

The Theory and Practice of Couples Managing Two Full-Time Careers
in Malaysia

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Abstract

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Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

The Theory and Practice of Couples Managing Two Full-Time Careers in Malaysia

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This thesis investigates the experiences of Malaysian dual-career couples combining career and family. Semi-structured qualitative interviews were used to collect data from 23 dual-career couples. The findings indicate that being in a dual-career relationship impacts upon how they perceive the family's provider role; career priorities; how decisions are made; and how family work is divided. The experiences described by the participants reflect their gender role ideologies and the salience of family and work roles. The results also reveal how interaction between partners can shape their ideologies and role salience, in addition to how religious and cultural values influence their gender attitudes. A number of challenges faced by the couples are identified. The supports and strategies that help them cope with housework, childcare and work demands are also critiqued. The thesis also highlights the implications of the government and organization's policies and support to the couples and the kind of policies and support that the couples would like to see introduced. The similarities and differences between dual-career couples in the Malaysian context compared with the West are explored. Additionally, the findings extend the use of gender role ideology and role salience theories to develop an understanding of the couples' experiences. A summarizing framework of their experiences based on the analysis is presented.

In summary, the thesis firstly fills a gap in the dual-career couples' literature which has previously focused upon Western couples only. Secondly, the study has examined the utility of gender role ideology and role salience as a framework to understand the context of dual-career couples. Thirdly, the current research also makes an important methodological contribution in a Malaysian context. Finally, it provides some recommendations for the government and organizations in Malaysia in terms of policies that promote work-family balance and gender equality for dual-career women.

Declaration

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning

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Chapter 1

Introduction

This thesis investigates the experiences of dual-career couples combining career and family in Malaysia, using the frameworks of gender role ideology and role salience. This introductory chapter describes the rationale for conducting this study, including the importance of the topic of dual-career couples before providing a brief overview of some of the limitations of previous research in this area. Following this, an introduction to the current research and the research questions that guided it will be presented. Finally, the chapter will outline how the thesis is organised and what is to come in the subsequent chapters.

1.1 Why Dual-Career Couples?

Over recent decades, the growth of women's participation in the labour force has been one of the most significant and prominent features of developed countries. It has been recorded that 65.1 per cent of all women aged between 20 and 64 in the United States (US), 67.9 per cent in the United Kingdom (UK) and 62.3 per cent in the European Union (EU) were in employment (Eurostat, 2012). The steady increase of women's participation in the workforce has changed simultaneously the family structures of the once traditional pattern of male breadwinner and female homemaker, and marks the rise of dual-career couples in which both spouses share a family life whilst having careers. It represents a relatively new family structure that deviates from established societal norms with regards to division of labour, gender and family life (Gordon & Whelan-Berry, 2005; Lease, 2003). Women's roles are no longer confined to family and home-keeper roles, and men are no longer the sole breadwinners in the family (Abele & Volmer, 2011).

For dual-career couples, work and life are intertwined. Despite mutual compensations, the demands of careers in tandem can generate conflict and stress, which are compounded when couples have children or other family responsibilities (Smith, 1997). Careers with heavy workloads, inflexibility, long working hours or frequent travel affect the quality time available for the family (Jacobs & Gerson, 2004). Juggling an increasingly demanding career and a busy home life inevitably involves compromise, particularly for women. As career and family tensions are thrust into high relief, they have important implications for organizations too, since conflicts are transferred inevitably from home to work and vice versa (Linehan and

Walsh, 2001; Smith, 1997). Considering the widespread of dual-career couples and the conflict and challenges facing them, many researchers have taken interest in studying the context for couples combining career and family in relation to various aspects, such as the provider role, career priority, division of household work and childcare, as well as organizational expectations and their impacts.

1.2 Limitations of Previous Research

In examining the context of dual-career couples, it is important to acknowledge that the relationship between gender and work-family conflict, as well as the nature and pace of change in gender roles associated with the growth of dual-career couples, differ across nations due to specific cultural values (Bianchie & Milkie, 2010; Lewis, et al. 1992). Furthermore, recent studies (e.g Cha & Thebaud, 2009; Crompton & Lyonette, 2006; Stier & Lewin-Epstein, 2007) have revealed that cultural variables, such as gender role and political and economic factors, influence an individual's work-family experiences. Thus, examining the work-family experience of dual-career couples in light of such cultural norms and values may contribute to a better understanding of differences and similarities in work-family relationships across different cultural groups (Bowes, 2005; Karimi, 2009; Korabik et al., 2003; Shafiro & Hammer, 2004). In addition, this knowledge will contribute to the development of better policies and practices at the national level as well as for practitioners, consistent with the increased globalization and growing number of multinational corporations (Shafiro & Hammer, 2004).

The majority of works on dual-career couples have been conducted in the US and Western countries¹ (Elloy & Smith, 2003; Rusconi, 2002; Shafiro & Hammer, 2004). Attempts to examine the dynamics of this family model across cultures, especially in developing countries, are generally lacking, despite the fact that the dynamics of work-family have also changed in these countries (Karimi, 2009; Quek & Knudson Martin, 2008). Taking these factors into account, the present research sets out to investigate the work-family experiences of dual-career couples in Malaysia. Malaysia has experienced a significant increase in the number of women entering paid work and this increase is expected to be continued because

¹ In the contemporary cultural meaning, the Western countries includes Europe, as well as many countries of European colonial origin with majority European populations in the Americas and Oceania, such as the United States of America, Canada, Australia and New Zealand (Thompson & Hickey, 2005).

of the greater educational opportunities that contribute to women's career aspirations, as well as the growing financial needs that increase the desire for a double income in many families (Abdullah et. al., 2008; Nasurdin & Khor, 2008). In this country, however, there have been very few empirical investigations related to dual-career couples. Studies that have been conducted focused only on the antecedents and consequences of work-family conflict (e.g Komarraju, 2006; Nasurdin & Khor, 2008; Tam, 2008). Furthermore, literatures in Malaysia seem to focus more on working women, compared with investigation that includes both men and women in dual-career marriages (e.g; Abdullah et al., 2008; Hashim, 2004; Ismail & Ibrahim, 2007; Noor, 1999; Noor & Mahudin, 2005). To date, no studies have explored Malaysian dual-career husbands' perceptions of their home and work balance. Hence, it was deemed appropriate to examine the context for couples combining career and family in Malaysia.

1.3 Introducing the Current Research

This thesis employs a qualitative methodology. Given the dearth of available literature on this particular population and the need to explore various views and experiences of dual-career couples, the study utilised semi-structured, in-depth interviews with both husbands and wives in dual-career couples. The study is carried out under the assumption of an interpretive paradigm, which assumes that people create and associate their own subjective and inter-subjective meanings as they interact with the world around them (Orlikowski & Baroudi 1991). This approach views that there are always multiple interpretations to be made of any phenomenon, which depend upon the position of the researcher and the context of the research (King, 2004). Thus, it is appropriate to use interpretive approach in this study since it seeks to gain understanding of the couples' experiences and challenges from their own point of view.

The study focuses on Malay couples since they represent the largest ethnic group (54.6%) of the population in this country (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2012). For the Malays, religious beliefs and cultural values play important roles in their lives and therefore, there has existed traditional gendered norms with regards to women's role in society. The culture insists that a woman has to take care of her husband's overall well-being and those who are filial to her husband would receive great accolades from society (Noor & Mahudin, 2005). The roles of women have also been described as to manage the household affairs and to be a wife, a mother and caretaker of the family (Ariffin, 1997). Accordingly, women are exposed

to a series of teachings on womanly virtues and prepared meticulously by their mothers to assume and continue these cultural roles (Noor & Mahudin, 2005). Such traditional norms, however, have been weakened in accompanying with rapid economic growth and modernization, especially among young couples (Abdullah et al., 2008). Considering all these complexities, the case study of Malaysian dual-career couples adds to the literature on dual-career couples in general, and in Malaysia in particular, by providing valuable insights into their experiences in the workplace and in the family domain as a result of being in a dual-career relationship.

The study adopts gender role ideology and role salience as its theoretical foundation. Gender role ideology has been used extensively as the framework to examine the context of dual-career couples in a particular country (e.g Gonzalez-Lopez, 2001; Hendrickx et al., 2001; Lewis, et al. 1992; Rusconi, 2002). Gender roles are those behaviours and attitudes prescribed and assigned to males and females by the broader culture solely on the basis of gender (Bartley et al., 2005). Women and men vary in their individual views concerning appropriate behaviours for the sexes in the paid work and family domain (Corrigall & Konrad, 2007). Conceptually, gender role orientation is seen as ranging on a continuum from traditional to non-traditional. Traditional roles are those that see the roles of men and women as distinct and separate, whereas non-traditional gender role orientation is characterized by role sharing between men and women (Ahmad, 1999). From this perspective, this thesis investigates the gender role ideology of Malaysian couples in regards to their family roles, whether there has been movement towards a less traditional gender role attitude in their family roles and explore how variations in their personal characteristics might affect their attitude. This perspective also guides the investigation concerning the influence of macro and micro-factors on the couples' ideology, as well as on Government and organizational policies and arrangements. In addition, it provides the basis for investigating the consequences of gender role ideology displayed by the government and employed by organizations on the couples' experiences at work and in the family.

Furthermore, in order to build a more comprehensive structure to assess the context of dual-career couples in Malaysia, this present research expands the theoretical framework by adding another perspective; namely, role salience. In this perspective, people are viewed as being engaged with various roles, and role salience denotes the relative importance or "the degree to which a given role stands out from others played" (Super, 1982). One pivotal aspect of role salience is its influence on how people will fulfil their responsibilities in family and

organizational roles. Cinamon and Rich (2002) have demonstrated the importance of examining the relative salience of both work and family roles to understand work-family conflicts and challenges. Role salience impacts peoples' behaviour and decisions regarding their roles as employees and, therefore, has meaningful implications for employees and organizations (Greer and Egan, 2012). Salience concerning the different roles that individuals enact in society is particularly suited as a framework for examining the conflict between work and family roles (Greenhaus & Powell, 2003); hence, it would be suitable for this thesis. The present study extends the use of the two perspectives in examining the context of couples by exhibiting its utility in understanding the Malaysian couples' experiences and the factors that impact them. Moreover, the combination of these two perspectives as the theoretical framework is effective in highlighting the interaction between macro and micro-factors in influencing the participants' gender role attitude and role salience, which, in turn, affects their perceptions and experiences at work and in the family.

Thus, using the theoretical frameworks of gender role ideology and role salience, the research aims to provide a comprehensive and detailed study of the experiences of Malay dual-career couples in Malaysia in combining careers and family. The four specific objectives are:

- 1) To generate a unique set of empirical data that enables the comparison of the perspectives of both husbands and wives in understanding their experiences of combining careers and family.
- 2) To provide a comparison between the perceptions and experiences of Malaysian dual-career couples and dual-career couples in the West in relation to the challenges of and support to combining careers and family life.
- 3) To examine the utility of gender role ideology and role salience as theoretical frameworks in understanding the experiences of Malaysian dual-career couples and the factors that impact their perceptions and experiences.
- 4) To suggest recommendations for organizations and policy makers regarding the best ways to enhance couples' work and family balance that encourages role sharing between dual-career husbands and wives.

To achieve the above mentioned objectives, the research seeks to answer the questions of:

- 1) What perceptions do dual-career couples have of the provider role and career priority in the family?
- 2) What is the pattern of decision making and division of family work among Malaysian couples?
- 3) Is traditional gender role ideology among Malaysian couples changing?
- 4) What are the problems and challenges faced by the dual-career couples in Malaysia?
- 5) What are the coping strategies and supports employed by couples to overcome these problems and challenges?
- 6) What are the implications of the Government and organization's policies and support for the couples?
- 7) What kind of policies and support would the couples like to see introduced?
- 8) To what extent are the perceptions and experiences identified in the Malaysian context similar to those identified in Western literature?
- 9) How does the gender role ideology that underpins government and organizational policies impact the couples' experiences at work and in the family?
- 10) What are the factors that affect the Malaysian couples' gender role ideologies and role salience?
- 11) How does the interplay of gender role ideology and role salience explain the couples' experiences?

Research examining work and family experiences of dual-career couples across cultures will not only enrich literature in this area but will also provide practitioners with knowledge about universal and culturally-specific work-family experiences that should help employees and employers operate in a multicultural environment. Furthermore, by linking two different theoretical perspectives, this study aims to show their utility in examining the context of couples and providing a comprehensive framework that is effective in scrutinizing the complexities of their entwined lives. Interviewing both couples and incorporating couple-level analysis apart from individual-level analysis, also bring a new methodological approach to the Malaysian context and present a valuable method to describe the dynamics and the interplay of gender role attitude and role salience in their life. Finally, for practical purposes, this research will suggest some recommendations for the government and organizations in Malaysia, particularly in terms of human resource policies and support that would enhance

work-family balance and promote more role-sharing between dual-career husbands and wives.

1.4 Thesis Structure

This thesis is structured in the following way:

The following chapter, **Chapter 2**, reflects on the context of the study. In this chapter, a brief introduction will be provided to the country's background. There will also be a discussion on the position of women in Malaysia, the impact of culture and the efforts made by the government to support the participation of women in the workforce.

Chapter 3 discusses previous works on dual-career couples, mainly those that have been done in Western countries; while **Chapter 4** reviews literatures on gender role ideology and role salience, which are used as the theoretical foundation for the study.

Chapter 5 outlines the methodological approach of the research. It explains the methodological foundation, research instrument, research sample, research process and ethical considerations of the present study. This chapter also explicates the analysis of the data.

Chapters 6, 7 and 8 present the findings of the study drawing on data from the interviews. The findings are divided into three chapters that focus on answering the research questions. **Chapter 6** concerns the impact of dual-career relationship on the family. This includes their perception in terms of provider role and career priority in the family, and the pattern of decision making for the division of family work among the couples. **Chapter 7** highlights the problems and challenges encountered by couples and discusses the coping strategies and supports that they utilize to help them overcome the challenges. **Chapter 8** reveals the implication of the Government and organization's policies and support for the couples. Recommendations for policies and supports, as proposed by the couples, are also presented in this chapter.

The findings are elaborated in relation to the theoretical frameworks that guide the investigation. Hence, these chapters describe the couples' gender role attitude and role salience, and point out how being dual-career couples affects their gender role attitude and role salience. It also discusses the interplay of gender role ideology and role salience in explaining the couples' experiences in combining career and family.

Chapter 9 discusses the findings in more detail and presents a comparison between the experiences of Malaysian couples with previous studies on dual-career couples, particularly in the West. There is also a discussion on the gender role ideology that underpins the government and organizational policies, and their impact on the couples' experience. Additionally, this chapter discusses the factors that affect the Malaysian couples' gender role ideologies and role salience, and presents a summarizing framework of the couples' perceptions and experiences based on the chosen theoretical perspectives.

The final chapter, **Chapter 10**, draws conclusions and discusses the contributions of the study. It also discusses its limitations and offers recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2

Context of the Study: Women and Dual-Career Couples in Malaysia

This chapter identifies the research context. In order to understand the work and family experiences of dual-career couples in Malaysia, it is only appropriate to begin by examining the position of working men and women in Malaysia. The first section of this chapter will provide a brief introduction to the country's background. This will be followed by a discussion on the position of women in the country, which includes a discussion about their background, followed by an examination of the factors that have contributed towards the huge employment opportunities for Malaysian women, as well as the patterns and characteristics of women in the labour force. The next section will highlight the impact of culture on gender identities of working women in Malaysia, which is essential as cultural norms may influence Malaysian women's experiences and attitudes in the family and in organizations. Nevertheless, it should be noted that, although the Malaysian society comprised three major ethnic groups (Malay, Chinese and Indian), this chapter will focus only on the consequences of being Malay since they represent the largest ethnic group in Malaysian society. Furthermore, given the absence of qualitative data gained from dual-career men in this country, it is considered appropriate to concentrate on the most dominant ethnic group first, since other ethnic groups may have different experiences due to differences in culture and religion. The final section of this chapter will scrutinise the efforts by Malaysian government to support and encourage the participation of women in the labour force, which contribute consequently to the rise of dual-career couples in Malaysia.

2.1 The Background of Malaysia

Malaysia, a country located at the heart of South-East Asia, consists of two distinct geographical segments separated by the South China Sea, which are Peninsular (or West) Malaysia and East Malaysia. Prior to 1963, Malaysia was known as Malaya and achieved its independence from the British on 31st August 1957. The modern state of Malaysia was formed in 1963, consisting of Malaya, Singapore, Sabah and Sarawak. In 1965, Singapore left Malaysia to become an independent Republic. The nation now is made up of 13 states, 11 of which are in Peninsular Malaysia with the remaining two (Sabah and Sarawak) in East Malaysia. Of the 13 states, nine are descended from the original Malay *Sultanate* (or monarchy) and are headed by hereditary rulers. The remaining four states are headed by *Yang diPertua Negeri* (or governors), who are appointed for fixed terms of office (Saw, 2007).

The country has a total land area covering 330, 803 square kilometres and is populated primarily by Malays, Chinese and Indians, as well as some minority indigenous groups called 'Bumiputra' (The Economic Planning Unit, 2012). Today, the Malays and the Bumiputra account for nearly 67.4 per cent of the total population of 28.9 million people. The Chinese account for 24.6 per cent and the Indians represent 7.3 per cent of the total population, while 0.7 per cent comes from other ethnic groups (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2012). Malays are considered to include those adopting Malay language and customs, and those who are Muslim. It is, thus, an umbrella term covering a number of distinct ethnic groups: Buginese, Javanese, Malays, Minangkabau and others. The other Bumiputeras consist of a number of groups including the Negrito; Senoi, in Peninsular Malaysia; the Bajau, Dusun and Kadazan in Sabah; and the Bidayuh, Iban and Melanau in Sarawak. The main Chinese speech groups are Cantonese, Hainanese, Hokkien, Khak and Zeochew. The main Indian subgroups are Tamil, Malayali and Punjabi. In addition, there is number of Indonesians, Thai, Filipinos and other groups. The ethnographic mix of Peninsular Malaysia (West Malaysia) and Sabah and Sarawak (East Malaysia) differs within and between each region with the kaleidoscope of cultural manifestations that it implies (Ahmad, 1998; The Economic Planning Unit, 2012). Because there are many different cultures that co-exist, Malaysia is considered a pluralist state (Esposito, 1987). Although each of these cultures has dynamically maintained its traditions and community structures, they have also mixed together to create modern Malaysia's uniquely diverse heritage (Manaf, 2009).

Malaysia is known in the surrounding region as a fast developing country; bringing economic prosperity and a better quality of life to its people (Ariffin, 1997). The modernization of Malaysia is equated to industrialization and urbanization. Economic liberalization is causing changes to the social values of Malaysian people. Thus, this country presents an interesting case to study about the experiences of dual-career couples, since it is a society that has undergone significant industrialization and urbanization but, at the same time, the traditional structure of family life based on religious and cultural norms is still widespread.

2.2 Women in Malaysia

In this country, women make up half of the population (14.03 million women) (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2012). Since 1970, women have made significant progress into the paid labour force, from 36% to 48.8 % in 2012 (The Economic Planning Unit, 2012). Factors that contributed towards this increase were the huge investment in educational facilities

accompanied by the provision for equal access to educational opportunities, the implementation of the New Economic Policy (NEP) by the government in 1971 as well as the rapid development and industrialization, which created more jobs opportunity for women.

Employment opportunities, indeed, have changed Malaysian women's role and attitudes towards work. From a historical perspective, in the pre-colonial period, women usually worked alongside their husbands in subsistence agriculture (Noor, 1999). The women were also confined to domestic spheres and took care of the reproductive roles; namely, bearing children, and looking after the home, husband and children (Hong, 1983). With colonialism, labour became an economic commodity and subsistence production was no longer stressed. The men worked in paid employment and the women stayed at home to tend to the family; thus, the traditional gender roles were born (Noor, 1999). Men were defined as "head of the household" with the right to family assets and property, and entitlements to the government agricultural programmes and subsidies (Hong, 1983). Until the 1960s, a commonly-held belief was that women are ideally suited to being housewives and, when educated, they should work as teachers, nurses or in similar "feminine" occupations (Koshal et al., 1998). However, since 1970, changes brought about by industrialization have resulted in many job opportunities in urban areas; hence, many families migrated for employment reasons. Therefore, in many families both husband and wife now work, making employed spouses a common type of family in Malaysia (Hashim & Omar 2004).

As mentioned previously, several factors such as education and economy have contributed to the significant increase of women in the labour force. Hence, the next section will discuss in more detail the factors that influence the progress of women in employment.

2.2.1 Factors Conducive to the Rise of Malaysian Women in the Workforce

2.2.1.1 Education

A main factor contributing to the economic and social advancement of women in Malaysia has been the equal access of women to educational opportunities. Malaysia has made a huge investment in educational facilities in order to provide education for its people. The current educational system in Malaysia is based on the spirit of the National Educational Policy and the New Economic Policy (Chiu, 2000). The National Educational Policy, introduced in 1961, establishes Bahasa Melayu as the national language and initially provided universal free education from primary level to Form 3 (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 1990). Today,

Malaysia's education system includes six years of compulsory primary schooling and five years of secondary schooling (Pong, 1995). The efforts made by the government have generated a positive impact on women's education. In 2007, female students accounted for almost half of the total enrolments in primary and secondary schools whilst, at upper secondary level, female students outnumbered their male counterparts. Statistics showed that 86,180 females were enrolled, compared with only 46,115 male students (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2008).

Apart from schools, Malaysia also provides tertiary education in the form of public and private universities and colleges, which offer a variety of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. It was reported that Malaysia has 20 government-funded universities and 600 private and university colleges offering almost 100,000 places annually for Malaysians to enter higher education (Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, 2012). Not surprisingly, there has been a tremendous increase in the number of females entering public universities in recent years. In 1970, for instance, female students accounted for only 29.1 per cent of the student population but, in 2011, the percentage of female students enrolled in first degree was more than 60 per cent (Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, 2012).

Table 2.1 below shows the enrolment of male and female students in public higher learning education for 2010 and 2011. It illustrates that there were more female students pursuing study in four levels of higher education compared with male students. Female students showed a huge enrolment at Bachelor degree and postgraduate diploma level in 2010, with a ratio of 62 per cent and 63 per cent respectively. Similarly, this trend continued in 2011, with female students comprising 62 per cent and 66 per cent of the students for Bachelor degrees and at postgraduate diploma level. Despite these tremendous achievements, female students are relatively low at PhD level. There were only 41 per cent and 43 per cent of female students pursuing PhDs, compared with 59 per cent and 57 per cent of male students in 2010 and 2011.

Table 2.1: Student Enrolment in Public Higher Learning Institutions by Level of Study and Sex 2010 and 2011

Level of Education	Male (M)		Female (F)		Total		Ratio (%) M:F	
	2010	2011	2010	2011	2010	2011	2010	2011
Doctor of Philosophy	10,416	12,846	7,302	9,748	17,718	22,594	59:41	57:43
Master's Degree	21,620	22,226	28,056	31,041	49,676	53,267	44:56	42:58
Postgraduate Diploma	1,181	654	1,987	1,270	3,168	1,924	37:63	34:66
Bachelor Degree	103,483	112,273	171,207	186,906	274,690	299,179	38:62	38:62
Diploma	38,315	43,667	55,711	62,069	94,026	105,736	41:59	41:59

Source: Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, 2012

The outstanding progress of Malaysian women in education has created opportunities for them to qualify into the labour force. Simultaneously, it has also changed the view of the Malaysian people to accept working women as a normative lifestyle, similar to many other industrialized countries.

2.2.1.2 Economy

The greater participation of women in the economy and the improved access to education were made possible by the rapid growth of the economy, which created greater and new opportunities for women. The expansion of this during the 1970s and 1980s is attributed generally to the pull of the manufacturing industry, due to the growth of electronics and garment industries, and expansion of export processing zones that began in the 1970s. The industrial expansion had a profound impact on the pattern of employment and rural-to-urban

migration, and drew unprecedented numbers of young, unmarried Malay women from villages to urban factories for the first time (Ahmad, 1998). In the 1990s, the manufacturing sector created about 0.6 million new jobs between 1990 and 1994 and, in 1994 alone, provided employment to 1.9 million people (Ministry of International Trade and Industry, 1995).

The manufacturing sector also became the leading sector that formed the highest share of employment, expanding from 16 per cent in 1980 to 31.7 per cent in 2005. This was due mainly to the outstanding growth in the manufacturing sector and its large contribution to the Growth Domestic Product (GDP). This time period also noted that over 50 per cent of the jobs created came from the manufacturing sector. Increases in job opportunities occurred in the electrical and electronics industries, along with other industries, such as garment, textiles and food processing, which were often labelled as “industrial feminisation” and the real sector that encouraged more women to participate in the labour-intensive industrial sector (Subramaniam, 2011).

2.2.1.2.1 The Effect of Economic Policy

In addition to economic development, there have been several policy changes affecting women’s employment in Malaysia. The NEP, launched in 1971, was designed to eradicate poverty, irrespective of ethnicity, and also tried to eliminate the identification of ethnicity with economic functions and geographical locations (Amin, 2004). It was incorporated into the Second Malaysian Plan of 1971-1975 and lasted for 20 years until 1990. The Government cited three forms of “economic imbalances” to be solved: (1) imbalances in income; (2) in employment; and (3) in ownership and control wealth. The NEP had definite targets for improving the socio-economic status of the Malays (Government of Malaysia, 1973). Under the NEP, the Government became the entrepreneur, engaging in massive expansion of the public sector enterprises and competing on behalf of Malays by utilising state capital to set up corporations, mostly in core utility businesses, such as transportation, communication and finance (Embong, 1998).

The result of this policy has benefited the Malaysian population, especially the rural Malay community in plantation and in business, because the government has provided low-interest loans and some incentives to help them descending their lives (Md.Shukri et al. 2009). During the NEP years, the country’s annual average growth rate was an impressive 6.7 per

cent, and the number of middle-class families doubled (Embong, 1998). Moreover, the launched of NEP also contributed to the rapid economic growth, which opened up new avenues of employment for women (Chattopadhyay, 1997).

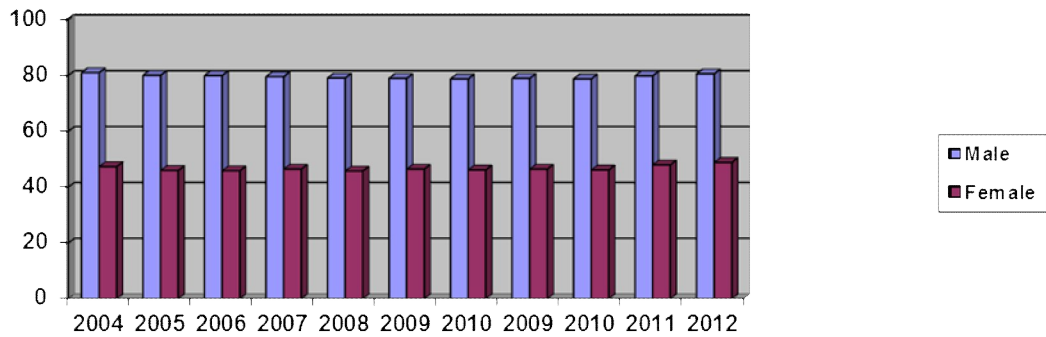
The New Vision Policy (NVP), introduced under the Eight Malaysia Plan (2001-2005), was designed to plan the development of the nation for the first decade of the 21st century. The NVP incorporates the critical thrust of the NEP with a dominant objective of national unity. What interesting here is that, the NVP is guided by the strategic challenges of Vision 2020, which laid out the direction for Malaysia to become fully developed by 2020 (Government of Malaysia, 2001). One of the main ambitions of the government is to develop a knowledge-based economy as a strategic move to raise the value added of all economic sectors and optimising the brainpower of the nation. The shift from manufacturing-based to an information and service-based economy would be expected to benefit women's employment in professional and management position (Powell, 2000). In such an economy, "brain power" was likely to be more valued than "muscle power"; hence, increasing the demand for highly-educated employees (Schwartz, 1992). Indeed, such advantages have contributed to Malaysian women being given better work opportunities, as more and more women today are attaining better educational qualifications. At present, the services, manufacturing and agriculture sectors are the three top components of the Malaysian economy. The services sector was the largest contributor to the GDP with 58.6 per cent in 2011 (Malaysian Institute of Economic Research, 2012), as well as the largest employer of women in the workforce (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2012).

2.2.2 Patterns and Characteristics of Women's Participation in the Labour Force

Economic growth has been accompanied by the greater participation of women in the formal workforce and in a range of other activities. At present, women's rate of participation in the labour force is 48.8 per cent (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2012) while in the past decades their contribution steadily increased from 15 per cent in the 1950s and 1960s to 35 per cent in the 1970s and 1980s (Ariffin, 1997). However, in the past few years, this percentage has remained between 45 per cent and 48 per cent (see Figure 2.1), reflecting relatively slow growth. Hence, even though currently there are more women than men pursuing education at the tertiary level, this is not reflected in the labour force participation rate (Abdullah et al., 2008). The government claimed two factors contributed to the

underutilisation of women in the economy; inadequate childcare facilities and inflexible working patterns (Omar & Davidson, 2004).

Figure 2.1: Labour Force Participation by Sex, 2004-2012



Source: Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2012

In addition, increased female participation in the workforce has been lopsided when analysed from the types of jobs for which they are employed. The data presented in Table 2.2 shows that the majority of female occupations were clustered in occupational categories, such as clerical workers, and services and sales workers. The percentages of women in senior official and managerial roles, as well as professionals, are still relatively low compared with other categories.

Table 2.2: Female Employment by Occupation, 2009 and 2010

Occupational category	2009 (%)	2010 (%)
Senior officials and managers	4.8	5.2
Professionals	8.3	8.3
Technicians and associate professionals	15.7	16.1
Clerical workers	19.3	19.7
Services and sales workers	21.0	20.1
Skilled agricultural and fishery workers	8.2	7.6
Craft and related trade workers	3.9	4.1

Plant and machine operators and assemblers	7.7	8.3
Elementary occupations	11.2	10.4
Total	100.0	100.0

Source: Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2012

Likewise, women also showed a lower percentage compared with men when analysed in terms of the percentage of employment by occupation (see Table 2.3). This is especially evident in the field of legislation and management, where more than 70 per cent of men were employed compared with only around 20 per cent of women. Female participation as professionals, however, seems to be more balanced with the males. But again, it should be noted that this category includes teaching and nursing professionals (where a large number of women are employed) along with other occupations, such as doctors, engineers and lawyers (Koshal et al., 1998).

Table 2.3: Percentage of Employed Persons by Occupations and Sex, 2009 and 2010

Occupations	2009		2010	
	Male (%)	Female (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
Legislators, Senior Officials & Managers	76.9	23.1	75.0	25.0
Professionals	52.5	47.5	52.5	47.5

Source: Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2011

Looking at the trend above, the low percentage of women in managerial and some professional occupations in Malaysia is probably because the nature of the job itself. It cannot be denied that those involved in managerial and professional lines need to display high commitment and spend long hours in the workplace. Therefore, these fields might be considered less appropriate for women, especially those who are married, because the burden of the job might interfere with their commitment to the family. As indicated by Omar and

Davidson (2001) and Omar (2003), for the majority of working women in Asian societies, the primary responsibilities of caring for the homes and children remained, and they continued to put long hours into the second shift even when they had domestic helpers. Moreover, the prejudice experienced by Malaysian women, especially when they climb the managerial hierarchy, might well contribute to the lack of women in these fields (Omar & Davidson, 2004). Omar (2003), in her study on women managers in Malaysia, has revealed that the norm “think manager, think Malay male” is prevalent in Malaysian organizations. More male managers were reported to agree that men were better suited to be managers, especially at senior levels, and that women lacked effective qualities. In addition, Malay women were described as being too “conservative” to be effective managers. Malaysian male managers believed that Malay women might not be suited to certain jobs or employment areas, and that the Islamic code of behaviour placed Muslim women in disadvantaged positions because they could not entertain clients, mix freely with men and hold top managerial positions (Omar, 2003).

2.3 Culture and the Position of Malay Women in Malaysian Society

Culture provides the fabric that enables human beings to interpret their experiences and actions. It is the outcome of values and norms of a society that offer a configuration of dos and don'ts in dealing with life. Cultural values determine what is desirable, correct and good that most members of a society share (Vander-Zanden, 1996). Each member is then socialized into these values as he or she should behave towards one another and, often, towards people of different cultures (Noor & Mahudin, 2005).

In all cultures, people are socialized differently according to gender, with men and women having different sets of culturally-defined right and duties. As such, men are expected to behave in certain ways and women in others. Traditionally, men dominate social life outside the home in practically all societies. Only exceptional and upper-class women had the means to delegate childrearing activities to others and to step into a public role (Hofstede, 1991).

For the Malay, *adat* and Islam are the two fundamental elements that formed the basis of the Malay value systems and ideologies (Kling, 1995). *Adat* (from the Arabic word, meaning culture, refinement, proprietary or humanity) refers to the total constellations of concepts, rules and codes of behaviours that are conceived as legitimate or appropriate (Karim, 1992), and synonymous with customs or culture. Therefore, in Malaysia, the roles of traditional

women were characterized by their social-classes, either by being the ruling class (royalty, aristocrats, nobility) or commoners (rakyat, peasant, slaves). Women from the ruling class did not contribute to economic activities per se, albeit some of them owned land or businesses. They focused only on taking care of their children and helped individuals to fit into the social structure of the society. The peasant women were involved directly in work (Ariffin, 1992). A possible explanation could be because, in customary law (Adat Temenggung and Adat Pepatih) and the Islamic faith, women possess a certain degree of economic autonomy and access to own land and properties (Noor & Mahudin, 2005). Malay society is cited as an example that permitted relatively egalitarian relation between the sexes. However, in the post-independence period, forces linked to economic development and Islamic revivalism have undermined the adat emphasis bilaterally, while strengthening Islamic tenets that increase male control over domestic resources (Ariffin, 1997).

Men, therefore, are regarded as the primary authority in Malay society. Being the head of the family, a man is responsible for making decisions in most family matters (Noor & Mahudin, 2005). The Malays may not have any preferences with regard to having a son or daughter, but there exists clear segregation of household duties and socialization according to gender and age (Harun, 1989). The males usually do the tasks that require physical energy, such as carpentry, house repairs and the like. Certain games or art are also prescribed exclusively to the males, such as playing wau, doing silversmith work or animal husbandry (Noor & Mahudin, 2005).

Despite the fact that major domestic responsibilities fell to women, Malay society acknowledged women's, especially the elders', participation in decision-making processes. In deciding an issue, the final say may come from the husbands but it is usually achieved through deliberation and agreement with the wives. Malay women were also entrusted to be the "banker" for the husbands. Accordingly, the Malays regard a good wife as one who is thrifty and can efficiently manage the family's financial matters (Harun, 1989).

Women were also required to help men in work, doing jobs that did not require much physical energy. Notably, this involved producing agricultural products either for self-consumption or for trading. They were also engaged in various petty businesses such as selling cookies and sewing clothes, as long as the work did not contravene cultural and religious practices (Noor & Mahudin, 2005). In everyday life, married women could move freely in tending to their cash-crop gardens or engaging in petty trade. They were not,

however, supposed to sit in coffee shops or seek male company (Ong, 1990). In general, Malay customs dictate that while men dominate public activities and enjoy more social freedom, the role of the women is reserved to domestic settings. Hence, masculinity depended on a man's economic power and moral authority over women in household (Ong, 1990).

2.3.1 The Influence of Islamic Religion

Since independence in 1957, Islam has been adopted as “the religion of the Federation.” This establishes Islam as the official religion of the country, and the main emphasis of such status is to maintain harmony and cooperation between Malays and other ethnic people in the country (Mastor et al., 2000). This establishment has led Islam to be constituted as a key element in ethnic identity and, therefore, this religion is central to and dominant in Malay culture (Kling, 1995; Leete, 1996). Esposito and Voll (1996) regarded Islam in Malaysia as a moderate version of the religion because Muslims in Malaysia have lived in harmony and peace with non-Muslims in the community for more than five centuries. The moderate approach to Islam has also resulted in women being accorded greater freedom. Living in a multicultural and multi-religious society may partly be responsible for this attitude, although it is argued the Government played a critical role in ensuring that radicalism in Islam was not part of Malaysia's socio-cultural and political systems (Omar, 2003).

In the political arena, Malay Muslims have maintained political supremacy even though they have only a slight political majority and are economically backward (Amin & Alam, 2008). The Malay community expects its leaders to safeguard their welfare in the country and act as role models who are familiar with spiritual and religious frames of reference (Manaf, 2009). In other words, Islam is so ingrained in Malay life that Islamic practices or rituals are perceived as Malay culture, and these two components of Islam and Malay form an intertwined identity in most daily activities (Esposito, 1987).

2.3.1.1 Islamic Perspective of Gender

In the issue of gender equality, it must be understood that Islam operates on the basis of complementary roles between men and women. There is ample evidence of gender equality in the principal religious text of Islam, the Qur'an and Hadith (traditions of the Prophet Muhammad). The Qur'an declares the creation of opposite genders as part of a divine scheme and a matter of reflection (51:49, 36:36). Good deeds of all humans will be rewarded

irrespective of their gender (16:97). The Qur'an describes women and men as raiments for each other (2:187), and instructs both to remain modest (24:30-31).

The Qur'an promotes the idea of equal partnership between men and women. "If any do deeds of righteousness, be they male or female, and have faith, they will enter paradise and not the least injustice will be done to them" (4:124). Besides the equality of essence, Islamic teachings also promote equality in education, political participation and employment. Both sexes are required to seek more knowledge because through knowledge they learn to distinguish between vice and virtue (Kausar, 1995).

In terms of women's right to seek employment, Badawi (1971) argues that Islam regards the role of women in society as a mother and a wife as the most sacred and essential. Badawi terms these roles as noble and vital in shaping the future of nations, which must not be regarded as "idleness". However, there is no verdict in Islam that prohibits women from seeking employment, "especially in positions which fits her nature and in which society needs her most". Badawi then offers a list of such professions, which include nursing and teaching, and (on account of Abu-Hanifa and Al-Tabary) a woman can also hold the position of a judge. In fact, it has been suggested that women who could make a difference in society must work, as making the society better off was regarded as an obligation for all Muslims (Kausar, 1995; Khattab, 1996). It must be noted that a woman's income remains completely hers, whether through inheritance or employment. No one, including her father and her husband, can make any claim on it. Furthermore, irrespective of her income, it is the duty of her husband or father to afford her personal and household expenses (Syed, 2008).

2.3.1.2 Marriage Life

Islam also has a big influence on the Malays' marital life. Islam has delineated important ways and means in the manner that husbands and wives should treat each other respectfully. The religion orders marital partners to behave toward each other with kindness and compassion (Manaf, 2009). The position of husbands and wives is viewed as of equal worth and complementary (Badawi, 1971), manifesting their contradictory characteristics, abilities and characters, and the roles of men and women. Therefore, as both partners are equal and crucial to managing household, the blaming, inequality and injustice towards women and wives are not acceptable (Manaf, 2009).

According to Islamic teaching, the male is considered to be mainly responsible for the maintenance of the family (Al-'Ati, 1977), while the woman's role is to dedicate herself to bringing up children and looking after the family household in a healthy and conducive atmosphere (Manaf, 2009). However, this does not mean that women are prevented from working outside the home or that men do not participate in housework (Carolan et al., 2000). It is also the opposite to the misguided notion that Islam oppresses women's rights and positions in societies (Kausar, 1995; Khattab, 1996) and that women are accorded lower status than men, in both the public and private spheres of existence (Ong, 1990).

However, in Malaysia, a number of studies seem to support this claim (see Ariffin et al., 1996; Narli, 1981; Omar, 2003). For example, the lower participation of Malay women in the labour market compared with the Chinese has been attributed to the fact that Malays are Muslims and that Islam has strict rules about women working (Ariffin et al., 1996). Narli (1981) further noted that Malay women in her study believed that they should only seek employment in areas that required them provide services to others, such as teachers, doctors attending only women and children, or clerks.

Woman's participation in the labour market requires support, understanding and encouragement from her husband and family. According to Khattab (1996), although it is usually the case that the wife takes responsibility for most (if not all) domestic duties, it is not entirely certain if housework should be seen as the wife's obligation. Instead, she propagated that Islam requires both husband and wife to achieve mutual understanding about the roles that each would assume at home and work. If both the husband and wife are in agreement for the wife to work, then the husband must help at home or at least pay for help in the house (Kausar, 1995; Khattab, 1996). This proposal was based on the practices of Prophet Muhammad SAW, who performed various household chores in his lifetime and a documented experience of a companion of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, Umar ibn al-Khattab (Khattab, 1996). Furthermore, the Qur'an itself stresses the importance of taking counsel and mutual agreement in family decisions. A verse in the Qur'an exemplifies clearly this view: "If they (husband and wife) desire to wean the child by mutual consent and (after) consultation, this is no blame on them" (Chapter 2:233).

Nevertheless, a number of studies have discovered that much of the practices in Islam are not in accordance with Islamic teachings and women rarely obtain the encouragement they need (Kausar, 1995; Omar & Davidson, 2001; Omar, 2003; Syed, 2008). Hence, to improve

women's participation in economic activities, the focus should be on creating an environment that is conducive for female workers and where they can enjoy equal opportunities in terms of employment, remuneration, growth and respect (Syed, 2008), as well as support, consideration and encouragement from the husband. As such, it is important within the present study to identify how being Muslim affected Malay dual-career couples' experiences at home and work.

2.4 The Cultural Context of Work and Family in Malaysian Society

Due to the differences in cultural and religious values, the effect of combining simultaneously both work and family roles may be different in Malaysia as compared with other countries, especially in the West. The cultural and religious beliefs of each of these ethnic groups in Malaysia influence the social expectations of its women. Basically, these values both place extreme importance on the woman's homemaker role; as such, Malaysian women are likely to feel guilty if these home-related responsibilities are not attended to properly (Noor, 1999). The culture insists that a woman has to take care of her husband's overall well-being and she who is obedient to her husband would receive great honours from society (Noor & Mahudin, 2005). Hence, according to the traditional norms, women in Malaysia are expected to play the role of a wife, a mother and caretaker of family as well as managing the household affairs.

Even though industrialization has increased the number of married employed women in this country, this has not relieved them of the burden of household work and childcare since they are expected to carry the main responsibility for these tasks. Studies have indicated that women find difficulties in getting their husbands involved in daily chores but, at the same time, there are some women who thought that these are typical women's jobs and did not feel upset if the husband did not help (Hashim & Omar, 2004). This is because some women still hold on to the gender role ideology that women must attend to all the housework duties (Hashim & Omar, 2004).

Moreover, although childcare seems to present a great challenge for women, Malaysian society continues to have a large number of children in their families. Fertility among the Malaysian societies remains high, especially among the Malays. Despite an increasingly educated female population, increased rates of urbanization and modern sector employment, there has not been widespread adoption of small family norms among the Malays (Leete, 1996). Though it was reported that the fertility rate for Malay has decreased from 3.4 in 2001 to 2.6 in 2010, it is still higher than the rate for other ethnic groups in the country, such as

Chinese and Indian, which stand at 1.5 and 1.7 respectively (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2011). Being Muslim, the Malay fertility is a result of the influence of Islamic values, which regard children as blessings. Malay women continue to have more children because they view children as assets and gifts from God (Hashim & Omar, 2004). Thus, to cater support for the childcare, employed women usually go for alternative methods of support. The most popular types of childcare are hiring maids or sending children to day care centres or babysitters. Some resorted to send their children to be cared for by their parents or other relatives (Hashim & Omar, 2004). Nowadays, the trend of having live-in maids seems to be the most popular option because they are not only available to care for the children, but also ready to do household work every day at any time.

Until now, the belief that a woman's primary role is in the home is still strong. Even professional women tend to carry out most of the work and bear most responsibility in the family (Hashim & Omar, 2004; Omar, 2003). Furthermore, in spite of more women earning wages outside the home and some commanding higher wages than their spouses, the principle prevails in most Malaysian families that it is the man who remains the main breadwinner and leader of the family (Ariffin, 1997). Employment is regarded as an extra role and not the primary role of women and, thus, contributes to lots of challenges for employed women in the workplace (Abdullah et al., 2008). The glass-ceiling syndrome has been identified to exist in different sectors in this country. Women managers faced some problems, such as the perception that women were not suited to be managers, too conservative to be effective managers and some even argued that it is against Islamic teachings to place Malay women at the top of the organization (Omar & Davidson, 2004). Nonetheless, despite social expectations and barriers in the workplace that impede married women's career development, many are 'protected' from unfavorable experiences by certain elements within their culture, such as the claim that religion plays an important role in their lives and consequently helps to reduce their stress (Noor & Mahudin, 2005).

As the country becomes more industrialized and modernized, however, cultural expectations are subject to change in terms of experience and context. Many women, especially the younger generation, are calling for more recognition for the housewife role and negotiate more participation from husbands (Noor & Mahudin, 2005). But still, challenges from other forces, such as cultural values in the society and traditional norms incorporated in

organizational arrangements, still become factors that place many dual-career women in a state of dilemma.

2.5 Government Policies to Support Women's Employment

Realizing the educational development and economic potential of women, the Malaysian government has implemented various initiatives to encourage the participation of women in the workforce. Through legislation, the government has constituted numerous acts in order to protect the women at the workplace and provide them with several benefits.

According to Article 8(1) of the Constitution, "All persons are equal before the law and entitled to the equal protection of the law". The Constitution also recognizes and safeguards Malaysian women's right to participate the political and administrative aspects of the country. The Employment Act of 1955 (Revised 1981) regulates the conditions of work for all employees. The Act defines specifically "employees" to include women and has provisions that apply exclusively to women – Part VIII (Employment of Women) and Part XI (Maternity Protection) - under the guise of protecting women workers.

Part VII (Employment of Women) Section 34 (1) prohibits night work for women in the industrial or agricultural sector between the hours of ten o'clock in the evening and five o'clock in the morning. The Section also stipulates that a female employee is not allowed to commence work without having had a period of 11 consecutive hours free from work. However, a provision to the Section empowers the Minister of Human Resources to exempt in writing any female employees from these restrictions.

Maternity protection has also been regulated to benefit the female employees. Previously, in Part IX (Maternity Protection), Section 37 (1), a female employee is entitled to a minimum of 60 days' consecutive maternity leave. Maternity allowance for this eligible period is given to women with no more than five children. Through the Service Circular Volume 14 in 2010, the government has amended the maternity leave by entitling a female employee with a full pay maternity leave of 300 days throughout the length of her service, with the flexibility to determine the period of maternity leave between 60 to 90 days. A female employee may also choose to use maternity leave earlier than the date of delivery at any time within 14 days of the expected delivery date.

Besides the provisions constituted in the Employment Act, working women in Malaysia also receive the same benefits as the men under the 1951 Employees' Provident Fund Ordinance, The Pensions Act and the 1952 Workmen's Compensation Act (Omar, 2003).

In 1989, the Cabinet approved the National Policy for Women (NPW). This policy provided long-term sectorial planning to integrate and incorporate women in the country's quest to become fully developed (Omar, 2003). According to the government, the overall objectives of NPW are (Government of Malaysia, 1991):

- to ensure greater equality of access to resources, information, opportunities for participation and development benefits for both men and women.
- to enable women, who form half of the country's population, to contribute and achieve their full potential
- to integrate women into all sectors of national development, based on their needs, that would upgrade the quality of life, eradicate poverty, abolish ignorance and illiteracy and uphold the peace and prosperity of the nation.

Following the implementation of NPW, for the first time a "Women in Development" chapter was included in the Sixth Malaysia Plan (1991-1995). In this plan, the government emphasized and focused specifically on issues and strategies for the advancement of women by detailing programmes and projects for women's development, recognizing them as an important economic resource and identifying constraints that were holding back their full involvement. In the following Seventh, Eighth and Ninth Malaysia Plans, efforts to enhance the role, position and status of women increased; particularly the provision of more education and training opportunities to meet the demands of the knowledge-based economy and improve their upward mobility in the labour market (Abdullah et. al., 2008).

The National Action Plan for the advancement of women was being formulated as early as 1992. It was prepared to operationalize the National Policy on Women. Under the Plan, various strategies and programmes were drawn up to be implemented by the government agencies, private sector, and NGOs. The Action Plan for the Development of Women outlines 13 critical areas of concern to be addressed. These include increasing public awareness and sensitivity of government bureaucracy to women's issues, activating NGOs to improve the

efficiency and effectiveness of socio economic programs and to improve women several aspects such as in health, education, economy, law, power-sharing and family (Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, 2010).

