VALUES AND IDENTITY
IN PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTICE
IN MALAYSIA

Gae Synnott
B.A. (Communications), M.B.A.,
Graduate Certificate of Education (Tertiary Teaching)

This thesis is presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of
Murdoch University, 2001
I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary educational institution.

[Signature]

Gae Synnott
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ABSTRACT

This is a study of values and identity within the public relations profession in Malaysia. Although the study has a national focus, its implications are global, because its context is created by the intersection of three current areas of debate and examination: 1) the renewed focus on Asian values which seeks to articulate Asian values as a way of supporting Asia's pathway to modernisation; 2) the open challenge to assumptions about the transferability of theory between countries around the world, about whether theory can be universal or whether different theories or different versions of theories are needed to help explain practice in different parts of the world; and 3) the re-emerging focus on values underwriting the public relations profession.

Malaysia's growing public relations profession is playing a crucial communication role in support of the country's move towards industrialisation. In Malaysia, issues of culture, modernisation, Westernisation, and globalisation are both real and topical.

Through the values framework, the study aims to contribute in three ways: 1) To develop and test an alternative, but equally useful, framework and method for comparing public relations practice between countries; 2) to investigate the influence of specific cultural and professional variables on public relations practice in Malaysia, to further understand specific variables which might lead public relations practice to differ between countries; and 3) to contribute to the definition of Asian values by defining one component, that is, the personal and professional values of a sample of public relations practitioners in Malaysia.
The research was undertaken in two parts. The first, using a survey and structured interviews, examined the influence of two cultural variables (ethnicity and gender) and two professional variables (years of experience and work environment) on values held. Ethnicity and years of experience led to significant differences in the values held, with each variable influencing different value dimensions. Gender and work environment had some influence but generally in combination with ethnicity and years of experience respectively. The study found a distinctive U-shaped curve related to years of experience, which means that practitioners' value priorities change as they gain more experience in the profession. All four of the variables studied could be significant in accounting for difference in professional practice in other countries.

The second part, using repertory grid methodology, examined values and identity. It identified core values central to public relations practice in Malaysia, and interpreted these core values as statements of self-identity. The nature of identity as a public relations practitioner may also account for differences in public relations practice between countries.

Combining both parts, the study has revealed values that underwrite public relations practice in Malaysia, the aspects of self-identity important to the profession, and the way in which those values and identity have been influenced by cultural and professional factors. It therefore leads towards the development of a theoretical foundation for "culture-specific" public relations in Malaysia.

This exploratory study has generated findings which challenge the expectations of Schwartz and Bilsky's values theory, on which the values analysis was based.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

This chapter sets out the context and purpose of the research. The research examines values and identity within one profession (Public Relations), in one country (Malaysia). Its implications, however, are global, because its context is created by the intersection of three current areas of debate and examination, which are examined in this chapter. The outcomes of this research have the potential to provide a new, and hitherto largely unexplored, basis for comparative research between the profession in Malaysia and other countries. This chapter provides a background to the public relations profession in Malaysia, and outlines the status of research on cultural issues in public relations particularly in the Asian region.

1.1 The purpose of the study

_The ways individuals organize experience, what seems right, natural and of worth, how individuals make sense of themselves, one's goals and motivations, all importantly depend on the ways these concepts are socially represented both generally within a society and specifically within the sociocultural niches individuals occupy in that society"_ (Oyserman, Sakamoto, & Lauffer, 1998, p. 1606).

This research examines the role of cultural and professional factors in shaping the values and self-identity of public relations practitioners in Malaysia. In other words, it
examines which cultural and/or professional factors explain differences between practitioners in terms of their values and identity.

Public relations academics have begun to focus on the values underwriting the profession, reinforced by the first issue of the *Journal of Public Relations Research* in the new millenium being devoted to values of public relations from different theoretical perspectives. Values determine the way in which the job is conceptualised and performed and, as shown by the quote below, are instrumental in the perception of public relations as a profession.

*Ultimately, if we as a scholarly and professional community are to overcome the stigma commonly associated with public relations, we must develop a set of values for the profession, for ourselves personally, and for the organisations that are our clients. At the same time, society must agree that these values are important; and the skills and knowledge needed to implement these values must define public relations as a unique profession. We should not choose a set of core values for public relations arbitrarily or by imposing one’s personal values on others* (J. Grunig, 2000, p. 24).

This is a sociocultural research project which works with a sample of 20 - 25 public relations practitioners and creates dialogue with each one in relation to the research question. It examines the role of cultural and professional variables in shaping the values of public relations practitioners in Malaysia by exploring how practitioners individually make sense of their world and of others working in the same profession; how they individually construct the influence of cultural and professional factors on
their values and motivation; and how they explain the influence of cultural factors on others working in the same profession. Further, it examines the self-identity of public relations practitioners in Malaysia, based on the view that values are integral to self-identity. It explores the topic using methods that allow personal views of self to mix with personal views of others and combines personal experience of what it's like to work in public relations in Malaysia with interpretations about what it is like for others working in the same profession.

Many questions are relevant to this study: What influences the practitioner in doing the job? What self-concept does a public relations practitioner have? How is this shaped by values? How important is the work environment in shaping the public relations experience? How important is ethnic background in determining how the job is approached? What is the experience like for female practitioners versus male practitioners? What level of social control do these cultural aspects have in how the job is done, particularly if the professional and organisational context is based on values that are different from personal values? To what extent do practitioners segment work from home or do values stay the same regardless of context? To what extent and in what way do practitioners change their approach as they gain more experience? In what ways does the specific cultural context in Malaysia influence the public relations profession? Do practitioners align themselves more in terms of their ethnicity, or their gender, or their family associations, or their profession, and what impact does this have on their values? What contribution does this knowledge make to the public relations body of knowledge?
This study is an exploration into a relatively new field. It is intended to answer some of the above questions, and to develop a theoretical foundation for culture-specific public relations in Malaysia. Culbertson and Chen (1996) identified two different types of research that can be performed in the global realm. The first of these is "comparative public relations" which is pursued through cumulative explorations of the similarities and differences in practice between countries. This type of research is becoming more prevalent as a variety of individual studies have examined how public relations is practised in specific countries. This research style also dominated the book by Culbertson and Chen (1996).

The second type of research was identified by Culbertson and Chen (1996) as "international public relations". This focuses on how public relations is most effectively practised in organisations as it crosses cultural or national borders. Culbertson and Chen claim that most of the literature on international public relations to date involves this second type of research. The research in this study fits more closely into the comparative genre outlined above.

Malaysia provides a good context for the study of cultural and professional variables because of the existence of three culturally distinct ethnic groups, and the existence also of a thriving public relations profession.

1.2 The broad context and justification for the study

This research is set within three areas of international interest.
1.2.1 The current focus on Asian values

The first area of current debate, among academics, political leaders and commentators, concerns Asian values and their role in supporting Asia’s pathway to modernisation. Gungwu (Woon & Gungwu, 1999) calls the whole debate a curious one, but in Kwok Kian Woon’s view (1999) “it is a crucial time for a deeper consideration of the place of values in the context of the awesome challenges Asian societies are facing” (p. 30). A focus on culture and values, for example through this thesis, is timely.

The dominant reason for investigating a distinctive set of Asian values has been the need to explain the dramatic economic success of the area. Kwok Kian Woon (1999, p. 30) explains: “By the early 1990s, the economic rise of the Asian region, amidst signs of economic slowdown and social crisis in western countries, was accompanied by a newfound confidence on the part of Asian societies on the global stage. Some Asian leaders and intellectuals sought to highlight the significance of ‘Asian values’ in underpinning the Asian miracle and in resisting the ills of western liberalism and welfarism”. The debate became a polarised one where Asian values and Western values were pitted against each other as supposed opposites. Following the economic crisis in 1998/1999, Malaysia’s Prime Minister, Dato’ Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, saw that Asian values would also be a positive force in helping the region recover (Sheridan, 1999, p. 103).

The debate has also been fuelled by reflections on the rapid industrial and economic development in the region over the past few decades which Kwok Kian Woon (1999, p. 30) calls “modernization without modernity”. He explains: “Citizens were mobilized by the state towards ‘national’ goals with the promise of material improvement – which
was, in varying degrees, delivered. In the process, there was a kind of ‘leapfrogging’ from the old order into the structures and mentalities of modernization, into the scientific-technological and capitalist rationality – generally bypassing the development of the cognitive bases of modernity in the form of a new self-consciousness.” The Asian values discourse has emerged as part of this reflective process. A relevant question posed by Glazer (1999) is: Regardless of what role they play in explaining the economic rise of East Asian countries, can the distinctiveness of East Asian values survive that rise?

A third contributing factor to the rise in interest in articulating Asian values has been the need to create an identity and stature for the region, to express a sense of ‘Asia-ness’ that would have some meaning in the context of East and West (Kwok Kian Woon, 1999, p. 30) and which would provide a vision and a reminder of underlying cultural priorities for the region as it deals with the impact of globalisation. In Sheridan's view (1999, p. 92), the strong assertion of Asian values helps to create a mindset that developing countries (such as Malaysia) could look to an Asian society (such as Japan) for inspiration rather than always to a Western society. Glazer (1999) hypothesises that if Asian values survive and even flourish, then the expectation of homogenisation of culture through globalisation is belied, and globalisation will be seen to be compatible with different values and cultures.

In Gungwu’s view, the debate has emerged to fill the vacuum left by the resolution of ideological differences following the end of the Cold War. He asserts that the politics of the debate have overshadowed the deeper question of cultural differences: “It spread beyond the ideals of civil society, liberal democracy and political freedoms to the
question of whether Asian values should be linked to economic success” (Gungwu, 1990, p. 31). The current challenge in his view is to understand and appreciate the role of values that can help Asian countries meet the challenge of rapid change.

This debate draws fuel also from the long history of drawing sharp distinctions between the East and the West, articulated by Said (1979, 1993), and enshrined in the Western literary tradition. “In the past, the image of the Orient as an exotic and undifferentiated place, and that of the “oriental” as passive, and non-agentic helped to define the Western sense of individuality and agency and promoted an ideology of western imperialism” (Wink, 1997, p. 330).

In view of these comments, it would be helpful to identify a clear set of Asian values. This is an area of lively debate within Asia, and to date there appears to be a lack of consensus among Asian intellectuals and scholars about the existence of a distinct set of Asian values. Three schools of thought exist (Koh, 1999). First, values are universal, and while there are good values and bad values, there is no such thing as Asian values. Second, Asia is so big and heterogeneous that there is no set of values that are shared by all Asians. However, there may be some Asian countries which share a common set of values, such as Confucianist societies. And third, that Asians do share certain person and societal values, and that Asian values can be articulated.

Koh (1999) cites a 1994 study by Hitchcock, that sought to define Asian values and to determine the degree of congruence between Northeast and Southeast Asians. He found a surprising degree of congruence, with both regions giving equal emphasis to the importance of hard work, respect for learning, honesty, self-reliance, self-discipline and
the fulfilment of obligations. On societal values, the respondents agreed on the importance of orderly society, harmony, respect for authority, official accountability and consensus.

In addition, it has been suggested that the role and respect given to organised religion is one of the essential Asian values, and distinguishes East Asian societies from the West (Sheridan, 1999, p. 94).

In the context of this focus on Asian values, my study will aim to identify personal and professional values in Malaysia, and thus can contribute to the total picture on Asian values.

1.2.2 The current interest in understanding differences in public relations practice in different countries

The second area of academic interest is the open challenge to assumptions about the transferability of theory between countries around the world, about whether theory can be universal or whether different theories or different versions of theories are needed to explain practice in different parts of the world. In politicised terms, this is framed as the extent to which Western ideology may dominate as societies and cultures pursue economic development and material advancement. Glazer (1999) epitomises this sentiment with the question: Does the spread of the common technology-based economy, to which all societies and cultures seem to aspire, mean that their underlying distinctive cultural differences are destined to disappear?
In more pragmatic terms, parallel questions can be asked in relation to the body of knowledge about public relations and current dominant paradigms, all of which have been developed in western cultures, mainly the United States. Public relations has been practised around the world for centuries. Eshkol (1992) and Kaul (1988) have chronicled the use of public relations practices in biblical and pre-biblical times in Israel and India respectively. Yet most public relations theorising and modelling has come from North American researchers who, using their own culture and norms, have developed operational theories of public relations, much of it derived from historical analysis of public relations practice (see Grunig & Hunt, 1984). The body of knowledge developed under these circumstances has ethnocentric presuppositions and biases.

Of interest then, is whether public relations theory developed in the United States is transferable and relevant in other countries. This debate extends also to other fields of study including management theory (see Adler, 1983). In relation to management theory for example, Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars (1993) agreed that “it is largely Americans who believe that any universal code of management is possible” (p. 24). The Japanese and other cultures, by contrast, “do not believe that anything … can be covered by a coherent set of universally valid laws” (p.24). The first problem with “assumed universality” is that these studies ignore cultural differences (Adler, 1983, p. 35). The act of producing universals is, in itself, a cultural activity (Wakefield, 1997, p. 50).

In public relations, the US-developed theory base is accepted and referenced in many academic institutions around the world. For example, a 1988 survey of communication education in ASEAN countries (Dissanayake, 1988) found that 71% of material used to
teach communication theory was of American origin. Dissanayake (1988) cites Menon of the Asian Mass Communication Research and Information Centre (AMIC), who articulates the concern of Asian scholars with American communication theories, stating that the consequence of American influence is the uncritical acceptance of western models and a neglect of concepts inherent in the Asian traditions. He qualifies that AMIC's search for an Asian perspective does not imply outright rejection of western theories, but advocates their selective use and adaptation to the study of the communication process in Asia to ensure that the cultural contexts in which they operate are considered.

Botan (1992) sees the growth in activity of multinational corporations and their practice of international public relations as catalysts to the increasing focus on these questions. Botan (1992) infers that knowledge of the underlying assumptions in a culture will determine the extent to which theory is transferable and, in international public relations terms, whether a specific strategy formulated in the United States, for example, can work in other countries. The challenge is for practitioners to overcome the ethnocentric assumptions built into much of the current scholarship and practice (Botan, 1992, p. 157), with the threat to effective public relations practice coming from the possibility that practitioners accept the underlying assumptions in the theory as more valid than the underlying assumptions in the countries where it is applied.

Others frame it as an issue between culture-specific and culture-free theory, whether there is a need to develop culture-specific theory or whether it is possible to apply generic theoretical factors in a universal (culture-free) theory of public relations. The culture-free approach, supported by scholars such as Hickson, Hinings, McMillan, and
Schwiter (1974), suggests that the link between organisational characteristics and contextual variables are stable across societies, and that management practices can be transferred from one country to another without cultural adaptation. Scholars such as Tayeb (1992) and Hofstede (1980) represent the culture-specific approach, and propose that culture demands that functions change across boundaries. Limaye and Victor (1996) report that scholars and practitioners are becoming increasingly sensitised to the fact that cultural factors heavily influence management practices. Tayeb (1988) argued that the methodologies behind culture-free studies look only for similarities between cultures, and therefore find only similarities. Culture-specific theories, she said, reflect cultural realities better than culture-free theories.

In an effort to address the issue of whether universality exists in public relations, the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) Research Foundation, in 1983, funded a 10-year research study, which became known as “The Excellence Study” (J. Grunig, 1992). The study aimed to identify concepts relevant to excellent public relations practice and then test those concepts through a series of organisational studies. The study confirmed that public relations is practised using different models in different parts of the world, specifically the USA, Canada and the United Kingdom. Many US dissertations have since focused on the question of whether dominant models of public relations practice developed in the United States, or dimensions that underlie the models, have relevance in other countries (e.g., Huang, 1997; Rhee, 1999; Sha, 1999), and a metaresearch project by J. Grunig, L. Grunig, Sriramesh, Huang & Lyra (1995) in India, Greece and Taiwan, also followed this path.
The focus has therefore shifted to examine the specific variables which cause public relations practice to differ from country to country. Sriramesh and White (1992) and Sriramesh (1996) proposed that cultural differences among societies affect the way public relations is practised in different societies and argued that knowledge of public relations practice would advance greatly if the impact of culture on public relations were better understood. Sharpe (1998) relates performance differences internationally to cultural variations in behaviours and belief systems.

Dissanayake (1981) was among the first to identify a relationship between levels of economic or national development and communication, suggesting four different approaches depending on level of development which included: economic growth phase; social growth phase; structural transformation of society phase; and a self-development phase (Lerner & Schramm, 1967; Rogers & Shoemaker, 1971). Botan (1992) developed a matrix showing the relationship between societal level indicators and the predominant form of public relations being practised, including: the level of national development; the type of primary clients; the level of legal protection along with the political role of the practice; and the uniqueness of the history of the practice. Botan argued that these factors determine the amount and kind of public relations resources available, which in turn influence the worldviews and the role of the practice in that country.

Van Leuven (1994) further developed another group of four factors which affect the level at which public relations can be undertaken: communication and media infrastructure; market-economy development; political stability; and linguistic and cultural integration. Synnott and McKie's (1996) exploratory study on research priorities
in the Australasian/Asian/African regions found preliminary support for differences in public relations based on level of economic development, culture and geography.

Further, Wakefield (1996) offered a framework for research in international public relations which combines cultural, management, societal, and communication theories. L. Grunig, J. Grunig, and Vercic (1997) identified six potential differences between countries that are likely to create different operating conditions for public relations practitioners in different countries: (1) level of economic development in a country; (2) the political environment in which public relations is practised; (3) the cultural environment; (4) language differences; (5) the potential for activism; and (6) the role of the mass media. From the Excellence Study, Grunig and others (see J. Grunig, 2000, p. 44) have developed a generic theory of global public relations which prescribes 10 principles that are generic to “excellent” public relations on a global scale.

In the context of this focus on universal vs. specific variables that account for differences in public relations practice between countries, my study will focus on specific cultural and professional variables and examine whether they have an influence on the values of practitioners in Malaysia. This will contribute to the ongoing development of a body of knowledge on universality of public relations theory and practice, and will inform international and intercultural public relations practice.

1.2.3 The current focus on values in public relations

Professions are based on values and a body of knowledge to teach and enhance values (Toth & Pavlik, 2000, p. 1).
Botan’s (1992) assertion of the importance of assumptions underlying public relations practice encompasses also the values attached to those assumptions. Each model of public relations practice -- symmetrical/systems, rhetorical/critical, feminist, social scientific, and the dominant applied model based on a journalistic heritage and business orientation (Botan, 1993) -- contains assumptions and values. Feminist values in public relations, as proposed by L. Grunig, Toth, and Hon (2000) for example, include: cooperation, respect, caring, nurturance, interconnection, justice, equity, honesty, sensitivity, perceptiveness, intuition, altruism, fairness, morality, and commitment (see L. Grunig, Toth & Hon, 2000, for a full exploration of links between feminist values and ethical public relations practice). Rhetorical values of advocacy and counteradvocacy, for example, are presented by Heath (2000) as important in understanding public relations in the public policy arena.

Values are at the core of professionalism (J. Grunig, 2000, p. 26). L. Grunig et al. (2000) hypothesised that feminist values enhance public relations practice and organisational effectiveness.

Taylor (1999) suggests that one way to understand the similarities and differences in international practices is to compare the assumptions underlying each nation’s practice of public relations, and in this study I am using values in this way. Values underwrite the practice of public relations. If we can clearly identify values of practitioners that underwrite practice in a particular country, then we have a basis for comparing public relations practice between countries.
Professional values explain how practitioners make strategic choices for their professions and the organisations for which they work. Further, they form the basis of professional ethics because they create guidelines and beliefs about the practice. J. Grunig (2000) suggests that professionalism empowers public relations managers to negotiate with clients to change organisational behaviour – helping organisations to consider the interests of external stakeholders as well as their own interests. In support of this, J. Grunig proposes that the core value of public relations is collaboration, which also can be found in the concepts of societal corporatism, collectivism, and communal relationships.

In Asia, public relations is more often influenced by Eastern theology and hierarchical principles (Taylor, 1999). Ekachai and Komolsevin (1996) looked at the public relations role and function in Thailand, and identified social status as one of the values that shapes practice there. Sriramesh (1991), in his studies of public relations in India, identified personal influence as a central value in public relations practice. A metaresearch project by J. Grunig, L. Grunig, Sriramesh, Huang, and Lyra (1995) in India, Greece and Taiwan found the use of the personal influence model in all three countries.

A comparative study by Sriramesh, Kim and Takasaki (1999) of public relations practice in India, South Korea and Japan also confirmed the use of the personal influence model. They describe its use in Japan: “Expressing disagreement publicly (i.e., practising tataeme) is shunned because it leads to a loss of face for the other, thus destroying wa (social harmony). For this very reason, the Japanese prefer to build stable relationships by communicating in informal settings ideal for exchanging honne (the
private self). This also explains why the personal influence model is so critical to Japanese public relations practice. public relations professionals need to build personal relationships with journalists and others so they can engage in honne” (Sriramesh et al., 1999, p. 26). This is a clear example of values driving practice.

Singh (2000), in a later review of the Indian public relations profession identified the need for a transparent and collaborative ethos to be developed because “although India is the world’s largest democracy, it seems to lack the openness that this function demands” (p. 308). In a profile of the Philippine public relations industry Panol (2000) failed to identify underlying values of the profession, saying only that it is “male dominated, western styled and urban concentrated” (p. 237).

Huang (2000) critically reviewed public relations in Taiwan, where Confucianism has prevailed as the basic social and political value system for over 1,000 years. Traits consistent with the Confucian ideology are:

1. Socialisation within the family unit in such a way as to promote sobriety, education, the acquisition of skills, and seriousness about tasks, job, family and obligations;
2. A tendency to help the group (however it might be identified);
3. A sense of hierarchy and of its naturalness and rightness; and
4. A sense of complementarity in relationship which, combined with the sense of hierarchy, enhances perceptions of fairness and equity of institutions.

In the context of this re-focus on the importance of values to public relations practice, my study will investigate and document normative and actual values of public relations
practitioners in Malaysia. If the values that practitioners hold and are motivated by are linked with their ability to do the job, it is important to understand the values that underwrite public relations practice in Malaysia. What professional values are important in doing the job? What professional values are critical to effective public relations? What values lead to effective public relations practice in Malaysia? What influences the values held by practitioners? These data can then be used in comparative studies to better understand specific differences in public relations practice between countries, particularly those that are different from the dominant Western models.

1.3 Study design and direction

1.3.1 The springboard for this study

In 1995 I undertook my first research project in the Asian region (Synnott & McKie, 1997). Following on from the work of McElreath (1993), my study used Delphi methodology to establish a research agenda of priority issues for public relations practitioners internationally. Drawing from 37 participants from 13 countries (Australia, China, Hong Kong, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Taiwan and Zimbabwe), the first stage of the research identified their research priorities, compared them to priorities identified in the USA through a similar study in 1989 undertaken by McElreath, and drew some initial conclusions from the new data.

In the second stage, to enable wider comparative analyses, responses were separated by country and grouped in three separate ways: 1) according to the level of economic
development; 2) in regional groupings; and 3) according to culture. These reordered data were used to explore the more qualitative research question that significant differences in priority issues would exist between countries based on either their level of economic development, or geographic or cultural factors. The results were broadly in line with previous studies, showing that economic development was the main factor.

The findings of the Delphi study in relation to cultural influences were inconclusive, open to the criticism of "too much diversity of operational measures" (J. Grunig, L. Grunig, Sriramesh, Huang, & Lyra, 1995, p. 172), and indicating the need for further research. Some interesting initial findings were that the role of public relations in community development and social responsibility was more important in developing countries than developed countries; and that there was a different focus on globalisation and multicultural concerns between Asian communities and Western communities (Synnott & McKie, 1997).

Of the three potential explanations for difference -- level of economic development, regional factors, and cultural factors -- both regional and cultural factors were less important than the level of economic level. In relation to culture, this directly challenged Tayeb's (1992) assertion that culture is in fact a determinant of the level of economic development achieved (pp. 127-8) and suggested that the issue of cultural influences was worthy of more extensive and comprehensive examination.

This study was the pilot study for the present research project.

1.3.2 The contribution of other studies in setting the direction for this research
Following the consensus from scholars such as Vercic, J. Grunig, and L. Grunig (1996), Culbertson and Chen (1996), and Sriramesh and White (1992) that the study of international public relations should be linked to environmental elements such as culture and political context, researchers have begun to follow this path.

In the context of the IABC Excellence Study (mentioned above in section 1.2.2), Sriramesh and White (1992) examined the correlations between the various cultural dimensions and the practice of excellent public relations. They concluded that organisations are usually bound to the cultures of their home country, which means that whatever decisions they make will reflect their own cultural values. They conceptualised the linkage between societal culture and public relations through two propositions: 1) That excellent public relations practices would be more likely to be developed in cultures that display low power distance, authoritarianism and individualism, but higher levels of interpersonal trust among workers; and 2) That organisations in societal cultures that do not display the characteristics outlined in proposition 1 (above) can have excellent public relations if the few power holders in the organisation foster participative organisational culture (p. 612).

Since the Sriramesh and White (1992) study, other researchers in the field have conducted studies relating societal culture to public relations, and have agreed that public relations practices often are correlated to the culture of the countries involved (e.g., Hazleton & Cutbirth, 1993; Coombs, Holladay, Hasenauer & Signitzer, 1994). The Coombs et al. (1994) study examined similarities and differences in practice between Australia, Norway and the United States in terms of culture-specific, work-
related values, which they operationalised in terms of professional orientation, fulfilment, and practitioner roles.

Much of the work done in this area however has been framed in terms of the four dominant models of public relations practice developed by Grunig and Hunt (1984). For example, studies have examined whether J. Grunig’s original four models of public relations accurately describe public relations activities in specific countries. Cultural variables in Sriramesh, Kim and Takasaki’s (1999) comparative study across India, South Korea and Japan were not operationalised; rather, the impact of culture emerged during the research process through participant observation and interview and were discussed in relation to two of Hofstede’s (1980) cultural dimensions. Sriramesh et al. (1999) concluded that organisations are culture-bound (p. 4). They see that communication, one key foundation of public relations activity, has a two-way relationship with culture.

The contribution of my research is to focus on values underwriting the profession, as a somewhat different but complementary approach to examining the way in which environmental variables can impact on public relations.

1.3.3 Framing this as a grounded, transdisciplinary study

This is a grounded research project, exploratory in nature and generating new data which have not been studied before. Further, it is a research project which crosses disciplinary lines, combining aspects of psychological study, with sociology and public relations. The research was designed using psychological tools to identify values, self-
identity and personal constructs, within cultural frameworks, and applied to the public relations profession. Being a grounded research project, the theoretical fields relevant for understanding and designing the project are broad. As will be seen in chapter 2 which outlines the theoretical frameworks of relevance for this study, this study draws not only on values, ethnicity, personal construct and cultural aspects but also delves into frameworks for understanding gender differences, for understanding interactions between individuals and their working environment, and for understanding how people change their values over the course of their working lives. This research therefore provides an opportunity to investigate linkages which have not been previously studied in relation to the public relations profession in general, and specifically in Malaysia.

