiar with; being a non-native English speaker or having a non-New Zealand accent; and little knowledge of New Zealand or its workplace culture. Difficulties around employment of immigrants in New Zealand and the associated factors appear to persist, as noted by the Ministry of Social Development's *Social Report* (2008), which states that one of the major areas of dissatisfaction amongst immigrants (including refugees) in New Zealand is employment and difficulties in finding work.

Other factors identified in the literature include the following:

Employer attitudes

Empirical studies have highlighted attitudinal issues that Asian immigrants may face. A recurring theme is that of discrimination faced by ethnic minority immigrants, especially Asians, in New Zealand (eg, Evolve, 2005; Harris et al, 2006; Human Rights Commission, 2007; Sobrun-Maharaj et al, 2008). Racial discrimination includes unfair treatment because of ethnicity (eg, at work, or when seeking employment and housing). Discrimination against immigrants' country of origin, their accent, foreign name, skin colour and work patterns are found to be major obstacles in securing a job (Aroian & Norris, 2003; Bell et al, 2004; Statistics New Zealand, 2008; Trlin et al, 2004). *The New Zealand General Social Survey* (Statistics New Zealand, 2008) found that Asian people (and Mäori) were two to three times more likely to report discrimination than Europeans.

Several New Zealand studies found that immigrants were most likely to experience discrimination during employment (eg, Butcher, Spoonley, & Trlin, 2006, Chang, Morris, & Vokes, 2006; Dunstan et al, 2004; Henderson et al, 2001). Studies (Ministry of Social Development, 2008; Ward & Masgoret, 2007) found that recruitment agencies are more likely to invite a New Zealand-born candidate (with a New Zealand European name) for further contact or an interview, than a China-born candidate with equivalent educational qualifications and work experience, and that Asian applicants were often filtered out at the telephone interview stage based on accents (Trlin et al, 2004). This may be due to employers' discriminatory attitudes, or it may also be due to poor written English (on a CV and cover letter) or spoken English (during a phone interview).

Also, research has found that those from a more similar or closely aligned culture to that of the native population are more likely to be successful in finding employment (Coates & Carr, 2005; Forsyte Research, 1998).

Furthermore, several authors (eg, Aroian & Norris, 2003; Basnayake, 1999; Bell et al, 2004; Henderson et al, 2001; Department of Internal Affairs, 1996; Ho et al, 1999) have found that employers do not recognise the qualifications and work experience that immigrants, particularly Asian immigrants, bring from their home country. Local-born people are often seen as better qualified, possibly because employers find it easier to understand their qualifications (James, 2002). Consequently, there is a high concentration of jobs in a few occupations that are readily available for immigrants (McKenzie, 2008). For example, most young male immigrants are most likely to obtain physically demanding occupations, whereas many young female immigrants are likely to attain lower-level service work, such as domestic workers, cashiers and sales assistants (McKenzie, 2008).

Language

Proficiency in the English language has long been recognised as a factor that has a significant impact on employment opportunities and the work experience of Asian immigrants (Henderson, 2006; Henderson et al, 2001, 2003; Trlin et al, 2004). A lack of English

proficiency can be a major impediment to employment and educational opportunities (Miller & Chandler, 2002) as well as access to services and options to participate in other important domains such as civic life and mainstream entertainment (Beiser & Hou, 2001), and other resources associated with social, economic and cultural integration (Segal & Mayadas, 2005). This isolates families and has an adverse impact on their wellbeing.

However, many Asian immigrants have had some exposure to English in their country of origin, especially South and Southeast Asians. While some immigrants, especially East Asians and refugees, initially face difficulties in communicating in English, research suggests that most immigrants readily overcome this (DeSouza, 2006; Guerin, Abdi, & Guerin, 2003; Watts, White, & Drago, 2002). Recent research undertaken in New Zealand shows that South Asians and Southeast Asians are usually proficient in English, but still encounter obstacles in finding appropriate employment due to their accents (Dixon et al, 2010; Henderson et al, 2001; Sobrun-Maharaj et al, 2008; Trlin & Watts, 2001; Tse et al, 2006).

While immigrants' foreign language skills are also an asset, they tend to be under-utilised in international business, trade and tourism in New Zealand (Watts & Trlin, 1999).

Immigration policies

It has been argued that New Zealand's skill-based points immigration policy is inefficient as the skills that immigrants bring are under-utilised (Henderson et al, 2001; McKenzie, 2008;). As foreign qualifications are often unrecognised, many immigrants choose to accept employment that does not utilise their skills and knowledge, or financially reward them for it (Malone, 2001). According to Trlin et al, (2004) this is "a long-term trap with associated loss of skills and an undermining of individual health and wellbeing" (p. 213). Although the skill-based points immigration policy has been developed to accept immigrants who have the most to offer New Zealand, Mattoo et al, (2008) believe many immigrants are prevented from securing jobs that match their qualifications and skills.

Economy status of the host country

The economy status of the host country influences the entry of immigrants into job markets (Noh & Avison, 1996). During an economic recession, it is difficult for both immigrants and native-born employees to get a job (Perreira, Harris, & Lee, 2007). This trend was noted during the late 2000s when employment rates fell for most New Zealanders, including Asian immigrants (Statistics New Zealand, 2008a). As employers tend to undervalue foreign qualifications, immigrants find it particularly hard to get a job (Perreira et al, 2007). Also, when there is more than enough labour available in a particular field, the competition between individuals rises (Slack & Jensen, 2007). This is evident in the United States where there are large numbers of immigrants from Asia, particularly India, who are specialised in information technology (IT) but find it difficult to find employment in IT (Slack & Jensen, 2007).

Others barriers to employment include: lack of information about how to access interpreter services; poor working conditions; recruitment agencies that do not address the needs of immigrants; and problems with housing (Bell et al, 2004). Lack of social networks and experience in New Zealand also reduce the employment opportunities of immigrants (Ministry of Social Development, 2008). However, second-generation immigrants and those who arrived in New Zealand as children have a higher employment rate (Coates & Carr, 2005; Ministry of Social Development, 2008).

2.3 Consequences of unemployment, underemployment or inappropriate employment

Research has consistently highlighted the negative impact of ethnic discrimination in employment on the settlement process. In particular, perceived discrimination has been associated with poor psychological health (eg, Finch, Kolody, & Vega, 2000) and life satisfaction (eg, Brown, 2001), as well as physical health (Karlsen & Nazroo, 2002).

Psychological effects

Psychological research conducted by Akhavan, Bildt, Franzen, & Wamala, (2004) has shown that adverse socio-economic circumstances start psychological, behavioural and biological reaction patterns, which have a negative effect on the mental and physical health of unemployed people. This is supported by numerous other psychosocial studies which have consistently shown psychological distress, depression

and anxiety, reduced happiness, lowered self-esteem, death by suicide, admissions to psychiatric hospitals and risk of substance abuse and criminality as among the most salient outcomes associated with unemployment or problems in gaining employment commensurate with qualifications (eg, Banks & Ullah, 1988; Goldsmith, Veum, & Darity, 1996; Hammarstrom, 1994; Kokko, Pulkkinen & Puustinen, 2000; Oswald, 1997; Rodriguez, et al, 2001).

Akhavan et al (2004) state that the theory of conditioned helplessness implies that people who want to work but cannot find a job may experience passivity, negative self-perception, bad self-confidence and depression. This is endorsed by Goldsmith et al (1996) who found that both past unemployment and past inactivity reduce current self-esteem, and Warr and Jackson (1987) and Clark, Georgellis, and Sanfey (2001) whose research suggests that unemployed individuals become resigned to their s tate, reducing the value they attach to paid employment, withdrawing from job-search activity and becoming passive and lethargic.

The prejudice experienced by Asian immigrants may have an adverse impact on family relations (Kasturirangan, Krishnan, & Riger, 2004). For example, the frustrations or anger that result from discrimination might be directed against other family members.

Physical health effects

Unemployment has also been shown to increase unhealthy behaviour such as alcohol and tobacco consumption, poor diet, lack of exercise, which may lead to increased risk for disease or mortality (Dooley et al, 1996). Medical examinations have shown an increase in blood pressure among unemployed adult men and unemployed young girls and boys (Akhavan et al, 2004). Unemployment may affect physical health via a 'stress' pathway involving physiological changes such as a raised cholesterol concentration and lowered immunity (Bartley, 1994). Financial problems contribute by increasing the frequency of stressful life events associated with debt, and possibly by their effect on diet and the quality of the home environment (Bartley, 1994).

Settlement

A significant part of settling into a new country is finding a job (Holton & Sloan, 1994). As outlined earlier, the Department of Labour-led, whole–of–government settlement strategy aims to ensure that immigrants settle successfully in New Zealand. A second, intermediate goal of this strategy is to ensure that immigrants and their families "obtain employment appropriate to their qualifications and skills and are valued for their contribution to economic transformation and innovation". However, both anecdotal and empirical evidence from the recent New Zealand studies discussed above show that some Asian immigrants are not achieving appropriate employment and are not always being valued for their contribution to the New Zealand economy. Unemployment negatively affects the settlement experience of immigrants, including their families, and can be a barrier to a sense of belonging (Aycan & Berry, 1996; Ministry of Social Development, 2008), because, for many unemployed, social activity and participation – and therefore social support – fall dramatically (Bartley, 1994). It has been shown (Akhavan et al, 2004) that unemployed people who lack contacts outside the family are particularly vulnerable to psychological distress.

Moderators of negative effects of unemployment, underemployment or inappropriate employment

As has been illustrated by the research cited above, unemployment or underemployment have negative psychological, behavioural and health consequences for the whole family, and compromises the ability of immigrants to settle successfully in New Zealand. Several variables appear to moderate the negative effects of unemployment, underemployment or inappropriate employment. Among these are age, gender, ethnic group membership, social class, length of unemployment, employment commitment and personal vulnerability (Warr, Jackson, & Banks, 1988). Personal resources such as ability to speak the host country language, and social support and resources, such as intimate relationships and the availability of a like-ethnic community, help safeguard mental health (Beiser & Hou, 2001; Pearlin & Aneshensel, 1989).

2.4 Facilitators of employment

Researchers have identified personal-psychological and social support factors as important facilitators of employment for immigrants (eg, Garcia-Ramirez et al, 2005).These include personal-psychological attributes of a positive self–concept, internal attributions about their employment and active engagement in job searching.

Resiliency

There are a number of potential sources of stress for immigrants including changes in families' financial and relationship status, the stress associated with securing employment and housing and the loss and grief associated with leaving family and friends. These issues are often compounded by a lack of proficiency with the host language and host attitudes towards immigrants (Beiser & Hou, 2001; Brooking & Rabel, 1995). However, it is clear that not all families experience the immigration process in the same way, even when facing the same challenges. As has been suggested in our previous research for the Families Commission (Dixon et al, 2010), resilience theory is a means to understand the different ways in which families experience settlement.

Resilience has been defined as "a dynamic process of encompassing positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity" (Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000, p. 543). In our 2010 study (Dixon et al, 2010), we explained that the concept of resiliency was originally applied to the individual, with research focusing on factors such as personality traits and coping styles that enabled the individual to succeed in the face of adversity (eg Werner, 1993). More recently, resilience has come to be seen as a construct that may usefully be applied at a family level, the emphasis being on how the family deals with challenges or disruption. Hawley (2000) has described family resilience as the features of families that help them: i) resist disruption in the face of change; and, ii) adapt in the face of crisis situations. Underlying this approach is a shift away from focusing on families with problems to families who remain 'healthy and functional' in the face of significant challenges. Walsh (2002) points out that the extent to which the family is able to deal with stress and disorganisation will have consequences for the adaptation of family members and for their relationships.

Walsh (1996) developed a meta-framework that identifies the key processes associated with family resilience. These processes are grouped within three main domains of family functioning: belief systems; organisational patterns; and communication processes. The specific processes associated with belief systems are: making meaning of adversity; positive outlook; transcendence; and spirituality. Those associated with organisational patterns are: flexibility and social and economic resources; and with communication processes: clarity, open emotional sharing and collaborative problem-solving.

The strength of a resiliency approach to understanding families' responses to crises such as being unable to find an appropriate job or attain economic stability in the new country, is a focus on identifying the characteristics and resources possessed by families who adapt well following a stressful experience such as migration. The theoretical foundation for much family resilience research is underpinned by McCubbin and Thompson's (1991) Resiliency Model of Family Stress, Adjustment and Adaptation. They say a family's resilience depends on two distinct but related stress responses: adjustment and adaptation. In the adjustment phase, the family identifies factors that protect them, and help them function in the face of crisis. As Greeff and Holtzkamp (2007) point out, at this time, everything associated with migration is risky and could precipitate a family crisis. In the event of a crisis, the family then enters the adaptation phase, where they are required to adapt to their new situation to restore stability and achieve a suitable family environment. As they work through this process of adaptation the family draws on resources within and outside of the family (Der Kindersen & Greeff, 2003). A successful adaptation depends on the availability and quality of such resources.

A number of factors are associated with resilience in immigrant families. Those internal to the family include a sense of cultural heritage and the presence of religious and/or spiritual beliefs (Walsh, 2002), and shared values and maintenance of family rituals (Silberberg, 2001). Externally, social support systems, both formal and informal, are critical to the process (Silberberg, 2001).

Support

Social supports can be defined as inputs provided by individuals or groups to another person to enhance the individual's belief system and to have a positive effect on the receiver's desire (Caplan, Robinson, French Jr, Caldwell, & Shinn, 1976; Ryan, 1997). Social supports are intended to prevent or reduce stresses by changing the situation and managing the symptoms of stress (Pearlin & Aneshensel, 1989). They achieve this by creating a process of interaction with the social environment that is customised for the individual's psychological needs. This interaction may occur at an

individual, group or community level. Support groups are the most common form of community-level social support for people experiencing acute life events and role transitions (Ryan, 1997).

Social support factors, such as networks of people from their old and new countries, are considered central to obtaining employment (Beiser & Hou, 2001). Having social support networks that include people who share the same goals and concerns helps reduce feelings of vulnerability and increases knowledge of the employment environment (Trickett & Buchanan, 2001).

Inversely, being employed can increase opportunities to widen social networks (Garcia et al, 2005). The challenge, however, lies in determining how to enhance the personal-psychological factors associated with gaining employment in the first place. This could be done by developing and sustaining the resilience that immigrant families bring with them.

2.5 Summary

This chapter reviewed international and national literature examining immigrants' work experience issues in relation to families as a whole and the unique challenges they face in relation to employment in New Zealand. It discussed Asian immigrant employment in New Zealand against a backdrop of employment of all immigrants in the country. This comparison showed that the employment rates for Asian immigrants differ considerably from other immigrants, with Asians experiencing higher rates of unemployment, underemployment and a lower income in their first 15 years in New Zealand. Self-employment appears to be an increasing trend amongst Asian immigrants, possibly due to barriers to employment, and also because some obtain their permanent residency and work visas by investing money in a business.

The literature has identified a number of barriers to employment, including: cultural differences; overseas qualifications and experience that an employer is not familiar with; being a non-native English speaker or having a non-New Zealand accent; having little knowledge of New Zealand or its workplace culture; employer attitudes; immigration policies; and the economic status of the host country. Consequences of unemployment, underemployment or inappropriate employment identified in the literature include: psychological effects such as psychological distress, depression and anxiety, reduced happiness, lowered self-esteem, death by suicide, admissions to psychiatric hospitals and risk of substance abuse and criminality; physical health effects such as an increase in blood pressure, raised cholesterol concentration and lowered immunity; and poor settlement for Asian immigrant families. Moderators of these effects include: age; gender; ethnic group membership; social class; length of unemployment; employment commitment; and personal vulnerability. Personal resources such as ability to speak the host country language, and social support and resources, such as intimate relationships and the availability of a like-ethnic community, help safeguard mental health.

Facilitators of employment identified in the literature include immigrants having social support in the form of networks of people from their old and new countries, which helps reduce feelings of vulnerability and increases knowledge of the employment environment. Resiliency is also a significant facilitator of employment as it enhances the personal-psychological factors associated with gaining employment. Hence, it is important that the resilience immigrant families bring with them is developed.

3. METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

This chapter outlines the methodology and methods employed in this study, and the research questions that guided it.

This research was exploratory in nature and adopted an ecological approach to studying the settlement experiences of Asian immigrant families, namely Chinese, South Asian, Korean, Southeast Asian and refugees of Asian ethnicity. In essence, an ecological approach acknowledges the contextual framework in which individuals live and operate. Individuals are members of families that are situated within communities, and these are part of wider society (eg, Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979) delineated a number of nested systems which relate to the role of an individual within; for example, their family (microsystem), workplace (exosystem) and extended sociocultural context (macrosystem). Our utilisation of an ecological framework means that individuals have been viewed as members of families situated within communities, and these in turn are part of wider society.

The study also adopted a strengths-based perspective, identifying factors that contribute to positive work experiences (and thus family wellbeing) for Asian families, as well as those that contribute to adverse work experiences.

3.1 Methods

This research utilised qualitative research techniques, namely in-depth family interviews. Qualitative techniques were chosen for use by the research team as they would enable the in-depth examination of the relevant issues and could build on and improve our understanding of the findings provided through previous quantitative research (eg, Statistics New Zealand, 2007).