The Government has also shown its support by allocating funds and setting up organizations. The National Advisory Council on Women in Development (NACIWID) and Women's Affairs in the Prime Minister's Department (HAWA) were instituted, which acted as catalyst in the process (Ahmad, 1998). In 2000, the government made an important step by upgrading the secretariat for HAWA into a full ministry with a Cabinet Minister. The Ministry, which is now known as The Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, is responsible for determining the policies and direction to achieve the goals of gender equality, family development and a caring society in Malaysia. This is in line with Malaysia's commitment to the United Nations' Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Beijing Declaration (Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, 2010) .

In 2001, the government approved the Amendment to Article 8.2 of the Malaysian Constitution, which is related to the prohibition of gender discrimination. In line with this, and the vision and mission of to achieve gender equality, the government agreed to establish a Cabinet Committee on Gender Equality. This Cabinet Committee was chaired by the Prime Minister with several ministers as members. It is aimed at setting the direction and policy as well as monitoring the implementation of programmes and projects related to the development of women and family. Among the important decisions made by this committee was the creation of Gender Focal Point (GFP) in every relevant ministry and government agency. The GFP would act as the agent of the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development in implementing programmes and projects at all government administrative levels so as to be in line with the intent to achieve gender equality (Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, 2010). This would have a deep impact on government administration, whereby each relevant ministry and agency would be more focused and effective in dealing with issues of the development of women and gender equality.

The Government of Malaysia also approved the policy of women in decision-making in 2004. By introducing this policy, the government hoped to increase women's representation by at least 30 per cent at the decision-making level in all sectors, especially the public sector. The

implementation of this policy in fact, has had a positive impact (see Table 4). In 2007, the number of women officers increased in the public sector, particularly at the upper level (JUSA Officers), Vice Chancellors of Universities, Member of Local Government Councils (LGC), judges, district officers and senior police and army officers (Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, 2010). Recently, the government also urged the private sector to provide more opportunities for women holding positions as decision-makers, particularly as a member of the Board and Chief Executive Officer (Government of Malaysia, 2010).

Table 2.4: Women’s Participation at Decision-Making Level

Subject	2004	2007
Women JUSA Officers	18.8%	25.8%
Vice Chancellors	0.0%	15.0%
Women Members of LGC	10.4%	12.4%

Source: Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, Malaysia, 2012

On the whole, the efforts of the Government have generated much positive effects on women’s achievement in organizations. The NPW has helped raise representation of women in management positions in the public sector from 18.8% in 2004 to 30.5% in 2010, while it rose from 13.5% to 26.2% in the private sector. Additionally, *Nur Bestari*, a leadership programme initiated in 2007, has benefited more than 147,000 women (Government of Malaysia, 2010). This supports the contention by Ismail & Ibrahim (2007) and Abdullah et al. (2008) that there has been progression for women in professional and managerial positions.

2.6 The Rise of Dual-Career Couples in Malaysia

The increase of professional and managerial women has resulted in the increase of dual-career couples, where the husband and the wife share a family life together while at the same time pursuing professional careers. However, it should be noted that determining the development of dual-career couples in Malaysia is difficult since there is no longitudinal data to represent them in this country. Nevertheless, the growing number of professionals and managerial women is a sign that the number of dual-career couples have increased. This is in line with the argument by Davidson and Burke (2011) and Saraceno (2007), that those

women in management who do marry are more likely to have partners with professional or managerial careers.

The growth of dual-career couples indicates that there is an increase of families with job responsibilities co-existing with their family obligations. Due to responsibilities for multiple roles, employees are more likely to experience challenges and role conflict involving incompatible demands. With an awareness of the consequences, the government has taken numerous measures to address the challenges. Flexible working hours were introduced under the Employment Act of 1955 (amended in 1998) with benefits to be paid to part-time workers proportionate to those working full time. Female employees in the government sector could also continue their services after taking a maximum of three months unpaid leave for childcare reasons following their maternity leave. There is also childcare leave (without pay), which is granted to female employees to care for and breastfeed their baby, as provided in Circular Volume 15 of 2007, with eligibility rates of 1.825 days (5 years) throughout their service. This childcare leave can be given as an option to replace maternity leave without pay in order to fulfill the period of maternity leave. Apart from these, employees were also entitled to a maximum of 180 days of half-paid leave to take care of a sick child, parent or close relative (Government of Malaysia, 2011). Married male government employees are given seven days' paternity leave for a maximum of five times throughout their service (Ahmad, 2007). The Government also outlined provision for tax deductions to employers for the establishment of childcare centres near or within the workplace (Abdullah et al. 2008).

However, it was reported that, overall, organizations in Malaysia are still at the early stage of family-friendly policy development. For example, there is lack of financial aid for costs of childcare, and childcare centres are not provided in many organizations even though the government provides a grant to partially support organizations in establishing childcare facilities (Abdullah et al. 2008; Ahmad, 2007). Furthermore, flexible work arrangements are not provided extensively and many workplaces do not recognize part-time work, despite the legislation by the Government (Abdullah et. al. 2008). With regards to this, the Government has urged the private sector to employ more part-time women workers, especially those who are already married. Parallel Government measures to encourage participation of women as part-time workers include enforcing the Employment Regulations on Partial Time Employees in 2010. Moreover, arrangements for working from home, teleworking and flexi-time are also encouraged, in line with the Government's vision to increase the female labour force

participation rate by 55 per cent of the working age population² by 2015 (Government of Malaysia, 2010; 2011).

Indeed, the increase of dual-career couples in this country necessitates more research to be done in order to understand the patterns of behaviour in this family model and the challenges that they face at work and in the family. At present, most of the work-family studies in Malaysia concentrate only on the experiences of women (e.g; Abdullah et al., 2008; Hashim & Omar, 2004; Ismail & Ibrahim, 2007; Noor, 1999; Noor & Mahudin, 2005). It should be clear that the perceptions of men are also important in order to identify the complexities of a dual-career lifestyle and create a more balanced account of their experiences. Thus, this indicates the need for a study to focus on the experiences of dual-career couples in Malaysia; specifically on the impact of dual-career relationship on their work and family spheres and, at the same time, analysing the impact of factors such as cultural values, religious, social context as well as government and organizational arrangements for their work and family life.

2.7 Summary

This chapter reviewed the position of women in Malaysia with regards to employment and family. The review of the Malaysian context started with a glance at the country's history, geographical and demographic background, as well as a general review on the context of women in Malaysia. The chapter then scrutinized the factors contributing to the rise of women in the labour force. Evidently, the literatures show that education, economy and Government policy are important factors in encouraging the participation of women in the workforce. The Malaysian Government's huge investment in education has produced a positive impact on women's achievement in education. Female students' enrolment at upper secondary, first degree and postgraduate diploma level are relatively higher compared with their male counterparts, and these tremendous achievements are reflected in their increasing participation in employment. The economy is also a major factor in creating more job opportunities for women. Industrial expansion created a positive impact by opening up a lot of job avenues for women. In addition, policies developed by the Government, such as the NEP and NVP, which were designed to develop the country's economy, also benefited women with better work opportunities. Nevertheless, analysis showed that women employees

² Working age population refers to population ages 15 until 64 (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2011)

are still clustered in certain occupations, such as clerical, services and sales workers. Female participation in management and some professional occupations are still lagging behind the males.

In the Malaysian context, the Malay *Adat* and Islamic religion have a profound impact on Malay women's involvement in family and work. Despite industrialization, women are still expected to carry the responsibilities of managing the household duties and being the caretaker of the family. Research showed that men are still regarded as the main breadwinner (Hashim & Omar, 2004; Omar, 2003), although some wives earn more than their partners (Ariffin, 1997). Getting husbands to participate in domestic work is difficult, but some women did not even feel disappointed by the lack of husbands' involvement due to the traditional gender role ideology. Furthermore, even though the presence of children would imply more struggles for working women, the small family norm is still not a common lifestyle among the Malays. However, some recent studies show that many women, particularly the younger cohorts, are beginning to move away from the traditional norms and negotiate for more participation from their husbands in household affairs (Abdullah et al., 2008; Ng, 2012).

At the workplace, some employed women still face the glass-ceiling syndrome, especially when reaching the top position in the organization. The Government of Malaysia, recognizing the economic potential of women and the challenges they face, has developed numerous measures to increase the participation of women, including those with families, in the workforce. A number of legislation and policies were set up to benefit women in the workplace. Some efforts were also made to increase the number of females at the decision-making level, as well as promoting gender equality, especially in the public sector. The increase of women in professional and managerial positions also marks the increase of dual-career couples in the country, which resulted in the Government implementing some family-friendly policies to help couples manage their work and family better. However, studies on dual-career couples are still relatively low in Malaysia and, therefore, there is a need for more research in order to explore in more detail the intertwining of work and family in the couples' lives.

Chapter 3

Literature Review: Dual-Career Couples

The aim of this chapter is to provide a review of the existing literature relating to dual-career couples. The paucity of research on dual-career couples in Malaysia and other Asian countries necessitates the use of Western literatures on dual-career couples as the theoretical basis for understanding the lives of dual-career couples in Malaysia. This chapter primarily reviews existing literature of dual-career couples in the US and UK as well as several other Western countries in Europe and Australia. The few studies that have investigated the work-family experiences of dual-career couples in Asian countries are also highlighted to determine how the experiences of dual-career couples are similar or different across national and cultural boundaries.

The areas reviewed provide the basis for achieving the objectives of this research and, therefore, cover prior research that discusses the phenomenon of dual-career couples in general and other issues in particular, such as the impact on the provider role, career priority, decision making, division of household work and childcare. It also discusses the dual-career couples' experiences at work, their coping strategies and support to overcome problems and challenges as well as the policies implemented by the governments and organizations to help dual-career couples balance their work and family demands.

This chapter concludes with a reflection on the critical research reviewed, how it relates to the objectives of this study and where there appears to be particular gaps in the research to date.

3.1 The Dual-Career Phenomenon

The term “dual-career family” was coined by Rappoport and Rappoport (1969), who described it as “the type of family in which both heads of household pursue careers and at the same time maintain a family life together”. Careers here are defined as occupations with a developmental sequence, which require a high level of commitment and are highly, personally salient to the occupants. They also argued that this family form represented a new basis for egalitarian family relationships. The comparable nature of male and female employment serves as grounds for anticipating a more egalitarian form of domestic labour than that found in households where the male partner is, or has traditionally been, the primary earner (Gregson & Lowe, 1993). Therefore, the belief that highly-educated, well-paid women

have the potential to transform families and create more egalitarian options for other women, have made lots of researchers focus their attention on professional and managerial dual-career couples (Bird & Schnurmann-Crook, 2005; Burnett et al., 2010; Elloy & Smith, 2003, 2004; Gordon & Whelan-Berry, 2005).

The dual-career couples indicate a new type of labour force involving both men and women at all levels of seniority with high career involvement and, at the same time, trying to balance them with marriage and parenthood (Gordon & Wheelan-Berry, 2005). Early studies on dual-career couples emphasized the advantages and difficulties of this lifestyle (Bedeian et al., 1986; Rappoport & Rappoport, 1969; Sekaran, 1986; Skinner, 1980; Tryon & Tryon, 1982). Evidence shows that dual-career marriages frequently provide career women with not only financial benefits, but also major psychological advantages, such as greater self-esteem, effectiveness and well-being (Nadelson & Nadelson, 1980; Smith; 1992; Rappoport & Rappoport, 1976; Ruderman et al. 2002; Smith; 1992). The dual-career marriage also provides companionship and collaboration, thereby reducing the potential for stress and contributing to a significantly greater degree of marital satisfaction and happiness (Bedeian et al., 1986; Rappoport & Rappoport, 1969; Ruderman et al. 2002). Studies focusing on men in dual-career families also show that, when their wives pursue careers, husbands too experience positive advantages in terms of their own career development and choice, motivation, ambition, status, performance, self-determination, career satisfaction and family satisfaction (Rosin, 1990a ; Rosin 1990b). It was also claimed that the new demands being made on men have given some a richer sense of self which, in turn, enables them to be more successful at work (Novak & Novak, 1996). Nevertheless, despite the numerous advantages offered by this relationship, there are still some difficulties that cannot be avoided. The demands of two parallel careers can cause overload, stress and challenges that are compounded when couples have children or other family responsibilities. Role conflicts often occur in dual-career couples when multiple stressors and responsibilities force changes to work and family roles (Nadelson & Nadelson, 1980; Rappoport & Rappoport, 1976; Sekaran, 1986; Smith; 1992; Tryon & Tryon, 1982). This challenge is still on-going, as reported by many newer studies, despite the widespread of dual-career couples at present (Kinnunen et al., 2004; Elloy & Smith, 2004, Kirrane & Monks, 2004; Santos & Cardoso, 2008; Westman, 2002;).

The current pervasiveness of dual-career families has attracted a lot of researchers to study various aspects of this family model. Many scholars have studied the patterns of decision making and the division of household work and also the division of child and elderly care

among spouses (Coltrane, 2000; Challiol & Mignonac, 2005; Ezzedeen & Ritchey, 2009; Gershuny & Sullivan, 2003; Santos & Cardoso, 2008). The increasing number of dual-career couples has also generated growing research interest on the organizational implications for the couples. Due to the relative inflexibility of company policies, much of the recent literatures have identified specific strategies for changes to employment practices for better career and home management (De Cieri et al., 2005; Deery, 2002; Deery & Jago, 2009; Gambles et al., 2006).

Another set of studies (e.g Blossfield & Drobnic, 2001; Lewis & Campbell, 2007; Saraceno, 2007) has adopted a macro-level strategy. These studies have identified the critical importance of dual-career couples' labour force patterns, earnings and opportunities for economic and social equality. Other research includes social expectations about men's and women's roles and the overall approaches to state-market-family relationships and family (Blair-Loy & Frenkel, 2005; Korabik et al. 2003; Korpi, 2000; Lewis & Campbell, 2007). There is also research on gender and employment supportive policies, such as public provisions for maternity and parental leave and benefits, family leave, and tax policies, as well as social programmes that include publicly-funded childcare (Deven & Moss, 2002; Lewis, 2001; Stier & Lewin-Epstein, 2007; Straub, 2007).

To sum up, research on dual-career couples can be classified into two categories that either examine micro-level constructs (e.g impact on family work and perceptions on work family balance) or the macro-level variables (e.g public policies and its impact on women's labour force patterns). Therefore, in order to provide a comprehensive picture of the lives of dual-career couples, the following sections will provide a review of the empirical literature related to dual-career couples that involve both micro and some macro-level constructs that are prominent in influencing couples' experiences in work and family. The need to include multi-level constructs is important, as argued by Rusconi and Solga (2008) that an examination of entwined life and work of men and women in a committed relationship requires going beyond the sole analysis of the individual characteristics of each partner. Rather, it is necessary to include the analysis of general social, cultural conditions and institutional structures in the couples' career and family life.

Thus, the micro-level variables will consider the effect of dual-career marriage on dual-career couples in terms of their perceptions of the provider role and career priority, the pattern of decision making, division of family work and childcare, their experiences and challenges at

work, as well as the strategies they utilise and support they use to deal with problems and challenges. At the macro-level variables, this research will discuss the effect of cultural values through public and organizational policies and supports, and also the impact of these policies on supporting the couples' career and family and, subsequently, on gender equality.

3.2 The Provider Role

Breadwinning has traditionally conferred substantial privileges of men within the family (Tichenor, 2005). However, as more women joined the ranks of employed and laws prohibiting outright discrimination came into effect, a wider array of opportunities opened up to women. A working mother is no longer revolutionary and is, in fact, now common. In the US, for example, in 2008 only one in five families with children (20.7 per cent) has the traditional male breadwinner and female homemaker, compared with 44.7 per cent in 1975 (Boushey, 2009). As more women became breadwinners in record numbers, it seemed logical that the relationship between the "male" and "female" worlds would change, along with the place of the provider role in gender schema (Loscocco & Spitze, 2007).

Regardless of the shift to the dual-earner family as the dominant form, the breadwinner/homemaker family has tremendous ideological staying power (Loscocco & Spitze, 2007). Even though women continue to be full participants in the labour force, the social institutions, from the educational systems to work structures, have not adapted to the behavioural decline of husband as economic provider, and continue to operate as though the traditional gender division of labour still exists (Moen & Orrange, 2002). Social norms continue to pressure women to nurture and men to be good breadwinners (Jacobs & Gerson, 2004). The man as the provider role model continues to affect both the organization of paid work and how people think about responsibility for earning.

Intensive interview studies with employed and self-employed men uncover many who downplay their wives' economic contributions to their family while shoring up their sense of themselves as primary breadwinners (Gerson, 1993; Spade, 1994). An in-depth interview study of self-employed women and men found that a majority of the men took for granted their status as primary breadwinners, using it for complaints that their wives or girlfriends had about how much they work (Loscocco, 1997). In fact, men and women in dual-career relationships still tend to interpret the husband's employment as providing for essential family needs, whereas the wife's earnings are supplemental, even if she contributes the same amount of family income as her husband (Potuchek, 1997). Until now, this perception still

persisted, as reported by a number of recent studies (e.g. Raley, et. al., 2006; Tichenor, 2005; Dema-Moreno & Diaz-Martinez, 2010). Men and women report that it is important for others to perceive the man as the primary earner, even when the wife earns more (Tichenor, 2005). Dema-Moreno and Diaz-Martinez (2010), in their study on Spanish couples, reveal that both partners use various strategies to conceal when a woman earns more than her partner, such as overvaluing the man's salary and undervaluing his spending. For example, when some couples have a joint account, the difference in income is hidden and the female contribution is absorbed into the common pool. In others, if the couple have separate accounts, the money is allocated differently and used for different expenditure. For instance, the man's income is made more significant by using it for more important expenditure, such as the car and mortgage, whereas the woman's money is spent on day-to-day expenses.

The underlying reason for such findings appears to be the emphasis on the role of good provider in establishing men's gender identity (Brennan et.al. 2001; Loscocco & Spitze, 2007; Zuo, 2004). Traditional gender socialisation of men and women strengthens the apparent persistence of traditional gender expectation regarding the provider role in the family and constitutes one of the main obstacles that women have to face when they are trying to establish egalitarian relationships (Dema-Moreno & Diaz-Martinez, 2010). Thus, many, certainly not all, men, find it important to establish themselves as men via breadwinning, and even some women expect this of the men with whom they share their lives (Loscocco, 1997). Given that being a good provider continues to establish masculine identity (Brennan et al. 2001; Zuo, 2004), men may cling to that role or take on more of the providing than they prefer (Loscocco & Spitze, 2007). The possibility that men become stuck in the good provider role is raised by a study showing that the gap between preferred hours and actual hours worked is greater for men than women (Moen & Yu, 2000). Given the continued salience of being a good provider to men's gender identity, the emotional well-being of men who do not provide as much as they think they should, may be adversely affected, whereas women have alternative sources of identity and fulfilment that men do not. Men's continued accountability to good provider norms appear to underlie the gender differences that surface even among men and women in similar work situations (Loscocco & Spitze, 2007).

Nevertheless, although generally men insist on being regarded as the main provider in the family, some of them still tend to regard their wife's income as essential and that women's careers carry as much import within the couples' relationship as the men's (Quek &

Knudson-Martin, 2008). In dual-career couples, the question will arise of whose career comes first; hence, it is important to provide a review of career priority among dual-career couples.

3.3 Career Priority

Studies report that most dual-career couples saw each career as equal in importance, although women were twice as likely as men to limit their work commitments (Hardill & Watson, 2004; Lang, 2000). However, it was also discovered that, even in the cases where one career is identified as primary, the partner indicated making such accommodations as being available for emergency childcare or turning down an opportunity to relocate (Lang, 2000). It is also important to note that although, traditionally, the husband's career was seen as primary, this could also be determined by factors such as which partner has a higher salary, or in the case of geographic relocation, whether one partner has a more specialized career with less ability to gain employment in a new location. It was also highlighted that, in other cases, couples might decide to take turns making career sacrifices for one another (Perrone et al., 2009). Meanwhile, some couples choose "commuter marriage" by living apart, while one of the partners completes an assignment away from home (Neault & Pickerell, 2005).

Thus, having a relationship where both spouses engage in full-time profession certainly has an impact on each other's career. Acknowledgement of wives' career priority initiates a number of changes that appear to impact gender hierarchies in the family sphere (Quek & Knudson-Martin, 2008), such as decision making, housework and childcare. Therefore, the following section will discuss in more detail these matters.

3.4 Decision Making

One of the main issues that has been long analysed in dual-career couples is the pattern of decision making among the couples. There has been a reported increase in the prevalence of equal influence in decision-making processes among dual-career couples (Rogers & Amato, 2000). Even earlier studies in the 1980s and 1990s found that women's access to money of their own allows them a "voice" in household matters and greater decision-making power (Hardill et al., 1997; Huber & Spitze, 1983; Hobson, 1990). However, Fox and Murry (2000), in their overview on family research from a feminist perspective, concluded that although couples view their marriages as equal and their family roles as egalitarian, husbands are more likely to maintain an upper hand in decision-making processes. Decision-making continues to be divided along traditional gender roles, with women making decisions concerning the day-

to-day details of family life and men making the major decisions (Ball, et al. 1995; Fox & Murry, 2000). This is supported by Bartley et al. (2005), who concluded that husbands and wives differ in terms of influence in decision-making, where wives reported exerting more unilateral influence than husbands in decision-making processes.

A more recent study by Dema-Moreno (2009) highlighted that obstacles such as the persistence of men in the role of providers, men's privileged participation in the management of the family money, and the gendered socialization of gender roles of both men and women, were the main difficulties that women encountered in portraying themselves as equal in negotiation processes; thereby favouring men's greater influence in decision making. Even some wives who earn more than their husbands would often defer to their husbands in the decision-making process for fear of exercising power in decision-making and threatening their gender identities (Tichenor, 2005). However, not all dual-career couples present this kind of arrangement in the family. It was reported that there were also couples who were able to put into practice an egalitarian model of decision making. In these cases, men and women managed to create shared negotiation conditions where both partners felt encouraged to propose initiatives, consider the wishes of their partners and actively aim to reach a consensus (Dema-Moreno, 2009).

3.5 Household Work

Household work is one of the most often discussed aspects in a relationship when both couples are engaged in full-time careers. It was cited that the changes in women's economic position did not bring about real change in the division of housework and care work within the family (Stier & Lewin-Epstein, 2007). A multitude of studies in the West indicated that family work is still sharply divided by gender, with women spending more time on these tasks than men and maintaining overall responsibility for household management (Acker & Armenti, 2004; Coltrane, 2000; Grady & McCarthy, 2008; Jacobs & Winslow, 2004). Therefore, while the amount of time women invest in housework has declined in recent decades, the increase in time spent by men on household chores only partially offset this reduction (Coltrane, 2000; Gershuny & Sullivan, 2003). This contention is further supported by Sayer et al. (2004) who recorded that the totals of paid and unpaid work performed by women in the US are 5 to 7 hours more than the men. In all industrialized countries, women are still left with the major responsibility for housework and childcare (Stier & Lewin-

Epstein, 2007). Thus, the household division of labour remains unbalanced and gender-dependent.

Nevertheless, Sullivan & Coltrane (2008) contended that studies that claimed men's family work to be barely moved in response to women's increased employment were based on unrealistic hopes for instant transformation. They argued that these studies underestimated the amount of change going on behind the scenes and the growing willingness of men to adapt to their wives' new behaviours and values. In fact, more couples are sharing family tasks than ever before, and the movement toward sharing has been especially significant for full-time dual-career couples. With the influx of women in the workplace, there has been a shift in the division of labour in the home. Women today perform less housework than previous generations, and men perform more household chores than their predecessors (Roehling & Moen, 2003). On-going studies of couple relationships reveal that change has been continuous and significant, not merely in younger couples who begin their relationship with more flexible ideas about gender, but also in older couples where the wife has worked long enough to change her husband's values and behaviours (Sullivan, 2006). An analysis of couples' relative contribution to housework in Britain found a steady growth from the 1960s to the 1990s in the percentage of families where the man contributed more time to family work; this is particularly marked among full-time employed couples (Sullivan, 2006). It was also recorded in the US that men's absolute and proportionate contributions to household tasks increased substantially, lessening the burden on women. By the early 21st century, the average full or part-time employed US married women with children was doing two hours less housework than in 1965 (Sullivan & Coltrane, 2008).

There is also considerable evidence that women who earn more, or are more successful in career terms, than their partners are in a situation to negotiate greater husband participation in family work (Cha & Thebaud, 2009). Brewster and Padavic (2000) argue that men find "equilibrium with reality" by adjusting their attitudes when their wives are contributing more substantially to the family income. In addition, as more men report that being involved as husbands and fathers is important to them, they may come to view another income as a way to facilitate a better balance between work and family life. Experiencing such benefits through marital satisfaction and breadwinning experiences may lead men to re-evaluate their own beliefs about what their primary activities should be (Cha & Thebaud, 2009).

Indeed, many studies give evidence that men's role at home are changing, though more slowly than expected. Because men and tasks associated with men are more valued and rewarded, there is more cultural support for women moving into previously male preserves, such as wage earning or even "male" jobs than there is for men engaging in household work that has been culturally labelled "feminine" (Folbre, 1994). Thus, while individual women may want more help with household work, the broader set of social forces encourages women to change more than men. With gender change a mostly one-way street, the result can be a longer day for women, as well as more pressure on women to multitask (Sayer et al., 2004).

Working couples with children may attempt to reduce their household tasks by making trade-offs, such as finding substitutes or outsourcing for domestic tasks and care giving (Bianchi et al., 2000; De Ruijter & Van der Lippe, 2007; Ezzedeen & Ritchey, 2009). Domestic activities that were previously taken unpaid by the family in most social groups are again becoming commodified in the public realm (Cancedda, 2001; Gregson & Lowe, 1994). Outsourcing includes hiring housekeepers, live-in nannies, babysitters, day care, laundry services and takeout food (Wallace & Young, 2008). In this matter, it is still the women who usually take responsibility for outsourcing, which tends to be regarded as help for the wives rather than the household (Ezzedeen & Ritchey, 2009; Milkie & Peltola, 1999). Despite the use of paid service domestic workers, due in part to the problems of work-life conflict, their use remains relatively low across Western society as a whole. Only around 6-10 per cent of households on average in Europe employ someone to undertake domestic chores (Cancedda, 2001), even though surveys have suggested that latent demand for this type of domestic service is much more widespread, with up to 25 per cent of household expressing a desire for domestic help. Windebank (2010) conducted a study on employees of a large service-sector employer in a major UK city and found that only around 30 per cent paid for at least one domestic service on a regular basis, with 23 per cent employ a cleaner, 14 per cent pay someone to do their ironing and 9 per cent have a gardener. Meanwhile, Gregson and Lowe (1994) noted that only around 35 per cent of the dual-career families in professional and managerial occupations in their study employed waged domestic labour in one form or another, including nannies. Two main factors were identified as barriers to the outsourcing of domestic chores when considering the attitudes of working women who do not pay for domestic services. The first is the question of affordability (Cancedda, 2001; Warren, 2003; Windebank, 2010) and the second is the positive value placed on looking after one's own home (Windebank, 2010). The absence of domestic chores outsourcing causes families to

work together to cope with their household duties and another important family tasks; namely, childcare. The next section will elaborate on the issues of childcare for dual-career couples

3.6 Childcare

Employment, particularly if work conditions are inflexible, with long hours or shift work at times when families are usually together, has the potential to interfere with the physical and emotional care that takes place within families (Bowes, 2005). The time demands related to care responsibilities are especially acute for men and women in highly demanding professions, where both family responsibilities and professional work are “greedy institutions”. However, these pressures are particularly severe for women in professional occupations, as they are aware of societal expectations that they prioritize family responsibilities ahead their careers (Suitor et al., 2001). This gendered division of family obligations and responsible parenting that remains in Western societies (Acker & Armenti, 2004; Jacobs & Winslow, 2004) plays a significant part in tensions between work and family for dual-career women. Nevertheless, despite the struggle faced by women in this aspect, it is important to note that dual-career men have been reported to show an increase in their contributions to childcare. Men in dual-career families are typically more engaged in caring for their children, especially compared with men in traditional, single-earner families (Bianchi & Milkie, 2010; Sullivan & Coltrane, 2008). However, regardless of this positive development, childcare remains much more the purview of mothers than fathers, just as paid work hours remain longer for fathers than mothers (Bianchi & Milkie, 2010; Ezzedeen & Ritchey, 2009). It is still widely assumed that mothers have the major responsibility for children and this is often reflected in how dual-career families negotiate their roles as parents and also in employers’ attitude (Ezzedeen & Ritchey, 2009).

A common perception of the legal profession and the workforce in general is that women, particularly mothers, expend less effort at work, spend less time at work and are generally less productive at work compared with men (Hill et al., 2004; Wallace, 2004). Working mothers report frequently that they feel undervalued, given less important and challenging work assignments and find themselves on the “mommy track” (Schwartz, 1992). The cultural pressures for mothering force women to devote more time and energy to childcare, even if they have invested heavily in a professional career (Wallace & Young, 2008). Mothers are assumed to be less motivated and productive because they either save their energy for their

family obligations or have no energy left for work after meeting their domestic responsibilities (Voydanoff, 2004). However, according to a study by Wallace and Young (2008), the presence of children has been found not to reduce women's work time and, instead, women with teenage children work longer hours than women without children. Only women with young children work fewer hours since they spend considerably more time on parental responsibilities. This shows that dual-career life style is more difficult to be managed by mothers of young children (Santos & Cardoso, 2008). Childcare responsibilities, especially those associated with younger children who are unable to take care of themselves and require constant supervision or organized care before and after school, are likely to impact negatively on mothers' work time (Byron, 2005; Wharton & Blair-Loy, 2006).

On the contrary, in taking on the male breadwinner role, fathers typically work longer hours and are viewed as more committed to their work than men without children (Hundley, 2001; Jacobs & Gerson, 2001). Having children entails greater economic demands, which may result in fathers increasing their work commitments to meet the economic needs of a larger family (Hundley, 2001). The expectation of being a "good" mother and wife are very different from the roles of being a "good" father and husband (Wallace & Young, 2008). For women, the expectations of motherhood usually conflict with their work roles, whereas for fathers they coincide (Milkie & Peltola, 1999). Therefore, women typically adjust their work schedules to accommodate their home responsibilities (Greenhaus & Friedman, 2000; Nomaguchi, et al., 2005) but, for men, being a good provider fulfils simultaneously worker, husband and father obligations (Jacobs & Gerson, 2001; Milkie & Peltola, 1999).

In a nutshell, household chores and childcare can be seen as the main sources of pressure and challenges for dual-career couples, especially dual-career women. This relates to traditional gender-role expectations that lead men to place more importance on their work role and women to place more importance on family roles (Higgins et al., 2010). In addition to family challenges, work also increases the tensions in the couples' life. The organizational work culture and the existence of certain family-unfriendly policies and practices in the workplace could become sources of pressure for the spouses. The next section will discuss in more detail the experiences of dual-career couples at work.

3.7 Experiences of Work

Difficulties at work have been recorded as one of the major challenges for dual-career couples. High levels of organisational turbulence, the spread of 24-hours, seven-day working

and complex shift patterns are just some of the well-documented features of the contemporary workplace that could cause stress and conflicts (Taylor et. al., 2004; Hyman et al., 2005). The thinking about the model of today's workforce is still very much oriented to the organisational assumption that ideal employers are those who work continuously from the end of education to retirement, work long rigid hours and do not allow family or other concerns to interfere with work (Ismail & Ibrahim, 2007). Many occupations, especially those in the most well-remunerated workplaces, require total absorption in the job, which is problematic for workers who wanted to spend time with their children and other family members (Blair-Loy, 2003). This suggests that most organizations seem to follow the traditional concepts of work and careers, which assume that workers are male and work is separate from the rest of life with work (Santos & Cardoso, 2008). As a result, "the male model of work" is the type of work model held widely in organizations.

3.7.1 Long Work Hours and Work Overload

Although the burden of family responsibilities falls largely on women, both partners in dual-career relationships are affected to some extent by overload and conflict from multiple roles (Byron, 2005; Eby et al. 2005; Elloy & Smith, 2004). This situation is often worsened by the expectation that committed employees should visibly put in long hours at the workplace (Santos & Cardoso, 2008; Swanberg, 2004; Wharton & Blair-Loy, 2006). The long-hours' work culture that prevails in many organizations renders the conciliation between work and family, and parenting in particular, a very difficult endeavour (Acker & Armenti, 2004; Doherty & Manfredi, 2006; Jacobs & Winslow, 2004). There is a evidence that long (full-time) work hours are likely to increase work-family conflict and is associated with relationship difficulties with partners and children (Allan et al., 2007; Byron, 2005; Barnett, 2006; Wharton & Blair-Loy, 2006). Working long hours, which is one of the expected behaviours in contemporary organisations (Swanberg, 2004), is consistently associated largely with reduced work and life satisfaction (Pocock et al., 2007).

However, Thornthwaite (2004) argued that the impact of long hours depends on their subjective meaning and a person's life circumstances. For instance, individuals in highly engaging, interesting and fulfilling work may enjoy working long hours (Wallace, 1997). Parents too, may choose to work long hours to support their family. For example, Weston et al. (2004) found that 25 per cent of fathers working very long hours were highly satisfied

with their hours and around 40 per cent did not desire fewer hours. Furthermore, the impact of long work hours may also depend on cultural meanings of work (Spector et al. 2004).

Work overload is also associated frequently with increased pressure on dual-career couples. In fact, it has emerged as the strongest predictor of work-life conflict (Byron, 2005; Skinner & Pocock, 2008). Work overload is likely to have a dual effect on work-life conflict; high workloads are likely to increase work hours and contribute to feelings of strain and exhaustion (Frone et al., 1997). In addition, there is good evidence that highly demanding jobs that lack control over work scheduling have detrimental outcomes for the well-being of individuals and their families (van der Doef & Maes, 1999). Furthermore, high workloads have also been identified as an important block to the uptake of work-family policies. For example, pursuing certain policies, such as taking time off, would only increase the stress levels due to the build-up of work (Waters & Bardoel, 2006). Thus, developing and implementing strategies to address work overload is challenging since work intensification is becoming a common phenomenon across countries (Green, 2004; Skinner & Pocock, 2008).

3.7.2 Rigid Work Arrangements

The rigid work arrangements by most organisations are also incompatible with family life and this may contribute to the difficulties and stress of the dual-career lifestyle (Anderson et al., 2002; Pocock et al., 2007). Lack of availability of flexible working hours was a key issue cited by female workers in their decision to leave their jobs (Smith & Secombe, 1998). These issues also extend to men, however, and it has been established that dissatisfaction with hours of work is a major cause of employee turnover among both sexes (Taylor, 2002). Inflexibility in work schedules also had deleterious consequences for child well-being and family life in general (Bianchi & Milkie, 2010). Such concerns led initially to the emergence of a family-friendly agenda, in which policies focused on supporting employees in combining work and family pressures, developing an emphasis on achieving work-life balance or work-life integration, often via flexible working mechanisms (Atkinson & Hall, 2009).

Nevertheless, there are a number of barriers identified traditionally as creating a take-up gap (Kodz et al., 2002); that is, the number of people who take flexible working options is much smaller than the number who desire greater work-life balance. Among the barriers typically identified is that there is a lack of awareness of flexible working policies (Skinner et al., 2004). Further, some organisations have no procedure for employees to request flexible working, and poor management skills have been shown to present barriers to introducing and

implementing work-life balance policies (Hall & Atkinson, 2005). Moreover, employees consider that taking up such options suggests a lack of commitment to one's career and the organization, with potentially negative consequences (Rana, 2002). The take-up of formal flexible working is also constrained by gender roles. Intensification of work has led to the assumption that work-life balance is not appropriate for professional and managerial roles, and that long hours necessarily apply (Sheridan, 2004) so that women have to perform according to a male career model in order to be considered successful (Smithson & Stokoe, 2005). Therefore, the flexible working arrangement seems to be more suitable for women than men. Professional men are, thus, rarely to be found working flexibly (Sheridan, 2004), although the burden of domestic labour falling upon women may mean that professional women are more likely than men to risk damage to their careers by seeking to work flexibly (Lewis, 2001).

3.7.3 Job Mobility and Relocation

Another problem that impacts on dual-career couples concerns job mobility and relocation. For dual-career couples, job mobility and relocation can be difficult considering factors such as social networking, children's schooling and, more importantly, the need to satisfy simultaneously the career requirements of both partners (Grady & McCarthy, 2008; Pierce and Delahaye, 1996). Mobility also takes place often at the disadvantage of married women, especially when they follow their husbands into small local labour markets (Rusconi, 2002). Empirical results show that singles (regardless of gender) and married men in particular succeed in re-achieving a qualified occupation after a regional move, but for married women, the chance to re-enter qualified employment is not only lower, but is especially low when they move to a smaller place of residence (Buchel, 2000). Thus, many relocations are turned down on the basis of family considerations (Challiol & Mignonac, 2005). Moreover, the emerging trends of increasing number of female expatriates (Linehan, 2002; Selmer, 2001) create unique challenges for dual-career couples. Since the failure of a spouse or family to adjust is the number-one reason for international assignment failure (Harvey et al., 2010), the idea of a trailing spouse seems to be problematic. As a result, being involved in dual-career marriages can be regarded as one factor contributing to increasing employee immobility.

Having to face numerous problems and challenges, has led dual-career couples to utilise various kinds of coping strategies and support in order to resolve their work-family tensions. In the subsequent section, these strategies and support will be discussed further.

3.8 Coping Strategies

A particularly interesting matter in the dual-career couples' research has been an inquiry into the strategies used by the couples in their attempts to manage work and family. Dual-career partners reported using a variety of individual emotion and problem-focused strategies (Bird & Schnurmann-Crook, 2005; Higgins et al., 2010). Emotion-focused coping is aimed at regulating reactively one's emotions in the face of a stressful situation (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Middleton, 2004). This coping strategy might include thinking positively (Bird & Schnurmann-Crook, 2005) and managing psychological strains by working harder and sacrificing personal well-being for that of the family (Becker & Moen, 1999; Middleton, 2004). Problem-focused coping, in contrast, is aimed at taking action to affect the nature of the person-environment transaction (Higgins et al., 2010). It includes analysing work problems or dividing work problems into smaller and more manageable segments (Bird & Schnurmann-Crook, 2005). In the context of family coping, problem-focused strategy might include restructuring family roles to accommodate family members' demands, restructuring work roles to accommodate family demands or hiring outside help (Middleton, 2004; Bird & Schnurmann-Crook, 2005).

In the context of dual-career couples, Becker & Moen (1999) found that women tend to engage in problem-focused strategies through scaling back strategies, such as placing limits on work responsibilities; defining their work as a job rather than a career; and trading off as the primary breadwinner, particularly during childrearing years. Many women workers in the US, Australia and the Netherlands, for example, scale back from full-time to part time work, reduce their work hours to fit family schedules, such as school hours, or leave the workforce altogether when their children are young (Barnett & Gareis, 2002; Pocock, 2001; Bosch et al., 2010). In doing so, women join the "mommy track", effectively sidelining their chances for career advancement for the sake of their families (Bowes, 2005).

Dual-career couples were also reported to depend on social support (Allen, 2001; Marcinkus et al. 2007). Research suggests that social support in the workplace, such as the support of supervisors and co-workers, has a positive impact on work outcomes (Allen, 2001; Marcinkus et al. 2007), while social support outside work, such as that provided by spouses, friends and helpers, have a positive impact on work-family balance (Carlson & Perrewe, 1999; Marcinkus et al., 2007; Ezzedeen & Ritchey, 2009). Hence, social support has positive

consequences for reducing stress and mitigating work and family challenges (Deelstra et al. 2003; Marcinkus et al. 2007; Grady & McCarthy, 2008).

Overall, dual-career couples make use of various types of strategies as well as relying on different kinds of support in order to cope with their problems and challenges. Additionally, employing organizations and government also help to facilitate the lives of dual-career couples by providing a number of family-friendly policies that would help them achieve a better work-family balance. This literature review, therefore, will consider the issues of government and organizational policies in the next section.

3.9 Policies to Support Dual-Career Couples

In conjunction with the rise of dual-career couples, many public policies were implemented in Western countries to facilitate women's employment, enhance gender equality and reduce work-family conflicts (Stier & Lewin-Epstein, 2007). Family supportive policies, such as fully paid maternity leave, subsidized day-care arrangements and tax deductions, have proved significant in affecting women's labour force participation and their employment patterns, which have become more similar to those of men (Daly, 2000; Korpi, 2000; Stier et al., 2001). Studies have also indicated that the availability and use of flexibility and other work-family policies are associated with higher commitment, job satisfaction, loyalty and lower rates of turnover (Allen, 2001; Roehling et al., 2001).

In the workplace, many employing organizations respond to the needs of dual-career couples by offering a variety of family-friendly policies, such as flexitime, telecommuting, compressed work week, job sharing, day-care provision and many others. For many human resource practitioners, dual-career policies are developed in order to successfully recruit and retain qualified candidates. Increasing employees' control over their work scheduling may be a central strategy to reduce work-life conflict, and it is certainly one of the most common strategies utilised in European companies and Australian organisations (De Cieri et al., 2005; Kelly & Moen, 2007). Flexitime, for example, has been cited as one of the most popular strategies used by dual-career couples (Bowes, 2005, Haddock et al., 2006). Flexible schedules may allow employees to alter their daily work start and end times or the ability to leave work when unexpected demands arise (Golden, 2001). Greater flexibility and discretion in one's work hours may help parents to structure their workdays to better cope with competing work and family role demands (Byron, 2005). Flexible work hours are one of the least costly family-friendly benefits that workplaces can offer. It might be reframed as a

“lifestyle benefit” that is attractive in recruiting and retaining not only working mothers, but also other employees of various family statuses who can use and enjoy a flexible schedule (Wallace & Young, 2008). Flexitime has been linked to reductions in tardiness, absenteeism, sick leave and to a reduction of turnover, as well as increased psychological and physical health and greater employee loyalty (Roehling et al., 2001; Glass & Riley, 1998).

In addition, telecommuting, the use of technology to perform paid work while at home, is another preferred strategy used by dual-career partners (Bowes, 2005). Telecommuting is defined as work conducted from home supported by telecommunications technology, such as telephone, internet access or computers (Nilles, 1998). Telecommuting enhances employees’ job flexibility and autonomy by allowing work to be completed from virtually any location at any time (Haddock et al., 2006). It, therefore, allows workers to be more available for family-related needs, thereby relieving some of the strain endemic to dual-career couples (Bowes, 2005). Research also suggests that individuals who are able to use formal flexibility policies, such as telecommuting, are likely to reciprocate with more favourable work attitudes and behaviours (Kossek et al., 2006).

Overall, various policies have been implemented by the Government and organizations in many countries to ease the burden of dual-career spouses. These policies may differ across nations due to dissimilarity of cultural ideologies that, in turn, will produce different effects on both the husbands and wives. Therefore, the next section will look more closely at the effect of cultural values through government and organisational policies, and also consider the effect of the policies on women’s labour force patterns and gender equality.

3.9.1 The Effect of Cultural Values through Government and Organizational Policy

Despite shared international concerns, countries vary in how they address issues of work and family. Cultural differences in the meaning and structure of the institutions of work, family and gender shape government and organizational policies and peoples’ ability to utilize them (Blair-Loy & Frankel, 2005; Davis & Greenstein, 2004; Stier & Lewin-Epstein, 2007). Societal cultural models are the frameworks through which legislators, managers, workers and family members interpret their world. They define what people consider work-family problems and clarify who is responsible for offering solutions, whether that is the individual worker, the family, the community, the employer or the state (Blair-Loy & Frankel, 2005). Therefore, the analysis of societal cultures and how they shape people, organizations and

policies is essential in the design of more effective work-family arrangements around the globe (Blair-Loy & Frankel, 2005).

Variation in cultural models of family and work can be identified across societies. For instance, different conceptualizations of the centrality of work in people's lives and in providing meaning to these lives lead to differences in workers' attitudes toward working overtime and part-time. In the US, the overtime culture is only rarely challenged among professionals and managers (Blair-Loy & Jacobs, 2003; Jacobs & Gerson, 2004), and many workers in the general population put in more hours than they would prefer (Clarkberg & Moen, 2001). Yet, in other cultures, long hours are less normative (Perlow, 2001). Stier and Lewin-Epstein (2003) found that local cultural conceptualizations of working time may explain some of the wide differences in workers' preferences of working time in 22 industrialized societies. In Britain and the Netherlands, part-time jobs are seen as family-friendly. Hence, their positions are better integrated into the labour market than part-time employed women in Finland and Italy (Bang et al. 2000).

Societal variation in cultural models of family and gender also affects how childcare is perceived. According to comparative research of EU member states, in Belgium-Flanders, Denmark, France and Sweden the public and private childcare coverage rate for children under three surpasses 40 per cent; for French Belgium and the Netherlands it is about 33 per cent; whereas Austria, Germany, Greece, Italy and Spain score less than 10 per cent score (Platenga et al., 2008). In Germany, for example, where the male breadwinner/female housewife contract prevails, many people believe it is harmful for pre-school children to be away all day from home and their mother. This cultural understanding justifies the limited hours of public care institutions (Pfau-Effinger, 2000). In societies with more egalitarian understandings, such as Sweden, care provision for children under three years old by reliable nannies or in state supervised day-care centres are viewed as normative and even preferred (Blair-Loy & Frankel, 2005).

A study by Straub (2007) shows that company contribution to childcare is low in European countries where the state plays an active role as care provider, whereas company contribution is high in countries with little public care coverage. However, this fact does not hold true for Sweden. Although the state is an active provider, company involvement is very high, which seems to suggest that Swedish companies have recognized that they also have an important

role to play in the provision of childcare in order to overcome work-family related problems (Straub, 2007).

Additionally, in many societies, the extended family also plays a big part in providing care for young children. For example, in the former Soviet Union, childrearing by grandparents who sometimes live far away from the parents' residence is a common and accepted arrangement. In addition, in many Chinese societies, the extended family is a robust institution buttressed by ties of regular visits and transfer of care and financial support (Joplin et al., 2003; Zhan & Montgomery, 2003). In another example, the Latino extended family structures gives Latina mothers more access to relatives for childcare, compared with white mothers (Lamphere et al., 1993).

In organizations, policies are constrained by managers' cultural assumptions regarding what is "normal" or beneficial to employees. Poster and Prasad (2005) found that similar software firms in the US and India offered distinctive work-family policies. The American firm offered flexitime and telecommuting, while the Indian company offered material support such as paid maternity leave and on-site childcare. Workplace policies, such as telecommuting and flexitime, which blur the work-home boundary, would likely pose problems for women in some countries because they make them appear available for extended family care-giving during the days. For instance, the strong ties of family support in Chinese societies are also intense ties of family obligation to parents and adult siblings. When the elderly require special care, daughters-in law, daughters and sons are expected to be their care givers (Zhan & Montgomery, 2003). Similarly, South Asian women find that the extended family obligations interfere with their professional responsibilities and consume their non-work time and weekends (Rana et al., 1998). Thus, policies such as telecommuting and flexitime might not be effective for dual-career couples in these societies.

Hence, government and organisational policies in different countries are influenced by their cultural ideology in terms of their attitudes towards gender role. The real test of whether organizations are adapting to their changing workforce is the extent to which they achieve through accommodation of work and family, and also contribute towards gender equality in the home (Acker, 2006).

3.9.2 Policy Effects

One of the main concerns regarding family-friendly policies to support dual-career couples is whether these policies really improve work-life integration, especially for dual-career women. Indeed, these policies seem to produce various effects in terms of women's employment patterns and gender equality at work and home. Observational studies pooled data across countries with differing policy contexts, and showed that countries with a large public sector of female-type jobs facilitated women's part-time employment but also tended to increase gender occupational segregation (Mandel & Semyonov, 2006). The provision of long parental leave for childbirth discouraged female labour force participation and tended to ghettoize mothers when they were employed (Gangl & Ziefle, 2009).

Hook (2006) found that policies that aimed to support mothers' employment did not increase men's participation in housework. Undeniably, while family policies (such as maternity leave schemes and subsidized childcare arrangements) are expected, in general, to improve women's position by allowing them to combine family duties with market involvement, they may preserve simultaneously the gendered division of labour (Stier & Lewin-Epstein, 2007). Family supportive policies seldom target men's involvement in family work or their role as parents (except for a few paternity leave schemes); therefore, while encouraging the participation of women in the labour market (Gornick & Mayers, 2003), these policies are not aimed directly at increasing gender equality, but rather are oriented towards alleviating the conflict between home and work, which is often experienced by women (Stier & Lewin-Epstein, 2007).