As a grounded research project, the research has been done in three phases: a preliminary phase in Australia; an initial data collection trip in Malaysia; and, following analysis of data from the first trip, a second trip to Malaysia to meet again with respondents to discuss the interpretations. I have worked with a small sample of public relations practitioners in Malaysia, and delved in depth to understand, interpret and explain the results. Particularly in cross-cultural research it is important to retain the frame of reference of the culture involved and not bring my own biases to the analysis. The methodological intent of working with respondents twice in the research process -- first to obtain the data and second to analyse and discuss the findings -- was to ground the analysis within the understandings of the people that the research was focused on; essential to the repertory grid process and beneficial to the analysis and interpretation of the survey data. In addition, the perspective of others helps to legitimise the results and ensure that the foundation will be accepted and used by scholars and practitioners in the field (Pauly, 1991).
In line with Chu's advice (1990) that data collected in the developing nations of Asia should include both qualitative and quantitative measures, this study used both qualitative and qualitative methods. While much of the data is qualitative in nature, the study has relied on quantitative data to identify significant relationships between independent and dependent variables, which were then explored through further discussion with respondents, and which are reported qualitatively. The mix of qualitative and quantitative methods is further strengthened with the use of a third method, repertory grid interviews, whose inclusion enables different views on values to emerge, and which provides some triangulation within the analysis. The largely qualitative approach should be able to preserve the holism and "richness of data" that Lesly (1983) has said is so important to the public relations field. The methods I have used include focus groups, surveys, repertory grid interviews, and structured interviews.

This research has generated data both on the individual level and at an aggregated level. In some aspects the aggregated data is meaningful, while at the same time some of the data can only be dealt with on an individual level. This is demonstrated by the repertory grid material. The repertory grid process generates meaningful individual constructs, and these can be analysed for commonality through the socio-grids (Shaw, 1980) program, but their real value lies in understanding how each person creates meaning within their own life.

Because the study is qualitative, it is pursued in the spirit of scientific observation stressed by Pauly (1991). He viewed qualitative research as "an ongoing conversation that the researcher now proposes to join" (p. 8). Once involved in the study, the
researcher conducts the study and publishes the results. As Pauly notes (1991), the publishing “marks a pause in the interpretive process, a measure in which writer, critics and readers can catch their breath before moving on. The conversation never ends” (p. 21).

As an exploratory research project with a small sample, the findings and conclusions must be taken as preliminary. However, it should satisfy Marshall and Rossman’s (1989) criteria for qualitative research because it is an exploration “to identify important variables for subsequent explanatory or predictive research” (p. 15). It is descriptive in nature: it should find out what is going on in the minds of those who practise public relations in Malaysia.

My hope is that sufficient issues of interest are highlighted by this research to motivate others to continue the process.

1.3.4 Researching one country from another

This research is being undertaken in the Asian context, and the Asian cognitive frame is distinct in relation to other cultures. In fact, the cognitive frame is likely to be different for each country within the Asian region. Fisher (1988) calls these 'mindsets'. Issues which are important in one context, one country, may be quite unimportant in the next. Interpretations that make sense in one context will be inaccurate in another. “What is rational and logical thus apparently differs among cultures and countries because world views or perceptions differ radically among people around the globe” (Limaye & Victor, 1995, p. 224).
The process of doing research in one country from another raises the onus of responsibility: responsibility to overcome biases, and a responsibility to use a method that is respondent-focused rather than researcher-focused, which allows the respondents' voices to be heard free of researcher interpretation and bias. This is the rationale for the way in which this research project has been designed.

Positives can come from this external standpoint: "it is a truism that marginality can recombine knowledge in novel ways" (Stivens, 1998, p. 23), and “the horizon can be wider with a more distant view” (Servaes, 2000, p. 55).

Servaes (2000) further states that in the study of cultural identity and the values of others, one must be attentive to: 1) the characteristics and dimensions of the cultural reference framework; 2) the interaction and interrelation with the environment of power and interests; and 3) the ‘ideological apparatus’ by which the cultural reference framework is produced and through which it is at the same time disseminated.

1.3.5 Limits of the study

The major limitation of the study is the sample size, which started at 25 and finished at 20. If this was intended to be a definitive review of the public relations profession in Malaysia, the small sample size would render the research invalid. However, my intention, as discussed above, was to build understanding of values and identity of practitioners within the profession. The research was designed to gather and examine data which would provide insight into the values that practitioners use, what influences
those values, the differing motivational impact of the values held, and the ways in which these values are reflected in practitioners' views of themselves and colleagues. It is an in-depth study. As such, it highlights results and findings which can be validated through further research to test how widespread these views are within the public relations profession in Malaysia, and beyond into other countries. This is a first step in a new area, and has attempted to use methods and concepts not usually used in public relations studies to provide useful information to build the body of knowledge.

1.4 Background to Malaysia and the development of public relations

Malaysia is located in Southeast Asia and is geographically divided into two regions – Peninsular Malaysia (bordered by Thailand and Singapore) and East Malaysia (on the Borneo island shared with Brunei and Indonesia). Malaysia is a federation of 13 states and the Federal territory. Malaysia's population of over 23 million is led by a democratically-elected government that rules by the Malaysian constitution under the parliamentary system. The Federation of Malaya achieved independence from British colonial rule in 1957 and became Malaysia in 1963. Colonialisation left a legacy of political and economic stratification along ethnic lines, increasingly punctuated by religious differences (Tan, 2000).

The economy of the country is supported by agriculture, light and medium industries and its abundant natural resources (Sim & Elasmor, 1997). In addition there is a significant effort to move towards industrialisation, encapsulated in the Prime Minister’s Vision 2020. This ambition is manifest in the efforts of both the public and private sectors, in transportation and communication infrastructure, in economic and political
policies, in institutions of health and education, and in almost every concern of the nation (Sim & Elasmar, 1997).

1.4.1 Ethnic profile of Malaysia

In Malaysia, in virtually every social setting, you find yourself dealing with Malays, Chinese and Indians simultaneously (Sheridan, 1999, p. 83).

Malaysia is multicultural, multi-ethnic, and multi-religious, but without a single majority group which manifests historical, demographic, political and economic dominance (Ward & Hewstone, 1985). Malaysia comprises three major ethnic groups – the Malays, Chinese and Indian people – and their well-preserved customs. The Malays are the indigenous people of the land and have descended from Indonesia and Arabia. The Chinese and Indians mostly descended from immigrant labourers brought in by British colonial policies to work in mining and rubber estates (Sim & Elasmar, 1997), or who entered as refugees from war-torn areas in China during the 19th century (Ismail, 1989). The Chinese are subdivided into Hokkein, Hakka, Cantonese, Teochew, Hockchew, Hainanese, Henghau, and others (Ward & Hewstone, 1985). The Indians include both South Indians such as Tamil, Nadu and Kerala, and North Indians such as Punjabis, Bengalis, Gujaratis, Parsis, and others (Ward & Hewstone, 1985). In addition there are several indigenous ethnic groups mostly residing in east Malaysia. This diversity is a deciding factor in the governance of the country and in the social mores of its people (Sim & Elasmar, 1997). Multi-ethnicity is especially evident in urban environments where education, commerce and politics are highly integrated.
The Malays, known as Bumiputera, comprise 55% of the population. Ethnic Malays claim to be the indigenous "sons of the soil" (Taylor, 2000) with a right to rule the nation. Malays believe that their legitimacy in ruling Malaysia comes not from their economic power but because of their history of living in the region before the Chinese and the Indians. They have traditionally concentrated in subsistence agriculture such as rice cultivation and inshore fishing (Ward & Hewstone, 1985). Although Malays comprise the largest ethnic group in terms of population, they fall behind the Chinese in education and economic development (Taylor, 2000). Despite economic disadvantages and rural origins, the Malays retain political power through the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) (Ward & Hewstone, 1985).

Ethnic Chinese comprise the second-largest group (34%), have been very successful in education and have been dominant in commerce and manufacturing, controlling what is believed to be approximately 61% of the local share capital (Tan, 2000). Chinese economic success is achieved through very strong business networks: guanxi social-cultural ties and/or personal networks that operate along dialect-speech lines within the Chinese community, and political guanxi particularistic connections outside of the Chinese community with political and bureaucratic elites (Tan, 2000). The Chinese in Malaysia are angry about what they perceive to be unfair treatment due to national policies that favour Malays (Taylor, 2000). As a group, the Chinese take a low political and public profile, which in Tan's view stems from an acute sensitivity to the need to minimise the risk of provoking indigenous complaints against the citizen-Chinese economic dominance (Tan, 2000).
A third group, Indians, represents 10% of the population. Under British colonisation, unskilled workers from rural India were encouraged to immigrate to Malaysia. The British imported these foreign workers for the labour-intensive mining and rubber plantations and because they wanted the indigenous Malays to remain in the agricultural sector of the economy (Taylor, 2000). The Indian Malaysian community consists of a strong professional class, a narrow middle class and a huge working class inherited from the days when Indians were working on the plantations. Economically, the Indians occupy an intermediate stratum (Ward & Hewstone, 1985), but overall, they remain the most marginalised of the major ethnic groups in Malaysia (Sheridan, 1999).

Taylor defines the situation in Malaysia as one of coincidental cleavages, which "occurs when people continually divide along ethnic lines on social, political and economic issues" (2000, p. 189). Citing Horowitz (1985), Taylor states that coincidental cleavages are a common condition in former colonies where disparate groups are forced together under colonial boundaries. During colonial rule, Malays, Chinese and Indians were discouraged from interacting with each other, and the government continues to reinforce traditional ethnic classifications (Taylor, 2000). Ward and Hewstone (1985) state that Malaysians are further divided along occupational and geographical lines.

However, Malaysia continues to be a peaceful nation with minimal ethnic conflict (Taylor, 2000). On this point, former deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim said in 1997 that Malaysia's economic success in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, especially the creation of a Malay business class, had brought about a profound change in race relations. He thought that the growing Malay self-confidence generally had resulted in the evolution of a more relaxed racial atmosphere: "There is less feeling of insecurity
among the races, particularly the Malays, because their economic achievement is considerable. Race relations have entered a new phase. Cultural and religious differences are now seen in a new light. It is considered a strength rather than a source of conflict" (Sheridan, 1999, p. 84).

1.4.2 Religious diversity

Besides being distinguished by race, Malaysians face diversity in religion. Malaysia has a predominantly Islamic identity. Most Malays are of the Muslim faith, while Buddhism is largely a Chinese religion and Hinduism is mainly an Indian one. Christianity may also be followed by Chinese and Indian people. Distinctions by ethnicity and religion are further emphasised by a history of division of labour by racial lines during the British governance (Sim & Elasmar, 1997).

Malaysia is one of the most economically developed of all Muslim societies. A significant challenge within the country, according to Sheridan (1999) is that of building a decent compact with its largely (nearly 40 per cent) non-Muslim minorities. Sheridan (1999) recognises and acknowledges Dr Mahathir’s focus on development of Malaysia as an attempt to harness the traditional moral virtues of Islam -- thrift, honesty, family fidelity, obedience, abstemiousness, communal solidarity -- with the traditional Chinese and Japanese ingredients of East Asian economic success. If Malaysia succeeds in becoming a fully-developed nation, Sheridan suggests it will demonstrate the viability of multi-ethnic, multi-religious societies, but may offer a new vision of how an Islamic society can reconcile both Islam and economic modernisation. He believes that Dr Mahathir’s larger view has been to reconcile Islam with the modern world.
1.4.3 A short history of public relations in Malaysia

Van Leuven (1996) proposed a preliminary framework for describing the development of public relations in Malaysia and its changes over time. He distinguished between public relations work in economically advanced nations versus developing nations. The key difference is that in the former, public relations is largely the practice of private sector organisations relating to their strategic publics. In developing countries, public relations equates with government nation building programs or countrywide public communication campaigns. Van Leuven proposed a three-phase framework -- nation building, market development, and regional-interdependence -- and noted that Malaysia was in the second phase and had not, by 1996, moved into the third phase.

1.4.3.1 Nation building phase

The early development of public relations in Malaysia during the 1940s, was heavily influenced by British public relations. The early activities of the Information Department, and then the Department of Information and Publicity, before the fall of Malaya to the Japanese forces during World War Two, were replicas of British ideas formed with the single objective of waging propaganda war against the Germans and the Japanese (Syed Arabi Idid, 1994).

When the Malayan Union was established in April 1946, a Department of Public Relations was formed, following a decision made by the Colonial Office in London that colonies should have public relations departments (Syed Arabi Idid, 1994). "The
condition in the country was bad — food was scarce, there was near breakdown in law and order, and confidence in the British was very low. The Public Relations Department was set up by the British Malayan Union government to address those problems" (Syed Arabi Idid, 1992, p. 5). From the start, public relations was characterised by information campaigns and government-run, nation-building campaigns, for example "preparing Malaysians to accept Merdeka, persuading the people in Sabah and Sarawak to accept the concept of Malaysia and events thereafter" (Syed Arabi Idid, 1994, p. 3).

In 1960 the Malaysian Government established the Rural Development Plan and began a massive development support communication program aimed at providing roads, a water supply, community halls and electricity (Van Leuven, 1996). Virtually all public relations work emanated from government information ministries and it wasn't until the mid 1960s that private sector public relations began to appear. The Institute of Public Relations was established in Malaysia in 1962, with its founding members being from the government sector (Syed Arabi Idid, 1994).

Following the race riots in 1969 (a watershed in Malaysian history), the government realised that it needed to do more to fully explain its policies and actions, and to seek feedback to understand how the people felt towards these policies and actions. Public relations people were subsequently appointed in every ministry, government department and semi-government department (Syed Arabi Idid, 1994). At this time, the Government introduced a New Economic Policy (NEP) aimed at restructuring society so that no race would be identified with any particular vocation, and eradicating poverty among all segments of the population. This necessitated supportive communication to enlist popular support and co-operation (Nordin, 1986).
Typical nation-building campaigns over this period were ones to boost food production, the antidrug abuse campaign, the antihoarding campaign, campaigns against the spread of Dengue fever, and road safety campaigns (Van Leuven, 1996). During this period the government information staff grew from a few hundred to approximately 2,500. Staff in the information ministries tended to be either political appointees or long-time government officials with no specific training in public relations.

The private sector was slightly behind in adopting public relations. Syed Arabi Idid (1994) explains that in the early days public opinion was not vocal, there were no visible pressure groups, and government laws and regulations governing business were not of immediate concern. Early private sector public relations work began with the few oil multinationals informing their shareholders in Western countries about their activities in the region. Eric White Associates was the first consultancy to be established in 1965 (Syed Arabi Idid, 1994). Financial support of government through the underwriting of public information campaigns was the next development, as explained by Van Leuven (1996, p. 212): "Soon however they began courting government and public favor by underwriting sports, arts, and educational programs. In fact, government tended to define corporate social responsibility in terms of financial support for the various nation building efforts".

1.4.3.2 Market development phase

The market development phase emerged as a result of trade expansion, a growing manufacturing base, and government housing programs which combined to produce a
middle class in Malaysia. New markets for consumer goods signalled more opportunities for public relations. Multinational companies brought big budgets to Malaysia and these monies attracted multinational public relations and advertising agencies. At the same time, local consultancies sprang up to serve local industries that either could not afford the big consultancies, or that preferred to use local companies. Many of these smaller agencies actually specialised in graphic design, brochures or video production rather than providing a full range of public relations or marketing services (Van Leuven, 1996).

Government information ministries still employed the greatest number of public relations workers, but increasingly consultancies were hired to take on both the planning and strategy development segments of government information campaigns. The focus of nation building campaigns shifted from individual behavioural change to changes that motivated people to support and participate in projects launched by the government (Van Leuven & Pratt, 1996).

Public relations practitioners were former journalists whose tools were news releases and media contacts. Campaign planning became more comprehensive and the hallmark of private sector public relations during the early phases of market development was the shift from publicity in the news media to the inclusion of controlled media and special events for promoting grand openings, groundbreakings, product launches, and hotel as well as tourism promotions (Van Leuven, 1996).

1.4.3.3 The present
Although only three decades old, the nation of Malaysia seeks to be accepted by the world as a developed, modern state. Behind this international image lies a complex program of nation building communication programs of which one component is ethnic relations. Nation building efforts in Malaysia seek to improve the social, political, and economic spheres (Taylor, 2000, p. 188).

Building from Van Leuven's assessment of level of development of the profession in Malaysia, Taylor (2000) identifies the public relations approach in Malaysia as a nation building approach, where the government consciously uses communication to achieve national goals and to build national unity. Karim (1989, p. 22) called this a "moving target' as racial relations are a continual phenomenon". A public relations approach to nation building focuses on creating, changing and maintaining relationships between governments and publics as well as the creation of new relationships between previously unrelated publics, "bridging communication gaps that are usually related to community welfare and the quality of life in general" (Karim, 1989, p. 24).

The public information model, the second of four models proposed by Grunig and Hunt (1984) typifies government-based communication where the government uses one-way mass communication campaigns to change behaviour, although Karim (1989) sees it as a fine line between public relations and propaganda: "Many Asian governments use information as an extension of their power. Indeed their communication policies hinge around the provision of 'support' to the government" (p. 22). Karim's conclusion about the status of public relations in Asian countries including Malaysia in 1989 was that the fast-changing economic, political and social development necessitated flexibility in approach and thinking.
In Malaysia today public relations people are employed in all types of organisations – private sector, government organisations and agencies, consultancies, and freelancers. The real public relations opportunities are largely found in the private sector including in television/broadcast networks and stations, telecommunications companies, large manufacturing concerns, property/real estate conglomerates, IT companies and the tourism and leisure industries. They are more highly educated than in the past, with a study done in 1992 finding that the majority held diplomas or degrees (Syed Arabi Idid, 1994).

The range of public relations tasks performed is varied and can be a specialist or a generalist role. Areas of specialisation include events management and product launches, media relations and editorial services, plus the normal range of professional activities as undertaken in Australia and other western countries. After 10-12 years in the field, practitioners can achieve the level of public relations Manager/Director. Track record, background, references, performance in organisational skills, writing skills and interpersonal skills appear to be the key factors leading to professional progress.

Up until the 1998 economic crisis in Malaysia, public relations was an expanding industry. Companies realised the value of the public relations role and the demand for practitioners exceeded availability. Companies were hiring people who showed aptitude, with or without academic qualifications. During the economic crisis the situation was different. Budgets were being cut. public relations practitioners were losing their jobs. This is now starting to improve. "As Malaysia plans for more industries in line with its
ambition to be an industrialised nation by the year 2020, the country will have more public relations practitioners" (Syed Arabi Idid, 1994, p. 8).

1.5 The structure of this thesis

This thesis describes the journey that I've taken with this topic over the research period.

Chapter two outlines the psychological, cultural and public relations constructs that are drawn on in this study. This study is multidisciplinary, combining different theoretical frameworks in the design of the research, and in the understanding and interpretation of the results. The study draws on different disciplines to provide the psychological framework for this study, (self, values, self-identity and personal construct psychology), the cultural dimensions used to define the study (including ethnicity and gender), and professional variables (including work environment and years of experience). While this project is focused on the public relations profession, the findings are likely to be relevant across other occupations in Malaysia. The Schwartz and Bilsky (1987, 1990, 1992; and Schwartz & Sagiv, 1995) values model, central to this research project, is introduced in this chapter.

Chapter three details the methods to be used, including a survey, the repertory grid (rep grid) method and structured interviews. Using the grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1966), the chapter explains the process of theory development as the data unfold. The research phases in the project are outlined, incorporating two phases of data collection in Malaysia, and three phases of analysis: the initial quantitative analysis of significant results and rep grid relationships, a qualitative content analysis of interview
discussion about the quantitative results, and an analysis of the results in relation to theory.

Chapter four outlines the quantitative findings following the first research trip to Malaysia when the survey and the rep grid were administered. The chapter details the sample, explains how the data were analysed, and then provides the initial rep grid results, and the quantitative results from the values analysis, highlighting where significant effects were found. This chapter discusses which variables to focus on in the next research phase. The values analysis and conclusions about significance of variables mean that some of the components dropped out of the study at this point.

Chapter five begins the qualitative analysis. Armed with findings from the first visit, I went back to Malaysia to meet again with each respondent and discuss the results from the first research phase. This chapter is the first of three which document the respondents' discussion of, and their reactions to, the analysis of values and the impact on values of the four variables of gender, ethnicity, work environment and years of experience. This chapter examines the impact of the four independent variables on the first of Schwartz and Bilsky's (1987, 1990. 1992; and Schwartz & Sagiv, 1995) value dimensions, openness to change. Other value dimensions are discussed in chapters six (self-enhancement) and seven (self-transcendence).

Chapters eight and nine are theme chapters where I analyse the results from the perspective of each of the four independent variables: ethnicity, gender, years of experience in public relations, and work environment, rather than from the values dimension perspective used in the previous three chapters. Each chapter starts with a
discussion of the relevant literature to enable the results to be interpreted and implications to be understood.

Chapter ten brings in the rep grid analysis. This chapter presents a brief description of how I've used the rep grid methodology, then looks at what has emerged and its contribution to understanding values and self-identity within the profession. I use examples to present the different ways practitioners perceive those with experience vs. non-experience; and to demonstrate the linkages between values and identity among public relations professionals in Malaysia.

Chapter eleven is the conclusion. In this chapter I discuss the contribution of this research to the public relations body of knowledge, particularly in terms of understanding the values that underwrite the profession in Malaysia, and what this has provided as a comparative base for future research on specific differences in public relations practice between countries. I discuss the effectiveness of this research approach to the topic, compared with the common focus on validity of the dominant models of practice, and the value of operationalising environmental (i.e., cultural and professional) variables through the four variables used in this study. The finishing note of the chapter is recommendations for future research.

1.6 Conclusion

This introductory chapter has set out the purpose for the study, which is to examine the values and identity of public relations practitioners in Malaysia. It has established a context for the study and detailed what its specific contributions to public relations
theory are intended to be. Those contributions are three-fold. The first is to explore and demonstrate the use of a values framework for comparing public relations practice between countries, particularly those that are different from the dominant Western models. The second is to investigate the influence of specific cultural and professional variables on public relations practice, through the values framework, to add knowledge about the influence of universal vs. specific variables in determining public relations practice in different countries. The third is to contribute to the definition of Asian values by defining one component, that is, the personal and professional values of a sample of public relations practitioners in Malaysia.

This chapter has introduced the research design and discussed some of the important issues in relation to transdisciplinary research, and identified the potential pitfalls for undertaking research from one country into another. A background was provided to the country and profession under study, together with a discussion about prior research in the broad area of cultural impacts on public relations which has helped to set the direction for this study. The chapter concluded with a summary of the contents of each chapter in the thesis.
CHAPTER 2

HOW THIS STUDY IS CONCEPTUALISED

This research project crosses a number of disciplinary borders to explore new ground in relation to examining the values and self-identity of public relations practitioners working in Malaysia, specifically in terms of what values they hold and are motivated by, what self-identities they have, and what cultural and professional factors might help to explain differences between practitioners in terms of their values and identity. This is a grounded research project, which means that the clarity present in the finished thesis was not present at the start when the project was being conceptualised.

The theoretical constructs which were used in the initial determination of research direction include values and value dimensions, culture and cultural dimensions, ethnicity and ethnic identification, personal construct psychology, Asian communication models, the theoretical frameworks for public relations practice, and self-concept and self-identity in public relations. All of these constructs have played a part in the evolution and progress of this grounded research project, and in understanding and interpreting the findings that have resulted. In Putnam's view (1999), such interdisciplinary research contributes vitality and energy to the field, and the process of incorporating recent developments from other fields generates new insights and creativity.

The way in which I see these constructs working together is that they provide a conceptual framework on three levels. On the first level, to erect a foundation for the
study, I have brought together concepts of self and self-identity, values, and personal construct psychology. Everything revolves around self and, despite their differences as areas of study, values, identity and personal construct theory are complementary in their ability to create a meaningful framework.

On the second level, to define the study, I have brought together psychological and sociological concepts including ethnicity and ethnic identification, gender, and cultural dimensions at the national, organisational, occupational and communicational levels. The Malaysian context is particularly crucial in defining the study.

On the third level, to provide a relevant application for the study, I have incorporated the professional variables of work environment and years of experience.

Underpinning all these areas and providing a link between them is the concept of self. This research focuses on the self of individual public relations practitioners, and studies the various cultural and professional factors that influence each individual, examined through the dimensions of values and identity. Suh (2000, p. 63) describes the position of self as standing at the junction of subjective well-being and culture: "Culture provides form and shape to the self, which in turn influences how individuals feel and think about various aspects of their lives". The discussion therefore starts with a discussion of self.

This chapter introduces the theoretical concepts drawn on in the study. A full discussion of these concepts in relation to the findings is presented in chapters 8, 9 and 10.
2.1 The first level: Self, values and self-identity

2.1.1 The concept of self and self-identity

The self is a composite view of oneself that is formed through direct experience and evaluations adopted from significant others (Bandura, 1986).

Triandis conceptualises self as an active agent that promotes differential sampling, processing, and evaluation of information from the environment, leading to differences in social behaviour (1989). Self is shaped in part through interaction with groups, and defined by the cultural contexts within which the interaction occurs. Culture is therefore a starting point, or an agent, that affects individual psychological processes and shapes attitudes, values and concepts of self. Even when individuals do not define self explicitly in terms of social positions, their views of self still depend on, and are qualified by, social forces and social structures (Augoustinos & Walker, 1995).

Through their socialisation practices, norms and institutions, cultures emphasise the connectedness or separateness of individuals in many ways (Singelis & Brown, 1995) leading to different positioning of selves across cultures (Marsella, DeVos, & Hsu, 1985). This distinction between self and other is a form of categorisation which fits within the Social Identity Theory (SIT: Tajfel & Turner, 1979) view that the social world is perceived in categories which are socially constructed, that each person belongs to some categories and not to others, and that individuals draw their social
identity from their group membership and the way their groups are perceived in
comparison to other groups.

Triandis (1989) distinguishes between the private, public and collective selves, where:
*The private self* is an assessment of the self by the self, involving traits, states or
behaviours of the person (e.g., I am honest); *the public self* is an assessment of the self
by the generalised other (e.g., people will think I am honest); and *the collective self* is an
assessment of the self by a specific reference group such as family or coworkers (e.g.,
my family thinks I am honest). Augoustinos and Walker (1995) identify similar
distinctions: the *subordinate level*, the *superordinate level* and the *intermediate level*
respectively. Personal and social identities therefore represent different levels of self-
categorisation. Tajfel's (1978) concept of social identity relates particularly to the
collective self or the intermediate level, and SIT assumes that a person's social identity
is constituted by the many social identifications that a person has with various social
categories (Augoustinos & Walker, 1995).

Triandis (1989) proposes that people sample these three kinds of selves with different
probabilities, in different cultures, with specific consequences for behaviour. The
complexity of each of these selves will depend on cultural variables. For example, in
cultures in which specific groups are emphasised during socialisation, the collective self
is likely to be complex. The more complex a particular self, the more probable it is that
it will be sampled, and sampling of a particular self will increase the probability that
behaviours implicated in this aspect of the self will occur, when situations favour such
occurrence. Triandis (1989) cites data which suggest that people from East Asia sample
their collective self more frequently than do Europeans or North Americans. This means
that elements of their reference groups, such as group norms and group goals, will be more salient among Asians than among Europeans or North Americans.

Self-identity is self-concept, shaped in part through a person's interaction with groups, and defined by the cultural contexts within which the interaction occurs. Attitude to self is self-esteem (Augoustinos & Walker, 1995). Social identity theory is essentially about intergroup behaviour, and a basic assumption of the theory is the motive to think well of one's self; that is, to have a positive self-esteem. The theory proposes that people are motivated to achieve a positive social identity and a positive self-esteem, and that this motive propels much social behaviour. People engage in social comparisons between ingroup and outgroup characteristics, mostly for self-enhancement, which is expressed as a tendency to evaluate one's ingroup memberships (i.e., the social categories one belongs to) positively (Augoustinos & Walker, 1995). Group values are part of this process of identity construction, because individuals link their sense of self to the value systems within their groups (McConatha & Schnell, 1997). Hence, self-identity and values are linked.