Family interviews were chosen ahead of other qualitative techniques, such as focus groups, as we were interested in the impacts of work experiences on the family as a whole. Through previous research on family-based issues (eg, Dixon et al, Tse et al, 2006; 2010), the researchers have found family interviews a particularly effective data collection method as they seem to encourage the sharing of familial-based perspectives, as opposed to focus groups in which participants had a strong tendency to share individual-based information and perspectives.

This section provides details relating to the research method, including: recruitment and sample; data collection procedures; data collection instuments, and data analysis.

3.1.1 Recruitment and sample

Participating families from each ethnic group were recruited from the greater Auckland region through the field researchers' personal, professional and community networks. Recruitment techniques included displaying information about the research at appropriate locations (eg, community venues), snow-balling (participants passing on information to other families who may be interested/suitable), and asking colleagues to pass on information to eligible families. To ensure that they received a wide range of views, the field researchers sought families with diverse experiences and considered several factors such as: the current employment status of parents; the level of difficulty experienced in securing employment; type of employment/profession; single- versus double-income families; years of residency in New Zealand; and family composition. The field researchers discussed the suitability of each family with at least one of the principal investigators and then decided whether or not to recruit the family.

Family interviews were conducted with families from the following five streams:

> each of the four major Asian immigrant ethnic groups in New Zealand: Chinese, Korean, Southeast Asian and South Asian;

> Asian with refugee background.

Each stream consisted of four interviews, resulting in 20 family interviews and involving 78 participants: 43 adults[2] and 35 children. A breakdown of the number of family interviews and participants, according to ethnicity and age categorisation (adult/child), is provided in Table 2.

[2] NB: While 43 adults participated in the family interviews, three were extended family members (eg, a grandparent who was living with the family). No employment data (presented in Section 4,2) were gathered on extended family members.

Table 2: Breakdown of family interviews by ethnic group/category

			Immigrant ethnic group/category				
			Chinese	Korean	Indian	South-east Asian	Asian with refugee background
Interview # 1	Number of participants	Adults	3	2	2	2	2
		Children	1	2	2	3	3
Interview # 2	Number of participants	Adults	2	2	4	2	2
		Children	1	0	2	3	3
Interview # 3	Number of participants	Adults	2	2	2	2	2
		Children	1	0	2	4	2
Interview # 4	Number of participants	Adults	2	2	2	2	2
		Children	1	0	1	3	1
Number of adults (Total 43)			**9**	**8**	**10**	**8**	**8**
Number of children (Total 35)			**4**	**2**	**7**	**13**	**9**
TOTAL: Number of participants (78)			**13**	**10**	**17**	**21**	**17**

3.1.2 Data collection procedures

Family interviews were held between March 2009 and July 2009. Interviews with families in the Chinese, Korean, Indian and Southeast Asian streams were facilitated by a researcher of matching ethnicity, and an Asian researcher with a refugee background conducted the interviews with families in the refugee stream. The family interviews were held at a time and place suitable to the participants, generally in the homes of participating families. Each family interview was audio-recorded, with participant consent, and where necessary was conducted in the preferred language of each participating family (Section 3.3 provides further details on the ethnic matching of field researchers and participating families).

A supermarket voucher ($60) was given to each participating family as a token of the research team's appreciation.

3.1.3 Data collection instruments

A semi-structured interview schedule (see Appendix A) was developed by the core research team to facilitate the family interviews. This schedule was based on the research aims and literature review, and was reviewed by the cultural advisory team and the field researchers. The adjusted interview schedule was then utilised by the field researchers and reviewed by the entire research team at a team meeting after each field researcher had completed their initial interview.

3.1.4 Data analysis

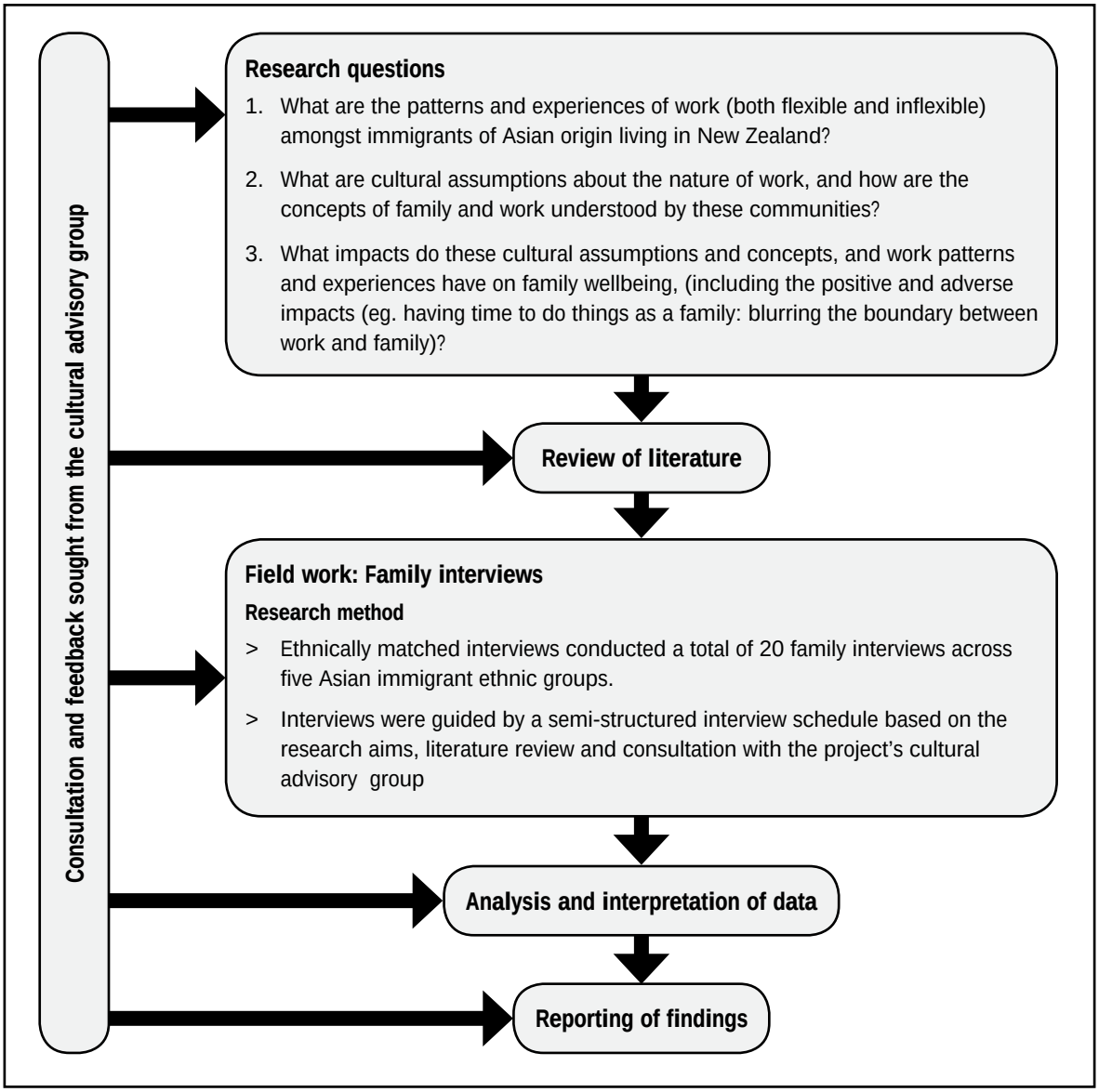
Following the completion of each family interview, field researchers transcribed (and translated into English when necessary) their family interview discussions, and entered the data into an interview matrix. Each field researcher also compiled an overview of the key themes arising from their interviews. The research team met with the field researchers on 23 July 2009 for a half-day meeting, after the family interviews were completed and transcribed. This meeting allowed the field researchers to have a final debrief regarding the research process and to begin discussing emerging themes.

The project's cultural advisory group reconvened again on 30 July and were presented with the preliminary findings. The advisory group provided feedback on these findings and helped the research team contextualise and understand them within an ecological framework.

With the preliminary high-level analysis/overview and the cultural advisory group's feedback in mind, the principal investigators independently analysed the interview transcripts/matrices through multiple readings. The analysis was conducted using a general inductive approach (Thomas, 2006) that enables the identification of themes, clusters and categories relevant to the research objectives. Throughout this process, the principal investigators came together for weekly meetings where they compared their analyses and interpretations of the data and noted the presence of common/recurring themes or themes common to particular groups. At the end of the independent analysis, the two principal researchers came together for a half-day meeting, during which the final two sets of themes were compared, contrasted and combined into one final set of themes.

Figure 2 provides a summary of the research process, from the research questions through to the analysis and interpretation of the data.

Figure 2: Summary of research process



3.2 Cultural advisory group

A cultural advisory group was convened by the research team at the commencement of the research project. The group consisted of five members who broadly represent the Asian immigrant ethnic groups participating in the research: a Chinese; South Asian; Korean; Southeast Asian; and Asian of refugee background. The members of the group all have expertise and experience with regard to the health and wellbeing issues experienced by Asian immigrants and refugees in New Zealand.

The advisory group met three times throughout the course of the research project. The group provided expert cultural advice and guidance on issues such as the data collection measures and procedures, and aid with the interpretation and contextualisation of the resulting data.

3.3 Field researchers

The research team recognised the importance of ethnically matching researchers with participants. As such, a team of five field researchers was formed; this consisted of one researcher from each of the Asian immigrant ethnic groups included in the study.

Due to the diverse ethnic backgrounds of refugees living in New Zealand, we could not ensure that the field researcher for the refugee stream was always ethnically matched to participants. However, the researcher responsible for this stream came from a refugee background herself and has been employed in various capacities within the refugee sector. Each of the field researchers was experienced in social science research techniques and had access to a wide range of community and professional networks to help them recruit suitable families.

Field researchers were trained in issues such as: the scope of the research project (aims/objectives, methodology etc); data collection tools and procedures; recruitment and selection of participants; ethical procedures/requirements; safety procedures, and transcription of data. These training sessions, along with frequent one-on-one personal contact when necessary, ensured that the research was undertaken in a consistent and coordinated manner.

3.4 Ethics approval

The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee (UAHPEC) approved the study on 13 May 2009 (Reference 2009 / 066).

4. RESULTS

This chapter provides details on the results, which have been categorised into five major topics. These topics include: Cultural assumptions of Asian families; employment; factors that impact appropriate employment, positive work experiences and family wellbeing; and impacts of negative work experiences on family wellbeing. The chapter concludes with an overall summary of the results.

4.1 Cultural assumptions of Asian families

Cultural assumptions of Asian families from the five groups were similar. These views seemed to relate to the collectivistic nature that is shared by Asian cultures and the associated commonalities in their worldview (Schwartz, 1994; Triandis, 1989, 1995 & 1998). This section presents participants' perceptions of work and family.

4.1.1 The nature of work

For all the participants in this study, work was understood in the context of family. All participants indicated that work was extremely important in their lives because "it helps you earn a living" (South Asian male), and because of the functions that work plays in terms of family. These functions ranged from enabling them to provide the basic needs for their family, such as food, clothes, shelter, education and transport, to developing other skills, progressing and succeeding in one's career and forming networks. For example:

> It gives me the ability to earn money, and I can also develop professionally, and learn, and I can have some social security. (South Asian male)

The extent of the significance of work to these communities is illustrated by the following comments:

> Without work there's no purpose in life. It's similar to a disabled person. (Refugee male)

> When you stop working, you stop eating. (Chinese male)

> …work is crucial to family wellbeing. (South Asian female)

Furthermore, work also contributes to identity formation and mental wellbeing, as illustrated by a Korean male participant:

> It is a means to develop one's identity … I think work provides many essentials to people's lives such as money, feelings that you get when you achieve something, and reason to live.

All participants identified job satisfaction as a significant factor contributing to mental wellbeing. For example:

> You've got to enjoy what you do. (South Asian male)

> However, whatever you do, it should be enjoyable. (Korean male)

4.1.2 The concept of family

Understanding of the concept of family

A key commonality amongst almost all Asian families in this study is the notion that family is not just the nuclear family, but also the extended family, friends, neighbours and community. This is a strong feature of collective societies:

> I think family means my neighbourhood and my friends and other people. (South Asian male)

> It's more than just my immediate family members. Friends are family too. (Refugee male)

> It's about the people most important to us – the immediate and extended family. For parents, children are the main concern and their obligation. (Southeast Asian male)

For these families, the implication was that if one family is experiencing problems, this has a ripple effect on the community, which is the extended family. However, there is also a positive side to these ripple effects, in that families are able to act as a source of support for each other through the sharing of money and problems etc:

> Helping others is an important concept in the family. (Chinese female)

However, this did not mean that the nuclear family unit was less important. As with many other societies, particularly those that are 'Westernised', the nuclear family was considered to be more important than the wider family and work. The nuclear family unit denoted completeness and wholeness, a 'shelter' for all troubles. It also provided a sense of belonging, connectedness/ cohesion and support. It:

> …kinda helps you get through life; it makes the whole world work. (South Asian male)

> Family is the driving force for its members. To carry out daily activities, it is important to recharge their batteries at home and get the engine going. Each member needs to be supportive of each other. (Korean male)

> Family is a place where you can go to if you have any troubles. (Chinese male)

> We are like a circle; joined together… Sometimes we're friends; but we realise we are family. (Southeast Asian youth)

A Korean family used the analogy of sailing, with the ship being the commonly shared goals and the family being the ship's crew that works together towards achieving those common goals:

> I believe that a family is like a crew on a boat. There would be a captain, engineer and other members with different roles. Father would be the captain, and he is responsible for taking very good care of the steering wheel. Everyone needs to work together to get through whatever comes before them. It is all about synergy. (Korean male)

Understanding of the concept of family wellbeing

Being collective societies, family wellbeing for all Asian families revolved around family connectedness and support. All five groups said 'being together' and 'bonding' as a family helped enable wellbeing. For example:

> Completeness is important, such as having all family members in New Zealand. Everyone being healthy and together. The family should have a good influence on the child. (Chinese female)

> I could be changing jobs every day, having different levels of income etc, but a family is something that truly belongs to me and that I can depend on. (Chinese male)

Other factors that contributed to family wellbeing were: respect for each other in the family; happiness; good communication and good relationships between the generations within the family; good health; spiritual and emotional needs met; feeling safe; individual rights; good child education; and material needs met (eg, food, housing). These were regarded as 'crucial pillars' for family wellbeing. For example:

> The basic necessities of life; the four essential requirements of the people: food, clothing, housing and transportation needs to be met for family well-being. (Chinese male)

> Emotionally, parents need to be there for their children. Children need to know that they are loved and cared for by their parents, and parents need to have their interest at heart. There must be respect, unity and love in the family. (Southeast Asian female)

> Helping others is an important concept in the family; for example, we don't have much money to make donations to charities, but we do educate our child. (Chinese female)

Some families also talked about the role of macro factors, such as environmental factors, that enable family wellbeing. This included facilities and support from the host community in their new country, and the ability to find work so that they could support their families.

4.2 Employment

The following section provides details on the research findings that related to participants' employment. In particular, the following topics are addressed: patterns of employment; family employment and qualification profiles; and experiences of work.

4.2.1 Patterns of employment

Of the 40 adults interviewed in this study (excluding the three grandparents), 35 participants were in the workforce and five (who were all women) were not. Three of these chose to stay at home and care for their children (one also volunteered part-time), one was on maternity leave and the other had returned to study. Two with 'refugee background' were unemployed. Only a small proportion of the employed adults (under one-sixth) had been able to find employment equivalent to the jobs they did before migrating to New Zealand. Almost one-third (30 percent) were self-employed, two reported being underemployed and over one-quarter (28 percent) were 'misemployed'. Some of these labels are self-reported and others were identified by the researchers based on information provided by the participants. The category of 'misemployed' was suggested by participants, and further details on this and the other categories will be provided in the next section.

Range of employment

Generally, participants were not doing the same job that they were in their home countries. The range of jobs that participants were engaged in was very wide, for all groups. Jobs included assisting new immigrants, information technology (computer programming), mental health services, warehouse management,

cleaning, labouring, teaching, tutoring, farming, real estate sales, childcare, running a café, working in a casino, gardening/landscaping, nursing, secretarial work and technical work at a university.

It is interesting to note that over one-quarter of the participants were self-employed. Self-employment seemed to be particularly common amongst the Korean families and refugee families (many of whom were working as self-employed labourers). This is high when compared to self-employment levels for Auckland in general, which was almost 10 percent in 2006 (Statistics New Zealand, 2006b).

Time taken to initially secure employment

The amount of time taken to find a job upon arrival in New Zealand varied greatly from pre arranged work – one Southeast Asian participant had transferred to his employer's New Zealand branch – to two to three weeks, to six months. Most participants had found employment quickly; mainly because they took anything that was available to avoid unemployment. However, these types of jobs tended to be low level. Some said females found jobs sooner than their male counterparts. When the research project's cultural advisory group was consulted regarding this finding, it was their view that this may be because women were more willing to take 'lesser' jobs than their spouses.

Equivalent employment

For the purposes of this study, equivalent employment has been defined as working in the same field, doing the very same job (ie, at the same level), that people did in their home countries. Only six adults from this sample (less than one-sixth) had secured equivalent employment in New Zealand. These adults were of varying ethnicities and were employed in diverse fields: two Chinese females employed in administration and information technology programming; a Korean early childhood teacher and marketing manager and a Southeast Asian nurse and accountant who transferred to a New Zealand branch of the organisation.