Whether work-family policies are viewed as effective depends on the desired outcome, with labour market outcomes only part of the nexus. More time with one's own children may increase family well-being, even though it erodes labour market outcomes of the individual parent (Bianchi & Milkie, 2010). For example, a programme in Norway where parents are paid to care for their own young children increased parental time and correlated with increase marital stability of the couple (Hardoy & Schone, 2008). In Germany, for example, the relevance of traditional gender role beliefs are manifested clearly in tax benefits for married couples and a lack of public childcare provision. The inadequacy of childcare services is a result of institutionalized gender role beliefs that conceive and depend upon mothers as primary care givers (Rusconi & Solga, 2008). Government provision of childcare increased

the pace at which women became first-time mothers (Rindfuss et. al, 2007) at the same time as it increased maternal employment (Misra et. al. 2007).

Government, through its policies, certainly plays a major role in influencing the experience of dual-career couples. The Nordic model of family-friendly policies, for instance, establishes mandatory employment rights to promote work-family balance and is designed to “influence the role of father within the family”. In Sweden, Government-mandated paid parental leave has been available to both mothers and fathers since 1974. By 2006, each parent had two non-transferable leave months and nine additional months to share. From the beginning, parental leave was presented as a policy designed to promote gender equality, with women and men having equal opportunities and responsibilities to contribute economically to the family and care for their children (Hass & Hwang, 2008). In the Nordic countries, there are high female participation rates, with many mothers working part-time (Finland excepted) and extensive public systems to assist the reconciliation of work and family (Hardy & Adnett, 2002). Therefore, it cannot be denied that cultural ideologies certainly affect the types of policies that are suitable to be implemented in particular countries, but still governments and organizations play significant roles in designing policies that will not only facilitate the lives of dual-career spouses, but also contribute to gender equality at home and work without isolating the cultural values of each society.

3.10 Summary

This review explored some of the existing empirical research concerning dual-career couples, particularly in Western countries. The review began with a definition of the dual-career phenomenon and a general description of the advantages and difficulties associated with this family model. Despite financial benefits and several psychological advantages, the literatures pointed out that some problems and challenges may arise due to the impact of combining two careers in a family.

A review has been made in terms of the impact of dual-career relationship on issues, such as the provider role, decision making, division of family work and childcare. Clearly, the literatures indicate that despite the remarkable growth of women in employment, dual-career couples still insist that husbands should be regarded as the main provider in the family. However, certain conditions, such as wives attaining higher salary or wives with more specialized careers, might influence the couples’ career prioritizing and perceptions of the

provider role. Markedly, being involved in dual-career marriages give women greater decision-making powers. However, in the household management, women still carry the major responsibility for housework and family care. Undeniably, dual-career husbands engage in family work and childcare more than men in traditional families, but the main responsibilities still fall on women which certainly present more struggles for them.

Existing studies also revealed that dual-career couples face several challenges at work, such as long work hours, work overload, rigid work arrangements and a dilemma with job mobility and relocation, which is incompatible with the dual-career lifestyle. These force couples to adopt certain strategies in order to cope with the challenges. Emotion-focused and problem-focused coping are the two types of strategies used commonly by couples. In addition, dual-career couples were also reported to rely on social support to reduce the conflict between work and family. Social support in the workplace and outside work, such as family, friends and helpers, proved to have a positive impact psychologically and physically.

The literatures also pointed out that many countries have developed public policies to support dual-career couples' work and home balance. Family supportive policies, flexibility policies and dependent care benefits have proved to generate positive impact at work as well as encouraging the women's workforce participation. Nevertheless, these policies may be different due to variation in cultural ideologies in each society. People in different societies might have different preferences in the type of supports that they like and, thus, organizational policies were found to be influenced by cultural assumptions regarding to what is beneficial to the employees.

These policies certainly produce different effects in terms of women's employment patterns and gender equality between dual-career spouses. Studies indicated that policies aimed at supporting mothers at work facilitate women to combine family work with labour market participation but, at the same time, they do not improve men's involvement in household work. However, it should be noted that culture values once again have a profound impact on assessing the effectiveness of work-family policies. Thus, it is important for the Government and organizations to develop policies that are suitable to employees in different countries but that also improve the equality between dual-career couples.

In short, previous research has pointed out the importance of identifying the differences across national boundaries as a result of local uniqueness. Women in Malaysia, for instance, may face greater challenges due to the more traditional orientation of the societies compared

with the Western countries. The lack of research on dual-career couples in Malaysia, furthermore, created the need to explore in more detail the experience of dual-career couples in this society. Examining the experiences of Malaysian couples will contribute to a better understanding of the similarities and variations in work and family experiences, compared with those highlighted in the literature review. The finding from this study would not only fill the gaps and enrich the literature in this area, but also provide useful knowledge for practitioners, such as the Government, local organizations and multinational corporations, to help them develop suitable policies and support for dual-career couples.

Chapter 4

Theoretical Framework

This chapter reviews the theoretical framework that is used to guide the investigation of this thesis. It includes gender role ideology and role salience, which are selected to provide a robust and comprehensive framework to examine the context of dual-career couples. This chapter starts with a background to gender role ideology and a review of the factors influencing an individual's belief about gender role. A detailed elaboration is also presented on how this theory fits with the topic under investigation. The next section provides a review of role salience, which is another perspective applied as the theoretical backdrop for the thesis. Several important concepts in this perspective and the relationship between role salience and the work and family study are addressed. This is followed by a discussion on the appropriateness of this framework for this particular research. Finally, this chapter highlights the usefulness of integrating simultaneously both gender role ideology and role salience in the examination of dual-career couples.

4.1 Gender Role Ideology

Gender roles are those behaviours and attitudes prescribed and assigned to males and females by the broader culture solely on the basis of gender (Bartley et al., 2005). Women and men vary in their individual views concerning appropriate behaviours for the sexes in the paid work and family domains (Corrigall & Konrad, 2007). Conceptually, gender role orientation is seen as ranging on a continuum from traditional to non-traditional gender role orientation. Traditional roles are those that see the roles of men and women as distinct and separate, whereas non-traditional or egalitarian gender role orientation is characterized by role sharing by men and women (Ahmad, 1999). Therefore, traditional individuals believe that a woman's role is homemaker and that a man's role is breadwinner. More egalitarian individuals believe that women should share in the financial support of the family and that men should participate in childcare and other traditionally feminine aspects of household labour (Corrigall & Konrad, 2007).

Gender role ideology has been chosen as the theoretical framework for the thesis due to its suitability to the research, which intends to provide a comparison of the perspectives of both husbands and wives in understanding their experiences of combining careers and family. The importance of including gender role ideology in dual-career couples' research has been

highlighted by Singley and Hynes (2005), who suggested that gender role attitudes of a couple may influence their joint work and family patterns. This is supported by Korabik et al. (2008), who suggested that gender role ideology determines behaviours and, therefore, knowing the individual's gender role ideology would be more important in predicting work-family conflict than knowing the gender of the individual. Much research on international perspectives (e.g Hendrickx et. al., 2001; Gonzalez-Lopez, 2001; Lewis, et al. 1992; Rusconi, 2002) have been using this dominant theory as the theoretical base to explain the context of dual-career family in particular countries. Moreover, they stress that examination of the evolving nature of gender role expectation in the couples' life is relevant given that the challenges men and women face as they no longer necessarily subscribe to pre-defined societal notions about which partner should be the breadwinner or caregiver are still influenced inevitably by gender role expectation (Fern Hube, 2007). Hence, an examination of dual-career couples in Malaysia using this theoretical base would be appropriate.

Including gender ideology in the literature on dual-career couples allows us to determine the impact of individuals' internalized societal gender expectations and norms on the role strain of the individual (King, 2005). It was highlighted that different social conditions would produce distinct individual life experiences and beliefs through their effect on the change of family relationships and behaviours (Tu & Chang, 2000). Industrialization shifts a society from agricultural to non-agricultural modes of production, creates employment opportunities and new occupations, and facilitates peoples' (especially women's) ability to earn wages. The greater economic opportunities among women could influence existing gender roles and norms. Women turned income earner may be able to leverage their new position to change gender roles in their households by influencing the allocation of time and resources among household members, shifting the relative power within the households and, more broadly, exercising stronger agency (Worldbank, 2011)

Public policies also have a significant impact on gender roles. For example, during the divided years, East Germany and West Germany encouraged women to combine paid work and the family in very different ways (Bauernschuster & Rainer, 2011). In East Germany, the principle of "equal pay for equal work" was made part of the first constitution in 1949. By the 1970s, the regime recognized that women's increasing employment seemed to be associated with lower fertility rates (Engelhardt et al. 2002). In the latter years of the socialist regime, the policy focus changed from qualified employment to the reconciliation of work and

maternity. In addition to providing extensive childcare, the implemented policies made it possible for women to take paid leave with a job-return guarantee after childbirth and to reduce working hours while the children were small (Trappe 1996). In West Germany, by contrast, combining work and family was difficult for women due to the lack of public childcare. Family policy centred around extended maternal leave for childcare, which allowed mothers to stay at home with their children, depending economically on their partners and a means-tested payment (Engelhardt et al. 2002). Thus, West German policy encouraged a male breadwinner model in which women worked until they had children and then either stayed at home or returned to part-time work after a long interruption (Bauernschuster & Rainer, 2011).

The literatures on gender role attitudes also suggest that there are several other factors that influence a person's gender role ideology (Barry & Beitel, 2006; Harris & Firestone, 1998). Gender is one of the significant factors of gender roles attitudes (Tu & Chang, 2000). Bolzendahl and Myers (2004) argued that because women have more of a vested interest in increased egalitarianism, men are expected to be less egalitarian than women. Many studies (e.g. Bolzendahl & Myers, 2004; Cunningham et al., 2005; Fan & Marini, 2000; Thornton & Young-De Marco, 2001) noted that men are less gender egalitarian than women. Young men, especially, hesitate to challenge the cultural standard of the mother role and the expectation of negative child outcomes due to maternal employment presumably because, in general, men may benefit from women's unequal performance of family and household tasks (Davis & Greenstein, 2009).

Researchers have pointed out that socioeconomic factors may affect family gender role attitudes. This includes findings that women and men who have higher incomes express more egalitarian gender role orientations (e.g. Lackey, 1989), while children from more economically-advantaged family backgrounds also have more egalitarian gender attitudes (Kulik, 2002). Moreover, mother's labour force participation is associated with more egalitarian gender role views (Harris & Firestone, 1998). Mothers play a key role in socialization and, as such, maternal education and labour force participation provide children with exposure to a more gender egalitarian method of household organization (Davis & Greenstein, 2009). Previous research has also used the number of children to identify traditional family circumstances (Bolzendahl & Myers, 2004; Tu & Chang, 2000), as married couples with several children are considered the most traditional family arrangement and are

considered to be less gender egalitarian (Davis & Greenstein, 2009; Tu & Chang, 2000). However, evidence suggests that the birth of children has the same traditionalizing effect across the life course for both women and men (Ciabattari, 2001; Corrigan & Konrad, 2007; Cunningham et al., 2005; Fan & Marini, 2000).

Cohort effects on gender ideology are also mentioned in the literatures as a result of more egalitarian cohorts aging in the adult population and replacing older, more traditional cohorts (Davis & Greenstein, 2009), which lead to population-level shifts in attitudes (Brewster & Padavic, 2000). Hence, younger individual attitudes' changed more than older individuals, which are also linked with less traditional gender role orientation (Fan & Marini, 2000, Brewster & Padavic, 2000). A study by Ciabattari (2001) showed that American men born in the pre-baby boom era (1925-1944) are more traditional, compared with men born later.

Education also plays an important role in determining the level of exposure to egalitarian ideas. Studies have shown that increases in educational attainment and achieving advanced degrees are associated with less traditional gender role orientations (Bianchi et al., 2000; Bolzendahl & Myers, 2004; Corrigan & Konrad, 2007; Harris & Firestone, 1998). However, societal context may influence how education impacts on gender role attitudes. For example, Inglehart and Baker (2000) argue that how countries experience the effects of education may differ based on the level of democracy, cultural persistence or even religion. Japan and South Korea serve as specific examples where the persistence of normative/cultural institutional profiles regarding power distance and masculine roles possibly mutes the modernizing effects of their well-developed educational systems on the managers' gender role attitudes. The content of education may also affect gender role attitudes (Lindsey, 2005). For instance, if the educational content tends to reinforce gender stereotyping (boys doing more interesting or "heroic" things than girls in textbooks, or other gendered curricula), it is likely that people will share more traditional gender role orientation (Parboteeah et al., 2008).

Cultural and ethnic group differences have been identified as contributing to differences in gender role attitudes among people (Barry & Beitel, 2006). For instance, African-Americans are expected to be more egalitarian than whites because African-American women have a higher rate of labour force participation (Davis & Greenstein, 2009) and African-Americans have a higher commitment in general to egalitarianism (Harris & Firestone, 1998). Some evidence also suggests that Hispanics are less egalitarian than non-Hispanics whites (Fan & Marini, 2000; Kane, 2000), particularly regarding attitudes towards separate spheres (Kane,

2000). Apart from ethnic differences, religious belief was also regarded as one factor influencing a person's gender role ideology. Specific tenets within religious doctrines often focus on gender relations as well as women's and men's relative responsibilities for childrearing (Davis & Greenstein, 2009). Nevertheless, religions are expected to differ in their teachings about gender relations and, thus, lead to different ideologies among their followers. For example, findings indicate generally that religions, such as Conservative Protestants, are the least supportive of gender egalitarianism, Jews are the most supportive, while Catholics and mainline Protestants are somewhere in between (Baker et al., 2009; Bolzendahl & Myers, 2004; Ciabattari, 2001; Fan & Marini, 2000).

4.1.1 Consequences of Gender Ideology

Gender role attitudes are likely to affect the amount of time spent in paid as well as unpaid work. Women with more traditional attitudes are likely to focus their time and energy on family responsibilities and household labour. If there is sufficient family income from other sources, they may choose to forgo household labour or reduce paid work time to meet unpaid family obligations. More egalitarian women may be willing to forgo household labour, negotiate more sharing of such labour or be more willing to hire household labour services in order to increase paid work time (Corrigan & Konrad, 2007). On the other hand, men's participation in paid labour may be less responsive to their gender role attitudes, because labour force withdrawal is less acceptable for men than for women (Doucet, 2004).

Research examining men's gender role attitudes to family tasks found that men, who saw their roles as interchangeable with their wives role, are more egalitarian in decision making. They are also found to accept more responsibility for tasks related to childcare as well as household work, such as meal preparation and cleaning, compared with men with the traditional ideology (Bianchi et al., 2000; Pittman & Blanchard, 1996). Studies reveal egalitarian men's definition of success as reflecting their belief; these men note that their relationship with their children is a better marker of success than their financial contributions to the household or their business acumen (Coltrane, 2000; Davis & Greenstein, 2009). Numerous studies in Western countries have pointed out that men with less traditional gender ideologies do a greater share of the household duties (Bianchi et al., 2000; Cunningham, 2005; Davis & Greenstein, 2009; Kan, 2008; Nordenmark & Nyman, 2003). Even a few studies in Asian countries seem to support this contention (Hu & Kamo, 2007; Pimentel, 2006). There is also evidence that gender role attitude is associated with perceptions of fairness in the

division of household labour. According to Nordenmark and Nyman (2003), traditional women are less likely than non-traditional women to perceive inequalities in the division of household labour as unfair. In addition, men of a lower breadwinner status relative to that of their wives are more likely to embrace egalitarian ideology, and that egalitarian men are more likely to engage in a more equal share of the provider role.

The consequences of gender role ideology can also be seen explicitly at work. Employing organization with traditional gender role ideology is characterized by inequality for men and women for advancement, training and responsibility; thus contributing to occupational segregation at workplace. Recent research in Western countries shows that occupational segregation still exists, even though there has been a slight reduction of occupational segregation by gender in some occupations (Blackwell, 2001; Hellerstein & Neumark, 2008; Davidson & Burke, 2011). Chang (2000) and Parboteeah et al. (2008) argue that the more regulation there is aimed at redressing gender equality, the less likely such societies are to be “sex segregation regimes” and the less likely organisations will have traditional gender role attitudes. This is crucial since the policies introduced by the Government have not only influenced the actual labour force participation of both men and women, but in their institutional arrangements also reflect normative views about the roles of women and men on the labour market and within the family spheres (Sjoberg, 2004). Societies with more legislation concerned with redressing gender equality are more likely to focus on agendas relevant to working women (e.g providing childcare support or facilitating re-entry of women into the workforce after maternity leave) (Parboteeah, 2008; Saint-Germain, 1990). The support that reconciles women’s work and family obligations have the potential to ease the tension and abate this role conflict (Sjoberg, 2004).

The research on dual-career families has, in general, established that gender roles in most contemporary societies are subject to a complex interplay of contradictory forces (Ramu, 1987; Rusconi & Solga, 2008). There exist expectations that reinforce inequality between men and women due to cultural values that emphasize different roles for husbands and wives. At the same time, economic development, women’s labour force participation, cultural context and state policies are also important influences on couples’ family structures (Fuwa, 2004). In such context, husbands and wives face a dilemma regarding adherence to traditional patterns or moving to a more egalitarian relationships. The resolution of this problem has not been easy for most couples, and the patterns of renegotiation of roles differ not only across social class divisions, but also from one couple to another (Ramu, 1987).

In the Malaysian context, gender role ideology is influenced profoundly by cultural values and religious beliefs. Despite the fact that most research about women has pointed out that traditional family structures are still widely practice (Ariffin, 1999; Noor; 1999), recent studies by Abdullah et al. (2008) and Ng (2012) have indicated that there has been some shift towards less-traditional attitudes especially among the younger generation. Therefore, this present study investigates the gender role attitude of the husbands and wives in order to discover whether there has been movement towards a less traditional gender role ideology in their perceptions regarding provider role, career priority, decision making and division of family work, and explores how variations in personal characteristics might affect their gender role orientation. From this perspective, the study also investigates the impact of cultural values, religious belief and other relevant factors on the couples, and the Government and organizations attitude towards gender role. Additionally, it also examines the consequences of gender role ideology displayed by the Government and organizations, and how these impact the couples' experiences at work and at home.

Apart from gender role ideology, this study also attempts to expand the theoretical framework by utilizing another perspective, role salience, in order to create an effective framework to explore the complexities in the lives of dual-career couples. Therefore, the next section will discuss in more detail this particular concept and how it is relevant to be incorporated as a framework in this study.

4.2 Role Salience

The term "role salience" has been used by researchers as the choices people make within various social roles (Stryker and Serpe, 1994). It is a reflection of the importance and value that people place on the roles they determine to be central to their lives and identities. In a single day, an individual may engage with the roles of spouse, parent, older adult care provider, employee and co-worker. Many adults will find that there are some cases when the expectations and responsibilities of their roles are compatible, and other times when they have to make decisions to fulfil the expectations and responsibilities of one role in lieu of another (Greer & Egan, 2012). The concept of role salience was established by Super (1982) to represent the notion that all life roles are not necessarily of equal importance to a person. He suggested role salience as being composed of three basic components: commitment (conative component), participation (behavioural component) and knowledge (cognitive component). One's identification with a role entails a psychological focus on that role's

activities and may play a significant part in how effective the individual is in that role, which may influence their physical or psychological availability in another role (Rothbard, 2001). Additionally, identifying with a role provides guidance for behaviours within that role (Thoits, 1991). This notion of role salience explains partially why individuals choose to behave the way they do within a social role, and why individuals experience an enriching effect of one role on the quality of life in another role (e.g., Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Wayne et al., 2006). Noor (2004) has cited that role salience or importance has been used interchangeably with several other terms, such as role centrality (Martire et al., 2000), role commitment (Brown et al., 1987) and personal involvement (Frone et al., 1995).

4.2.1 Role Salience as a Framework in Work and Family Study

The importance of role salience as a framework for examining the conflict and relationship between work and family roles has been highlighted by previous researchers (e.g. Cinamon & Rich, 2002a; 2002b; Cinamon et al., 2008; Greenhaus & Powell, 2003; Noor, 2004; Winkel & Clayton, 2009). Although these researchers have suggested that role salience is a relevant variable for work-family research, studies have pointed out that this perspective has been largely neglected (e.g: Biggs & Brough, 2005; Bicaksiz, 2009). Taking into account the lack of role salience perspective in the study of dual-career couples and its significance in understanding dual-career couples' experience in work and family roles, this theory has also been selected as the framework for this thesis. Therefore, apart from gender role ideology, this thesis incorporates role salience in its theoretical framework to show the utility of using both perspectives in understanding the experiences of dual-career couples.

Role salience is effective in generating understanding towards peoples' perceptions on the importance of work and family roles in their lives and how they face challenges in fulfilling their responsibilities. In general, both men and women have been found to rank their roles as spouse and parent at similar levels of importance, or salience; both of these roles are ranked as more important than their roles as employees (Thoits, 1992), and family activity is chosen over work activity (Greenhaus and Powell, 2003). However, a dual-career couple is, by nature, required to maintain some dual salience of the work and family roles (Budworth et al., 2008). Complicating this picture is the reality among dual-career couples; those who rated both work and family roles as highly salient had higher work-family conflict than those who placed family above career (Cinamon & Rich, 2002a), and corrective efforts to resolve

threats to family roles often result in a disruptive impact on their work roles (Bird & Shnurmann-Crook, 2005; Guelzow & Bird, 1995). Hence, a common problem for dual-career couples is achieving a satisfactory balance in their commitment to family and work roles.

A number of factors have been associated as predictors of role salience. These include demographic, individual differences, cultural differences and gender differences (Greer & Egan, 2012). In terms of cultural background, for example, Esdaile et al. (1997) highlighted that differences were apparent in values and role salience between occupational therapy students in Canada and Australia. Another study by Watson et al. (1995) also stressed in their study the impact of culture on the career development of black and white South African university students, where differences in their work salience were highlighted and black students were found to be significantly less career mature than white students. Age or life stage is also mentioned as a factor when age is related negatively to the occupation reward-value of high career men (Chi Ching, 1995). For these high career men, at the pre-launching couple stages they devote their attention to their careers and, at the subsequent mature parenthood stage they start to pay attention to the family. Other studies, such as Salami (2000), found that socio-economic status was related to work-role salience and a study by Hartung et al. (2002) indicates that characteristics of a person's family of origin affect role salience hierarchy. They suggest that people who perceive their family of origin as more functionally adaptable and cohesive, participates more in home and family roles in life. The extent to which people determines their salient roles may also be influenced in part by gender (e.g Budworth et al., 2008; Bagger et al., 2008; Cinamon & Rich, 2002b; Marin et al., 2002). Cinamon & Rich (2002a), for example, found three profiles of workers who differ in attributions of importance to work and family roles. They are classified as persons who assign high importance to both the work role and the family role ("Dual" profile); participants who ascribed high importance to the work role and low importance to the family role ("Work" profile); and participants who attributed high importance to the family role and low importance to the work role ("Family" profile). In their subsequent study, it was found that men were distributed equally throughout the profiles, whereas women were underrepresented in the Work category and more women than men fit the Family profile, and more men than women fit the Work profile (Cinamon & Rich, 2002b). Another study by Marin et al. (2002) found that women appear to be more likely to experience dynamic conflict between their roles, especially work and family roles. It is important to note that the effect of gender presents an interesting point of discussion as it can be elaborate together with the gender role

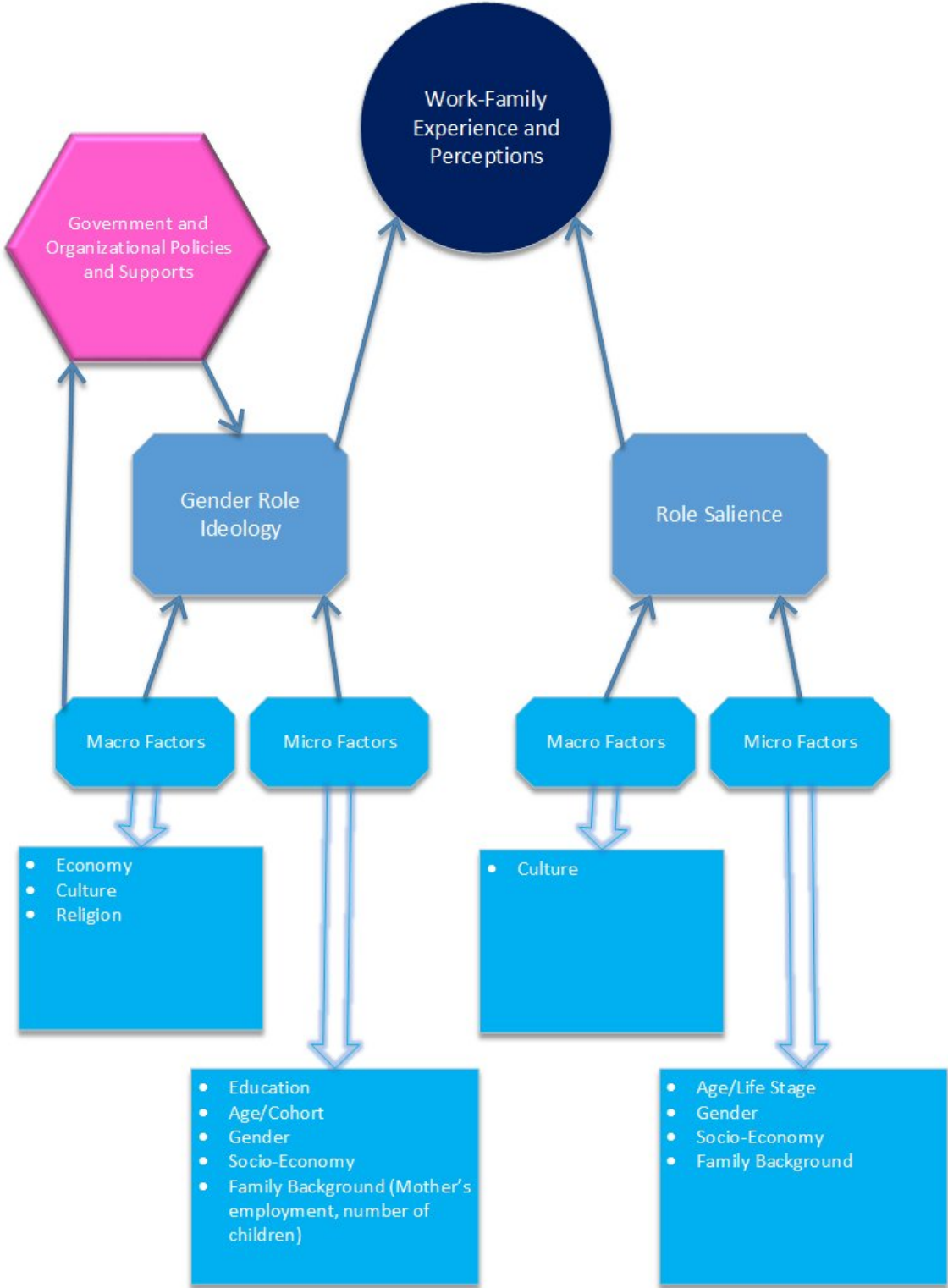
ideology viewpoint. Earlier studies have demonstrated the joint use of gender role ideology and salience of work-family roles in exploring the extent to which work and family interfere with each other. Bagger et al., (2008) in their quantitative study of 163 employees in a US firm, found that people with high salience in family roles have a reduction in the negative impact of family on work experience and the buffering effect of high family salience towards work was stronger for women than for men. When women identify strongly with their family role, they may be less concerned with the interference of family activities with their work. However, men's job satisfaction was affected by a high level of family interference in work, regardless of their family salience. These findings suggest that since men have to conform to the gender stereotype as a breadwinner, a high salience in their family roles may not be able to protect them against the negative impact of family on work.

In brief, research has shown that there are several factors that could influence the salience of a role in a person's life. However, at present, there is yet to be any research conducted using role salience as the base in relation to dual-career couples in Malaysia. Therefore, it would be useful to explore what kind of factors might be significant in influencing the salience of a role in the Malaysian context and, therefore, provide a comparison with previous research.

The research also expands the use of role salience as a framework examining work and family experience by focusing on a couple-level analysis. In the context of dual-career couples, Budworth et al. (2008) proposed that it is necessary to consider how the roles of the individuals within the couple may be shaped by their interactions with each other. They argued that, when the individual is part of a couple, the role of worker may take on a different meaning or position than if the individual was not part of an independent relationship. For example, if one member of a couple is ill and unable to work, the other person may have to move the role of worker higher in his or her role hierarchy. However, since this proposition has not been examined empirically, it would be interesting to see in the current research how the interactions between spouses will influence the importance of a particular role at a time.

To summarize, the research is investigated with respect to the following framework, as illustrated in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1: A Summarizing Framework based on the Literature Review of Gender Role Ideology and Role Salience



4.3 Summary

This chapter reviews the literature on the theoretical framework used to guide the investigation in this study. The review of the literature outlined in this chapter highlights the importance of using both perspectives in examining the experience of work and family. However, the extent of using both perspectives simultaneously in the context of couples has not been fully investigated. The following research objectives, therefore, seek to address the gaps in the literature and, in so doing, meet the aim of the research, providing crucial evidence on the experience of dual-career couples in Malaysia combining work and family. The research objectives are as follows:

- 1) To generate a unique set of empirical data that enables comparison of the perspectives of both husbands and wives in understanding their experiences of combining career and family.
- 2) To provide a comparison between the perceptions and experiences of Malaysian dual-career couples and dual-career couples in the West in relation to the challenges of and support for combining careers and family life.
- 3) To examine the utility of gender role ideology and role salience as theoretical frameworks in understanding the experiences of Malaysian dual-career couples and the factors that impact their perceptions and experiences.
- 4) To suggest recommendations for organizations and policymakers regarding the best ways to enhance couples' work and family balance that encourages role sharing between dual-career husbands and wives.

The research questions have been generated from the literature review and address directly the research objectives. The questions that have been identified and the links with the research objectives are as follows:

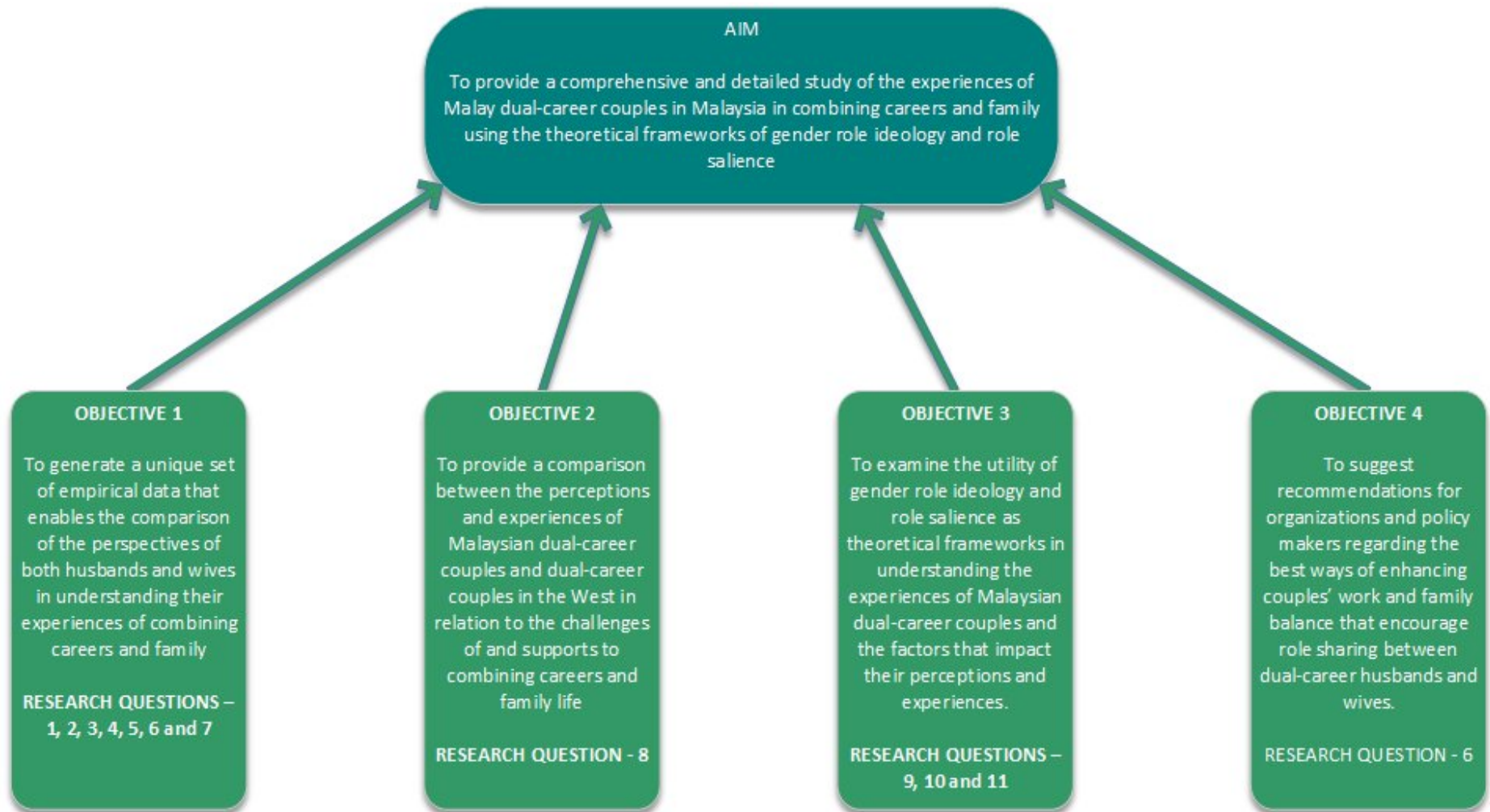
- 1) What perceptions do dual-career couples have of the provider role and career priority in the family?
- 2) What is the pattern of decision making and division of family work among Malaysian couples?

- 3) Is traditional gender role ideology changing among Malaysian couples?
- 4) What are the problems and challenges faced by the dual-career couples in Malaysia?
- 5) What are the coping strategies and support employed by couples to overcome these problems and challenges?
- 6) What are the implications of the Government and organization's policies and support for the couples?
- 7) What kind of policies and support would the couples like to see introduced?
- 8) To what extent are the perceptions and experiences identified in the Malaysian context similar to those identified in Western literatures?
- 9) How does the gender role ideology that underpins government and organizational policies impact the couples' experiences at work and in the family?
- 10) What are the factors that affect the Malaysian couples' gender role ideologies and role salience?
- 11) How does the interplay of gender role ideology and role salience explain the couples' experiences?

Research questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 address research objective 1 by exploring the perceptions and experience in several aspects of work and family such as the provider role, decision making, division of family work, problems and challenges, coping strategies and supports, as well as the policies and support from their employing organization. The data provided by the couples will enable a comparison between the perception and experience of the husbands and wives, and an understanding on their experiences in combining careers and family in Malaysia. Research question 8 addresses research objective 2, where it explores the research gaps in dual-career couples and seeks to add value by providing a comparison between the experience and gender role ideology of Malaysian couples with couples from the West. Questions 9, 10 and 11 address research objective 3, where these seek to explore the utility of gender role ideology and role salience as theoretical frameworks in understanding the experiences of Malaysian dual-career couples and the factors that impact their perceptions and experiences. Question 9 examines how the gender role ideology that underpins government and organizational policies impacts on the couples' experiences at work and in the family, particularly in their work-family balance and gender equality. Question 10 sought to highlight the factors that affect the Malaysian couples' gender role ideologies and role salience by investigating both the macro and micro-factors that have significant impact on

their gender role and role salience. Meanwhile, question 11 is used to show how the couples' experiences can be explained through the interplay of gender role ideology and role salience in order to provide more understanding of their work and family life. Research question 6 is again used to seek the kind of policies and support desired by the participants in order to enhance their work and family balance. This question addresses research objective 4, which is to provide some recommendations for organizations and policymakers on how to enhance couples' work and family balance and, at the same time, encourage role sharing between dual-career husbands and wives. The following diagram (Figure 4.2) provides an outline of the links between the research objectives and the research questions, to achieve the aim of the research:

Figure 4.2 Links between Research Aims, Research Objectives and Research Questions



Chapter 5

Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the methodological approach of the present study and how it was conducted and analysed. It begins by outlining the philosophical foundation, followed by a description of a social constructionist approach, the use of qualitative methodology and semi-structured interviews as a research instrument for data collection. Next, there is a discussion of establishing quality in qualitative research, ethical considerations within the study and the research sample. In addition, a discussion on the interview schedule, pilot study and the research process are also presented. Finally, the method and procedure of performing the analysis are explained.

5.1 Philosophical Standpoint

Research in work and family interface has been criticised for some methodological shortcomings, particularly in terms of its over-reliance on cross-sectional, quantitative methodology which is dominated by a positivistic paradigm (e.g Casper et. al. 2007; Ozbilgin et. al., 2010; Schultheiss, 2006; Zedeck, 1992). Examining the work-family interface from this epistemological perspective may prevent us from gaining valuable insights into and understanding of the reality of couples coping with work and family demands in a more complex world. For this reason, the current research is carried out under the interpretivist philosophy. Interpretivism as a research paradigm provides a deep insight into “the complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it” (Schwandt, 1994). The focus is on how humans interpret or construct their social world in specific linguistic, social and historical contexts. It is characterized generally as *Verstehen* (understanding) tradition in the human sciences, which arose in the reactions of neo-Kantian German historian, and sociologist Dilthey and Weber (Schwandt, 2003). Contrasted with positivism, which is associated closely with the methods of natural sciences and tends to focus on linear process research design, interpretivism focuses on subjective experience, small-scale interactions and understanding (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). The researcher’s interpretations play a key role in this kind of study, bringing such subjectivity to the fore, backed by quality arguments rather than statistical exactness (Garcia & Quek, 1997). Under this approach, the reality is assumed as socially constructed through an individual’s interpretation and, therefore, can mean different things to different people. Subjective experience is regarded as an important

source of knowledge to understand human actors' social reality. Therefore, this approach enables researchers to understand the experience of dual-career couples in Malaysia from their point of view, an area about which little is known since the research in Malaysia so far focuses only on the women's and not the men's voice. Furthermore, it was considered crucial to hear personal views from both partners because it will provide the opportunity to explore their personal realities (Moser & Karlton, 1985), as well as a balanced account of their experiences; this is important in order to gain deeper understanding of the challenges of their lives and contribute to the planning of culturally-appropriate ways to improve support for them.

5.2 A Social Constructionist Approach

Based in an interpretive paradigm, this thesis takes on a social constructionist approach to the study of Malay dual-career couples. In attempting to make sense of the social world, social constructionists view knowledge as constructed as opposed to created (Schwandt, 2003). According to this perspective, one can believe that concepts are constructed rather than discovered yet maintain that they correspond to something real in the world (Andrew, 2012). This is consistent with the idea of Berger and Luckmann (1971), in that reality is socially defined but this reality refers to the subjective experience of everyday life and how the world is understood rather than any form of objective reality. In this regard, social phenomena are produced through continuous sense making and interpretation that individuals use to interpret their social environment. Hence, meaning and experience is produced and reproduced through social interaction and not only constructed within the individual (Burr, 1995; Berger & Luckmann, 1971; Schwandt, 2000). In addition, social construction assumes that knowledge is socially and culturally mediated through language (Schwandt, 2000), and is produced and constructed jointly between the researcher and the participants during the interaction process (Lindgren & Packendorff, 2009).

In this study, I investigate how dual-career couples in Malaysia construct and create meaning of their work and family experiences through their interaction (specifically through language) with each other and in interaction with the social context in which they live. Burr (1995) argued that social constructionists challenge "the view that conventional knowledge is based upon objective, unbiased observations of the world". This is particularly significant for my study because it enables me to challenge the dominant interpretations displayed about dual-

career couples in prior research. My research explores how the men and women in dual career couples are situated in a particular social, cultural, religious, political and economic context through the framework of gender role ideology and role salience, and how this influences the way they make sense of and construct their experiences of work and family.

The importance of constructing experience through language has made it imperative for the use of interviews in gathering data for the study. According to Holstein and Gubrium (2004), interviews, from a social constructionist perspective, can be regarded as a tool for constructing individualised experience and phenomena. Through interviews, participants are actively involved in the construction of their own subjective experiences (Fontana & Prokos, 2007; Holstein & Gubrium, 2004). In this way, interviews yield rich insight into people's life experiences including their values, beliefs and aspirations (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; May, 2001; Rubin & Rubin, 1995).

5.3 Qualitative Methodology

Up till now, there have been very few studies carried out to investigate about the experience of dual-career couples in Malaysia (for instance, Ahmad, 2008; Komarraju, 2006; Nasurdin & Khor, 2008; Tam, 2008). Furthermore, previous literatures in this country also seem to focus on working women compared with investigation that includes both men and women in dual-career marriages (e.g Abdullah et al., 2008; Hashim, 2004; Ismail & Ibrahim, 2007; Noor, 1999; Noor & Mahudin, 2005). The limited studies conducted on dual-career couples are found to adopt quantitative methodology and focus on testing pre-formulated hypotheses. A study by Ahmad (2008), for example, examined the gender differences in work-family conflict experienced by female employees and their husbands, as well as family-friendly employment in the government and selected private organizations in Malaysia using a survey of 1303 employees, consisting of 711 married female employees and their husbands, who made up 592 of the respondents. Another study by Komarraju (2006) examined occupational role salience, work-family conflict, basic understandings, spousal support and organizational support as predictors of work satisfaction using a survey questionnaire on 116 dual-career faculty and staff from three Malaysian universities. Meanwhile, Tam (2008) examined the effects of dual-career family and marital conflict on the general health of couples using a survey of 399 participants in dual-career relationships. A study by Nasurdin and Khor (2008) also applied a quantitative approach. In this study, they examined the influence of support at work (managerial support) and at home (spousal support) in predicting work-family conflict

using a survey questionnaire on a sample of 185 married accountants in Malaysia. To reiterate, the present research is conducted to explore the experiences of dual-career couples in a Malaysian context through gender role ideology and role salience theoretical frameworks and how they compare with previous research on dual-career couples, particularly in the West. Therefore, qualitative methodology is regarded as suitable to support the current research because, in this approach, the research questions developed are geared towards discovering what people think and feel, how they account for their experiences and actions, and what challenges they face (Webber and Byrd, 2010).

5.4 Qualitative Design using Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were chosen for this study as they provide the opportunity to explore the people's lives and the contexts in which they make decisions and yield "thick description" of social life (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). This "thick description", namely the content of practices within a society, can be further analysed and verified to develop thematic interpretation of the research question (Manaf, 2009). The value of in-depth interviewing for work and family studies derive from the ability to gain rich qualitative data about particular processes or subjects from the selected individuals (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). Studies that have gained data directly via interviews with dual-career couples have proven to produce rich and illustrative accounts of their experiences (e.g. Ba', 2008; Radcliffe, 2012; Rana, 1998; Such, 2002). Furthermore, because in-depth interviews permit people's ambivalences to surface as they share their stories, it is an excellent method for understanding family patterns and the different meanings that people have of work and family arrangements (Webber & Byrd, 2010). Therefore, it is considered the most appropriate methodology to allow women and men to be given a voice, to present their personal accounts, perceptions, views and perspectives of their experiences of work and family life (Rana, 1998). Additionally, since many daily work and family social processes are ordinary, routine and taken for granted, this method allows the researcher to uncover hidden information (Webber & Byrd, 2010). The interviews conducted in the present study are found to be effective in encouraging reflections among the interviewees about the real things going on in their family life. For example, there are some women who do not realize that they are actually co-providers and tend initially to regard their husband as the main provider. However, these women changed their statements during the interviews as they discussed their experiences. Therefore, the interviews conducted proved to be an excellent method of uncovering how people's initial view about

their work and family may not be the same as what they actually experience. The utilization of a semi-structured interview format also allows for understanding gained from past dual-career research (mostly from the US and UK) to be used to benefit the current study. Hence, it offered the opportunity to investigate the validity of past research findings in a local context, and to explore other relevant issues as identified by the respondents (Pierce and Delahaye, 1996).

5.5 Establishing Quality in Qualitative Research

It has been argued by many authors that qualitative research cannot be assessed by the same criteria as these applied to quantitative research due to the differences in the methodologies utilised by researchers in each area (e.g Denzin, 1988; Seale, 1999; Easterby-Smith et al, 2008). In quantitative study, criteria such as reliability and validity are widely accepted and considered as elements that must be proven by the researchers to ensure that the studies are accepted as worthy of consideration. This contrasts with qualitative research where subjectivity, interpretation and emancipation may be key elements, so criteria such as construct validity make little sense (Symon & Cassell, 2012). Due to this, qualitative researchers have produced a number of list of criteria for judging qualitative research. Tracy (2010) for example, believes that we can identify a number of criteria that are common to qualitative research despite paradigmatic differences. These criteria include a worthy topic, rich rigor, sincerity, credibility, resonance, significant contribution and ethical and meaningful coherence. I decided to focus on three main criteria which are rich rigour, sincerity and significant contribution as these three criteria are heavily stressed and regarded as crucial by qualitative researchers (e.g Cohen & Crabtree, 2008; Eisner, 1991; Tracy, 2010; Viney & Nagy, 2011). Furthermore, Spencer et al. (2003) have emphasized the importance of criteria such as contributory and rigorous for evaluating interpretivistic research. Therefore, for the purpose of establishing the quality of this study, I now outline how I addressed these criteria in the research:

1) Rich rigor

High quality qualitative research is marked by a rich complexity of meaning in contrast to quantitative research that is more likely to be valued for its precision (Winter, 2000). Choosing the Malaysia dual-career couples as the sample to study the issues of couples combining career and family is considered appropriate to meet this criteria as it will produce a richly rigorous research that see nuance and complexity in a sample that has not previously

been fully explored. In addition to its connection to richness, rigor provides face validity – which is concerned with whether a study appears on the face of it to be reasonable and appropriate (Golafshani, 2003). If data are new, unique or rare, a valuable contribution could be achieved with very little data (Tracy, 2010). In this regard, my sample of 23 couples can be considered as reasonable as it offers a new data set on couples’ perspective that has been dominated previously by the Western perspective.

2) Sincerity

An important criterion for assessing the quality of research is sincerity. Tracy (2010) has pointed out that every study must be concerned with their self-reflexivity, vulnerability, honesty, transparency and auditing of data to achieve sincerity as the end goal. Honesty and transparency of the researchers’ biases, goals and weaknesses, and how these play a role in the methods, joys and errors of the research is the cornerstone of the research that has sincerity (Tracy, 2010). Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that ensuring honesty is one of the ways to ensure credibility in qualitative research. To achieve this, each of the participants in the study are given opportunities to refuse to participate in the project so as make sure that the data collection sessions involve only those who are genuinely willing to take part and are prepared to offer data freely (Shenton, 2004). In this research, participants were encouraged to be frank from the start of each session. At the beginning of the interviews I explained to the participants about the background of the study in addition to the importance of giving an honest answer.

Self-reflexivity which is one part of sincerity, is one of the most well-known practices in qualitative research. Honesty and authenticity in one’s self, one’s research and one’s audience is regarded as self-reflexivity (Tracy, 2010). However, in qualitative research, reflexivity is a term that is more commonly used (eg Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000; Bryman & Cassell, 2006; Cole et al., 2011; Cunliffe, 2003). Researcher can practice self-reflexivity through being introspective, assessing their own biases and motivations and asking whether they are well-suited to examine their chosen topics at this time. Questions to ask include “Why am I doing this study?”, “Why now”, “Am I ready for this?” (Tracy, 2010). In this matter, I regard that my status as a part of dual-career couple myself, as something that is very well-suited for the purpose of conducting this study. Indeed my own position also served as my motivation to conduct a study on this topic. This is because after I had my son, I realized how difficult it is to juggle between the demands of career and family. Hence, initially I was interested in

knowing more about how women in Malaysia especially those who are involved in demanding careers such as managers, cope with their challenges. However, after doing more reading of the previous literatures and discussion with my initial supervisor, I decided to focus on couples and not solely women. This is because research involving couples is lacking when compared to research on women, particularly in the Malaysian context where no men have previously participated in a qualitative study of work and family balance (as mentioned in Chapter 1). It cannot be denied that as a working mother I have the perception that women like me have more challenges in balancing work and family as compared to the men. Therefore, to prevent myself from being judgmental towards my data, I applied the insider and outsider perspective for the study. According to Dwyer and Buckle (2009), whether the researcher is an insider, sharing the characteristics, role or experience under the study with the participants or outsider to the commonality shared by the participants, the researcher membership status in relation to those participating in the research is an essential and ever-present aspect of the investigation. All the participants in this study knew my situation as a Malay mother in a dual-career couple. This did not present a problem. Instead, this status made it easier for me to communicate with them as they thought I had a better understanding of what they were trying to convey. For example some interviewees came up with statements such as “You know right” or “Of course you understand too”. In addition, there was also an exchange of experience between me and those participants in certain circumstances which enabled them to talk in more detail about their experiences. This led to the interview becoming a more efficient collaborative process since the exchange of data and experiences allowed me to reach mutual understanding and helped me to see their point of view.