This perspective of self as being multidimensional, dynamic, and influenced by cultural conditions sets the framework for my research. I am researching four specific variables—two cultural and two professional—and the way in which they influence and interact with values, which I see as a critical component of self and self-identity.
2.1.2 Values

There is much discussion and perhaps little consensus about what constitutes a value. Theorists have likened values to beliefs (Rokeach, 1968, 1973), needs (Super, 1973), goals (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987), criteria for choosing goals (Locke, 1976), attitudes (Eagly & Chaiken, 1992; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) and as “a broad tendency to prefer certain states of affairs over others” (Hofstede, 1980, p. 19).

In Dose's (1997) view, most value theorists agree that values are standards or criteria (e.g., Rokeach, 1968, 1973; Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987) for choosing goals or guiding action, and are relatively enduring and stable over time (e.g., Rokeach, 1973). Schwartz's definition (1992, p. 2) of values is as “desirable states, objects, goals, or behaviours, transcending specific situations and applied as normative standards to judge and to choose among alternative modes of behaviour”. In an earlier definition, Schwartz and Bilsky (1987) also defined values as being ordered by relative importance. Rokeach (1973) viewed values as global beliefs that guide actions and judgement across situations.

Erez and Earley (1993) clarify how this process of guiding actions and judgement happens. They see values in terms of mediating the relationship between needs, goals, and intentions in the motivation sequence. Goals and intentions are conscious formulations, and needs cannot be translated into goals unless they have a cognitive representation in the form of values. They conclude: “Thus values play a necessary role in ascribing cognitive meanings to needs and in transforming needs into goals and intentions for action. Goals can be viewed as applications of values to specific
situations” (p. 98). At the end of the behavioural sequence, values can be seen to have a
direct effect on rewards and satisfaction, because values determine what actions will be
personally rewarding and satisfying.

Researchers highlight the importance of research on values as opposed to research on
attitudes for two reasons: values are standards, but attitudes are not; and values occupy a
more central position in the cognitive system and personality make-up of individuals,
determine attitudes, and are more closely linked to motivation (Dose, 1997). Roe and
Ester (1999) add three more reasons: that values are generalised whereas attitudes are
situation or object-specific; values are always positive whereas attitudes can be positive
or negative; and values are thought to be relatively stable and less changeable than
attitudes. For values to serve as meaningful guiding principles in life, they must show at
least moderate stability over time (Schwartz & Sagiv, 1995).

In many societies, work is an important part of people's lives (MOW, 1987), and
therefore much research has studied values in relation to work. Work has attracted
relatively more research attention than other life domains because of its key role as a
base for social participation, social status, consumption, health and family life (Roe &
Ester, 1999). Studies have focused on the structure of values, value profiles and
patterns, and value change. For example, studies on value profiles and patterns have
identified distinct value profiles or patterns for nations, countries and other social
categories (Roe & Ester, 1999).

The relationship between general values and work values is seen in several different
ways (Roe & Ester, 1999). One view is that values have a particular cognitive structure
which produces a structural similarity between general and work values (Elizur & Sagie, 1999). Another view is that general values produce work values, as work values are a specific domain within general values (e.g., Ros, Schwartz, & Surkiss, 1999). This is the common conception that work activities are determined by work values, and work values derive from general values. The reverse view is that work values might be a source from which general values develop, as shown by a process where modern work practices and standards may generate work-related values that move out into the wider community. Roe and Ester (1999) cite results from the Meaning of Work project (1987) which show that the work role is seen as important in many cultures, and this makes work values into core values which take a cardinal position in the pattern of values.

Researchers have different views about whether values directly influence behaviour (Gudykunst, Matsumoto, Ting-Toomey, Nishida, Kim, & Heyman, 1996, p. 515) or influence people’s activity indirectly through attitudes and goals. At the individual level, values are seen as a source of motivation for individual action, and an individual’s behaviour is affected both by their cultural or societal values and their individual values. At the societal level, cultural values provide broad guidelines, and define norms and shared goals, which elicit and guide collective action. At the work group level, activity is likely to depend more on work values than general values, although general values will still have a role (Roe & Ester, 1999).

Two conceptualisations are valuable in relation to research in this area, namely distinctions between extrinsic and intrinsic work values, and between central and peripheral values. Extrinsic values concern the rewards derived from the job but external to the work itself (e.g., income, prestige and security). Intrinsic values involve
rewards obtained directly from work experience (e.g., interest, challenge, responsibility, and autonomy). Core values resist change from contextual pressures, whereas peripheral values may change, implying a hierarchy of values with peripheral values much more subject to social control (Lachman, Nedd & Hinings, 1995).

In this research, I have chosen Schwartz and Bilsky's values theory (1987, 1990; Schwartz, 1992; and Schwartz & Sagiv, 1995) to work with, for two reasons: it links values to motivation, and it has been tested cross-culturally which is relevant to my research context. This values theory empirically defines basic dimensions of general values and identifies value profiles of countries and their position in a general value space. The values model will be referred to extensively, and to streamline this referencing in the thesis I'll refer to the values theory (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987, 1990; Schwartz, 1992; and Schwartz & Sagiv, 1995) as the Schwartz and Bilsky values theory.

2.1.2.1 Schwartz and Bilsky's values theory

Schwartz and Bilsky found that the crucial aspect that distinguishes among values is the motivational goal they represent. Their theory derived 10 motivationally distinct value domains (self-direction, hedonism, tradition, power, achievement, security, stimulation, universalism, benevolence, and conformity), postulated to be recognised implicitly in all cultures. The theory also specified the interrelationships of conflict and compatibility among the 10 value types that give structure to value systems. Research with 40 samples from 20 countries (Schwartz, 1992), and with 88 samples from 40 countries (Schwartz & Sagiv, 1995), found support for the existence of the 10 value domains, for
two basic dimensions that organise value systems (Openness to Change vs. Conservation; and Self-transcendence vs. Self-enhancement), and that 44 specific values within the 10 value types have highly consistent meanings across cultures (Schwartz & Sagiv, 1995). The data confirmed that people in these cultures implicitly distinguish 10 types of values when assessing the importance of specific values as guiding principles in their lives.

Schwartz and Bilsky theorised that values form a continuum of related motivations which can be plotted in terms of their relationship with each other. Values near the boundaries of adjacent types overlap in their motivational meaning, whereas values and value types that express opposing motivations emerge in clearly distinct regions, separated from each other.

The 10 value domains are organised in two bipolar dimensions. The first dimension -- Openness to Change vs. Conservation -- opposes values emphasising own independent thought and action and favouring change (self-direction and stimulation types) with values emphasising submissive self-restriction, preservation of traditional practices, and protection of stability (security, conformity and tradition). The second dimension -- Self-Transcendence vs Self-Enhancement -- opposes values emphasising acceptance of others as equals and concern for their welfare (universalism and benevolence) with values emphasising the pursuit of one's own relative success and dominance over others (power and achievement). Hedonism is related both to Openness to Change and Self-Enhancement (Schwartz, 1995, p. 94). Schwartz (1992) confirmed a number of expected compatibilities and conflicts among value types, as represented by the two
bipolar dimensions. This is a central point in understanding the results, and is discussed extensively during the analysis.

The focus of Schwartz and Bilsky's earlier (1987, 1990) studies was to test the structure and assumptions of the theory, by determining the extent to which the theoretical distinctions correspond to actual distinctions that people make when evaluating the relative importance of their values.

One point of refinement in later versions (Schwartz, 1992; and Schwartz & Sagiv, 1995) of the values theory related to the apparent bipolar positioning of Individualism and Collectivism on the Openness to Change vs. Conservation value dimension. The refinement suggested that the interests served by values can be individualistic, collectivistic, or mixed, rather than dichotomous. Schwartz (1992) contends that the value domains of power, achievement, self-direction, hedonism and stimulation serve individual interests, while the value domains of tradition, conformity and benevolence serve collective interests. Schwartz (1990) argues that individuals hold both individualistic and collectivistic values and that these are not necessarily in conflict. He believes that collectivistic values may serve the interests of the ingroup or larger collectives and that serving the interests of the collective is not necessarily at the expense of the individual.

Further, values influence individuals' readiness for contact with outgroup members (Rokeach, 1973). Schwartz and Sagiv (1995) reported that individualistic values (e.g., self-direction) are associated positively with Israeli Jews' readiness for contact with
Arabs, whereas collectivistic values (e.g., tradition, security) are associated negatively with readiness for contact.

My aim with this research is not to test this model, but to use it to understand which values and value dimensions are held more strongly by respondents, and what influences those values. My sample (detailed in chapter 4) represents the three ethnic groups in Malaysia, three different experience groupings, both male and female practitioners, and two different work environments, allowing me to determine whether these four independent variables have any influence on values. Much of the analysis in this thesis centres on the interactions between these variables and the values.

2.1.3 Personal construct psychology

A personal construct system is a theory being put to perpetual test (Bannister & Fransella, 1971, p. 27).

Personal construct psychology (PCP) represents the theoretical framework developed by Kelly (1955). The foundation of PCP is that people are not locked in by predetermined events, but have a choice of alternative actions; that constructs or interpretations of the world are subject to revision and replacement; and that people actively create and construe their own personal realities. “This means that people understand themselves and their environment, and anticipate future events, by constructing tentative models or personal theories and by evaluating these theories against personal criteria as to whether or not the prediction and control of events (based upon the models) have been successful. All theories are hypotheses created by people, which may be valid at any
particular time, but may suddenly be invalid in some unforeseeable respect and replaced by a better theory” (Zuber-Skerritt, 1990, p. 57).

Kelly (1955) views the person holistically, as a personal construct system. According to systems theory, the change of any one part of the system will lead to change elsewhere in the system as it strives to stay in balance. Meaning, generated through how people construct the world, and the judgements that they make in relation to their constructs, guides their actions, but is being constantly revised in the light of new meanings, and new interpretations that people make about the world around them. People are engaged in an ongoing process of observation, interpretation, prediction and control of their external environment (Featherston, 1995). They use personal constructs to understand life events and to make sense of their experiences. Personal constructs, their contents and structures, understood as a system, are assumed to have profound implications for behaviour (Landfield, 1976). Kelly (1955) has developed his theory in terms of a fundamental postulate, with eleven corollaries. The fundamental postulate refers to the basic assumption underlying his theory. The corollaries are propositions which explain PCP.

*The Fundamental Postulate:* A person's processes are psychologically channelised by the way in which he/she anticipates events. This means that an individual's cognitive system is used to understand, construe, interpret, and evaluate incoming data, and to translate this into decisions on how to respond (Dainty, 1990).

*The Construction Corollary:* A person anticipates events by construing their replications. This means that people make sense of their world by continually detecting
repeated themes, categorising these themes and segmenting their world in terms of the themes (Bannister & Fransella, 1971, p. 20).

The Individuality Corollary: Persons differ from each other in their construction of events. This means that each person sees a situation through their own eyes, and the way they see it is likely to be different from the ways others see it. This is a direct reflection of a person’s private sense of self. Private dimensions may have important different dimensions associated with their construal (Forster & Schwartz, 1994), which is what the repertory (rep) grid method can define.

The Organisation Corollary: Each person characteristically evolves, for his/her convenience in anticipating events, a construction system embracing ordinal relations between constructs. As Bannister and Fransella state (1971, p. 23) “this hierarchical quality of construct systems is what makes our world a manageable place”. This means that we each develop a view of how events link together.

The Dichotomy Corollary: A person’s construction system is composed of a finite number of dichotomous constructs. Kelly’s (1955) view was that it is more useful to see constructs as having two poles, a positive and a negative, rather than seeing them as unipolar (Bannister & Fransella, 1971).

The Choice Corollary: A person chooses for him/herself that alternative in a dichotomised construct through which he/she anticipates the greater possibility for extension and definition of his/her system. This means that each person will move in those directions that seem to make the most sense in terms of fitting their construction
of the world (Bannister & Fransella, 1971). The filter or lens that a person uses to determine "sense" will determine whether a given event is meaningful or relevant (Forster & Schwartz, 1994).

**The Range Corollary:** *A construct is convenient for the anticipation of a finite range of events only.* The range of convenience is all those things to which people might eventually find the construct applicable (Banister & Fransella, 1971). This means that some things are outside the range of convenience and are not subsumed under either pole of that construct.

**The Experience Corollary:** *A person's construction system varies as he/she successfully construes the replication of events.* Construct systems change as we make sense of our experiences, to help us better understand and anticipate future events. Core constructs evolve from the construal of replications of events that seem important to survival or maintenance (Forster & Schwartz, 1994).

**The Modulation Corollary:** *The variation in a person's construction system is limited by the permeability of the constructs within whose range of convenience the variants lie.* Permeability refers to the extent to which a construct can assimilate new elements within its range of convenience. Constructs can be both permeable and impermeable (Bannister & Fransella, 1971), and the extent of permeability can change as core constructs develop.

**The Fragmentation Corollary:** *A person may successively employ a variety of construct sub-systems which are inferentially incompatible with each other.* A construct system is
a hierarchy and a series of sub-systems each with varying ranges of convenience. Conclusions about the ‘same’ series of events can be drawn at levels which are not necessarily consistent with or even related to each other (Bannister & Fransella, 1971).

**The Commonality Corollary:** *To the extent that one person employs a construction of experience which is similar to that employed by another, his/her psychological processes are similar to those of the other person.* This is the converse of the individuality corollary, and says that people are similar if they construe events in similar ways (Bannister & Fransella, 1971).

**The Sociality Corollary:** *To the extent that one person construes the construction process of another, he/she may play a role in a social process involving the other.* This means that a public sense of self incorporates commonly shared normative dimensions of construal (Forster & Schwartz, 1994) and interpersonal interaction is in terms of each person’s understanding of the other (Bannister & Fransella, 1971).

Rep grids are a technique for establishing and expressing an individual's mental map, or personal construct system. Constructions are verbalised as constructs, and the rep grid method elicits these constructs. What is elicited from respondents is their working knowledge, that is, constructs which control the way in which a person regards old and new events. These elicited constructs are assumed to be relatively permanent (Featherston, 1995).
2.1.3.1 Personal construct psychology in cross-cultural studies

A paradox apparently exists in the disjunction between the suitability and usage of PCP in cross-cultural research. "The approach seems .. to carry little cultural baggage when it comes to the task of understanding individual and shared meaning systems that might be found in other cultures" (Davidson & Reser, 1996, p. 105). Yet very few cross-cultural psychological studies have used the personal construct approach as their principal theoretical or methodological strategy (see Davidson & Reser, 1996, for a summary of research in this area).

Davidson and Reser (1996) examine the question of whether Kelly's (1955) focus on the individual nature of construct systems makes it appropriate for use in a more collectivist culture, and conclude that the theory can accommodate culture because it recognises that construing is done by selves in culture. Kelly (1955) gives clear support to the notion that selves are social, that they imply role relationships, and that they involve construal of self vis-à-vis others (Davidson & Reser, 1996). Thus Kellian psychology has the potential to redirect attention from individual selves to collective selves in cultures where self is not juxtaposed with others but includes others.

Davidson and Reser (1996) examine the question of whether the rep grid method itself is culture-specific in that it requires an understanding of the English language to complete. They suggest that such problems could occur if there were no equivalent terms in English for the indigenous language term, which could lead to difficulty in conveying the original cultural meanings of constructs when they appear in translated form.
My concern about the relevance of the PCP approach in Malaysia however, related to the concept of personal control. The relationship between sense of personal control and psychological well-being is well established (Sastry & Ross, 1998; Bird & Ross, 1993), but this association is most often seen from the perspective of western cultures where having personal control means making decisions which lead to achievement of goals which lead to a feeling of well-being. In their study of Asian ethnicity and the sense of personal control Sastry and Ross (1998) hypothesised that the collectivist nature of Asian countries, including subordination of personal desires to those of the family and community, would lead to a lower level of personal control among Asians, together with less personal distress associated with the lower level of personal control. In other words, they expected to find that the concept of personal control would be less relevant in collectivist communities, and their study confirmed this.

What this raised for me was a question about the validity of personal construct psychology among Asian people. How does the attitude that “what I do has no real effect on what happens to me” (an item in the World Values Survey, cited in Sastry & Ross, 1998, p. 196) fit with a personal construct psychology view which sees the individual as a more active agent? However, as Sastry and Ross (1998) concluded, collectivist motivations can be strong, and can drive action in the same way that individualistic motivations drive those in Western cultures. In Kelly's (1955) view, everyone has a construct system, but it is culturally-embedded and this is a point to be recognised in the analysis of the constructs.
Kelly (1971) viewed PCP as a metatheory, that is, a theory about a theory. In his view PCP is valuable as a way of examining the process by which people build understanding, and it doesn’t draw conclusions about what will be found as a result of examining the process (Davidson & Reser, 1996). In this way, the theory can be accommodated to other cultures where self and self-determination may be constructed differently.

2.1.4 Linking self, values and self-identity to PCP

Kelly (1955) wrote about values and value systems, and equated a system of values with “a comprehensive superordinate construction system” (p. 843). Elaborating on this, Horley (1991) proposed that there is similarity between a value and a personal construct, and that values and core constructs are in fact the same thing. In support of this proposition he defines values as providing standards against which to evaluate things, people and ideas. He notes also that Rokeach (1973), among others, described values as bipolar.

Throughout any discussion of values, mention of the self is frequent. Values are seen to represent the essence of an individual. People come to see themselves, and others come to see them, by the standards that seem to guide their affairs (Horley, 1991). Core constructs provide a sense of personal identity by serving as information about who people are and what they represent. Self-knowledge or self-identity can be seen in terms of taking stock of values (Horley, 1991), and the process of construct elicitation through the rep grid method gets people to identify those values/core constructs which they hold as important or central to their lives. Through the rep grid method, which Kelly (1955)
recommended as a good way to obtain an array of idiographic data (Slater, 1976),
respondents articulate their constructs, and these constructs are a practical expression of
personal construct theory.

Constructs are always part of an organised system. They can be organised vertically so
that a construct can be superordinate or subordinate to another construct. Superordinate
constructs are likely to be more stable and more resistant to change than the lower order
constructs (Featherston, 1995). Core constructs are those constructs which Kelly defines
as involved in the day to day processes of maintaining identity and a sense of continuing
existence. Changing these constructs is very difficult because of the links to a person’s
identity (Featherston, 1995). Peripheral, subordinate constructs can be changed more
easily.

For this study, identifying the personal constructs of public relations practitioners
enables us to understand the values and self-identities that they hold as important and
which influence their work as a practitioner.

An effective metaphor for tying these four areas together conceptually is Rowe’s (1973)
metaphor of a person’s experiences as a solar system. He suggests that a person’s
experiences, the totality of what he/she knows and the terms he/she uses to describe
them, could be pictured as a person’s inner world, a solar system with the concept of
self at the centre, around which all other concepts revolve. “When we ask a person
about his concepts...he cannot answer without relating the object under discussion to
himself in some way...We make a value judgement about every concept by referring
that concept back to ourselves” (Rowe, 1973, p. 213).
Rowe suggests that it is important to know about an individual's concept of themselves before it is possible to find out about their concept system. "The gradual differentiation of self and not-self leads to the development of inner objects, images of persons needed by the individual. These form part of the self-concept, as do the concepts of the self at early stages (myself as a child) and super-ego concepts (the ideal self). There are concepts, too, about the person doing something (myself as a parent, myself as a scientist)" (1973, p. 213/214).

The rep grid method, a PCP technique, enables people to bring out those constructs of importance, and as stated above, constructs, particularly core constructs, equate to values. Thus self, self-identity, values, and PCP contribute jointly to the framing of understanding in this study.

2.2 The second level: Culture and cultural dimensions

The field of cross-cultural research highlights the importance of cultural context, particularly in understanding, from the individual's perspective, the ways in which life tasks are structured and the normative positioning of self in relation to social embeddedness (Hofstede, 1980). Insights from this work help researchers and others to understand how individuals within heterogeneous societies make choices and organise experience.

Many definitions of culture have been proffered. Three of the best are Hofstede's definition of culture as "collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the
members of one group or category of people from another” (1991, p. 5); Tayeb’s definition as “the values and attitudes collectively held by the people who belong to a given society, and which influence their material and non-material way of life” (1992, pp. 119-125); and Triandis's definition that "culture is to society what memory is to individuals. It refers to tools and ideas that are shared and transmitted to succeeding generations because they were once practical at some point in time" (2000, p. 13).

There is agreement among authors that culture is learned through socialisation, not inherited (Hofstede, 1991, p 5–10; Tayeb, 1992). Tayeb (1992) suggests that culture originates in the physical environment, the family, religion, education, and the political system.

There is agreement that there are different levels or manifestations of culture, some of which are easier to see than others. Hofstede suggests a hierarchy of manifestations of culture, from the outside in: symbols, heroes, and rituals, with values at the core (1991, p. 10). Trompenaars (1993) outlines three layers, from the outside in: artefacts and products, norms and values, and at the core, basic assumptions. While the terminology differs, these two authors agree that the central core consists of the things that children learn implicitly about their environment and their existence, and through socialisation these fundamental values or basic assumptions, often invisible to people outside of the culture, become habitual.
2.2.1 *Hofstede's cultural dimensions*

There is healthy discussion about how to describe the cultural orientations of societies. Perhaps the best known is Hofstede's (1980) research, which initially identified four (later five) bipolar dimensions for describing the cultural differences between countries, described by Fernandez, Carlson, Stepina, and Nicholson (1997, p. 44) as "a watershed conceptual foundation". Hofstede viewed these dimensions as universal constructs that provide a framework for considering how a culture resolves the most basic problems of life in organisations. The position of a culture on these dimensions allows other researchers to make some predictions on the way that society operates, including management processes within organisations. Others have also identified basic dimensions (Adler, 1991; Tayeb, 1988; Trompenaars, 1993) and underlying cultural assumptions (e.g., Abdullah, 1996). Researchers have used Hofstede's (1980, 1991) four dimensions to test cultural differences at the national level. The four dimensions are Power Distance (PD), Uncertainty Avoidance (UA), Masculinity/Femininity (M-F), and Individualism-Collectivism (I-C).

The *Power Distance* dimension (Hofstede, 1980, 1991) describes the dependence relationships in a country, and is concerned with issues of equality and inequality and the way in which inequality is generally accepted in terms of institutions and practices such as the prevailing distribution of prestige, social status, wealth, the class and caste system and access to universal rights. It is defined as the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organisations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally, and refers to the norms that the powerless as well as the powerful subscribe to (Bochner & Hesketh, 1994).
The *Uncertainty Avoidance* dimension (Hofstede, 1980, 1991) measures tolerance for uncertainty or ambiguity, and the degree of need to take action to reduce the uncertainty. Feelings of uncertainty are acquired and are expressed through nervous stress and the need for predictability such as through written and unwritten rules. Ways of coping become a part of the culture and are transferred and reinforced through the family, education and society. For example, people alleviate their anxiety through introducing technology or laws to reduce uncertainty, or through their religious beliefs. Asian countries tend to have medium to low scores on this index, and Eastern religions, by and large, equate with low UA because they are less concerned about absolute Truth, stressing instead acquisition of insight as a gradual and lifelong journey (Hofstede, 1991).

The *Masculinity/Femininity* dimension (Hofstede, 1980, 1991) is related to the gender-based assignment of roles in society. Masculinity pertains to societies where social gender roles are clearly distinct (e.g., men are supposed to be assertive, tough and focused on material success; women are supposed to be more modest, tender and concerned with quality of life). Femininity pertains to societies where social gender roles overlap (e.g., both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender and concerned with quality of life). On average, males are programmed with tougher values and women with more tender values, but the gap between the sexes differs between countries. Hofstede found it useful to map countries according to the two dimensions of M-F and PD, which means that different societies place the two genders at different levels of the societal hierarchy (Sriramesh, Kim, & Takasaki, 1999).
The *Individualism/Collectivism* dimension (Hofstede, 1980, 1991) is a measure of the extent to which an individual's self-concept is perceived in individual or collective terms, (i.e., in terms of the groups to which they belong). At one end of the continuum is western individualism, which construes people as separate entities. People see themselves as more differentiated and separated from others, and place more emphasis on asserting their individuality. At the collectivist end the distinction between the individual and the group is blurred, and people regard themselves in relation to the various social systems to which they belong. Collectivists regard themselves as less differentiated from, and more connected with, other people, especially those whom they regard as significant. They are sensitive to the demands of their social context, more responsive to the assumed needs of others, and put much value on harmonious interpersonal relationships (Bochner, 1994).

Power distance and individualism/collectivism are generally highly correlated (Hofstede, 1980, 1991). Social relations with unequal power are more common in collectivist cultures than in individualistic cultures. In collectivist cultures, the most important relationships are vertical (e.g., parent-child), whereas in individualist cultures the most important relationships are horizontal (e.g., spouse-spouse, friend-friend) (Triandis, Bontempo, Villareal, Asai, & Lucca, 1988).

A fifth dimension, *Confucian Dynamism*, was added in later research (Hofstede & Bond, 1988), although Hofstede (1991) later called it “long-term orientation”. High Confucian dynamism characterises individuals who place more importance on values associated with Confucian teachings that are future oriented (persistence, status-ordered relationships, thrift, and a sense of shame), and low Confucian dynamism characterises
individuals who place importance on values associated with Confucian teachings that are past and present oriented (steadiness and stability, protection of face, respect for tradition, and reciprocation of greeting, favours and gifts) (Yeh & Lawrence, 1995). Franke, Hofstede, and Bond (1991) found that values associated with high Confucian Dynamism and low Individualism led to high economic growth.

From the 53 countries in Hofstede's (1980) study, Malaysia was rated the highest on PD with a score of 104 (lowest was Austria on 11); as a collectivist country with an I/C score of 26 (compared to USA which was rated the most individualistic country with 91 and Guatemala the most collectivist on 6); around the middle on the M/F dimension with a score of 50 (compared with Japan which scored as the most masculine country with 95, and Sweden as the most feminine country with 5); and towards the low end of the scale on UA with a score of 36 (compared with the highest country, Greece, on 112 whose people feel extremely threatened by uncertainty, and the lowest country, Singapore, on 8).

Hofstede's dimensions are widely used as the basis for cross-cultural research. The individualism/collectivism dimension is the most popular and many studies have worked with this dimension. Abdullah (1996) used two dimensions, power distance and individualism/collectivism, in combination with Hall’s (1987) high and low context concept to analyse and compare Malaysia with the United States. Sriramesh et al. (1999) used the same two dimensions, power distance and individualism/collectivism to explain aspects of public relations practice in India, South Korea and Japan.
However, IsHak & Moore (1998) pointed out that four nations within Hofstede's sample -- Canada, Belgium, Malaysia and the United States -- are composed of more than one culture, and in reality there are likely to be other countries that could be added to this list (e.g., Australia, the United Kingdom). They suggest that linguistic, regional, tribal, ethnic, religious and caste cleavages within nations may make the data non-representative for the whole of the nation. Fukuda and Wheeler (1988) raised the same concern, in relation to Chinese management practices. They lamented that Orientals are quite often lumped together on the assumption that they share a common value system, even though there are many subdivisions within the Chinese culture (Fukuda & Wheeler, 1988). The existence of sub-cultural differences on Hofstede's value dimensions was also demonstrated in a study which compared values between four different subcultural groupings of Chinese living in Taiwan, Beijing, Hong Kong and Wuhan (Huo & Randall, 1990).

Hofstede's cultural dimensions do not provide specific variables for my research, but they are valuable in interpreting the findings.

2.2.1.1 National vs. Organisational culture

Hofstede (1980) distinguished between culture at different levels -- national, organisational, professional, and individual -- stating that each was different. The question is the extent to which each level affects the next.