Underemployment

We have defined 'underemployment' as employees continuing to work within the field they are qualified for, but holding lesser positions than they did in their home country. Two participants had found employment in New Zealand in the same field in which they had been employed in their home countries, but were working at levels well below their qualifications/experience. These were a senior teacher who was employed as a junior teacher and also did part-time tutoring, and a sales representative who was working as a real estate secretary.

Misemployment and multiple jobs

Several participants used the term 'misemployment'. They defined misemployment as employment in low-level work, in a field different from the one in which they worked in their home country, (eg, doctors driving taxis). The term 'misemployment' and the definition given by participants was later endorsed by the project's cultural advisory group. Some participants identified themselves as misemployed and others were categorised as misemployed by the research team, based on information provided by participants. Many participants were misemployed and had settled for 'lesser' jobs that had nothing to do with the professions they were trained in. They accepted these jobs as they enabled them to support their families:

> I didn't choose the job, the job chose me. (Chinese female)

The male participants, in particular, felt great pressure to find a job to support their families, settling for low-level jobs and sometimes doing more than one job to make ends meet. Although only a few participants in this study had more than one job at the time of interview, they talked about family and friends who were in this position, and many had initially held two jobs simultaneously when they first migrated to New Zealand. Misemployment and volunteer work were seen as a way to get experience and 'move upwards', and many families who had been in New Zealand longer reflected on starting their lives in New Zealand with low-level jobs before working their way up to more satisfactory positions. For example, a university lecturer had worked at Burger King, service stations, a butchery and a logistics company before becoming a warehouse manager. Participants gave reasons such as their qualifications not being recognised, difficulty with English language and limited opportunities in their field due to the small population in New Zealand.

Self-employment

Most participants who were self-employed reported being forced into this situation. They explained that they opted for setting up their own little businesses to create a source of income as there were limited or no employment opportunities available to them. They had not come to New Zealand as business migrants and

had no prior intentions of setting up a business. They could not secure employment in New Zealand, hence they had to find a way of creating a source of income. In many instances, setting up a small business was the only option. These ranged from a stall in a market over the weekend to cafés and ethnic–specific stores.

As touched on previously, this trend of self-employment was particularly noticeable in the Korean and refugee families. Three of the four fathers from the refugee families were self-employed as labourers (eg, gardeners/landscapers, gib-stoppers/plasterers), while the Korean families were more likely to invest in a café or similar business. However, a few Korean families had expected not to find appropriate jobs due mainly to language difficulties, and anticipated setting up small family businesses if necessary. Nonetheless, this was not an ideal option.

4.2.2 Family employment and qualification profiles

A summary of details of employment before and after migration to New Zealand, and qualification profiles of the families interviewed are shown in Tables 2 to 6 on the following pages.

Table 3: Chinese families' current and previous employment profiles with their qualification information

Family details and employment profiles				
Interview #	**Father/ Mother**	**Number of years living in NZ**	**Pre-migration (ie, in China) employment information, qualifications and background information**	**Post-migration (ie, in New Zealand) employment information**
One	Father	6	> Qualifications (university degree) and experience not recognised in New Zealand > Came to New Zealand as student	**Current status: EMPLOYED** Overseas student coordinator **Other/previous employment** Restaurant work; fruit picking; service station; volunteer work
	Mother	7	> Administrator > Qualifications (university degree) and experience not recognised in New Zealand > Came to New Zealand as student	**Current status: EMPLOYED** Immigration advisor/admin **Other/previous employment** Student; volunteer at CAB
Two	Father	7	> Chinese language lecturer > Qualifications and experience not recognised in New Zealand	**Current status: EMPLOYED** Warehouse manager (hospitality company) **Other/previous employment** Burger King; service stations; butchery; logistics company; student
	Mother	7	> IT programmer > IT experience helpful in New Zealand	**Current status: EMPLOYED** IT programmer (part-time) **Other/previous employment** Student
Three	Father	6	> Civil engineer > Qualifications (university degree) and experience not recognised in New Zealand	**Current status: EMPLOYED/STUDENT** Mental health residential support worker; student **Other/previous employment** Kitchen hand; painter
	Mother	1	> Government economist > Qualifications (university degree) and experience not recognised in New Zealand	**Current status: EMPLOYED** Cleaner (part-time) **Other/previous employment** No information available
Four	Father	6	> Supervisor at a pharmaceutical company > Qualifications (university degree) and experience not recognised in New Zealand	**Current status: EMPLOYED** Mental health cultural support coordinator **Other/previous employment** Salesperson
	Mother	1	> Associate professor in mathematics teaching at a Chinese university > Qualifications (university degree) and experience not recognised in New Zealand	**Current status: STUDENT** Student **Other/previous employment** No information available

Summary of Table 3: All of the Chinese parents were highly qualified when they immigrated to New Zealand; most had university degrees and/or substantial work experience in their field of expertise. At the time of the interviews, seven of the eight Chinese parents were employed (one was also studying to improve appropriate employment opportunities; father, Family Three), and one (mother, Family Four) who had recently arrived in New Zealand, had chosen to study English to improve her chance of securing appropriate employment, as the mother from Family Two had done on first arriving in New Zealand. From the table, it is apparent that many of the participants held a variety of mostly unskilled positions, hence, were misemployed prior to securing their current employment. It is interesting to note that while two of the mothers (Family One and Family Two) indicated that they were working in the same field and at a similar level as they had in their home country, most of the others (particularly the fathers) were currently employed in completely different fields, with many being misemployed (some self-reported and some researcher categorised).

Table 4: Korean families' current and previous employment profiles with their qualification information

Family details and employment profiles				
Interview #	**Father/ Mother**	**Number of years living in NZ**	**Pre-migration (ie, in Korea) employment information, qualifications and background information**	**Post-migration (ie, in New Zealand) employment information**
One	Father	15	> Businessman	**Current status: SELF-EMPLOYED** Self-employed as a farmer; runs a takeaway shop **Other/previous employment** Student; cleaner
	Mother	15	> Homemaker	**Current status: SELF-EMPLOYED** Self-employed as a farmer; runs a takeaway shop **Other/previous employment** No information available
Two	Father	8	> Engineer at a nuclear power station > Qualifications (university degree) and experience not recognised in New Zealand	**Current status: SELF-EMPLOYED** Self-employed as a café owner **Other/previous employment** No information available
	Mother	8	> Homemaker	**Current status: SELF-EMPLOYED** Self-employed as a café owner **Other/previous employment** No information available
Three	Father	9	> Corporate: employed in a multinational organisation > Qualifications (university degree) and experience were not relevant to the line of work pursued in New Zealand	**Current status: EMPLOYED** Real estate agent **Other/previous employment** None
	Mother	9	> Early childhood teacher > Qualifications (university degree) and experience were recognised in New Zealand	**Current status: EMPLOYED** Early childhood teacher **Other/previous employment** None
Four	Father	12	> Served two years in the Army > Studied at a Korean university > Came to New Zealand as a student	**Current status: EMPLOYED** Marketing and promotions manager for a trading company **Other/previous employment** Student
	Mother	12	> Golf instructor	**Current status: NOT IN WORKFORCE** Currently on maternity leave **Other/previous employment** Worked in marketing; student

Summary of Table 4: With the exception of one mother on maternity leave, the Korean parents were all employed. In comparison with the other ethnic streams, these families had a high proportion of self-employment, with half of the parents being self-employed in vocations such as farming, running a takeaway shop, and running a café. It is worth noting that all four of the fathers had secured employment, or were self-employed, in fields that were significantly different to their employment in Korea. Only one of the parents (mother, Family Three) was working in the same position (early childhood teacher) she had prior to immigrating. While two of the mothers were homemakers in Korea, they decided to enter the workforce in New Zealand due to financial pressures.

Table 5: South Asian families' current and previous employment profiles with their qualification information

Family details and employment profiles				
Interview #	**Father/ Mother**	**Number of years living in NZ**	**Pre-migration (ie, in South Asia) employment information, qualifications, and background information**	**Post-migration (ie, in New Zealand) employment information**
One	Father	6	> Self-employed businessman	**Current status: EMPLOYED** Labourer in food factory **Other/previous employment** Cleaner
	Mother	6	> Secondary school teacher > Qualifications and experience not recognised in New Zealand	**Current status: EMPLOYED** Assistant accountant **Other/previous employment** Worked in a NZ supermarket for 3.5 years; student
Two	Father	4	> Vice-president of a software company	**Current status: EMPLOYED** Teacher (secondary) **Other/previous employment** No information available
	Mother	4	> Homemaker	**Current status: SELF-EMPLOYED** Self-employed as an educational consultant; Homemaker **Other/previous employment** No information available
Three	Father	4	> Teacher > Qualifications and experience not recognised in New Zealand	**Current status: EMPLOYED** Tutor (part-time)/Teacher **Other/previous employment** Temporary contractor
	Mother	4	> Homemaker	**Current status: NOT IN WORKFORCE** Homemaker **Other/previous employment** No information available
Four	Father	4	> Student	**Current status: SELF-EMPLOYED** Self-employed businessman **Other/previous employment** Student
	Mother	4	> Homemaker	**Current status: NOT IN WORKFORCE** Homemaker **Other/previous employment** No information available

Summary of Table 5: In total, six of the South Asian participants were currently employed, with two being self-employed. Of the employed, one was misemployed (Family One) and the other underemployed (Family Two). One female (Family One) had initially been underemployed, so returned to study, resulting in her securing a suitable job in a different field. The three remaining females were not in the workforce; they were homemakers, as they had been in their home countries.

Table 6: Southeast Asian families' current and previous employment profiles with their qualification information

Family details and employment profiles				
Interview #	**Father/ Mother**	**Number of years living in NZ**	**Pre-migration (ie, in Southeast Asia) employment information, qualifications and background information**	**Post-migration (ie, in New Zealand) employment information**
One	Father	9	> Several years' experience as sales rep for pharmaceutical company > Qualifications (university degree) and experience not recognised in New Zealand	**Current status: EMPLOYED** Casino gaming floor dealer (recently relocated to Brisbane) **Other/previous employment** None
	Mother	9	> Certified public accountant > Qualifications not recognised in New Zealand (but transferred to New Zealand with company)	**Current status: EMPLOYED** Accounting: group manager **Other/previous employment** Internal transfer to a New Zealand branch of company
Two	Father	14	> Music teacher > Qualifications and experience not recognised in New Zealand	**Current status: EMPLOYED** Cleaner; teaches Koran as a volunteer **Other/previous employment** No information available
	Mother	9	> Administrator > Qualifications (university degree) and experience not recognised in New Zealand	**Current status: NOT IN WORKFORCE** Homemaker; teaches Koran as a volunteer **Other/previous employment** None
Three	Father	7	> Civil engineer > Qualifications and experience not recognised in New Zealand	**Current status: EMPLOYED** Senior technical officer at a university **Other/previous employment** None
	Mother	7	> Previous experience in sales	**Current status: EMPLOYED** Personal secretary at a real estate agency **Other/previous employment** None
Four	Father	>10	> Construction manager in Malaysia	**Current status: SELF-EMPLOYED** Self-employed: gardening and landscaping business **Other/previous employment** Bakery; gardener; student (horticulture)
	Mother	6	> Registered nurse > Qualifications and experience were recognised in New Zealand	**Current status: EMPLOYED** Nurse at New Zealand hospital **Other/previous employment** None

Summary of Table 6: At the time of this research, only one of the Southeast Asian parents (Mother, Family Two) was not in the workforce. While she had a university qualification from her home country, she said she thought she would have to gain further qualifications to get similar employment in New Zealand. Two adults were doing the same job as they had in their home country: a nurse and a manager who transferred to a New Zealand branch of their organisation. Of the remaining participants, one was self-employed and three were employed in fields different from those in their country of origin, with one underemployed and two misemployed.

Table 7: Refugee families' current and previous employment profiles with their qualification information

Family details and employment profiles				
Interview #	**Father/ Mother**	**Number of years living in NZ**	**Pre-migration (ie, in country of origin) employment information, qualifications and background information**	**Post-migration (ie, in New Zealand) employment information**
One	Father	9	> Background in forestry > Qualifications and experience not recognised in New Zealand	**Current status: SELF-EMPLOYED** Self-employed: painter/gib-stopper **Other/previous employment** Factory worker; butcher; catching crabs; growing quails and eggs; painting
	Mother	9	> No information available	**Current status: SELF-EMPLOYED** Homemaker; cooks goods to sell at a market **Other/previous employment** No information available
Two	Father	14	> Farmer; child soldier	**Current status: UNEMPLOYED** Unemployed **Other/previous employment** Painter/gib-stopper
	Mother	9	> Child soldier	**Current status: UNEMPLOYED** Unemployed **Other/previous employment** Caregiver in a rest-home
Three	Father	7	> Farmer	**Current status: SELF-EMPLOYED** Plasterer **Other/previous employment** None
	Mother	7	> Homemaker	**Current status: SELF-EMPLOYED** Homemaker; small market business **Other/previous employment** None
Four	Father	>10	> No information available	**Current status: SELF-EMPLOYED** **Other/previous employment** No information available
	Mother	6	> Researcher (pharmacy) > Qualifications (university degree) and experience not recognised in New Zealand	**Current status: EMPLOYED Part-time** Cultural coordinator and translator **Other/previous employment** Student; part-time work with Fonterra

Summary of Table 7: One notable characteristic of many of the refugee parents' background was their limited range of previous qualifications, training and work experience. As with the Korean families, there was a high proportion of self-employment (five of the eight parents were at least partially self-employed), with males focusing on manual, labour-intensive jobs and females often balancing market-based businesses with their role as a homemaker. Of the remaining parents, two were currently unemployed: a husband and wife with backgrounds as child soldiers. The employed person reported being misemployed: despite having worked as a pharmacist in her home country and then gaining a Master's degree in Chemistry in New Zealand, she had only been able to secure work as a part-time cultural coordinator and translator. However, she said she was enjoying her current work.

4.2.3 Experiences of work

Job expectations

Expectations with regard to securing employment in New Zealand varied according to ethnic group. Most East Asian participants did not expect to get equivalent jobs in New Zealand to those they had in their home countries, mostly due to their lack of English proficiency. Most Korean families held similar expectations and seemed to have accepted the likelihood of undergoing a career shift: all of the Korean families were very focused on their reasons for coming to New Zealand (mainly for a change in lifestyle rather than career prospects etc). Some Southeast Asian families had migrated to New Zealand temporarily and did not expect equivalent jobs:

> I think it is almost impossible for first generation of immigrants to find a job that is similar to what they used to back home. Their qualifications are hardly recognised here, and so are their experiences. So I think it is important to devote ourselves to help the next generation succeed. (Korean male)

For many participants, work visas emerged as a key factor of job expectations: those who had acquired work visas and gained entry to New Zealand under the Skilled Migrants category expected to gain equivalent employment in New Zealand. However, as many in this situation did not manage to find equivalent employment, this topic was one of dissatisfaction and unhappiness, with some parents feeling that they had been betrayed/misled about their prospects in New Zealand. This group included most South Asians, one Chinese family and about half the Southeast Asian families:

> We expected to get a job that was at least close to our own professions; since we came under the 'skilled migrant' category in the immigration process/application we expected that. (Chinese female)

Job satisfaction

Participants reported mixed levels of job satisfaction, with some being satisfied with their jobs to some extent and some not. Those who reported being more satisfied with their jobs were those who had secured equivalent jobs or who had worked through the process of adaptation to non-equivalent or inappropriate jobs. The latter group reflected an acceptance of their job situation rather than satisfaction. A number of those who were still misemployed found their jobs "boring" and were "not happy".

It was interesting to note that the Korean group mostly reported that they were satisfied with their job, despite many being misemployed and not earning as much as they did in Korea. They said that enjoying life and contributing to society were now more important, especially with regard to work-life balance (including spending more time with their family). They had come to New Zealand expecting that job opportunities would be limited, were mostly financially secure and looked forward to enjoying less stressful lives:

> We as immigrants in New Zealand may not be in a very good position to demand so much. We need to learn ourselves to be satisfied with what we have here. (Korean male)

Participants of refugee background had mixed feelings about their jobs. Some felt that their dissatisfaction was compensated by job flexibility (eg, flexible working hours) and the good lifestyle and people that they encountered here in New Zealand:

> This job here; I love it. People that work here and the environment makes it a great place to work. It's flexible with time and attitude. (Refugee female)

Those who were unhappy in their jobs mainly attributed this dissatisfaction to the discrimination they had experienced at work or feeling unsafe in their work environment (the next section, Job safety, addresses these issues in detail):

> Left my job as a rest-home worker. Found that I had to work all the public holiday shifts and the employer would give those days off to other workers. Job was also too heavy lifting old people and their equipment. Not good conditions. (Refugee female)

The importance of finding suitable employment was particularly evident for one Southeast Asian family, in which the father was very dissatisfied with the employment he had been able to secure. Eventually this participant decided to move to another country for suitable employment, while his family remained in New Zealand until they could join him at a later date:

> My husband didn't have a good job opportunity here; it's really a major disappointment for him... He moved to Australia because of this. (Southeast Asian female)

However, the move had resulted in major disruption and upheaval, with devastating consequences for his family; and the family unit had come under substantial stress:

> If the head of the family is not happy, then there's restlessness and discontent. It's very unsettling... Although the children are already settled here and I'm settled here, we have to consider him because he had given up his career for our welfare. So we are moving to Australia for him. If he only has a good job here he wouldn't move to Australia. (Southeast Asian female)

Job safety

Most participants felt safe in their work, although some had concerns about the details of their jobs (eg, the use of chemicals and exposure to disease in some types of work they did).