At the same time, I also took the outsider perspective during the process of obtaining data and analysis. As suggested by Asselin (2003), it is best for the insider researcher to gather data with her/his “eyes open” but assuming she knows nothing about the phenomenon being studied. Although the researcher might be part of the culture under study, he/she might not understand the subculture. In this respect, I put myself as the outsider because although I am also involved in dual-career relationship, I do not know every aspect of behaviour patterns and experience of other couples specifically because there are differences in our work and family life due to differences in various aspects such as family background, occupation, age and so on. It should be noted as well that in certain circumstances I do feel that there is the possibility that participants were offering their views on how things should work rather than how they do work, or telling me what they thought I wanted to hear since there are some of

them who seemed to be explaining only the good aspects of their family. Nevertheless, I cannot rely on this assumption in making judgments of their data. This is where I rely on the 'outsider' perspective, since I do not know about the real things happening in their life. Furthermore, as I explained about sincerity in answering the interview questions, all the participants were asked to be honest about their answers so as to meet the objective of the study. After all, their answers reflect their perceptions and belief about their roles and how men and women should behave as a couple sharing a family while having careers, which is crucial for the research.

It is also recommended for the researchers that they should seek to evaluate the project again as it develops (Shenton, 2004). This may be done through reflective commentary, part of which may be devoted to the effectiveness of the techniques that have been employed. The commentary can play a key role in what Lincoln and Guba (1985) term "progressive subjectivity", which is critical in establishing credibility. In this case, I have developed my own reflexive commentary where I took reflexive notes after every interview, I found that the notes were indeed very useful in helping to improve the interview process. For example, I discovered that doing interviews on weekday evenings was not as efficient as doing it during the day or in the weekend because the participants seem to look tired after spending the whole day at work. This might impact their strength in telling their stories and thus helped me to identify the ideal time to interview them. Besides that, after every interview I also recorded my weaknesses and tried to improve them especially in terms of expressing the questions so that the interviewees will understand better, and be able to provide valuable answers for every question.

3) Significant Contribution

A qualitative study is also considered as having quality when it can provide a significant contribution. The study is deemed to provide significant contribution when it is theoretically significant, heuristically significant, practically significant or methodologically significant (Tracy, 2010). This present study provides significant theoretical, practical and methodological contributions. Firstly, it fills the gap of dual-career couples' literatures which have been predominantly carried out in the West as well as provides knowledge about universal and culturally-specific work-family experiences that would be beneficial for practitioners. Secondly, the study has examined the utility of gender role ideology and role salience as a framework to understand the context of dual-career couples. Thirdly, the current

research also makes an important methodological contribution in a Malaysian context by interviewing both husband and wife in dual-career couples. Lastly, it also provides some recommendations for the government and organizations in Malaysia in terms of policies that promote work-family balance and gender equality for dual-career women.

5.6 Ethical Considerations

The research followed the University of Manchester's ethical considerations to ensure good practice was maintained for the duration of the study. The code of ethics was applied as presented in the information sheet; consent form; and recording of the interviews. Protection of the participants in the reporting and representation of the analysis was ensured by replacing the participants' names with pseudonyms.

In addition to the endorsement by the Ethics Committee, my experience and knowledge of Malay culture helped me, as the researcher, to be more cautious of the cultural sensitivities in this study. In this respect, the data was analysed with the awareness that any translation from Malay language to English language could cause deficiencies in the meaning of the data; so great care was taken. This was important, especially when dealing with certain terms and expressions that are difficult and challenging to translate because there is no exact equivalent English from of words in which to express and convey the meaning. Every possible effort was made to translate the words based on the context provided.

Furthermore, as this study involves some questions concerning their family arrangements that might be sensitive to some people, the study did not force the respondents to answer any questions that might be considered too personal. Access to a counselling unit at the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development Malaysia was also provided should the respondents need further assistance if they face any distress or problems at work or at home that might be revealed during the interview.

In short, the following are a few of the principles and processes to which the research has adhered in order to ensure the highest standard of scientific integrity and ethical trustworthiness:

- The right of confidentiality
- The right to withdraw from the interviews

- Provision of access to the possible counselling agencies should the participants need the assistance
- Cautious and meticulous translation of the language in understanding and reporting of the study.

5.7 The Research Sample

5.7.1 Sample Selection

In the beginning, it was evident that a whole host of parameters existed for selecting the sample. It was obvious that wide individual differences amongst Malaysian men and women reflected their familial and work roles. It was impossible to incorporate all of the parameters into a small study of this scale. An attempt, therefore, was made to include a range of respondents within certain criteria, so that variables could be compared effectively. The research does not aim to provide a generalised picture of the Malaysian couples, but rather to gain understandings and garner new insights into dual-career couples to be assessed in a new light. The selection criteria for the sample of the research were: (1) each individual (male and female) had a position as a professional or at the management level; (2) must be a Malay; and (3) have at least one dependent child (below 18 years of age). Participants were chosen against these criteria due to several reasons. Firstly, the research centres on couples who engage with professional and managerial positions. Owing to the fact that dual-career couples are defined as couples who are involved in occupations with a developmental sequence, which require a high level of commitment and are highly personally salient to the occupants, the sample was more likely to be professionals and managers because they are more likely to be dual-career couples. Moreover, it was mentioned that many researchers focus their attention on professional and managerial dual-career couples due to the belief that highly-educated, well-paid women have the potential to transform families and create more egalitarian options for other women (see Chapter 3). Thus, this study decided to focus on managerial and professional couples to analyse the impact of being dual-career couples on their attitudes to gender role and role salience. The study also decided to focus on Malay couples since the Malay represent the largest ethnic group (more than half of the population) in this country. Furthermore, as explained in the literature review, other ethnic groups may have different experiences due to differences in culture and religions, so it would be appropriate to only focus on the Malay ethnic in this study. In addition, the research only interviewed couples who had children under the age of 18, as they are expected to carry

greater responsibilities and struggles in balancing work and family demands compared with childless couples or parents of adult children. Thus, these couples would represent a meaningful context of work-family tension.

The sampling method was purposive, as the sample was selected not to approximate representativeness but because the respondents are atypical in some way that specially equips them to be useful as study informants (Neuman, 2007). Interviewees for this research were selected by personal contacts and recommendations. More than half of the participants recruited came from the researcher's personal contacts, which include friends, colleagues and relatives. Some of the interviewees also helped recruit participants by recommending friends that they thought would be interested in being involved in the study. A snowball sampling strategy was also employed to gather a group of individuals who fit the study parameters. Snowball sampling is a method of identifying and sampling the cases in a network (Neuman, 2007). Once the original volunteers were interviewed, they were asked to pass information to their friends or colleagues about the study and, from these initial volunteers, the snowballing process began (Saunders, 2012). This word of mouth approach appeared to be an effective way of recruiting participants to the study. It appeared as though people who had been referred by someone who had already been interviewed were less anxious about being interviewed. I made contact with the potential interviewees themselves, or their details were sent to the researcher. Once the potential interviewees were identified, they were telephoned or e-mailed and the process was explained. The aims and objectives of the research, the research process, who would be undertaking the research, how it would be disseminated and ethical considerations, were explained and they were assured of confidentiality. When both spouses expressed their consent to participate in the research, an interview appointment was made for interview.

The study sample included 23 couples or 46 individuals (see Appendix A for the full list of participants). Gaining access to these couples came with distinctive challenges. The limited time of three months' data collection present a struggle for me as a single researcher to recruit more couples as participants for the study. On several occasions, few couples who had agreed initially to participate in the study, did not respond when I sent my further invitation. Moreover, there have been some difficulties with negotiating a time at which both partners would be available, due to their hectic schedules. Because of that, most of the interviews were conducted at the weekend. The majority of the interviews took place at their own homes, except for one couple who were interviewed at the wife's own firm and another

couple who were interviewed at a restaurant. The interviews focused on couples from the capital city of Kuala Lumpur and two neighbouring states, namely Selangor and Perak, because of the convenience since I lived in Kuala Lumpur during the data collection process. As the research is interested in looking at the impact of various factors on their gender role attitude and role salience, couples from different background were included in terms of age, occupations, sector of organizations, number of children, children's age, educational level, father's and mother's occupation and number of siblings. The respondents in this study ranged from 30 to 52 years old. However, only one couple in their 50s were recruited to this study. The respondents ranged from having a diploma to having a PhD. Respondents also came from three different sectors, which were defined as public, private and non-profit organisations (NPO). The reason for differentiating between these sectors was to see the differences in their experiences and in terms of the support provided by the organisations to the employees in dual-career families.

5.8 Interview Schedule

The interviews took a semi-structured format. The interview schedule was designed to obtain in-depth information of direct relevance to the aims of the study. The questions covered a range of topics, and were partly structured so that respondents were able to speak about their experiences in as much detail as they wanted. The questions were also linked to each other so that respondents could “tell a story” about their work and family lives (Rana, 1998). They were developed based on an extensive review of the literature and were organised into seven sections (See Appendix B for the full interview schedule and probes). While the questions were asked in order, a semi-structured interview by its very nature enables the researcher to probe certain areas of relevance as they arise (King, 2004). The sections of the interviews are as follows:

General Information: This section was used to elicit some information regarding the participants’ family and job background (i.e length of marriage, job responsibilities, company background). General questions regarding the participants’ background were asked at the start of the interviews because it served as an “ice-breaking” technique. It was observed that these questions succeeded in making the participants relaxed and it proved to be a good starting point for the establishment of trust. This technique is also suggested to help the interviewer establish a rapport with the interviewee before invasive questions are put forward (Omar, 2003).

The Provider Role and Career Priority: This section was designed to investigate the perception of Malaysian couples on the provider role of the family and the career priorities of the couples. The literatures indicated that dual-career couples tend to regard men as the main breadwinner, despite women contributing a significant amount of family income (e.g Demi-Moreno & Diaz-Martinez, 2010; Raley, et al., 2006; Tichenor, 2005). However, couples in general are reported to regard each career as equally important (Hardill & Watson, 2004; Lang, 2000). Questions in this section aimed to uncover which partner is regarded as the main provider of the family and whether any circumstances will change their perception. The couples were also asked whether any spouses’ careers take more priority and in what context this may happen.

Decision Making: This section was designed to identify the pattern of decision making in Malaysian couples. Couples were asked how decision making is shared and whether there is any particular decision taken by one partner rather than the other. The

participants were also asked how they make decisions about career issues. Fundamental to this line of the questioning is the contention that there are couples who exhibit an egalitarian model of decision making (Dema-Moreno, 2009) but there are also couples who like to maintain the husband as the decision maker (Ball, et al., 1995; Bartley, et al., 2005; Fox & Murry, 2000).

Domestic Responsibilities: The aim of this section was to determine the domestic responsibilities arrangements of the Malaysian couples. The couples were asked how they divide household tasks between themselves and whether there is anything they would they like to change about their current arrangements. Previous research has cited that women spend more time on housework and care work, despite both couples being engaged with full-time careers (Acker & Armenti, 2004; Coltrane, 2000; Grady & McCarthy, 2008; Jacobs & Winslow, 2004). Questions in this section also aimed to uncover whether the couples have any help with the housework and how they cope. The literature indicated that couples with children may try to ease their family work by finding substitutes or outsourcing for help (Bianchi et al., 2000; De Ruijter & Van der Lippe, 2007; Ezzedeen & Ritchey, 2009). The questions also asked how the burden of domestic responsibilities affects their work, since prior studies have mentioned that domestic responsibilities result in a longer day for women and more pressure to multitask (Sayer et. al., 2004)

Childcare: This section was designed to investigate the couples' childcare arrangements. The couples were asked about the arrangements they have for caring for their children and what factors affect their childcare choices. Couples were also asked about their satisfaction with the childcare arrangement and how they deal with any emergency involving their child while they are at work. It was reported that men's contributions to childcare have increased (Bianchi et al., 2006; Sullivan & Coltrane, 2008) although childcare remained much more the responsibility of mother than father (Bianchi & Milkie, 2010; Ezzedeen & Ritchey, 2009). The literature also suggested that work commitments may interfere with childcare within the family (Bowes, 2005) and pressure is particularly severe for women due to the societal expectation that they prioritize family responsibilities over their career (Acker & Armenti, 2004; Jacobs & Winslow, 2004). Therefore, couples were also asked how having children might affect their work.

Experience at Work: This section was used to examine the participants' experiences at work and the impact on their family life. Participants were asked about how they feel about their work, whether they experience any problems, how they manage it and how their peers or supervisors influence their experience. The literatures have indicated that dual-career couples face many problems and challenges, such as long work hours, work overload, rigid work arrangement and job mobility and relocation issues (Anderson et al., 2002; Grady & McCarthy, 2008; Pocock et al., 2007; Santos & Cardoso, 2008; Skinner & Pocock, 2008; Wharton & Blair-Loy, 2006). To cope with the challenges, studies have reported that couples used various emotion and problem-focused strategies (Bird & Schnurmann-Crook, 2005; Higgins et al., 2010). Dual-career couples were also reported to depend on social support in the workplace, such as from supervisors and co-workers (Allen, 2001; Marcinkus et al. 2006). Couples were also asked how their work affects their family life and how they feel about the balance between work and family. These questions are important as research shows that work demands and challenges have deleterious consequences on family life, increased work-family conflict and couples find it hard to achieve a good work and family balance (Byron, 2005; Barnett, 2006; Wharton & Blair-Loy, 2006)

Government and Organizational Policies: This section was designed to investigate the different types of policies and support provided by the Government and various employing organizations to the couples and their impact. Previous literatures indicated that many supportive policies, such as maternity leave, day-care arrangements, flexitime, telecommuting and many others have been provided by the Government and employing organization in response to the needs of dual-career couples (Daly, 2000; Korpi, 2000; Stier & Lewin-Epstein, 2007). These have been found to enhance gender equality and reduce work-family conflict (Stier & Lewin-Epstein, 2007). Support in the workplace is also found to be effective in producing favourable work attitudes and behaviour. Questions in this section aimed to uncover the participants' opinions of the policies and support provided by their employers and the Government. The participants were also asked about the impact of the policies and support on them as well as the kind of policies and support they would like to be offered.

Additional Biographical Information: Together with the initial general information, this section was designed to establish the links between the participants' background

and their experiences as dual-career couples. A number of factors, such as age, number of children and level of education have been linked as predictors of gender role ideology and role salience, which influence the experience in work and family (Barry & Beitel, 2006; Greer & Egan, 2012; Harris & Firestone, 1998). In this section, additional biographical information gathered includes age, occupation, type of industry, education level, number of children, children's ages, number of dependents, father's and mother's occupation and number of siblings.

5.9 Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted prior to the actual interviews. These pilot interviews were undertaken with two couples from Malaysia who live in Manchester (these couples are working in Malaysia but live temporarily in the United Kingdom for studying purposes). These interviews were conducted using the interview guide formulated based on the analysis of the literature. Conducting this pilot study was also one way for me to ensure the quality of my research. These pilot interviews enabled me to gauge how participants responded, how long the interviews would take, how easily understood the questions were and whether any pertinent issues arose that could be integrated into the questions. As a result of the pilot, some of the questions were re-worded or the structure of the sentence was changed to become more simplistic. For example, the questions "How have your colleagues or supervisors influenced your experience at work?" was originally put as "What do you think about the impact that your colleagues and managers have towards your experience at work?". However, the original question was a little bit hard for the participants to understand. Therefore, the questions were changed to ease the participants' understanding. The pilot interviews also helped to ensure the quality and credibility of the interview guide. It was found that the questions posed were indeed able to produce useful information with which to answer the research questions. In addition, through these pilot data, the answers given by the participants have enabled me to exhibit the connection of gender role ideology and role salience in explaining and understanding the context of couples.

5.10 The Research Process

The interviews were conducted face-to-face and couples were interviewed separately. All the interviews were pre-arranged and, during the interview, an information sheet and a consent form were presented. The information sheet explains the background of

the research (See Appendix C for a copy of participant information sheet and consent form). The participants were told that the study was on their experiences as dual-career couples and would include questions around their family and work experiences. The interviews were conducted in either Malaysia language or English – depending on the participants’ preferences. The respondents were interviewed between May 2011 and July 2011. Each participant was assured full confidentiality and the interview lasted anywhere from 30 minutes to one hour. At the outset of each interview, participants were given a copy of a letter explaining the procedures and outlining the confidentiality of the project. The participants were asked whether or not they preferred being audio-taped and were told that both audio-taping and note-taking were acceptable. I transcribed the data obtained *verbatim soon after every interview as it is thought to produce fewer errors, since I have full knowledge of the context of the interviews. In order to ensure consistency in the analysis, I have also translated the interview data from the Malay language to English language.*

5.10.1 Interviewing Couples

Each husband and wife was individually interviewed. Spouses were interviewed in direct succession to avoid any communication between the two. This approach provided some advantages, such as allowing spouses to give information without direct concern about the effects caused by the spouse’s presence (Hertz, 1986; 1995); spouses may be less able to reveal their own perspectives when interviewed jointly (La Rossa et al. 1981). Separate interviews also provide a good approach to providing a balanced account of the couples’ story, because researchers who interview spouses together can detect differences in accounts only when couples openly acknowledge them. Moreover, interviewing the couples apart would overcome the problem of domination by one partner because spouses who are more entertaining, knowledgeable or powerful will dominate the storytelling and the researcher will therefore have little chance of learning about the other spouse’s view (Hertz. 1995). It has also been acknowledged that separate interviews would be crucial to understanding the co-dependency of behaviour in couples, since the behaviour of one partner would inevitably impact on the other (Such, 2002).

5.10.2 Interview Experience

Overall, the interview guide has been useful in obtaining useful information and, in some situations, encouraged lengthy and informative conversation between the interviewees and me. In terms of the rapport developed, it was expected initially that I would find it easier to establish a good connection with the female participants compared with the men due to the gender similarity, besides the fact that I am not familiar with most of the male participants. Surprisingly, I have been able to develop swiftly a rapport with the male participants as some of them readily revealed their stories and shared lengthy conversations about their work and family experiences. This is perhaps due to my effort to provide a relaxed and friendly environment for the participants, coupled with the approachable and outgoing personality of some of them. However, when a general comparison is made between male and female respondents, female respondents on the whole are found to talk more and be more open about their experiences, particularly in the family aspects, which could be due to the fact that I am also a working mother; hence, I would be able to understand their experiences better.

During the course of the interviews, some challenges also emerged such as the problem of interviewing couples in their home when the both spouses were in the same place at the same time. Although all participants were interviewed separately, some interference occurred such as spouses passing through the room when interview were taking place or bringing in food and drinks while their partners were being interviewed. There have also been occasions where few couples have sat in the same area while one partner is being interviewed. In one instance, a female partner sat very near to her husband while he was being interviewed in the dining area. Perhaps the influence of Islamic values that it is not appropriate for a woman and a man who are not related to sit around together without the presence of anybody else, affected the way these couples faced a female interviewer. Additionally, some interference also emerged when some participants had to care for their babies during the interview. However, although this meant that the interviews had to be interrupted slightly, it did not detriment or cause the interviews to be shortened. Overall, these challenges and experiences during the course of the interviews provided some interesting insight into the lifestyle of dual-career couples in Malaysia.

5.11 Data Analysis

Analysis of interviews was carried out using template analysis, a qualitative technique for the thematic organisation and analysis of textual data as described by Crabtree and Miller (1999). This approach involves using codes to serve as a template for data analysis (Robson, 2002). As a set of techniques, rather than a distinct methodology, template analysis may be used within a range of epistemological positions. Since the research adopts an interpretivist paradigm that assumes there are always multiple interpretations of any phenomenon, template analysis would be more conducive compared with other approaches, such as grounded theory or interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). Grounded theory is not suitable for this study since it is utilized largely as a realist methodology and focuses on uncovering the “real” values (King, 2004). IPA, on the other hand, although similar to template analysis, would not be appropriate as it is based commonly on samples of 10 or fewer. In addition, IPA tends to analyse individual cases in greater depth before attempting any integration of a full set of cases, as opposed to template analysis which uses priori codes (King, 2004). Hence, the use of priori codes would be better suited to the present research, which aims to compare the experiences of dual-career couples in Malaysia with those in the West. Template analysis has been shown to be effective in studies that have involved the analysis of textual interview data to extrapolate and organise them (Cassell et al., 2006), including where the objectives have been to compare the perspectives of different groups of individuals (King, 2004). Therefore, it was deemed appropriate for this study where commonalities and different perspectives within and across the couples were the focus. I will now describe the analysis process in detail:

1) Define a priori themes

In the first step I defined a set of priori themes for the analysis. In this regard, an initial template was formed from the interview schedule. As pointed out by King (2004), often the best starting point for constructing an initial template is the interview topic guide – the set of question areas, probes and prompts used by the interviewer. The categories or theme decided in advance of the data collection help to provide structure to the process of data analysis, assisting the researcher to segment the text meaningfully and manageably. At the same time, it allows any new code that is

relevant to the research question, but not covered by an existing code, to be inserted. Main questions from the guide served as higher order codes, with subsidiary questions and probes as potential lower-order codes.

2) Transcribing the interview

As mentioned in 5.7, all the interview data were transcribed verbatim by myself. Subsequently, I read through them to thoroughly familiarize myself with them. I copied the data set into Microsoft Word document and arranged it into a table of four columns labeled number, name, data extract and code. This provided a way of organizing a large amount of data. I also engaged in the process of familiarizing myself with the transcripts. I repeatedly read all the transcripts a few times so that it was easier to search for patterns.

3) Carrying out initial coding of the data

During the first reading, initial notes were taken of the prominent themes and issues that emerged. The themes were written by the side of the margins and any issues or ideas were written at the back of the transcripts. Notes concerning the context of the interview for every participant were also written on the transcript, which proved useful in providing a better understanding of each analysed transcript. After repeatedly reading the transcripts and being familiar with the data, I was able to generate interesting ideas and I coded the individual data manually into meaningful classifications or groups. The process of coding is illustrated in the Table 5.1 below.

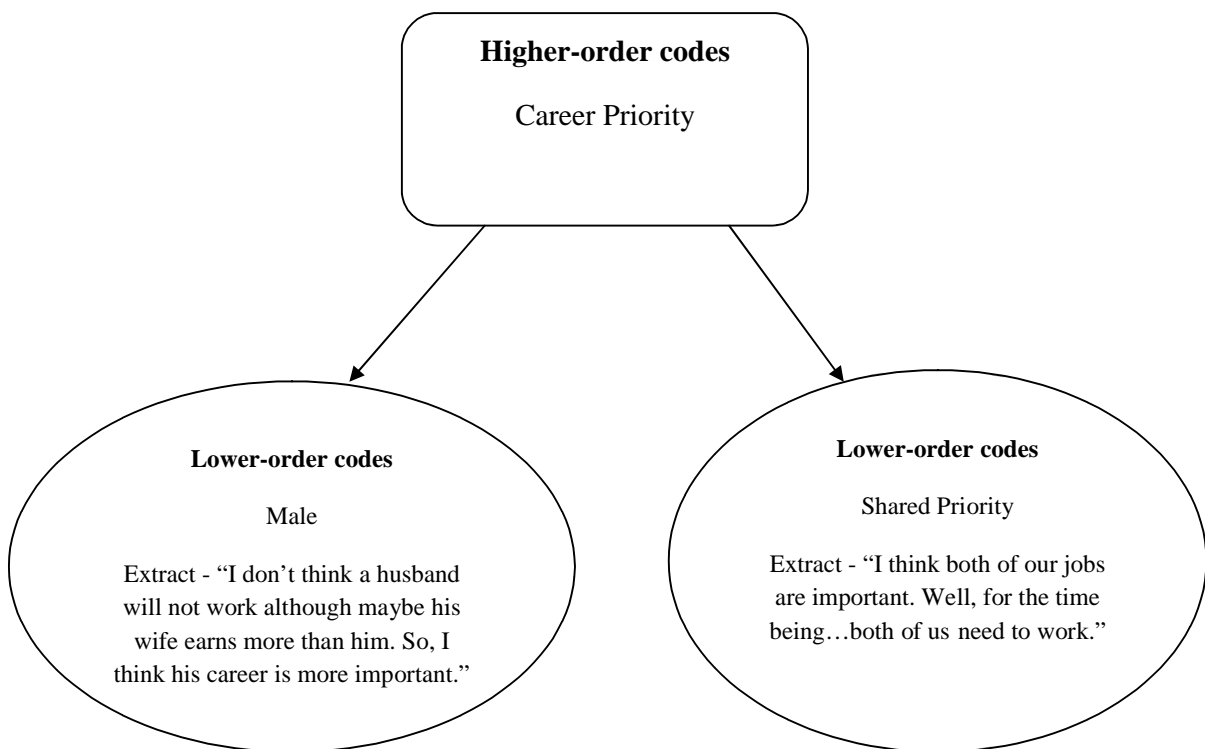
Table 5.1: Example of coding

Data extract	Coded for
Yes, because sometimes when I send him to the nursery, he doesn't want to go inside. So I have to persuade him and this affects my <i>time</i> .	Time impact
...we try to <i>achieve mutual agreement</i> between the both of us for any particular decisions.	Shared decision
But I do feel that <i>work is too compact</i> .	Work challenges

4) Producing the initial template

After reading the transcripts a few times, I was able to identify a number of important issues and concerns emanating from the data. By constantly making lists of themes, a connection between the data and the codes was made. The frequency of occurrence of each theme within the data set established the strength of each theme. For example, when categorizing into higher order codes and lower order codes, some codes are suited to be established as higher order codes and some that gives more detail specification, formed lower order codes. This process is illustrated in the form of mind-map in Figure 5.1. Six higher order codes were created to provide specificity of the analysis. This initial template can be found in Appendix D.

Figure 5.1: Example of how a higher order code was mapped with lower order codes



5) Developing the template

The codes remained open to continuous revision throughout the analysis. The initial list of codes was subsequently modified through additional readings of the transcripts and discussions with my supervisor. The final template was eventually created with

seven higher order codes by separating the provider role and career priority in the initial template. Additionally, there were some changes to the lower order codes (see Appendix E). These changes were made to ensure that the codes are consistent and answer the research questions. Both men and women were coded in the same template.

6) Interpreting and writing up

Smith et al. (1999) propose that, “toward the latter stages of the analytic process the researcher begins to involve him/herself directly in the research process in order to interpret the data and answer the research questions”. In interpreting the data, I found it useful to compile a list of all codes occurring in each transcript. As suggested by King (2004), the codes are marked very clearly with colour-coding to make it possible to list them quickly and accurately. The initial research questions played an important part in guiding and preventing me from falling into the trap of unselectivity (attempts to examine and interpret every code to an equal degree of depth), but I also bore in mind that I should not disregard all themes that are not of direct relevance as these can play a useful role in adding to the background detail of the study. For example, although my interview questions do not ask directly about factors that influence their decision making, some respondents have pointed out that personal preferences have a significant impact on the couple’s decision making. This factor was found to be important in influencing them to become more traditional or egalitarian in their decision making (e.g the wife who does not like making decisions or the husband who enjoys making decisions in matters that are considered to be woman’s domain). To present an account of my interpretation of the data, I immersed myself in the process of summarizing detailed notes about themes, selecting illustrative quotes and producing a coherent “story” of the findings, which built my understanding of the topic investigated.

To ensure that the findings of this study achieve the objectives, these codes are divided according to the research questions. The first, second, third, fourth and fifth codes address the first, second and third research questions: “*What perceptions do dual-career couples have of the provider role and career priority in the family?*”; “*What is*

the pattern of decision making and division of family work among Malaysian couples?” and “Is traditional gender role ideology among Malaysian couples changing?”. The findings for these are presented in Chapter Six.

Again, the fourth and the fifth codes together with the sixth codes address the fourth and fifth research questions: *“What are the problems and challenges faced by the dual-career couples in Malaysia?”* and *“What are the coping strategies and support employed by couples to overcome these problems and challenges?”* These are examined in Chapter Seven.

Meanwhile, the final code addresses the sixth and seventh research questions: *“What are the implications of the government and organization’s policies and supports to the couples?”* and *“What kind of policies and support would the couples like to see introduced?”* These are described in Chapter Eight.

All seven codes also address research questions eight, nine, ten and eleven: *“To what extent are the perceptions and experiences identified in the Malaysian context similar to those identified in Western literatures?”* *“How does the gender role ideology that underpins government and organizational policies impact the couples’ experiences at work and in the family?”* *“What are the factors that affect the Malaysian couples’ gender role ideologies and role salience?”*; and *“How does the interplay of gender role ideology and role salience explain the couples’ experiences?”* These seek to explore the utility of gender role ideology and role salience as the theoretical framework, which is discussed in Chapter 9.

In presenting the findings, I chose an approach that shows a thematic presentation of the findings, using different individual case-studies to illustrate each of the main themes. Direct quotes from the participants are used to aid the understanding of specific points of interpretation (King, 2004).

5.12 Summary

This chapter has outlined the methodological position towards exploring the experience of dual-career couples in Malaysia. It has clarified how an interpretive approach is appropriate to the aims of the thesis. Qualitative data has been elicited through in-depth interviews with 23 couples using a semi-structured questioning format. A discussion on the experience encountered during the interviews is also

presented. Analysis of the interviews has been conducted using templates with seven codes emerging. The findings derived from the analysis are presented in the next three chapters.

Chapter 6

Findings:

The Provider Role, Career Priority, Decision Making and Division of Family Work of Dual-Career Couples in Malaysia

Primarily, the aim of the findings chapter is to provide a comprehensive and detailed account of the experiences of Malay dual-career couples in Malaysia in combining work and family. To address the research questions, the findings of the study are reported in three main chapters. This chapter addresses the first, second and third research questions:

- 1) What perceptions do dual-career couples have of the provider role and career priority in the family?**
- 2) What is the pattern of decision making and division of family work among Malaysian couples?**
- 3) Is traditional gender role ideology changing among Malaysian couples?**

The findings indicate that being in a relationship where both husband and wife have full-time careers certainly has many impacts on family life. The implications can be seen in terms of how they perceive the family's provider role, career priority, how decisions are made and how family work is divided. Hence, this chapter will discuss in more detail these aspects, using extracts from the interviews to illustrate perceptions and experiences. The experiences described by the participants provide essential details that reflect their gender role ideologies and salience on family and work roles. Furthermore, the findings show how interaction between partners can shape their ideologies and role salience, in addition to how religious and cultural values influence their gender attitudes.

6.1 The Provider Role

The findings denote that sharing a family life with a spouse who also has a career leads to the couples in the study regarding themselves as co-providers. The need to have two providers in the family is undeniably important to them for the purpose of financial security. However, it was evident that there are various ways in which they

view themselves as co-providers. This includes dividing their contribution to the family, having a joint bank account and allocating certain roles between them.

6.1.1 The Need to be Co-Providers

For some participants, the need to have more stability in their family's finances has made them feel that it is important for both spouses to be co-providers for the family. This can be seen in the following comment:

I think both of us...due to high cost of living in KL. I don't think it is enough for one person to be the sole provider for the family. (Ikram)

Another female respondent also emphasized how important it is to have two providers in the family in order to sustain their living:

I suppose it is the same between the both of us. Supposedly the husband should contribute more to the family right, but now all the needs are expensive....so, now it is important for the wife to have a career to help the husband because if we only want to depends on him....you know, after we got married we straightaway got our first child, so the family's financial is not yet stable. Moreover, we were working with a private company that time...sometimes we get the pay a bit late...so it is necessary for a wife to work to help the husband. In terms of the house necessities, we provide it together...he's not the only one. (Farina)

The comment by Farina demonstrates how family circumstances have caused her to place a high salience in her work role, and making her and her husband share the role of providing for the economic needs of the family. Hence, although, by ideology, she contends that her husband should contribute more to the family, the financial needs have resulted in her becoming a co-provider

6.1.2 The Notion of Being Co-Providers

For some couples, since both husband and wife work, it is appropriate for both to share the role of family provider. This view is supported by the claim that they both provide for the family by making a division of distribution. The following comments illustrate this point:

It's both of us because we have planned it before we are married. Okay, he will support these things and I will support these things. That means we have planned that we will contribute together for the family. So apparently we wouldn't say he or me contribute more...it's kind of equal. (Syireen)

I think both of usbecause in terms of pay we are more or less the same, so we share. For the fixed expenditures, I will pay half of it and he will pay half of it. So it's sharing....we share a lot. (Yasmin)

This view is supported even by couples where one spouse earns more than the other. In the words of one female respondent:

Together we are the providers. He earns more than me. After paying for the monthly loan and everything else, there is some balance for me to pay the car loan, food and the children's expenses. For my husband, he will settle the car payment, the housing loan, all the utility bills, the children's religious education.....he settles them all. So, when he doesn't have enough money, I will give it to him....so it is both of us. (Nora)

Thus, the ability to contribute influences Nora's view of the role of providing for the family. Despite earning less than her husband, the responsibility for certain contributions and the division of distribution have made her feel that they are equal in terms of providing for the family.

Some participants also define themselves as co-providers by setting up a joint bank account in which to gather all their earnings. This situation occurs even where one partner earns more than the other. Their contributions are regarded as equal since the earnings are combined in one account. This was confirmed by a male respondent who shares his experience:

If we talk about provider of the family...I will say that we divide it equally. Because in our family we cannot have sole breadwinner because both of us are working even though there are some differences in our earnings. I earn more than her so I am responsible for more expenditure in the family, but in general I can say that both of us work for the family and the financial resources are from both of us.....even all this while we gathered all our income in one account and we pay all our expenditure together. (Raymee)

Based on the interviews, couples are found to set up different arrangements as co-providers in the family. Hence, the variety of ways the couples behave as co-providers in the family show indirectly how they demonstrate an egalitarian attitude, whereby both partners contribute equally to the family.

It is also interesting to note that there are some couples who establish the notion that they are both providing for the family by allocating certain financing roles between them. One example of this claim can be inferred from the words of one female respondent:

Well, financially my husband will provide the expenditure for the food and children's feeding. But I also provide partially...I will give some of my money and he will manage them. So, he is the financial manager of the house (laugh). But for things like my car, I pay for it myself...he pays for the house....he provides most of the financial support for the family, and I am the one who keeps the money for the family. So if there is any circumstance that makes us need to use the money, we will use it....so I am the keeper. (Wardina)

Wardina's comment indicates that they both have their own role in the family's finances, but it also shows that her husband plays the key role in providing for the family. Hence, even though both of them provide financially for the family, her husband is more responsible for meeting the family needs.

For other couples, providing does not link necessarily to contributing financially. Instead, it is presented as the husband fulfilling the financial role for the family and leaving the family responsibilities to the wife. This is reflected in the statement of a male respondent:

Both of us, but she take cares of the children more...and I am responsible on the household expenses and the utility bills. (Rezuan)

In another example, a male respondent said:

I think so far we are together. Both of us have careers but my wife carries most of the responsibility at home, including managing the children. But I also help her in managing the household duties. In terms of the family expenditure, I can say both of us contribute. (Hafsham)

Based on these two statements, it can be inferred that these participants adhere to the principle based on the cultural values where the provider role is held by the men while the women concentrate on domestic tasks, despite the fact that both are working for the good of the family. Therefore, although both husbands and wives make a significant financial contribution to the family, the wives need to display a higher salience in the family roles, performing more tasks at home compared with their husbands.

6.1.3 Realization of Being Co-Providers

Despite making a significant contribution to the family, there are some women who do not realize that they are actually co-providers. Initially, they tend to regard their husband as the main provider, but then change their statements during discussions. One such example is given by a female respondent who said:

I think at the time being my husband is the one...but it wouldn't be complete without a wife. So, right now we both have our share....if my husband supports in things such as the childcare, I will support in the house expenditure...so we are both provider for the family. (Azura)

Another respondent shared her view:

I think my husband is the main provider but I also contribute...ermm... I think both of us actually... (laugh). (Hanita)

Obviously, these female participants have an early perception that their husband is the main provider, without realizing that they actually make a significant contribution to the family. Therefore, the traditional attitude of men as the main provider influences their ideology in this regard and obscures their actual behaviour in the family.

6.1.4 Husband as the Main Provider

Even though all couples in the study are engaged in full-time jobs, there are still some participants who tend to regard their spouses as the main provider due to their greater income and contribution to the family. This demonstrates how traditional arrangement is still maintained in the couples' life. However, this situation is reflected only through the opinion of female interviewees. The following quotations illustrate this view:

I would say my husband because his portion is more. For now he contributes more. I will cover more for the home expenditure....as for my husband, he will cover much bigger stuffs such as the bank loan, the housing loan and so on. (Aleya)

It's my husband. I can say that he provides about 80% for the family. My contribution is more to the children's insurance, savings, investment, groceries...but for the car and house loan, he is responsible for them. (Shuhaidah)

I would say it's him. Because he has higher income than me and his contribution is more. (Suraya)

Conversely, this situation is not mirrored in couples where the wife is the higher earner. Despite the wife having an income advantage, these couples tend to regard each other as joint providers for the family. For example, one interviewee, who works as a doctor and earns more than her husband, claimed that they are co-providers and have a joint account in order to support the family.

So far it is both of us. Both of us are working and we even have a joint account to settle all the house expenditure from A to Z. So it is both of us. (Sarah)

This view is supported by her husband, who said:

I think both of us contribute. It is partially equal. Because ever since we got married, we have gone through so many different situations...from the beginning I started to work with the starting salary...even now, she actually earns more than me. So the career doesn't really affect our family arrangement. (Nasrun)

Thus, it can be observed that, although the wife has a higher income, the couple jointly did not identify her as the family's main provider. Instead, they created a joint account to settle their expenses and make them co-providers. Hence, rather than accepting the notion that wife is the main contributor, couples rather form other ways to preserve men's role as the main breadwinner.

Nonetheless, there are respondents who do not reject the idea that the wife will be the main provider for the family if she has a greater income than her husband. An example of this can be concluded from the conversation between the interviewer and a male respondent:

Who do you regard as the main provider of the family? Why? (Interviewer)

Me because of the earning power...but if we look again in terms of the toll, petrol and other stuff that I have to pay for travelling...the earning is just a little bit more than her...not that much...but, I still think it's me though I earned just a little bit more than her. But in the family, we tend to share most of the expenses...we share the house payment....I pay for my own car and she pays for her own car....but I will pay for the groceries. (Azimi)

What would make your perceptions change? (Interviewer)

Well...maybe she'll be the main provider, if she earns more. (Azimi)

Interestingly, the conversation with Azimi above demonstrates that there are some participants who are more open-minded about and accepting of the notion of the wife as the main provider if she has a greater income. However, the situation cannot be ascertained fully since Azimi is only giving his opinion; his response is not based on current practices in his family.

The provider role perception of some women also seems to be influenced by cultural and religious values. Despite having careers, these women tend to regard their husbands as the main provider due to their status as the leader in the family. On this point, a female participant commented:

My husband....he is the main provider in the family. I work for the sake of helping him. From a religious point of view, the husband is the leader of the family. So even if the wife has higher rank than him, that is only at work. (Aina)

Aina's comment denotes clearly the strong influence of religious belief in influencing her view regarding the provider role in the family. The view the husband should be the main provider is shared by a woman who says that she is the co-provider because

of her equal contribution; but indicates that it is not a proper situation for them. In her words:

It is both of us...because of course men actually should be the main provider but let say if the earning range is very far then we can see the difference...but if the range is more or less the same.. I think our position is almost the same. And we are both the same...we have the same degree, and we start working almost at the same time....if I have worked for 10 years, he has worked for 10 years as well. But for men, they should contribute more.... (Lina)

This perception exists, even for women who earn more than their husbands. As highlighted by a female respondent:

In terms of the main provider of the family, I would say it's my husband. Even though I earn more than him, he would be the one who's responsible for paying the bills and the children's expenditure. We would usually share in the household expenditure...but if we feel like buying something that we like, we will buy it ourselves. But in general, I would say my husband is the main provider. (Azalina)

Obviously, despite earning more than her husband, the interviewee retains the notion that men should be the main provider and, thus, claims that her husband responsible for paying all the bills and expenditures in order to strengthen his position as the family's main provider. This highlights the salience of his work role. For these women interviewees, this traditional perception is firmly held despite them having high educations or qualifications.

6.2 Career Priority

The priority of career among dual-career couples is an interesting dimension to be explored in this type of family model. It is evident from the research that the participants regard both their spouses and their own careers as very important. However, different reasons were given for this by the participants. One of the reasons given in relation to the couples prioritizing both of their careers is the need for financial security for the family. A male respondent expressed his thoughts in this way:

I think both of our jobs are important. Well, for the time being...both of us need to work. If I work alone, I guess I have to sell one of our cars (laugh).
(Zamri)

This is further supported by a male respondent who said:

If we were to elaborate in terms of career priority...well, both of us need to prioritize our careers not to be neglecting each other's careers. Due to security reason since the cost of living is getting higher and the need to have income from both partners is important so I do not foresee any party should prioritize their career more than the other party so I think both are equally important.
(Raymee)

Both statements above indicate how financial needs caused the couples to adopt a shared provider role. Interestingly, this economic necessity has led them to exhibit a more egalitarian attitude by placing equal importance on both careers, thus showing the high salience of both the husbands' and wives' work roles for the family.

However, finance is not the sole reason mentioned by the participants in the study. For example, a female interviewee shared why she views both careers as important:

Both of them are important. Mine is important for me because I like my job and he also considers his career as important because he is the leader of the family...so both of our careers are important. (Rozita)

Rozita gave different reasons on why both of their careers are important. However, it is interesting to note that, although she appears to be less traditional and shows high work salience by insisting that both careers are important, the traditional ideological influence is still embedded. She noted that her husband's career is important because he is the head of the family, compared with her own career, which is due to her interest.

Meanwhile, a female interviewee, who also has a mother who used to work, stressed that:

I think it's a balance. Both of our careers are important. If I am given the option to quit working, I will not quit. I want to develop my own career...so if anything happens...I am ready. (Shuhaidah)

Shuhaidah's comment exhibits a non-traditional view where she regards career as an important factor in her life. This shows that she has a high work salience and a less traditional ideology in relation to her role as a wife; she contended that she will never quit her job. It is important to highlight that Shuhaidah has a mother who used to work at the same time as having a family; therefore, having a working mother might serve as a role model for her to succeed in her own career.

6.2.1 Conflicting Views within Couples

Even though it is not typical, this study has discovered differences in terms of the career priorities within the couples. For example, one partner may say that both careers are important, but the other might not share the same thought. As acknowledged by a female interviewee:

It's the same because both of us want to work. Like us, both of us agreed that we both want to work...so both careers are important. (Lina)

Shamsul, her husband, on the other hand, does not share this view. According to him, his career is more important than hers, except in certain situations.

Well, in my perspective, my career is more important. But there are times when I sacrifice my work for her, for example when my child is sick and she has to attend an important meeting, so I will stay at home and take care of the kid. We will look at the situation because my job is more flexible than her. (Shamsul)

The differences in views might affect their perceptions of the challenges they face. Shamsul thinks that his career is more important and, therefore, perceives that he makes more of a sacrifice to attend to his family's demands when his wife cannot. A further example of conflicting views was given by another couple presenting a completely opposing view. While Azalina thinks her husband's career is more important, in line with his role as the man in the family, Faris considers their careers to be equally important.

Normally it is the husband that will work for the family. So, I don't think a husband will not work although maybe his wife earns more than him. So, I think his career is more important. (Azalina)

For me, both are important. Only that, right now my wife has the chance to further her study and I feel that she has more opportunities for her career now. Therefore, for the time being, I consider her career to be more important. So, basically I think it depends on the situation because I think one day, I will also have my opportunity too. (Faris)

The above statements point out how cultural and religious values influence the participants in how they view the importance of their own and their partner's careers. Although Faris shows that he is less traditional in his view, Azalina, despite earning more than Faris, is still influenced strongly by the ideology that the male should be the main provider and have more career priorities. Therefore, as experienced by Lina and Shamsul earlier, the differences in couples' view may influence the challenges and experiences that are faced by each spouse.

6.2.2 Work Characteristics Influencing Career Priority

The work itself also presents an interesting point in terms of career priorities among the spouses. Some participants reported that the nature of the job makes their spouse's job appear more important. Therefore, although they regard both careers as equally important, the nature of their partner's job makes their career seem to take precedence. In one instance, a female respondent said:

Both are equally important but the nature of my work and his work is different because he couldn't do much office work at home...unlike me, I can bring my work home. So, in the case of career priority it is much more the same ...only that the nature of work that makes it look like his career is more important. (Hafizah)

This impact is not only felt by women, as some male participants also stated that their wives' jobs need to be given primacy due to their nature. One such example is expressed by a male interviewee:

I prioritize both of our careers. But there are certain times when I would give more priority to her work because she works in the medical sector....so, sometimes she has to be on-call or work in the weekends. So, I have to sacrifice and spend time with the kids. (Nasrun)

The above comment shows that, although the male participants prioritize both jobs, he has to make some sacrifice due to the nature of his wife's job. This situation is also recognized by some women participants who claim that they have the more demanding job and, therefore, their husbands have more time for the family. This is illustrated by a female interviewee in this way:

Oh it's the same for me because we are both working in the admin field. He is in finance and I am in the pure administration. So it's the same. There are certain situations when he will prioritize my work...depends on the scope. Like me, I am in the admin and I travel a lot. Unlike him, he is in the finance department so his work is more static...he stays more in the office, so he has to often tolerate with my work demands because I think I am busier than him (laugh). If I have to go outstation, I will leave my children with him. So he compromises a lot, because he has to do everything when I'm not around...from A to Z...change the nappies, feed them, give them bath...he did it all. (Syireen)

Another female respondent echoed the claim, saying:

Ok...this question is quite tricky because now it looks like my job is more demanding than his. He does have to go outstation and stuff but not that often. The frequency is not that much as compared to me. After I came back from my PhD, the work commitment is more. So, he has to sacrifice more. (Yasmin)

The above circumstances not only make the couples more egalitarian, with increased involvement of the husband in caring for the children, but also affect their role salience. Based on the two examples above, both Syireen's and Yasmin's husbands have to increase their family salience due to the absence of their wives at home, while Syireen and Yasmin move their role of a worker higher in their role salience hierarchy due to their work commitments. Hence, this indicates how the family circumstances have a significant impact on the salience of work and family roles in a couple's life.

6.3 Decision Making

It was indicated clearly in the interviews that these couples emphasize consensus and tend to discuss and achieve mutual agreement when it comes to making decisions in the family. The following quotations support this view:

Basically, we will discuss...that means we try to achieve mutual agreement between the both of us for any particular decisions. (Daud)

Usually, we will go with the discussion approach...so either she or I will bring up the matters. Be it financing, family or personal problems...everything will be discussed. (Nazim)

Hence, decision-making practices among these couples reflect a team effort, with husband and wife having a fair share of the family decision making, with discussion being an important element.

Nevertheless, despite the equal participation of women in decision making in some families, there are still some dual-career women who reported that their husbands make more decisions than them. In relation to this point, one female respondent stated:

We decide about most of the thing together but for certain things it is 50-50. There quite a lot of things that I ask him about....I think he is more of the decision maker. (Sarah)

This was further confirmed by a female participant who shared her experiences:

Usually we will discuss but he makes more decisions than I do. Usually I will just follow him. For things that involve the family, he decides more. Moreover if it involves finance, obviously he will decide it....he is an accountant right? (laugh). So I will just follow him (Aleya)

The comments above illustrate that although there are some couples who show an egalitarian attitude in their decision making, there are still others who are more traditional, whereby the husbands make most of the family decisions. This situation is also acknowledged by the male participants. As one said:

Sometimes we make decisions together, but most of the time I will do it.
(Nasrun)

Indeed, the influences of cultural and religious values are the main sources that impact on their decision-making stand. Their status as husband and leader of the family has been raised by some men, who admit that they make more decisions in the family:

Maybe because I am the husband, so I make lots of decision in the family. But I still emphasize on discussion and mutual understanding with my wife.
(Hafsham)

We will discuss in a lot of things.... but as the leader of the family, I make lots of decisions. (Sahree)

These two statements illustrate clearly that their status as the leader of the family makes some men feel responsible for determining more decisions in the family. Hence, while discussion takes place within the couples, the traditional value seems to be persistent and decision will usually be made by the husband.