On the question of whether national culture affects organisational culture, one view is that systemic national, occupational and industry influences will all affect organisational
values, because they are imported through employees and because organisations adapt to their surrounding environment (Parkes, Bochner, & Schneider, 2001). Values come in to the organisation through the hiring process, and the national values and values of leaders and founders shape corporate culture, which leads Jabes and Gruere (1986) to argue that an organisation's members will hold values that tend to be synonymous with their nation's culture (Parkes et al., 2001). In support of this direct linkage between national and organisational culture, a literature review (Evans, Hau, & Sculli, 1995) concluded that: the national culture is a dominant factor in management style, and that management will retain its own unique cultural identity as the society develops; and that the management style adopted in a particular society is determined by the level of technology or the level of development of the economy. For example, Bochner and Hesketh (1994) found that, especially in multicultural countries, the cultural values of individuals may vary substantially and these are reflected in work groups.

Hofstede (1993; and Hofstede & Spangenberg, 1987) however, draws a distinction between culture at national and organisational levels. He sees that the national culture holds fundamental invisible values, while organisational cultures reside mainly in the visible practices of the organisation, acquired through socialisation or induction of new employees (Hofstede, Neuijen, Daval Ohayv, Sanders, 1990). In Hofstede et al's (1990) view, when employees enter an organisation, as adults, the bulk of their values has been established through community and family, and through schooling and occupational training, and what they learn on the job is practices rather than values. They found that employee values differed more according to demographic criteria such as nationality, age and education, than membership in the organisation per se (1990), whereas dominant workplace practices were more relevant to explaining differences between
organisations. Shared perceptions of daily practices are at the core of organisational culture, underlaid by shared values.

The concept of organisational culture is relevant for my research because my sample is defined by profession, and my focus is values on the job.

2.2.2 *Ethnicity*

Given the multicultural basis of Malaysian society with three major ethnic groupings (Malay, Chinese and Indian) and some smaller ones, ethnicity is an important component to consider in this research, and has been chosen as one of the two independent variables through which to examine cultural influence on values held. The challenge posed by the variable of ethnicity is to examine empirically whether ethnicity makes a difference in relation to values and value priorities, and then to determine what that difference is and why it might occur.

People in multiethnic countries often identify themselves by their ethnic or religious group (Horowitz, 1985), and in Malaysia, national identity is linked with ethnicity (Taylor, 2000). Ethnic identity is a critical element in determining an individual’s response to his or her world (Rosenthal & Feldman, 1992) and is constructed by individuals within specific contexts. Subjective self-identification as a member of an ethnic group locates an individual within a particular cultural framework (Rosenthal & Feldman, 1992). Ethnic identity is a richly layered dimension of the self, created through an interweaving of past history, social values, language, cultural context, political conflict, geographic region and current life circumstances (Christian, Gadfield,
Giles, & Taylor, 1976; Phinney, 1990). Ethnic identity is a dynamic process which changes over time.

My research looks at ethnic identification and its impact on values held. For example, does a Chinese public relations practitioner in Malaysia hold different values as central, compared with an Indian or Malay public relations practitioner in Malaysia? What influence does their ethnicity have on values held? Are there any factors in terms of intergroup relations that would help to explain any differences found? Is there intragroup consistency? Is ethnicity a valid factor in this analysis? If Malays are seen as the dominant group, what can we learn about values and value priority differences if we take the standpoint of either the Chinese practitioners or the Indian practitioners? In Malaysia, the Chinese are a more significant minority than the Indians, both in size and power. The Chinese have a strong economic position in Malaysia and contribute to the economy through their business activities. Because of this they have political strength. The Indian minority is much smaller and considerably less powerful in social, economic and political terms.

Keefe (1992) identified three general dimensions of ethnicity: ethnic culture, ethnic group membership, and ethnic identity. Ethnic culture is the pattern of behaviours and beliefs that sets a group apart from others. Ethnic group membership is the network of people with whom an individual is in contact. Ethnic identity is the perceptions of and personal affiliations with ethnic groups and cultures. Keefe defines these as the cultural, social and symbolic dimensions of culture, and places considerable emphasis on the symbolic dimension as a means of capturing the real meaning of ethnic identity.
The most valuable paradigm in relation to my research project is Social Identity Theory (SIT) (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), and much of the research on ethnic identity has been conducted within this social psychological framework. Social identity theory was introduced in section 2.1.1 in this chapter. Given the 'accommodation' strategy followed by the Malaysian Government, which allows each ethnic group to preserve its own identity, ingroup/outgroup divisions are salient and omnipresent in Malaysia (Ward & Hewstone, 1985).

2.2.3 Gender

Gender has been selected as the second independent variable to represent culture, through which to examine the influence of culture on values held. The challenge posed by the variable of gender is to examine empirically whether gender does make a difference in relation to values and value priorities, and then to determine what that difference is and why it might occur.

In Malaysia, women represent 48.9% of the total population (Bernama, 2001) but only about one-third of the total labour force (Seventh Malaysia Plan, 1996-2000, cited in Noor, 1999, p. 123). The Malaysian Government created a Ministry for Women and Family Affairs in early 2001 to promote gender equality (Bernama, 2001).

In 1984, the expectations for women in Malaysia were as follows (Ai Yun, 1984b, p. 213):
Throughout their early lives, it is to marriage, and specifically to the role of mother within marriage, to which women are directed by the media, education and family expectations. These ideologies have a material effect. The type of formal education opportunities open to women is limited and oriented to these perspectives. Women are preferred in jobs needing female ‘natural’ capacities such as endurance for tedious, delicate and intricate work. Such an unequal situation arises in part because women’s employment is seen as secondary to their main role as mothers and in part because for many women it is secondary at least while they have domestic responsibilities.

The contemporary Malaysian woman has to juggle work and home demands. Even when they have a job outside the home, they are primarily responsible for the home and the children (Noor, 1999). Their cultural and religious values place extreme importance on the woman's homemaker role. In all three ethnic groups, the status of women is perceived to be lower than that of men, and cultural beliefs are still strong "such as the belief that a women's primary role is in the home or that women must take second place to men at the workplace" (Noor, 1999, p. 125). Noor goes on to profile (p. 125):

As the man has always been the head of the household and one step above the women, the relationship between an employed woman and her husband may be an extremely sensitive issue. On the one hand, a woman has to abide by traditional cultural and religious values where the husband's decisions are final, whereas on the other hand, the current situation demands a woman to be assertive and independent and to have a say in the running of the household." (See Lie, 2000, p. 33 for expansion on this cultural paradox).
Ai Yun (1984a, p. 17) supports this perspective: “From time immemorial responsibility for running the home and rearing the children to ensure the perpetuation of society have fallen heavily on the shoulders of women alone, shared, only when convenient with other members of society”.

2.2.3.1 Theories on gender difference

There are various theoretical approaches to the question of differences between the sexes, for example, theories that postulate stable differences between males and females and theories that postulate no clear gender differences. The first view -- theories of stable gender differences -- assumes that gender differences stem from inherent (biological) or socialised differences, and are viewed as predictable, internal and persistent traits (Deaux & Major, 1990; Mednick 1989), and as a set of "relatively fixed attitudinal and behavioural predispositions" (Cassirer & Reskin, 2000, p. 438). According to this view, men and women have equal access to opportunities, and they rise and fall on their own merit (Hernstein & Murray, 1994, cited in Meyerson & Kolb, 2000, p. 560).

Gender stereotypes consist of a set of specific beliefs about the characteristics that men and women are likely to possess. Deaux and LaFrance (1998) claim that stereotypes are the most fundamental aspect of the gender belief system, both in terms of durability over time, and their pervasive influence. Such stereotypes see women as more relational, expressive and communal, and men as more autonomous, instrumental and agentic. These differences are likely to be expressed as differences in value priorities.
Agency and communion match with Schwartz and Bilsky's values theory which proposes a universal structure of human values.

The second approach -- theories of no clear gender differences -- assumes that gender isn't a personal trait but an agreement that resides in social interchange (West & Zimmerman 1987), where masculinity and femininity are social constructions within a cultural and political context (Hantzis, 1998). With this view, there are still likely to be differences between males and females, but the problem comes from the structures of organisations which Kanter (1977) calls differential structures of opportunity.

A third approach (Deaux & LaFrance, 1998), is to consider gender as a dynamic construct where gendered behaviours are highly flexible, influenced by context and often multiply determined.

For this research project, the gender stereotypes of the male as agentic and the female as communal are central. Using the independent variable of gender will make possible the identification of gender-related values, and determine the influence of gender on values.

2.3 The third level: public relations and professional variables

2.3.1 Public relations frameworks and worldviews

*Public relations is the deliberate, planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between an organisation and its publics*
Public relations is a distinctive management function which helps to establish and maintain mutual lines of communication, understanding, acceptance and cooperation between an organization and its publics; involves the management of problems or issues; helps management to keep informed on and responsible to public opinion; defines and emphasises the responsibility of management to serve the public interest; helps management keep abreast of and effectively utilize change, serving as an early warning system to help anticipate trends; and uses research and sound and ethical communication techniques as its principal tools (Dr Rex Harlow's definition, cited in Tymson & Sherman, 1987, p. 4).

Definitions of public relations have evolved over the years from fundamental assumptions of various authors about public relations, based on the environment in which they are operating. J. Grunig and White (1992) identified four main areas where these assumptions or worldviews differ from person to person. The first is the social role of public relations – whether it serves organisations only or ultimately serves society, or whether it helps preserve the status quo or fosters change. The second area is whether public relations should be a management function or a tactical support (or technician) role. A third area, related to the second, concentrates on gender and the various roles men and women perform in the field. The fourth assumption, linked to the first, centres on whether or not it balances mutual interests of organisations and publics.
Botan (1993) referred to this question as a "paradigm struggle" between a "dominant applied model" of public relations and what he called a "symmetrical/systems" model (p.198). The applied model is based on the traditional assumption that organisations may manipulate publics to expand their own interests. The symmetrical model however sees the organisation as just one entity of a sociopolitical system, and through dialogue and compromise it seeks the common good.

2.3.1.1 Asymmetrical vs. symmetrical public relations

The major framework for public relations over the past 15 years has been the focus on symmetrical communication between organisations and their publics (J. E. Grunig & Hunt, 1984; J.E. Grunig, 1992). In 1984, J.E. Grunig and Hunt proposed four models of public relations: (1) press agentry, (2) public information, (3) two-way asymmetrical, and (4) two-way symmetrical. Initially, Grunig & Hunt (1984) posited that the public information model -- a one-way model that focused on disseminating truthful information from the organisation to its publics -- would be the most widely practised model in the United States. The normative model is the two-way symmetrical model where the interests of the organisation are balanced in favour of both the organisation and its publics, although studies have questioned whether the two-way symmetrical model is actually achievable (e.g. Botan, 1993). This is the struggle referred to by Botan (1993).

Feminine values have been linked by Wetherell (1989) to two-way symmetrical communication (representing the search for understanding and compromise), which is the public relations model seen as the most ethical and effective. The asymmetrical (the
more manipulative) approach has been presented by Wetherell (1989) as characterising the male agentic approach.

2.3.2 Public relations: what role in developing countries?

*It seems to me that public relations thrives in surroundings of political stability and strong economic activity. It developed most rapidly in the United States alongside that country's enormous industrial development, and its development as a major exporter of goods and services* (Royce, 1985, p. 201).

Royce's contention, and that of Van Leuven (1996) among others, is that public relations grows hand in hand with a country's economic development, and as the market has become more complex and sophisticated, so too public relations has developed from a publicity mechanism to a relationship-building process. However, in many developing countries, the publicity function is still seen as extremely valuable, and publicity in terms of the amount of media coverage received has often been the benchmark for evaluating the effectiveness of public relations in those countries (Van Leuven & Pratt, 1996). Because it focuses on giving information, public relations in developing countries plays a largely functional role of informing and persuading people. Public relations has been criticised by some as a manipulative approach, and is typified by Deutsch's (1966) view of communication as a means for social control. Nation-building campaigns in particular have been criticised for being not relationship-building processes, but one-way, top-down linear programs (Van Leuven & Pratt, 1996).
Much academic discussion has centred on whether Grunig's normative two-way symmetrical model would be possible in a developing country. Van Leuven and Pratt (1996) suggest that public relations practitioners can contribute to decision making in relation to the development process by using communication strategies to translate government programs to the poor and the needy; and by using strategies that are sensitive to the public interest. Further in this line, Melkote (1991) has suggested that a shift to the two-way symmetrical stance would lead to more equity in the distribution of information and other benefits of development, active participation of people at the grassroots level, independence of local communities to tailor development projects to their own objectives; and serving as tools for diagnosis of community problems, among other ideas. Van Leuven and Pratt (1996) conclude that the idealised social role concept is appropriate only in a very limited sense in developing societies.

In the international context, the public information model is often cited as the norm, typified by public information or public education campaigns which seek to change societal behaviour. Nations in all stages of development have used the theories and methods of communication campaigns to educate target publics. Reports show that agriculture, business development and literacy campaigns in Asia, India and Africa have been successful (see Taylor, 2000, p. 182 for a summary).

2.3.2.1 The personal influence model

A number of studies within the past 10 years (e.g., J. Grunig, L. Grunig, Sriramesh, Huang, & Lyra, 1995) have focused on public relations in eastern countries and have asked whether the four dominant models of public relations explain practice in those
countries. From these studies, a fifth model is emerging – the personal influence model – which J. Grunig et al., (1995) proposed as a component of the four dominant models (Grunig & Hunt, 1984), but which Sriramesh et al. (1999) saw as distinct. With this model, practitioners try to establish personal relationships (i.e., friendships) with key individuals in the media, government, or political and activist groups. Practitioners in the J. Grunig et al. (1995) metaresearch project, described these relationships as 'contacts' from whom favours could be sought.

J. Grunig et al. (1995) suggested that the personal influence model leads to practices that would be considered unethical in most countries, but Sriramesh et al. (1999) were not judgemental about the practice.

2.3.3 Gender issues in public relations

In the United States, Australia, and potentially Malaysia, public relations has experienced an influx of women and is fast becoming seen as a feminised profession. Feminisation has been central to discussions about the future of the field, with regard to professionalism, prestige, and salaries (Hon, Grunig, & Dozier, 1992). Research over the past two decades in the United States has focused on describing the inequities in salary and organisational status that female practitioners confront. For example, Broom's (1982) study in the United States found that men outnumber women in managerial roles, whereas women tend to cluster in technical roles. In 1986, Broom and Dozier discovered statistically significant salary differences between male and female practitioners, and concluded that "professional growth in public relations is a function of the practitioner's gender and role" (p. 55).
In 1986, the International Association of Business Communicators sponsored a study "The Velvet Ghetto" to assess the impact of the feminisation of communications. The study found that being female was the strongest predictor of low salary. Gersh (1986) suggested that this comes from women being viewed as caring nurturers who may be skillful at sympathising with clients, but who are not tough enough for the business world.

In their 1993 audit of the public relations profession in the United States, Toth & Grunig found that tensions about gender were stronger in the corporate rather than the consultancy setting and concluded: "It may be that agencies are less political in their hiring and promotion practices because their focus is on the business of public relations - getting, serving and keeping clients. Or it may be because the agencies have fewer employees and fewer resources" (1993, p. 17).

This disparity in terms of the role undertaken, the salary received and the promotional opportunities may also be a reality in the profession in Malaysia.

2.3.4 **Occupational/professional culture**

Hofstede defined professional culture as distinct from national and organisational culture. Van Maanen and Barley (1984) use the term 'occupational culture' which they define as "a group of people who consider themselves to be engaged in the same sort of work; who identify (more or less positively) with their work; who share with one another a set of values, norms and perspectives that apply to, but extend beyond work-related matters; and whose social relationships meld the realms of work and leisure" (p.
287). Van Maanen and Barley (1984) propose the notion of occupational community as an alternative to the organisational frame of reference for understanding employee behaviour in the workplace. They see that the specifics of work and career are glossed over in organisational behaviour literature, whereas the occupational perspective concentrates on the meaning of the work for those who do it.

Van Maanen and Barley (1984) define the features of an occupational community as: 1) the existence of boundaries around the profession; 2) members derive valued identities or self-images directly from their occupational role; 3) rigorous socialisation to equip members with a value system so that members develop a collective perspective; 4) the blurring of distinction between work and leisure activities.

The ability to have autonomy over work practices and standards, the concept of self-control, is a prominent cultural theme in all occupational communities (Van Maanen & Barley, 1984).

Van Maanen and Barley (1984) propose that inclusion rather than vertical mobility or achievement of hierarchy may be a more relevant goal for those within an occupational community. Members of an occupational community attain centrality by acquiring reputations for expertise; or working in particular settings; or by strategic expansion or revision in one's network of acquaintances.

The study of public relations practitioner roles has developed clear typologies about the nature and scope of public relations work (Grunig, 1992), specifically a differentiation between manager and technician. However, in practice a broad array of accepted role
perceptions exist (Berkowitz & Hristodoulakis, 1999). Berkowitz and Hristodoulakis (1999) suggest that this divergence results from differences in training, organisational purpose, socialising influences in each organisation, and ways in which professional status develops inside an organisation. Work environment is therefore an important variable in studying values, as outlined in section 2.3.6 below.

The concept of professional or occupational culture has relevance for my research because public relations is building its image as a profession, and there is much concern about standards and accountability within the profession (Synnott & McKie, 1997). The Institute of Public Relations Malaysia (IPRM), for example, has a code of conduct which helps to establish professional standards for those practitioners who are members. Among the values specified in the code are respect for the public interest (clause 1), dealing fairly and honestly (clause 2), and a duty to maintain truth, accuracy and good taste (clause 3). The influence of professional values on individual practitioner values is relevant to this research. Also relevant is the way in which professional values change as practitioners gain more experience in the profession, and this is examined further in section 2.3.5 below.

2.3.5 Years of experience

Years of experience in public relations has been selected as the first independent professional variable. The challenge posed by the variable of years of experience is to examine empirically whether years of experience does make a difference in relation to values and value priorities, and then to determine what that difference is and why it might occur.
Having a certain number of years of experience implies that some learning has transpired – both learning about the nature and professional requirements of the job, and learning about the organisation’s requirements. This implies that people with lesser experience have had less exposure to such learning, and suggests that learning leads to some sort of difference so that the more experienced practitioner is likely to be a different person from the lesser-experienced practitioner. The differences may be in terms of knowledge, abilities, approach, personal style, effectiveness and self-concept. The learning may not all happen within the one working environment because practitioners may start their career in one organisation and may move, sometimes many times, in the course of their career.

The learning however does happen as part and parcel of the process of a career, a process defined by Hall (1976, p. 4) as “the individually perceived sequence of attitudes and behaviors associated with work-related experiences and activities over the span of a person’s life”. Career has both an internal focus (the way the individual perceives the career) and an external focus (the series of positions held), and it represents a person’s movement through a social structure over time (Hall, 1987). It encompasses a “bundle” of socialisation experiences as the person moves in, through, and out of various work-related roles. It implies continual opportunities or requirement for adjustment, on the part of the individual, which over time may lead to personal changes.

The variable of years of experience allows us to focus on changes that happen as people gain more experience in a particular profession. Key frameworks for examining this variable include theories related to work role transitions, organisational socialisation,
occupational socialisation and person-environment fit. These relate also to understanding the influence of the fourth variable, work environment.

2.3.6 Work environment

Work environment has been selected as the second professional variable, to be used in examining the influence of professional variables on values. The challenge posed by the variable of work environment is to examine empirically whether work environment does make a difference in relation to values and value priorities, and then to determine what that difference is and why it might occur. Two generic categories of work environments were chosen, both in the private sector – corporations and consultancies.

Key questions to consider in examining the influence of work environment on values include: what process do employees go through in choosing an organisation to work for; how comfortable do they feel they have to be with the organisation; how do they become comfortable and to what extent do they adjust their personal values; to what extent to they identify themselves with their professional group or with the organisation; and whether the many environment-related differences between corporate and consulting positions have any impact on values.

The two work environments -- consultancy and corporate -- are quite different. They are structured differently, have different purposes, and feel different to work in.
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The two work environments -- consultancy and corporate -- are quite different. They are structured differently, have different purposes, and feel different to work in.
2.3.6.1 The corporate work environment

Corporations run a business and management makes decisions to improve and build the business, and to ensure future viability. They encounter problems and issues that need to be resolved to enable progress to be achieved. Corporations tend to protect and jealously guard what they have. This is their competitive advantage, to maintain their position, build on it, and to act in the best interests of the shareholders. This provides clear pathways to follow, within which the public relations practitioner has to work. Because the guidelines are known and the expectations are clear, there is more certainty in the work environment.

The corporate environment tends to be more predictable and bureaucratic than the consultancy. Some of the challenges relate to structural issues rather than professional issues. Corporations are generally bigger, sometimes much bigger, than consultancies. They may compromise speed of response and flexibility with adherence to procedures and maintenance of the corporate interest.

Practitioners derive satisfaction from being able to say that they work for a well-known organisation. The client companies are more visible and known than the consultancies who do work for them, as the result of effective and well-resourced corporate image and marketing programs. It may be that the work done is program-based, more on an annual basis than the project work of consultants, so there may be a more even work environment and pace of work than in consultancies.
2.3.6.2 The consulting environment

The fundamental difference is that consultancies are stand-alone businesses. They are run to earn profits and survive, and they do this by providing services to clients and satisfying those clients' needs. People working at management level in consultancies must be both competent practitioners and business managers. Consultancies compete against other consultancies to gain the business, and to gain the business, they must demonstrate a wide range of knowledge and skills, particularly industry-specific knowledge. To retain the business they must do a good job, and meet client expectations. At stake is the potential loss of earnings and loss of business through dissatisfied clients, which places issues of client satisfaction and profitability at the forefront in a consultancy.

Consultants work in a professionally tough and competitive environment. There is a strong focus on achievement, performance, successful billings, and the ability to bring in new work, which provide clear goalposts in terms of success. Consultants' rewards are based on results and they need to succeed to keep their job. Consultancies often take pride in the fact that consulting is hard work and takes a lot of personal effort. This means that client's needs are paramount; personal needs are often subjugated.

This project will examine whether work environments have any influence on values. As outlined in section 2.2.1.1 above, Hofstede's (1991) assertion that values are developed before entering the workplace would suggest that work environment plays little role in influencing values.
2.4 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the psychological, cultural and public relations constructs that are drawn on in this study. It has presented a framework for drawing together the diverse disciplines, which shows the various roles and contributions of all components to this study. The framework is in three parts: firstly, the psychological framework for this study, essentially self, values, self-identity and personal construct psychology; secondly, the cultural variables used to define the study – ethnicity and gender – and the cultural context provided by Hofstede’s cultural dimensions; and thirdly, the application, in this case public relations, which contributes two professional variables to the study -- work environment and years of experience. The Schwartz and Bilsky values model, central to this research project, was also introduced.

The application of psychological and cultural variables to the study of public relations represents quite a different approach from that normally taken by public relations academics. Likewise, the application of professional public relations variables to a study of values, combined with the use of rep grid methodology, represents a different approach from that normally taken by psychologists. As a research study spanning two quite different areas, the conceptualisation for the study has by necessity sought a new approach. The proof of the effectiveness of this approach will lie in the study’s ability to meet its objectives, outlined in chapter 1.
CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH QUESTION AND RESEARCH METHOD

This chapter frames the research question from a grounded theory approach where decisions about the research design and subsequent stages clarified themselves through the research process. A grounding stage involving focus groups in Australia enabled some potential issues of interest to emerge. These then led to decisions about the first research stage in Malaysia where qualitative and quantitative data were obtained. Following analysis of these data, the subsequent phases became clear. This chapter details the methods used – focus groups, survey, repertory (rep) grid method, and structured interviews – and presents an argument for the largely qualitative approach for the subject under study, particularly in the international context. The research phases are outlined, incorporating a preliminary grounding phase, and two phases of data collection in Malaysia. Finally, and three phases of analysis are described: the initial quantitative analysis of significant results and rep grid relationships, a qualitative content analysis of interview discussion about the quantitative results, and an analysis of the results in relation to theory.

3.1 Framing the research question as a grounded theory study

This project aims to examine the role of cultural and professional factors in shaping the values and self-identity of public relations practitioners in Malaysia.

As stated in chapter two, this project crosses a number of disciplinary borders and draws on theoretical constructs from values and value dimensions, self-identity
literature, culture and cultural dimensions, ethnicity and ethnic identification, gender, personal construct psychology, and theoretical frameworks for public relations practice both in shaping the research project and analysing the data gathered.

As an inductive, grounded research project, the research design defined itself during the research process. Grounded theory as a research method is developed from the implications of the symbolic interactionist view of human behaviour (e.g., Blumer, 1969). Symbolic interaction focuses on the meaning of events to people in everyday settings, specifically how people define events or reality and how they act in relation to their beliefs (Blumer, 1969). For symbolic interactionists, meaning guides behaviour and a stage of deliberation or definition of the situation precedes behaviour (Chenitz & Swanson, 1986). This fits well with Kelly’s (1955) view of people as scientists who develop their own theories and test them out in their day to day actions.

Kelly (1955) gave the name ‘creativity cycle’ to the form in which people undertake changes in construing of events. The cycle has three major phases: circumspection, pre-emption, and control. These describe well the path my research has taken. Bannister (1981) describes the circumspection phase as: “that phase in which we are bound by no rules and where our mind may and should wander happily up and down every avenue and blind alley. It is the time when we fantasize, erect preposterous questions, and propose nonsensical answers” (p. 192). He describes the pre-emption phase as: “the phase in which we invent/choose/discover our issue of concern. We begin to see the kinds of questions we want to ask” (p. 193). The control phase is where: “we give our question an operational form; we ask it in a way that enables us to seek a specific answer by putting ourselves in relation to unfolding events. In scientific
parlance we set up experimentally testable hypotheses or (at least) propose empirically explorable, if open-ended and suck-it-and-see, kinds of questions” (p. 193).

The research process from that point is explained by Chenitz and Swanson (1986). Information and identified patterns lead to the development of explanations and a tentative theory. The focus then shifts to this theory leading to further observations and data-gathering. Additional data lead to refinement or modification of the theory (through the development of explanations), and possibly another refocus onto a more specific area. Chenitz and Swanson (1986) describe grounded theory as a systematic research approach for the collection and analysis of qualitative data for the purpose of generating explanatory theory that furthers the understanding of social and psychological phenomena. It aims to develop theory that explains basic patterns common in life, to produce abstract concepts and propositions about the relationships between them. It is the process of developing explanations to explain the data, reflecting Stinchcombe’s (1968, p. 3) assertion that “theory ought to create the capacity to invent explanations”.

Like much qualitative research, grounded theory makes its greatest contribution in areas in which little research has been done. Therefore, one of the major uses of grounded theory has been in preliminary, exploratory and descriptive studies (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) where grounded theory and other forms of qualitative research are widely acceptable as they are seen as precursors for further investigation (Chenitz & Swanson, 1986). From my reading of available literature, I believe the present project covers new ground in examining values and identity for public relations practitioners in Malaysia.
3.2 Introducing the research design and methods

This study crosses two main research domains – public relations and psychology – the latter of which has a number of streams which are relevant (cross-cultural psychology, social psychology, personal construct psychology). These are complex and require holistic analyses and interpretations that maintain a richness of meaning to accurately portray the entire situation being examined. This richness and accuracy of meaning is often lost in quantitative methodologies that reduce complexities into small units that can be analysed, then reconstructing them for interpretation (Pauly, 1991).

If a research project is descriptive or is in an established domain with hypotheses and concrete variables of study, quantitative methods such as random-sample surveys and experiments can be used. But if the project is investigating a complex or loosely defined topic, qualitative methods such as case studies, in-depth interviews, or focus groups are typically used (Babbie, 1989). Likewise, qualitative methods are appropriate where “there is a need to explore interactions among ambiguous or unclear variables” (Marshall & Rossman, 1989, p. 42). Pauly (1991) explained that qualitative methods offer a holistic perspective on human behaviours in the real world.