The refugee participants had mixed reactions, with some feeling safe in their work and some feeling unsafe. Some were concerned about bullying at work, and some had spiritual concerns around working night shifts:

> Did not feel safe in my old workplace. Felt that there were bullies. (Refugee)

> Mäori workers were intimidating. (Refugee)

> Sometimes I've been to new building sites and I have to stay overnight. I've seen spirits roaming in the new site and I get scared. I once had to pay for a separate accommodation because I got so scared. (Refugee)

Financial security

Many participants expressed concern about having less financial security in New Zealand than in their home countries, especially as that had been a motivating factor for migrating. Others expressed concerns with financial security due to the economic recession and the need for job stability:

> Financially there is a bit of insecurity. For example, I owned a house in China but now I rent one. Scared that I will be made redundant due to bad economy. It is a worry as I am the only income maker in this family. (Chinese male)

> After doing lots of jobs everywhere, having a stable job was important to the family. Stability at work affected the stability at home as well, in terms of time spent at home and also financially. (Korean male)

Impact of employment on family time

Participants' views about the impact of work on family time varied depending on their circumstances and expectations. However, there was overall consensus that the work experiences of a parent impact not only the individual, but the family as a whole:

> Enjoying work and life in general is important and this affects the family overall. (Korean male)

Many of the Asian families who participated in this research anticipated that their work-life balance would be improved by immigrating to New Zealand. While this did not eventuate for some families, the East Asians (Chinese and Koreans) generally felt that they had more family time in New Zealand than they had in their home countries, where they had worked extremely long hours:

> Working 9 to 5 Monday to Friday is stable and good for my family. Communication has also improved between my daughter and I. (Chinese male)

> We are happy. My husband and I work during the same time when my kids go to work. Our working hours fall under the same period so we can have our family time together at night. (Korean female)

The opposite view was often expressed by South and Southeast Asians who expected to secure good jobs in New Zealand based on their qualifications, resulting in an increase in the amount of time they could spend with family. However, they often found themselves working longer hours than they had in their home countries and/or doing shift work – both of which impinge on family time. These parents often had to take turns working and looking after family. Furthermore, many earn relatively lower wages here and pay higher taxes, hence they have to work long hours to make a living:

> Before, I used to work long hours but then I realised that it didn't [make] much difference whether I work[ed] long hours or not because the tax rate goes up and I was not better off. I try not to work long hours (36 hours per week) because the tax is too high even when you make just a little bit more and the difference to my take home pay is less. I better stay home and spend time with my family. (Southeast Asian female)

The amount of time that families had lived in New Zealand determined to some extent how they felt about this – family time appeared to be more heavily

affected during their early years in the country, as families tried to establish themselves. During this time parents often worked multiple jobs to make ends meet and establish a new life.

All of the refugee participants felt that their work allowed them sufficient time for the family.

4.3 Factors that impact appropriate employment, positive work experiences and family wellbeing

A number of factors were identified as impacting, either negatively or positively, on participants' ability to find employment, as well as on their work experiences and family wellbeing. The following section provides a description, analysis and interpretation of these factors, which have been categorised into three topic areas: institutional; environmental; and personal and cultural. This categorisation is consistent with an ecological model and has been adopted for ease of understanding. It is important to note that the factors are all interrelated, with one influencing the other.

4.3.1 Institutional factors that impact appropriate employment, positive work experiences and family wellbeing

This part of the report details findings relating to institutional factors that affect the participants' ability to find appropriate employment, have positive work experiences and achieve family wellbeing. Findings have been grouped into a number of categories including: the need for appropriate information; formal and informal assistance and practical help; and systemic and resource issues. Table 8 concludes the section and provides a summary of the institutional factors and participants' suggestions as to how they could be addressed.

The need for appropriate information

It was apparent that most of the participating families lacked prior substantial knowledge about New Zealand and its systems (eg, health and education systems, and services available to assist them to find appropriate employment). They also indicated that they would have liked to have received information on a wide range of issues such as employment services and placement agencies; retraining services; health, education and judicial systems; the culture (social and work) of the country; acculturation expectations; language issues; and social services before they immigrated to New Zealand. A lack of information on these issues can contribute to dissatisfaction with life in New Zealand, expressed in practical problems (eg, assistance with accrediting qualifications and experience) to those that were more ideological in nature (eg, a mismatch of fundamental beliefs/principles/worldview):

> I wanted assistance, but was not aware of any of these services. (Chinese male)

> There is a misuse of human rights. Seems as though New Zealand treats crime offenders better than victims. (Chinese male)

All participants identified lack of appropriate employment as the most significant impediment to a positive work experience and family wellbeing. The ability to obtain suitable employment was heavily dependent on having New Zealand work experience (or work experience from a similar Western country). Most participants found that the work experience gained in their home countries was not recognised in New Zealand. Furthermore, their qualifications were found to be inadequate and not recognised in New Zealand. This results in a decrease in income and having "to start again, from zero" which has a negative impact on quality of life and family wellbeing:

> I think it's hard for adults our age coming to a foreign country. We come starting at zero and restart our lives again pretty much. But it will be a paradise for children and elderly. (Chinese female)

As highlighted earlier in this report (see Job Expectations), these outcomes were confusing because they had believed that it was those very qualifications and/or experience that had enabled their migration to New Zealand; they could not understand why they were not recognised or valued by potential employers. Consequently, some participants have had to pursue further studies in New Zealand to increase their opportunities for better employment. While this situation was not relevant to most of the refugee families as they did not have previous qualifications or work experience, the one refugee parent who did have qualifications also found that they were not recognised in New Zealand.

As a result of these experiences, a topic of concern to almost all of the participating families was their lack of

prior knowledge about employment-related issues, such as the acceptability of their qualifications, the potential need for retraining/upskilling and the availability of jobs in New Zealand. There was a general lack of awareness of services such as Work and Income and other employment agencies and, as highlighted previously, most believed that they would be able to easily secure a job equivalent to that which they had in their home countries, simply because their qualifications had been accepted for immigration purposes. Further information on the employment culture of New Zealand would have aided their preparation for the transition.

It was interesting to note, however, that the refugee families seemed to have a higher level of awareness of employment agencies/services, and had received assistance from them. It is likely that this increased awareness is a result of the refugee settlement programmes/services in New Zealand.

The participants felt it was important that immigrants were better informed, as this would help aid their transition to life in New Zealand and contribute to family wellbeing. It would also have helped them make a more informed decision about whether or not to move to New Zealand.

Overall, participants said that providing adequate information could eliminate much of the confusion and disappointment they experience when they arrive in New Zealand.

Formal and informal assistance and practical help

It is apparent from the interviews that most Asian immigrant participants were not aware of the agencies in New Zealand, both formal and informal, from which they could get employment-related help. None of the participants mentioned agencies such as the Auckland Regional Migrant Services (ARMS) or Opportunities for Migrant Employment in Greater Auckland (OMEGA), which provide employment help specifically to immigrants. While there was some awareness of Work and Income and private recruitment agencies, many families who had attempted to access assistance through them had found them unhelpful. Participants reported that Work and Income usually focused on recruiting them for low-level jobs, and this led to under- or misemployment for them. Also, some said staff from private recruitment agencies were not always sympathetic to the needs of Asian clients:

> WINZ just told me to look at their vacancy boards to get a job, but most of them were just labour work, nothing close to my profession. Employment agencies were also inappropriate. (Chinese male)

It is unfortunate that the participants' experiences were not more positive as they all stated that receiving appropriate assistance from formal and informal agencies would have been helpful.

There was also a lack of practical guidance or help:

> Government needs to provide practical help … providing buddy system in my opinion is the way to go … letting new migrants know about ways to deal with emergencies and services when you arrive because majority have no clue about ACC and laws in New Zealand, death and so forth. (South Asian male)

> We wanted practical employment opportunities; someone just explaining things to us. (South Asian male)

Some women commented on a lack of community support, and little support with childcare and domestic help; which would have helped them secure appropriate employment, as it would have improved their ability to seek advice, prepare for and attend interviews etc:

> I would further like more free childcare. It's difficult to find the time to put a CV together and find the time to go to interviews when the Government only provides free actual childcare time. But for those genuinely looking for a job, I think the Government can give some additional childcare time to enable the parent to have the time to find a job. (Refugee female)

> They [people living in participant's area] seem to be supportive, but are not supportive. I don't experience any animosity from them, but they don't really offer practical support. It's like they expect you to ask for help before they help you, but you don't always know how to ask. (Refugee female)

Many participants said that networking was a critical factor for securing employment. As such, networks play a crucial role in the settlement and wellbeing of Asian immigrant families. Some participants suggested that some sort of preformed networks within the host community (eg, with other more established immigrants), that could be accessed on arrival in New Zealand would be helpful. While some immigrants

may be able to form such networks prior to their arrival, perhaps through family or friends who have previously relocated to New Zealand, others require information on how to access and form such networks:

> At the end of the day [I'm] here to get a job; it's all about networking I think. (South Asian male)

It was interesting to note that the refugee families appeared to have somewhat different experiences of accessing and receiving assistance. Three of the four refugee families had received some practical help from their ethnic communities; help with finding employment through networks, or guidance in finding and applying for jobs:

> Some of our ethnic networks have helped to find jobs for my husband. (Refugee female)

Refugee participants also received valuable help from welfare agencies such as Work and Income and local sponsors. They found that these sources of assistance helped free them on more than one level – from the burdens faced in their home countries to those of starting over in a new country:

> WINZ helped to find the job. Within six months, [I] found a job making sandwiches, working from 7am to 8pm. (Refugee male)

> My sponsors offered my wife and I our first job in the clothing factory. (Refugee male)

> There is happiness, freedom and security. (Refugee)

Systemic and resource issues

The participants highlighted several systemic and resource issues, all of which centred on employment-related issues and/or the impacts of reduced financial resources.

As highlighted earlier, most participants were highly qualified with university degrees and/or substantial work experience. However, many of them found that their qualifications were either considered inappropriate or were not officially recognised in New Zealand. The following comment illustrates the potential flow-on effects from these types of experiences:

> I told my husband that I would not stop until I get a similar job. Otherwise, you'd forget who you are. It's like accepting that I should forget; it's no longer that way. I don't like that to happen. (Southeast Asian female)

Participants generally felt that a lack of recognition for qualifications and/or experience prohibited them from gaining appropriate employment and limited their income, which affected their family's quality of life. For many, this was exacerbated by a higher cost of living and higher taxes in New Zealand:

> We had an average to above-average lifestyle in China but now we seem to be below average in New Zealand. (Chinese male)

> No opportunity to prosper from it. Pay a lot of tax. Good road means higher cost to living in New Zealand. I earn little, but still have to contribute much to the amenities in the community, and to New Zealand's society. (Refugee)

Most participants felt there were limited employment opportunities for immigrants in New Zealand. In addition to difficulties around recognition of their qualifications and experience, this was considered an outcome of the small population and small job market in New Zealand. It was evident that, for some families, these limitations affected the level of satisfaction with life in New Zealand, leading to subsequent instability for the family. For example:

> I want to go back to Malaysia. Here, you can't earn money. There are more opportunities in Malaysia. (Southeast Asian female)

In response to these concerns, participants suggested a number of actions that could be beneficial. All participants said that financial assistance from government for additional services for immigrants (eg, free, compulsory English classes) would enable Asian and other immigrants to communicate on a satisfactory level and improve their employment opportunities. As discussed previously, assistance with childcare when job-seeking would also be helpful, particularly for females who find themselves in a catch-22 situation: they cannot afford to pay for childcare as they do not have jobs, but cannot go out to seek jobs as they have nobody to mind their children.

Some participants also suggested that enabling families to reunify would provide enormous support for families. For example, if grandparents/parents were living in New Zealand they could help with childcare and provide cultural support. This would have a huge impact on family wellbeing. Participants said it was

currently difficult to bring parents over for prolonged periods of time to help their families settle. Refugee families, in particular, reported having low levels of family support and that this was difficult for them:

> Grandparents are in New Zealand to look after our child as a visitor. (Chinese female)

Summary of Institutional factors

Table 8 provides a summary of the institutional factors that participants felt had affected the appropriate employment, positive work experiences and family wellbeing of their families. Several participating families also suggested ways to address these issues; some of these have also been summarised.

Table 8: Summary of institutional factors that impact appropriate employment, positive work experiences and family wellbeing

Institutional factors:	
Issues that were raised by participants	**Participants' suggestions to address the raised issues**
Information: > Facilitators to positive work experiences and family wellbeing: - awareness of employment agencies/services for refugees through refugee settlement programmes/services. > Barriers to positive work experiences and family wellbeing: - lack of appropriate information on New Zealand and its systems (eg, health and education systems, social services) - poor awareness of employment services (eg, Work and Income) (especially for refugee families) and other employment agencies and services aimed at retraining/upskilling - foreign qualifications not being readily accepted by New Zealand employers - a smaller job pool/market in New Zealand – fewer jobs being available - lack of awareness of potential mismatches between cultures of immigrant and host country (social and employment).	> Provide potential immigrants with accurate information relating to these issues prior to their immigration to New Zealand, thus enabling them to make informed decisions.
Formal and informal assistance and practical help: > Facilitators to positive work experiences and family wellbeing: - 'formal' and appropriate assistance from agencies. > Barriers to positive work experiences and family wellbeing include: - unhelpful responses from agencies - tendency of Work and Income to place people in low-level jobs, leading to under- or misemployment - limited support (eg, childcare, domestic help) - lack of immigrant community capacity for self-help.	> Provide immigrants with practical help (in finding employment). This could include: - buddying systems - childcare while seeking employment - advice on seeking employment, including preparation for and attendance at job interviews. - Provide immigrants with information on how to access networks.
Systemic and resource inadequacies: > Facilitators to positive work experiences and family wellbeing: - having access to support/services that aid job-seeking and integration (eg, childcare by extended family, English classes). > Barriers to positive work experiences and family wellbeing include: - limited job opportunities for immigrants - lack of recognition for Asian qualifications and experience - high cost of living; limited income, higher taxes.	> Provide immigrants with financial assistance for additional services that assist with integration (English classes, childcare). > Enable and simplify processes to unify families, to assist families with issues such as childcare when seeking and securing employment and to enhance family wellbeing.

4.3.2 Environmental factors that impact appropriate employment, positive work experiences and family wellbeing

This section provides details on the environmental factors that affected participants' experiences regarding securing appropriate employment, having positive work encounters and the wellbeing of their families. The findings have been reported under the following categories: interaction with work colleagues and interaction with communities. A summary of the issues raised and participants' suggestions to assist with these issues is provided in Table 9.

Interaction with work colleagues

Most adults in this study worked in a multicultural and multiethnic environment and most stated that they usually felt positive about their work colleagues. The factors they identified as facilitators of a positive work experience and ultimately, family wellbeing, included: equality and respect in the workplace, with no issues about superiority and inferiority of some employees; no racism; equal work opportunities for immigrants; acceptance of differences such as culture, non-New Zealand accents and recognition of the work ethic of Asian employees (their perception was that Asians tend to work too hard). Rather than be threatened, they felt that local workers could benefit from the Asian work ethic and even adopt some of their good work habits themselves:

> Yes, they're good not bad … because they say, Asian people are always doing a good job. You know, hard workers – my boss and other superiors they always like it and like me. (South Asian female)

> People in China are very disciplined; people would not take a sick day unless they were seriously ill, but in New Zealand, sick days are taken often even if one were not really sick. (Chinese male)

A few participants also suggested that immigrants could learn from their 'Kiwi' colleagues; they were particularly impressed with the outspokenness and team approach to work that was displayed by their Kiwi counterparts. They suggested that immigrants needed to learn to adopt their relaxed attitudes as it would help eliminate some stress in their lives and help family wellbeing:

> It's good; they are outspoken and I like it, rather than backbiting. (Southeast Asian female)

> [I am] happy that colleagues are friendly. Not like in China; it's very competitive and it's like fighting every day – open competition and hidden battles. (Chinese female)

Many participants also commented that their work colleagues were hard-working and reliable and had many other positive attributes, including being: friendly, warm, polite, cordial and helpful towards Asian immigrants:

> The people I work with are very supportive. As I said, they've also at times helped to take care of my son. (Refugee female)

> Friendly, warm and helpful because we are in the service industry (Southeast Asian male)

However, although many of the participants seemed to hold their colleagues in high regard and viewed them as friendly, the level of social interaction with work colleagues was reported to be quite low. These were reported as being mostly limited to just greeting each other in passing, and at work-organised functions such as Christmas parties:

> Don't socialise with workmates. (Southeast Asian female)

> Mostly during company functions or Christmas times etc. (Chinese male)

A number of participants also felt that their colleagues underestimated their abilities at work and attributed this to their lack of proficiency in English. They felt this limited meaningful interactions with their colleagues and posed a huge barrier to the progression of their careers:

> Sometimes I feel it. I know I couldn't explain some products or services we provide fully, but they just say 'OK, I will think about it' and leave in a hurry. (Chinese male)

> Because of the language barrier or gap, it takes us more time to understand things that people say so they might get impatient with us and some get angry after repeating things often. (Chinese male)

> Chinese supervisor only supported Chinese people. Fought with him a lot. Started getting stomach aches because the workplace made you take late lunches. Went back onto the benefit. (Refugee)

Social interaction outside the work environment would break down barriers between local and

immigrant workers, create interethnic awareness and understanding, increase acceptance of difference, contribute to a more pleasant work experience and possibly have a positive influence on their careers.