6.3.1 Decision-Making Patterns

Besides uncovering the decision-making practice within the couples, the findings also found some trends in this area among men and women interviewees. It has been indicated that women tend to make more decisions on matters regarding the children, groceries and daily tasks. This is highlighted by a male participant:

Mainly, we will discuss but we will also look at what kind of issue it is...look at the matters. In certain things, usually one of us will make the decision. For example, about the children, since she is the main contributor... so she will make most of the decision. (Rezuan)

This is echoed by another male participant, who said that:

If it concerns the household matters, such as buying groceries or that kind of thing, usually my wife will involve more. (Nazmi)

Female participants also confirmed this view, as mentioned by Shamira:

For example, on the children matters... let's say for instance the activities that the children will do during the weekends, usually I will decide, because even if ask him he will say it's up to me (laugh). (Shamira)

These examples demonstrate the division of decision making between husbands and wives and how it is influenced subtly by cultural values. Women are found to be more responsible for making decision in tasks that are usually associated with the homemaker role. This pattern of decision making also reflects the situation where women are expected to have a higher salience in their family roles that concern caring for the children and household management.

This decision-making pattern is also clearly visible when some couples make a comparison on the types of decisions usually made by both parties. For example, an interviewee pointed out how she and her husband make decisions about different things:

If it is for daily things usually I will decide, but for bigger stuff such as buying cars he will decide on it. (Sarah)

Therefore, it appears that Sarah usually makes decisions about things that are simpler, compared with her husband. This situation is confirmed by a female respondent who claimed that her husband is more involved in major decisions, such as purchasing expensive household items and financial issues.

Yes, there are. Because managing the kids is done by me, mostly... so I make lots of decisions about them. Financial decision is made by my husband. And also any decisions to purchase household items, let say... electrical appliances, water filter, sofa, furniture and so on... usually are made by him. (Suraya)

Meanwhile, a male respondent explains his and his wife's roles in their family decision making by creating a parallel with their roles in the organization.

Most of them we will discuss but the strategic ones I will make most of the decisions. Household decisions for example groceries and stuffs, usually are done by her. If it's regarding the children, we will look at the situation. If it relates to strategic decision making, for example, should we send them to the afternoon school or not, we'll decide it together. If it is just an operational

decision, I will just let her decide because the CEO doesn't have to decide on things like that. The line manager can do the decision. It will just waste my time (laugh). (Rizal)

This trend demonstrates the subtle way in which the traditional roles of husband and wife are reinforced through the segmentation of decision making by some of the couples. Women tend to make decisions about things that have been always linked to women, such as childcare and groceries. Again highlighting the importance or salience of women in these homemaker roles; meanwhile, men make decisions about more important things, which is consistent with their role as the leader of the family.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that the tendency of men to make bigger decisions does not reflect necessarily a hierarchy of decision making in the family. Instead, some male participants commented that they held discussions with their wives before reaching a final decision. This point is supported by these two clear statements made by interviewees:

In certain things I decide on it a lot...but we discuss. I discuss with my wife first, but usually I will make the final decision. (Shahril)

I think I made more decisions in the family...but if it concerns with buying big household things usually we will discuss and achieve mutual agreement.
(Nasrun)

Based on the statements above, it can be concluded that, although some husbands make more decisions about bigger and more important things in the family, it does not mean that they are the sole decision maker. Instead, they insist that they still adopt a shared role in the decision making with their wife, by emphasizing discussion and ensuring mutual agreement is achieved.

6.3.2 Impact of Personal Preference on Decision Making

Interestingly, some interviewees reported how their spouses or their own personal preference might influence the couples' decision making. For example, a woman interviewee stated that she is more comfortable letting her husband make decisions for her:

I am the kind of person that is afraid of taking risk, so if I have to make any decision I will refer to him first. I will ask for his opinion first than I will make the decision. I am like that...I can say that I am not born to be leader, just a follower (laugh). I think I never made a decision by myself. But if it relates to the children, of course I will decide on it....for example ...simple things such as giving donations to school...you know, I can make decision on things like that. Things that are simple and related to the children. (Rozita)

A male participant also admitted that he makes more decisions in the family due to his wife's attitude:

Well, I make decision on lots of things. I will even decide about buying clothes (laugh) because my wife is a bit difficult in making decision...everything is nice to her (laugh). So it is easier if I make the decision. People will think as if I am a 'king control' (laugh). But still we do have lots of discussion and she doesn't mind when I make any decision. But for matters related to her, I will let her decide it herself. (Zamri)

Meanwhile, a female participant expressed how her husband is involved in all decisions, including those that are considered women's things.

We will even discuss before making decision about the curtain for the house (laugh). I will say let's do this...and he will say let's do this. So... usually we will take the fair solution. I don't know whether I am fortunate or not, but he even wants to take part in making decision in women's thing. Even about shopping, he is the one who will go to the market and he will pick the vegetables. So, in a way, most of the decisions are made together. (Wardina)

Therefore, it is interesting to observe how the participants' own personal preference may have some impact on the couples' gender role orientation. Couples can become more traditional or egalitarian in their decision-making or demonstrate high salience in both roles, not because of their attitude toward gender roles, but due to the each spouse's personal preferences.

6.3.3 Decision Making in Work Matters

In terms of making decisions on matters relating to work, some couples have reported how they tend to share decisions by discussing them with their spouses, in order to obtain their views and opinions. This is illustrated by a female participant in this way:

Sometimes we discuss.... I will ask for his opinion. Sometimes you know.....sometimes we may have a mind-set about something. So I will just tell him...not for consent, but maybe just ask for his opinion. So maybe he can justify his opinion and sometimes I feel that his view is quite good. So, in a way, he does contribute....yes, he does. (Yasmin)

Some couples also reported how their spouses help them in terms of handling issues at work. As commented by a female interviewee:

If I need to make the decision on the spot, I will do it myself. But usually I will tell him. I always tell him about things happening in my school every day. He will give me some advice on what I should do. (Razlinda)

A further example was given by a female respondent, who said:

Well, work matters...if the thing is something that he knows about for example writing a letter, he's very good at that...he works in the HR department, he knows....so I will ask for his advice. For other stuff, I tell a lot to him.....so he is a good listener. (Farina)

Although the findings above show that the participants in the study seek their partner's opinions and views regarding work, there are still some who tend to make individual decisions when it comes to their own work. For example, a female interviewee commented:

Usually, my husband doesn't mind if I make my own decisions on my own career issues. He would usually feel okay with all the things that I have decide in my career. So, normally there would be no problem. It's just that I need to inform him about the things that I've decided, that's all. (Mastura)

Furthermore, the differences in each partner's careers make them feel that they do not need to discuss their work with their spouses. For instance, a male respondent indicated:

In terms of career...well, because our fields are different, so usually I will make the decision myself. (Shahril)

Besides careers, differences in career perspectives also led couples to choose not to discuss their work with their partners. As one respondent stated:

In this case, I am a bit strict...I make my own decision. Like my wife, she is busy with her goal to go back to our hometown but for me, if possible I don't want to go back yet in the nearest future. In terms of career, if I work at rural area, there is not enough challenge. (Nazmi)

In contrast, some interviewees claim that they do not discuss work matters with their spouses, unless it is an issue that might impact on their family arrangement. This matter is further clarified by interviewees who stated:

Regarding my own work, usually I will decide it myself. Unless it impacts the family for example if I need to do some extra work and want to stay longer at the office, then I will ask him. (Hanita)

If it relates to office works I will decide it myself but if it relates to issues such as going outstation I still have to refer to him...if he says I can't go then I wouldn't go because it involves the family. (Shamira)

Meanwhile, other participants, they do not discuss about their work; rather, they inform their spouses of their decision so that they understand the demands of their jobs. This viewpoint is illustrated by remarks made by two respondents:

Usually, I will decide it on my own because most of my work matters are already fixed. So even if I discuss with her, it wouldn't change a thing. For example when I have been transferred to Tasik Kenyir, I didn't discuss it with her...instead I just inform her about it because there's nothing I can do about it. It's not that I have a choice whether I want to go or not... (Rezuan)

For that, most of the time I will decide it myself. But I will discuss with him so that he knows and he's prepared. For example, when I wanted to do my master's degree, I informed him about it and he supported me and tried to accommodate the situation. (Wardina)

Therefore, although some couples may not adopt shared decision making related to work matters, this does not mean that they are not concerned with their partners' responses to the issues. Instead, these participants are still concerned with compromise and understanding of their partners so that they will understand the situations they face in the workplace.

6.4 Household Work

Dual-career couples often face challenges in coping with family responsibilities, such as household work and caring for the children, when both are engaged in full-time careers. Housework, for example, is a responsibility that has always been associated with women. However, busy career women require their husband's cooperation and participation in housework. The findings from the interviews indicate that there has been an increase in male participation in domestic responsibilities. Interviewees reported sharing the responsibility for household chores:

Like us, both of us are working. We work for the family. So in the weekend, if we don't go back to our parents' house, we will tidy up the house together and wash the dishes. And every two, three times a week he will do the laundry. So we do most of the thing together. (Farina)

We share in most of the household duties. He sometimes does the laundry, hang them at the washing line and fold the clothes. He helps a lot. In fact, I think he folds the clothes more than I do! He's really helpful. He also throws the rubbish and washes the dishes. I'm very glad...we have good toleration in terms of this. (Azura)

Certainly, having career wives has led the men to be more involved in domestic chores and place more salience in their family roles. In this respect, compromise and tolerance are needed in terms of doing the housework, since the couples work full-time. The extracts below further elaborate this point:

At home...let say cooking, because Nazim can cook, so he will compromise. If he sees that I am exhausted after coming back from work, he will cook. But if both of us are tired, we will just buy takeout. Regarding the laundry, basically he will do it...but I will fold the clothes. But in terms of the children, I am more involved with caring them...managing everything. But last time when we only have one child and not that busy...I will iron his clothes. But now, we only iron our own clothes because I am busy...I don't have the time, I cannot make it. I also tidy up the house....and he does things like throwing the rubbish, mopping the floor, cleaning up the garage, washing the cars....things like that. (Syireen)

However, although the findings have shown that these couples have been moving towards a more egalitarian relationship in their domestic responsibilities, there are still some couples who maintain traditional attitudes at home, with the men putting less salience in the family homemaker roles. Despite being full-time career women, some struggle with the bulk of tasks at home. Significant examples of this emerged during the interviews:

Basically, he is less involved with the housework. Sometimes he depends on his mood, if he is in good mood, then he will do lots of housework...if not, then not really. So, usually I am the one who do most of the housework. (Hanita)

It's 100% on me...because he is always not at home. Even when I was pregnant and during my post-natal period, he was not there...cause he's working overseas at that time. So I have to do it all. (Shuhaidah)

The statements above show that these women are responsible for most of the housework, with their husbands contributing a little. Even some husbands admit that their wives carry most of the responsibilities at home. For example, a male participant stated that:

Yes, if it's about housework, most of them are dominated by my wife but not formally. I will support her but she still does most of the work. (Fariz)

The statement above indicates clearly that Fariz agrees that his wife does more work than him, but insists that he helps. This reflects his belief that his wife should do more

of the housework, despite also working full-time. This couple, who conforms to traditional gender roles, also places a different emphasis on the salience of certain roles.

Some men have stated that they are less involved with the housework due to time constraints caused by long working hours. As commented by some male participants:

I think it's 100% hers (laugh)...but I help a bit. Like now, I am seldom at house....I might be at home only 2 or 3 times a week. So, she does most of the housework....sometimes when I'm at home I will help her. (Rezuan)

Another male participant also stated how he is too tied to his work and, hence, his wife has to do most of the housework. In his words:

She does most of it because I always travel, work outstation³...so most of the housework are done by her. I help a bit....I still help, but she does major of the work. (Shahril)

The statements by these male respondents indicate that they are comfortable with the attitude that relates the work role as being important for men; thus, leaving the wives to do most of the housework.

The unfair division of responsibilities is definitely something that is not satisfactory for the female participants in the study. Some wish they could make a change to the current arrangement. One female participant commented:

Certainly! I wish he could spend more time with the family, and involve more with the housework and kids schooling activities. (Suraya)

Another participant shared her view in these words:

If possible I would like him to pay more attention on the children's education. Because he doesn't seem really concern about it. If possible in the future....because now I understand that he is always busy. But now he doesn't seem to be really bothered about the children's education. Because both of us

³ In the Malaysian context, work outstation refers to the condition where a person has to attend to work assignment at a different state in the country, away from his home office.

are working...so I don't think it is fair in terms of that, everything lies on me... (Aleya)

It is interesting to see how these dual-career women desire a more egalitarian attitude, compared with their husbands who are less involved in the family responsibilities. Nonetheless, despite the desirability, some of the women accept that there is nothing they can do to change the current situation. For example, a female participant, who has to carry most of the responsibilities at home due to her husband's work demands, stated:

Of course I would! (laugh). But his working situation is like that, there's nothing I can do about it. Unless if he goes back to his old job....but for these two years it's not possible for him to do that...I have to do it. (Rozita)

Thus, despite longing for a more egalitarian arrangement, this participant's intention of increasing role sharing between her and her husband is stunted by his work situation.

Conversely, there are also some women who are more traditional in their attitude towards the division of responsibilities, which impacts their acceptance of their domestic arrangements. A female participant shared her view:

Sometimes I hope he can change...but I don't think we can do anything because that is the nature of a man. So we the woman, by nature have to carry most of the housework...so we have to accept that. (Hanita)

This situation, however, does not occur among the male participants. Unlike women, men, especially those who does not really have a fair share in their housework, do not seem to desire change. As mentioned by some male respondents:

No, I guess...men wouldn't want to change anything unlike women who always like changes. So nothing that I would want to change because like cooking, I don't like to cook...I don't cook because I don't like doing things that I don't know...the kitchen is too alien for me (laugh)...where should I find the onions, where should I find all the things...If everything is prepared in front of me than that would be fine. (Ikram)

Oh no! I'm very happy with the way things are...why do I want any change (laugh). Maybe if I want to make any change is by having maid or cleaning service so that my wife could focus more on the kids. (Raymee)

Thus, it can be seen that there are still male and female participants who adhere strongly to traditional attitudes regarding the division of housework, despite both parties engaging in full-time careers. Effectively, this has driven them into not requiring any changes, especially for the men; moreover, even if they want some changes to happen, the only change that they would like to see is having a helper at home. In the words of some male respondents:

I do have an intention to hire a maid in order to ease the burden of housework but since I have some bad experience with maids before this, so the intention is quite stunted. But still I try to ease her burden by trying to find a good maid. (Hafsham)

If there is any chance to make any changes...maybe if we could have a domestic helper. I would like us to get help from someone else with the household task. (Fariz)

Therefore, based on the comments above, there is no doubt that the easy access to having a maid has made the men comfortable with their light involvement. They prefer to hire a maid to carry out the tasks at home instead of increasing their own participation; thus, the movement towards a more egalitarian arrangement among couples in Malaysia is more challenging.

6.4.1 Impact of Personal Preference on Housework

It is also interesting to note that some interviewees have mentioned how their own personal preference and family background have influenced their attitude towards housework. Some reported that they still want to participate in the housework, even though they are tired, because they like to do it. The following comments illustrate this point:

Every time when I got back from work it will be my routine to tidy up the house. I think it's because the way I was raised in my family. My eldest sister, she would always make sure that our house always stays clean and tidy...and

therefore, it has become a normal behaviour for me to make sure that the house is always organised and uncluttered. I used to do everything on my own. Even when I was about to give birth, I drove the car to the hospital myself. (Azura)

I am the kind of person that cannot stand looking my house messy and dirty. So, before I go to bed at night I will make sure the house is clean and tidy. So, sometimes I even get up at night at 10 until 2 am to do the housework. Maybe people will think I am fussy... but for me cleanliness is important. (Shuhaidah)

The comments above show how these participants' personal preferences influence the importance that they put on their family role, particularly those concerning household responsibilities. The impact of these not only applies to women, but can also be seen among male participants. One such instance is illustrated by the following remark:

Well, basically I am a person who likes to tidy up the house. So I think we divide it quite equally. Every morning I will iron all my kids uniform for school and also for my wife because she's busy preparing the breakfast for children. Same goes for the cooking, if she comes back late from work, I will cook. Sometimes I feel lazy to take care of the baby so I will cook, I rather cook (laugh) because the baby will still cry if she's with me so it is better if I do cooking and leave the baby with the mother... and I think the food taste just as nice as their mother's dishes (laugh). (Zamri)

Zamri's statement reflects that people like him will exhibit a more egalitarian attitude in terms of housework and high salience in family roles, due to his own character which likes to clean and tidy. Therefore, as with decision making, the impact of personal preference can be seen in terms of doing housework, whereby it also influences the extent to which couples share their roles in the division of domestic responsibilities, and the salience that they place on this.

6.5 Childcare

Caring for children definitely presents a struggle when both couples work full-time. Hence, several types of childcare options, such as nursery, maid, babysitter and even grandparents, are used to care for their children while the couples are at work.

Managing childcare is an important family responsibility for both parents, but the findings indicate that wives have greater responsibility than their husbands in this area. An illustration is provided by a female respondent, who said:

I am more responsible because, by noon, I am already at home. My husband will only come back in the evening, around 7. So when comes back, he will check whether the children have finishes their homework or not...look at their timetable. During exams, he will sit down together with the kids and help them with the revision. (Nora)

The husbands themselves admit that their wives are more involved in caring for their children. One of the male respondent shares his experience:

For things such as sending and fetching them from school...my wife will do it because she is working at the same school as my children. Also, in things such as buying their cloth, my wife will do it because she likes shopping she knows which place is cheaper and good, better than me. (Raymee)

Another male interviewee said:

Erm, my wife carries more of the responsibility. Because since last time, she did it all by herself...I actually I salute her. She took care of children all by herself for seven years, so she did most of the childcare. (Shahril)

Here, it can be seen that these couples demonstrate a traditional attitude in terms of childcare. Male and female respondents in the study highlighted that wives still bear the major responsibility in terms of caring for the children and display a higher family salience consistent with the role expectations prescribed by the gender role approach.

6.5.1 Conflicting Views among Couples

Nevertheless, in the matter of caring for children some couples seem to have conflicting views. For example, some wives have different opinions from their husbands regarding who is more responsible for childcare. There are some women who state that they are more responsible, but their husbands claim that they are equal. For example, a female interviewee said that:

Of course their mom because I have more time at home with them. Their dad will only be home at night, usually 7.30 pm. That's why sometimes even when my husband goes to the mosque I will feel tension because he comes back late sometimes at 10 pm so I have to attend the children, check on their homework. But during weekends he will spend more time with the children, like taking them to play futsal. (Lina)

However, her husband claimed they both care equally for their children.

Erm...I will say it is equal for both of us. In the morning I will send them to the school because I start my work later than her and in the afternoon she will pick them up. (Shamsul)

The conflicting views of these couples are probably caused by the differences of opinion in terms of the extent to which they are involved in childcare. For example, in the case of Lina and Shamsul, Lina said she is more involved because maybe she thinks she does more caring than Shamsul, while Shamsul probably feels that his involvement is satisfactory; thereby, assuming that they are equal in terms of caring for their children. Hence, this actually shows that Lina has a more egalitarian attitude in terms of childcare, because she feels that there is not enough sharing of the caring role.

In contrast, some couples presented different views, whereby some wives claim that their husbands are more involved in managing and preparing their children for childcare or school. For example, a female interviewee mentioned that:

Usually he would send and fetch them because he is nearer to the nursery...

She added:

I do wish that before I go to work I have the time to prepare them to school and nursery but since I have to rush to school every morning I don't have the time to do that. So after I ask them to take their bath, I have to leave them to my husband to prepare them to school and nursery. (Zurita)

Nevertheless, her husband regards their involvement as equal.

I think it is equal between the both us.....for example if she has to work on Saturday, she will bring two of our children with her and I will take care of the other two. For example if she extra-curricular activities or in house training she will bring the kids with her. But if she got lots of teaching to do at school and needs to be focus, I will take care of my four children at home. (Zamri)

Therefore, it appears that Zurita is influenced greatly by traditional ideology because she thinks she does not participate much in the childcare; not as much as she should be as a mother, despite the claim by her husband that they have equal responsibility. These statements not only indicate that spouses may hold different views of gender role ideology, but also different emphases of salience in this family role, which could affect their satisfaction with their involvement in childcare.

6.5.2 Childcare Responsibility during an Emergency

As a dual-career parents, there are times when couples have to handle emergency circumstances involving their children at home, childcare or school. In these instances, questions will arise about who is responsible for the children. From the interviews, it was indicated that, for some couples, it depends on who is nearer to their children's location. One of the respondents stated that:

Based on experience before this, I am the one who handle most of the emergency cases since my husband work far from home. So even though how much busy I am, I still have to handle and of course since it is emergency I couldn't argue about it with my husband. (Shamira)

In this respect, it is important to highlight that women participants are found to be working nearer to their children than the men. As pointed out by a female interviewee:

Certainly I will handle it. In case if I have important work at that time, I will ask my parents to help because my husband's workplace is very far. (Hafizah)

Here, a pattern can be identified in which couples select a house, school or childcare provider that is closer to their mother's workplace. This may be caused by their traditional attitude that assumes that it is more appropriate for the children to be closer to their mother. However, this is not a typical pattern for all the couples interviewed.

For some, it depends on who is available at the time of emergency. One interviewee explained it this way:

If there is an emergency, the maid will call me and I will inform my husband and tell my boss that I need to go back home. So whenever I received an emergency, I will not act alone. Instead I will contact my husband and we will decide on the level of the emergency...if I think I should go back, I'll go back. If he needs to go back as well, then he'll go back too. So we will look at the situation at the office, if at that time I couldn't go back, then my husband will. (Fatihah)

While another participant commented that both she and her husband act together when there is an emergency:

That depends...if the babysitter calls my husband and he couldn't go at that time, I will go there by myself. If not, we will go together. (Hanita)

Thus, in contrast to the couples where the wife's workplace is nearer the children, these couples appear to place similar emphasis of salience on their work and family roles, and are more egalitarian in their attitude as their preference is to act together during an emergency or rely on which of them is available at that particular time.

6.6 Summary

In answer to research questions one, two and three, the data presented here highlight the experience and perceptions of dual-career couples in Malaysia with regards to the provider role in the family, career priority, how decisions are made and how they divide their family work, as a result of the impact of their dual-career relationship. In line with what has been described about the Malay community context, interview data show that there are still some participants who hold traditional ideology and place different emphases of salience in connection with the roles that should be played by the husband and wife. This can be seen in every aspect, including the provider role, career priority, decision making, housework and childcare responsibility. Women are still responsible for housework and childcare, as well as having a higher salience in these family roles, while men are considered as the main provider. Nevertheless, this is not a common trend as there are other couples who exhibit egalitarian attitudes in terms of housework, childcare, decision making, work priorities and the breadwinner

role, as well as portraying equal high salience in both work and family roles. These couples show more role-sharing practice and equal participation in family matters. Besides, interestingly, the data also indicate differences of opinion among some couples in certain matters that reflect their differences in gender role ideology and role salience. In addition, the findings also indicate that individual personal preference may affect the way decisions are made and the division of responsibilities. Furthermore, the findings also highlighted that the interaction between the couples not only affects their attitudes to gender roles in the family, but also has significant implications for the salience of their family and work roles.

Chapter 7

Findings:

Challenges and Coping Strategies among Dual-Career Couples in Malaysia

The previous chapter explained the impact on the family when both the husband and wife work; in particular, in terms of provider role, career priority, decision making and the division of family work. Indeed, the relationship will not only impact on their arrangements in these aspects, but it also creates many problems and challenges as they commit themselves to full-time careers while simultaneously fulfilling many family responsibilities. This chapter, therefore, addresses the fourth and fifth research questions:

- 4) What are the problems and challenges faced by dual-career couples in Malaysia?**
- 5) What are the coping strategies and support employed by couples to overcome these problems and challenges?**

As a result of the study, a number of challenges were identified, including that of coping with housework and childcare, in addition to work challenges such as heavy workloads, long working hours, working away from home, coping with supervisors and the working environment. Evidently, some helpful support and strategies have been found to help these couples to cope with housework, childcare and work demands. This support includes having a domestic helper or cleaner, receiving support from family, colleagues and supervisors, and having a flexible working arrangement. Moreover, some useful strategies are also found to be useful to the couples, such as psychological approaches, doing more housework and spending more time with the family at the weekend, separating work from family and having good organization and prioritizing skills.

7.1 The Challenge of Coping with Household Work

One of the major challenges associated with dual-career couples is coping with household work. Although the subject of housework has been mentioned in the previous chapter, it is important to note that it is addressed differently in this chapter.

The previous focus was on the couples' arrangements as a result being in dual-career relationship, while this chapter discusses specifically the problems and challenges that subsequently arise.

It cannot be denied that it is gruelling for the couples to handle huge housework demands when they are employed full-time. The interviewees in the study reported that they feel too tired to cope with household chores. A female participant, for example, mentioned that:

Coming back from work is definitely tiring. Making us feel tired to do the housework. That's why sometimes we wait for Saturdays and Sundays to do the housework. (Razlinda)

Evidently, the challenge of coping with housework is felt more by women than men. For example, the statement from the couple Hafsham and Hanita shows clearly that the wife, Hanita, carries the burden of household chores more than Hafsham. As stated by Hanita:

When we work, we will be tired and it will affect the performance at home. You know...we have to do the laundry, teach the children...it's like we couldn't perform. Teaching the kids for example, sometimes we can only do it up to one page...it's like we don't have enough energy to do more than that. (Hanita)

In contrast, Hafsham claimed that he does not contribute much to the household tasks. He mentions:

Not really, because I don't really use a lot of time to do housework but I can see the exhaustion in my wife, so now I'm thinking of having a backup for doing housework by finding someone who maybe can work based on hour. (Hafsham)

Therefore, the statement that he is not involved much in housework contributes to the fact that he is less impacted by the demands of housework in comparison with Hanita. This is further echoed by a male respondent who said:

I don't think there is because like what I said just now, my housework is not that much...so there is not really any effect. (Rezuan)

Based on Hafsham's and Rezuan's statement, it can be inferred that the men agree that their wives are more affected than them by housework, since the women undertake more responsibility in this area. In fact, it was also stressed that Hafsham would prefer to hire someone else to help with the housework rather than increase his own participation. Hence, these comments reflect that traditional ideology and the view that women should show higher salience in family roles are still held strongly by these husbands, despite the wives having steady positions and income. The wives, therefore, have a greater impact in managing simultaneously their jobs and housework.

7.2 The Challenge of Coping with Childcare

Apart from housework, caring for children also becomes a great struggle for dual-career couples. Similar to what has been pointed out on the subject of housework, childcare is addressed differently in this chapter, as the previous chapter focused on the couples' childcare arrangements, while this chapter emphasizes its problems and challenges.

The findings indicate how the participants find it difficult to give their full attention to both their children and work. As highlighted by a female respondent:

...when I am too busy with my work, for example when I have to mark lots of test papers or assignments, if I bring it all to home, I will not have the time to monitor my son's homework...because ever since he is in Standard 2, there is so much homework to be done, almost every day. If I don't monitor him, maybe he will lie to me and say that he has no homework. That's why, every day, after they have their dinner, I will spend some time with them, especially when they have exams. (Rozita)

Rozita's comment shows how juggling simultaneously both demands might not be an easy task, especially when she places high salience on her role as a mother. She claimed:

I am a family woman... if given a portion; I can say maybe 60 for family and 40 for work. I think it's like that because now education for the kids is important, plus the fact that my husband is rarely at home. So I have to do it, I cannot wait for him...so the family has a large influence in my life. The work is still important but the portion is 60:40. (Rozita)

It is also important to note that when dual-career couples are involved in childcare, there will be some impact on their work. The participants in the study have reported how having children has impacted their lives in terms of timing. The following remark illustrates this point:

There is a bit. Last time if we have any urgent work to do, we could still stay back and do our job...but now, we really have to plan carefully. When I worked with a private company before this, if the boss says that I need to finish my work, that means I really need to finish my work...I have to put aside my children. (Nazmi)

The comment by Nazmi highlights how the participants must shorten their working hours in order to meet their childcare responsibilities. This contrasts with before they were married, when they could spend more time in the office. In fact, for some participants, the time interruption might affect their commitment to work. As stated by a female participant:

Yes, because sometimes when I send him to the nursery, he doesn't want to go inside. So I have to persuade him and this affects my time. Sometimes, I even arrived at the office late because he was crying and making tantrums in the nursery. (Razlinda)

Apart from time, some interviewees have also expressed how their work has been impacted during the time when their children are ill. One such example is given by a male respondent, who said:

I can't deny there is some affect. Moreover, my youngest son is special and needs extra attention. So the follow up at the hospital, treatments and other contingency stuff somewhat do have some effect on my work. (Hafsham)

Nevertheless, it is important to note that, when circumstances arise in which children fall ill, some couples reported that it is the mother who usually participates more in caring for them; thus, showing a higher salience in this family role compared with the father. This viewpoint is illustrated by the following comments:

Yes, there are some effects because sometimes we have to take care of our children who are sick so we cannot go to work...because usually when the children are sick I am the one who will take care of them. But there used to be a time when my child had chicken pox, so we alternated to take care of our son...but I took care of them more, so it affects in that aspect. (Lina)

I don't know...but I think maybe there is some effect on my wife. Sometimes there is, when the children are sick....admitted to the hospital, warded...and we have to send them at night. So usually, when our children are admitted to the hospital, my wife will take care of them and apply for leave. (Shahril)

These statements show that women are more affected in their work than their husbands in this case, due to the time that they need to spend caring for their ill children. This also reflects that the couples hold to the ideology of the woman as the main person responsible for childcare and the one who should be more salient in this family role.

Problems involving childcare providers also occur for couples, especially those who use nurseries or babysitters. During the time when the nursery is closed or the babysitter is not available, these couples have to bring their children to the workplace. In an example, a female interviewee said:

So far there's no effect...but there was last time, when she stayed at the nursery. Because sometimes the nursery is off or is closed, so there were some distractions. In fact, there were a few times when I have to bring her to the office since I didn't have time to apply for leave. But now she has started school, I have no such problem anymore. (Yasmin)

Thus, when there is a situation of a nursery closing, the question will arise of who will care for the children since both parents are working. In Yasmin's case, she claimed that she is the one who has to bring her daughter to the office. Her husband, Rais,

further confirmed that, in this kind of situation, Yasmin will have to look after their daughter. In his words:

Sometimes there is a problem, especially when the nursery suddenly closes. So... usually if that happens, Yasmin is the one who has to bring Dania to the office with her because my office is way too far from here. Not to mention that her work is more flexible than mine. So, it's better if she looks after her...
(Rais)

Based on this situation, we can see how they choose Yasmin to care for the child because of Rais's office location. Therefore, it is interesting to observe that, in these circumstances, couples make a decision of who should look after the child based on their working conditions rather than the influence of gender role ideology. This example can also be seen in another couple, Lina and Shamsul. According to Lina:

Sometimes my husband and I bring the children with us to the office; for, example when the day care is closed...but he brings them more often than me because he works in a private company and it is smaller than my company so it is easier for him to bring them there as compared to me...because I work in the Government sector and always have lots of meeting. Like last time, I used to bring my son to the office and I have made him waiting at the office for a while because I have to attend a meeting. (Lina)

Furthermore, Shamsul claimed that:

We will look at the situation because my job is more flexible than hers.
(Shamsul)

Therefore, it can be concluded that when the couples are confronted by the sudden problem of unavailable childcare providers, they will tend to compromise and choose the partner with the more flexible working conditions to look after the children, regardless of whether they are the husband or wife. Hence, in this situation, couples tend to have a more shared role and a similar emphasis of salience.

Apart from the problem of a closed nursery, there are some other struggles often faced by dual-career couples when using a nursery or babysitter that could interfere with their work. This is elaborated on by a female participant who considers herself lucky

to have a maid, compared with her friends who send their children to a nursery or babysitter:

Not really....because my maid helps a lot. But I see a lot of my friends that send their children to the nursery and if the children are feeling poorly, the nursery will ask them to pick their children. For me, I don't have such problem...I don't have to fetch them or anything if they are not well....I will make sure I call my maid and remind her about giving medicine to my kids....so we can monitor. It is different with the nursery, they will ask us to take our kids home. I can see some of my friends bringing their children to the office when they are not well since they couldn't send them to the nursery....so it is quite difficult. Like if their kids got chicken pox, definitely they have to take leave and take care of them at home. One more thing, if we send them to a babysitter and the babysitter suddenly has something else to do...they also have to bring their kids to the office. In terms of that, I feel really grateful. (Aleya)

Nevertheless, it is important to note that the problem with sending children to nursery or babysitter might be difficult for some couples, but not for others. For example, a female participant shared her different experience of having a good babysitter:

I'm glad to have a good babysitter caring for my son. Even when he is not well, I will still send him to her and she will look after him and give him medicine. She takes really good care of him. (Mastura)

Therefore, evidently, some dual-career couples may be more fortunate but others may face greater struggles with childcare because the challenge itself depends on the child's carer. Hence, this shows how the carer can actually influence the couple's salience in their work role. Couples who do not face a lot of problems with childcare will be able to concentrate more on their work and display a high work salience, in contrast to those who encounter more of a struggle.

However, despite some of the interference reported, some participants claim that having children actually has a positive impact on their work. As mentioned by a female participant:

At school, I teach five year old children. So when we have kids on our own, we can actually know how to handle these children. So based on our own experience ...we can know their behaviour, whether they are ready to learn or not. So we know and we can attract their attention to learn. (Nora)

Meanwhile, another female participant expressed her view in this way:

When you have children and at the same time you have a job, you will have so many responsibilities. So I think it is important for me to be good at managing and planning things so that I can take care of the children well and also settle my work at the office. So that actually makes me become a more responsible person. It also teaches me to be more patient. (Suraya)

Therefore, despite many challenges that have been reported, it is actually interesting to observe how the act of juggling both work and family responsibilities had a positive impact on some dual-career couples by providing a useful experience that can enable them to be more responsible, organized and effective in managing their work.

In contrast to previous comments that illustrate the impacts of childcare on work, some interviewees do not regard children as having any impact. For example, a male interviewee said:

No...the child's gifts from God, so I do not feel they gave the burden or impact on my work ...why should I feel that... (Nasrun)

Nasrun's comment shows the strong influence of religion in protecting him from feeling the impact of children on his work. This view is also shared by some other participants who believe that it is work that impacts solely on their family life. As mentioned by a female respondent:

I do feel exhausted but I don't think it spills over to my work. Just like the burden of housework, I think it is the opposite...it is the work that affects my family. Of course it is definitely tiring...like we have to get up at night to care for the children but I don't think it affects my work. (Azalina)

Thus, although dual-career couples are usually associated with the need to have dual salience in both roles, the statement above shows that there are some respondents who have much higher salience in their family roles compared with their work roles.

Azalina, for example, who also shows traditional attitudes in her perceptions of the provider role and career priority, stated that although she feels tired, she does not think that childcare affects her work at all. Instead, she thinks it is the work that affects her family life. Therefore, her high family salience is in line with her traditional views regarding the roles of women, has alleviated the impact of family on work.

Meanwhile, another female respondent, Zurita, shared her view in this way:

For me, since I work far from home, I do feel some effect on my children. For example, I do wish that before I go to work I have the time to prepare them for school and nursery, but since I have to rush to work every morning I don't have the time to do that. So, after I make sure they have their shower, I have to leave them to my husband to prepare them to school and nursery. (Zurita)

Based on Zurita's statement, it can be concluded that she thinks her work is an obstacle to performing her duties as a mother and portraying a high salience in her family role. Therefore, even though her husband is involved actively in childcare, her statement reflects that she is not satisfied in an egalitarian relationship.

7.3 Work Challenges

Certainly, work is regarded as a significant aspect in the lives of dual-career couples. Work brings a lot of experiences and challenges for these full-time employees and it cannot be denied that the work does impact on their family life to some extent.

The participants in the study expressed how they enjoy their work and are happy to have jobs that match their interests. However, despite this, they remain burdened by heavy workloads. The situation is tense when their partners are also oppressed by compact work activities. This matter is reflected in one couple's comments:

Future wise, I think I got the job that is suitable with my education level. Working at my place now, I get lots of experiences because now I am into policy making. So, I have to do more work, deal with lots of people....but I feel satisfied...now, I can give orders. But I do feel that work is too compact. Sometimes I fill out the leave form but my application is denied. Even when I am on leave sometimes they would ask me to go to the office for some

important work. Sometimes I feel like going for overseas holidays so that they will not disturb me... (Shuhaidah)

Her husband also commented on his busy work life:

I have to travel quite far from my house to the office. Moreover, I work a lot with expatriate, so I have to meet a lot of contractors and suppliers....I have to attend a lot of meetings. So when we have so many meetings, there is little time left to finish other work. (Shahril)

He further explained how this impacts his family life:

I have to travel a lot for my work, even now I have to go Lumut, Terengganu...Singapore. I don't have much time with the family because once a week I must travel somewhere. Although it is just for a day or two...but I can still feel the impact. Sometimes my wife is annoyed too...you know, I'm working in Malaysia now but still have to work away. So, yeah....what can I do... (Shahril)

Obviously, the heavy workload and the bustle of dual-career couples have impacted on their family spheres. Comments from Shuhaidah and Shahril show clearly how their busy work life has interfered with their family time, giving them less time to commit to their family. In a way, this might distract them from being more committed to their family demands and so on, portraying a high salience in their family roles.

The interference is also reported to affect the lives of the respondents at home. Some have explained how the pressures of completing assignments have caused them to bring work home after office hours. The following quote illustrates this point:

...in my work I have to check the entire application file...all the forms and plans, and I have to manage 3 departments. Besides that, we have lots of meeting and sometimes outside of the office...and back at the office I have more work to do. But I have my target...usually I have to settle my job in 14 days, so if I couldn't finish my job in that time I have to bring my work back to home. But if I bring my work home, I have to settle my housework first...tidy up, make sure the children have their dinner, check on their school bags...and only after that I can do my work, but at the same time I have to

check on their homework....so the situation is really tense. Sometimes I even have to wake up very early in the morning so that I can finish my office work.
(Lina)

Lina's experience shows how the pressure to complete her work has caused her to take work home. Moreover, it is not easy for her to work at home because she also has to perform the bulk of household duties. Therefore, Lina is an example of a dual-career wife who has to struggle to fulfil her work tasks at home while performing her family responsibilities. This also demonstrates an example of how a dual-career woman striving to maintain a high salience on both her family and work roles will face a greater struggle in order to balance both her family and work demands.

Excessive workloads have led to these participants experiencing some negative consequences; for example, the feeling of stress over the heavy workload. As pointed out by a female interviewee:

I really love teaching but there is just a slight problem at school now since we are lacking a teacher in my department. Therefore, we have to work more hours compared to teachers in other departments. For example, this year I felt quite pressured because besides teaching students from Form 1 to Form 3, I also have to teach students from Form 4 to Form 5. I couldn't focus and need to do lots of preparation for teaching. I felt very pressured...I don't have enough time to do all the preparation....at home I'm busy with the kids and couldn't do much work. Luckily my head of department is really helpful and provided me with lots of resources to help me with the teaching. (Zurita)

However, Zurita is more fortunate because she has a supportive supervisor to help her cope with her work demands and reduce her workload pressures; other participants' heavy workloads might produce detrimental consequences. One such instance is expressed by a male respondent who said:

I like working in my line but the workload now is too much. I think the work distribution is defective. And there is no such thing as stress management actions by the employers...nothing. I think I'm almost heading to burnout!
(Ikram)

Hence, it is quite disappointing for someone like Ikram because, although he currently enjoys working in his field, the workload makes him feel stressed and exhausted which, sadly, could result in a decreased interest in his job and might affect his ability to display a high work salience.

However, it is important to note that work stress is not necessarily due solely to a heavy workload. For example, some interviewees mentioned that they feel distressed when the demands at work and home clash. This female respondent commented:

Feeling tired because of work is normal...but when at the same time our child is also having exam, and the work at the office are piling....like now, my students are having their final exam, so there are tons of papers to be marked, and then two, three weeks soon my son is going to have his exam...so I definitely feel the effect...although it is not often. (Rozita)

Evidently, the stress of clashing work and home demands is felt more by women than men, as inferred by one couple, Nurida and Azhari. Nurida explained her view:

It actually depends on time. If it is exam time, yes... we'll definitely feel the impact. I really do...I feel that there are tons of work that I have to settle at the office and at home. But like now, it is school holiday...so I don't really feel any impact. (Nurida)

This is in contrast to her husband, Azhari, who said:

Right now, I think I'm ok. Although sometimes maybe I have lots of work to do, it is still manageable. (Azhari)

These statements illustrate how the wife has a greater impact in juggling both demands of work and family, reflecting the ideology that women must be more responsible for domestic tasks and face more difficulty in maintaining dual salience, compared with their husbands.

Work-related stress can have many undesirable effects on career couples. For some participants, the stress they experience due to work might impact on them emotionally, and they tend to be distracted while they are at home. As indicated by a male participant:

Yeah, I couldn't argue that the stress that I have at work does impact my life at home. At times I can become really short tempered when I have problems at work. (Fizi)

Another female participant added how the tension at work may affect her emotions at home and, thus, the environment at home should play an important role in reducing the stress:

Yes, I can feel it. Sometimes when I got back from work, tired, and I look at all the children's toys cluttered at the living room...I feel terrible. Sometimes when my boss got mad at me...I also felt like blowing up when I got home. So that's why I think the environment at home is important in reducing the stress. (Shuhaidah)

In addition, to the emotional impact, work has also been found to impact on their physical ability. Some participants mentioned that they feel worn out due to the heavy workload. As highlighted by these respondents:

...last time teachers only teach right, but now teachers have to do everything. From decorating the class, writing the students record, admin things. So, there are lots of work...the workload is heavy. Even early in the year we have to settle lots of things, if not you will suffer by the middle of the year. Yeah...it's like that...there is bunch of admin stuff to be handled. Moreover, if you have to control any specific rooms in the school, that is more difficult. Sometimes I feel so exhausted (sigh)... (Nurida)

Sometimes maybe it's tiring because I have to go out of town a lot, but that is my scope of job and I can't do anything about it. (Shamsul)

The burden of workload not only makes them feel tired, but the impact continues when they are at home. For some interviewees, especially the females, work has actually caused them to have less energy for performing their responsibilities at home. One example was given by a female respondent, who said:

I think when a wife is working it will definitely bring some effect especially to the children, in terms of their eating and education....our working hours have already disturbed our time with the children. The time that we should use to

teach them or cook for them will be less so there is obviously less time with them. Usually, when I come back from home, I am tired and don't have enough time to prepare dinner for the children, so sometimes we just buy takeout. And for teaching the children, well...there's not much energy left, so I think if we could spend around 15 or 20 minutes for that, it is okay. (Hanita)

This impact, however, is not felt by her husband as he is not involved as much in the housework. He states:

Yes, in terms of housework, she does most of them. I do support her...but she carries most of the work. (Hafsham)

It is evident that the tiredness resulting from a heavy workload is felt more by Hanita who has to do more of the housework. Both Hanita and Hafsham's statements reflect the ideology of a woman who has to carry the majority of work at home despite having her own career; thus, creating a bigger struggle for Hanita to perform and maintain a high salience in her family roles.

Apart from impacting the participants emotionally and physically, work also has consequences for the time available to be spent with the family. For instance, a male interviewee stated:

My work is strenuous. Every day I have to travel nearly an hour to get to my office and also go back to the house. Moreover, I always need to go to the outstation...might be two or three times within a month. So, it's really busy...the kids spend more with their mom. (Fariz)

Fariz's statement indicates how his lack of time at home means that his children spend more time with his wife than him. Another further example can be found from couple Rozita and Rezuan. According to Rezuan:

My work now is a bit pressured compared to my previous work. Previously, I worked in the administration department so the job there is routine, we will do the things that we usually do and we have so many examples and sample that we can follow through. Now, when I'm working in the project development...it is a new thing for me, so it makes me tense (laugh)...because we have many new responsibilities, with a lot of stakeholders...so the pressure

is more. I even often have to sleep at the office at night. I don't have enough time in the afternoon, so I really have to continue it until night. (Rezuan)

Based on Rezuan's comment above, his long working hours not only make him feel pressured, but also result in little time being spent at home. He proceeded to express how his busy work life has impacted on his children:

I realize there is an impact in terms of the children's education... I think they have gone down because there is lack of monitoring. Last time I had more time, I can focus my attention to them. Now, I'm only at home twice a week...sometimes, when I got back home, the kids are already asleep. So, it's only my wife who spends more time with them. Sometimes, she also couldn't spend a lot of time with them because she is also busy... (Rezuan)

Furthermore, his family situation worsens when his wife is also saddled with a heavy workload. This is elaborated by Rozita, who highlighted that:

The workload is definitely heavy, compared to other universities...we have to teach 20 hours per week. Even after this I have to cover for my colleague who is going to take maternity leave. So the workload is heavy. Plus, I am the supervisor of the practical unit, so the workload continues every semester. Even at night, some students will ring me until I have to tell them 'Please don't call me when I am at home, at night'. It is as if I am working 7 days a week, when weekends is actually very precious to me because that is the time when my husband is at home...people say quality time. (Rozita)

The above comment from Rozita shows that she is also squeezed by heavy workloads that sometimes interfere with her time at home. Thus, her workloads seem like seven days a week to some extent and may undermine her ability to sustain a high salience in her family roles. However, although both have demanding jobs, Rozita is still the one who spends more time with her children:

Well, we are both busy but my husband works far from home, so I carry the responsibility to look after the children....so I think I have made a sacrifice there. (Rozita)

The above comment indicates that Rozita has to sacrifice more and spend more time than her husband with their children, in line with the traditional view of gender roles, despite both of them bearing heavy workloads. Nevertheless, other couples, where both partners are squeezed by heavy workloads, might not experience the same situation as Rozita and Rezuan. Wardina and Ghani, for example, present a different story. Although both are busy, they are fortunate to have maids to help them care for their children. Ghani, for instance, shared his view in this way:

..the workload is quite heavy because I have to teach 18 hours per week...the travelling time itself is around 45 minutes...and that is the minimum. Maybe when I arrive home at 8, I don't have much time with the kids...I don't have the time to teach them Quran whereas I should be doing that. (Ghani)

While Wardina commented:

When I go back home it's already late...at night, so the children have already had their dinner and bath....and I was also tired. So, usually we would spend more time in the weekend. (Wardina)

She added:

Truthfully saying, I don't think I can be a specialist doctor without my maids' help. I really acknowledge that. Our maids are really important in our life, to make sure that our career flourish...for me and my husband. For me, I need the maid because she will actually help me in terms of taking care of the kids. (Wardina)

Hence, when compared with Rozita and Rezuan, Wardina and Ghani are lucky to have their maids looking after their children despite their busy lives, thus helping her to improve her ability to increase her work salience. These maids, however, serve as helpers to the wife more than the husband due to the claim by Wardina that the maids are required in terms of helping "her" to care for the children.

Indeed, living in families where both couples have full-time careers requires a lot of compromise and tolerance. Many challenges must also be confronted due to the work commitments of both parties. Some male interviewees have voiced that they must

travel lengthy distances to their workplace. The following comments reflect this viewpoint:

I think the decision to live in Cheras is actually a compromise because I have to travel far compared to my wife. But, luckily, I have flexible working time, so the compromise is satisfying because I can go out to work when the traffic is not congested. I can match my class with the time that suits me, I will finish my class at night...so it's okay. (Ghani)

Another male respondent said:

The working arrangement is okay....the only shortcoming is that it is far from my house...so the travelling time is sickening....In terms of the toll, petrol and other stuff that I have to pay for travelling...the earning is just a little bit more than her... (Azimi)

Ghani is more fortunate because he has flexible working hours, despite travelling far for work. However, for Azimi, travelling far not is not only a waste of time but also expensive, which presents another challenge. Nevertheless, it is interesting to highlight that, when couples work far from each other they tend to live closer to the wife's workplace than the husband's. This might reflect the masculinity of the male partner that makes it more suitable to travel far, and shows simultaneously that the wife will be more occupied by domestic responsibilities.