In fact, this research project utilises a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, with the quantitative contribution coming in the first phase to provide data that can then be examined qualitatively. The richness and essence of this research and its findings however will be generated largely by the qualitative components.
Qualitative methods are suitable also for cross-cultural research, and may be the most appropriate for international public relations research (Wakefield, 1997). When respondents speak languages other than English or English as a second language, qualitative methods are often more suited than surveys or experimentation because they are more adaptable to language differences (Rieger & Wong-Reiger, 1988). Another benefit to the use of qualitative methods is that they help reduce the effects of research bias. Pauly (1991) and Agar (1980) both suggest than any research is fraught with inherent bias in the researcher. Rather than apologising for these biases, qualitative methods address the problem by allowing the data to emerge from the subjects' own perspectives. This way, the researcher can become distanced from his or her own perceptions as much as possible and better ensure the accuracy of the resulting data (Agar, 1980; Spradley, 1980).

3.2.1 Research design

A preliminary phase was undertaken prior to undertaking the formal research phase in Malaysia. It can best be described as a backgrounding phase which involved the running of several focus groups in Perth among public relations practitioners from another culture, to determine potential issues of interest in the study.

The formal research was undertaken in two stages. The first stage took place in early 1997 when I travelled to Kuala Lumpur and interviewed 25 respondents to gather data. The second stage took place in early 1998 when I travelled again to Kuala Lumpur to meet a second time with respondents to discuss the results from the first phase and to
seek their views on how the data could be interpreted. This represented a second phase of data generation and validation.

The analysis took place in three stages. The first was a quantitative analysis following the first data collection trip to Malaysia. The second was a qualitative content analysis of interviews with respondents on the second trip where the findings from the first trip were presented and discussed. The third was an analysis of the relevance of the findings against the theoretical frameworks contextualising the study.

3.2.2 Focus groups

As a preliminary step before undertaking formal research in Malaysia, I sought a sample of public relations practitioners, living and working in Perth, Western Australia, who were first-generation from another culture, to identify and explore cultural issues that might be points of difference in professional practice between their experiences in Australia and elsewhere. I believed that such data would be helpful background to the types of issues I might encounter during my formal research in Malaysia, and might help to focus the formal research.

The focus group comprised seven public relations practitioners who had come to Australia to work or study in the communications/public relations industry.

As the first step in this exploratory research project, a qualitative method was needed to begin exploring the area. Given the nature of the topic and what I was trying to
accomplish deductively, and given the early stage of this data collection phase within the total research program, the most appropriate method was the focus group.

As a qualitative research tool, the focus group offered a number of advantages: it could provide a grounding on one’s theories and hypotheses in the reality of the participants, and help shape the subsequent data collection stages to the social context of the participants (Bowser & Sieber, 1993); it could provide an orientation to a new field (Morgan, 1988) and to a subpopulation where there’s very little useful prior information (Bowser & Sieber, 1993); it could act as a prelude to subsequent research to identify appropriate communication style and language that will produce a later research instrument that subjects will be able to relate to (Bowser & Sieber, 1993); it could identify specific issues and generate research questions to be used in later research (Morgan, 1988); and it could generate hypotheses based on informants’ insights (Morgan, 1988).

The focus group fitted into the first phase of planning (Morgan, 1988). Following the focus group and its analysis, I planned to move into the remaining three phases of observation, analysis and reporting. The research would be undertaken in Malaysia on the influence of culture in how public relations practitioners approach their work. My expectation was that the issues raised in this focus group would provide worthwhile direction for the subsequent research.

The use of a focus group in this way is recommended by Gibson (1998), who sees it as a way of testing the appropriateness and efficacy of a particular intervention. In her view, practising the intervention in a controlled pilot environment and questioning
individuals in a focus-group setting before the actual contact with respondents can save
time, energy and frustration by ensuring that the approach to be used is likely to be
successful.

Following the initial focus group, all participants indicated that they would like to
remain in touch with the project, and offered to come together as a group at later stages
in the research. Their offer to remain as a reference group throughout the research was
utilised at several stages, particularly in discussing results, sharing ideas about the
interpretation, and testing the rep grid methodology.

This multistage involvement can be extremely useful during the life of the research
project. Morgan (1988) identifies that focus groups can be used to pursue exploratory
aspects of analysis, in this case, to review the findings and offer interpretations from
their perspectives after my formal research contact with public relations practitioners in
Malaysia. In addition, members of the focus group may be useful for pre-testing the
data collection instruments to be used in the formal research stage.

Bowser and Sieber (1993) discuss the use of focus groups at various stages to provide a
“grounding” of one’s theories and hypotheses in the reality of the subjects, and to help
craft the method to the social context of prospective subjects. They also see a role at
the interpretation stage, with participants being able to add an important dimension.

The group members felt they had learned something about themselves by being
involved, and recognised a cultural component that they had not previously
acknowledged.
The sample proved fairly difficult to find and I used a combination of sampling strategies including membership lists from the professional association, and networking or "snowballing" strategies. Snowballing is the most common method for sampling special populations that are rare (Renzetti & Lee, 1988). The final sample of seven was probably very close to the full population of people meeting the criteria: first-generation from another culture, now in Perth, working/studying in the communication field. The sample consisted of one Sri Lankan, one Seychellois, three Malaysians (one Chinese, one Indian and one Eurasian), and two Anglo-Indians.

Two worked as in-house practitioners, two worked as freelance consultants, one worked as a customer service representative, and two were studying public relations at university.

3.2.3 Survey

On both research visits to Malaysia, the data were gathered during an intensive, structured interview. The research undertaken on the first trip involved a two-hour interview with each respondent, during which time the rep grid method (outlined in next section) was administered, together with the Schwartz Values Survey (1992) to determine their personal values.

The survey used was developed by Schwartz and Bilsky (1987, 1990, 1992), based on their theory of psychological content and structure of human values. The survey has been developed over time and tested throughout the world to test for consistency of
patterns of compatibility and conflict among value types across cultures (1987, 1990, 1992; and Schwartz & Sagiv, 1995). It looks at values that are meaningful to the individual, although much of the analysis has been done to determine patterns of value structures within and across cultures and countries.

The survey is in two parts: the first listing 30 values and the second listing 26 values. Respondents are asked to rate the importance of all values in each set, as 'guiding principles in their life'. A full copy of the survey appears in Appendix A. The first set of values are instrumental values (modes of behaviour), and the second set are terminal values (end states).

3.2.4 Rep grid technique

A repertory grid is a two-way classification of data in which events are interlaced with abstractions in such a way as to express part of a person's system of cross-references between his personal observations or experience of the world (elements), and his personal classifications or abstractions of that experience (constructs) (Shaw & McKnight, 1981, p. 14).

The rep grid technique (Kelly, 1955) was included as a method, for the dual purposes of triangulation and to find out different information from that achievable through the survey. On this second point, the main contribution of the rep grid method to this research was in the examination of self-concept of public relations practitioners, identification of professional values, and the definition of components of public relations effectiveness in Malaysia.
Traditional methods, such as questionnaires and structured interviews, have the advantage of allowing data collection from a statistically significant number of subjects, but they have the potential disadvantage of the researcher influencing the subjects' responses by the questions asked and through non-verbal suggestions (Zuber-Skerritt 1990). The language and criteria determined by the ‘expert’ researcher might be alien to the subjects’ own personal construct systems and, therefore, be misunderstood by the subjects, with the result that their responses are likely to be inaccurate or personally invalid. For example, much research work examining self-concept has used dimensions chosen by the researchers, not their respondents, and without direct reference to comparison with other people (Arnold & Nicholson, 1991).

The rep grid technique has the ability to be more sensitive to respondents because respondents can construe their personal theories of a particular topic without the researcher’s influence, by comparing people or things they know well from their experience to date, and by expressing the similarities and differences between them in abstract terms (Zuber-Skerritt 1990, p. 57). The technique enables the researcher to elicit from the respondents the constructs which they use, as a matter of course, in interpreting and predicting the behaviour of those people whom they know well and who are important in their lives. The key to Kelly’s (1955) approach is that the meanings of the respondent rather than the meanings of the researcher are important. Thus, rep grid differs from almost every other psychological method, in being formally structured while remaining content-free (Dainty, 1990).
Grids have been used for many purposes in a wide variety of contexts including vocational and occupational psychology (see for example, Fransella & Thomas, 1988, section F; Stewart & Stewart, 1981). Briefly, grids provide information on the way a person views a number of elements, (generally people, and, in my study, public relations practitioners), using constructs of the person’s own choosing. Constructs are the dimensions with which the elements are described.

In Kelly's method of eliciting personal constructs, the respondent nominates a certain number of people in his/her life (elements) and is required to compare them in triads and to say in which way two of the elements differ from the third (although the use of dyads is also possible - Arnold & Nicholson, 1991). The words or phrases resulting from this comparison form the construct pair. Thus both the elements and the constructs are nominated by the respondents themselves, and respondents describe the elements on dimensions which are meaningful to them.

Interpretation is, in Dainty's (1990) view “very much an art rather than a science” (p. 166). The rep grid generates as its outcome a whole range of possibilities for subjective interpretation by the researcher. To reduce this subjectivity, a second meeting with the respondents to discuss and confirm the results presented by the researcher, and to jointly interpret the results, is recommended. The rep grid technique is an instrument to focus discussion on some concepts to help build constructs important to the research. In this research, the rep grid generated a great deal of valuable information which complemented the data generated through the values analysis.
A valid concern in qualitative research is the ability to collect the data without undue influence on the data collected. If the researcher influences the data in any manner that may "lead" the respondents to similar opinions, it will skew the results (Babbie, 1989). The rep grid technique in particular is useful because, if administered properly, it avoids interviewer bias (Zuber-Skerritt, 1990).

3.2.4.1 Elicitation of elements and constructs

The rep grid technique requires each respondent to identify elements, and then using those elements in triad groupings, the respondent is asked to identify a way in which two of the three elements are similar, and the third one is different. The similarity becomes a 'construct' and is noted down on the left-hand side, and the difference is noted on the right-hand side of the grid. The pair of terms form a bipolar construct which can be used to sort the all the elements into those of one kind or the other. The elements, therefore, are the objects of people's thoughts, and the constructs are the qualities people use to think about the elements.

The element categories (below) were presented to respondents on a sheet of paper. On the paper, they were asked to write down the name of a public relations practitioner that they knew who met the element description, a different practitioner for each element. These identities were not revealed to me, but were used by each respondent during the construct elicitation process. The categories were:

♦ E1: A PR practitioner who is a strong company person
♦ E2: A PR practitioner who is a very capable practitioner
E3: A PR practitioner who has a strong sense of ethics
E4: A PR practitioner whom I don't admire as a professional
E5: A PR practitioner who is very experienced
E6: A PR practitioner who is my role model
E7: A PR practitioner who is new to the profession
E8: Myself

The rep grid exercise then required them to work with the practitioners they had identified. When each triad was presented, I asked the respondent: “Can you identify a way in which two of these are similar, and the third one is different in terms of their effectiveness as a public relations practitioner?”

Eight triads were presented for consideration, resulting in a minimum of eight constructs for each respondent. The technique of laddering was followed to some extent. Laddering was designed to test out Kelly's (1955) Organisational Corollary (Fransella, 1999), and by asking from time to time why a particular construct, or its bipolar opposite, was important to the respondent, respondents were able to clarify the clusters, and to uncover higher order constructs. This resulted in up to 19 constructs for some respondents. A final question to respondents was to nominate which side of the grid they would prefer to work on, and why.

3.2.4.2 Rating of constructs

Respondents were then asked to look at the grid chart and to rate each element (i.e., public relations practitioner) in terms of how closely they matched with each construct,
on a scale from 1 (indicated a close match) to 6 (indicated the opposite). Therefore the data generated from each respondent included a set of constructs and a set of statistical ratings of elements against each construct. It was necessary for every element and every construct to have a rating. This was entered into a matrix (eight elements by the number of constructs) and the matrix was then analysed by computer. An example of a completed rep grid form is attached (see Appendix B).

3.2.5  *Structured interviews*

On the second visit, interviews were conducted with each respondent with the aim of validating the rep grid findings, and seeking respondents' interpretations of the major findings from the values analysis. Each interview followed a structured format of open-ended questions. The aim was to get each respondent's own story on what the values findings meant, and what the rep grid analysis showed, while not missing any important factors. Responses were recorded, transcribed and coded, using mainly a qualitative or ethnographic summary (Morgan, 1988).

3.3 Procedures used for this study

3.3.1  *Selection of respondents*

The sample was found using the snowballing or networking method (Renzetti & Lee, 1993), a method used by qualitative researchers for sampling special populations. I began by contacting practitioners whom I'd met on previous trips to Malaysia; asked for recommendations of practitioners I could approach to be involved; made those
contacts; began the interviews, and was recommended to others by respondents. The sample was not intended to be representative of the total population of public relations practitioners in Malaysia, as it was exploratory research.

3.3.2 Selection of variables

Data were collected and analysed in relation to four variables. The first two variables (ethnicity and gender) were categorised as cultural variables, and the other two variables (work environment and years of experience) were categorised as professional variables.

3.3.2.1 Ethnicity

As Sekaran and Mowday (1981) and Rabinowitz (1981) state, demographics stand for socialisation. Hence, in Malaysia, ethnicity is considered to be highly indicative of differential socialisation. Ethnicity of respondents was determined by self-nomination. In the first research phase, four ethnicities were included: Malay, Chinese, Indian, and Caucasian. The Caucasian data were subsequently dropped from the quantitative analysis. This was because they were all born and raised outside of Malaysia, and only came to Malaysia during their working career.

3.3.2.2 Gender

Respondents were either male or female. This variable was important to include because of the growing predominance of females within the profession.
3.3.2.3 Work environment

Each respondent was categorised according to their current employment in either the consulting or corporate environment. Some respondents had moved between environments; others had entered public relations after working in another profession, either related or totally unrelated; and others had entered into either the corporate or consultancy environment after working in government. These elucidating factors were not considered immediately important to the research but relevant comments are brought into the discussion as needed.

3.3.2.4 Years of experience in public relations

At the first interview I asked each respondent how long they had worked in public relations. While not being overly proscriptive on this point, three groupings emerged which seemed to make sense -- the newer practitioner with less than two years of experience, the senior practitioner with 15+ years of experience, and those between, whose length of experience was from five to 10 years. This categorisation emerged from the data rather than being enforced on the sample.

3.4 Ethical and practical considerations

Any research project must adhere to certain ethical principles to preserve the privacy of the participants. In addition, there are practical considerations that affect the integrity of the data collected.
This project received clearance from the University's Human Research Ethics Committee prior to any contact with respondents, both in Perth and Malaysia. All respondents were asked to sign a form giving their approval for the information to be collected and used. They were assured of confidentiality in the reporting of the results.

3.5 Criteria for evaluating qualitative methodology

As Pavlik (1987) explained, good research in an underdeveloped domain contributes to its current practice as well as to the establishment of a theoretical framework for future research. Qualitative research that explores a new field is essentially an ongoing dialogue; when one study is completed, others are encouraged to scrutinise, critique, and add to the discussion. This is how knowledge expands in a new and dynamic field (Wakefield, 1997).

While this exploratory research includes a quantitative component, it is quite different from quantitative research. Similarly, criteria for determining the effectiveness of a qualitative study are different from the criteria for evaluating quantitative research. Evaluators of quantitative research determine whether or not a study meets the criteria of reliability and validity. A study is valid if it measures what it is supposed to measure. It is reliable if the measurement tools used are consistent or can be replicated (Babbie, 1989; Broom & Dozier, 1990).

Babbie (1989) pointed out that a "certain tension often exists between the criteria of reliability and validity. Often we seem to face a trade-off between the two" (p. 125).
The reason for this, he claimed, is that science often demands specificity in measurements; yet this specificity robs concepts of their "richness and meaning". Experiments for example are highly reliable, but their validity can be questioned because the results were obtained in a laboratory rather than in a "real world" setting. By contrast, a case study can be meaningful to public relations practitioners and scholars, but the subjective nature of the case method can reduce its reliability.

Guba and Lincoln (1981) suggest four alternative criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of a qualitative study: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

The construct of credibility means the extent to which the subject of the investigation is accurately identified and portrayed. It can be restated, according to Marshall and Rossman (1989, p. 144) as "how truthful are the particular findings of the study?" If the researcher has depicted accurately and comprehensively the theoretical framework and realities of the larger processes, social groupings or patterns of interaction that were meant to be examined, then the study "cannot help but be valid" (Marshall & Rossman, 1989, p. 45). Establishing confidence in the credibility of the findings also comes from researcher being consistent in his or her interpretations of what the respondents really meant (Guba & Lincoln, 1981).

Transferability suggests the extent to which the results can be extrapolated to other situations or groups (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). Guba and Lincoln (1981, p. 104) describe it as "how can one determine the degree to which the findings of a particular inquiry may have applicability in other contexts and with other subjects?"
Transferability is generally one of the weaknesses of qualitative research and, as Marshall and Rossman explain, the burden of overcoming this weakness usually rests with those who conduct follow-up studies, not with the original researcher. They can overcome this limitation by maintaining the original theoretical parameters of the data. They can also triangulate the sources of data. In the present study, the use of the rep grid method provided some triangulation of results.

Dependability is similar to the reliability criterion of quantitative studies. It refers to the ability to provide consistent results when measuring the same attribute several times (Broom & Dozier, 1990). Guba and Lincoln (1981) assert that a demonstration of internal validity (i.e., credibility) amounts to a simultaneous demonstration of reliability because it is impossible to have internal validity without reliability.

Confirmability refers to whether others can confirm that the results of the study do not just reflect the biases of the researcher. This criterion can be explained by asking the question: “How can we be reasonably sure that the findings would be replicated if the study were conducted with the same participants in the same context?” (Marshall & Rossman, 1989, p. 45). This means that the data should be factual and confirmable, and should be reported in such a way that they can be confirmed from other sources if necessary. Triangulation is also a method for establishing truth value, as discussed above (Guba & Lincoln, 1981).

This research project has followed a research design which was developed to suit the task. The quantitative components followed normal tests of validity and significance, with the result that only those relationships within the data which met conventional
tests of significance were pursued into the qualitative stage. The qualitative components, as outlined in subsequent chapters, were founded in the quantitative data, and followed normal procedures to bring objectivity to the process. The effectiveness of this can be seen in the remainder of the thesis.

3.6 What the backgrounding stage found

A set of discussion points was prepared for the focus group, which included questions about self-identification, values and culture (e.g., At home, during your upbringing, what were the values that were important to you and your family? To what extent have you been able to apply these in your working life in Perth?); and public relations and communication (e.g., What does it mean to be a public relations person in your culture? Are there differences in how you practise public relations compared with colleagues from a different cultural background? To what extent do communication/public relations skills vary from one culture to another?).

The main concepts or themes that emerged related to self-identification where ethnicity was a strong part of identity; values and the influence of family and/or religion; the concept of cultural adjustment which encompassed the outward changes of values to match the work and living environment, while maintaining values internally; how values are applied on the job; differences between their style of public relations practice and that of their colleagues; and the non-universality of public relations practice.
Research questions that started to develop from this included: What impact do cultural factors have on values held and on self-identity? What impact do professional factors have on values held and on self-identity? To what extent do values come into the organisation, how much are they left outside, and what determines the level to which they come in, and how are those values used on the job? How do the different aspects of self-identity in their lives transfer into the workplace? What values and self-identity are relevant for practitioners on the job? What values and self-identity are relevant for those aiming to achieve the highest professional levels in Malaysia? In what way is public relations practice different between countries?

This suggested that the focus of the research should look at values, and the interaction of some specific variables to examine how they influenced values.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter has framed the research question, then outlined the way in which the research project has been planned to achieve the desired results. In this grounded research project, both quantitative and qualitative components have been used – focus groups, survey, rep grid method, and structured interviews – in a project which has, step by step, explored the topic and refined itself as it progressed. The research phases were outlined, incorporating a preliminary backgrounding phase in Perth, two phases of data collection in Malaysia, and three phases of analysis: the initial quantitative analysis of significant results and rep grid relationships, a qualitative content analysis of interview discussion about the quantitative results, and an analysis of the results in relation to theory.
CHAPTER 4
RESULTS FROM THE FIRST DATA COLLECTION TRIP IN MALAYSIA

On my first trip to Malaysia, the rep grid method and the values survey were administered. Following this trip, I analysed the data from both methods, derived the results, and identified aspects of the results to be discussed with respondents on my second trip. In relation to the values analysis, it was important to determine which effects were significant, to enable a focus only on significant effects in the next research phase. Results from the values analysis enabled some components to drop out of the study at this point. In relation to the repertory (rep) grid analysis, the results to be discussed with respondents were their own individual construct results, from which a number of specific hypotheses were developed.

This chapter details the point I reached prior to the second trip. The following chapters document and discuss the interpretations offered by the respondents, and my analysis of the results in relation to the relevant literature.

4.1 Method

4.1.1 The Sample

The 25 people involved in stage one of the research were public relations practitioners, roughly split in terms of gender, work environment (i.e., corporate or consultancy positions), experience levels (i.e., with less than two years’ experience, 5 – 10 years’
experience, and 15+ years’ experience), and ethnicity (i.e., Malay, Chinese, Indian and Caucasian). The sample details are shown in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Id. No.</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Work environment</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Years of experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Consultancy</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>20+ (senior)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Consultancy</td>
<td>Malay</td>
<td>20+ (senior)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Consultancy</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>7 (mid)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Corporate</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>5 (mid)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Corporate</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>7 (mid)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Corporate</td>
<td>Malay</td>
<td>20+ (senior)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Consultancy</td>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>20+ (senior)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Consultancy</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>2 (newer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Corporate</td>
<td>Malay</td>
<td>6 (mid)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Consultancy</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>15 (senior)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Corporate</td>
<td>Malay</td>
<td>6 (mid)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Corporate</td>
<td>Malay</td>
<td>20+ (senior)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Consultancy</td>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>6 (mid)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Corporate</td>
<td>Malay</td>
<td>2 (newer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Corporate</td>
<td>Malay</td>
<td>15 (senior)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Consultancy</td>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>10 (mid)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Corporate</td>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>10 (mid)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Corporate</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>10 (mid)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Corporate</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>6 (mid)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Consultancy</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>20+ (senior)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Consultancy</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>2 (newer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Corporate</td>
<td>Malay</td>
<td>7 (mid)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Consultancy</td>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>20+ (senior)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Corporate</td>
<td>Malay</td>
<td>2 (newer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Corporate</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>20+ (senior)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1: Sample details
In summary, the sample had these characteristics:

- 7 Chinese, 9 Malay, 5 Indian, 4 Caucasian
- 10 male, 15 female
- 11 consultancy, 14 corporate
- years of experience in public relations:
  - 4 @ 2 years’ experience or less
  - 11 @ 5 – 10 years’ experience
  - 10 @ 15+ years’ experience

4.1.2 Phase one methods

As outlined earlier, I administered two instruments in this phase:

- the Schwartz (1992) Values Survey to determine respondents’ personal values;
- the rep grid (Stewart & Stewart, 1981) to determine professional values in public relations. Respondents were asked to identify elements of effectiveness in public relations practice.

Details about years of experience and ethnicity were obtained from each respondent at our first meeting. For ethnicity, respondents were asked to self-nominate ethnicity by completing the statement: “In terms of ethnic group, I consider myself to be ____________”. This was to elicit data about the kinds of ethnic labels people would use to describe themselves when explicit asked to do so (Verkuyten & Kwa, 1996).
4.1.3 Conduct

Over a two-week period, I interviewed each respondent, with each interview lasting approximately two hours. None of the respondents had any familiarity with the rep grid technique, and as this was the most complex and most time-consuming of the methods to be administered, each interview began with the rep grid.

A consent form was signed by each participant. Their permission was sought to record each interview, for reference during analysis, and in most cases permission was given.

4.2 Analysis of the rep grid data

Although the grid may be analysed manually, I used the faster and more sophisticated computer analysis package, RepGrid 2, developed in Canada. The software produces a computer-generated version of each rep grid (i.e., 25 grids, one for each respondent), plus:

♦ Focus hierarchical clustering (FOCUS)
♦ Principle Components spatial clustering (PRINCOM)
♦ Sociogrid group clustering (SOCIONETS)

With each of these forms of analysis, the software provides a print-out of a chart or picture, plus print-outs of the statistical data. I was then able to undertake interpretation of the print-outs. These charts, together with my interpretations, became the basis for
subsequent “learning conversations” with each participant. Outlined below is the method for analysis.

4.2.1 The FOCUS algorithm

According to Kelly’s (1955) Organisation Corollary, a person’s system of constructs is related and hierarchical in nature, which means that there will always be some overlap amongst the constructs and elements that comprise the system. As explained by Featherston (1995, p. 31): “This degree of similarity can be expressed using several measures…. A more sophisticated measure based on the City Block metric can be applied to constructs to give a cumulative distance measure. This measure can range from a maximum, no similarity at all, through to a minimum indicating perfect similarity between constructs (or elements). Scores using this measure and indicating the degree of match can then be used to form clusters of constructs (or elements). This is the basis of the FOCUS procedure. The FOCUS algorithm also reverses the left and right hand of the poles of a construct to determine if this produces a higher degree of match.”

The similarity or percentages of match of adjacent elements and constructs are shown in the element and construct trees (see examples later in this chapter). FOCUS points to those clusters of constructs and clusters of elements which are most or least similar in the respondent’s mind (Zuber-Skerritt, 1990).

With each of these forms of analysis, the software provides a print-out of a map, plus print-outs of the statistical data. I was then able to undertake interpretation of the print-
outs. These charts, together with my interpretations, became the basis for subsequent “learning conversations” with each participant. From the print-outs, both the display and the statistical data, I was able to use various aspects to interpret the results, including:

♦ Element links – this enabled me to see how the practitioner construed themselves, in relation to other practitioners. I was looking at linkages above the 90% level, which can be viewed as close linkages.

♦ Construct links – this enabled me to see how closely the various constructs matched each other. I was looking for matches at the 90% level, which indicated that the respondent saw constructs within a cluster as being fairly similar.

♦ Construct means – ranking the constructs in order of ascending means enabled me to start seeing a difference between core constructs and those of less centrality to each respondent. It enabled me to say that the elements were labelled more towards construct x (lowest mean) than towards construct y (highest mean).

♦ Element means – ranking the elements in order of ascending means enabled me to determine favourability of elements -- i.e., which practitioner is most admired as an effective practitioner. It is important to see where “self” is placed on this ranking exercise.

How far the grids can be compared depends on how closely they can be matched (Slater, 1976). In this case, where the constructs were all quite different, comparison of individual constructs was difficult, although some meaning was derived from the sociogrids results (see chapter 10). As Riley and Palmer (1976) note, if the objective is to describe the range of constructs in relation to each element, then all the constructs
produced by all the respondents together could be analysed as though they were all part of one big grid. However, if the objective is to investigate the differences between people in the way the total set of elements is differentiated, then such an aggregated analysis is not possible. The risk with aggregating the data is that "if (however) we have pooled together grids which are substantially different, it may be that we have described a pattern of thought which is average but represents nobody accurately" (Riley & Palmer, 1976, p. 164). Aspects relating to the elements however can be aggregated, and this was done where meaningful (see section 4.3 below, and chapter 10).

4.2.2 The PRINCOM analysis

The Principle Components Analysis (Princom) provides a general measure of association in that it reveals specific relationships between elements and constructs and is used to identify groupings of constructs and elements. Hypotheses can be drawn from the associations, and these can form the basis of a 'learning discussion' with each respondent.

The technique, attributed to Slater (1976), maps elements and constructs in the same metric space which is displayed as a two-dimensional figure. The two axes of the figure are the first two components of the principal components analysis, and the analysis relates all elements and constructs to the principal components. In interpreting the map it is important to know the percentage of variance explained by the first two variables. In my analysis, the first two components explained from 75% - 96% of the
variance, which meant that valid groupings could be made by plotting of the first two components (Featherston, 1995).