Interaction with communities

While a few of the participants lived in predominantly European neighbourhoods and seemed to have no issues with this arrangement, most participants reported living in diverse neighbourhoods/communities that were multicultural and/or multiethnic, including people from their own culture. Many felt that living in these types of communities was positive as it enabled interethnic understanding and improved attitudes:

> Well, they're all friendly and, like, you can get along with different cultures. (South Asian female youth)

In particular, living in neighbourhoods with some people from their own culture was positive; this was viewed as an enormous facilitator of wellbeing in families as it provided a strong sense of community and 'comradeship' and enabled them to maintain their own culture:

> I think we have more people here … strong community over here and we are living with our families … we're happy about that because we can maintain our culture and all the stuff and arrange functions. (South Asian male)

Unfortunately, living in a multicultural community did not always result in positive experiences. A few families reported experiencing a level of discomfort with their wider neighbourhood. In particular, they reported experiencing racism from some neighbours who were unfriendly, which sometimes resulted in feelings of interethnic conflict. This appeared to be mainly between Asian, Pacific Island and Mäori communities. Some participants speculated that this may be due to feelings of competition for scarce resources (eg, jobs). Such conflict has been reported in other studies (eg, Sobrun-Maharaj et al, 2008; Tse et al, 2006):

> Some of the Pacific and Mäori people have been intimidating on the roads. I don't like that. (Refugee male)

> There have been racist cases in the past when I worked for… Where drunken Mäori guys would come in and threaten me but there would be Kiwis that help me out too. (Chinese male)

> There is a small percentage of people here in New Zealand that are racist or not so welcoming to us migrants. This may be due to reasons like bad economy and certain jobs the Chinese people would do for a lower pay rate and so it seems like we are stealing/snatching their 'rice bowl'. (Chinese male)

Several factors were also raised in relation to the overall quality of the neighbourhood(s) in which the participants were living. A number complained of some criminal activity, noise and violence in their neighbourhoods. These appeared to occur mainly in lower socioeconomic areas and were more commonly reported by refugees. While they generally found their communities to be 'okay', many refugees had mixed feelings about the residential areas in which they were placed. They reported that while some were satisfactory, others provided an environment that they did not consider desirable and that was not conducive to the wellbeing of children and their families. This, in turn, affected the mental wellbeing of adults, who reported that they sometimes lost the motivation to seek and engage in employment. Some non-refugee immigrants reported similar circumstances and effects:

> When my people visited, the neighbour was very angry. Children could not play in the garden because they were scared of him and his dog. He also shouted at the smells my cooking made. (Refugee female)

> Big impact because when we were scared of our neighbour, it make us feel very unhappy. (Refugee female)

Participants identified environmental features that are facilitators of family wellbeing. These include: safety, security and privacy; friendly and quiet neighbours; and convenience of location (close to work, daycare and schools, shopping and transport). They felt that environments with these types of characteristics would assist in producing a better quality of life for their families and improve their wellbeing.

Regarding the wider environment and culture of New Zealand, all participants appreciated the clean and green image of New Zealand's environment and the quality of life that it offers immigrants. They enjoyed the smaller population size and the comparatively relaxed and less stressful atmosphere at many New Zealand workplaces and schools, and the work-life balance

that can be achieved here. Although not all Asian immigrants have achieved this yet, due to employment issues, it is something they can strive for. All of these factors affect family wellbeing and, while the transition can be particularly hard for adults, life is much better for their children and elderly:

> I wouldn't have taken up this business if I was required to work 24/7 or 12 to 13 hours a day like I used to in Korea. I only came to New Zealand and took this job because of one reason. It is to have my family more strongly bonded together and more opportunities to do activities together. (Korean male)

Participants said that positive interactions with New Zealanders were significant facilitators of positive work experiences and family wellbeing. New Zealanders' positive attitudes included being non-racist, non-discriminatory, accepting of differences and being friendly, warm and helpful towards Asian immigrants.

Interaction with neighbours varied from mostly superficial, such as saying hello, to interaction with neighbourhood support groups. While some Korean families reported having opportunities to have dinner with neighbours, social interaction with neighbours was generally limited. Although most participants perceived Kiwis as kind and friendly, most felt they were also a somewhat closed society that was insular and unwilling to interact with them:

> On a day-to-day level they are wonderful. On a broad level they keep their distance while being cordial. It's very difficult to get into their inner circle; there are exceptions but hard to apply that to the majority. They are different and they like to keep it that way. (South Asian male)

> Kiwis seem a bit more closed society. While kind, they're not as welcoming. (Refugee)

Many Asian immigrants felt socially isolated and tended to minimise interaction with members of the host society, perhaps due to the sentiments outlined above. This was particularly apparent in the refugee families, who consequently tended to interact with those from their own ethnic communities, resulting in a sense of comradeship:

> They leave us alone. We leave them alone. (Refugee)

> We don't socialise much with neighbours but do exchange gifts during Christmas times. (Chinese male)

> I don't interact much with my neighbours. My family and I keep to ourselves. We mainly interact with people from our own ethnic community. (Refugee male)

> People here in my living area are not so friendly; eg, if I was to borrow a spanner from my neighbour they would look me down. Whereas in China it would of be totally acceptable. (Chinese male)

While participants recognised the benefits of intraethnic interaction, there was also a fear that it could result in ghettos, or the perception of ghettos and even lower levels of interaction with Kiwis:

> My father is part of the senior citizen group. We know a lot of Indians … but we are not part of the community as such … consciously we don't want to be seen as forming ghettos … blaming New Zealand, instead we should be part of the integrative community. I avoid groups but we have friends and family who are Indians. (South Asian male)

One interesting finding was that some of the participating parents reported that their children socialised with neighbours more than they did themselves and that the adults would like to be able to socialise with their neighbours as well. This is an interesting finding and suggests that these children may be less inhibited than the adults. Perhaps there is potential for children to fulfil some sort of 'bridging' function with regard to neighbourhood relations:

> Mother: Don't socialise with neighbours but greet and smile at them … kids play with neighbours; 10-year-old child: It's okay because they don't disturb or bully us; we go biking with them during summer. (Southeast Asian family)

As stated earlier, good relations with neighbours would increase interethnic and intercultural understanding and have a positive impact on work experiences and family wellbeing.

Summary of environmental factors

Table 9 provides a summary of the environmental factors that were found to affect participants finding appropriate employment, positive work experiences and family wellbeing of the participating Asian families. While participants did not make many suggestions as to how these issues could be addressed, any ideas that they did offer have also been summarised.

Table 9: Summary of environmental factors that impact appropriate employment, positive work experiences and family wellbeing

Environmental factors:	
Issues that were raised by participants	**Participants' suggestions to address the raised issues**
Interaction with work colleagues: > Facilitators to positive work experiences and family wellbeing: - equality and respect in the workplace, no racism, equal work opportunities for immigrants, acceptance by host community of differences such as work ethics, culture, language/accent - acceptance by immigrants of host communities' work habits, culture/ethics - positive attributes of work colleagues: friendly, warm, polite, cordial, helpful - opportunities to interact positively with their work colleagues. > Barriers to positive work experiences and family wellbeing: - lack of meaningful social interaction with colleagues - lack of opportunities to interact positively with their work colleagues - colleagues underestimating their abilities at work; - different work ethic from Kiwis - language barrier.	> Immigrants should learn to adopt host communities' work ethics (eg, more relaxed attitudes etc).
Interaction with communities: > Facilitators to positive work experiences and family wellbeing: - opportunities to interact with people from immigrant's own culture – enables support and maintenance of own culture - New Zealand's environment and an improved quality of life (work-life balance etc) - a strong sense of community - living in a community that is friendly, safe, secure, convenient (to work, daycare/schools, shopping, transport) - host communities with positive attitudes towards migrants (non-racist, non-discriminatory, accepting of differences and being friendly, warm and helpful towards migrants) - opportunities to interact positively with the host community - youth often have greater levels of interaction with neighbours than adults and may be able to fulfil a 'bridging' function. > Barriers to positive work experiences and family wellbeing include: - interethnic conflict - living in an undesirable/unsafe area (due to issues such as noise, crime, violence, racism etc) – a particular issue for refugee families - racism - unfriendly neighbours - lack of opportunities to interact positively with neighbours/community - limiting interaction with people from own culture for fear of being seen to form ghettos (results in limited support) - social isolation.	> Environments should be provided that are safe, secure and private; and that are convenient to amenities, with friendly and positive neighbours. These characteristics will facilitate interethnic and intercultural understanding, positive work experiences and family wellbeing.

4.3.3 Personal and cultural factors that impact appropriate employment, positive work experiences and family wellbeing

This section details the personal and cultural factors that were seen as impacting on the appropriate employment, positive work experiences and family wellbeing of the participating Asian immigrant families. Results have been grouped into the following four categories: personal drive and initiative; positive outlook, coping strategies and resilience; Family and community support; and, cultural/ communal factors. A summary of these categories and the relevant findings can be found in Table 10.

Personal drive and initiative

All participants rated personal drive and initiative as an extremely significant personal factor that contributed to a positive work experience and family wellbeing. Drive and initiative were seen as the foundation for other facilitators. For example, it enabled immigrants to prepare (financially, physically and mentally) for their arrival in New Zealand; something that was considered important by participants as it ameliorates the stresses of resettlement for the entire family. Preparation arms them with knowledge about New Zealand and its systems, which ensures that they have realistic expectations of their experiences in the new country. This would assist in acculturating to life in New Zealand more easily, which would be enhanced by a positive orientation to acculturation:

> We came here with an open mind, we wanted a new life from our previous life back in India – wanted a change. (Indian male)

Although many of the participants had personal drive and were motivated to improve their situation, their lack of knowledge of New Zealand systems meant that some did not have full capacity to help themselves. Consequently, these families were also unable to offer any assistance to their communities to find employment or other services to assist with their settlement into the country. This type of situation was often exacerbated by the relatively recent arrival in the country of a few families (four families were in New Zealand for under five years), which meant that they had comparatively few personal, community or ethnic networks to depend on.

Positive outlook, coping strategies and resilience

While most families found the transition to living in New Zealand difficult, those who immigrated with a positive outlook and/or reasonably realistic expectations of life following immigration appeared to cope better with the transition than their counterparts:

> I think thinking positively is very important, having family happy and moving forward. Being content and looking on the positive side of things [makes you] better off. (Chinese male)

> Being open-minded and positive is very important and this affects how you move on. (Chinese male)

> Look on the bright side – be positive. (Southeast Asian female)

> It is not always easy, but because of lots of possibilities it's a great place to be. Having a welfare system also makes it easy. People have options and opportunities here. (Refugee female)

Moreover, many participants appeared to recognise that functional coping strategies helped them settle well in New Zealand. They said adopting a positive attitude was of primary importance, as being positive and being able to "look on the bright side of things" was crucial to mental wellbeing:

> I always try to be happy. There is not so much I could do to change my situation at the moment. Maybe I can in the future. (Korean male)

> All things are difficult before they are easy; once you straighten your psychological attitude you will not be so stressed out about how different things are etc. (Chinese male)

Some families also said that although it was financially difficult to be inadequately employed, it could be a blessing in disguise as it gave them more family time, which was lacking in their home countries due to the pressures of work:

> Doing less hours of work gives me more time for my family. (Southeast Asian male)

Equally important was adapting to change, and adjusting to and accepting cultural and social differences – all important characteristics of resilience:

> We accept that there is racism in any country and live with it. (Southeast Asian)

> Yea … you can't really fix it, like everyone has to contribute if you wanna fix it … it's not a big problem … you have to accept it. (South Asian female)

> When your horse dies, you then walk – we had to adapt to the current situation. (Chinese male)

Change also included making lifestyle changes that would also help promote mental health, such as engaging in physical activity and changing their diets.

"Taking the initiative and helping yourself" also emerged as a coping strategy employed by many families. For example, many pursued further education for better job opportunities. However, it is important to note that although it may be an individual who returns to study, for the sake of the family as well as themselves, the effects of committing to studying (in terms of time and lack of income) can also affect the family:

> I was thinking, 'No, I don't want to do [heavy labour jobs]' and when I saw the papers I saw lots of accounting jobs and I talked to my husband… He supported me and said, 'You go back to study and you can find something'… I'm interested in accounting so I [went] back to study and finished graduation and graduated diploma (four years) and now I have a proper job … when I was studying he used to work 50 hours, sometimes 60 hours to run/ support family. (South Asian female)

As illustrated so far, most of the families interviewed had encountered difficulties adapting to life in New Zealand. While some useful coping strategies had been displayed, a few dysfunctional strategies were also employed. Some immigrants said they avoided people they had problems with, so that they did not have to deal with such a situation again, and of suppressing problems to such an extent that they were experiencing physical ill health:

> I keep a lot of things on the inside. I went to the doctor a lot three years ago because I had a lot of stomach ulcers and I was losing weight. I think I kept a lot of stress inside me, but I don't like to talk about my problems. (Refugee male)

Losing hope, giving up or becoming resigned to a particular situation (eg, unsatisfactory or lack of employment) after repeatedly experiencing difficulties was another dysfunctional coping strategy:

> I think we don't cope with it [racism]…Yea … you can't really fix it – like everyone has to contribute if you wanna fix it … it's not a big problem … you have to accept it. (South Asian youth)

> We accept that there is racism in any country and live with it. (Southeast Asian)

> Just ignore … what else can you do? (South Asian male)

Family and community support

The six families with extended family in New Zealand found this really helped family wellbeing. The other 14 families had no extended family in New Zealand, and this lack of informal support was something the families sometimes found difficult. They felt that having extended family members help with childcare, for example, would help free up time to seek appropriate employment as well as relieve the stresses of everyday living. Three families discussed childcare issues and the role that extended family, particularly grandparents, fulfil or would normally fulfil in regard to childcare and family life:

> Well, we're all under one roof … we definitely have support alright. Because they are elders for the kids this is really good for them as they provide guidance in a different way compared to us parents … they are like role models to the kids and setting the path correctly … like values about respect this is important. (South Asian male)

> My sister's family supported us … we stayed at my sister's family for seven months. (South Asian female)

Many families said that they would prefer to have their children raised by family in their early years rather than sending them to formal childcare facilities where they are raised by people they do not know, who are possibly from a different culture and who may not understand their culture. One family also indicated that they would prefer to provide this care themselves so that they do not miss out on being involved in their children's development during their formative years:

> It's about being together. I don't like childcare because you don't see your kids growing and you don't know what they do. I want to look after them myself. (Southeast Asian female)

Two refugee families felt so strongly about this that they said that they would like to go back home:

> We want to go back home. It's too hard raising three boys here. (Refugee female)

Parents discussed the need to work long hours and/ or split childcare between them (ie, they would care for

their children in shifts), resulting in less parent-to-parent and family time. A discussion with one of the Southeast Asian families provided an insight into the different perspectives that parents and children can sometimes have, and the impacts of split childcare on children:

> Mother: Work is very flexible. We take turns looking after the kids. It works really well. Ten-year-old child: Not really, we don't have both of them together because they have to work too much and they are always busy. I don't feel really good 'cos we should be able to go out and do stuff together and should spend more time together as a family. (Southeast Asian family)

About two-thirds of the families interviewed did not have extended family living in New Zealand, although some did say that they could access family support if needed. Unfortunately, this study did not ask what participants meant by this, but we assume they mean that extended family could come to New Zealand for a limited period of time, if requested. The lack of support from extended family was particularly noticeable in the refugee families; only one refugee family had extended family in New Zealand.