Apart from the compromise between each husband and wife, some participants also mentioned that they have to tolerate the demands of their supervisors. One claim that has been made by the participants is that their supervisors are not sufficiently supportive of employees who have families. For example, a female interviewee said:

My head teacher doesn't seem really concerned about the staff. She said that we should never bring personal matters to school. Personal matters should be settled at home. She's like...she doesn't like the teachers taking leave for personal reasons. She will not listen if we say that we want to apply for leave because of family problem or whatever.....she doesn't like it. She wants us to settle our problems at home; she wants us to be professional. (Aleya)

A further example was given by a female respondent, who said:

There is too much pressure working with him... we are afraid that we will be scolded. He is very autocratic...we feel pressured working with him...he will even use words such as stupid when he is cross with us. My work is also too compact. One of my friends has already got hypertension. I am scared that I will fall sick too. Sometimes I have to work on Sunday. I think being a boss...you should not force your staff. (Shuhaidah)

Obviously, supervisors are an important element affecting a worker's experience. Therefore, it is sad to see how some supervisors not only apply pressure and lack support for employees with families, but also have a detrimental effect on the health of their employees; thus, they are an unsupportive element in promoting better work salience for dual-career couples.

Besides supervisors, the working environment itself contributes to a challenging work life. Some respondents claim that they have to face a work environment that is full of stress. As mentioned by a male interviewee:

Now, when I'm working in the project development...it is a new thing for me, so it makes me tense (laugh). Even my boss and colleagues add to my pressure (laugh)...this is because there is nobody working in this project who really has experience working in project development...everyone is new to this and we all have to learn new things...so that makes us tense. Like me, for example, I have to supervise 3 staff, and they all depend on me, so there is a lot of pressure on me...even my supervisor has zero knowledge in this project thing. (Rezuan)

Anxiety caused by working conditions is a matter that is unavoidable by employees and not all are fortunate enough to have a pleasurable working environment. Therefore, specific coping strategies and support are crucial to address the challenges of work, as well as balancing family and work demands.

7.4 Coping Strategies

7.4.1 Having Domestic Helper

Having a domestic helper, or maid, in Malaysia is a common scenario among dual-career couples. The ease of hiring maids from neighbouring countries has prompted

many couples to employ them in order to facilitate their household chores. It has been reported that the employment of foreign maids in Malaysian households, which began in the early 1980s, has increased rapidly from 4,000 initially to some 320,000 by the end of 2005 (Ministry of Finance, 2007). These foreign maids come from several Asian countries, such as Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam. However, most are from Indonesia because of the similarity between Malaysia and Indonesia in relation to language and religion (Tan, 2011). A study by Hashim and Omar in 2004 found that out of 43 women respondents, 41 per cent have domestic maids and a further 3 per cent have previously employed maids. This shows that having a maid is a favourable support to cope with their housework demands. In this study, some participants, especially women, admit that they delegate most of the housework to their maids. One example of this can be inferred from one female participant who said:

Because we have a maid, she will do most of the housework, and the order usually comes from me. So, for me, I think I divert most of the duties to someone else. For example, sending and fetching the kids from school, I use the school van service....and for the housework, my maid will do most of it. We concentrate on the children's education, their homework...that's all.
(Sarah)

Another female respondent added:

Because we have a maid, she will do most of the housework. Most of the housework, I will do it with the help of my maid, because he is busy... he comes back late at night, so he isn't really involved. (Aleya)

Aleya's husband further echoed the importance of having a maid by saying:

The work in the house depends on our job, so that's why we need a maid because I know I don't have enough time to do housework. My wife is also tired because she works as a teacher and has five children. That's why I think the maid's assistance is important...because that is the way for me to ease my wife's burden...by having a maid. (Rizal)

It is interesting to note from these statements that this maid is of great assistance to the wife, who is usually associated as being more responsible for the housework. The

comments by Aleya and Rizal display their traditional ideology where they regard the maid as a useful support, especially in aiding Aleya to carry out domestic tasks.

7.4.2 The Advantages of Having a Domestic Helper

Having a domestic helper is indeed a very helpful support for dual-career couples. The advantages are acknowledged by the couples who employ them as easing the burden of housework. A comment by a female respondent illustrates this point:

Having a maid does reduce my burden in terms of managing the household chores...when I get back from work every day I wouldn't have to worry about doing the laundry, ironing the cloth or cooking. (Shamira)

Another female participant, Lina, shared her experience:

It is much easier when we have a helper at home because I had an experience when my husband was working away...I was busy preparing the children for school in the morning because I don't have a helper yet and I left my handbag and also an important file at home because I was in a rush since I have to get to work at 8 in the morning. So now, when we have a maid, every time my husband is gone to an outstation, she will help me to prepare the children and walk to them to school. She also helps me to iron all the boys' uniforms for school, because if not I have to iron them every day. And the boys' uniforms also got dirty easily so I have to wash them almost every day. (Lina)

The above statement indicates that Lina's maid is a very useful support, especially when her husband is not around to help with the responsibilities at home. In fact, for some women, a maid might be more important for them as compared with their husband when housework is concerned. In the words of one female respondent:

Honestly, I think she helps me more than my husband. Even when he is away for outstation, I wouldn't feel anything because the maid has already covered his part. It is not that I want to boast or anything but that is the reality. When my maid is not around, I feel like half of my feet are gone. I feel really tense when she's not around because I used to depend on her....so when she is not around, it is hard. (Aleya)

There is no doubt that the maid is a very useful source of support, especially for career women who are short on time to complete their household chores. However, the ease of hiring a maid in this country has caused indirectly the husband to be less involved in household chores and act as a block to increased role sharing between a husband and wife.

Although the presence of a domestic helper can be a barrier to an egalitarian arrangement, their help provides many benefits to these couples. Besides simplifying the tasks at home, having a maid is acknowledged as having a positive psychological impact on the family. As stated by Shamsul, with the help of his maid at home he now has more time to spend with the family:

Now that I have a maid to help with housework, I have more leisure time with my family (laugh). (Shamsul)

Thus, although working parents usually complain that they find it difficult to spend quality time with their children, the presence of a maid can help the couple with housework leaving them more time to fulfil their parental responsibilities; thereby, indirectly assisting them to maintain a high salience in family roles.

Another example can be observed from a female participant who also expressed how the maid helps to relieve her tiredness; hence, producing a more positive environment for her and her children.

Besides that, the main reason I want to have maids is because I don't want to be overworked. Because when you are overworked you will get tired and tend to get angry so you might express the emotions to the kids. So that is not healthy for the children's development and it is not good because you have a very grumpy adult with you...so it is emotionally not good for them. (Wardina)

This example once again shows the benefit of having a maid in maintaining a high family salience, by producing a healthy environment in the family. Moreover, the participants also believe that their maids not only ease their domestic responsibilities and have a positive impact on their family, but also impact positively on their careers. As remarked by a female interviewee:

Well, I just started using maid about 6 months. My working hours are not fixed. I could finish my work at 8 pm...or 10 pm...or even at 3 in the morning. So, last time when I didn't have a maid...I was more stressful. So, the quality of my work did not improve. I couldn't bring my work home because obviously I couldn't do my work with the kids around. So now, with the maid around, my situation has improved. (Shuhaidah)

The statement by Shuhaidah proves that having a maid is useful in her situation since she does not have fixed working hours. With the help of her maid caring for her children at home, she can focus more on her work and put in more commitment without having to worry about her children.

This matter is also recognised by her husband, Shahril, who added:

A maid is like a support to us. For example, regarding the children...previously before we have a maid, we have to send them to the nursery. So during that time, every morning we will be busy preparing them to be sent to the nursery. Now, when we have a maid, time wise we can be more efficient...we can directly go to the office. Even when it's time to go back home, we don't have to rush to pick up our children. So, we can have a longer working time...it's good. (Shahril)

Hence, it can be observed that having a maid not only helps to improve their focus on work, but also the respondents can work longer, which contributes to the increased professional performance of the dual-career parents. Therefore, having a maid can be very beneficial not only as a source of coping for family work, but also for dual-career couples who need to maintain a high salience in both work and family roles.

7.4.3 Problems with Having a Domestic Helper

Although a maid is regarded as a very useful support for these couples, some do experience problems. For example, some have reported that having a maid does not comply fully with their needs. In the words of one male interviewee:

Last time we used to have a maid but we had so many problems with her. After her contract expired, we sent her back...and then to take a new maid would cost a lot of money, so we decided not to take any more maids. Even

the maid that we used to have doesn't spend a lot of time in our house; instead she stays most of the time at my in laws, taking care of my children at their place. And she doesn't really cook because it doesn't really suit our taste. (Ikram)

Another female participant pointed out how her maid's behaviour annoys her:

But, in other ways, there are some impacts, for example, before this there are no problems like high electricity cost or she, watching the television whenever she likes... sometimes she's taking advantage of the things available in the house... asking me to provides things for her. So, sometimes it makes me furious. (Shamira)

And another female participant shared her bad experience:

Before this I have used two maids. One of them has a really bad attitude, lazy and doesn't really care about my children. And the second one ran away from home (sigh)...I guess I'm unlucky in this maid thing...I don't think I want to have another one anymore. (Razlinda)

Hence, even though some couples receive a lot of benefits from the presence of a maid at home, some other couples are unfortunate to have maids that increase the problems at home. However, in this respect, it should be noted that there are various factors that could affect the maids' performance; for example, the attitude and competency of the maids, the standard of service set by the employers or how maids are treated by employers. There are reports of maids being abused in the country. Therefore, it is suggested that having a maid does not necessarily improve the couple's burden of responsibility; rather, the usefulness of having a maid depends on various factors.

7.4.4 Other Strategies to Cope with Housework Demands

Despite the tendency of dual-career couples in Malaysia to hire a maid to help them with the household chores, some other couples prefer not to have one. The preference not to have a maid has been reported by some participants for different reasons. Some feel that the presence of a maid might disturb their privacy. For example, a female respondent commented:

I don't feel comfortable when there is somebody else at home...it is difficult. Same goes for my husband. (Farina)

Another female participant claimed that she prefers the whole family to take part in the household chores instead of having a helper:

I admit that having maid does help but there are still some disadvantages because we tend to let her do all the work...so, in a way I don't think it is quite nice. Thus, I think the family doesn't look so harmonious, it doesn't look like we are helping each other...everything will be passed on to her. (Hafizah)

Hence, it can be concluded that not all dual-career couples prefer to have somebody else to help them with the housework, despite the popularity of this support in Malaysia. Instead, those like Hafizah, prefer to do their housework themselves in order to see the family functioning as a unit and have more role sharing among family members.

Therefore, those couples who do not have a maid resorted to using a variety of problem-focused coping strategies in order to cope with the demands of housework. Some couples reported that they have hired a cleaner to help them with the housework. As mentioned by a male participant:

Not really. But there used to be a cleaner coming to our house...but it was only once or twice and it really helped with the housework. (Faris)

Some respondents claim that they hired the cleaner to help them with the housework, especially during busy times. For instance, a female respondent said:

I also used to have a cleaner coming to the house, but not on a fixed basis...maybe weekly or monthly...depends on how busy I am. (Mastura)

Nevertheless, some other couples do not rely on any external support to help them at home. Instead, they use various coping mechanisms in order to settle the bulk of housework; for example, doing more housework at the weekends. This extract from a female respondent illustrates this point:

The house is obviously slipshod. Sometimes only after two or three days, we will do the laundry. We usually don't have time to tidy up the house...so

usually we can only do it on Saturdays and Sundays...we can clean and mop the floor....everything. (Razlinda)

Another female participant added:

Yeah, that's why I have piles of clothes to be folded every weekend! I have to. So the weekend is used to cope with the housework because we would usually be really tired during the weekdays. When we come back home from the office, it is late...I have to give the kids dinner, feed them, give them baths...put them to sleep...which sometimes makes me fall asleep as well. Sometimes I wake again at 2am to wash their feeding bottles...pack their stuff for tomorrow, and then go back to sleep at 4.30 in the morning. And then wake up again at 6.30 or 7 (laugh). (Syireen)

For working parents like Syireen, the need to fulfil her responsibilities as a mother has reduced her time for other housework on weekdays. Caring for her three year old and 10 month old daughters exhausts her, compared with other couples with older children.

Couples who have older children might be relieved from some duties, such as feeding and bathing, and these children might be a good source of help at home. These couples would have better capacity to retain high salience in their family roles. This point is actually highlighted by some respondents who reported that they have trained their children to help them with the household chores and be more responsible.

Since my children are growing up now.... I hope they will be more responsible and capable to attend more and help us in terms of doing the housework. So, I hope they will have more self-responsibility. (Sahree)

We also teach the kids, especially the bigger ones, to share the loads such as sweeping, washing clothes, dishwashing or cleaning trashes. I think that is important so that they can be more independent and not only depend on the parents. (Suraya)

Besides using different kinds of problem-focused coping strategies, there are some participants who use emotion-focused coping, such as being less fastidious about

cleanliness or mess since it is a common situation for a house with children. A female respondent shared her view with these words:

Of course we don't like living in a house that is messy, but I don't want to be stressed out all the time when I came back from work, so I am no longer pressuring myself to be too picky on cleanliness. Besides, I will also do things when I am not tired. (Suraya)

Meanwhile, another female participant expressed:

Before this I used to be a person who enjoys tidying up the house...I don't like to see mess and I will brush, mop the floor and clean a lot but now but when I got more children I tend to focus more on the children and couldn't make the house really tidy as I want it to be. But when I talk with my colleagues, they told me that I don't need to be too worried because they also don't have much time to tidy up the house after going back from work...so that makes me feel a bit relieved (laugh). (Zurita)

Certainly, sharing stories with people experiencing the same situation proved to be a good mechanism for dual-career couples. Therefore, social support from friends can be regarded as helpful in order to overcome the pressures at home.

7.4.5 Strategies to Cope with Work Demands

The demands of work have caused participants to use several different strategies and support to cope with their challenges. Some participants commented that their spouse and family provide support in overcoming work pressures. One example of this is explained by a male respondent:

I think the impact is quite big. Sometimes when we have problems with people or clients at the office, we will feel tense. So, at that time, I will remind myself that the reason I work is because I want to support my family, so thinking about my family gives me strength to face the tension that I have to go through. (Raymee)

In another instance, a male interviewee pointed out how his family is an important factor in motivating him at work:

I think my children and family act as my work motivators. I am working for the sake of their health factors and financing for their education. (Sahree)

While another female participants shared her thoughts:

If I have any problem at work, I will try not to get carried away at home...I will try to control it, so that I wouldn't be tension with the kids and husband. But I do tell my husband about things happening at my office...because he also works, and he does the same thing to. If I see that he looks like he needs support for his work matters, I will not incite him...because he will get more tension. Same for me if I have any problem at the office, I will tell him indirectly...maybe while we are having some rest. He also has experience and he can give me advice. So we tell each other... (Fatihah)

Hence, the findings indicate that family support can materialize in many ways. Other than being a source of motivation, there are also some respondents who often share with their spouses things that happened in the office as a way of releasing stress and obtaining useful advice.

Other than family support, some participants have stated how problem-focused coping in the form of good organization skills, such as time management and prioritizing, are important to survive the demands of work, and help them maintain a high work salience. As mentioned by a male participant:

I do have long working hours...so I have to be good at managing... manage time, manage email...I have to be good at prioritizing. If not, there will be no time to do all the work. (Rizal)

Meanwhile, some participants tend to utilize emotion-focused coping by adopting a psychological approach to handling work issues. As mentioned by a female respondent:

In terms of the workload, sometimes it can be heavy...but I try not to feel too tense about it....for me what's important is we need to have a focus. (Aina)

Another female participant further commented:

I enjoy my work now. I think if we don't enjoy our work, we'll feel tense. Especially when we are at this age, feeling tension is not good for the health (laugh). That means, in terms of work, we cannot force ourselves. If we don't enjoy it, we must do something about it. But for me, so far I enjoy my work. I think we are the one who have to make the work interesting... we should not take it negatively. (Fatihah)

It is interesting to see, however, how Fatihah, who is 50 years old, relates her age and health to her work enjoyment; thus, indicating how age can be an important factor in influencing an employee's experience of stress at work.

Besides coping with work demands, the interviewees in this study utilized a number of emotion-focused coping strategies to achieve a better balance between work and family, and achieve an equal salience in work and family roles. Some participants claimed that, in order to reduce the impact, they tend to separate work and family. The following quotes reflect this point:

From the beginning I started to work, I have trained myself that, when I am at home, I am absolutely for the family....so it's like that from the start, I don't bring my problem to home....I try to control, but I don't know if people see that I still look stressed (laugh)... (Nasrun)

So far, I managed to balance it well. Usually when I come back home, I wouldn't think about the stuff at school anymore. (Nora)

The participants in the study also try to cope with their parental responsibilities by spending more time with their family at the weekend. For example, a female respondent commented:

In the morning I will make it a point to see them off to school. Only when I got back home it's already late...at night so the children have already had their dinner and bath....and I was also tired. So, usually we would spend more time at the weekend. (Wardina)

Another respondent, Shahril, explained how he tried to spend more time with his children at the weekend in order to compensate for his busy work life:

So far, I consider the balance is fine....now every weekend is kind of for the family. My job is demanding... the workload is heavy, but I try to go back early to home. But still in a week, there will be like two or three days where I have to go back late at night from work. So when I arrive home, all the kids are already asleep...so we are kind of, what should I say....still not close enough. Every week there must be times when I will be back late form work. (Shahril)

Although he tries to spend more time with his family at the weekend, Shahril admitted that it is still not enough for him to have a balanced time with his children, but it is the best that he can do. Therefore, despite his effort to increase his time with his children, his work demands force him to give more commitment to work; thereby, giving his work role greater salience, resulting in him not having a very close relationship with his children.

The findings also found that the salience of a role may change depending on the situation and effect the way they handle their work and family demands. An example of this can be inferred from the experience of a female respondent:

When I started working, I think my priority was more to my career. But when I had children, I tried to balance everything and prioritize the thing that should be prioritized. Because we know that the children are our treasure...so we certainly give more priority to them. Before this, I was really into my work. I even go to work at night until 1 in the morning...because I was so spirited to finish the budget (laugh)... treat my friends so that they can accompany me (laugh). But now I have family, so I never do that anymore... (Syireen)

Syireen, is an example of a person who had very high salience in her work role before she got married. However, after getting married and having children, it was crucial for her to maintain a good balance while still prioritizing her children. Therefore, we can see how her role salience has changed after marriage and, thus, the family role is more central to her. This influences the priority that she must emphasize in order to attain a balance between all of her responsibilities.

Nevertheless, the situation is different for another female participant. Yasmin is an example of a dual-career woman who tries to maintain a high salience in both work and family by prioritizing according to the situation. In her words:

For sure people will say that we should try to balance our family and work right? But sometimes there are times when we have to give more priority to our work. And sometimes we have to give more attention to the family, and we have to put the work a side because there is nothing we can do about it, the family comes first. But there are times when I have to put the job first rather than my family. Because we can see that for example when I did my PhD last time, I have to leave my child. See...that means the work comes first right? Like now when my boss assign me to go somewhere and I will say 'Oh can't go there, no one is going to look after my daughter, I have to look after her, I can't go' So that's it, there are times... (Yasmin)

It is interesting to see how Yasmin's statement reflects that the hierarchy of salience between family and work roles depends on the situation. Therefore, she will not have a fixed hierarchy of salience in her work and family roles; rather, the highest position will depend on the needs of the roles.

Coping simultaneously with work and family demands is definitely not easy. Some female interviewees admit that they have achieved a good balance but they need help with maintaining it. For instance, a female interviewee described her view in this way:

I like having a career and family at the same time...but sort of have to depend on other people in order to strengthen all that...in terms of helping with the children, housework and so on...I couldn't stand alone. (Sarah)

Some dual-career couples may be more fortunate in having the support to cope with their work and family responsibilities. Nevertheless, there are participants who reported that their work and family balance are still not distributed equally and that they spend more time at work. This is highlighted in the following comments:

I think now my life is more to work....even now, in a week I can only be at home around 2 days only. Sometimes, I even have to work on Saturday and Sunday. Like today, it is supposed to be a holiday but my boss is working. (Rezuan)

I think I am still lacking at that. My time is still more for the work. (Fizi)

I think I spend too much time in the office....on weekdays I have little time with my children....sometimes even on the weekends I have to do some work so I feel that my time is spent a lot on my work...so far I think my workload is heavier than my housework. (Shuhaidah)

Hence, it can be seen that there are some participants who balance successfully their work and family, and manage to maintain dual salience in their work and family roles. However, others could not provide a balanced distribution of commitment at home due to their busy work life; thus, support from employers is crucial to helping these couples achieve a better work and family balance. The next chapter will describe more about the findings that relate to the policies and support provided by employers.

7.5 Summary

In answer to research questions four and five, this chapter has explained the problems and challenges faced by dual-career couples in Malaysia, as well as describing the coping strategies and support that they use to balance their work and family life. The findings indicate that one of the main challenges is coping with housework demands. On the whole, women participants are found to face more challenges than men and struggle more to maintain high salience in work and family roles, as the latter are not as involved as their wives in terms of the housework. This reflects the traditional ideology that is still upheld by some of the men, despite their wives also being engaged in a full-time career.

Juggling childcare is also a major challenge for dual-career couples. Involvement in childcare affects their work in terms of the time and performance as well as their ability to display high work salience. It was indicated that, when the children fall sick, the mothers are more affected than the fathers in caring their children, which shows the influence of traditional ideology on the maternal role of a mother. However, in certain cases, such as when faced with the problem of unavailable childcare providers, couples display a more egalitarian attitude by choosing the partner with the more flexible work situation to care for the children, regardless of gender. The study also found that some women with traditional ideology, coupled with higher family salience

than work, insist that the family does not impact on their work; rather, it is the work that impacts on their family and disrupts their high family salience.

The respondents also pointed out that they have encountered many work challenges, such as heavy workloads, which impact on their time available for the family and sometimes necessitating bringing work home. Clashing work and home demands affect the ability to display high salience in both roles, which are usually felt more by the women, as well as other challenges such as unsupportive supervisors and work environment.

The challenges confronted by dual-career couples has led them to undertake some problem and emotion-focused coping strategies, as well as several supports that could lead to increase their work and family salience; for example, having a domestic helper, which was also found to perpetuate the traditional arrangement between husband and wives. Hiring a cleaner, doing more housework at the weekend and getting help with housework from older children are also some of the supports and strategies mentioned in the interviews. Additionally, support from family and friends, good organization and prioritizing skills, psychological approach and separating work and family are also found to be helpful. Furthermore, the study also found that the way couples cope or handle their work and family demands also depends on specific circumstances which may change the salience of certain roles. Table 7.1 below summarizes the challenges faced by the Malaysian couples and the coping strategies used to overcome the challenges:

Table 7.1: Challenges and Coping Strategies of Dual-Career Couples in Malaysia

Challenges	Coping Strategy and Supports
1) Coping with housework demands <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tired to cope with housework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem-focused - Hiring domestic helper, hiring cleaner, doing more housework at the weekend ,train older children to help with housework • Emotion-focused - Be less fastidious about tidiness and cleanliness • Support - Friends supports through sharing stories

<p>2) Coping with childcare</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shorter working hours • Caring for sick children • Sudden unavailability of childcare providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem-focused - Having domestic helper, good childcare provider, choose partner with more flexible work to spend more time caring for children, spend more time with children at the weekend
<p>3) Work challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heavy workloads – less time for the family, resulting them in bringing work home. • Clashing work and home demands at the same time • Travelling far to work • Demands of supervisors who are not understanding • Stressful working condition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem-focused - Good organization skills (time management and prioritizing skills) • Emotion-focused (Psychological approach) – try not to feel tense, having focus, enjoy work, separate work and family • Supports – Motivation from family, sharing stories with spouses, supportive supervisors

It was also evidenced in this chapter that there are some participants who balance successfully their work and family, but others find it more difficult because of oppressive work commitments. Therefore, it is important for employers to provide the necessary support to help dual-career couples attain a better work-family balance and high work and family salience. The next chapter will discuss more about the facilities and support provided by the employers of dual-career couples in Malaysia.

Chapter 8

Findings:

Policies and Support from the Government and Employing Organizations

The previous chapter discussed the problems and challenges faced by dual-career couples in Malaysia, along with the coping strategies employed by couples to overcome these. The findings show that, in addition to the coping strategies used, support from the employing organization is also important to help them cope with the demands of the workplace and home. This chapter addresses research questions six and seven:

- 6) What are the implications of the government and organization's policies and support to the couples?**
- 7) What kind of policies and support would the couples like to see introduced?**

In conjunction with the rise of dual-career couples, the Government and organizations in Malaysia have implemented various supports and policies to help facilitate the couples' work and family balance. Hence, this chapter first highlights the types of supports and family-friendly policies provided by the employing organizations. This includes the different kinds of approaches undertaken by organizations from different sectors in the country and the implications of the supports to the couples. Subsequently, this chapter also points out the weaknesses in some of the current policies and facilities. Next, it highlights the couples' recommendations to improve the current policies and support, in addition to those that they would like to be introduced. The final part of the chapter explains the effect that is expected from the support recommended by the participants. It is important to note, however, that this chapter displays less interaction with the couples compared with the previous findings chapters, since the participants talked more about the policies and support in their own organizations and the Government overall, rather than making a comparison with or connection to their spouses.

8.1 Policies and Supports from the Organizations and its Implications.

Organizational supports are indeed very important for dual-career couples to cope with challenges. The findings show that this supports can exist in many forms. Supervisors for example, have been cited as a very important source of support to aid the participants with their challenges. Some of them stated that they have bosses who are understanding and considerate towards their family issues. The following remarks illustrate this point:

At the moment, my head of department is a lady with two kids. Last time my HOD (Head of Department) was a lady with no kids. So there is a difference. Like my current HOD, if we ask for an excuse because of our children, she will back off...she will also do the same. I think if I compare myself to her I think she is more attentive to her kids. Even if her child got a minor diarrhoea, she will be like 'Oh I'm sorry I'm late today because my child got diarrhoea. If it was my children, I will just remind my maid to give them plenty of water to drink, that's it. So, I think she's ok. (Wardina)

So far, my boss...I can say he understands. For example if I have any emergency...like a couple of weeks before this, my child has been admitted to the hospital...he said ok, no problem... I can look after my son until he is well, and I can go back to work after that. So he gives exemption for me to take care of my child... (Shahril)

The above comment by Shahril shows how considerate supervisors can have a positive impact on their employees. This flexibility not only facilitates the employees to carry out their duties, but also makes them feel happy in their work. The supports from bosses are important for employees in dual-career relationship who need to maintain a high salience in both their family and work roles.

Besides supervisors, supportive colleagues have also been cited as a factor that helps the participants to cope with their work demands.

In terms of my colleagues, I would say that they are helpful. For example if there is any emergency, they will cover my work for me...so yes, they are helpful. (Mastura)

Apart from having helpful and supportive colleagues who understand the demands of dual-career couples, some participants have highlighted that the work environment is also a source of support that helps them to enjoy their work. Participants who experience a pleasant working environment expressed that they feel happy with their current work. As one male interviewee said:

So far, I have no problem...that's why I like my workplace now even though it is a bit far. In fact, we have one branch near my house...but I didn't apply to work there because I enjoy working at my current place. (Nazmi)

In fact, the workplace is also mentioned as an important factor in facilitating work and family balance.

I think I almost balance it well...I can say 60 for work and 40 for the family. Because when I worked in KL last time, the gap between work and family was indeed far. The traffic jam has contributed to some percentage of my busy life. (Hafsham)

Therefore, besides supports from supervisors and colleagues, the condition of the workplace itself, such as the environment and location, also plays a crucial part in being supportive of dual-career couples coping better with work and family demands; thus, helping them to increase their work and family salience.

The interview data have also found that many family-friendly policies have been implemented for their married staff with family by the Government and organizations in Malaysia. These include daycare, medical benefits, maternity and paternity leave, flexible work arrangements and many others. It was also evidenced from the interviews that these organizations undertake different approaches regarding the policies and supports that they provide. Participants working for Government bodies, for example, are generally provided with many useful supportive policies as mentioned by these interviewees:

As a government servant, we have maternity leave, paternity leave, parental leave and we can also get a tax reduction. There is also a day care which we have to pay for, but it is really helpful. The working hours are also flexible. (Azalina)

For me, the supports that my workplace had provided to me are really useful for example the medical treatment and the leave provided. I think everything is OK now, the annual leave is enough...we don't have to pay our medical bills...so it is good. (Izhar)

However, for employees working for private companies, the policies provided vary according to organizations. Some organizations provided a lot of useful supports but others are still lacking in providing them. For example, a male participant commented on the supports at his workplace:

Everything is only at the level of fulfilling the government regulation...only the minimum level. Like the paternity leave, last time it was only one day, after that it was two days. There was also no written flex-time at work...but my senior manager says we could come late...say like 10 in the morning but we have to make sure that we complete 8 hours a day at work...but at the same time he doesn't really like if people come late to work...it is so contradicting! (Azimi)

For participants working in smaller private companies, the financial resources to provide the supports may be limited, thus making them available to less supports. As mentioned by a female interviewee who owns a law firm:

I hope that the government could support the maternity leave for the staffs that take three months maternity leave or more. Because it will be a bit difficult for us to pay for the staff that take 3 or 4 months maternity leave since we are a small company. So, if the government could support us, it will be very good.

This situation contradicts to the situation of those participants working in huge corporations. These participants are provided with a lot of generous family-friendly policies by their companies, as stated by a male interviewee:

TM is like a Government body, we have paternity leave for three days. There is also a childcare at the HQ. There is a flex-time option at TM HQ which is either 9-6 or 8.30-5.30. For telecommuting, they are now doing a try on this option for ten selected employees (which mean that these employees don't

need to be in the office.) We also have a few holiday houses in the country.
(Rizal)

Meanwhile, some respondents working in a non-profit organization (NPO) enjoy different kinds of support. Since these respondents came from a huge international NPO, the support they receive is very advantageous. A male participant described his experience this way:

My paternity leave is different from my friend in Malaysia because we are enjoying four weeks of paternity. Previously, I only got three days leave compared to 28 days now. And also the kind of entitlement that they give is more on family focus such as we have dependants allowance which means the staff members' kid will get RM 125 ringgit each until they are 18 years old or until they are 25 years old if they are studying full time. We are also partially covered by insurance for the whole family. Besides that, we have 30 days entitlement leave which is quite a lot and four months maternity leave which is common in Europe countries. We also have phone communications which is linked to employees from all over the world, as well as teleconferencing and videoconferencing. (Raymee)

It is interesting to see how he elaborated in terms of the advantages he received, compared with his friends in Malaysia and his previous company. Being employed in an international non-profit organisation, Raymee clearly received much helpful support; for example, in terms of paternity leave. The four weeks' paternity leave is far greater than that available to Malaysians (seven days for government staff and around three days for employees in private organizations). This demonstrates how the Malaysian's organization is further behind in enhancing role sharing practice between new parents or supporting fathers to show higher salience in their his family roles.

It was found that the family-friendly policies and support provided by organizations for their employees have provided many benefits. This matter is reflected in the following remark by a female interviewee working for the Government:

I feel grateful because I think there is lots of flexibility in terms of work. Moreover, now we have three months maternity leave, there are some advantages to us. Besides that, my workplace still practice half-day leave, if

there is any emergency, we can take that leave. And then the boss is also very flexible...we can do our work at home and e-mail it to him. So, it's okay....even though I feel stress sometimes, but these supports help me to overcome it. (Syireen)

Syireen's statement above indicates how the support at her workplace not only facilitates her work and family balance, but also helps her to handle the stress that she feels at work. Hence, the organization support is very effective in facilitating dual-career couples who wish to maintain dual salience in their work and family roles.

For some participants, the support also has beneficial implications, such as job satisfaction and loyalty to the organizations. This is elaborated by a male respondent in his comment:

I am grateful with what has been provided by my employers. It is very effective... I don't foresee anything else to be added because I came from a company offering less entitlement, so the improvement on the entitlements that I get is good...It gives me a lot of satisfaction. (Raymee)

Raymee's comment illustrates how the support provided by his organization gives him more satisfaction, especially when he compares the support he receives from his NPO with that provided by his previous employer. The helpful support that he receives is very rewarding, not only facilitating his family life but also having a positive effect on his overall work experience.

Meanwhile another male interviewee pointed out:

I think what we have now is good...because TM is considered one of the best employers in Malaysia. What they have provided is good for the employees' loyalty to the company. (Rizal)

Rizal's statements reflect how his huge private organization has provided much useful support to its employees, which has a positive impact on his work, such as a sense of loyalty to the company. This highlights that organizations should be willing to provide generous support to their employees with family since their implementation is actually beneficial to both employees and employers.

It was also revealed that the support provided by the organizations is found to be beneficial, not only to the employees, but also to their family in general. This matter can be seen from an example given by Lina, a Government servant:

There are medical benefits which are helpful. I used it when my son and husband went through an operation. (Lina)

In some cases, this support will become more useful when one half of the couple's workplace provides more facilities than the other. This viewpoint is illustrated in the following quotes:

I think the medical benefits are okay. I think my workplace is better than hers. So far, all the medical claims on my special child have never been rejected. We have tried claiming using her workplace but it took us so long, so we use mine. So far I think there's no problem...the policies help a lot... (Ghani)

It can be observed here that the support of dual-career couples by employers is important in facilitating family matters. In the case of Ghani, who works as a lecturer in a public university, he was fortunate because the support of his organization is better than his wife's; hence, this has helped their family when they have been in need.

Another example is given by Shamsul, who said that his private organization's policies are more flexible than his wife's.

I can always take extra leave whenever I apply for it. Usually people who work for the government might have some problem applying for leave. Like my wife for example, since it is stricter there. (Shamsul)

This matter is supported by his wife, who commented that:

Sometimes my husband and I bring the children with us to the office, for example when the day care is closed...but he brings them more often than I do because he works in a private company and it is smaller than my organization so it is easier for him to bring them there as compared to me because I work in the government sector and always have lots of meeting. (Lina)

These statements not only indicate how support from the organizations is helpful, but it can also help to increase role sharing among husband and wife. For example, in the

case of Lina and Shamsul, Shamsul also plays an important role in caring for the children due to his workplace situation; therefore, making it easier for him to care for his children when the nursery is closed.

8.2 Weaknesses in the Policies and Support

Although many policies and support have been provided by organizations and the Government, some participants have pointed out some of their weaknesses. Workplace childcare, for instance, is among the facilities highlighted. As mentioned by some interviewees:

Actually, there is childcare at my office but we have to fetch our children latest by 5.15. So the time is not suitable. (Rozita)

I don't feel satisfied with the nursery at my school because there are too many kids there. I mean...the proportion between the nursery staff and the children is not balanced. So I think this does not meet the standard. Sometimes I see that the children are just left alone by themselves and sometimes they don't really care about their feeding. So the care is not very satisfactory. (Razlinda)

It is disappointing to see how both of these participants, who work in the public sector, are not able to use the daycare facility provided at their workplace due to unsuitable conditions and facilities. Thus, these workers could not take advantage of the facilities provided and had to find alternative arrangements for their children.

Losses due to employees not being able to use the workplace facilities are not due solely to the unsuitable conditions. For example, a female respondent, who works as a teacher, commented that she could not use the pre-school facilities at her school for her daughter:

Since the school has a pre-school education for kids, I think they should give priority for the teachers to send their children there. Like now, even though there is a pre-school here, the teacher can't even register their own kids there. There are so many conditions in terms of the earning and so on. Of course they should do that but why don't they give some space for the teachers there as well? We are also teaching there. So if they could give some priority to the teachers there, that would be good. (Nurida)

This is supported by her husband who says:

I'm a bit unhappy about the pre-school facility at Nurida's school because although the facility is there in the school, my daughter cannot be registered there because of the qualification. So, I guess things like this should be given some flexibility. (Azhari)

This is another example of how some participants are not given any leeway by their employers to facilitate their family life. This should be considered by employers and the Government so that employees can more conveniently manage their work and family life; thus, supporting them in sustaining their work and family salience.

Moreover, maternity leave issues have also been raised by some interviewees. The current maternity leave by the Government was revised on 15 October 2010, to extend the previous 60 days to 90 days (Malaysian Department of Public Services, 2012). This act, however, stated that each woman is allocated 300 days of maternity leave, equating to 90 days' maternity leave for up to three children. This has caused some women participants to question the policy. For example, a female respondent stated:

The current maternity leave is limited to 300 days for every woman. So, I wish there were no limit. Because if the ladies can perform their job, why should you limit it to only 300 days? Let that person take her maternity leave based on her suitability and that person can work happily. Rather than you think "Oh after this I have to apply for unpaid leave". So, I think that will also help. (Wardina)

While another female interviewee commented:

The policies are okay but I hope they will not set limitation towards the number of children that the staff can apply for maternity leave. I don't think there is anything wrong if they provide the maternity leave, don't set the limitation. I don't think it will really affect their work....because we have many women employees working everywhere. So, if they start working when they are not really fit yet...maybe they are not really in good physical shape yet to go back to work. I'm afraid this will have an implication in the future. They always say that it is not good for the productivity, but they didn't think about the long-term effects. (Fatimah)

Clearly, the limitations imposed on maternity leave do not satisfying some women participants, especially those who have, or might want to have, more than three children; for example, Wardina and Fatihah, who each have five children. Therefore, since many women in Malaysia are employed, their welfare is a matter that should be considered. Moreover, the Malaysian community, especially the Malays, are very much influenced by the Islamic values that regard children as a blessing; therefore, they tend to have more children. In addition, the fact that all the concerns regarding maternity leave came from the women participants reflects the cultural values that the maternal role is really emphasized by the Malay women.

8.3 Personal Preference on Supports

It was evidenced in the interviews that some respondents chose not to use the support provided by their employer. This is due to the fact that some of the support provided is unsuitable or incompatible with their needs. For example, a female participant, Shamira, who works for a Government body, commented that she does not use the daycare facility provided at her workplace as the cost makes it more favourable for her to employ a maid.

We got a childcare at the office but when we have many children, it is worth more worth to have a maid rather than sending them all to the childcare.
(Shamira)

Undoubtedly, the cost of having a maid is worth more than sending all children to the daycare, especially for those who have a large number of children. In Malaysia, the average maid is paid around RM 600, which is much cheaper than sending children to daycare costing an average of RM 250 per head, especially for couples with many children. In the case of Shamira, who has four children, having a live-in maid is more useful to help look after all her children while she is at work.

Another example of a respondent who does not use the support provided by his organization is Nasrun, who works at a public university. He claimed that he prefers not to use the medical support at his workplace since he lives far from it.

In terms of medical support...as far as I can remember, I have never use the medical support that is available. Never... (laugh). In fact, I think I don't even take the medical card that they provided for me because all the medical

supports are located near the workplace. So, even if I'm sick, it would not make sense for me to drive all the way for the medical treatment right? (Nasrun)

And he added to explain how the organization can help to support his situation:

If possible, I hope the medical facilities and supports are expanded to places where the staffs are living...I live here because of my family; it's not that I purposely want to stay far from my workplace. So, I hope they can consider this kind of thing. (Nasrun)

Clearly, the family situation makes Nasrun unable to use the support in his organization. Thus, it would be better if the organization could think of a framework to help this family, perhaps in line with Nasrun's suggestions, or maybe providing a procedure for him to make a claim for using alternative medical facilities.

8.4 Policies and Supports Recommended

Many suggestions have been raised by participants for improving the weaknesses in some of the current policies and supports. Extended maternity leave, for example, is one of the policies mentioned frequently by the participants. Currently, the maternity leave has been allocated as 300 days for each woman; thus, Malaysian women can only enjoy three months' maternity leave for up to three children. This has resulted in some of the interviewees suggesting improvement. One female participant, for example, said:

If they can provide the maternity leave exactly 90 days without any condition, I think that would be even better...because when we are breastfeeding, there are so many things that we have to think in terms of the transition to leave him with someone else. So, if the leave are extended I think the staff can give better performance at work because they wouldn't be really anxious thinking about their babies. (Shamira)

As mentioned previously, the limitation on the number of children might not be something that is wished for by dual-career women, especially those who desire more than three children. Shamira has four children and, hence, would not be able to enjoy the extended maternity leave of 90 days if she has another child.

To further discuss the extension of maternity leave, another female respondent added the importance of having a longer period of maternity leave:

Yes, because in terms of maternity leave, at the early period after having the baby we would be in a worrying state because the baby is still small...so when it is up to six month we will be less worried....because if we worry too much, we will tend to make calls many time from the office. So, once the baby is more stable...the effect would be much better. (Hafizah)

These comments indicate how extended leave not only benefits the dual-career women at home, but also provides a positive impact at work by enabling them to focus more on the work; thus, increasing their salience in this role. Therefore, the positive implication is not only for the women but also for the organization.

In addition to the suggestions mentioned earlier, there are also other options that have been mentioned by the interviewees to be included in the maternity leave. As suggested by some women participants:

I think it is good to give the women themselves option for how long they want to take their maternity leave. Because some women doesn't like to take leave for so long, they get bored at home but for some others they like to have longer maternity leave because for them there is nothing bigger than making sure that your child is prepared to be taken care by someone else. (Aina)

I think it would be good if they could provide an option for the employees to start taking maternity leave earlier because some mothers will give birth earlier than their due date. Like in my case, my first son was born when he was 36 weeks, and the second when he was 38 weeks. So at least we are more prepared. So every time we are going to work, we wouldn't be worried about giving birth earlier than the due date... (Razlinda)

Besides maternity leave, improvement on paternity leave has also been suggested by some participants. Currently, the Malaysian Government has not regulated any paternity leave for male employees. With the exception of government servants, who receive seven days' paternity leave for each child, other organizations seem to provide different amounts of paternity leave to their staff. This has resulted in some participants suggesting a paternity leave extension:

...but if the maternity leave or paternity leave could be extended I think it would be much better. (Faris)

Maybe they can extend the leave for the husband. Right now my husband only got three days paternity leave. So for mothers that have to undergo their post-natal period without their family around...I think three days is not enough... So it's difficult if the mothers need any help...if she is all by herself. (Razlinda)

However, some couples are found to emphasize more on the maternity leave than paternity leave. This is reflected in both Ikram and Hafizah's views:

For the women, I would say the maternity leave. It would be good if the government could extend the maternity leave. For the paternity leave, 5 days would be enough. (Ikram)

If the maternity leave could be extended, it would be much more better...like my husband he got 2 days paternity leave, so if the government could extend that...maybe one week, would also be good....but I prefer longer maternity leave compared to paternity leave. (Hafizah)

The statements made by this couple reflect a more traditional ideology in which they are more likely to associate the charge of a newborn baby with the mother than the father, since they collectively prefer longer maternity to longer paternity leave.

However, another couple, Sarah and Nasrun, present a different attitude in this matter, since they think that both maternity and paternity leave should be extended.

What the Government does right now shows that they are concerns about employees with family, but if they could provide more supports that would be even better. For example the paternity leave, if it could be extended...that would be good. Because during maternity leave, depression among mothers usually happens in the first two weeks because at that time they really need that extra care....after that, it's fine. (Sarah)

I hope they can extend the maternity leave for the wives....and for the husband as well because the burden depends on the birth. If it's normal then it's okay. Like my third child, she was born through c-section and after that she got

jaundice. So in that kind of case maybe they could think of a framework on how to support the family... (Nasrun)

Sarah and Nasrun displayed a more egalitarian attitude compared with the Hafizah and Azim, since they not only want a longer maternity leave, but also hope that paternity leave can be extended in order to share the burden of caring for a newborn baby.

Apart from maternity and paternity leave, a woman interviewee working at a public hospital also pointed out how emergency leave for staff can be improved to better benefit dual-career parents.

...I also think the compassionate leave should be separated from the annual leave because emergency leave is used for something that is an emergency... something that you cannot avoid. So, I don't think it should be deducted from the annual leave. Sometimes I felt pity with the parents of my patients who said that they cannot apply for any more leave to take care of their kids because they don't have any more leave available and they have to deduct their salary if they insist on taking leave. (Wardina)

It can be seen from the interviews that the policies in terms of leave are emphasized heavily by the Malaysian participants. This shows indirectly how the participants are very concerned about spending time with the family at times of need, and also shows how they have a high salience in their parental role.

It was also found that some participants hope that the Government and organizations could establish a daycare service at their workplace to eliminate childcare issues while they are at work:

It would be good if there is a childcare in my workplace. It would be easier for us to look at the children there. Like my baby, she only breastfeeds and doesn't want to be fed using the bottle. So, people from the nursery have to feed her water by using the spoon. Only when she was 8 months it was better because she started to eat food...prior that I always felt worried at work, thinking whether my baby is hungry or not. (Zurita)

Furthermore, the influence of cultural and religious values that make Malay families tend to have more children emphasizes the importance of having on-site childcare. As mentioned by a female interviewee:

Well, they don't have to worry about where to send their children, and then if something happens they can just go and look at them during the break. So, there will no problem about applying for leave or leaving the office early every time the children are ill....they don't have to upset the boss anymore. In fact, sometimes we have meeting until late afternoon...and sometimes we even have to work on Saturdays...in which we have to pay extra charges to the nursery. And some nursery doesn't even look after children on Saturday. Furthermore, most of the staff here are young teachers who just got married and active having babies...so, it would be beneficial to have a childcare here. (Nora)

It cannot be denied that daycare in the workplace might be very useful for dual-career couples, helping them to be more focused at work and show higher salience in their work roles. However, some organizations might regard it as a costly exercise. Therefore, awareness for the organization is crucial as having a daycare facility might not only help the employees, but also result positively in their work.

Besides daycare facilities, the interviewees in the study also wish that their workplace could offer more flexible work arrangements in order to improve their work and family balance.

If possible, I hope my workplace will give some priority and flexibility to people with family. Because sometimes when I am assigned with night classes, I try to change the schedule but some people just don't understand. They say that it is not fair if they keep on giving night classes to the unmarried staffs. Yes, that is right... but if we are forced to teach at night, we wouldn't feel happy because we'll keep thinking about our children at home. We couldn't focus....so if they could be more reasonable, it would be a win-win situation. (Rozita)

Rozita's comment indicates that the lack of flexibility has made it difficult for her to reconcile her responsibilities at home, in addition to the fact that her husband is at

home only two or three times a week. Therefore, understanding and support in the workplace is vital to help Rozita fulfil her responsibility at work and at home.

Meanwhile, another male participant hopes that his workplace can provide a flexible working arrangement through telecommuting, due to his work location being far from home:

If we want to compare to last time, now it is more fast-paced and the work has taken over people's life. Travelling far to work is a waste of time, so nowadays we should have the facilities to do work at home via teleconferencing, for instance. Thus, if companies could give that option it is much better...and it is up to the individual to discipline themselves because it will be hard if we have children at home. So, I hope they could create more efficient way to work...but of course they must have the infrastructure such as the fibre optic structure...so basically it will make life easier if people can work at home. (Azimi)

Another male participant who works far from home also wishes for a flexible working arrangement:

I think there are two things. The first is the flexible working options. The second is the thing that JKR is having now...telecommuting. So, we can stay at the house and at the same time do our work. (Rezuan)

Since these male respondents are found to be working far from home, a flexible option would be a very good support for them and their families. For people like Azimi, who works in a private company, and Rezuan, who works as a Government servant, by having telecommuting as a flexible work option, they would be able to spend more time at home and, hopefully, increase their participation in home responsibilities and their salience in the family roles.

Certainly, flexible options can exist in many forms. Apart from telecommuting, part-time work has also been mentioned as a desired option for some respondents. This matter is reflected on by a female respondent:

I think it would be better if they could provide us with some supports such as having flexi-time or part-time work option. This would be beneficial for those who wish to spend more time with their family. (Suraya)

The suggestions from the respondents indicate the desirability among the employees to have more flexible options at work. In Malaysia, however, arrangements such as telecommuting and part-time working are rare and not as widely practiced as in Western countries (Subramaniam, 2011). Thus, it is important for organizations to analyse and consider this option in order to help those employees who wish to commit more time to their families and to gain the benefits as mentioned in the earlier comments by participants who enjoyed having flexible work options. Having this flexible option is imperative as some participants working in the public and private sectors, and are lucky to be granted flexible working arrangements, indicate that this support helps to reduce the pressure on them. The following quotes illustrate this point:

Very good (laugh)...because it gives me lots of freedom and I am not pressured. Because I am in charge and organise my own work, so there are no pressure. (Shamsul)

For the pre-school teachers, we can arrange our own timetable. So even if we have our schedule, we must tune with the children's ability. For example, if we want to teach them to write, some children probably don't need too much time to be able to write, but some other children might take longer. So the time is more flexible and we are not so pressured. (Nora)

Apart from discussing support in terms of leave and facilities, other participants have voiced their opinion from a more economic perspective.