The associations that I observed from this analysis directly reflected each respondent’s self-identity and their perception of effectiveness in public relations (i.e., professional values). As a starting point in reading the data, it was interesting to look at the element of “Myself” and see how the respondent viewed him/herself in relation to other practitioners and in relation to specific constructs.

This method doesn’t create any more information than already exists in the grid, but provides another way of interpreting the grid, and the visual nature of the presentation of the groupings may provide a clearer picture of the associations. The validity of the interpretation must always be confirmed with the person from whom the grid was elicited (Featherston, 1995), which is what I did in my second interview with respondents.

4.2.3 The SOCIOGRID analysis

As explained by Featherston (1995), this technique provides a means of comparing a number of grids and, in this case, it enabled me to compare sub-groups within my total sample. Using similarity measures based on cluster analysis, an output is produced which shows who is most similar to whom in terms of their constructs. This method identifies those constructs that show high levels of agreements, across all participants, based on the patterns of ratings of the elements. These identified constructs are called mode constructs, and matches are directional in nature.
I analysed in sub-groups based on the four variables of ethnicity, gender, work environment and years of experience in public relations. I looked for matches at two levels: at least 70% over 85.0 (where at least 70% of the constructs match 85% of the time); and at least 80% over 80.0. I looked for mode constructs at 70.0 and at 90.0, to identify those constructs that show high levels of agreements, across all participants, based on the patterns of ratings of the elements (Featherston, 1995).

4.3 Rep grid results – the aggregated data

The aggregated data are useful in examining self-concept and the extent of similarity between self and others; attributes of the role model and the identification of professional values in public relations in Malaysia; the extent of similarity between respondents in relation to the constructs generated; and centrality of constructs generated. The Focus Algorithms, Principal Components and Sociogrids analyses present the data in different ways and all contribute to the discussion in this chapter.

4.3.1 Self-concept and extent of similarity between self and others

In general terms, the grid reveals more about the individual respondents than the people they are comparing with. However, two key methods of dealing with the data can provide meaningful aggregated information.

Firstly, favourability of elements analysis calculates the ranking of the elements from most to least admired, as shown in Table 4.2 below. favourability rankings indicate
those whom practitioners would most like to be like. This is calculated by summing the means across all the grids. In this study, the ranking from most to least admired was as follows: the role model, the capable practitioner, self, the strong company person, the experienced practitioner, the person with a strong sense of ethics, and (a long way behind) the new practitioner and the practitioner not admired. This is useful because it provides a guide as to how the various roles are perceived by practitioners within the profession. The role model would be expected to be the most admired because of its normative status. In self-identity terms, the role model could be assumed to represent "ideal self".

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std Dev</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ELEM6</td>
<td>1.91</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>rolemod</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELEM2</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>capable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELEM9</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>myself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELEM1</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>4.58</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELEM5</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>experien</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELEM3</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>4.58</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>ethics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELEM7</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>4.73</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>newprac</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELEM4</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>5.08</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>notadmir</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2: Favourability of elements analysis

There were no major differences in these rankings when analysed by variable subgroups (i.e., male/female; Chinese/Indian/Malay; newer/mid-level/senior; or consultant/corporate). The role model was rated as most favourable by everyone except the newer practitioner group which rated the capable practitioner most highly, followed by the role model. Further, elements seven (the new practitioner) and four (the practitioner not admired) were consistently rated the least favourable across all subgroups.
Secondly, *proximity* between practitioners and those with whom they feel more closely matched, can be determined by calculating element links. In my sample, all saw themselves as close to one or two of the elements, sometimes within a much larger cluster or grouping. All except four respondents saw themselves as close to at least one of the other elements at higher than 90% (see table 4.3 below). While a 100% match indicates that elements are seen as identical, a match at 90% or higher indicates a perception of closeness and strong similarity with the practitioner identified.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of practitioners</th>
<th>Closest match with:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Closest above 90%</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Capable practitioner (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Strong company person (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Experienced practitioner (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Strong sense of ethics (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Role model (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>New practitioner (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closest above 80%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Strong sense of ethics (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Role model (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>New practitioner (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closest above 70%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>New practitioner (1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3: Proximity between self and closest other

The most commonly cited element that practitioners saw themselves being closely matched with was the capable practitioner, followed by the strong company person. This indicates a positive level of self-esteem among the respondents in the study. None of the respondents saw themselves as closest to the practitioner they didn't admire.
There were some instances where respondents placed themselves at a distance from those most admired. This could reflect a dissatisfaction with current positioning or performance or with the job itself, or could reflect a mental distancing and separation from those around them. An interesting aspect that could be tested with a larger sample, was that the newer practitioners in my sample tended to see themselves as part of a small cluster, generally closely matched with only one or two other elements. Apart from this trend, no differences appeared to emerge in relation to elements between practitioners within the three ‘years of experience’ groupings.

Two clusters appeared frequently. One common cluster was a grouping of the experienced practitioner, the capable practitioner, the role model, the practitioner with a strong sense of ethics, and the strong company person (see Figure 4.1 below). Most distinct was the practitioner not admired, who was linked with the new practitioner 52% of the time, and with the experienced practitioner 28.5% of the time (see Figure 4.2 below). The principal components analysis which maps the elements together with the constructs on a two-dimensional plane, enables these clusters to be more clearly seen, and samples are shown below to illustrate the two clusters described.

![PrinCom chart showing a common cluster](image-url)
Figure 4.2: PrinCom chart showing another common cluster

4.3.1 Similarity of constructs of effectiveness in public relations

The rep grid elicits constructs that describe the terms by which the respondents think and feel about themselves and other practitioners (identified through the elements), and how his/her different thoughts (constructs) relate to each other, i.e., what attributes go together. A qualitative content analysis was undertaken to identify the substantive categories of constructs (Stringer, 1976) used by respondents in engaging with the question of effectiveness in public relations practice in Malaysia. This analysis sorted the 297 elicited constructs into nine substantive categories:

1. Work practices and approach (92 constructs)
2. Personal attributes and descriptions (59 constructs)
3. Skills, abilities and knowledge (51 constructs)
While the development of substantive categories provides a content framework, the Sociogrid analysis calculates the index of agreement between respondents and constructs, specifically identifying the extent to which people are alike in the ways they construe. The Sociogrid analysis generates mode constructs which are groupings of constructs where different words may be used by respondents to mean the same thing. Mode constructs are representative of the group being studied.

The Sociogrid analysis was undertaken with sub-groups based on the four variables of ethnicity, gender, work environment and years of experience in public relations. I looked for matches at two levels: at least 70% over 85.0 (where at least 70% of the constructs match 85% of the time); and at least 80% over 80.0. A higher level of matching (i.e., 90%) indicates not only that the constructs mean similar things to the respondents but that the linkage between the constructs is strong. I found high levels of commonality within sub-groups about their views of effective public relations practice. This is a measure of Kelly's (1955) commonality corollary and indicates that their psychological processes are similar. For example, when grouped by ethnicity, the Chinese practitioners appear to view constructs in a similar way (see Figure 4.3 below), as do the Malay practitioners, as do the Indian practitioners. The mode constructs were also very cohesive, with all constructs melding into the one mode construct at the 70.0 level.

In terms of gender, there was a high level of matches among both males and females at the level of at least 80% over 80.0. That is, the male practitioners appear to view constructs in a similar way, as do female practitioners, as shown by very cohesive mode constructs.
In terms of workplace, there was a high level of matches among both corporates and consultants at the level of at least 80% over 80.0. That is, the corporate practitioners appear to view constructs in a similar way, as do the consultant practitioners, as shown by very cohesive mode constructs. The same pattern appeared also when the analysis was done on the basis of years of experience.

Figure 4.3: Sociogrid of Chinese respondents

4.3 Rep grid results -- the individual data

For each respondent, I derived a Focus Algorithm, a Principal Components map, a listing of construct means to indicate priority of constructs, a summary of the construct clusters, and a set of hypotheses based on the Princom map for discussion with that respondent. These data formed the basis of my discussion with each respondent on the
second trip to Malaysia. These data for one respondent are shown below. This
practitioner is Chinese, female, and a corporate practitioner with 7 years' experience.
Her focus algorithm, including element and construct trees, and the principal
components map are shown below.

4.3.1 Self-concept

As shown on the chart in Figure 4.4 (overleaf), derived from the Focus Algorithm, this
practitioner sees herself as most closely linked with a strong company person (at
92.5%) and an ethical practitioner (at 90.0%), within a larger cluster which also
includes the capable practitioner, the experienced practitioner and the role model. The
new practitioner is closest to the practitioner not admired, and neither are closely
linked with this practitioner. This information provides a basis for discussing self-
concept, and perceptions of self in relation to other practitioners.

4.3.2 Professional values

The Focus Algorithm (Figure 4.4) also shows linkages between the constructs. There
are essentially two clusters:

1) **Constructs 11, 16, 12, 10, 1, 3, 2, 14, 8, 6, 4, 15, 5:** Local, understands the
market; Positions company in a positive light (100% matched which indicates
that they are identical); Thorough; Understands theory and practice; Good
understanding of public relations and the market; Good training;
Professional procedures; Honest and ethical; Good managers of people; Role
model; Builds relationships and services clients well; Others trust their capabilities; Guided by the book.

2) **Constructs 9 & 7: Able to give strategic counselling; Consistent.**

![Diagram showing element and construct links]

**Figure 4.4:** Focus Algorithm showing element and construct links

The construct ratings (i.e., calculation of the means to indicate importance or centrality of the construct) were as follows:
• Others trust their capabilities/Builds relationships and services clients well (m = 2.5)

• Liked and respected by staff/Good understanding of public relations and the market (m = 2.63)

• Local, understands market/Good training/Positions company in a positive light/Understands theory and practice (m = 2.75)

• Thorough/Honest and ethical/Professional procedures (m = 2.88)

• Good managers of people/Able to give strategic counselling (m = 3)

• Role model; Guided "by the book" (m = 3.13)

• Consistent (m = 3.25)

These data provide the basis for discussion about importance of professional values, and the accuracy of the values identified in describing what is important in public relations practice in Malaysia.

4.4.3 Relationship between elements and constructs

The PrinCom analysis generated the map shown in Figure 4.5 below. Five clusters of elements and constructs are apparent, which provides five sets of relationships to discuss:

1. Self is close to experienced practitioner and a number of qualities: Thorough; Good understanding of public relations and market; Understands theory and practice; Consistent; Local, understands market; Positions company in a positive light; Good training; Builds relations and services clients well; Able to give strategic
counselling; Others trust their capabilities; Guided “by the book”; Professional procedures; and Good managers of people.

2. Role model and a strong company person appear together with the quality of Being honest and ethical.

3. The practitioner not admired appears with the attribute of Someone who is not liked.

4. The capable practitioner and the practitioner with a strong sense of ethics are grouped together.

5. A number of qualities are grouped together: Trust their own capabilities; Doesn’t always follow the book; Different style of working; Doesn’t know how to build relationships; Operates at a different level; Hasn’t had proper training; Will be unethical to get the job done; Not professional or effective; Not experienced in this culture; Never know what they’re up to; not as experienced in the local market; Doesn’t understand client/agency relationships; Inconsistent.

**Figure 4.5:** PrinCom map showing relationship between elements and constructs
4.5 Analysis of the survey data

The 56 instrumental and terminal values in Schwartz's (1992) survey were categorised into 10 value domains, and further categorised into four value dimensions, in line with Schwartz and Bilsky's values theory. Means and standard deviations were calculated for each respondent to determine the importance of the 10 individual value domains and the four value dimensions. Schwartz and Bilsky (1990) found that using the mean importance score of the several values that constitute the domain is "more reliable, more parsimonious, and less ambiguous in meaning than are single value scores" (p. 889). These means became the dependent variables in subsequent analyses.

4.5.1 The independent variables

My interest was to examine the impact of cultural and professional variables on values held. As outlined in chapter 2, ethnicity and gender were the cultural variables. Ethnicity was derived through self-identification from the respondents. The professional variable of work environment emerged from the sample, where respondents were either corporate or consultant practitioners. The final variable, years of experience, also emerged from the sample. At the first interview, respondents were asked how long they had worked in public relations, and three distinct groupings of years of experience emerged.

Each of the four independent variables had a number of sub-groups: ethnicity (Malay, Chinese, Indian or Caucasian); gender (male or female); work environment
(consultancy or corporate); and years of experience (2 years and under, 5-10 years, and 15+ years).

4.5.2 Overview of analyses

The 10 value types and four value dimensions were examined for differences due to the main or interactive effects of the four independent variables (gender, ethnicity, years of experience, and work environment). Ideally, these data would be analysed using a four-way analysis of variance. However, the sample size is too small to allow this. Instead, two-way ANOVAs will be presented. The first uses gender and ethnicity as independent variables; the second uses years of experience and work environment. The independent variables were grouped this way since gender and ethnicity represent background demographic variables, and years of experience and work environment represent professional variables. Where appropriate, significant effects were followed by a Student-Newman-Keuls post-hoc test. All significant effects are presented here. If an effect is not mentioned, it is not significant. These tests of mean difference are followed by a correlational analysis involving the research types and dimensions. Given the small sample size, the ANOVAs have been used cautiously. Differences identified here as significant effects are interpreted as indicative only, and worthy of further examination.

4.6 The values results

Briefly recapping the structure of Schwartz and Bilsky’s values model, values refer to a finite number (10) of universal motivational concerns, which are organised along two
dimensions. The first dimension -- Openness to Change vs. Conservation -- opposes values emphasising own independent thought and action and favouring change (self-direction and stimulation types) with values emphasising submissive self-restriction, preservation of traditional practices, and protection of stability (security, conformity and tradition). The second dimension -- Self-Transcendence vs. Self-Enhancement -- opposes values emphasising acceptance of others as equals and concern for their welfare (universalism and benevolence) with values emphasising the pursuit of one's own relative success and dominance over others (power and achievement). Hedonism is related both to Openness to Change and Self-Enhancement (Schwartz, 1995).

Schwartz (1992) confirmed a number of compatibilities and conflicts among value types. Compatibilities were found to be meaningful between power and achievement; achievement and hedonism; hedonism and stimulation; stimulation and self-direction; self-direction and universalism; universalism and benevolence; tradition and conformity; conformity and security; and security and power. Conflicts were expected to exist between self-direction/stimulation vs. conformity/tradition/security; universalism/benevolence vs. power/achievement; hedonism vs. conformity/tradition; and spiritual vs. hedonism/power/achievement (Schwartz, 1992). The dimensions of openness to change vs. conservation, and self-transcendence vs. self-enhancement portray these conflicts. Two domains are conceptually close if it is compatible to place high priority on values in both domains at the same time (e.g., security and conformity). Domains are conceptually distant if it is practically or logically contradictory to give high priority to values in both domains simultaneously (e.g., self-direction and conformity).
In analysing findings obtained with the Schwartz and Bilsky values theory, people's value systems should be seen as integrated structures of motivational types. That is, every finding that specifies the association of one value type with an outside variable has clear implications for the associations of the other value types as well (Schwartz, 1992). For example, a hypothesis that suggests that conformity increases with age would also suggest that stimulation would decrease with age, because conformity and stimulation are opposed within the value structure. Deviations from such expected relationships indicate that special circumstances exist (1992). Schwartz and Bilsky (1987) foreshadowed that differences across cultures would imply that cultures differ in the individual motivational patterns and social arrangements that shape value systems.

4.6.1 Effects due to ethnicity and gender

4.6.1.1 Value dimensions

Each of the four superordinate values was subjected to 2 (gender) x 3 (ethnicity) ANOVAs. No significant effects were produced for Self-Enhancement or Conservation. On Openness to Change, there was a significant main effect for ethnicity ($F (2,15) = 8.06, p = .00$), and a significant 2-way interaction ($F (2,15) = 7.26, p = .01$). (See Figure 4.6 overleaf).

This interaction was followed by examining the gender difference for each of the three ethnicities. These revealed that gender makes no difference for the Chinese respondents ($m_{\text{male}} = 4.73$, $m_{\text{female}} = 5.71$; $t(5) = 1.70$, ns), but does lead to a
significant difference for the Malays ($m$ (male) = 7.18, $m$ (female) = 5.84; $t$ (7) = 3.15, $p$ = .02). The analysis could not be undertaken with the Indian sample because it included only one male.

![Graph showing the influence of ethnicity and gender on Openness to Change](image)

**Figure 4.6:** influence of ethnicity and gender on Openness to Change

On Self-Transcendence, there was a significant main effect for ethnicity ($F$ (2,15) = 4.17, $p$ = .04), and a significant 2-way interaction ($F$ (2,15) = 4.08, $p$ = .04). (See Figure 4.7 below). This interaction was followed by examining the gender difference for each of the three ethnicities. These revealed that gender makes no difference for the Chinese respondents ($m$ (male) = 5.91, $m$ (female) = 6.43; $t$ (5) = 1.70, $ns$), but does lead to a significant difference for the Malays ($m$ (male) = 7.39, $m$ (female) = 6.42; $t$ (7) =
2.99, \( p = .02 \)). The analysis could not be undertaken with the Indian sample because it included only one male.

![Graph showing influence of ethnicity and gender on Self-Transcendence](image)

**Figure 4.7:** Influence of ethnicity and gender on Self-Transcendence

### 4.6.1.2 Value domains

At the value domain level, the ANOVA produced a significant main effect for ethnicity on Power (\( F (2,15) = 6.11, p = .01 \)), but this was conditioned by a significant 2-way interaction (\( F (2,15) = 6.52, p = .01 \)). This interaction was followed by examining the gender difference for each of the three ethnicities. As with the value dimensions,
gender makes no difference for the Chinese respondents \(m(\text{male}) = 4.87, m(\text{female}) = 5.55; t(5) = 1.70, ns\), couldn't be analysed for the Indians because of sample limitations; but does lead to a significant difference for the Malays \(m(\text{male}) = 7.90, m(\text{female}) = 5.54; t(7) = 2.99, p = .03\).

For Achievement, a significant 2-way interaction was found \((F(2,15) = 5.01, p = .02)\). The gender difference for each ethnicity was found to be significant for the Malays \(m(\text{male}) = 8.50, m(\text{female}) = 7.24; t(7) = 2.99, p = .04\); not significant for the Chinese \(m(\text{male}) = 6.22, m(\text{female}) = 7.58; t(5) = 1.92, ns\), and unable to be analysed for the Indians.

For Stimulation, the ANOVA produced a significant main effect for ethnicity \((F(2,15) = 4.56, p = .03)\), but this was conditioned by a significant 2-way interaction \((F(2,15) = 6.60, p = .01)\). The gender difference for each ethnicity was found to be significant for the Malays \(m(\text{male}) = 8.00, m(\text{female}) = 5.86; t(6) = 7.80, p = .00\); not significant for the Chinese \(m(\text{male}) = 4.88, m(\text{female}) = 5.91; t(5) = 1.21, ns\), and unable to be analysed for the Indians.

For Self-Direction, the ANOVA produced a significant main effect for ethnicity \((F(2,15) = 5.37, p = .02)\), but this was conditioned by a significant 2-way interaction \((F(2,15) = 3.67, p = .05)\). The gender difference for each ethnicity was found to be not significant for both the Malays \(m(\text{male}) = 8.30, m(\text{female}) = 7.17; t(7) = 1.40, ns\) and the Chinese \(m(\text{male}) = 5.47, m(\text{female}) = 6.85; t(5) = 2.07, ns\), and unable to be analysed for the Indians.
These results portray a stronger influence for ethnicity than gender on the motivational domains, and therefore on the values held. Ethnicity on its own produced significant effects on Openness to Change, Self-Transcendence, Power, Stimulation and Self-Direction, but whether the practitioner is male or female also has a significant influence on the values held. The results highlight inconsistencies in terms of Schwartz and Bilsky's model. Significant effects on Stimulation and Self-Direction are consistent with significance for Openness to Change; but Power and Achievement are part of Self-Enhancement which wasn’t significant, and are opposed to Self-Transcendence which did show a significant effect.

4.6.2 Effects due to years of experience and work environment

4.6.2.1 Value dimensions

A 2 x 3 ANOVA produced a significant main effect for years of experience on the value dimensions of Self-Enhancement ($F(2,15) = 6.56, p = .01$), and Self-Transcendence ($F(2,15) = 6.07, p = .01$). Because years of experience has three levels, these main effects should be followed by t-tests to find which of the three levels are different from which others.

4.6.2.2 Value domains

At the value domain level, the ANOVA produced a significant main effect for years of experience on the value domains of Benevolence ($F(2,15) = 4.31, p = .03$), and Conformity ($F(2,15) = 3.60, p = .05$).
A significant 2-way interaction was produced for Power \((F(2,15) = 3.76, p = .05)\). This interaction was followed by examining the work environment difference for each of the three categories of years of experience. These revealed that work environment makes no difference for the senior practitioners \((m(\text{corporates}) = 6.56, m(\text{consultants}) = 5.53; t(6) = 2.13, ns)\), but does lead to a significant difference for the mid-level practitioners \((m(\text{corporates}) = 4.40, m(\text{consultants}) = 5.87; t(8) = 2.33, p = .05)\). The analysis could not be undertaken with the newer practitioners because the sample included only one consultant.

The typical pattern indicated by years of experience was a U-shaped pattern, where newer practitioners scored high, mid-level practitioners scored low, and senior practitioners again scored high. With power, corporates followed the U-shaped pattern, and consultants followed the opposite pattern -- an inverted U-shaped curve.

### 4.6.3 Correlations

Correlations were examined to assess the strength and direction of relationships between value dimensions, and between value domains. This is a direct test of Schwartz and Bilsky's values theory and the assumptions of relationships between bipolar dimensions.

#### 4.6.3.1 Value dimensions
The model predicts negative bipolar relationships between the two sets of opposing dimensions. Interestingly, all significant relationships identified by this analysis were positive (see table 4.4).

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<th>Self-Transcendence</th>
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Table 4.4: Correlations of value dimensions

Conservation was positively correlated with Self-Enhancement (r = .70, p = .00); and Self-Transcendence was positively correlated with Openness to Change (r = .65, p = .00), Self-Enhancement (r = .85, p = .00) and Conservation (r = .78, p = .00). Three of these correlations relate to dimensions on different continua.

The interesting finding is that Self-Transcendence and Self-Enhancement are positively correlated when Schwartz and Bilsky’s values theory clearly represents them as being opposed and negatively correlated. This is clearly a finding contrary to the structure and expectations of Schwartz and Bilsky’s values theory.

4.6.3.2 Value domains
As outlined earlier in this chapter, Schwartz and Bilsky (1987, 1990) and Schwartz (1992) predicted and tested a number of compatibilities and conflicts among value domains. Compatibilities that were confirmed in my study included: stimulation and self-direction; tradition and conformity; conformity and security; power and achievement; achievement and hedonism; and self-direction and universalism. No conflicts were confirmed by my study, as none of the negative correlations were significant. However, a number of significant correlations that weren’t predicted by the model emerged, including: power and hedonism ($r = .45$, $p = .04$); power and stimulation ($r = .43$, $p = .05$); stimulation and achievement ($r = .48$, $p = .03$); self-direction and achievement ($r = .72$, $p = .00$); self-direction and hedonism ($r = .44$, $p = .05$); conformity and benevolence ($r = .61$, $p = .00$); security and benevolence ($r = .43$, $p = .05$); tradition and benevolence ($r = .57$, $p = .01$); security and universalism ($r = .58$, $p = .01$); conformity and universalism ($r = .45$, $p = .04$); and achievement and universalism ($r = .52$, $p = .02$) (see table 4.5 overleaf).

This suggests much greater flexibility than the model allows, or that the individual motivational patterns and social arrangements that shape value systems are different in Malaysia. In combination with the correlations between value dimensions, there appear to be positive relationships between Openness to Change and Self-Enhancement, and between Conservation and Self-Transcendence, and the value domains contained within them, despite them being on separate dimensions; and positive relationships between Self-Enhancement and Self-Transcendence, and value dimensions contained within them, despite them being opposed. This directly challenges Schwartz and Bilsky’s values theory.
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Table 4.5: Correlations of value domains
4.7 Summary of the results and implications for the next phase of research

The significant relationships between independent and dependent variables are summarised in Table 4.6 below.

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<th>Value dimensions</th>
<th>Ethnicity &amp; Gender</th>
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<th>Work environment</th>
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</table>

Table 4.6: Summary of findings of significance

The next phase of research involved a return to Malaysia to talk again with respondents. This was primarily to maintain the integrity of the rep grid process which
requires the interpretation and discussion to be done jointly with respondents. However, this also provided an opportunity to discuss the values analysis and seek respondent interpretations for some of the significant effects found.

From Table 4.6 above, it is possible to decide which value dimensions or variables appear to be more important to the research and, conversely, which could be dropped from the next phase of research to sharpen the focus of the study.

4.7.1 Values and variables that appear crucial to the research

Years of experience and ethnicity are clearly important variables in terms of influencing value dimensions and domains, both on their own and, for ethnicity, in combination with gender.

Self-Enhancement, Self-Transcendence and Openness to Change are all important value dimensions in terms of their dependent relationship with the variables. Among the value domains, power, achievement, stimulation, self-direction, conformity and benevolence are also clearly influenced by the variables. It is interesting that the cultural variables of ethnicity and gender produce significant effects at the value domain level on domains that serve primarily individual interests (power, achievement, stimulation and self-direction), rather than on those that serve collective interests, and it will be useful to analyse this finding in relation to the individualism/collectivism cultural dimension (Hofstede, 1980).
The distinctive U-shaped pattern emerging in all significant relationships around years of experience is particularly interesting. The typical pattern is where newer practitioners score high, mid-level practitioners score low and senior practitioners again score high. The U-shaped curve suggests that a practitioner’s personal values/outlook on life change as more experience is gained in public relations. This may be tied into a change in self-concept and self-identity which comes with experience in the field, perhaps as practitioners become more familiar with the role of the professional, or the organisation they’re working with.

Likewise, ethnicity appears to be a very strong variable in Malaysia that may determine a practitioner’s worldview and their approach to the job. It relates to the ethnicity of the management and the cultural environment created by management in the organisation, and it also results from the prevailing attitudes in the community which are both ethnically and gender biased. Further, it relates to the ways in which males and females from different ethnic backgrounds work on the job. There are different approaches to the job according to both gender and ethnicity (Abdullah, 1996). This has implications for public relations people of one ethnicity who need to work closely with management from another ethnic grouping, and the extent to which they can do it easily or find it hard, particularly female practitioners and male management.

4.7.2 Values and variables that appear to be less important to the research

Conservation appears to be marginal to this research. That is, none of the four independent variables has been found to have a significant impact on this value dimension. Among the value types, years of experience had a significant main effect on
conformity, and mid-level practitioners were significantly different from newer practitioners on security. Schwartz and Bilsky's values theory proposes principles of motivational conflict, and in their 1990 study, found confirmation that the value conflict between Openness to Change and Conservation appears to organise value priorities across different cultures. This meant that people would be expected to rate high on one and low on the other, but not high on both together. Further, Schwartz and Bilsky (1990) found that understanding of motivational domains (i.e., value types) as individualistic or collectivist was universal, leading them to be able to compare the importance of individualistic vs. collectivist values across cultures. This is what is represented by the Openness to Change vs. Conservation continuum.

My study was not focused on testing the structure or content of Schwartz and Bilsky’s values theory, nor solely on identifying value priorities among public relations practitioners in Malaysia. Rather, it explored the effects of different social structural variables (as Schwartz and Bilsky, 1987, suggested could be done) and professional variables on values (using Schwartz & Bilsky’s motivational domain framework), and found significant effects in relation to specific variables. Malaysia, as a collectivist country according to Hofstede’s (1980) study, would be expected to be high on Conservation; however, testing levels of Conservation compared with levels of Openness to Change was not this study’s purpose. The study found that none of the variables studied had any effect on levels of Conservation values, and therefore Conservation drops from this study. However, the fact that Malaysia is a collectivist country will be valuable information during the analysis when I seek to interpret the effects.
The lack of significant effects on Conservation may be due to one of two reasons: the sample characteristics where the sample may have contained practitioners who are reasonably similar on this dimension; or it may reflect that the variables in this study are not the most relevant to understanding what leads to different levels of Conservation values.