It was apparent that, for some participants, the lack of community support was exacerbated by a lack of English language proficiency; they were limited in their ability to seek support. This was more common amongst the East Asian families as most of them had English language difficulties and could not meet International English Language Testing System (IELTS) requirements. As South and Southeast Asians are generally able to speak English relatively well, this was not so much of a problem for them. However, they did experience difficulties due to their accents, which employers appeared to view negatively:

> Culture, accent are a barrier. (South Asian male)

> I found when I studied … Kiwi people they don't like Asians especially whose English is not so good like them. (South Asian female)

However, all families attempted to overcome support issues by supporting each other within the nuclear family. They did this by creating family time and talking to each other and sharing their problems. This fostered family connectedness and helped with their mental wellbeing:

> If I've had a hard day I would get over it by playing with my child, complain or throw a fit at my husband… (Chinese female)

Cultural/communal factors

A number of cultural and/or communal issues appeared to affect participants. The slow/quiet pace of life in New Zealand was perceived by many as a barrier to work opportunities and a step back in their family's quality of life. For example, participants cited shops closing early; a lack of entertainment, including family–based activities; and the city being too quiet and boring. Because shops closed early, they felt this reduced work hours and the availability of jobs for immigrants, which in turn reduced the level of disposable income that could be used on entertainment etc:

> Harder than we thought. We used to ride taxis, eat out and have lots of entertainment back in China but now we can't afford stuff like this in New Zealand. We are confused about if we should go back to China or not. (Chinese male)

Furthermore, different cultural values and practices in New Zealand such as a perceived lack of respect for authority and "unwritten cultural rules" made adapting to the culture of the country and the workforce difficult. Participants often felt it was difficult to maintain their own culture, not only socially, but also within the work setting, such as respecting those superior to you etc. Furthermore, this made them miss their own culture and values. These issues were particularly relevant to communities that did not appear to have formal ethnic community networks to support their cultural activities; however, all of the participants appeared to have some informal links with their communities:

> People like us cannot be part of the mainstream in New Zealand. We do not fully understand the Kiwi culture, have never studied the in the Kiwi system, do not possess fluent language skills, and, most of all, we are lacking the common knowledge that Kiwi people share among themselves. (Korean male)

> I can tell that Kiwis are more individualistic than Koreans, who are more collectively working. I don't want to generalise it in the New Zealand population, but, for example, if a boss stays late to work then the employees will stay just as late to work. But you don't see it happening in New Zealand. I guess Kiwis are more realistic though, because staying

> late at work doesn't necessarily mean that you are working productively. (Korean male)
>
> It's also hard to maintain your culture … you actually have to try whereas in Sri Lanka you know everything … it's just sort of there … whereas here you actually have to keep going with some rules. (South Asian female)
>
> There's a lack of support, no domestic help over here; it's all about the 'do it yourself' notion. (South Asian male)

Several participants felt that coming from a culture and ethnicity similar to New Zealand's is a significant facilitator to finding appropriate employment. It was felt that having an Anglo-Saxon name improved their chances of being called in for a job interview:

> I applied so many places … maybe my CV's not good … but I found sometimes racist or something like that … you know, people don't like Asians. (South Asian female)

While immigrants cannot control how similar the New Zealand culture is to their own, they think that integrating into New Zealand culture could facilitate a positive work experience, which would have a positive impact on family wellbeing. Participants did, however, note the importance of maintaining their culture for mental wellbeing, hence the importance of integrating rather than attempting to assimilate into New Zealand culture:

> Our culture in [our home country] is different from New Zealand. But our community people are also living here, that is why we adapt here. Same culture here also… (South Asian male)

All families recognised that strong links with their ethnic communities helped them maintain their culture, as they provide social and cultural support for families (especially children and the elderly), as well as support systems for those without extended family in New Zealand who need help with childcare and other activities. However, while the South Asian and refugee families had forged strong links with their ethnic communities, the other families in this study had been less successful.

Networks in these ethnic communities can also lead to appropriate employment. For example, a Chinese participant found a job in New Zealand at the same level as her last position in China through such a network. Three of the four refugee families also received community help to find employment, which they say has enabled them to provide opportunities for the next generation. In fact, community networks were identified as a key factor to securing employment (and therefore family happiness and wellbeing) by almost all the families.

Summary of personal and cultural factors

Table 10 provides a summary of the personal and cultural factors that were found to impact on the appropriate employment, positive work experiences and family wellbeing of the participating Asian families. Where applicable, any suggestions the participating families made for how to address these issues have also been summarised.

Table 10: Summary of personal and cultural factors that affect appropriate employment, positive work experiences and family wellbeing

Personal and cultural factors:	
Issues that were raised by participants	**Participants' suggestions to address the raised issues**
Personal drive and initiative: > Facilitators to positive work experiences and family wellbeing: - strong personal drive and a tendency towards taking the initiative were seen as foundation factors for contributing to positive work experiences and family wellbeing – they enable immigrants to prepare for transitioning to life in New Zealand. > Barriers to positive work experiences and family wellbeing: - high personal drive and initiative cannot compensate for a lack of knowledge of New Zealand systems – this decreases immigrants' capacity to help themselves.	
Positive outlook, coping strategies and resilience: > Facilitators to positive work experiences and family wellbeing: - immigrating with a positive outlook/realistic expectations contributed to positive work experiences and family wellbeing - resilience-enabled functional coping strategies, which included: - looking on the positive side of things - accepting cultural and social differences - lifestyle changes – exercise/physical activity, diet - spending time together as a family – talking and sharing problems - adapting to change; and - taking the initiative to help oneself (eg, pursuing further education/study). > Barriers to positive work experiences and family wellbeing: - dysfunctional coping strategies included: - avoiding problematic situations/people etc - losing hope/becoming resigned to difficulties.	> Lifestyle changes – improve diet and engage in physical activity to keep healthy, which in turn promotes good mental health.
Family and community support: > Facilitators to positive work experiences and family wellbeing: - having strong community links and/or family support. > Barriers to positive work experiences and family wellbeing: - the majority of families did not have family support in New Zealand. This often led to: - difficulties with childcare - less parent-to-parent and family time - some families had difficulties engaging with communities and/or employers. This was often exacerbated by their lack of English language proficiency and/or accent.	> Spend time together as a family – talk about and share problems. Foster family connectedness.
Cultural/communal factors: > Facilitators to positive work experiences and family wellbeing: - similarity of immigrants' culture to that of New Zealand: - if similar, the chance of finding appropriate employment was perceived to increase - maintenance of one's own culture: - recognised as important for mental wellbeing - can be achieved through strong links with one's ethnic community - having strong family links (eg, extended family living together) also helps to maintain culture - refugees, in particular, suffer from a lack of extended family support - ethnic community networks form a key aspect of securing employment. > Barriers to positive work experiences and family wellbeing: - the slow/quiet pace of life in New Zealand, which affects: - availability of jobs for immigrants - family wellbeing – lack of entertainment options/family-based activities - different cultural values and practices in New Zealand, which affect ability to maintain own culture – both socially and within the workplace.	> Integrating into the New Zealand culture facilitates a positive work experience, which results in increased family wellbeing. > Maintain strong links with one's ethnic community – aids maintenance of one's own culture and provides social and cultural support. > Networks made through ethnic communities can also assist migrants secure appropriate employment.

4.4 Impacts of negative work experiences on family wellbeing

Families were acutely aware of the effect of unemployment, underemployment and misemployment on family wellbeing and were clearly concerned about this. In most cases, they had come to New Zealand primarily to give their families, especially their children, better opportunities and a better lifestyle. However, many of the families expressed some dissatisfaction with the outcomes of their move to New Zealand, mainly due to difficulties finding employment that they felt matched their qualifications, experience and expectations. As shown earlier, approximately four-fifths (29 to 83 percent) of the employed adults (35 of 40 participants) were unable to find appropriate employment in New Zealand, and, of these, several who expected to find employment had to become self-employed to support their families. Many (14 to 40 percent) were un-, under- or misemployed, with misemployment being a common issue. These situations can be stressful and some families (mainly South Asian) argued that a lack of job satisfaction can lead to poor mental health, which can also lead to poor physical health and affect family wellbeing:

> Husband lacks some sleep and becomes tired and short-tempered, he is unhappy, always got aches and pains, he becomes diabetic. (Southeast Asian female)

> No permanent job, you never know what is going to happen … change seems to be the only thing that is constant … this largely impacts the family. (South Asian male)

To minimise such effects, parents stated that they would like to develop their careers and have jobs that are more aligned with their original professions. They felt that appropriate employment would enable them to earn better salaries, have a better work-life balance and provide adequately for their families, such as providing accommodation stability by buying a house. This would have a positive effect on family wellbeing.

Half of the families (three Chinese, three South Asian, one Korean and three Southeast Asian families) talked about the collectivistic nature of Asian families and the importance of each family member within the family unit. In Asian cultures, if one family member is not happy (eg, father) then others will not be happy, and the wellbeing of the whole family is affected. However, this theme did not seem as relevant to the refugee stream; although they did raise the issue of sending money back home to support family (see discussion in the section: Stress on family).

Some of the effects reported by the families who were interviewed are noted below.

Poor work-life balance and family time

Approximately three-quarters of the families interviewed were concerned about their poor work-life balance in New Zealand. They attributed this to misemployment and sometimes having to work multiple jobs or at odd hours in shift work. This disrupted the family unit and decreased the time they could spend together (eg, having meals together, public holidays together and time together as a couple). Parents often worked different shifts, so did not have much time together, and children did not have both parents together at home or often did not see both of their parents together as they were working long hours. Hence, children were often spending time alone at home without their parents or any other adult support:

> The family have always been a close unit, but we are struggling more with finance and spending less time together as we're all busy ... with part-time work or work of some description. (Refugee male)

> I try to have a balance between family and work, and we take turns looking after the kids so the kids feel protected and healthy. (Southeast Asian male)

> It is only the weekend we have [referring to family time]. (South Asian male, and young daughter agreed with his statement by nodding her head)

Parents suggested that having extended family support would alleviate this situation. For many families, a lack of extended family support emerged as a significant issue that negatively affects family wellbeing. Grandparents and other family members can have a positive impact on family wellbeing by providing important support services such as childcare (discussed above).

On the other hand, almost half the families, Southeast Asians in particular, saw their odd and flexible work hours as often being an advantage, as it enabled them to work around their children's needs. The refugee families and some East Asian families also suggested

that the work-life balance is better for them in New Zealand than in their home country, where males worked long hours and spent little time with the family. Having lesser jobs in New Zealand and working fewer hours within structured work hours, while less financially rewarding, enabled them to spend more time together as a family. This has had a positive impact on family relationships:

> Working nine to five, Monday to Friday is stable and good for my family. Communication has also improved between my daughter and I. (Chinese male)

> Regular work hours forced me to plan activities with my family so we have time together and my family is happy. (Southeast Asian male)

The Korean families who participated in this study appeared to be comparatively well resourced upon their arrival in New Zealand, and were generally happy with less work as it gave them more family time.

Stress on family

Several families, including refugees, raised issues around work-related stress that also affected their family life. This stress related to either work being stressful or adults being stressed due to lack of appropriate work, job instability and an inability to adequately support the family financially:

> We argue a lot because not having a job makes me and my husband worry about money and how to buy things and look after our children. (Refugee female)

> Job is stressful; eg, when clients don't pay, I bring stress home and scold the children and so the kids get stressed. (Southeast Asian male)

This often resulted in pressure on the adults to find work that will ensure that their families are "okay". As mentioned previously, in one extreme case, a father chose to move to Brisbane to be able to support his family adequately, which fragmented the family.

Stress is exacerbated when a parent decides to return to study, to increase their skills or have their original qualifications recognised. This places time and financial strains on the family; study costs eat into the family budget and the other parent then has to work longer hours to supplement the family income. It also creates tensions about what the family's priorities are. For example:

> I had initially planned to go back to studying full-time last week. I resigned from one of my other part-time jobs with [employer's name]; I dropped my hours with this job. When I was at university last week, trying to do my studies and my son needed me, I became very stressed and struggled to be a mum, a worker and a student. I decided to leave my studies to later on. While I feel that a huge burden has been lifted from my shoulders, I still want to do better to improve my family's situation. (Refugee female)

The recession was also mentioned by many of these families. Adults were worried they may lose their jobs, and did not know how their families would cope financially if that happened:

> My wife has also had to work to sell products at the market because the recession has made it harder to find work. (Refugee male)

> [I have] safe and supportive colleagues. [I am] only worried that due to bad economy, redundancy might happen to us. (Chinese female)

> It's okay because I have at least some job; [it's] not good, but it's okay because I heard lots of people are losing their jobs so we're lucky at least we have a job. (South Asian female)

A refugee family also talked about their responsibility to financially support their family back home, and how this then affects them as a family as they are unable to progress financially. For example, they are unable to save a deposit to purchase a home:

> I feel a huge responsibility to support my family back home. I often send back much of my earnings. This means that we still rent and don't own our own home. (Refugee male)

One noticeable trend was that the Korean families who were interviewed did not report having as much pressure to find a job. It would be worth investigating whether this is because they are generally well resourced when they come here, or whether they are less willing to 'complain' about the aspects of New Zealand life that are not going well:

> If immigrants from overseas in Korea keep complaining and wanting their needs to be met

> regardless of the current economy status, tension arising with North Korea, and other important matters highlighted in communities, the New Zealand people won't like the immigrants at all. They will probably tell the immigrants to go back home. We as immigrants in New Zealand may not be in a very good position to demand so much. We need to learn to be satisfied with what we have here. (Korean male)

Intergenerational conflict

Although, on the surface, intergenerational conflict does not appear to be related to negative work experiences, some families felt this was one of the contributors of such conflict. When parents and children do not have sufficient family time together (due to working long or odd hours, shift work etc), parental influence can diminish and children may become more vulnerable to negative external influences. Refugee families were particularly vocal about intergenerational issues and raised the following points in relation to this topic. Firstly, some parents struggled to accept the Westernisation of their children, particularly when they felt that their children's values were shifting away from their own (perhaps due to peer pressure):

> Trying to control our three daughters and their growing Western habits has a big impact on the wellbeing of the family. We don't want them to sleep around or have boyfriends before they get married. (Refugee male)

Communication and language was also an issue that some families struggled with:

> My husband and I can't control our children because they can't speak [native language] and we can't speak English well... It makes us sad that we can't control our children. (Refugee female)

Parents also wanted their children to do well at school so that they could get good jobs and not have negative employment experiences. However, children do not always respond well to this pressure and it can lead to arguments within the family. For example:

> We push our children hard to do well at school. They do not always like this, which leads to a lot of arguments. (Refugee male)

> We want our children to do well, but they have seen us do lots of factory jobs. Maybe they don't want to study hard because they think they can do factory jobs and leave school early. (Refugee female)

On the other hand, some of the parents were pleased that the balance between study and life had improved for their children. They felt that there was less pressure at school and that the requirements of studying were less intrusive than in their home countries, which enabled them to holiday together and have more family time:

> We used to go to Taupo, Queenstown, Tauranga and so many other places during term breaks. We all had so much fun. (Korean male)

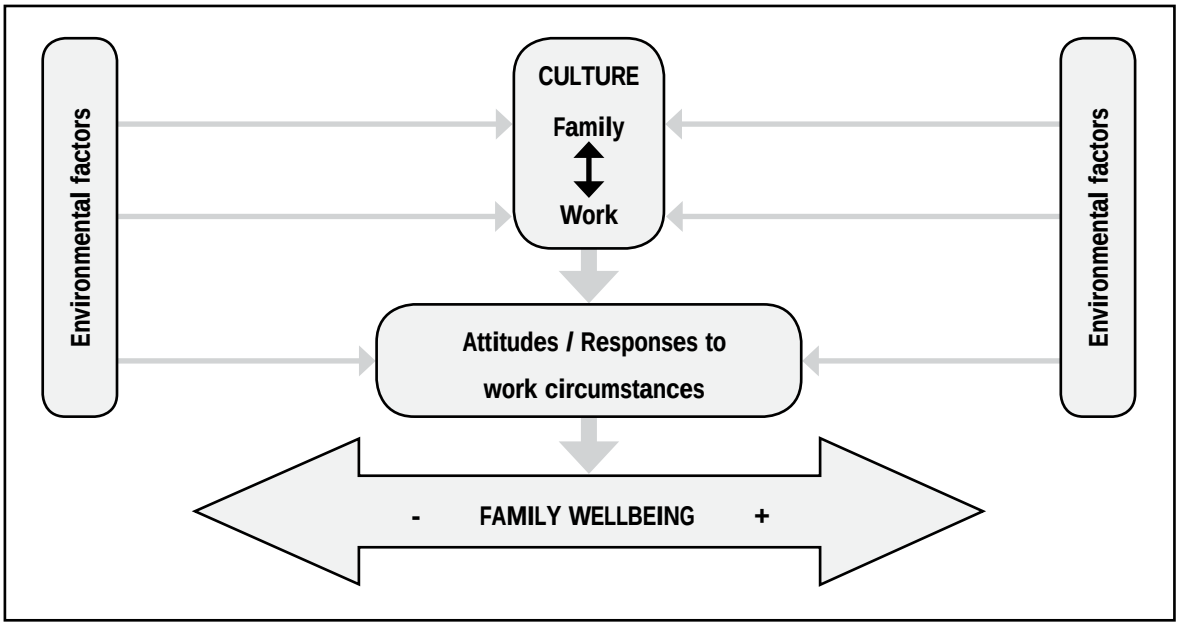
5. DISCUSSION AND INSIGHTS

The results presented in Chapter 4 provide a clear picture of the work experiences, and the effect of these on family wellbeing, of a group of 20 Asian immigrant families living in New Zealand: four each of Chinese, South Asian, Korean, Southeast Asian and Asian refugees. This chapter will bring together the findings and attempt to glean some insights from them, as well as identify opportunities to support the wellbeing of Asian immigrant and refugee families in an employment context.

This study attempted to explore Asian cultural assumptions about the nature of work and the concept of family; to examine their patterns and experiences of work and understand how cultural understandings affect Asian families' experiences of work. Finally, it attempted to understand the ways that these affect Asian family wellbeing. The results show that culture is a strong element in the lives of Asians, and family and work are significant aspects of culture. Family is integral to Asian culture, and family members, including extended family, are valued and taken care of. Work is important as it enables the provision of basic needs for the family, as well as contributing to identity formation and mental wellbeing for both the individual and the family. Hence, when traditional culture is strong, providing adequately for family through work is important. This affects attitudes and responses to work circumstances, and has a significant impact on family wellbeing.