Maybe the government could raise the COLA (cost of living allowance) because I don't think the allowance now is enough for us living in Tanjong Malim. Even though Tanjong Malim is not considered as a city, the cost of living here is still high. (Zamri)

I hope the government could reduce the price for children in full-time schooling especially the whole items related to study. (Sahree)

Another important issue that has been raised is the economic support for dual-career couples with disabled children. Ghani, who has five children including one with a disability, expressed his concern on this matter:

So far I think there's no problem...the policies help a lot...only that, I think the Government on a whole, is still lacking in terms of the supports toward disabled children. A simple example would be the maid. If we hire two maids, the levy charge is different; the second maid's levy is higher. So, the needs to have two maids for a family like us, where the mother is working or both of us are working, have a special child and at the same time have four more children, the needs is necessary. If the government could provide an exemption levy scheme for the maid that is specifically hire to take care of the disabled child; that would be something good. Because the maintenance cost for a special child every month is very expensive. If we work for the government, then we can claim to some extent, but for people who are self-employed, the burden would be much more... (Ghani)

These participants further pointed out how reducing charges on certain family or children's needs as well as increasing family allowance might also assist the families economically.

It can help the families...so the families can use their money for other benefits. (Nasrun)

Yes, it will reduce family expenses in general and more saving can be made. (Sahree)

Obviously, economic support is regarded as crucial to these participants. Nevertheless, it is interesting to see that all the comments regarding economic supports were made by the male respondents. This might reflect the traditional ideology that they are very concerned with their role as the family's provider.

The interviewees in the study have also highlighted how the policies and support should be implemented based on the person's field of employment:

I actually think there are lots of things that can be improved because I think that the policy makers usually only see things that are in front of them. They

didn't really look at the situation on the ground. So, lots of things can be improved. They cannot use one method for everybody. I think the policies should be suited based on a person's field of employment. (Rezuan)

A female respondent further elaborated on this matter by explaining about her profession:

One more thing, in the medical field, pregnant doctors will have to work right up until they are giving birth. So in terms of 'on call', I think it should be a general rule that pregnant doctors shouldn't be given on call when they are 7 or 8 months pregnant. I have a lot of friends who is pregnant and after that have miscarriage or pregnant and then have premature labour just because the burden of work is too much. So I think it's necessary in certain conditions that, pregnant doctors should not be given on call duty. (Wardina)

Therefore, it was found that various support and facilities are desired by the dual-career couples in the study. These recommendations and suggestions should be given emphasis and consideration by the organization and the Government, since the benefits and advantages of the support provided will not only facilitate the lives of dual-career couples, but may also have a positive impact on the organization.

It is also important to highlight that the support and policies set up for dual-career couples vary according to sector and types of organizations. Although many supports have been provided, there are still many organizations that are still lacking in providing helpful family-friendly policies and facilities. Nevertheless, this study does not aim on making generalization on the policies and supports available for couples in Malaysia, but rather it tries to provide insight into the diversity that exists within the experience of dual-career couples working in Malaysian organizations.

8.5 Effects of the Availability of Policies and Supports Recommended

The participants in the study have highlighted how the availability of the policies and support recommended might impact positively on their work. Support from the Government and workplace are expected to increase their performance and commitment to work. As illustrated by the following quotes:

I think it will be more positive. Because when we work in the field that we are interested, when they provide us this supports and flexibility, we will be more motivated. So if we were given more supports, I think we can perform better. (Nasrun)

Of course we will feel happy...we'll feel satisfied. So when we got what we want for, we have to give the best in return. (Rozita)

If the policies help us to facilitate our work and family balance of course we wouldn't feel so stress out. And of course by logic it will affect our work because when there are policies available to help us balance our family and work, it will be make our life easier and we can give more commitment to our work. (Rais)

All the comments above demonstrate how workplace support not only facilitates the work-family balance, but could also help to increase the salience towards work roles by providing ways to enhance performance and commitment. Therefore, it is crucial to highlight to the employing organizations how the support can generate a positive impact on the employees' work salience and, so, benefit the organizations.

Certain policies and supports may provide many advantages for dual-career families and help them to achieve a better work and family balance overall. Nevertheless, the importance of using the policies and supports wisely, as well as managing themselves efficiently, was stressed:

I think there are many policies that have been implemented either by the organization or the Government. For me, the important thing is how we make use of these policies effectively and efficiently. (Ikram)

I think they provide good welfare for us but what's more important is we must know how to manage our lives competently. (Farina)

I think the policies and supports are fine....maybe because I don't have too many children but we are the one who have to balance it well. Because I think if you want to work you have to know how balance here and there... (Lina)

Hence, it is undeniable that organizational support is important for dual-career couples, but the statements above indicate that the couples' own management is

imperative as well in order for them to maintain a good balance and maximize the benefits.

8.6 Summary

In answer to research questions six and seven, this chapter explained the implications of the government and organization's policies and support to the couples and the kind of policies and support would the couples like to see introduced. Indeed, many policies and supports have been implemented, including daycare, medical benefits, maternity and paternity leave, flexible work arrangements and many others. These policies and support are different according to sector and type of organization. The policies and support provided have benefited the participants, facilitated them to balance their work and family demands, and assist them in achieving high work and family salience. However, some weaknesses were identified in the current policies and supports, such as daycare with unsuitable conditions, the limitation on the 300 days' maternity leave, paternity leave that is too short and the lack of support for parents of disabled children.

It was also evidenced that some participants prefer not to use the support provided; for example, in terms of the cost and location of facilities that are far from home. Hence, many suggestions have been made by the interviewees for improving the current policies and supports. These recommendations include having 90 days' maternity leave without limiting the number of children, providing some options for maternity leave; longer paternity leave; on-site day care; flexible work options, such as telecommuting and part-time work; economic support; and tailoring policies and support based on the field of employment. These recommendations are valued highly by the participants since they will not only help them to have a better work and family balance, but can also benefit the organization since these supports are expected to increase their salience towards the work role by enabling them to increase their performance and commitment.

Chapter 9

Discussion

The previous findings chapters have presented an analysis of the accounts generated from Malaysian dual-career couples' perspective. These chapters have focused on their perceptions and experiences with regards to the provider role in the family, career priority, decision making in family and work, family responsibilities, work challenges, personal coping strategies and support, as well as policies and supports provided by the workplace. Each chapter has been elaborated in relation to gender role ideology and role salience, which have been selected as the theoretical framework for the thesis. It has been found that there exist some similarities as well as some differences between dual-career couples in the Malaysian context compared with the West due to the influence of several macro and micro-factors. Hence, in this chapter, I address research questions 8, 9, 10 and 11:

- 1) To what extent are the perceptions and experiences identified in the Malaysian context similar to those identified in Western literatures?**
- 2) What are the factors that affect the Malaysian couples' gender role ideologies and role salience?**
- 3) How does the gender role ideology that underpins Government and organizational policies impact on the couples' experiences at work and in the family?**
- 4) How does the interplay of gender role ideology and role salience explain the couples' experiences?**

In this chapter, a summarizing framework of their experiences has been created based on the analysis that has been carried out. A discussion of the findings and a comparison between the experiences of dual-career couples in Malaysia with the existing literature on dual-career couples, particularly in the Western countries and some non-Western countries (where appropriate), are also presented in this chapter. In addition, this chapter points out the specific factors that influence the experience of Malaysian couples through the lens of gender role and role salience perspective and elaborate how the findings extend the use of these two perspectives in understanding the context of couples.

9.1 Comparison between Malaysian and Western Findings

Based on the findings in Chapter 6, 7 and 8, the study has managed to build a summarizing framework of the experiences of Malaysian dual-career couples (refer Figure 9.2). Similar to the earlier framework built from previous literatures (see Figure 9.1), some macro and micro factors have emerged to be important in influencing the perceptions and experiences of Malaysian dual-career couples. The developments in economics and education have resulted in Malaysia going through a surge in the number of women in the workforce and dual-career couples as experienced by the Western countries. Regardless of the variety of similar challenges faced, the present study found that there exist some differences between the experiences felt by the couples in Malaysia and the West. Apart from economic factors, these dissimilarities are striking due to their cultural and religious underpinnings and can be observed in many aspects of work and family. Additionally, it was revealed that the couples identified several micro-factors, due to personal background and characteristics, as influencing their experiences. Therefore, a discussion is presented on how the Malay couples constructed these factors as having significant impact on their gender role and role salience, and therefore on their work and family experience. The connection of both theories in explaining and understanding the context of couples is then discussed.

Figure 9.1: A Summarizing Framework Based on the Literature Review of Gender Role Ideology and Role Salience

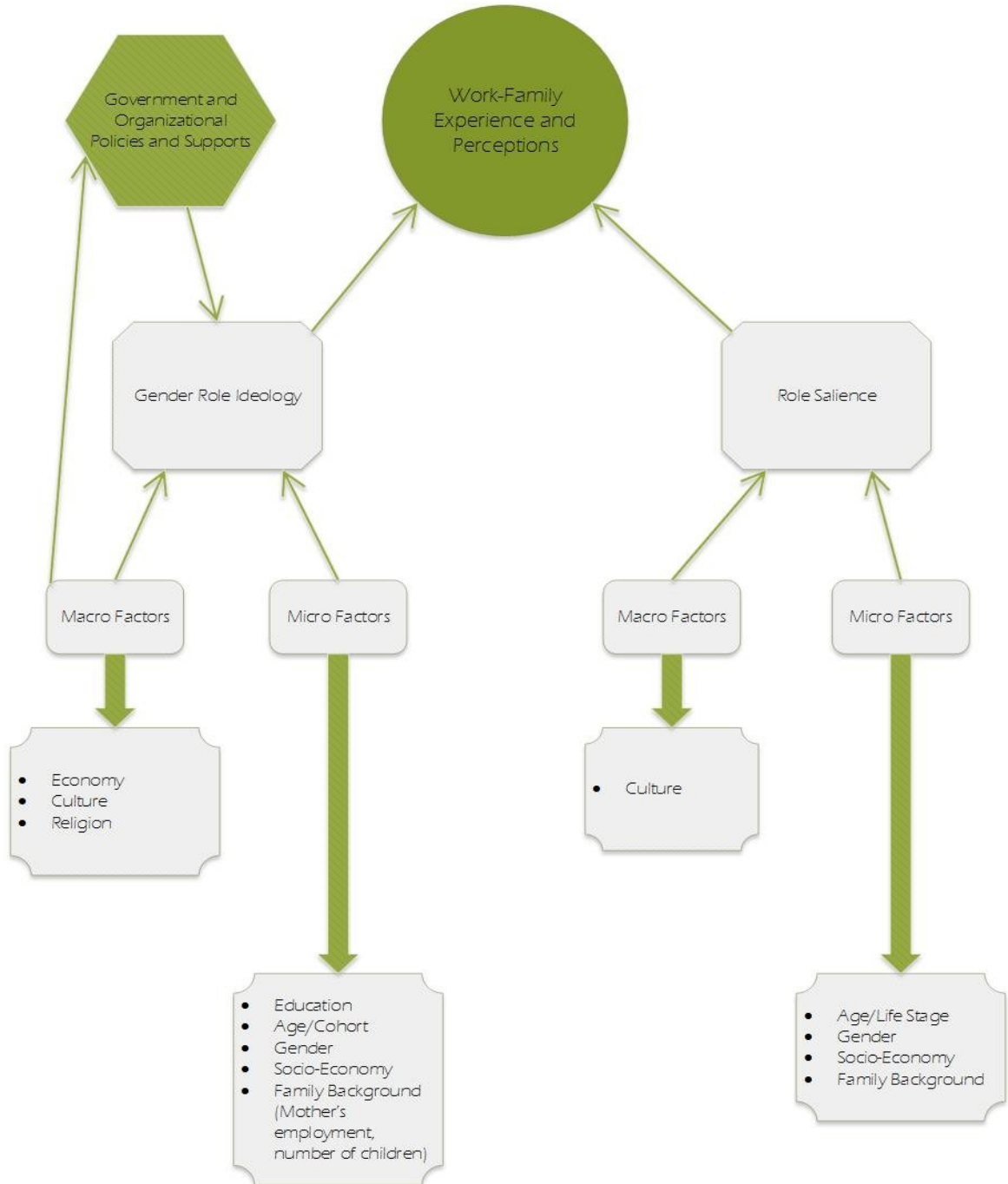
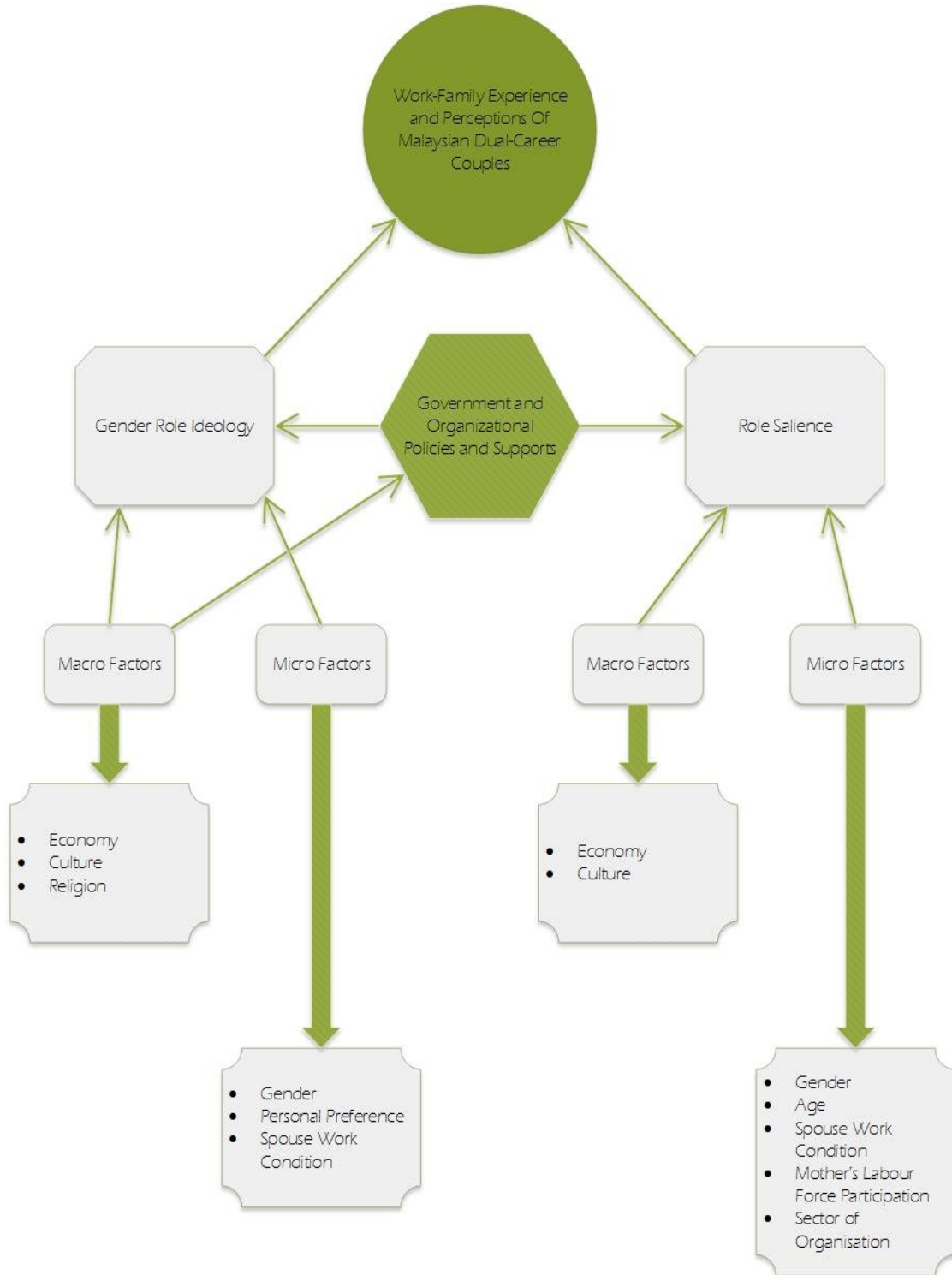


Figure 9.2: A Summarizing Framework on the Experiences of Dual-Career Couples in Malaysia



9.2 The Influence of Macro Factors on Gender Role Ideology

In the context of macro factors; economy, culture and religion, emerged as playing pivotal roles in shaping the attitudes to gender role among the Malaysian participants, consistent with previous findings from the West. Furthermore, these three factors are also found to influence the types of policies and support provided by the Government and organizations similar to earlier studies. However, when looked at in more detail, the Malaysian economic background, the influence of Malay culture and the influence of Islam are also perceived as causing differences in the perceptions and experiences of dual-couples in Malaysia compared with those in the West. These factors are now discussed in more detail.

9.2.1 Culture

Earlier literatures in the West have stated that couples still regard men as being responsible for earning despite having two people to contribute to the family income (Potuchek, 1997; Tichenor, 1999, 2005). Instead, it has been argued that most dual-career women redefine their own breadwinning role in various ways without diminishing the identity of the men as the major provider (Dema-Moreno & Diaz-Martinez, 2010; Tichenor, 2005). The current study supports previous research where some participants are found to show traditional values in their statements regarding the provider role. Furthermore, maintaining men's dominance in providing seems important for them and this is illustrated in how they redefine themselves as co-provider when the wives earn more. This illustration demonstrates how the Malay couples framed the ideology of male as the main provider. Additionally, it was revealed that some women did not realize that they are actually co-provider, which indicates how traditional ideology obscures their actual behaviour in the family. Man as the provider model also seems to be preserved by some women participants who acknowledged their spouses as the main provider due to their greater income. Nevertheless, acknowledging spouses as the main provider due to their greater income does not occur among men whose wives earn more than them. Although some men state that they might regard their wives as the main provider if they have higher incomes, the situation is not realized; hence, it is uncertain if the men would really acknowledge that perception if their wives do earn more than them.

For some women interviewees, the influence of culture is stronger, leading them to regard their husband as the main breadwinner even when they earn more and have better qualifications. This finding challenges the taken for granted knowledge that higher educated people or people who have higher incomes express more egalitarian gender role orientations

(Lackey, 1989). Instead, the societal context or the influence of culture may affect their perceptions and attitudes to gender roles (Bianchi et al, 2000; Bolzendahl & Myers, 2004; Corrigan & Konrad, 2007; Harris & Firestone, 1998; Inglehart and Baker, 2000). This view is reflected in the present study where there are participants who, despite holding high educational achievements, portray a more traditional attitude to work and family roles. For example, one women participant with a PhD qualification and earning more than her husband still regards her husband as the main provider. Hence for this participant, the cultural values or perhaps religious beliefs that dictate the husband as being responsible for the provision of maintenance, have a stronger influence on her understanding than her own educational attainment.

Culture also influences how participants make sense of the provider role in the family. Some participants in line with previous literatures see the provider role as connected with the breadwinner role or specifically as concerned with the one whose earnings are the primary source of support for the family. However, some other participants construct the family provider role in a different way. This role is not only connected to providing monetary needs but also refers to providing the non-financial aspects of support for the family, particularly providing and fulfilling the family responsibilities at home. This illustrates how these couples are influenced by the traditional values of Malay cultures that dictate the provider role as to be one where the husband provides the monetary supports and wife provides for the needs of the family at home.

The impact of culture can also be found in the subject of childcare. Earlier research has indicated that different cultures have shown different attitudes regarding the use of extended family in caring for children. Studies in the United States for instance, have cited that white couples are less dependent on their extended family to care for their child, compared with African-American and Mexican-American families (Uttal, 1999). It is also reported that mothers of colour were more likely than non-Hispanic white mothers to use extended full-time grandparent care as opposed to sporadic grandparent care, extended part-time grandparent care, and not-routine grandparent care (Vandell, et al., 2003). In addition, in some societies such as Soviet, Chinese and Latino, the extended family plays a big part in providing care for young children (Aroian et al., 1996; Blank & Torrecilha, 1998; Kramer et al., 2002). In this Malaysian study, the couples explained how extended family is one of the supports that are helpful in caring for children among dual-career couples. This is consistent with previous research in this country by Subramaniam (2011) that, if domestic help is not

affordable or not available, women are still able to go to work by relying on extended family to help with childcare. Reliance on extended family is more prevalent among Malay families, which have strong kinship ties and some of them send their children to their parents or in-laws in the village to be cared for (Subramaniam, 2011). The great assistance from extended family or domestic workers in Malaysia is similar to some other Asian countries, such as Hong Kong and South Korea (Lo et al. 2003; Park & Kim, 2006); as well as some European countries, such as Italy and Greece, which are known for their strong family structure and cheap domestic services, both of which lighten the burden of childcare and household tasks (Straub, 2007).

The way childcare is perceived is also different across countries. A study by Pfau-Effinger (2000), for example, found that countries in Europe show differences in perceptions regarding the care of small children. In Germany for instance, it is believed that it is harmful for pre-school children to be away from home and their mother all day, while in Sweden, care by nannies or daycare centres for under three year olds is viewed as normative. In Malaysia it is common for a mother of a three month old newborn to leave her child with a nursery, babysitter or with a maid or extended family due to the shorter maternity leave in the country compared with other countries, especially in Europe. It is only since the 16th of October 2010 that the Government has enforced the extended leave provision from 60 days to 90 days and, therefore prior to this date, it was normal for working mothers to spend only two full months with their newborn.

9.2.2 Religion

Religious values emerged as an important theme in influencing the perceptions and experiences of Malaysian dual-career couples towards the provider role. For instance in Western societies, couples often regard the husband as the main provider in order to maintain their masculinity and establish men's gender identity (Brennan et al., 2001; Loscocco & Spitze, 2007; Zuo, 2004). In the Malaysian context, it was found that how couples in the study make sense of their roles in the family is influenced by their religious beliefs. The findings have shown this great influence through the statements that husbands are considered as the major provider of the family due to their status as the family leader, according to Islam. Unquestionably, from the perspective of religion, Islamic law asserts that a man, as the head of the family, is responsible for the provision of maintenance for the wife and his family (Mohamad, 2010). As for the women, due to the great responsibilities in the reproduction and

caring for the families, they are not charged with the responsibility of breadwinning (Omar, 2001). However, this does not mean that Islam discourages women to work; instead, they must work if they can provide a useful contribution to the society (Kausar, 1995; Khattab, 1996) (see Chapter 2). It should also be noted as well, that it is not wrong to regard a wife who has a higher career position and contribution as the major provider for the family, as long as she has permission and blessing from her husband, who is the family leader. Moreover, it is also crucial to highlight that Islam operates according to the premise of complementary roles between men and women, and gender equality is called for in both the Qu'ran and the teachings of the Prophet SAW; however, differences between men and women are not abolished (Kausar, 1996). Nevertheless, some participants in this study framed the provider role as something that must be held by men by stating it as in accordance with Islamic values. Perhaps the misconception between what is dictated between Malay culture (which delineated husband as the primary provider) and the religious belief, since Malays are embedded as Muslim in Malaysia, has driven their perception in this regard and influences the acceptance of the provider role as something that must be carried out by men.

In the aspect of decision making, couples in this study are illustrated as showing an egalitarian attitude when they communicate in that they tend to discuss and achieve compromise along with mutual agreement in making decisions either about the family or work matters. This is consistent with prior studies that show greater involvement of women and lots of decision being made jointly by both partners (Dema-Moreno, 2009; Hardill, 1997, McClelland, 2008). Nevertheless, there are also some couples who claimed that the husband is the main decision maker in the family due to their status as a husband and leader of the family. This finding is similar to the previous contention by Dema-Moreno (2009) and Tichenor (2005), who highlighted that obstacles such as that the gendered socialization of gender roles of both men and women mean that the husband is given more power in the decision making process to preserve their gender identity (Tichenor, 2005). However, in the Malaysian context, couples construct the significant influence of religious beliefs in their perceptions of decision making. The interviewees explained that religion influences their perceptions of acknowledging the husband as the decision maker of the family due to their status as the family leader in Islam, similar to the previously discussed in relation to the provider role.

The influence of religious values can also be found in aspects of childcare. For example, some interviewees highlighted the significant role of religious belief in addressing the impact of family commitment towards work; such as how children are regarded as a blessing from God and thus, caring for children is not regarded as having any effect on their work life. It has been acknowledged that being Muslim, the Malay tend to have a larger number of children as compared to other ethnic groups in the country as a consequence of the influence of Islamic values (see Chapter 2). Therefore, having children is regarded as something that is very valuable and somehow it protected some of the respondents from feeling any impact on their work. In contrast to previous Western literatures, even though having children is also very much appreciated, religion is not looked upon as a reason in terms of addressing the impact of childcare on work. Therefore, the perception of the Malaysian participants that children are not a burden affecting work due to religious reasons, is a new finding that emerged from this study, since previous studies have not reported a relationship between religion and the question of managing the impact of childcare.

9.2.3 Government and Organizational Policies

Government and organizational policies are also important in influencing the experiences and perceptions of the couples. The preferences on the types of support from the Government and the workplace have been identified as a distinctive aspect between Malaysian and Western participants. It has been acknowledged that flextime and telecommuting are some of the most popular strategies used by dual-career couples in Europe, the United States and Australia (Bowes, 2005, Haddock et al., 2006; De Cieri et al., 2005; Kelly & Moen, 2007, Roehling & Moen 2003). However, this type of support which blurs the work and home boundary, would likely pose problems for women in different societies, such as China and South Asia, because it would make them appear available for extended family caregiving during the days and consume their non-work time and weekends ((Zhan & Montgomery, 2003; Baljit Kaur et al., 1998). The Malay couples in this study also indicated less preference for these kinds of supports. Although some participants have expressed their desire for flexible working and telecommuting, these supports are not heavily emphasized as other family-friendly options such as longer maternity leave or on-site child care. The maternity leave, for example, is given great emphasis by the women participants who want improvement on the current maternity leave which is limited to 300 days for each female employee. This situation is very

different from Western countries where the maternity leave is very generous, particularly in Nordic countries where maternity benefits can be up to one year with pay.

Nevertheless, it should also be noted that maternity leave that is too long might not be beneficial in the Malaysian context since lengthy maternity leave can play a role in exacerbating gender inequality at home. Furthermore, the shorter maternity leave might imply that the women have less career interruptions as compared to the women in the West and, consequently, they have better ability to display a high salience in their work role. Still, it does not mean that the current maternity leave does not need any improvement. As indicated in the findings, many women feel that the extension of the leave from 60 to 90 days would make no difference if they wanted to have more than three children (see Chapter 8). Malay families are known to have a tendency towards having more children and, therefore, the short maternity leave would result in the mothers juggling work and their newborn baby. Therefore, limitations on the number of children supported under the 90 days' maternity leave should be reviewed and considered in order to ease their responsibilities in caring for children.

In addition to longer maternity leave, some couples also wish for a longer paternity leave. Unfortunately, the paternity leave policy in Malaysia is still lagging behind countries in the West. This can be understood when paternity leave is not even regulated in the Employment Act of Malaysia. This is in contrast with European countries, which are found to be generous with their paternity leave. For example, in Denmark, fathers have the right to 32 weeks of leave in a scheme that offers a high-earning replacement rate; while in Portugal, a recent reform has given fathers the right to 15 days of leave with full pay (Anxo, et al., 2007). In Malaysia, apart from seven days on full pay allocated to Government staff, employees in the private sector are provided with various provisions of paternity leave which on average would be less than that allocated to Government staff. The short paternity leave led the male participants to not having lots of time to spend with their wives and new babies. Therefore, the short paternity leave reflects how the organizations communicated the differing emphasis of salience that should be placed by men and women on the responsibility of caring for the newborn. Here the message is that this is mainly the responsibility of the mother. The provision of leave is much influenced by traditional values and therefore, despite a tremendous shift in the social attitude among Malaysian men towards married women working outside the house, gendered divisions of labour were clear with strong patriarchal views noted by most women, as contended by Subramaniam (2011). The change to an

attitude with more sharing of roles between husband and wife within the existing policies implemented in Malaysia is still far from implementation and is less emphasized compared with Western countries. Thus, an action towards a more egalitarian option by the government is crucial to instill more role sharing among dual-career couples in Malaysia.

9.2.4 Economy

The findings also point out that the economy influences the couples' gender role attitudes. Having a domestic helper prevents families from increasing the role sharing among family members and preserves the traditional ideology where women are still associated with the bulk of household duties. As argued by Chia (2012), the influx of domestic workers is a practice that exacerbates privatization of care encouraging people to continue to define the housework and care work as woman's calling and a family obligation. This practice therefore, creates an excuse for the lack of care work done by men. Prior studies have contended that it is still the women who usually take the duty for outsourcing which tends to be regarded as help for the wives rather than the household (Ezzedeen & Ritchey, 2009; Milkie & Peltola, 1999). In Malaysia, couples also make sense that outsourcing is a help for the wives when some husbands indicate that they try to reduce the burden of housework by finding them a helper at home. However, this does not necessarily mean that the women are in charge of finding the helper, since the husbands in the study claimed that they are involved in the recruitment process.

9.3 The Influence of Micro Factors on Gender Role Ideology

In addition to the macro-factors, some micro-factors are found to have significant influence on the gender role ideology of dual-career couples in this study. Earlier literatures have pointed out that factors such as gender, education, age, socio-economy, family background and organizational sectors have influence on the attitude towards gender role. In the present study, findings have indicated that factors such as gender, personal preference and spouse work condition emerge as factors that are important in influencing how dual-career couples construct and make sense of gender roles. In this respect, culture and religion are found to have stronger impacts than those factors mentioned in previous literatures. Indeed these strengthen the traditional views of some participants.

9.3.1 Gender

The interview data has pointed out how having career wives has led the men to perceive the importance of their involvement in domestic chores, and couples displaying more role sharing in their housework responsibilities. This is in line with earlier research that states that women today perform less housework than previous generations and men perform more household chores than their predecessors (Roehling & Moen, 2003; Sullivan & Coltrane, 2008).

However, as mentioned by numerous studies in the West, family work is still divided sharply by gender, with women doing more chores than men and being majorly responsible for household management (Acker & Armenti, 2004; Jacobs & Winslow, 2004; Grady & McCarthy, 2008 Schiebinger & Gilmartin 2010). The Malay couples in the study also communicated the importance of women being linked to household work. There are still some husbands who display little involvement in household tasks and tend to let their wives carry more of the responsibility. It was reported that men are more reluctant to shift to a more egalitarian orientation compared with women, since the tasks that are associated with men are more rewarded (Folbre, 1994), and men benefit more from relationships involving traditional arrangements (Davis & Greenstein, 2009). The current study also found the impact of gender when some women respondents want their husbands to be more involved with the chores at home, as they feel that they are doing a lot more than their spouses. On the contrary, husbands who admit that they are doing less than their wives at home prefer to outsource for help rather than increase their own participation. In addition, the influence of traditional values and gendered beliefs are also held strongly by some women who accept family work as their responsibility and feel that they should do more family labour than men, despite being engaged in a full-time career.

The impact of gender on gender role ideology can also be found in the couples' decision making. The present study has highlighted a pattern of decision making among husbands and wives, where the wives usually decide more about children, groceries and daily tasks, while husbands make decisions about bigger or major matters in the family. The subtle ways in which the traditional roles are reinforced, which strengthen the traditional roles between the husband and wife, are parallel to previous findings where decision making is divided along traditional gender roles, with women making decisions concerning day-to-day details of family life and men making the major decisions (Ball et al. 1995; Fox & Murray, 2000).

9.3.2 Personal Preference

Besides gender, several previous studies have showed how age is a significant factor influencing gender role ideology and, subsequently, on the work and family experience. It was reported that younger individual attitudes changed more than older individuals, which are also linked to less traditional gender role orientation (Fan & Marini, 2000, Brewster & Padavic, 2000). Nevertheless, in this study, some couples in their 30s highlight a more traditional practice in the family where the wives will attend to most of the housework, whereas an elder couple in their 50s explained that they have a fine role-sharing arrangement in the family. This shows that there are indeed younger couples who display a more traditional arrangement in their family work as opposed to older participants, thus challenging the taken for granted knowledge as proposed by earlier studies. Therefore, being part of the younger generation does not necessarily link to modern attitudes since other factors, such as family background or socialization that instill traditional values might have a stronger impact on how they construct their gender role attitudes. In addition, previous research has also mentioned that the higher the number of children in the family, the more traditional the attitude of the men and women ((Davis & Greenstein, 2009; Kulik, 2002; Tu & Chang, 2000). However, it was discovered in the present study that having a larger number of children does not always lead to a more traditional attitude in the family. Rather, some couples who have more children show a more egalitarian attitude when they illustrate more role sharing as opposed to some couples with fewer children. In these families, the number of children they have does not really influence their ideology towards gender roles. Instead, one male participant reveals clearly how he is used to tidying and cooking in the house as well as his liking for cleanliness. He is involved more in housework and is seemingly more egalitarian, despite having four children. Hence, in this matter, the number of children does not necessarily influence the attitude at home since there are other significant influences, such as personal preferences which impact upon how these participants construct their roles.

9.3.3 Spouse Work Condition

Spouse work condition is also seen to influence the couples' gender role ideology. Previous studies have indicated that even though traditionally the husband's career was seen as primary, certain conditions can affect how career priority is perceived, such as the wife earning more or having a more specialized career (Perrone et al., 2009). Barnett and Gareis (2007) found that when mothers worked evenings rather than daytime hours, fathers were

more involved in childcare, spent more time with the children, and were generally more knowledgeable about their children's lives and activities. Looking into this matter, this study indeed found an impact of the wife's work condition on the couples' career priority. Some husbands explained that their work characteristics had a significant influence on couples' arrangements regarding domestic responsibilities and therefore, some of them are seemingly more egalitarian due to the nature of their wives' jobs, which caused them to be more involved in childcare.

9.4 The Influence of Macro Factors on Role Salience

Apart from influencing gender role, macro-factors such as culture, economy as well as government and organizational policies are also found to influence the salience placed on the couples' work and family roles. These are now discussed in detail.

9.4.1 Culture

Earlier literatures have indicated that culture acts as a factor that influences work and family salience. One major aspect that can be identified is in terms of the coping strategies used to overcome their challenges. Couples in the current study talked about depending on various social supports which are similar to those in the previous Western studies. This includes social supports in the workplace, such as the support of supervisors and co-workers which has a positive impact on work outcomes (Allen, 2001; Behson 2004; Marcinkus et al. 2007). Social supports outside of work, such as that provided by spouses, family, friends and helpers, also have a positive impact on work-family balance (Carlson & Perrewe, 1999; Marcinkus et al. 2007; Ezzedeen & Ritchey, 2009). Consistent with what has been suggested by previous literatures, couples tend to adopt different kinds of coping behaviour that can either be classified as problem or emotion-focused strategies (Bird and Schnurmann-Cook, 2005; Higgins et al., 2010). Through problem-focused coping, the participants are found to utilized organizational skills such as time management and prioritizing. In the context of coping with domestic responsibilities, problem-focused coping includes hiring a domestic helper, hiring a cleaner, hiring a good childcare provider, doing more housework at the weekend, training older children to help with housework, choosing a partner with more flexible time to spend caring for children and spending more time with the children at the weekend. Moreover, participants adopted emotion-focused strategies such as avoiding

tension, putting more focus at work and trying to enjoy work to avoid stress. In addition, some participants reported to being less fastidious about tidiness and cleanliness at home. The supports and coping strategies mentioned were seen as helpful in assisting couples to put in more commitment and increase their performance in the work and family roles, thus helping them to maintain dual salience in both of these roles.

However, differences in culture in terms of the coping strategies used resulted in differences of experiences of the couples. Part-time work for example, is widely reported to be a convenient solution for parents especially mothers with small children wishing to remain in the labour market (European Company Survey, 2009). In European countries, such as Britain and the Netherlands, part time jobs are seen as family-friendly and a common work arrangement (Bang et. al. 2000). The rates of part-time work in the UK, for instance, are reported to be very high as they are in the Netherlands and in Germany (Lewis & Campbell, 2007). The Third Work–Life Balance Employees’ Survey in 2006 has highlighted that the most commonly available flexible working arrangement in the UK was working part-time with nearly seven in 10 (69 per cent) of employees saying that this would be available if they needed it. Nevertheless, the Malaysian participants in this study do not frame the importance of part-time work in their life. It is regarded as less normative and not extensively practiced. Local conceptualizations of working time are different across countries (Stier& Lewin-Epstein, 2003) hence, this influence of culture might explain the lack of part-time work among the interviewees. Chandra (2012) stated that in most Asian countries, working long hours is often seen as a commitment to the job and negotiating shorter work hours is often perceived as a sign of weakness. This contradicts with Europe where it is common to negotiate for fewer hours in return for moderate pay revision. Nevertheless, the interviews conducted in this research revealed that part-time work is mentioned as a desirable option by participants. However up to now, the country is still further behind in implementing part-time work options in organizations. Although at the policy level, the Government has developed plans and policies to encourage flexible work arrangements in the workplace, the implementation is not aggressive and many employers in the private sector have not implemented flexible work options. It is only the larger companies and multinational companies that have various types of flexible work arrangements (Subramaniam, 2011). Therefore, this option should be developed more to help support those who want to allocate more time to the family.

9.4.2 Economic Factors

The current research has also managed to point out how economic factors are an important element in influencing role salience. For example, the extensive use of domestic helpers and childcare, which are cheaper in Malaysia than in the West, have led the couples in the study to have fewer career interruptions compared with dual-career couples in the West who have to invest in scaling-back strategies or part-time work in order to fulfil family commitments. Hence, these couples are able to stand out more in their work roles and have the ability to give more commitment and work longer, particularly those with domestic helpers. Additionally, how the couples construct their work salience was also influenced by their childcare providers. Couples who face fewer problems with their childcare provider explained that they are able to have a better focus on work; thus, they would be able to show more commitment and higher work salience, compared with couples who face more problems.

The interviews indicate that support in the form of domestic helper is found to be a favourable choice of support in the Malaysia context especially to help the couples with their household work and child care. The popularity of having a domestic helper as a source of home support is similar with other countries in Asia, such as Singapore and Hong Kong, where there has been a surge in the number of domestic helpers (Cortes & Pan, 2009). In Asian countries, the affordability of having a domestic helper is the main reason for the popular demands of this source of support for working couples. It was reported that in the wealthier Asian countries like Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan, the aging workforce demands cheap labour from developing countries to offset their own labour shortage and to care for an aging population (Smales, 2010). Malaysia, where cheap foreign labour is in high demand (Globalpost 3/2/2012), is estimated to have approximately 300,000 documented migrant domestic workers, of which 90% are Indonesian. In addition, based on the number of employers registered with maid agencies in the country, approximately 35,000 maids are needed immediately (Berita Harian, 10/9/2012).

In contrast to the situation in Asia, where the amount of domestic helpers is increasing, the use of this source of support in Western society remains relatively low. In many European countries, the percentage of domestic workers in the economically-active population had reached the peak of its nineteenth-century expansion around the 1880s and thereafter had begun to decline (Sarti, 2006). Research by Cancedda (2001) pointed out that only around 6-

10 per cent of households on average in Europe employ someone to undertake domestic chores (see Chapter 3). Two main factors were identified as barriers to the outsourcing of domestic chores. The first is the question of affordability (Cancedda, 2001; Windebank, 2010). Windebank (2010) in her survey on 550 staff of a large service-sector employer in the UK found that the average amount paid to a cleaner was £28 per week and £14 per week to someone doing the ironing. In comparison with domestic helpers in Malaysia, these fees are expensive since maids in Malaysia can be paid around RM 600-RM 700 a month (approximately £120-£140) to do all the work at home every day, including childcare where the cost in Malaysia is also generally cheaper than that in Western countries (see section 9.1.7.3). Furthermore, a large proportion of women place a positive value on looking after their own home (Windebank, 2010). For these women, changes to the cost and structures of domestic service may have little impact on their decision-making regarding outsourcing domestic chores, as their own preferences and values concerning homemaking underlie their decision not to outsource. Additionally, wanting to look after one's own home has been linked to resistance to the penetration of commodification into previously private and family life (Williams and Windebank, 2003). Interestingly, this is similar to some participants in this study who despite being capable of hiring a maid, feel uncomfortable having an "outsider" in the house and, instead, resort to using various strategies to cope with their housework.

The help of maids provided many benefits to the couples in this study. Besides making the tasks at home easier, having a maid is acknowledged as having a positive psychological impact for those concerned and participants reported that, having more time to spend with the family prevented them from being emotionally stressed at home. Thus, it can be inferred that the presence of a maid not only assists the couples' with housework, but also helps them indirectly to have a higher salience in their family roles. Thus, the constructions of their family roles are impacted by access to this form of support. Furthermore, having a maid also had some positive impact on work. Respondents talked about the benefits of working longer, which contributes to increased professional performance. Therefore, having a maid can be very beneficial for couples who wish to maintain a high salience on both their work and family roles.

Previous literatures in the West have also indicated that many women opt for scaling back strategies, such as placing limits (e.g: limiting numbers of hours worked or turning down jobs with more travel), and trading off (couples trade off jobs and career due to career opportunities or life-course-related events) in order to cater their family commitment,

especially if the public provision of childcare is scarce or inadequate (Becker & Moen, 1999; Rusconi & Solga, 2008). However, the popular uses of these strategies are not reflected in the Malaysian context. Women in Malaysia rarely use the earlier mentioned strategies in order to tackle the demands of childcare. Instead, they tend to use a variety of child care options which would either be in the form of domestic helper, nurseries or babysitters (who are normally their neighbours or live in the same neighbourhood) or even the help of extended family. The various sources of childcare readily available do not cost as much as in the West, and this might explain the reason why Malaysian women are not investing in scaling-back strategies or part-time work as widely as women in the West. The cost of a full-time nursery for a child in Malaysia ranges from as low as RM 250 (approximately £50) per month in rural areas to RM 400 - RM 500 per month (approximately £80 - £100) (The Sun, 3/1/13; The Star, 11/12/12), which is cheaper than in the UK where the average childcare cost currently exceeds £100 for a part-time place (25 hours) in many parts of the country (Daycare Trust, 2012). Although there are some expensive centres in some urban areas in Malaysia where the fees could go as high as RM 700 (approximately £140) as the minimum monthly fees (The Sun, 3/1/13), these areas usually serve wealthier couples in accordance with their capabilities. In this respect, it is crucial to highlight that the childcare cost can also be linked as one economic factor that led to the differences of experiences among dual-career couples in the West and in Malaysia.

Looking at the differences in terms of the strategies used by women in previous Western literatures and in the current Malaysian study, especially in matters related to childcare, it can be seen in that Malay women in this study have more options and less challenges in this aspect compared with their Western counterparts. Hence in a way, the women in this study have the advantage of expanding their career without having to use strategies that would involve sacrificing their careers such as scaling back or part time work. Nevertheless, it is important to highlight that, despite the fact that these women face fewer challenges in this respect, the participation rate of Malaysian women in the labour force on a whole, is still low compared with other Western countries (Worldbank, 2012). Therefore, it is crucial to look at the Malaysian context and the impact of support provided by the Government.

9.4.3 Government and Organizational Policies

A multitude of research in Western countries has reported that many policies and supports have been implemented by the governments and companies in response to the needs of dual-

career couples (Allen, 2001; Blossfield & Drobnic, 2001; Daly, 2000; Korpi, 2000; Stier & Lewin-Epstein, 2007). In Malaysia, the Government and the employing organizations have also been trying to facilitate the lives of dual-career couples by offering many kinds of supports, such as in the form of medical benefits, maternity and paternity leave, parental leave, flexible working arrangements and daycare facilities. Government and organizational policies impacted upon the participants' role salience. For example, the shorter maternity leave might imply that the women have less career interruption as compared to the women in the West; hence, they have a better ability to display a high salience in their work role. However, at the same time the short paternity leave provided by the participants' workplaces not only led to the preservation of traditional gender role ideology but also reflects how the organizations communicated the differing emphasis of salience that should be placed by men and women as well as the view that the responsibility of caring for the newborn is mainly the mothers.

Even though many supports have been provided by the Government and organizations in Malaysia, women's participation rate in the workforce has stagnated at 47 per cent (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2013). Factors such as inadequate childcare facilities (despite the claim to access of several kinds of child care in Malaysia) and inflexible working patterns are reported to be the main reasons for the underutilization of women in the labour force (Omar & Davidson, 2004; Subramaniam, 2011). The existence of a nursery near or in the workplace for example, is not extensively available which causes some struggles for mothers, especially those who have just come back from maternity leave. These women have to go back to work after three months of maternity leave and some have difficulties leaving their small babies, particularly those who fully breastfeed.

Problems encountered by these women could be reduced if certain supports are provided, such as childcare in the workplace or even one or two breaks a day to breastfeed. However, in Malaysia, the social condition of the country itself contributes to the lack of support for this kind of problem. For example, the perception that couples have access to a variety of sources of childcare in the country might contribute to the less aggressive approach of workplaces in providing useful support for childcare. Therefore, it is important to highlight that, despite the ease of obtaining supports for childcare in Malaysia, parents are still reported to encounter several problems such low quality of nursery and babysitter with no fixed working schedule and their sudden unavailability. Moreover, domestic helpers who are employed by many households especially among the higher income earners to solve the dilemma of childcare

responsibility, have their own set of economic and social problems. This led to some dual-career couples choosing not to have a helper at home. Therefore, although on the surface dual-career couples in Malaysia appear to have easy access to childcare, there are still problems; hence, support from the Government and workplace would be very beneficial, especially in terms of providing on-site, quality childcare. Based on these findings, support by the Government and the workplace is regarded as very important for the participants. This support will not only facilitate the work-family balance, but will also help to increase the salience of the participants in their work roles as the support is expected to contribute to increasing their performance and commitments.

9.5 The Influence of Micro Factors on Role Salience

Some micro-factors are also found to influence role salience as identified by prior studies. These studies have revealed that factors such as gender, age, socio-economy and family background influence the salience of work and family roles. In Malaysia, a number of factors such as gender, age, mother's labour force participation, personal preferences and sector of organizations are found to be significant in influencing the participants' role salience.

9.5.1 Gender

Prior literatures have also stated that women appear to be more likely to experience dynamic conflict between their roles (Marin et al., 2002) and are expected to give more commitment and participate more in home-related activities than men (Matzeder & Kreshok, 1995). In this study, couples also highlighted the same experience when women interviewees revealed that some of them clearly have to place much higher salience on their family roles than their spouses. These women have to increase their home commitment and face more challenges in their work-family roles than their husband, particularly for those women whose husbands work (or used to work) in another city or country. It was also revealed that couples who work far from each other tend to live closer to the wife's workplace, thus, making the wives more occupied by the homemaker role. Hence, the present study shows that the women participants have to give more commitment to home activities and illustrate the need to display a higher salience in family roles, compared with their spouses who have to show more commitment to work. The claim by men that they are too tired to work and have to face long working hours, leaving the housework mostly to the wives, indicates that they are comfortable with the

attitude that relates the work roles as being important for them and housework for women. This signifies how they make sense of the different emphasis of salience for men and women in work and family roles. This supports the argument by Budworth et al. (2008) that couples who conform to traditional gender roles are much more likely to place different emphasis of salience on certain roles. Nevertheless, although earlier research reported that women enjoy doing housework more than men due to gendered belief (Grote et al. 2002; Kroska, 2003), this perception does not indicate necessarily that the women participants in the current study enjoy doing it; rather, it is due to their sense of responsibility as a wife.

Couples in the study also conveyed their understandings of how women need to display higher salience in their family homemaker roles as compared to men through the pattern of decision making. Here they explained that wives usually decide more about children and household tasks, while husbands make decisions about bigger or major matters in the family. Nevertheless, it is crucial to point out from the findings that the participants all constructed their own personal preferences, such as preferring someone else to make decisions or men enjoying what were seen as women's tasks. These preferences impacted upon the couples' decision-making arrangements. Hence, spouses may exhibit high salience in certain roles, or couples can become more or less traditional in decision making due to their own personal preferences.