The independent variable of gender has been shown to have limited influence on values held. Its only influence is in combination with ethnicity and even then, ethnicity appears to explain more of the effects than gender. Because of this, the influence of the gender variable will subsequently only be discussed in terms of its interrelationship with ethnicity.

The independent variable of work environment appears less influential than both ethnicity and years of experience, with its only significant effects being an interaction effect with years of experience on Power.

My decision at this point was to focus the subsequent analysis at the value dimension level, rather than at the value domain level, or a combination of both. This was because Schwartz and Bilsky's efforts to identify a model of universal value structure were intended to permit the derivation of basic value dimensions that could be used for the purposes of comparison (Schwartz, 1992). This decision was also suggested by Schwartz's (1992) comments: "the statistical significance of single correlations or mean differences is no longer the critical test of theory; rather, the whole pattern of associations – both significant and nonsignificant – reflects on the viability of the
theory” (p. 54). The bigger picture of patterns of association provided by the value dimensions compared with the individual value domains, appeared to be of more value.

From the significant relationships identified through the ANOVA, most relationships at the value domain level are consistent with those identified at the value dimensions level and can be assumed to be explained in the context of that analysis. The one relationship at the value domain level which is not consistent with those identified at the value dimensions level is the significant effect of years of experience on conformity which is a value domain within Conservation. As discussed above, Conservation as a value dimension is marginal to this research. The single effect at the value domain level is insufficient to create an effect on Conservation, and therefore it will not be pursued in this study. Conservation, and the variables which explain it, would be a useful research study at another time.

4.7.3 Planning the next research phase

At this point, my strong concern was that I should not form early conclusions about what the data represented. As a researcher from outside the Malaysian context, I could not allow my perspective to come before the perspectives of the respondents. A second interview with respondents was critical to enable me to present the significant effects, and the interrelationships, and to seek their interpretations of the analysis, and their explanations as to how these impacted within the public relations profession in Malaysia.
In relation to years of experience, discussion points for the second interview with respondents needed to focus on the ways in which years of experience in public relations change the practitioner: does their self-concept change; do their job tasks change; do different values influence them at different stages; do influences other than work become more important at different stages; what sort of attributes does the inexperienced practitioner have vs the experienced practitioner; what difference do years of experience actually make; what differences can they see in themselves since their early days in the profession?

In relation to ethnicity, discussion points should focus on the ways in which ethnic background impacts on the practitioner: are there real differences between how Malay, Chinese and Indian practitioners view their job; do dimensions of individualism and collectivism impact on values and are they different for different ethnicities; what leads to the differences between the ethnicities in terms of the extent to which different values or value dimensions motivate them; are there differences in values between males and females of each ethnic group; do values change for different ethnicities over time; and why do inexperienced practitioners feel more strongly influenced by their ethnic grouping than more experienced practitioners? In what way does a practitioner's self-identity, as a Chinese, Malay or Indian person, may affect what values and attributes are important, and what are important or relevant components of the job?

Specifically on gender, discussion points should focus on the ways in which gender and ethnicity interact together; are there real differences between how a male practitioner and a female practitioner view their job; why do male and female practitioners of different ethnicities appear to be motivated differently by values and
what explains this; and do values change for either male or female practitioners as they gain more experience in the profession?

4.8 Conclusion

The quantitative phase of this research established some important points: that not all variables have a similar effect on values, and that some variables are more important in explaining values held than others. Ethnicity and years of experience were important to the analysis. Gender was significant only when combined with ethnicity. Work environment was significant only at the value domain level, not at the value dimension levels, and then only in combination with years of experience. Work environment was thus dropped from the subsequent analysis, and analysis of gender was restricted to its interaction effects with ethnicity.

In relation to values, the value dimension of Conservation was not influenced significantly by any of the variables and thus was dropped from subsequent analysis. This does not mean that Conservation is not important as a value dimension in Malaysia. Rather, it means that the variables in this study had no impact on levels of Conservation. A different, and significant, result may be achieved in another study with different variables. It is important to note that the results reported here are drawn from analysis based on a small sample, and the significant effects can therefore be interpreted as indicative only.

The rep grid findings reported here are aggregated data which provide some useful information about the commonality of constructs used by public relations practitioners.
The real value of the method lies in the individual interpretations of constructs, and this would be achieved on the return trip to Malaysia when the analysis would be discussed with each respondent.
CHAPTER 5
OPENNESS TO CHANGE

This chapter (and the following two chapters) presents findings from the next phase of analysis in this research project: the qualitative content analysis of the respondents’ discussion of, and their reactions to, the analysis of values and the impact on values of the four variables of gender, ethnicity, work environment and years of experience. The focus in this chapter is the Openness to Change value dimension, one of the four value dimensions in Schwartz and Bilsky's values theory. Respondents’ comments have been coded, and the major themes are reported here, supported with quotes from respondents. The chapter ends with the identification of key themes to take forward into the final analysis and discussion of variables in chapters 8 and 9.

5.1 Methodological details

5.1.1 Changes to the sample

The sample changed slightly between visits, because of nonavailability of several respondents, and the decision to drop the Caucasian respondents following the first data collection phase (see section 3.3.2.4). One new respondent, an academic, entered at this point, creating a sample of 17 practitioners from corporate, consultancy and academic sectors in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, with the following characteristics:

- 6 Chinese, 6 Malay, 5 Indian
- 5 male, 12 female
• 5 consultancy, 11 corporate, 1 academic

• years of experience in public relations:

  2 @ 2 years’ experience or less

  11 @ 5 – 10 years’ experience

  4 @ 15+ years’ experience

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Table 5.1: Sample for second research phase

5.1.2 Conduct

Structured interviews were conducted, each lasting approximately two hours. We began with a discussion based on the results of phase one, the analysis of the impact of the four independent variables on the value dimensions. I followed a structured format where I presented, one at a time, a series of charts, generated from plotting the cell means of significant relationships. The respondent was asked to interpret and explain
the patterns, and to discuss the extent to which the patterns generated were a true representation of reality. A definition of each of the value dimensions and value types was provided. Following this, we discussed the repertory grid results in detail.

The following charts were helpful in facilitating the discussion about values and variables:

1. Self-transcendence and years of experience
2. Self-enhancement and years of experience
3. Openness to change and work environment
4. Self-transcendence, years of experience and work environment
5. Self-enhancement, years of experience and work environment
6. Openness to change and ethnicity
7. Openness to change, ethnicity and gender
8. Self-transcendence, ethnicity and gender
9. Power, years of experience and work environment

Each interview was recorded and later transcribed. (See Appendix E for copies of transcripts).

5.1.3 Analysis of the structured interviews

The transcripts from the interviews were read many times and analysed in a three-step process (Strauss, 1987). The first step was an open coding phase to organise the raw
data into conceptual categories, identifying themes or concepts from the transcripts. Open coding revealed a large number of codes or themes.

The second step of axial coding involved going through the transcripts again and developing codes or themes in relation to the research question. The aim was to organise the ideas or themes and to identify key concepts. I was looking for categories that could cluster together. Axial coding stimulates thinking about linkages between themes, dropping some themes, highlighting others – reinforcing the connections between concepts and evidence.

The third step of selective coding involved going through the transcripts again to group the data according to the themes and to start to build up evidence in support of each theme. Primarily this involved selecting a set of passages or quotes to illustrate concepts and comparisons.

Coding and analysis went on simultaneously with concepts and relationships allowed to emerge from the data. This cyclical process of moving back and forward between the raw data in the transcripts and the gradual determination of the topics to focus on for the report are integral to this form of analysis. As Morgan states (1988, p. 65) “At any one point in an ethnographic analysis such as this, the material in the transcripts is simultaneously serving as a source of potential quotes for confirmed code categories and a source of inspiration for new code categories”.

The codes were entered into two sets of spreadsheets: one set detailing codes in relation to each value dimension or individual value type, and the other detailing codes
in relation to the independent variables of gender, work environment, number of years of experience and ethnicity. This enabled the data to be analysed on two different planes: in terms of the values and in terms of the variables. In this and the following two chapters, the key themes identified during the coding process are documented with supporting quotes from the respondents. The quotes presented fairly represent the corpus of statements collected.

5.2 The findings on Openness to Change

Openness to change represents the extent to which one is motivated by values emphasising own individual thought and action, and favouring change. The value types that comprise this dimension are self-direction and stimulation. Self-direction is defined as independent thought and action -- choosing, creating, exploring. Stimulation is defined as excitement, novelty and challenge in life.

From the first round of research, differences on the openness to change value dimension were explained by ethnicity, and the combined influence of ethnicity and gender. I was surprised that the professional variables had no impact on openness to change, as intuitively I expected the professional demands for flexibility and adaptability inherent in consultancy life to lead to a significant result. Certainly respondents felt there was a difference between corporate and consulting environments, but this was not supported statistically. The difference, if it exists, may not have been possible to locate with a small sample as in this study. Therefore, the focus of this chapter is on ethnicity and gender.
5.2.1 Openness to change and ethnic group

The analysis of the impact of ethnicity and gender on the openness to change value dimension found different patterns for male and female practitioners. For women, there is little difference between ethnic groups in terms of motivation to openness to change. Female Chinese and Malay practitioners were similar in their motivation levels with the level being slightly higher for female Indian practitioners. The differences among male practitioners were more marked: male Chinese practitioners had the lowest motivation levels, with male Indian practitioners slightly higher and male Malay practitioners highest overall. The motivation levels for male Chinese and Indian practitioners were lower than for all female practitioners. Only for the Malays was this difference between males and females significant ($m$(male) = 7.18, $m$(female) = 5.84; $t$(7) = 3.15, $p = .02$.

5.2.1.1 Chinese practitioners

The statistical analysis showed that male Chinese practitioners were lowest on openness to change, among all practitioners. Female Chinese practitioners were higher than males. The material below covers the major themes that emerged from the analysis, together with respondent comments that illustrate each theme.

Surprise that the Chinese scored low on this dimension. The Chinese are survivors and adapters. They are traders and hawkers. They dare to do things. They are very motivated. They have had to accommodate -- as a nation they've adapted and accommodated. The Chinese should be higher on openness to change.
It depends on who you meet. I would have thought Chinese were also very much motivated... But I would have thought the Chinese would have been also open to change. Unless it depends which organisation. If they are already in a Chinese organisation, or where they are the owners, then they don't have to work so hard. Do I see it this way? Not really. They should maybe be equal to the Malays. (Female/Indian/Senior/Academic)

From my experience it's the opposite pattern. The Chinese are more open to change. (Female/Chinese/New/Consultant)

I'm quite surprised comparing the males that the Chinese are less open to change, and that the Indians are much more. I would imagine it would be the inverse, from my experience dealing with the different ethnic groups. (Female/Chinese/Mid/Corporate)

I think it would be the other way around (Chinese male more open to change, Indians lower). Because Chinese have been known throughout the world as traders, hawkers, store people. These people dare to go and change places from time to time. (Male/Malay/New/Corporate)

I don't see it that way. I would see it the other way. Chinese character has always been something which is a survivor and having that character they are one that can adapt very fast everywhere in this world I think, not just in Malaysia. And they want to move and progress very fast. I am quite surprised at the pattern here. (Female/Malay/Senior/Corporate)

The degree of independent thought and self-assuredness is highest amongst the Chinese. They have the heritage to know that their ancestors have been doing something correct. They are more competitive, motivated and are generally in the mainstream of business life. Of the three ethnic groups, they are the most commercial
and entrepreneurial group. This means they are generally the ones most affected by the economic policy. They want to protect what they have.

The Chinese are arguably the most commercial and entrepreneurial group in Malaysia. If you understand the history of how it all began, the usual slowboat out of China, come in with 16 pennies in their pocket. The degree of independent thought, the self-assuredness is highest among the Chinese group. They've got the history and heritage to know that their generations have been doing something correct. There's a track record of successful Chinese individuals who have gone from rags to riches. (Male/Chinese/Mid/Corporate)

Chinese professionals are suspicious and even a bit hostile. The Chinese are a lot more competitive, and they're very much in the mainstream of business life. They are the ones most affected by the economic policy. Maybe that's the reason why they are not so open to change, because they want to protect what they have. (Female/Indian/Senior/Consultant)

Chinese are traditional in terms of how they do business.

In terms of the men, the Chinese although very successful in terms of business, try to be very traditional in how they do business. It's a pretty much inherited situation from your parents as to how you do certain things. (Female/Indian/Mid/Consultant)

With the Chinese, they are also the minority. The Chinese are not the majority yet they are less open to change. Generally they are quite conservative. (Female/Malay/Senior/Corporate)

The lower motivation toward independent thought starts at school. Tradition is drummed in. Chinese schools are more traditional. It is a rigorous education where
students learn by rote, and where independence of thought is not encouraged. There is a difference between studying locally and studying abroad. The cultural emphasis is on tradition, respect for elders, and the collective over the individual.

With the men I have no idea why there's this huge gap. Both races, Malay and Chinese, if you look at them culturally at the emphasis of both cultures value is placed on tradition and the respect for elders and the collective over the individual. (Female/Malay/Mid/Corporate)

I think it wouldn't be ethnicity. It could be education. The Chinese schools are more traditional. (Female/Chinese/Mid/Corporate)

There are many factors. I think the education background. Where they studied, whether they studied locally or abroad, whom they studied with. To that extent I find sometimes the Malays who are exposed to the same atmosphere as their Chinese counterpart, they are more aggressive, whether male or female. (Male/Chinese/Consultant/Mid)

They are hard workers and actually do the job. They want to move and progress very fast. They are the most dynamic. They would feel quite good about their networks. They have support systems, extended family, and they feel comfortable within this. They can do what's expected of them because the rules are known. They hit the comfort zone a lot faster so don't feel the need to be open to change. They are suspicious and hostile, conservative, and males have the view: "if it's not broke, don't fix".

And I think the Chinese basically, they would probably feel quite good about their network. They have that support system in that work, the extended family system, the options that are before them, or they may be feeling they are quite
comfortable where they are. They're in that position where they can do what's expected of them. They see they could probably be working in the right kind of company that they wanted to work in, and see the opportunities and the road ahead. They hit the comfort zone a lot faster (because of the networks around them, and what has gone before). (Male/Chinese/Mid/Corporate)

The Chinese male generally tends to have the thinking that if it ain’t broke don’t fix it. He’s basically quite happy as long as things are going fine. (Male/Indian/Mid/Corporate)

Chinese women are seen as more open to change than Chinese men because they have to prove themselves. They are seen as more set in their ways, and comfortable with what they have rather than being ambitious. For Chinese males, the willingness to change is very low.

More Chinese women are open to change than Chinese men. They have to prove themselves. Every kind of women have to prove themselves more. (Female/Indian/Senior/Academic)

I feel it is the Chinese women who are always motivated by change because, among the three groups, I look at the Chinese as the most dynamic. They are the hard workers, they are the ones who actually do the job. I would term the Chinese people as a very hard working ethnic group. I feel they are more open to change compared to the Malays. For me it is the Chinese most motivated, followed by Indians, then Malay. Same thing for males and females. (Female/Indian/Mid/Consultant)

For women, women are more open to change. That's very true. Personally I find it easier to relate to a Chinese lady than a Chinese gentleman. The Chinese ladies are more modern, more open to changes. (Female/Malay/Senior/Corporate)
A lot of Indians and Chinese (women), they're just very comfortable with what they have and they're not very ambitious. (Female/Indian/Mid/Consultant)

Chinese female, females are sometimes set on the standards, and they're not willing to be open to new ideas. I have experienced this working for a Chinese lady boss, even though I have explained "Why don't you do it this way?" they are set, they won't change. (Female/Malay/Mid/Corporate)

For Chinese males, willingness to change is very low. This is true. I have found in the Chinese way of thinking, whatever they do is taken as that's it. (Female/Malay/Mid/Corporate)

Practitioners (women) come into the workplace having already seen a lot of discrimination (at school) which constrains their ambitions.

But it's always a problem with the Chinese and the Indians in terms of motivation as well. They tend to be a bit lower. It starts way back in school. It's a horrible system in terms of how far you get. The gradings are different. So you come out into the work world already seeing a lot of discrimination and that impedes you to do a lot of things or to want to do a lot of things or want to go anywhere beyond just being a menial secretarial person. You find a lot of Indians and Chinese who are secretaries, administration level. Whereas Malay women because of being Malay it will further them in the bigger corporates. You see a lot more Malay women at higher levels. (Female/Indian/Mid/Consultant)

**Chinese practitioners see themselves as:** Having the highest degree of independent thought and self-assurance is highest among the Chinese. They see that Chinese should be higher on openness to change because as a people they have had to adapt and accommodate. They see that they have the heritage to know that their ancestors have been doing something right. They see that they have good support systems, extended
family and a network within which they feel quite comfortable and about which they feel good. They hit their comfort zone a lot faster because of this, and can do what's expected of them and therefore they don't feel the need to be open to change. They see that schools are more traditional, and Chinese males are low on openness to change because of education, although there's a difference between studying locally and studying abroad.

*Malay practitioners see Chinese practitioners as:* Survivors and adapters, hawkers and traders who dared to do what they had to do to survive. They see that Chinese males have a very low willingness to change, and Chinese females are more set in their ways. They see that the cultural emphasis on tradition, respect for elders and the collective over the individual is strong.

*Indian practitioners see Chinese practitioners as:* More competitive, in the mainstream of business life. They are the ones most affected by the economic policy and therefore they want to protect what they have. This makes them very motivated, dynamic, suspicious and hostile. They see the Chinese as hard workers who actually do the job. The male view is if it's not broken, don't fix it. Different views about whether Chinese are or aren't more open to change. They see Chinese men as traditional in terms of how they do business. They see that Chinese women are more open to change than Chinese men because they have to prove themselves, but also that Chinese women are not very ambitious and are comfortable with what they have.
5.2.1.2 Malay practitioners

Male Malay practitioners were more open to change than male Chinese practitioners, and the one male Indian practitioner in the sample. Female Malay practitioners were lower than Malay males.

Traditionally, Malays are conservative. The Malay education system provides little latitude for independent thought. Malays are bounded by religion, old beliefs, have a high level of commitment to religious beliefs, and are educated like that from the Book (the Qu’ran). The cultural emphasis is on tradition, respect for elders, and the collective over the individual. They have constraints.

The other factor is that an openness to change could also be related to religion. I think the more truly religiously inclined a person is, the more open to change he tends to be. Because he would believe that the change is for the better. If one truly believes in his religion and wants to practice it, then his openness to change would be greater. Because of that I would think the Malays should come a little higher because they tend to be very committed to their beliefs. (Male/Indian/Mid/Corporate)

Malays, we are bounded by religion. Old beliefs. Because we were educated like that from the Book. There are constraints. (Male/Malay/New/Corporate)

I think probably Malays again are probably conservative in a lot of ways and therefore they move but not as open as the Chinese. (Female/Malay/Senior/Corporate)

With the men I have no idea why there's this huge gap. Both races, Malay and Chinese, if you look at them culturally at the emphasis of both cultures value
is placed on tradition and the respect for elders and the collective over the individual. (Female/Malay/Mid/Corporate)

The Malays get a lot of support and assistance from the Government. Most opportunities are available to Malays, although there is a distinction between the haves and the have-nots, with Malays having to compete more among themselves now.

_The Malays they get all they got from the Government, and they're making the transition from rural to urban life with a lot of help along the way._ (Male/Chinese/Mid/Corporate)

_I am surprised at that level. I would have thought it would be lower down. Higher than the Chinese. The only way I can explain it is this has come from an ethnic distinction to a class distinction within the Malays. There is this distinction between the haves and have-nots. It's no longer this feeling commercially disadvantaged vis-a-vis the Chinese, in terms of opportunities. They have a lot of that. They are just having to compete among themselves more now. You may be aware that there are some jobs in this country reserved for them. Houses as well, a lot of things. They're settling in, I think._ (Male/Chinese/Mid/Corporate)

Malay women are higher than women from other ethnic backgrounds because of the government assistance. A lot of Malay women are entrepreneurs compared to Chinese and Indian women -- they have more to look forward to. There are opportunities the Government pushes all the time, to go further and be more ambitious. There are a lot more Malay women at higher levels. Malay women want change and variety.

_The Malay women, I agree in terms of them being higher than the other two. A lot of that has to do with the privileges that the Malays get in terms of the potentials, business, loans and such things. Being Malay there's a lot more_
assistance you can look at and a lot of Malay women are entrepreneurs in this country compared to Chinese and Indians. I suppose they've got a whole lot more to look forward to. As it is, you don't expect very much. A lot of Indians and Chinese, they're just very comfortable with what they have and they're not very ambitious. With the Malays, because there are opportunities that the government pushes and publicises all the time, you want to go further, you want to be a bit more ambitious. You know that you can make it. (Female/Indian/Mid/Consultant)

But it's always a problem with the Chinese and the Indians in terms of motivation as well. They tend to be a bit lower. It starts way back in school. It's a horrible system in terms of how far you get. The gradings are different. So you come out into the work world already seeing a lot of discrimination and that impedes you to do a lot of things or to want to do a lot of things or want to go anywhere beyond just being a menial secretarial person. You find a lot of Indians and Chinese who are secretaries, administration level. Whereas Malay women because of being Malay it will further them in the bigger corporates. You see a lot more Malay women at higher levels. (Female/Indian/Mid/Consultant)

Whereas the Malay women they want change and they want variety. (Female/Indian/Mid/Consultant)

They are more easy-going, more willing to listen and to change, to adopt new procedures. They are change-oriented, more driven to reform and change things.

Malays pretty much take the middle road. (Female/Chinese/New/Consultant)

Malays, maybe they're more easy going. (Female/Chinese/Mid/Corporate)
The Malay tends to be more driven to reform things, to change things. To that extent I would have thought this would be higher. (Male/Indian/Mid/Corporate)

For Malays (males) there is a tendency to change because they're willing to listen and to change, to adopt new procedures. (Female/Malay/Mid/Corporate)

Malay practitioners see themselves as: Facing constraints, and bounded by religion, old beliefs, and a cultural emphasis on tradition, respect for elders and the collective over the individual. They see themselves as more conservative, but at the same time as willing to listen and change, and adopt new procedures.

Chinese practitioners see Malay practitioners as: More easy-going, taking the middle road. They see that there is a distinction between the haves and the have-nots, and that Malays are having to compete more among themselves now.

Indian practitioners see Malay practitioners as: Having the most opportunities; that Government opportunities are provided all the time to push towards the Malays; that a lot of Malay women are entrepreneurs compared with Indian and Chinese women because of the level of Government assistance; and that there are more Malay women at higher levels because of the Government assistance. They see that Malay women want variety and change. They see the Malays as change-oriented, and more driven to reform and change things. They see that Malays should come higher on openness to change because of their high level of commitment to religious beliefs.
5.2.1.3 Indian practitioners

The one male Indian practitioner in the sample was more open to change than male Chinese practitioners and less open to change than male Malay practitioners. Female Indian practitioners were slightly higher than Malay and Chinese female practitioners.

Indians are followers and conformists. It is surprising that Indians are so open to change.

Indians conform after a certain while. They are conformists. They still practice arranged marriages and that sort of thing. I cannot see them as being so open to change. (Female/Chinese/New/Consultant)

I'm quite surprised comparing the males that the Chinese are less open to change, and that the Indians are much more. I would imagine it would be the inverse. From my experience dealing with the different ethnic groups. (Female/Chinese/Mid/Corporate)

I'm surprised with the high figure for Indians because I would expect quite similar -- Indian males to Indian females. (Male/Chinese/Consultant/Mid)

I thought the Indians would be the reverse. Basically the Indians in Malaysia are more of a follower than a leader. They will see whether it is progressing and therefore they progress along with this group. (Female/Malay/Senior/Corporate)

Indians are the minority in Malaysia, and are more ambitious. They are in the least privileged or most disadvantaged position and they have to be open to change to survive. They have a need to be accepted. Indians are seen as having to struggle the
hardest in Malaysia, as facing the highest prejudice and having the least opportunities available to them. They are the least satisfied, and are dissatisfied with the status quo and want change. They feel they're not getting their share.

The Indians have to prove themselves. When you look at opportunities that are available, most opportunities are available to the Malays, then the Chinese and lastly the Indians. So Indians always have to work hard. Work harder than everyone else to prove themselves. (Female/Indian/Senior/Academic)

I think it's true. It has something to do with the need to be accepted. I don't like to use the word survival, but it's really the need to be accepted. (Female/Malay/Senior/Corporate)

And for the Indians, because they're a minority and they're maybe more ambitious because they've reached a certain amount of education and level of experience. (Female/Chinese/Mid/Corporate)

The Indians are the group who has to struggle the hardest in this country... The Indians are dissatisfied with the status quo, with their lot in life (and therefore they're high because they want to change). (Male/Chinese/Mid/Corporate)

We're talking specifically PR. Coming back from that backdrop, let's come back to this. Because of that understanding, Indians feel they are the least satisfied. There is also a lot of pressure, all things being equal, the old problem with racial identity, whites, blacks, yellows. In the scheme of colours, the Indians face the highest prejudice, even from fellow Malaysians. When you're an ethnic Indian lady, you really have a lot of glass walls to deal with. They would probably be the least satisfied. They would feel that they're not really getting their fair share. (Male/Chinese/Mid/Corporate)
They don't have a business base to protect so can afford to be open to change. They have nothing to lose. They have to prove themselves. They always have to work hard, but they are seen as having guts and as slowly improving their position. Indian males will try whatever works. They are keen to change because in the future they don't want to be seen the same way as they've been seen in the past.

The Indian generally is inbetween, he is neither here nor there in a manner of speaking. He has nothing to lose. Basically, change all you can. After all, it's not going to affect him adversely changes in general. That is comparing between Indian relative to Malay to Chinese. (Male/Indian/Mid/Corporate)

Indians came here, brought in by the British, to work in the estates. Most probably why you find this happening is because they want themselves not to be seen as the minority. To be seen you have to be, not brilliant, but open and brave enough to change. I can tell you the Indians have guts. They are doing well politically, educationally. There are more Indian doctors than Chinese. They are improving themselves. They do not want themselves to be seen as they were seen during history. (Male/Malay/New/Corporate)

They will be open to change if driven by professionalism.

I think this is quite true. Indian professionals, if they're very driven by professionalism, they tend to be a lot more open than the Chinese professionals. (Female/Indian/Senior/Consultant)

You know that the findings from Asma (Abdullah, 1996) are also that the Indians tend to speak up. They also tend to be more extrovert. Mostly they are the people who are going to speak up, asking for change. They also are in the profession, lawyers. So it could be the reason why the Indian guy has a higher score. (Male/Chinese/Mid/Corporate)
Indian women are culturally less ambitious than Indian men. Not too many Indian women are fighting for senior positions. Indian women tend to be comfortable with what they have. They're more set in their ways. Practitioners come into the workplace having already seen a lot of discrimination (at school) which constrains their ambitions. Indian women have the most glass walls.