If family wellbeing or wellness is conceptualised as a continuum, the outcome of this interaction amongst these elements is a state of greater or less wellbeing or wellness within each family. This is mapped in the following conceptual figure.

Figure 3: Relationship between family, culture, work and family wellbeing



As this study was focused on the impact of culture on work, and of work experiences on family wellbeing, we have used a mental health model (Randal, et al, 2009) to understand these effects. This model fits well with our ecological perspective on family wellbeing and understands wellness in the context of the relationship between the person and his/her environment, including the family. It also considers impacts of 'illness' of the individual on the family. We examine the findings in relation to individual and family mental health and discuss the possible implications for fostering and strengthening family wellbeing.

5.1 Asian culture: family and work

The Asian communities investigated in this study are from China, South Asia, Korea and Southeast Asia. These ethnic communities are all collectivistic in nature, with a deep-rooted culture and philosophy that advocates a strong sense of commitment and loyalty to family. As illustrated by most respondents in this study, family includes not only members of the nuclear family, but also the extended family and the wider community. This generates a determined work ethic that encourages adults, in particular, to work very hard (through both employment and their attitude to life etc) to secure the wellbeing of their families and communities. Furthermore, an integral part of traditional Asian culture is religion and spirituality, which guide their worldview and lifestyle. Work is considered worship because fulfilling the duties of life to the best of one's ability enables one to make spiritual progress (Veylanswami, 2004). A large number of Asians from the regions listed above are Hindu and Buddhists and subscribe to the concept of karma, which is the law of action. This law suggests that the world is causative and every action has a reaction, which determines not only the course of the present life, but also the next. Hence, hard work and commitment to family is a focus of many Asians.

The work experiences of the participants in this study, and their impact on family wellbeing, have been viewed and interpreted against this backdrop.

5.2 Employment experiences of Asian immigrants

In keeping with the national and international literature on the topic of immigrant employment, the Asian participants in this study have reported experiencing high rates of unemployment, underemployment, as well as misemployment, with many being self-employed, having lower income and lower work-life balance satisfaction. The most significant issues faced by participants related to unemployment, underemployment and misemployment, with the category of misemployment being the most common issue.

Misemployment versus underemployment

A significant outcome of this study was the identification of the category of 'misemployment' to describe the employment status of many of the participating Asian immigrants. This was not an expectation of the study, nor was it identified in the literature, but it emerged from the findings. The literature uses the category of underemployment to cover misemployment. Participants distinguished misemployment from underemployment and perceived it as a significantly different issue from underemployment (a category and sentiment that was endorsed by the project's cultural advisory group). They saw underemployment as being employed within one's field of expertise, but in a lesser position; for example, a school principal working as an assistant teacher. On the other hand, misemployment was seen as doing work that had nothing to do with one's field of expertise; for example, a medical doctor driving a taxi. The cultural advisory group presented the view that the term 'underemployment' was a benign one and that labelling such an extreme situation as underemployment was actually disguising and minimising the severity of the situation, as well as the implications of being misemployed. Participants felt that the health, especially mental health, consequences of being misemployed were reportedly far greater than those of being underemployed. Mental health is considered as an important predictor of successful resettlement (Thoits, 1995). Almost one-third of the employed adults reported or were identified as being misemployed, compared to two who were underemployed. This situation was shown to affect the wellbeing of entire families.

Accurate identification of the employment status of Asian immigrants is important. This type of information will help improve our understanding of the issues and impacts associated with such a situation, not only on the individual and the family, but also on the workforce, state services and the New Zealand economy. It could also have implications for employment and other related policy.

Self-employment and unemployment

The issue of self-employment was also viewed strongly by participants and the cultural advisory group. They suggested that self-employment was usually a consequence of unemployment and that employment statistics fail to capture the true employment situation of Asian immigrants and misrepresent this when they report a high rate of employment amongst this group. It was their view that, unless it is clearly a path followed

by choice, self-employment should be considered misemployment as immigrants were engaging in this simply to provide themselves with an income when New Zealand employers would not employ them or employed them inappropriately. The Ministry of Social Development (2008) has also indicated that a lack of employment opportunities leads to an increased percentage of self-employment amongst Asians, and Trlin et al (2004) describe self-employment as the main coping strategy of unemployment. As explained earlier, these participants had not come to New Zealand as business migrants and had no prior intentions of setting up a business. Self-employment often involved setting up small businesses such as dairies, takeaway food outlets and cafés, and labour-intensive businesses such as painting and gardening. Many of these are highly stressful, involve long work hours and comparatively small incomes, and impact on the individual's self-esteem. All of these factors have the potential to impact negatively upon family wellbeing.

When the categories of unemployment, underemployment, misemployment and self-employment are collapsed, many employed participants reported finding themselves in an unfavourable employment situation. However, the Korean self-employed families did not consider their employment situation unfavourable as it allowed them to improve their lifestyle by working shorter hours and having more family time. It is clear that employment is a significant hurdle that many immigrant families struggle to address in their transition to living in New Zealand.

5.3 Barriers to appropriate employment and positive work experiences

It is clear from the results presented previously (see Chapter 4), and supported by the literature (eg, Baker & Benjamin, 1997; Basnayake, 1999; Dooley et al, 1996; Lidgard & Yoon, 1999; Miller & Neo, 1997; Ministry of Social Development, 2008; Rodriguez et al, 2001; Spoonley & Meares, 2009; Trlin, et al, 2004; Ward & Masgoret, 2007; Watts & Trlin, 2000 Winkelmann & Winkelmann, 1998), that some of the participants in this study of 20 Asian immigrant families faced significant challenges in finding appropriate employment. In line with the Ministry of Social Development (2008) and other New Zealand and international researchers (Butcher et al., 2006; Chang et al, 2006; Dunstan et al, 2004; Evolve, 2005; Harris et al, 2006; Human Rights Commission, 2007; Sobrun-Maharaj et al, 2008), participants identified the main barrier to finding appropriate employment as negative attitudes such as racial discrimination towards Asian immigrants. As found in other studies (Dixon et al, 2010; Sobrun-Maharaj et al, 2008; Tse et al, 2006), the participants observed that racism at an individual and/or community level (ie, social racism) also enables institutional racism. Social racism affected their ability to interact with neighbours and feel safe within their neighbourhoods. While many participants had positive experiences with accepting and friendly neighbours, others, mainly those living in poorer neighbourhoods, had negative experiences with unfriendly and sometimes hostile neighbours. Institutional racism reduced access to adequate information and support, and reduced the availability of employment opportunities. Some participants attempted to explain the conflict between some neighbours, especially between Asians and Pacific Islanders, as insecurity of older immigrants about new immigrants, particularly regarding to competition for scarce resources.

Other studies in New Zealand have confirmed discriminatory attitudes towards immigrants (eg, Aroian & Norris, 2003; Bell et al, 2004; Department of Labour, 2007a and b; Equal Employment Opportunites Trust, 2000; Henderson, 2003; McIntyre et al, 2003; Oliver, 2000; Podsiadlowski, 2006; Trlin et al, 2004), stating that some employers appear to be reluctant to employ immigrants because of cultural differences; foreign name; skin colour; being a non-native English speaker or having a non-New Zealand accent. Participants believed that their qualifications were not recognised for these same reasons, although this has been explained by some researchers as an outcome of unfamiliarity with foreign qualifications (eg, James, 2002). Participants could not find any other explanation for the non-recognition of the qualifications that enabled them to acquire a visa to the country in the first place. Because of this, some chose to accept low-level jobs, sometimes multiple low-level jobs, to support their families. This caused a great deal of job dissatisfaction amongst these participants, dissatisfaction that has previously been acknowledged by the Ministry of Social Development (2007). The only group in this study that was not greatly dissatisfied with their jobs, although

they were still employed at a lower level, were those of Korean origin. The reason for their acceptance was that they came to New Zealand expecting to take on lesser jobs with shorter hours of work, and welcomed this change in lifestyle as it gave them more time with family, something they did not have at home. This was quite different from most of the other groups who came here expecting to find equivalent jobs, or at least be employed within their fields of expertise. An inability to find appropriate employment created much dissatisfaction amongst these individuals, affecting their sense of self: their cultural identity and their ability to provide for their families. However, some families who had inadequate or inappropriate employment recognised that at least the work gave them more time with their families.

Other significant barriers to appropriate employment and positive work experiences identified in this study and reported in the literature (eg, Beiser & Hou, 2001; Mattoo et al, 2008; Miller & Chandler, 2002) include: lack of English proficiency which impedes accessing information and resources, as well as interaction with hosts socially and at work, and cultural differences which sometimes impinge on immigrants' ability to adapt to the New Zealand culture and on the ability of both immigrants and hosts to understand each other.

5.4 Coping, resiliency and self-esteem

Not much appears to have been said in the literature about the effects of coping strategies on people's ability to secure appropriate employment. Responses from participants suggest that this may be a significant factor which may be linked to resiliency. As has been explained in Chapter 2, resiliency is a "dynamic process of encompassing positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity" (Luthar et al, 2000, p. 543), and can be applied to both the individual and the family (Walsh, 1996). The wellbeing of some of the Asian families in the present research project was found to diminish due to unfavourable employment and other social circumstances encountered in New Zealand (discussed above). Some of these families were reportedly losing hope and giving up or escaping from a situation because they were unable to change their circumstances, some were apparently ignoring situations or pretending they were not occurring and others were resorting to frustration and anger about their situation. Furthermore, some employed avoidance strategies: avoiding problematic people or situations; avoiding congregating with or living in the same area as their own ethnic groups for fear of being seen as forming ghettos; and avoiding conflict.

Asians are known to disguise their emotional distresses or pretend that everything is okay because they do not wish to be exposed as weak and lose face (Chung, 1988). Such dysfunctional strategies of coping are both caused by and exacerbate stress (Gance-Cleveland, 2004), which in turn lowers self-esteem and confidence. In the case of Asian males who appear to have a high employment commitment due to cultural pressures to work and support their families, this stress can cause higher rates of psychiatric symptoms, as has been found in the United Kingdom (Shamir, 1986a; Shams & Jackson, 1994) and diminish employment capacity. Among those who are unemployed, better psychological wellbeing is associated with higher levels of internal control beliefs (including functional coping strategies) and positive self-esteem (Shams & Jackson, 1994). In line with self-consistency theory (Shamir, 1986b), self-esteem moderates the relationship between employment status and psychological wellbeing. The psychological wellbeing of low self-esteem individuals is more sensitive to employment status than that of high self-esteem individuals. Low self-esteem unemployed individuals tend to be more flexible in some respects when considering job offers and may continue the cycle of accepting low-level jobs, being frustrated and stressed and coping dysfunctionally.

However, some families appeared to be more resilient and exhibited more functional coping than the other families with regard to adversity. These more resilient families tended to exhibit strong personal drive, took initiatives to help themselves (eg, pursuing further education, making lifestyle changes), maintain a positive outlook, have realistic expectations and be more accepting of cultural and social differences. The families who were coping well also seemed to pursue strong community links and to 'pull together' as a family and share/discuss difficulties.

The diversity of resilient outcomes illustrated through the findings of this research provide further support for McCubbin and Thompson's (1991) Resiliency Model of

Family Stress, Adjustment and Adaptation (as outlined in Chapter 2 of this report). The issues encountered by the families participating in this research and the coping mechanisms that they employed clearly illustrate the range of processes utilised in adjusting and adapting to the immigration experience.

5.5 Impact on family wellbeing

It is widely agreed that finding an appropriate job is crucial to resettling and establishing oneself in a new country and that unemployment is a potent psychological stressor (Banks & Ullah, 1988; Goldsmith et al, 1996; Hammarstrom, 1994; Kokko et al, 2000; Oswald, 1997; Rodriguez et al, 2001). An inability to find an appropriate job affects not just the wellbeing of the individual, but also the whole family unit (eg, Cox, 1985; Holton & Sloan, 1994). Responses in the study show that some Asian immigrants get caught up in a vicious cycle of discrimination, misemployment, depression and low self-esteem, which can lead to dysfunctional coping behaviours, affecting their capacity to work, increasing discrimination and further impeding their ability to find appropriate employment. This has enormous negative impacts on the wellbeing of their families. According to stress process theory, resettlement stresses such as unemployment and/or inappropriate employment, separation from family and the experience of discrimination jeopardise mental wellbeing. Furthermore, persons with mental disorders not only create stressful situations for themselves and for their families, but alienate extra-familial contacts as well (Beiser & Hou, 2001).

Responses from the participants indicate that the cultural drive amongst Asian immigrants to support and protect their family is strengthened during resettlement in a new and foreign country, especially when their employment expectations are not met. This causes high levels of stress, especially for adult males whose identities are often most related to their work. Beiser and Hou (2001) state that, for men in particular, unemployment is a potent risk factor for depression, and as stated above, higher employment commitment has been found to be associated with higher rates of psychiatric symptoms (Shamir, 1986a; Shams & Jackson, 1994). This is exacerbated in Asian cultures where there is a great deal of stigma and shame associated with not being able to support one's family adequately and having to depend on others for assistance, especially on wives who sometimes find employment sooner than husbands – perhaps because they are more willing to accept lesser jobs, and to help finance their husbands' training and education, as suggested by Baker and Benjamin (1997). This leads to changing roles and family dynamics which add to the pressure experienced by males to find appropriate employment, not only to support their families adequately, but also to retain their dominant roles within the family. As reported in the literature (Banks & Ullah, 1988; Hammarstrom, 1994; Kokko et al, 2000), an inability to do this leads to further stress, depression and lowering of self-esteem, and to cope with this people are reportedly turning to dysfunctional behaviours such as gambling and substance abuse (drugs and alcohol) which often results in domestic violence. Asian immigrants, especially males, also avoid seeking help, for fear of losing face within the community. Moreover, participants report that their entitlement to, or their ability to access, financial assistance from the state, is confusing and they do not know how to manoeuvre through the system. This increases the 'pressure' on them.

Randal et al (2009) found that these negative effects on individuals have equally negative effects on the family unit. They also suggest that in the context of employment and family support, other family members experience equal levels of shame as the males in the family, and they also develop a huge sense of guilt and worry about contributing to the dilemma in which husbands and fathers find themselves. This can lead to mental and physical health problems such as stress, anxiety, depression, tension, headaches and high blood pressure, which can lead to more serious conditions. Illness within the family reduces the level of intra-family support and the family's ability to cope with adversity. The need to 'keep face' often leads families to withdraw from their communities that could provide them with valuable social support (Pearlin & Aneshensel, 1989). Sometimes, a lack of family wellbeing could evolve into crisis.

The participants also identified socio-cultural factors that contribute to stress. New Zealand has its own culture, with a set of beliefs and values in terms of family and work that are often different from and, in

some cases, in conflict with, those of the home country. Immigrants often feel responsible for maintaining their culture when away from their home countries – not only must adults now protect their families in a foreign country, but they must also protect and uphold their own culture. This becomes an additional source of stress within the family as adults observe their children adapting to the New Zealand culture at a faster pace than themselves, and taking on what parents often see as a contradictory worldview and lifestyle to theirs, which results in intergenerational conflict. This exacerbates already high levels of stress in some families and jeopardises mental and physical health, a finding that has been reported in other New Zealand studies of Asian immigrants (eg, Dixon et al, 2010; Sobrun-Maharaj et al, 2008; Tse et al, 2006), as well as international studies (eg, Beiser & Hou, 2001).

Participants also highlighted the relationship between employment and intergenerational conflict. This was mainly due to a reduction in the amount of time parents and children spent together, as parents were working increased hours. Apart from adopting the local culture indiscriminately, many participating adults reported that their children were also adopting more relaxed attitudes towards their studies and were not paying as much attention to education as their parents would like them to. Asian cultures, in general, place huge emphasis on education, which is considered extremely important, not only for living a good lifestyle, but also for human dignity. Hence, parents make enormous sacrifices to provide their children with a good education despite the financial hardships that many experience after migration. It is understandable that many parents feel disappointed when their children begin to acculturate and neglect important aspects of their culture such as education, home language and values, especially as their child's education is the driver for the migration of some families (Suarez-Orozco, 2001). Asian immigrant youth generally have better academic performance and attitudes to school than children from New Zealand (as in other host countries). However, anecdotal data from the Asian community suggest that the academic achievement of some Asian youth is below that of children from the mainstream culture. Research (Gance-Cleveland, 2004) suggests that this may be due to a lack of coping strategies to deal with negative practices and attitudes of host cultures, such as negative attitudes toward authority, poor discipline and poor peer relations between some host and immigrant youth. It is inevitable that this leads to some degree of intergenerational conflict within most Asian immigrant families, especially those who are not financially stable and need to work longer hours and spend less time with their families.

5.6 Opportunities to facilitate and support resilience and family wellbeing in an employment context

The research findings point to the following opportunities at the personal/cultural, institutional and environmental levels to facilitate and support resilience and family wellbeing in an employment context.

At a personal/cultural level

Identifying the facilitators of a positive work experience and family wellbeing was not difficult for the Asian immigrant participants – they were clear about what makes a family resilient. They realised that it was most important that they attained English language proficiency (ELP), as good English ability enabled them to find employment more easily and settle more successfully. It was also important that they were adequately prepared for life in New Zealand: its culture, requirements for moving and the services available to them when they arrive. Better preparation would give them more realistic expectations about what they could achieve in terms of employment and interaction with the host community, and ensure that they are prepared (mentally, financially etc) for the adaptations they need to make, to integrate with the host community.