Previous literatures have indicated that dual-career men are typically more engaged in caring for their children compared with men in single-earner families; however, mothers are still much more responsible than fathers for childcare (Bianchi & Milkie, 2010). In this current study, wives are framed as being more involved in caring for their sick children and more impacted when they have young children, similar to the prior research that working mothers receive more impact, especially those with younger children (Byron, 2005; Wharton & Blair-Loy, 2006). These mothers explained that they are more affected in their time and commitment and, thus, juggling work and home demands seems to be difficult, especially for those who strive to maintain high salience in both work and family roles. The current study also revealed that spouses may have different understandings of their involvement in childcare. In this regard, the differences in gender role attitude and a different emphasis of salience in certain roles may result in conflicting views of each spouse, and subsequently affect their satisfaction in this area.

It has been cited in numerous studies that many challenges created by work have had many impacts on dual-career couples (van der Doef & Maes, 1999; Blair-Loy, 2003; Santos & Cardoso, 2008). The struggle has increased the conflict between work and family and, henceforth, affects the employees' ability to achieve a good work and family balance (Acker & Armenti, 2004; Doherty & Manfredi, 2006; Byron, 2005; Barnett, 2006; Wharton & Blair-Loy, 2006; Allan et. al., 2007; Pocock et. al., 2007). Similarly, the couples in this study felt that their ability to portray a high family salience is hindered when both partners are burdened by heavy workloads that usually interfere with their family time. Consistent with previous research by Cinamon and Rich (2002a), Malaysian participants who place high salience on both work and family roles explained that they have to face a greater struggle in balancing their commitments in these roles. The workload they carry has been reported to cause stress that impacts either emotionally or physically, and it becomes worse when both home and work demands clash. However, following traditional gender role ideology, women are reported to be more affected, and some couples reported that the mother will have to spend more time with the children despite both having heavy workloads. This is parallel with empirical findings by Wallace and Young (2008) regarding the effect of caring responsibilities among working parents. Nevertheless, despite the challenges that seem to be affecting more women than men, some women perceived that children were not impacting their work life, as opposed to work which impacts their family, particularly for female participants who display traditional attitudes in their perceptions and exemplify higher salience in their family roles than in work roles. The perceptions of these women extend the understanding of the argument by Bagger et al. (2008) in their quantitative study, which argued that people with high family salience might have a reduction in the negative impact of family on work experience, since the high family salient family buffers the negative effects of spill-over into the work domain.

9.5.2 Age

Age is reported to influence the extent of commitment given by an individual to their roles at home and at work. For example, Chi Ching (1995) has revealed that age was related negatively to the occupation reward-value of high career men. Men at a young age who have just started to establish their careers will display a higher commitment to their career than to the family, as opposed to those who are already at a mature and stable stage. When compared with the findings of this study, couples also framed that their experiences are influenced by

age. Some male interviewees in their early and mid-30s, and even early 40s, are found to display a high salience in their work role. These participants explained that they to choose to work abroad or frequently attending off-site job assignments, leaving their spouses and children for the sake of career development. This is no exception for women when there is a participant in her early 30s who is willing to further study abroad and left her family in Malaysia after been given a career opportunity. Unfortunately, comparison with older participants cannot be made effectively as there are only a few in the sample that are in their 40s in addition to the fact that there is only one couple in their 50s.

9.5.3 Spouse Work Condition

Spouse work condition is also perceived to influence the participants' role salience. In the current research, the couples' work characteristics impact upon couples' arrangements in domestic responsibilities. Some male participants explained that they have to be more involved in domestic responsibilities than their spouses in certain circumstances, such as when the wives have to work outstation or are offered the opportunities to study abroad. Thus, these men feel they have to increase their family role salience due to the work demands of their wives. Therefore, the above circumstances are not just making the couples more egalitarian with increased involvement of the husband in caring for the children, but also affecting their role salience. Hence, although women traditionally will have a higher salience in family roles than men, certain situations particularly work demands of wives can alter the hierarchy of salience between husbands and wives. Thus, interviewees in this study construct the hierarchy of salience in work and family roles in the context of each spouse's work situation. This finding provides an understanding for the contention by Budworth. et al. (2008) in their conceptual paper that when an individual is part of a couple, the role of worker may take on a different meaning or position than if the individual is not part of an independent relationship, Therefore, the salience of the role of individuals within the couple may be shaped by their interactions with each other.

9.5.4 Mother's Labour Force Participation

The study also found that how participants made sense of their labour force participation was influenced by their mother's labour force participation. This is reflected particularly among women participants who illustrated how having a career is important to them, and exhibited a strong interest and commitment to succeed in their careers. The importance of careers and the strong commitment to succeed illustrate the high salience that they place in their work role.

Previous researchers have mentioned that familial factors play important parts in career aspirations (Salami, 2004; 2008). Hence, although not expressed explicitly, having a mother who participates in the workforce might be an inspiration to the participants in the study to do the same thing and also make them regard work as central to their life and consequently contribute to them having a high work salience.

9.5.5 Sector of Organization

Organizational sector is a factor that impacted upon the interviewees' role salience. Some differences have been found between the experiences of participants working in different sectors of organizations, including public, private and non-profit. Many participants, especially those who work in the public sector, huge private firms and international non-profit organizations, enjoy a lot of family friendly policies and support that helps to facilitate their work-family balance and dual salience in both roles. However, some participants who work in smaller private organizations have less supports towards their work and family challenges, and hence less aid to increase their work and family salience. This finding is consistent with previous studies by Goodstein (1994) and Ingram & Simons (1995) that have shown that public organizations are generally larger and, as a result, more likely to adopt family-friendly support practices. In contrast, some private organizations especially small firms, which may not have many resources and are less able to provide more supports to their employees. Therefore, the lack of funds becomes a factor that hinders private companies from providing a lot of support to their employees. This is similar to Western research where many employers, in particular small businesses, express concern about the impact of mandated benefits on their firms operations and economic viability (Phillips, 2002). Hence, some employees who work in private companies are unable to enjoy family-friendly support that could ease their work and family demands.

9.6 Understanding How Couples' Interaction Influence their Gender Role Ideology and Role Salience.

The findings of the current study also extend the use and present the connection of gender role ideology and role salience in understanding the context of couples. First, the findings support the argument by Budworth et al. (2008) which have not previously been examined empirically that role salience of the individuals within a couple may be shaped by their interactions with each other. It was found that some husbands had to increase their family

role salience while their wives moved their work role to a higher position due to the work demands of the wives. Therefore, the spouse's work condition caused the couples to be more egalitarian with increased involvement of the husband in caring for children. This affects each spouse's role salience. It was also highlighted that there are some male participants who have to increase their family salience more than their spouses in certain circumstances, such as when the wives have to work outstation or are offered the opportunities to further study abroad. Therefore, although traditionally women will have a higher salience than men in family roles, certain situations, particularly work demands of the wives, can alter the hierarchy of salience between husbands and wives. Thus, the study has managed to illustrate how the hierarchy of salience in work and family roles for dual-career couples is influenced by each spouse's work situation. Coping with work and family demands also has a significant impact on the participants' role salience. The findings indicate that the way couples cope or handle their work and family demands depends on the particular work or family demands at a given time and what needs to be fulfilled first. Hence, individuals within couples do not have a fixed hierarchy of salience; instead this will depend on the roles that should be prioritized at a certain time.

In addition, the findings also provide evidence for Budworth et al's. (2008) contention that couples who conform to traditional gender roles are much more likely to place differing emphasis of salience on certain roles. Some examples show clearly that couples who have traditional arrangements in their family are comfortable with the attitude that relates the work roles as being important for men and housework for women, highlighting their different emphases of salience in work and family roles.

The data given by the women interviewees in the study also generates a deeper understanding of the argument by Bagger et al. (2008), in their quantitative study, that people with high family salience might have a reduction in the negative impact of family on work experience, since the high family salient family buffers the negative effects of spill-over into the work domain. It was indicated through the interview that these women think children as not impacting their work life, as opposed to work which impacts their family. This matter is highlighted particularly by female participants who exhibit traditional attitudes in their perceptions and exemplify higher salience in their family roles compared with work roles.

The findings also point out how having a domestic helper at home may impact simultaneously on the couple's gender role ideology and role salience. It was noted that

having a maid helps to improve their focus and assist them to have the benefit of working longer, which contributes to increased professional performance. Additionally, they also result in couples being less tired at home and having more quality time to spend with their children. This is very beneficial for couples who wish to maintain a high salience in both their work and family roles. Nevertheless, at the same time, having maids prevents the families from increasing the role sharing among family members, making the couples maintain the traditional ideology where women are still associated with the bulk of household duties. Therefore, although it has positive impacts to the couples' work and family salience, at the same time it preserves the traditional ideology with lack of increase in the husband's involvement at home since domestic helpers are usually regarded as a support for the wives.

In a nutshell, the current study has been able to form a specific framework to look at the experiences of dual-career couples in Malaysia based on the perspectives of gender role ideology and role salience. Based on the comparison between the framework in Malaysia and earlier frameworks developed through the literature review, some similarities and differences have been found in their experiences of work and family. Furthermore, the research has managed to point out how several micro-factors identified in previous studies such as age, education or socio-economy may not affect some participants due to the strong influence of cultural and religious values. Additionally, the study has also highlighted a number of significant macro and micro-factors found to influence dual-career couples in Malaysia, which have not been emphasized in previous research, and also highlighted how policies and supports have significant influence on their gender role attitude and their role salience. The present research also extends the use of the two perspectives in the context of couples. Thus using both gender role ideology and role salience as theoretical bases and simultaneously incorporating macro and micro-factors, can provide a useful framework to understand more about the dynamic complexities of the lives of dual-career couples.

9.7 Summary

In answer to research questions eight, nine, 10 and 11, the research has revealed that many similarities and differences exist between the experiences of dual-career couples in Malaysia and couples in the West. As discussed, similarities can be found in several aspects of the provider role, career priority, decision making, domestic responsibilities, childcare, experience at work, coping strategies and supports, and the policies and supports provided by

employing organizations to the couples. Despite many similarities that can be traced between dual-career couples in Malaysia and the West, there still exist some differences where macro-factors such as religion, culture and the economy are seen as instrumental to the differences. Economic factors are a major reason for many dual-career couples hiring foreign domestic helpers as a source of support in coping with their household responsibilities. The discussion previously has highlighted that these differences can be seen in a number of things such as the perception of main provider and decision maker, the type of support and strategies used, and the policies provided, by the government.

Apart from the macro-factors, some micro-factors are also constructed as influencing their work and family experience. Interestingly, several micro-factors which have been studied in the West do not impact necessarily on the gender role attitude and role salience of the participants in this study since culture and religious influences have managed to moderate some of the impact. Gender, personal preference, and spouse work condition are important factors that are found to influence the extent of egalitarian attitudes. While factors such as gender, age, spouse working condition, mothers' labour force participation and sector of organization can impact on role salience.

Chapter 10

Conclusion

This final chapter concludes the thesis by presenting an overview of the findings and the contributions of the thesis. It also discusses the limitation of the study, offers some recommendations for future research and finally draws an overall conclusion. It is hoped that this Malaysia study provides a crucial and significant insight for future studies in dual-career couples.

10.1 Overview of the Findings

This thesis presented the experience and perceptions of Malay dual-career couples in Malaysia with respect to several issues; namely, the provider role in the family, career priority, decision making, family work, experience at work as well as policies and support by the Government. The findings of this study have been analyzed using gender role ideology and role salience as its theoretical foundation. In line with modernization and economic needs, the participants display the view that wives are regarded as equal providers and their career as important as the husbands. Couples also show more role-sharing practices and equal participation in family matters. However, there are still some participants who hold traditional ideology in connection with the roles that should be played by the husband and wife. Furthermore, the interviews have highlighted the differences of views among some couples in certain matters and also how individual personal preferences can affect the division of responsibilities among them. Interestingly, it was revealed that certain conditions such as wife's work demands may affect the couples gender role attitudes and has also been illustrated as to have an impact on each spouse' hierarchy of salience in work and family roles.

Similar to previous studies in the West, one of the main challenges reported by the couples is coping with housework demands. However, in general, women participants are found to face more challenges than the men in this domain. Juggling childcare is also a major challenge and impacts their work in terms of the time and performance. Again, it indicated that the mothers are more affected than the fathers in caring for children, especially when the children fall sick which shows the influence of traditional ideology on the maternal role of a mother. However, there are couples who exhibit an egalitarian practice in this matter and some couples rely on

the partner with the more flexible work situation to care for the children, regardless of gender.

Apart from housework and childcare challenges, the respondents also mentioned that they have encountered many work challenges, such as heavy workloads and long working hours that impact on their time available for the family and sometimes result in them bringing work home. Clashing work and home demands, which are usually felt more by the women, and affects their ability to display a high salience in their work and family roles were also mentioned by the participants, besides other challenges, such as unsupportive supervisors and work environment.

The challenges confronted by dual-career couples has made them apply some problem and emotion-focused coping strategies, such as having a domestic helper, which was found to help them increase the salience of their family and work roles, hiring a cleaner, doing more housework at the weekend and getting help with housework from older children. In addition, supports from family, supervisors and colleagues; pleasant working environment, having flexible work arrangement, good organization and prioritizing skills, and a psychological approach have been found to be helpful for them to cope with work challenges. Furthermore, the study also found the influence of role salience on the coping strategies utilized by the participants where the salience of a role may change depending on the situation that should be prioritized, and this affects the way they handle their work and family demands.

In consequence of the challenges faced by dual-career couples, many policies and supports have been set up, including daycare, medical benefits, maternity and paternity leave, flexible work arrangements and many others. The policies and supports provided have benefited the participants and facilitated them in balancing work and family demands. However, some weaknesses were identified in the current policies and supports, such as daycare with unsuitable conditions, the limitation on the 300 days' maternity leave, paternity leave that is too short and the lack of support for parents of disabled children. It was also evidenced that some participants prefer not to use the supports provided; for example, in terms of the cost and location of facilities that are far from home. Hence, many suggestions have been made and these recommendations are highly valued by the participants since they will not only help them to have a better work and family balance, but can also benefit the organization as these supports are expected to increase their salience towards in their work roles by enabling them to increase their performance and commitment to work.

Based on the analysis, two main factors, namely macro and micro, are found to have substantial influences on the couples' gender role ideology and role salience which then affect their perceptions and practices in the family and work spheres. Consistent with previous findings from the West, macro-factors such as the economy, culture and religion are found to have significant roles in influencing the attitudes toward gender role. These factors are also found to contribute to the differences in the perceptions and experiences of dual couples in Malaysia compared with those in the West. Moreover, these factors are found to be critical in shaping the types of policies and supports provided by the government and organizations, similar with what have been indicated by earlier studies. It should be noted that certain measures were carried out to increase the number of females at decision-making levels and promoting gender equality especially in the public sector. However, policies and support in Malaysia on the whole, are still embedded in traditional values with the view that women should give more commitment to home chores than men in contrast to other Western countries such as those in Europe, which are investing heavily in implementing policies towards more egalitarian roles between husband and wife.

Besides these macro-factors, micro-factors such as gender, personal preference and sector of the organization are significant in influencing the gender role attitudes of dual-career couples. On top of influencing gender role, a number of micro and macro-factors are also found to influence role salience. Cultural and economic factors are revealed as important in a person's salience on family and work roles. Moreover, the present study has discovered that several micro-factors, such as gender, age and mother's labour force participation, are significant in influencing the participants' role salience.

10.2 Research Contributions

The current research has made four important theoretical and practical contributions. Firstly, it fills the gap of dual-career couples' literatures which have been carried out mainly in the West and provides knowledge about universal and culturally-specific work-family experiences that would be beneficial for practitioners. Secondly, the study has examined the utility of gender role ideology and role salience as a framework to understand the context of dual-career couples. Thirdly, the current research also makes an important methodological contribution in a Malaysian context. Finally, it provides some recommendations for the government and organizations in Malaysia in terms of policies that promote work-family balance and gender equality for dual-career women. Each is now considered in turn.

10.2.1 Enrich Literature on Dual-Career Couples

As the literature review demonstrated, studies of dual-career couples have been predominantly conducted in the American and European countries (see Chapter 1). Studies in non-Western countries have been relatively low and, up to now, only few studies have been conducted in the Asian region such as China, India, Singapore (e.g: Kalliath et al., 2011; Quek & Knudson Martin, 2008; Zuo & Bian, 2001). Therefore, this present research fills the gap by adding more research on dual-career couples in a non-Western context. It presents a cross-cultural perspective on dual-career couples in Malaysia in contrast to those in the Western countries and some non-Western countries where applicable. On the whole, dual-career couples in Malaysia and the West face a lot of similar challenges and portray many parallels in their work and family life practices. Many couples agree that both husband and wife's careers are important but the ideology of male as the provider is still held strongly. Certain conditions such as wife earning more or having a more specialized career can affect the way career priority is perceived. Couples in the study also tend to discuss and achieve mutual agreement in making decisions either about the family or work matters. In line with societal change, dual-career men are reported to be more involved in domestic chores and couples have reported to display more roles sharing in their family responsibilities. Nevertheless, women still spend doing more chores than men and are majorly responsible for household management. It is also important to highlight that the study has found some differences in their experiences which are mainly the result of the differences in religious belief, culture and economy. These differences can be seen in several aspects, such as the perception of the main provider and decision maker, where husbands are considered as the major provider or decision maker of the family due to their status in Islam as the family leader. The types of support and strategies to cope with work and family demands as well as preferences for the supports also serve as aspects that can be distinguished between the Malaysia dual-career couples and the West. In contrast to the situation in Malaysia where the amount of domestic helpers is huge, the use of this source of support in Western society remains relatively low. Furthermore, women in Malaysia rarely use strategies that are used by Western women, such as scaling back or doing part-time work; instead, they tend to use a variety of child care options which would either be in the form of domestic helper, nurseries, babysitters or help from extended family. Great assistance from extended family or domestic workers in Malaysia is found to be similar with some other Asian and Europe countries but differs from white couples in the US. The types of current policies or supports provided by

the Government and employing organizations in Malaysia also present another distinct feature from Western countries. Therefore, the research has managed to scrutinize the differences between the experience of dual-career couples in Malaysia and the West. The knowledge about the similarities and differences will not only enrich literature in this area, but it will also provide practitioner with knowledge about universal and culturally specific work-family experiences that should help employees and employers operate in multicultural environment.

10.2.2 Examine the Utility of Gender Role Ideology and Role Salience as a Framework to Understand the Experience of Dual-Career Couples

The current study chose to incorporate gender role ideology and role salience as its theoretical framework to examine the complexities and dynamics in the life of dual-career couples. Gender role ideology is a theory that has been used widely in dual-career couples' research and in the work and family literature in general. The use of this theory is regarded as relevant since the challenges men and women face as they no longer subscribed to pre-defined societal notions about their roles are still inevitably influenced by gender role expectations (Hube, 2007). Role salience, on the other hand, is not used extensively in studies that involve couple-level analysis, but has meaningful implications for dual-career couples and organizations because role salience impacts a person's behaviour and decisions regarding their roles in the family or as an employee (Greer & Egan, 2012). Using these two perspectives jointly, this study has shown their utility in understanding the Malaysian couples experiences and the factors that impact their experiences. The study has also built a specific framework that enables the comparison between the experiences of dual-career couples in Malaysia with previous literatures through the lens of gender role ideology and role salience. The theoretical framework is effective in highlighting the interaction between macro-factors (e.g. economy, culture and religion) and micro-factors (e.g. gender, spouse work condition, sector of organization, age) in influencing the participants' gender role attitude and role salience which, in turn, affect their perceptions and experiences at work and in the family. The present study also revealed a number of significant macro and micro-factors that influence the Malaysian couples' experiences, which have not been emphasized in earlier research.

The study also extends the use of the two perspectives in examining the couples' context. The findings provide evidence for Budworth et al's. (2008) contention that role salience of the

individuals within the couple may be shaped by their interactions with each other, by showing how the hierarchy of salience in work and family roles for dual-career couples are influenced by each spouse's work situation. It was also found that coping with work and family demands have a significant impact on the participants' role salience. In this case, some individuals within couples do not have a fixed hierarchy of salience; instead, the highest position will depend on the roles that should be prioritized at a certain time. The findings also support the argument by Budworth et al. (2008) that couples who conform to traditional gender roles are much more likely to place differing emphasis of salience on certain roles. Moreover, the qualitative data provided by the female interviewees in the study generate a deeper understanding of the argument by Bagger et al. (2008), that people with high family salience might experience a reduction in the negative impact of family on work experience, since the high family salient family buffers the negative effects of spill-over into the work domain.

It was also discovered that economic factors in terms of the use of domestic helper in Malaysia can strengthen traditional attitudes in couples but at the same time may increase their salience in work and family roles. Therefore, although it has positive impacts on the couples' work and family salience, at the same time it preserves the traditional ideology with lack of increase in the husband's involvement at home since domestic helpers are usually regarded as a support for the wives. In addition, the research indicates how the impact of role salience is important for the Government and employing organizations to understand when implementing suitable policies and support for the couples. The interview data have illustrated how the participants expected to increase their commitment to and performance in work if they are provided with suitable family friendly supports that could ease their family demands. Providing employer supported child-care for example would be beneficial in the Malaysian context as it is very much welcomed by the participants and has proved to reduce commuting time, boost morale and decreases stress (Casey & Grzywacz, 2008). Thus, it is important for the employers to consider the support recommended by the participants as it might be helpful in increasing the employees' salience in their work role.

Overall, the study has shown that applying the two theories in one study is very useful in examining the context of couples and the complexities in their life; and the use of these two perspectives together is regarded as valuable in creating a comprehensive framework of studying about the context of couples.

10.2.3 Using a Novel Methodology in a Malaysian Context

Interviews using couples as the unit of analysis has proved to be a useful tool to understand the dynamic and interdependent nature of life (e.g. Ba', 2008; Radcliffe, 2012; Rana, 1998; Such, 2002). In Malaysia, the few qualitative studies on dual-career couples thus far only focus on women interviewees; none have included husbands as participants. Therefore, the study extends the value of interviewing both husband and wife in dual-career couples by exhibiting the usefulness of this method in highlighting the connection of gender role attitude and role salience in their life, in a Malaysian context. Through the data gained from both spouses, this method is useful in explicating their experiences and creating a clear picture on how the dynamic of the interaction between their gender role attitude and role salience affect their work and family experience. This matter can be illustrated through the example of a male participant who has a busy working life and seldom at home which then has impacted his time for his children. The situation deteriorates when his wife also has heavy workload, and both of them are pressured to maintain a high salience in their family roles. However, following traditional values, his wife is the one who has to sacrifice more to care for her children. Therefore, the interview data from both husband and wife help to provide a thorough picture of how gender role expectation affects the couples behaviour in which the husband will show a higher salience in his work role while the wife has to cope more with caring work and struggles to maintain a dual salience in both roles.

Interviewing both couples is also very effective in highlighting the dynamics of gender attitudes in couples. It was indicated that when couples display a traditional attitude in one family aspect, this does not mean that they are traditional in all their family arrangement. Furthermore, through the interviews conducted, this study manages to reveal how the work characteristics of each spouse may affect their hierarchy of salience in work and family and, simultaneously, their career priorities. In addition, the interviews also encourage reflection of what is happening in their family and make the participants realize about their actual family arrangement, which may be obscured by their gender role attitudes. Thus, interviewing both couples as a method of collecting data in this study is very valuable in exploring the dynamics as well as elaborating the interplay of gender role attitude and role salience in their life.

10.2.4 Provide Practical Recommendations for the Government and Employing Organizations in Malaysia.

As revealed in the preceding finding and literature review chapters, Malaysian dual-career women face more challenges with home demands as compared to the men. The cultural value of the Malay, which asserts that women's primary role is in the home, seems to be the biggest factor that influence this perceptions and attitudes. Even the policies and support provided by the Government and organizations seem to promote this traditional gender role orientation. This matter can be exemplified through certain policies such as the short paternity leave or parental leave that is restricted only to the female employees. Parental leave is not commonly practiced in this country and is further lagging behind other countries, especially Nordic countries like Denmark, where 14 weeks' leave after childbirth is given to the mother and 10 weeks' of parental leave may be taken by either parent (Pylkannen & Smith, 2004). Hence, in order to create more equality for dual-career women, it is imperative for changes to be carried out in the legislation, social attitudes and within the organizations themselves. In terms of legislation for example, the current paternity leave in Malaysia, should be revised in order to provide an opportunity for father to participate more in the care of newborn babies. As mentioned in the previous chapters, paternity leave is not an enforceable provision in the Malaysian Employment Act. With the exception of Government employees who receive seven days allocation, the amount of paternity leave in Malaysia is different depending on the organizations which are normally shorter than those in the public sector. Therefore, as desired by many participants in this study, one of the steps that can be executed to help dual-career women with their caring responsibility is to extend the duration of paternity leave in the public sector and encourage private companies to provide longer paid paternity leave for their employees. Since capital is regarded as a problem in this regard, the Government should consider giving subsidies to those private companies to implement this support. Apart from this leave provision, the Government can also help by enforcing parental leave not only for working mothers, but also for fathers. By providing these kinds of options, the Government can foster indirectly an attitude that recognizes caring responsibility as something that is not only intended for women. It is also important to consider the need to encourage changes in social attitudes with regards to women's role. To facilitate change of social attitude, concerted efforts should be made through the media, Governmental policy, political awareness, education systems and so on (Davidson, 1997). For example, examples of men participating in household management should be portrayed more often in the media.

Education systems can also encourage equality by encouraging parents and teachers to raise self-confidence and motivation among girls to pursue interests in subjects that are commonly dominated by boys, as well as creating awareness and equipping male students with more household management skills in certain subjects. Through these channels, awareness should be instilled in the community in order to lead to attitudinal change to encourage men to share equally with women household responsibilities and realize that family care and housework are not only women's domain.

Apart from these parity challenges, women in Malaysia still lack support for their work and family balance. Maternity leave for example, has been revealed in the finding as one of the main concerns for these women. It has been acknowledged that, in recent years, the Government has extended the 60 days' paid maternity leave to 90 days. However, as pointed out previously, this 90 days' leave is restricted to only 3 children. Thus, this issue has been raised by some women who proposed that there should be no limit for the number of children in the maternity leave since the Malay is known for their tendency to have a larger number of children. Thus, it would be helpful if the Government could provide paid maternity leave without any limitation in order to facilitate the family demands of women with more than three children and ensuring better mental and physical health.

The participation rate of Malaysian women has been reported to be stagnated at 47 per cent and one of the main issues contributing to this situation is the lack of an alternative childcare system (Omar, 2003; Subramaniam, 2011). Supportive facilities for reconciling the demands of family care and work, such as childcare facilities and family care benefits are still insufficient. Although the government has taken steps to open more childcare centers at Government offices, there are still few shortcomings especially in terms of quality of the services as commented by the participants in this study. Furthermore, even though the government provides a grant to partially support any federal government organizations in establishing childcare centres, the set-up is still not extensive and private sectors are reported to not be ready due to the high cost. Therefore, besides encouraging organizations to set up nurseries near workplace, it is also important for the Government to simplify the regulations on setting up childcare and create more options, such as after-school care, emergency back-up care, subsidies or vouchers, and more benefits for employees with disabled children. It would also be useful for organizations to implement flexitime and teleworking, which could encourage more caring work particularly for dual-career husbands. For these to happen,

organizations should be ready to set up a good quality of infrastructure so that the flexible work option could be executed efficiently. The implementation of these strategies is crucial for the Government and employing organizations to undertake to support the work and family balance of dual-career couples and at the same time promote equal opportunities at work and at home. Such legislative measures revealed that those countries with more extensive Government policy regarding work-family arrangement had higher female participation rates. Its application could also help indirectly to create a new normative climate within work organisations that will attract and retain more skilled workers.

10.3 Limitations and Recommendations

There are a few aspects of the study that should be given consideration: 1) sample of the study; 2) subject under investigation; and 3) data provided by the participants. An evaluation of the limitations of the thesis leads to several conclusions about the future direction of similar work.

10.3.1 Sample of the Study

As mentioned previously, Malaysia comprises many ethnic groups, of which the main consist of Malay, Chinese and Indian. However, to conduct a study on all three groups would require a very large sample of dual-career couples. Due to the time frame of three months of data collection and the qualitative nature of the research, it is not possible for me as a single researcher to conduct a study on all three. Therefore, the study decided to focus only on the experiences of the Malay, which is the largest ethnic group in the country since other ethnic groups may have difference experience due to differences in cultures and religions. Hence, the findings of the study should not be generalized to the Malaysian and the practical recommendations that came out from this study are suitable for the Malays as their experiences would be different from the other groups due to cultural differences (Omar, 2003). Perhaps upcoming research could extend the sample to include other ethnicities in this country so as to understand their detailed experiences.

Moreover, the sample of this study concentrated only on couples who work in managerial and professional occupations in accordance with previous studies since the thought that highly educated, well-paid women have the potential to create more egalitarian options for other women, has made lots of researchers focus their attention on professional and managerial dual-career couples (Bird & Schnurmann-Crook, 2005; Elloy & Smith, 2004; Gordon &

Whelan-Berry, 2005; Lopez, 2011). Hence, besides having other ethnic groups as participants, future research should also try to look at different areas including both men and women in lower income households in order to gain knowledge of their specific challenges and experiences.

10.3.2 Subjects under Investigation.

Due to the lack of existing research on dual-career couples in Malaysia and the exploratory nature of a project that combines both husband and wife as the participants in this country, the subjects and issues investigated were quite broad and diverse. It covers various aspects from provider role to career priority, decision making, housework, childcare, experiences at work, work family balance and policies and supports. The broad nature of the research could serve as the limitation since most of the issues investigated could be pursued individually in greater depth. For example, the investigation into their experience at work could be further explored to scrutinize the issues related to career development or opportunities for dual-career women. Moreover, issues that relate with experience at work and workplace policies and supports could be explored more comprehensively if the organizational point of view is considered in the study. Therefore, future research could also include employers as the participants apart from just couples, in order to know more exhaustively about their experience in handling employees in dual-career relationship or the problems and challenges they face in implementing family-friendly policies and supports. In addition, more research should also be undertaken to explore in more details about each subject and issue investigated in the study.

10.3.3 Data Gained from the Interviews

One more issue that should be addressed is how the interview data depend fully on the respondents' answers during the interview. Since this interview involves the participants responding directly to the interviewer face-to-face, there might be some participants who do not want to reveal any negative thing that occurs in the family. Although some respondents understand the need of the research and gave good cooperation in expressing things happening in the family or at work, some respondents are seen as if they are trying to give a positive answer and try to highlight that their family is functioning very well. However, as an "outsider", I need to accept all the data given as a reliable source of what is happening in the family since the participants themselves know better about their own life. Thus, even though this matter needs to be considered, the data gained from the interview have been very useful

in explaining the dynamics and interactions that occur in the family and illustrating the connections between gender role attitude and role salience, which may not be able to be clarified quantitatively.

10.4 Conclusion

This study has presented and analyzed a new data set to enable comparison between the experience of dual-career couples in Malaysia and couples in the West. Some similarities and differences have been found which are largely due to differences in culture, religion and economy. Additionally, the study has examined the utility of gender role ideology and role salience in understanding the context of couples. A summarizing framework that enables the comparison between the experiences of dual-career couples in Malaysia and previous research through these two perspectives, involving micro and macro-factors, has been created. It was highlighted that cultural and religious values have stronger influence on the participants, thereby reducing the impacts of several micro-factors that were identified in previous studies, such as age, education or socio-economy. Furthermore, the current study has also highlighted a number of significant macro and micro-factors found to influence dual-career couples in Malaysia, which have not been emphasized in previous research, as well as stressing how policies and support not only influence their gender role attitude, but also their role salience. Thus, employing both gender role ideology and role salience as a theoretical base simultaneously using multi-level factors by looking at within the couples' context and wider social context, can be a useful framework to explain more about the dynamic and complexities in the life of dual-career couples. Therefore, future research could be done in other countries using this framework so as to see its specific context of factors. The research also suggested some suitable policies and support for organizations and policy makers to enhance couples' work and family balance, and encourage role sharing between dual-career husbands and wives. A few limitations have been identified, such as the scope of the sample and the broad nature of the research, suggesting that more research should be carried out to include other ethnic groups and other areas in Malaysia as well as the need to pursue each subject investigated in greater depth. In short, this study has provided a useful insight into the lives of dual-career couples in Malaysia and it is hoped that more research involving dual-career couples in this country can be conducted in the future.

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APPENDIX A – LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

	Names	Number and Age of Children	Occupations	Additional Details
Couple 1	Rezuan, 40 and Rozita, 36	2 (aged 8 and 6)	Rezuan works as an assistant Manager (Human Development) in a government tourism body and Rozita works as a University Lecturer in a public university	Rezuan works in a town far from home and only will be back home 2 or 3 times a week.
Couple 2	Nazmi, 37 and Farina, 30	2 (aged 4 and 3)	Nazmi works as an Assistant Manager (Human Resource) in a government industrial law body and Farina works as a Teacher at a secondary school.	Both children are cared by Farina's parent but stay with them during public and school holidays.
Couple 3	Nasrun, 36 and Sarah, 34	3 (aged 9, 7 and 2)	Nasrun works as a University Lecturer at a public university and Sarah works as a Doctor at a public hospital.	Sarah is currently on study leave pursuing her Master's degree. Nasrun works far from home and travels nearly an hour to reach his workplace. The couples has been having maid ever since they got their first child.
Couple 4	Hafsham, 31 and Hanita, 32	3 (aged 6, 4 and 2)	Hafsham works as a University Lecturer in a public university and Hanita works as Lawyer at her own law firm.	The couple used to have a few maids before. They also have one child with disability.
Couple 5	Faizi, 36 and Shamira, 36	4 (aged 11, 7, 6 and 2)	Faizi works as a Town Planner at a government development body and Shamira works as an IT Officer at a local authorities.	The couple currently have a maid.
Couple 6	Daud, 52 and Fatihah, 50	5 (aged 24, 23, 21, 17 and 12)	Daud works as a Diplomatic and Admin Officer at a government health body and Fatihah works as a Finance Officer at a government finance ministry.	The couple used to have maids when their children were small.
Couple 7	Izhar, 38 and Azura, 36	2 (aged 5 and 4)	Izhar works as a University Lecturer at a public university and Azura works as Teacher in a primary school.	
Couple 8	Shamsul, 36 and Lina, 36	2 (aged 8 and 5)	Shamsul works as a GIS Executive at a private geo-planning company and Lina works as	Shamsul works far from home and travels around 45 minutes to reach his

			Planning Officer at a government city planning department.	workplace. The couple just started having maids about 2 months ago.
Couple 9	Zamri, 32 and Zurita, 32	4 (aged 7, 5, 4 and 1)	Zamri works as a University Lecturer at a public university and Zurita works as a Teacher at a secondary school.	Zurita works far from home and travels around 45 minutes to reach her workplace.
Couple 10	Raymee, 37 and Nora, 36	3 (aged 11, 9 and 3)	Raymee works as a Human Resource Executive at an international non-profit organization and Nora works as a Teacher at a primary school.	The couple lives with Nora's parent. They got a new baby four months after the interviews were conducted. Their number of children now is 4.
Couple 11	Effendi, 36 and Noraini, 36	3 (aged 8, 5 and 2)	Both works as Teachers at a secondary school.	During work hours and after school hours, the children are cared by Noraini's parent who lives not far from her workplace.
Couple 12	Ghani, 36 and Wardina, 36	5 (aged 9, 7, 4, 2 ½ and 3 months)	Ghani works as a University Lecturer at a public university and Wardina works as an Ophthalmologist and also a Medical Lecturer at a public university hospital.	Ghani works far from and travels around 45 minutes to reach his workplace. The couple has one child with disability and two maids at home.
Couple 13	Azhari, 40 and Nurida, 32	1 (aged 3)	Azhari works as an Operative Manager and Nurida works as a Teacher at a primary school.	The couple got a new baby two months after the interviews were conducted. Their number of children now is 2.
Couple 14	Rizal, 40 and Aleya, 40	5 (aged 15, 12, 8, 5 and 3)	Rizal works as an Assistant General Manager (Business Development) and Aleya works as an Educational Service Officer at a secondary school.	The couple currently have a maid.
Couple 15	Shahril, 34 and Shuhaidah, 31	3 (aged 7, 6, 4)	Shahril works as an Offshore Engineer at an international private organization and Shuhaidah works as a Planner at a government body.	Shahril used to work at overseas for seven years leaving Shuhaidah and their children in Malaysia. Shahril now works in Malaysia but travels far to his workplace (around 45 min – 1 hour). The couples have a maid at home.
Couple 16	Nazim, 31 and Syireen, 32	2 (aged 3 and 3 months)	Nazim works as an Account Officer and Syireen works as an Administrative Officer at a public university.	The couple work in the same organization
Couple 17	Fariz, 30 and Razlinda, 30	2 (aged 3 and 2 months)	Fariz works as an IT Executive at a private telecommunication company and Razlinda works as an Educational Service Officer at a secondary	Fariz works far from home and travels nearly an hour to reach his workplace. The couples used to have maids.

			school.	
Couple 18	Rais, 34 and Yasmin, 34	1 (aged 7)	Rais works as an Assistant Manager in a bank and Yasmin works as University Lecturer at a public university.	Rais works far from home and travels about an hour to reach his workplace. Yasmin left her daughter with her husband for a year to further her study overseas.
Couple 19	Ikram, 35 and Hafizah, 33	3 (aged 11, 5 and 3)	Ikram works as a Project Engineer at a private communication company and Hafizah works as a Teacher at a secondary school.	The couple used to have a maid.
Couple 20	Sahree, 41 and Aina, 40	4 (14, 12, 8, 5)	Sahree works as an Administrative Officer at an international non-profit organization and Aina works as Finance Officer in a government body.	
Couple 21	Fizi, 37 and Mastura, 41	1 (aged 3)	Fizi works as a Human Resource Officer at an international non-profit organization and Mastura works as an Officer in a Bank.	
Couple 22	Azimi, 36 and Suraya, 36	4 (aged 13, 9, 7 and 4)	Azimi works as an Investment Manager at a finance company and Suraya works as a HR Executive at an international non-profit organization.	Azim works far from home and travels around 40 – 50 minutes to reach his workplace. The couples just started using maid services about three months ago.
Couple 23	Faris, 38 and Azalina, 35	3 (aged 8,5 and 2)	Faris works as a Land Surveyor at a government body and Azalina works as a University Lecturer at a public university.	Faris used to take three years unpaid leave to follow Azalina who furthered study overseas.

APPENDIX B – INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Introductions

- Introduce myself
- Introduce study, who funded by, what the purpose is.
- Explain that I am interested in how Malaysian dual career couples experience work and family life and how government and employing organizations might influence their experiences.
- Explain that it is their experiences and opinions that I am after and there is no right or wrong answer.
- Explain about confidentiality, tape recording, they don't have to answer all questions and that they can take a break or stop the interview at any time.
- Ask if there is any question.
- Consent form.

General Information

- Please tell me about your family.
- Please tell me about your job.

The Provider Role/Career Priority

- Who do you regard as the main provider of the family? Why? (probe: earn more, have higher status, gender role perception)
- What would make your perceptions change?
- Does anyone's career take priority? In what contexts?

Decision Making

- How is decision making shared between you?
- Any particular decisions taken by one partner rather than the other?
- How do you make decision in your career issues? (e.g If there is a need for increase travel, relocation)

Household Work Responsibilities

- How do you divide household task between yourselves?
- Would you like to change anything about how the housework is shared?
- Have you ever had any help with the housework? (eg. domestic helper, cleaners, relative). Please indicate when and how it affected your life.
- If you never had any help, explain your choice and how do you cope with it.
- How does the burden of household work responsibilities affect your work? (probe: performance, commitment)

Childcare/ Elderly Care

- What arrangements do you have for caring for the child(ren)?
- What affects your childcare choices? (probe: availability of family/neighbours, finances, availability of quality childcare services, transportation, working times)
- Are you satisfied with these arrangements? Why?
- Whose responsibility is it to supervise those arrangements?
- If any emergency arises, for example your child had an accident at school, how would you deal with it?
- How does having child (or elderly) affect your work? (probe: performance, commitment, career development)

Experience at Work

- Now, I would like to turn to your work life.
- How do you feel about your work? (probe: working hours, workload, working arrangement etc). Is that a problem? How do you manage that?
- How have your peers or supervisors influence your experience at work?
- How does your work affect your family life?
- How do you feel about the balance between your work and home life?

Government and Organizational Policies

- Does your employer offer any support for your dual career lifestyle?(e.g maternity leave, paternity leave, child care, parental leave, flexible working option)
- What do you think of these?

- What impact do these policies have on you? (probe: work family balance, career development)
- What kind of supports or policies you think your employer and the government should offer to enhance your work-family balance?
- How does the availability of these policies will affect your work? (probe: performance, commitment, career development)

Additional Biographical Information

- Age
- Occupation
- Type of Industry
- Highest Educational Level
- Number of children
- Children's Ages
- Number of other dependants and relations
- Father's and mother's occupation
- Number of siblings

APPENDIX C – PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM

MANCHESTER
1824

The University
of Manchester

DUAL-CAREER COUPLES IN MALAYSIA

Participant Information Sheet

You are being invited to take part in a research study about the problems and challenges of dual career couples in Malaysia. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

Who will conduct the research?

Rafiduraida Abdul Rahman, Manchester Business School, The University of Manchester
Booth Street West, Manchester, Gtr Manchester M15 6PB UK

Title of the Research

DUAL-CAREER COUPLES IN MALAYSIA

What is the aim of the research?

The research aims to make some recommendations for the government and organizations in Malaysia such as human resource policies that promote work-life balance for dual career couples and highlight the importance of promoting equal opportunities at work to facilitate the career development of dual career women. Additionally, this research will also provide practitioners with knowledge about universal and culturally specific work-family experiences that should help employees and employers operate in multicultural environment

Why have I been chosen?

The research will focus on Malay professionals and managerial dual career couples in Malaysia. Therefore, respondents must possess three important characteristics: (1) each individual (male and female) had a position as a professional or at the management level; (2) must be a Malay; and (3) have at least one dependant child (below 18 of age). A sample of 40 dual career couples will be drawn to represent a cross section of industries from government and private sectors

What would I be asked to do if I took part?

The interview will be conducted to investigate the experiences, problems and challenges of Malay professional and managerial dual career couples in Malaysia. Hence, you will be asked to answer questions that are related to work and family balance issues such as the

impact of dual career relationships on work and family, coping strategies to overcome problems and challenges at home and at work as well as the kind of policies introduced by your organization in response to the problems

Since the research attempts to investigate issues related to your personal life, it could potentially invade your privacy or place you in unpleasant situation. Thus, the research will follow fundamental ethical principles of social research by not disclosing a participant's identity after information is gathered. You may also decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so wish

What happens to the data collected?

All the data will be analyzed and extracts from interviews may be used in the final report of the research, related follow-up studies and any resulting publications but no references will be made to the specific origin of that information

How is confidentiality maintained?

Your name will not appear in any thesis or report resulting from this study, however, with your permission anonymous quotations may be used. All interview data will be kept in a locked office and only can be assessed by the researcher involved in this project

What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without detriment to yourself

Will I be paid for participating in the research?

No

What is the duration of the research?

Approximately half an hour interview

Where will the research be conducted?

In a mutually agreed upon location (participants home, office, coffee shop etc)

Will the outcomes of the research be published?

Outcomes of the research will be published in the final report of the research, related follow-up studies and any resulting publications

Contact for further information

Phone: 03-20942220

Email: rafiduraida.abdulrahman@postgrad.mbs.ac.uk.

What if something goes wrong?

If you face distress or problems as a result of these issues and want help or advice, you could contact the Counselling Service Unit at Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development through this number 03-2693 0095.

If you want to make a formal complaint about the conduct of the research you should contact the Head of the Research Office, Christie Building, University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL.

DUAL-CAREER COUPLES IN MALAYSIA

CONSENT FORM

If you are happy to participate please complete and sign the consent form below

**Please
Initial
Box**

1. I confirm that I have read the attached information sheet on the above project and have had the opportunity to consider the information and ask questions and had these answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my participation in the study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

3. I understand that information obtained in this research will be used only in this study, related follow-up studies and any resulting publications.

4. I agree to the use of anonymous quotations in any thesis or publication that comes of this research.

I agree to take part in the above project

Name of participant

Date

Signature

Name of person taking consent

Date

Signature

APPENDIX D – INITIAL TEMPLATE

1. THE PROVIDER/ CAREER PRIORITY
 - 1.1) Main provider
 - 1.1.1) Male
 - 1.1.2) Female
 - 1.1.3) Shared
 - 1.2) Change Perception
 - 1.3) Career Priority
 - 3.1.1) Male
 - 3.1.2) Shared

2. DECISION MAKING
 - 2.1) How decision are made
 - 2.1.1) Shared
 - 2.1.2) Taken by male
 - 2.1.3) Taken by female
 - 2.2) Decision in career issues
 - 2.2.1) Shared
 - 2.2.2) Taken individually

3. HOUSEHOLD WORK RESPONSIBILITIES
 - 3.1) Division of responsibilities
 - 3.2) Satisfaction with division of responsibilities
 - 3.3) Desirability of changes
 - 3.4) Help with housework
 - 3.4.1) Impact
 - 3.5) Coping strategies
 - 3.6) Effects of household work responsibilities towards work

4. CHILDCARE
 - 4.1) Childcare arrangement
 - 4.2) Childcare choice
 - 4.2.1) Availability of childcare near home
 - 4.2.1) Proximity to workplace
 - 4.2.3) Quality childcare services
 - 4.3) Satisfaction
 - 4.4) Responsibilities
 - 4.5) Emergency situation
 - 4.6) Impacts of child towards work
 - 4.6.1) Time
 - 4.6.2) Performance
 - 4.7) Coping with child and work

5. EXPERIENCE AT WORK
 - 5.1) Perceptions
 - 5.1.1) Working hours
 - 5.1.2) Workload

- 5.1.3) Working arrangement
- 5.1.4) Proximity to home
- 5.1.5) Interest in job
- 5.1.6) Fairness at workplace
- 5.2) Supervisors
- 5.3) Colleagues
- 5.4) Effects of work towards family life
- 5.5) Work family balance
- 6. GOVERNMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL POLICIES
 - 6.1) Employers
 - 6.1.1) Supports
 - 6.1.2) Policies
 - 6.2) Impacts
 - 6.3) Recommendations
 - 6.3.1) Government
 - 6.3.2) Organizations
 - 6.4) Effects by the availability of policies/support recommended

APPENDIX E – FINAL TEMPLATE

1. THE PROVIDER ROLE
 - 1.1) Shared
 - 1.1.1) The notion of being co-provider
 - 1.1.2) The need to have co-provider
 - 1.1.3) Realization of being co-provider
 - 1.2) Male as main provider
 - 1.2.1) Factors
 - 1.2.2) The ideology

2. CAREER PRIORITY
 - 2.1) Shared
 - 2.1.1) Reasons influencing shared priority
 - 2.2) Differences in priorities within couples
 - 2.3) Factors influencing priorities

3. DECISION MAKING
 - 3.1) How decision are made
 - 3.1.1) Shared
 - 3.1.2) Taken by male
 - 3.2) Decision Making Pattern
 - 3.3) Impact of Personality on Couples' Decision Making

4. HOUSEHOLD WORK RESPONSIBILITIES
 - 4.1) Division of responsibilities
 - 4.2) Satisfaction with division of responsibilities
 - 4.3) Desirability of changes
 - 4.4) Help with household work

- 3.4.1) Impact
- 4.5) Not receiving help
- 4.6) Effects of household work responsibilities towards work

5. CHILDCARE

- 5.1) Childcare arrangement
- 5.2) Childcare choice
 - 5.2.1) Availability of childcare near home
 - 5.2.1) Proximity to workplace
 - 5.2.3) Quality childcare services
- 5.3) Satisfaction
- 5.4) Responsibilities
- 5.5) Emergency situation
- 5.6) Impacts of child towards work
 - 5.6.1) Time
 - 5.6.2) Performance
- 5.7) Coping with child and work

6. EXPERIENCE AT WORK

- 6.1) Perceptions
 - 6.1.1) Working hours
 - 6.1.2) Workload
 - 6.1.3) Working arrangement
 - 6.1.4) Proximity to home
 - 6.1.5) Interest in job
 - 6.1.6) Fairness at workplace
- 6.2) Supervisors
- 6.3) Colleagues
- 6.4) Effects of work towards family life
- 6.5) Work family balance

7. GOVERNMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL POLICIES

7.1) Employers

7.1.1) Supports

7.1.2) Policies

7.2) Impacts

7.3) Recommendations

7.3.1) Government

7.3.2) Organizations

7.4) Effects by the availability of policies/support recommended