At the environmental level

To facilitate this, participants reported they need help from the host community. Most importantly, they need to be accepted by them rather than tolerated. New Zealanders need to eliminate their negative attitudes towards Asian immigrants, take the opportunity to interact with them socially and at work and provide equal employment opportunities. This can only have positive effects on New Zealand's society and economy, providing better social outcomes and greater economic stability.

At the institutional level

These changes need to be facilitated further by institutional interventions such as providing better information, resources and support to facilitate appropriate employment. Providing information to Asian immigrants about requirements, services etc, before and after they emigrate, would assist them make a more informed decision about emigration. This includes accurate and up-to-date information about New Zealand culture, systems, employment, services such as ARMS and OMEGA, assistance, as well as information on the potential risks of emigrating to New Zealand. Resources could include childcare assistance to help immigrants find a job, free English language classes and accommodation for refugee families in safe neighbourhoods. A compulsory orientation course for immigrants could also assist with raising awareness of services and systems that are available to immigrants.

The provision of resources (through government and non-government agencies) to facilitate family resilience and functional coping strategies through community links, mentoring systems, involvement in sports/social activities, activities with a family focus etc, is likely to result in social and economic benefits. A positive environment with adequate resources for Asian immigrants will nurture the resilience they bring with them and enable them to employ functional coping strategies in the face of adversity, which all immigrants encounter at some time during their settlement process. As a result, mentally and physically healthy immigrant families will ease any burden that may otherwise be placed on the health sector.

A lack of recognition of foreign qualifications/ experience and its effect on the securing of appropriate employment by Asian immigrants is highly significant. Similarly, the issue of family support is of serious concern to Asian immigrants, who have emphasised the importance of extended family support to facilitate employment, settlement and family wellbeing.

Changing attitudes amongst New Zealand employers and the general public towards Asian immigrants is important. While communities are trying to engage in this at some level, it is apparent that a concerted drive that incorporates a top-down approach (ie from government) would assist with addressing this problem.

5.7 Conclusions

Asian immigrants come to New Zealand for numerous reasons. These include better lifestyle, employment opportunities and advanced educational services. However, being in New Zealand does not guarantee them these benefits. It is evident from the data presented above that all of the 20 participating Asian immigrant families in this study, including refugees, are finding the settlement process challenging to varying extents, and the key underlying factor appears to be difficulties in finding appropriate employment. In many cases, they are struggling to find a secure job, especially one that matches their qualifications and skills with a reasonable return. This finding is in keeping with other New Zealand-based research (Evans, 2005; Holton & Sloan, 1994; Ward & Masgoret, 2007). For immigrants to successfully emigrate, employment is vital, and those who have secure jobs are more successfully settled in the host country and more likely to benefit from the social structure.

As outlined by the Ministry of Social Development: "The quality of work is critically important. A meaningful job can enhance people's satisfaction with their work. An unsafe job, on the other hand, places people's wellbeing at risk. Work can also be stressful. People may be required to work longer hours than they want to or need to. The desired outcomes acknowledge that wellbeing is best served by maintaining a balance between paid work and other aspects of life, though where that balance lies will differ from person to person" (2008, p. 42). Indeed, it is evident from the data presented above that not only the individual wellbeing, but also the wellbeing of the whole family is adversely affected by imbalances between paid work and other aspects of life.

The data presented above illustrate that immigration and the associated employment problems experienced by many families have brought with it a set of challenges for all members of the participating families. In many cases, these stressors have resulted in family conflict and emotional, psychological, as well as physical health problems; all of which have had some adverse effects on family wellbeing. On the other hand, in some cases, families have seen less work as an opportunity to spend more time with family. The cultural pressures for Asian males to be a good provider, and

the employment difficulties they experience, which are exacerbated, if not caused by, negative attitudes to employing them by many New Zealanders, are making achievement of balance between paid work and other aspects of life difficult for many of the Asian immigrants interviewed. However, attitudinal, resource and employment issues are not insurmountable problems. The implications detailed above highlight some of the most pressing issues. Addressing these issues may contribute towards alleviating the employment and related problems encountered by Asian immigrant families and ensure their wellbeing.

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APPENDIX A: Semi-structured interview schedule

Title: Impacts of the work experiences of Asian immigrants on family wellbeing

A semi-structured interview schedule/guideline for family interviews will be developed through extensive consultation with the advisory committee to be set up for this project and the key researchers involved in the study. This will consist of a set of open-ended questions which will be used to guide the interview.

The interview guideline will cover the following themes and include personal, institutional and environmental factors that impact on work experiences. The order and wording of the questions will be determined by the cues provided by participants. Some examples of questions are included as a guide to interviewers:

1. **Cultural assumptions:** about the nature of work, and the concepts of family:
   - > What is your understanding of work?
   - > How important is work in your life?
   - > What is your understanding of the concept of family?
2. **Employment:** patterns and experiences of work:
   - > Do you currently have a job?
   - > Where are you employed and what do you do?
   - > Are you doing the same job that you did in your home country? Why?
   - > Do you have any formal qualifications/training/skills in your field of work?
   - > Are your qualifications recognised here in New Zealand?
   - > What were your job expectations when you arrived in New Zealand?
   - > Were you able to find a job easily? Why do you think was this so (age, gender, education, language, attitudes toward immigrants)?
   - > Are you happy with the work that you are doing? Why?
   - > Do you feel safe doing the job that you are currently doing? Why?
   - > Does your job allow you sufficient time to be with your family?
3. **Barriers and facilitators:** to a positive work experience and family wellbeing:
   - > **Institutional factors:**
     - i. Did you require any assistance with finding employment when you arrived in New Zealand?
     - ii. If yes, what employment assistance (programmes/resources) were you given and by whom?
     - iii. Were these programmes and information on these programmes easily accessible?
     - iv. Did these services meet your employment needs?
     - v. Did you find it easy to work with the staff who provided these services?

> **Environmental factors:**

i. Is the community that you live in multiethnic or does it have more of one ethnic group?

ii. Do you have many 'Kiwis' living in your area?

iii. What are attitudes of the people living in your area toward you and your family? What makes you feel this way?

iv. What are attitudes of the people with whom you work toward you? What makes you feel this way?

v. How do you find working with 'Kiwis'?

vi. Do you socialise with people from your residential area and at work?

> **Personal factors:**

i. Do you like living in New Zealand? What is it that you like or dislike?

ii. What do you do about the things that you dislike (how do you cope with adversities)?

iii. Did you find it easy to adapt to life in New Zealand? Why?

iv. Do you have any family (extended) living in New Zealand?

v. Do you have family support if needed?

vi. If you could change anything about your life here, what would you change and why?

4. Impacts on family wellbeing: impacts of these trends (discussed above) on family wellbeing:

> What impact does your view of life and work have on the wellbeing of your family?

> What impact do attitudes and behaviours of the people who live around you and work with you have on the wellbeing of your family?

> What impacts do your work patterns and experiences have on your family wellbeing, including the positive and adverse impacts (eg, having time to do things as a family; blurring the boundary between work and family)?

> Are there any other issues that you feel have an impact on the wellbeing of your family?

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APPENDIX B: Participant information sheet

For family interviews

Title: Impacts of the work experiences of Asian immigrants on family wellbeing

Funder: The Families Commission

To: The participants of family interviews

Researchers: Dr Amritha Sobrun-Maharaj (09) 3737599 Ext 89204 and Dr Fiona Rossen Ext 89218

Email: a.sobrun-maharaj@auckland.ac.nz or f.rossen@auckland.ac.nz

What is this research all about?

This study is being undertaken to explore the work experiences of Asian immigrant and refugee families in New Zealand and their impact on family wellbeing.

Why is this research happening?

Many Asian immigrants and refugees are known to experience much difficulty with finding appropriate employment in New Zealand, and this is reported to have an effect on the wellbeing of their families. To date, there is not much information available on this situation in the New Zealand context. If researchers are able to gather this data, it will assist in understanding the situation better and finding ways to improve their employment experiences. It is hoped that this will in turn improve their family wellbeing.

Who and what will the research involve?

This research will involve Asian families who have recently immigrated to New Zealand. Participants will be recruited from within the Auckland region.

If you choose to take part in our study, we will invite your family to take part in a family interview and to provide written consent for each member of the family participating in the interview. The interview will be conducted in your home or any other place that you choose and at a time convenient to you. You will be asked to discuss a number of topics related to your work experience and its impact on your family wellbeing.

The family interviews will be conducted in English, and they are expected to take approximately 60 minutes. A researcher who is of your own ethnicity and can speak your language will conduct the interview, but if required, interpreters will be available. The researchers will take notes during the family interview, which may also be audio-taped with your consent, but you may request that the recorder be turned off at any time during the interview. The tapes may be transcribed by the researcher who interviews you for further analysis.

Should you require support during the interview, you may invite a support person to attend the interview with your family.

In recognition of the time you have given to take part in this research, we will offer participating families a $60 supermarket voucher.

How will the findings of the research be used?

Findings from this research will provide in-depth information on a wide range of issues that shape the work and family experiences of Asian immigrant and refugee families. This information will help to improve understanding of the work experiences of Asian families and their impact on family wellbeing. It will also inform employers and other service providers and help to improve the employment experiences and family wellbeing of Asian families.

A summary of research findings will be sent to the funding agency and other stakeholders, and will be made available to participants at their request. Peer reviewed publications will inform academics and other researchers of the findings.

Keeping what you share safe and anonymous

The research team cannot ensure confidentiality of the information shared in a family discussion, as it requires everyone who takes part to keep the information confidential. We will ask participants to keep the information shared confidential and your assistance in this matter is greatly appreciated. Your name will not be used in any reports or publications arising from the study. If you choose to take part in this study, you may refuse to answer any particular question, and ask any questions about the research at any time. Your family may choose to withdraw from the research before the 30th of June 2009. However, individuals from the family may not withdraw any information they have provided, as this is a group interview and removing sections of the data will impact on the information provided by the group. As all information is anonymous, any comments you provide will be unable to be identified.

Transcriptions of family interviews and any other information will be kept by the researchers in a locked cabinet on university premises for up to six years after this research for future reference if necessary. After this period, the transcriptions will be destroyed by shredding. The audio-tapes of the family interviews will be erased by the researchers after they have been transcribed.

Any questions?

If you have any queries or require further information, please contact the principal investigators, Dr Amritha Sobrun-Maharaj and Dr Fiona Rossen listed below:

Dr Amritha Sobrun-Maharaj

Interim Director, Centre for Asian Health Research and Evaluation, School of Population Health, The University of Auckland

Phone: 3737599 Ext 89204

Email: a.sobrun-maharaj@auckland.ac.nz

Dr Fiona Rossen

Senior Research Fellow, Centre for Asian Health Research and Evaluation, School of Population Health, The University of Auckland

Phone: 3737599 Ext 89218

Email: f.rossen@auckland.ac.nz

Talking about issues that impact on your family and relationships with people in your life can be a good experience. Sometimes, however, it can bring up painful issues or feelings, which is quite normal. If you continue to find such thoughts painful, please contact the researchers who can help arrange some assistance for you, or you can talk to someone at Lifeline on (09) 5222999.

For any queries regarding ethical concerns, please contact:

The Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Office of the Vice Chancellor, Private Bag 92019, Auckland

Phone: +64 9 3737999 Ext 87830

Approved by The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 13 May for three years. Reference number 2009/066.

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APPENDIX C: Consent form

This form will be stored for a period of six years

Title: Impacts of the work experiences of Asian immigrants on family wellbeing

Funder: The Families Commission

Researchers: Dr Amritha Sobrun-Maharaj (09) 3737599 Ext 89204 and Dr Fiona Rossen Ext 89218.
Email: a.sobrun-maharaj@auckland.ac.nz or f.rossen@auckland.ac.nz

I have read the Information sheet and have had the details of the research explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand I may ask further questions at any time.

I understand that my name will not be used in any reports or publications arising from the study. I agree to provide information to the researcher on the understanding that my name will not be used.

I understand that the research team cannot ensure confidentiality of the information shared in a family discussion, as it requires everyone who takes part to keep the information confidential. I agree to keep the information shared in the family discussions confidential.

I understand I have the right to withdraw from the study before the 30th of June 2009 without giving a reason and to decline to answer any particular question. I also understand that if I withdraw from the study, any comments I have provided within the family discussion will be unable to be identified and withdrawn from the project.

I understand that the interview will last approximately 60 minutes and that the researchers may take notes during the interview. I understand that the interview will be audio-taped with my consent, and that I may request that the recorder be turned off at any time during the interview. I understand that the audio-tapes will only be transcribed by the researchers if needed and erased after being transcribed. The data will be kept for up to six years after this research by the researchers, as it might be used as part of future research projects in the same field.

I understand that talking about issues that impact on my family can sometimes bring up painful issues or feelings, which is quite normal. If I continue to find such thoughts painful, I can contact the researchers who can help arrange some assistance for me, or I can talk to someone at Lifeline on (09) 5222999.

I understand that I may invite a support person to attend the interview with my family and choose/do not choose to do so.

I understand that a summary of research findings will be sent to the Families Commission.

I request/do not request for a summary of the key research findings.

I agree/do not agree to be audio-recorded.

Name: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Approved by The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 13 May for three years. Reference number 2009/066.

Please send a summary of the research findings to the following address (if requested):

Name: _____

Postal address: _____

_____

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APPENDIX D: Assent form for children

This form will be stored for a period of six years

Title: Impacts of the work experiences of Asian immigrants on family wellbeing

Funder: The Families Commission

Researchers: Dr Amritha Sobrun-Maharaj (09) 3737599 Ext 89204 and Dr Fiona Rossen Ext 89218
Email: a.sobrun-maharaj@auckland.ac.nz or f.rossen@auckland.ac.nz

I have read the Information sheet and have had the details of the research explained to me.

I understand the role that I will play in this study and I agree to take part in this study with my family.

I understand that my name will not be used in anything that is written about the study.

I agree to keep the information shared in the family discussions confidential – I will not discuss it with anyone who was not part of the family discussion.

I understand that I am able to withdraw from the study before the 30th of June 2009 without giving a reason and that I do not have to answer any question that I do not want to. I also understand that if I withdraw from the study, anything that I have said within the family discussion will be unable to be identified and withdrawn from the project.

I agree/do not agree to be audio-recorded.

Name: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Approved by The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 13 May for three years. Reference number 2009/066.

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APPENDIX E: Parental consent form

This form will be stored for a period of six years

Title: Impacts of the work experiences of Asian immigrants on family wellbeing

Funder: The Families Commission

Researchers: Dr Amritha Sobrun-Maharaj (09) 3737599 Ext 89204 and Dr Fiona Rossen Ext 89218.
Email: a.sobrun-maharaj@auckland.ac.nz or f.rossen@auckland.ac.nz

I have read the Information sheet and have had the details of the research explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand I may ask further questions at any time.

I understand the role that my child will play in this study.

I agree to have my child participate in this study with my family and to provide information to the researcher on the understanding that his/her name will not be used in any reports or publications arising from the study.

I understand that the research team cannot ensure confidentiality of the information shared in a family discussion, as it requires everyone who takes part to keep the information confidential. I agree to ensure that my child keeps the information shared in the family discussions confidential.

I understand that I have the right to withdraw my child from the study before the 30th of June 2009 without giving a reason and to decline to answer any question. I also understand that if I withdraw him/her from the study, any comments he/she has provided within the family discussion will be unable to be identified and withdrawn from the project.

I understand that the interview will last approximately 60 minutes and that the researchers may take notes during the interview. I understand that the interview will be audio-taped with my consent, and that I may request that the recorder be turned off at any time during the interview. I understand that the audio-tapes will only be transcribed by the researchers if needed and erased after the completion of the project. The data will be kept for up to six years after this research by the researchers, as it might be used as part of future research projects in the same field.

I understand that talking about issues that impact on my family and relationships with people in my life can be a good experience. Sometimes, however, it can bring up painful issues or feelings, which is quite normal. If my child continues to find such thoughts painful, I can contact the researchers who can help arrange some assistance for him/her, or my child can talk to someone at Youthline on 0800 376633.

I understand that a summary of research findings will be sent to the Families Commission.

I agree/do not agree to my child being audio-recorded.

Name: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Approved by The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 13 May for three years. Reference number 2009/066.

Families Commission Research Fund

1/09 *Childbirth Education: Antenatal education and transitions of maternity care in New Zealand.* Dr Sarah Dwyer, May 2009.

2/09 *Healthy Families, Young Minds and Developing Brains: Enabling all children to reach their potential.* Charles Waldegrave and Kasia Waldegrave, May 2009.

3/10 *Passing It On: Intergenerational transmission of human capital in New Zealand families.* David Maré and Steven Stillman, February 2010.

4/10 *Family Resilience: The settlement experience for Asian immigrant families in New Zealand.* Professor Robyn Dixon, Professor Samson Tse, Dr Fiona Rossen and Dr Amritha Sobrun-Maharaj, April 2010.

These reports are available on the Commission's website www.nzfamilies.org.nz or contact the Commission to request copies.

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families commission
kōmihana ā **whānau**

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