*But it's always a problem with the Chinese and the Indians in terms of motivation as well. They tend to be a bit lower. It starts way back in school. It's a horrible system in terms of how far you get. The gradings are different. So you come out into the work world already seeing a lot of discrimination and that impedes you to do a lot of things or to want to do a lot of things or want to go anywhere beyond just being a menial secretarial person. You find a lot of Indians and Chinese who are secretaries, administration level. Whereas Malay women because of being Malay it will further them in the bigger corporates. You see a lot more Malay women at higher levels.*

(Female/Indian/Mid/Consultant)

*Indian women are also very open to change.*

(Female/Malay/Senior/Corporate)

Indian women do want to achieve but the men need to achieve more than the women. Women are happy with a settled position because they're more concerned about getting married. The main breadwinner is supposed to be the man. Wives don't want to earn more than their husband -- if they can help it.

*And the Indian women I suppose are less ambitious than the Indian men. I think so. That's a cultural thing with a lot of Indian women. In general, Indian women want to achieve, but the men need to achieve more than the women. Men have to work harder because they're competing with the other males for very much more senior positions. Whereas the Indian women, not too many*
are really fighting for very senior positions. They're happy with a settled position because they're more concerned about marriage. All women in fact would be more concerned about getting married, and looking after the family and the main breadwinner is supposed to be the man anyway. Perhaps that's also very much of the Indian culture. You don't want to earn more than the husband if you help it. It upsets the whole structure. (Female/Indian/Senior/Academic)

Indian men want to achieve change in the beginning and then stop.

*Because they always want change in the beginning, but after some time they will leave that stagnant. "I have already achieved so much".* (Female/Indian/Mid/Consultant)

Indian males have to work harder because they're competing with other men for much more senior positions. Men have to prove a lot more. They want the same kinds of positions as the Malays and Chinese

*But the men have to prove themselves a lot more. Wanting the same kind of a position as a Malay and the Chinese. So they would be very much more motivated.* (Female/Indian/Senior/Academic)

*For the Indian male, they are also at a point where whatever works, they're willing to try.* (Female/Malay/Mid/Corporate)

*Between the men, the Indians have to work a lot more.* (Female/Indian/Senior/Academic)

Many Indians have converted to Christianity and conversions often result in people with greater zeal and passion for change.
The other factor is that an openness to change could also be related to religion. I think the more truly religiously inclined a person is, the more open to change he tends to be. Because he would believe that the change is for the better. If one truly believes in his religion and wants to practice it, then his openness to change would be greater. Because of that I would think the Malays should come a little higher because they tend to be very committed to their beliefs. The Indians I would explain more from the perspective that many Indians are Christians and that means it came mostly from a conversion from Hinduism to Christianity, and conversions tend to more often than not result in people of greater zeal and could explain this. (Male/Indian/Mid/Corporate)

**Indian practitioners see themselves as:** Having the least opportunities available to them, that they always have to work hard and have to prove themselves. They see that they don't have a business base to protect and they have nothing to lose, so they have every reason to be open to change if it leads to better opportunities and better outcomes. They did acknowledge a difference between Indian males and females, that both want to achieve, but culturally Indian women are less ambitious than men and Indian men have a greater need than women to achieve. Men have a lot more to prove because they're wanting the same kind of positions as Chinese and Malay practitioners whereas women are happy with a settled position, allowing the man to be the main breadwinner while the woman is more family oriented. Women are more comfortable with what they have whereas the men are more driven.

**Chinese practitioners see Indian practitioners as:** Conformists, but they also see that they're the minority which makes them ambitious. They see that the Indians have to struggle the hardest, are the least satisfied, would feel they're not getting their fair share, and would want change because of dissatisfaction with their current position. They see that Indian women have the most glass walls.
Malay practitioners see Indian practitioners as: Followers who have a need to be accepted. They see that the Indians are keen to change because they don't want to be seen in the same way that they've been seen in the past. They see that Indians have guts, are improving themselves and that Indian males will try whatever works.

5.2.2 Openness to change and gender

Regardless of how many years females had been in the profession (with my sample) they were fairly consistent in the extent to which they were motivated by openness to change, whereas males differed in their level of openness to change depending on how long they'd been in the profession. Males followed a U-shaped pattern. Women, being consistent across all years of experience, were at a level above the mid-level males and below the junior and senior males.

5.2.2.1 Female practitioners

Female practitioners are generally more open, less resistant to change and they appreciate the value of being open to change. They are possibly less ambitious and therefore more willing to be flexible. They are more creative, and also more consistent in their thinking and in the way they act. They are more emotional and more able to express their thoughts. They compare where they stand against men all the time; whereas men compare against men.

In this country, most families survive on a double income. Women, even though we are open to change, we still have to consider the other variables,
and if you think about your family this way, you bring this practice into your work as well. We're a bit more consistent in our thinking and in the way we act, than men are. (Female/Chinese/New/Consultant)

Overriding all of this would be the fact that the female in general tends to be more consistent anyway. So this consistency doesn't get overridden by ethnicity or religion. The very make-up, the very gender causes her to be more consistent and not really dependent on outside variables such as ethnicity and religious practices. (Male/Indian/Mid/Corporate)

In terms of openness to change, women being very stable or consistent, I think the minute you get into school, the minute you start communicating and moving about with guys, you have already pretty much figured out where you stand. A lot of women compare themselves against a man in terms of what you're doing so you've pretty much fixed your ideas to exactly how far you're going to go, or how much you're going to do or how you're going to play. Whereas men don't look at women at all as a comparison. We don't come into the picture at all. They're probably comparing against another guy. Whereas women are comparing against the men at all points. (Female/Indian/Mid/Consultant)

I think women are less resistant to change. I'm not sure whether it's because they are less ambitious and hence more willing to be flexible...The women are a little more creative. Women appreciate the value of being open to change more than men do, and women practitioners of all ages tend to be open to change, whereas men tend to be more flexible and open at the start of their careers. Then they get into a little mental block, and then as they get older and more mature, they become more open to change. (Female/Indian/Senior/Consultant)

Women are more emotional and are able to express your thoughts more, and women I think are just more open to change. (Female/Chinese/Mid/Corporate)
Female practitioners are more open because they're competing in a man's world. It is a matter of survival. They have to prove themselves to be above the men. They can't relax and they can't afford to drop their motivation -- they're always fighting. They may have to overcome unfair obstacles in terms of achieving acceptability in the workplace, and they have to be able to change and fit in and be accepted. They may have to be more open to even attain the same level as men.

*I suppose because women are always having to prove themselves to be above the men. We cannot afford to relax so much. In fact, it increases at 5-10 years, moving towards that promotion, having to prove ourselves far more so that we achieve that promotion. So we are always consistently trying to achieve and we have to keep otherwise we lose our respect and all. Maybe the pressures on women are there all the time.* (Female/Indian/Senior/Academic)

*Their (males) motivation to change comes down, whereas the women can't afford that. They are always fighting.* (Female/Indian/Mid/Consultant)

*Your graph shows Malay women to be more motivated than the men. Women overall we have to be more motivated - we have to be to even attain the same level as the men. There are more opportunities open to men. I'm not too surprised at the Chinese women and the Malay women. And the Indian women also should be more motivated.* (Female/Indian/Senior/Academic)

*Based on my experience with female practitioners this is fair. Female practitioners tend to be more consistent though not necessarily more open to change. What they said two years ago is something that they would say two years from now. The male practitioner would tend to want to huddle into his comfort zone and really try to protect it a little more than the female might. I guess to some extent to the female practitioner it could be a sheer case of survival too because of the sometimes unfair obstacles that she would have to*
overcome in terms of acceptability etc. My gut reaction is that this is a fair
description. (Male/Indian/Mid/Corporate)

The female is always more open to change because they're always competing
in a male's world. So they just have to be able to change and to fit in and to be
accepted. (Female/Indian/Mid/Consultant)

Women in Malaysia may be brought up to be passive and complacent, and not to
expect too much. They have constrained attitudes in terms of what they can achieve,
instilled in them by their parents. They have a constrained attitude in terms of where
they are in life. They feel comfortable with there they are, and they're comfortable as
long as they get into a particular range.

This links back to what I said about this job naturally attracts women more
than it does men. Besides the nature of women, the way they are more caring,
at least they display more of that than a man does, this job is also seen as not
revenue-generating and the old macho man has to go out there and hunt, be
the hunter to bring home the bacon. In an organisation, if you're not revenue-
generating you're seen as a cost centre, you're seen as nice but not critical, if
the bus runs over that individual, that's okay -- the organisation will not
collapse unless they're in the middle of a crisis. There is time to get a
replacement in. Revenue-generating people are regarded differently. So I
think it's a point. The male gets to that stage where they feel this is all very
fun, been there done that, and they want to get into perhaps more of the
revenue-generating type of role, do a career change, a totally new move. A
male might want to do that. They might want to get into a business, they want
to run the business, they want to feel it's time to stop being dependent on a
salary and they want to go out and create a business, and self-employment. I
think the men feel a greater amount about this conflict in where they are after
10 years, than the women do. I see much more women retiring in that
business, that industry. (Male/Chinese/Mid/Corporate)
It's openness to change in what you expect. Which means a lot of women in this country don't really expect that much. You're comfortable so long as you get into this particular range, you're comfortable with a lot of things. It's got to do with a lot of complacency in the way we've been brought up, passiveness in a lot of what we do. So you don't expect much. Whereas men they just expect the world. (Female/Indian/Mid/Consultant)

For the females, they are more stable because they feel more comfortable with where they are. (Female/Malay/Mid/Corporate)

Women still think of work as being secondary to having a family. Traditionally women have not been strong players outside the home. This impacts on their mindset, and if the mindset is that family is more important, that will determine their success or not. This dimension takes priority the older they get. Generally they see that they're not affected by how they progress with the job, because they don't expect to end up as career people -- they'll end up looking after the home and family. They have to consider the other variables of family and they bring this into their work. They are not driven by change, and they don't feel they need to get more money because their husband will.

A lot of women go into the workforce with certain expectations already because I think a lot of women in Malaysia still think of work as being secondary to raising a family and children. So if you go into work with that sort of mindset as opposed to a normal person who goes in there expecting to make that the be all and end there, that will determine the essence of his success or not. Whereas for women there's that other dimension which probably takes a bit more priority the older they get. That's why you see the difference. Women go in with that level of expectation that doesn't really change whereas men have the high energy, then in the middle they go through
that management transition I talked about, and then it changes later when they grow older. (Female/Malay/Mid/Corporate)

They might believe their voice will not be heard. They might not have been given the opportunity in management to voice out openly. They might be motivated to change but accept that some may not listen. They just follow what is there and accept it.

Women don’t care, but we know and I suppose we accept. We are motivated to change but we accept that some may listen to us and some may not. The reason why age doesn’t come into it because we must look at the contrast of age. We have to look at the 20 yr olds and the 40 yr olds, and then you will see the difference. If you’re a 20 yr old and you have the most fantastic of ideas, the senior management will not even listen to you. But if you’re 40 yrs old and you have the same ideas, they will listen to you. But at 30 yrs old, you’re in the middle and it’s touch and go. Age only comes into play if it’s at 40 and above or 30 and below. More especially at 25 and below, then you see the contrast. (Female/Indian/Senior/Academic)

The ladies just follow whatever is there. (Male/Malay/New/Corporate)

I think in the Malaysian context, probably basically the role of female has not been a very strong player outside the home. For a female in the industry, they might think their voice will not be heard that much and therefore it’s not something they want to explore in the industry. It could be that they have not been given the opportunity in the management to voice out openly and therefore their openness to change is, they change but not too much, looking into a lot of controversial issues or whatever. (Female/Malay/Senior/Corporate)

Again in terms of gender, the female gender role in Malaysia has not been one that has been seen as the front in industry and so. It is growing but not
like everywhere internationally, but we are playing our role slowly. (Female/Malay/Senior/Corporate)

They may feel they are right and are not willing to change.

For females, this is different because maybe they feel they are right and they're not willing to change because they feel their way is more correct. Maybe more for pride's sake. I have met some who think, right or wrong, they won't accept another point of view. (Female/Malay/Mid/Corporate)

Openness to change increases in mid-years as females head towards promotion. They have to be more open to even attain the same level as men.

In fact, it increases at 5-10 years, moving towards that promotion, having to prove ourselves far more so that we achieve that promotion. (Female/Indian/Senior/Academic)

It should increase over time.

I would have thought the ladies would increase over the years. It's really related to the exposure on the job. Especially if you are in the communications field, you'll find that it's very important to be open to change. (Female/Malay/Senior/Corporate)

Female practitioners see themselves as: Generally more open, less resistant to change, appreciative of the value of being open to change, more emotional and able to express their thoughts, and possibly less ambitious and therefore more willing to be flexible. They see that they can't afford to drop their motivation, they are always fighting and can't relax in their efforts to prove themselves to be above the men or to attain an equal
level. They have to be able to change and fit in and be accepted in what they see as a man's world. They see that women compare where they stand against men all the time, whereas men compare against men.

They recognise that traditionally women have not been strong players outside the home. Women in Malaysia don't expect very much, and are comfortable with what they achieve, as a result of how they've been brought up, with passiveness and complacency. They still think of work as secondary to family and this impacts on their mindset. They see that their voice may not be heard because they may not have been given the opportunity in management to speak out openly -- less voice, less prominence. They are motivated to change but accept that some may listen and some may not.

*Male practitioners see female practitioners as:* Generally more open, accepting, willing to follow and more consistent in their thinking and in the way they act. They see that women are not driven by change to the same extent as men. They don't have to get more money because their husband will. Generally they see that women are not affected by how they progress with the job, because they won't end up as career people -- they will end up looking after the home. They see women as being constrained by expectations instilled by their parents, and have a constrained attitude of where they are in life. They recognise that women may have to overcome unfair obstacles in terms of their acceptability and that survival is an issue.
**Chinese practitioners see female practitioners as:** More emotional and more able to express their thoughts. They see that women have to consider other variables such as the family.

**Malay practitioners see female practitioners as:** Having less voice, less prominence outside the home, and as being followers who accept. Women still think of work as being secondary to family which impacts their mindset. They see that women may not have been given the opportunity in management to voice their thoughts openly and this might lead them to think that their voice will not be heard.

**Indian practitioners see female practitioners as:** Struggling for survival and may have to overcome unfair obstacles in terms of acceptability. Women can't afford to drop their motivation; they are always fighting to prove themselves; they compare where they stand against men all the time; and they have to be more open to even attain the same level as men. They see that women see the value of being open to change and are less resistant to change, and are more willing to be flexible either because they are less ambitious or because they have to be open to change to fit in and be accepted. They see that women don't expect very much. They accept that some may listen and some may not which constrains their readiness to push for change perhaps and allows them to feel comfortable with what they do achieve.

### 5.2.2.2 Male practitioners

Males differed in their level of openness to change depending on how long they'd been in the profession. Juniors were most highly motivated by openness to change; mids
dropped sharply, and senior males were high again in being motivated by openness to change almost to the same level as junior males.

Men like to be seen as superior. They are the breadwinners. They want to be leaders and believe they should be leaders. They seem to have more dominance. They are ambitious and they go into the workplace with strong expectations, which are probably different from women's expectations, and with fewer hang-ups than women. They like to go and change something.

*We would like to be seen to people that we are versatile, we are men, we like to be superior. The ladies just follow whatever is there. Instead of us, we like to go and change something, we have that drive. We want to be leaders. I think men should be leaders.* (Male/Malay/New/Corporate)

*It goes back to perhaps their position, proving themselves, not needing to prove themselves, managerial position and proving yourself again.* (Female/Indian/Senior/Academic)

Would they be more ambitious? They're a lot less jaded? Women have gone through more trauma? I have no idea. Could be expectations are different between males and females. Males are more aggressive. Maybe they go into the workplace with less hang-ups than women. (Female/Chinese/Mid/Corporate)

*Whereas the males always seem to have more dominance. At least in this country they just feel they have more dominance and therefore initially they want to create an impression, they want to change. Then when they reach a certain point they saw "Okay I've already done this. I've already achieved this much so I'm going to take a break". And then later on they feel "Okay this has become mundane" and therefore they have to do something about it. They just seem to have the upper hand over the women. Their motivation to change*
comes down, whereas the women can’t afford that. They are always fighting. (Female/Indian/Mid/Consultant)

They go into the job expecting to make it the be all and end all. They expect the world. As the dominant sex, they like to portray that in their working environment. More opportunities are open to men. They are more exposed.

Males in Malaysia are more exposed. It surprises me that women are not as open to change as men, but maybe it’s because there are less women working than men, so they’re not as exposed to the work environment. (Female/Chinese/Mid/Corporate)

Whereas male probably they are expected, especially when you’re a young practitioner, you want to show a lot that you have great ideas. Being very dominant sex in this country I think they would like to portray that in their working environment also, and when they are towards the end of their career, again they want to voice it out and make it the finale in their career. (Female/Malay/Senior/Corporate)

Whereas men they just expect the world. (Male/Indian/Mid/Corporate)

They are less jaded. They view the job as a career path. They protect their turf. They are more willing to accept other points of view.

The male practitioner would tend to want to huddle into his comfort zone and really try to protect it a little more than the female might. (Male/Indian/Mid/Corporate)

But males, yes they are willing to accept different points of view, and to change. (Female/Malay/Mid/Corporate)
5.2.2.1 Newer male practitioners

They are more flexible at the start of their career.

Women appreciate the value of being open to change more than men do, and women practitioners of all ages tend to be open to change, whereas men tend to be more flexible and open at the start of their careers. (Female/Indian/Senior/Consultant)

They have their own set of values.

I suppose in the younger days, they have their own set of values and they hold by it too strongly, and once they are in the field, it decreases, and it's the process of adjustment. Before they're established it is important to value openness to change in their work. (Female/Malay/Senior/Corporate)

Junior males have high energy to succeed. They initially want to make an impression and want to change things. They want to show that they have good ideas, and they want to prove themselves. They want to find out the new ways in public relations.

At least in this country they just feel they have more dominance and therefore initially they want to create an impression, they want to change. (Female/Indian/Mid/Consultant)

For males, they want to find out what are the new ways in public relations. (Female/Malay/Mid/Corporate)

Men have the high energy. (Female/Malay/Mid/Corporate)
5.2.2.2 Mid-level male practitioners

They get into a mental block, perhaps as part of the adjustment to the company's values.

*Then they get into a little mental block, and then as they get older and more mature, they become more open to change.* (Female/Indian/Senior/Consultant)

They may be making the transition into management, a more stable position. They get set in their ways. They don't need to prove themselves and the pressure drops off. They take a break.

*Then when they reach a certain point they saw "Okay I've already done this. I've already achieved this much so I'm going to take a break". (Female/Indian/Mid/Consultant)*

They feel frustrated, they tend to be more conservative. They get set in their ways. These women will just follow whatever is there. They accept. Men are different. (Male/Malay/New/Corporate)

*Then in the middle they go through that management transition I talked about. (Female/Malay/Mid/Corporate)*

*Mid-range they are more stable.* (Female/Malay/Mid/Corporate)

Family comes into play.
Men on the other hand, 5-10 years, maybe family comes into play here. (Female/Chinese/Mid/Corporate)

5.2.2.2.3 Senior male practitioners

Senior male practitioners get more open as they mature. They value openness to change in their work. In their management position, they get to see the value of independent thought and action.

... and then as they get older and more mature, they become more open to change. (Female/Indian/Senior/Consultant)

They want to keep up with the trends. They want to do something about it because they don't want the job to be mundane.

And then later on they feel "Okay this has become mundane" and therefore they have to do something about it. (Female/Indian/Mid/Consultant)

... and the big jump as 15 years and more they want to find out what is the new buzz in town, what is happening, so they want to keep up with the trends. (Female/Malay/Mid/Corporate)

They have to prove themselves because they're in a management position. They want to voice it out and make a finale of their career.

And then for the next step they perhaps have to prove themselves a lot more at a more senior level. (Female/Indian/Senior/Academic)
...and when they are towards the end of their career, again they want to voice it out and make it the finale in their career. (Female/Malay/Senior/Corporate)

Their expectations change again.

Women go in with that level of expectation that doesn't really change whereas men have the high energy, then in the middle they go through that management transition I talked about, and then it changes later when they grow older. (Female/Malay/Mid/Corporate)

This links back to what I said about this job naturally attracts women more than it does men. Besides the nature of women, the way they are more caring, at least they display more of that than a man does, this job is also seen as not revenue-generating and the old macho man has to go out there and hunt, be the hunter to bring home the bacon. In an organisation, if you're not revenue-generating you're seen as a cost centre, you're seen as nice but not critical, if the bus runs over that individual, that's okay -- the organisation will not collapse unless they're in the middle of a crisis. There is time to get a replacement in. Revenue-generating people are regarded differently. So I think it's a point. The male gets to that stage where they feel this is all very fun, been there done that, and they want to get into perhaps more of the revenue-generating type of role, do a career change, a totally new move. A male might want to do that. They might want to get into a business, they want to run the business, they want to feel it's time to stop being dependent on a salary and they want to go out and create a business, and self-employment. I think the men feel a greater amount about this conflict in where they are after 10 years, than the women do. I see much more women retiring in that business, that industry. (Male/Chinese/Mid/Corporate)

**Male practitioners see themselves as:** The breadwinner. They want to be leaders, feel they should be leaders, and like to be seen as superior. They like to go and change something. They see themselves as involved in career pathing and protecting their turf.
Female practitioners see male practitioners as: Liking to be dominant, wanting to portray that in their working environment and seeming to be more dominant. They see that more opportunities are available to men, and men are more exposed. They see that men go into the job with different expectations, and greater expectations and ambitions. They expect the world and they go into a job expecting that to be the 'be all and end all'. They see that males have fewer hang-ups than women and may be more willing to accept other points of view.

Chinese practitioners see male practitioners as: More ambitious, less jaded, who go into the job with greater expectations and less hang-ups than women. The male is the breadwinner.

Malay practitioners see male practitioners as: Someone who likes to be seen as superior, who wants to be a leader, and who likes to portray dominance in the workplace. They go into the job with strong expectations and throw themselves into it. In doing so, they are more willing to listen to other points of view.

Indian practitioners view male practitioners as: Someone who expects the world, who has more opportunities, more dominance and is good at protecting their turf.
5.3 Interpretations on Openness to Change

The qualitative content analysis reported here is interesting and valuable for two reasons: it reinforces the linkages between values and identity; and it can be taken to represent core constructs in relation to ethnicity, gender and openness to change.

On the first point, in chapter 2, I presented the argument that values equate with core constructs because they represent the essence of an individual. People come to see themselves and others come to see them, by the standards that seem to guide their affairs (Horley, 1991). At the same time, core constructs provide a sense of personal identity by serving as information about who people are and what they represent. The process of asking people to look at the interrelationships between these variables and openness to change has generated people’s views about practitioners of different ethnicities and genders. The process was done in the context of self, so that the observations made were made from each individual’s perspective, grounded in their own interrelationships with others on the basis of ethnicity and gender. Thus issues of identity are captured in the comments.

The process of talking about values and their interaction with ethnicity and gender has allowed respondents to voice their constructs about how ethnicity and gender work as variables in their everyday lives. At our second meeting, respondents made the choice about what they wanted to say on each aspect of interest. My role was simply to put the significant relationships in front of respondents and then let them talk about whether it had meaning for them, and what form that meaning took. Because the reporting uses
the respondents’ own words, the intended meaning of respondents is communicated, rather than an interpretation from the researcher.

What has come through in respondent comments are a collection of individual explanations for the effects of ethnicity and gender on openness to change. In chapters 8 and 9, I’ll use theoretical frameworks to explain the effects. This stage is important therefore in identifying key themes which can be analysed against the theoretical frameworks.

5.3.1 The impact of ethnicity on openness to change

5.3.1.1 The Chinese and openness to change

One theme to follow through on in the next analytical phase is the importance or otherwise of this value dimension among the Chinese. Respondents talked about Chinese men being very traditional in terms of how they do business, which they saw as coming from their educational background (particularly if schooled in Malaysia in a “Chinese Chinese” school where they are taught in Chinese, based on Chinese traditions and values. This was juxtaposed against their background as a people who have moved and adapted to new countries and conditions. While their heritage suggests flexibility and adaptability, they are less motivated by this value dimension than the other ethnic groups. Perhaps this can be interpreted as having less reliance on others because they are sure of their abilities to deal with any situation.
Related to the first theme of the centrality or otherwise of this dimension is the relationship between openness to change and achievement of business goals. Respondents saw that the Chinese work hard to protect what they have. They don't do that by taking risks. They are analytical and objective, and results are pivotal. They are seen as being in the mainstream of business life in Malaysia, and it's particularly interesting that Indians who are not in the mainstream view the Chinese through this perspective. They have rules, and perhaps by accommodating to the rules they don't need to pursue different approaches.

Another theme is the impact of relationships within Chinese groups (whether they are families or businesses) on openness to change. They have good networks, good support systems, and they know what to work towards in business. If it's a “Chinese Chinese” business (where the business is conducted in Chinese and follows Chinese business practices), then discipline is strong, and the boss is firmly in control. This very strong operating environment would work as a constraint to openness to change particularly for males who are brought into the company. A related question is how Chinese practitioners adapt to working in non-Chinese organisations but this can’t be answered within this study as ethnicity of management was not included as a variable.

Another theme is the relationship between self-identity and openness to change. It is interesting that the Chinese looked at the Indian position in Malaysia in terms of a minority/power framework. They saw the Indian community's lack of power and position as the motivator for change. This suggests that the power structure is an important construct for the Chinese and if their self-identity is as a powerful group, then this removes a reason for being open to change.
Another theme is the difference between my findings and the expectation among respondents that Chinese would score higher on this dimension. Responses of surprise came from members of all three ethnic groups in the study.

5.3.1.2 The Malays and openness to change

As with the Chinese, a key theme for the Malays is the centrality or otherwise of openness to change. Respondents talked about the importance of protocol and relationships, and doing things right, possibly to the point where appearances can be more important than other goals. A focus on maintaining appearances and the status quo is unlikely to encourage openness to change. Malay organisations are seen as more caring, operating more like a kampong (village), or like a family, with a father protector/benefactor at the top who makes the decisions. How does this interface with openness to change?

A related theme is the compatibility of openness to change with the Malay way of doing things (e.g., cultural approaches). In Malaysia, most Malays are Muslim (Kassim, 1984). They are guided by the Qu’ran and seek guidance and enlightenment throughout their life. Does the “agentic” dimension of openness to change fit? At the same time, many Malay public relations practitioners are educated overseas. Those practitioners are change-oriented, and more driven to reform and change things. Because Malays are characterised as being easy-going, they are more willing to listen and to change, to adopt new procedures. This suggests difference within the Malay community on this dimension.
Another theme is the relationship between self-identity and openness to change. Malays look at the Indians through a “belonging” framework and see the need for acceptance as being a motivator for change and an explanation for the high motivation to change that Indian practitioners have. Belonging must be important for the Malays. In what way is openness to change a part of the Malay self-identity?

5.3.1.3 The Indians and openness to change

A key theme for Indians is the relationship between openness to change and achievement of goals. Because of their minority position, Indian practitioners may adopt whatever strategy will work for them and being open to change may be one such strategy. Their disadvantaged position fuels their ambition. As a minority they are seeking acceptance, and being open to change may be a strategy to achieve this. Within their own community they may be very conscious of cultural norms, but within the broader society where they are competing for resources and status and a share of the economic market, they are driven to do what they must to succeed.

Another theme is the maintenance of identity. If they do maintain strong cultural values in their lives, but adopt openness to change strategies to achieve a better position, where do they draw the boundaries around their core values and identity, and how do they determine what they’re willing to change to achieve more fundamental goals. Respondents talked about Indian practitioners being well-represented in the communication industry because of their good language and writing skills. Does their
professional identity as a communicator, which requires them to be open to change, fit with their identity as an Indian?

Also on identity is how the Indians see themselves in relation to the other ethnic groups, and whether this is related to openness to change levels. Respondents talked about the Indian perspective that Malays have much more in terms of Government assistance, and I wonder whether this is more clearly a reflection of the Indian perspective that they don't have the same level of opportunities. Does this act as a motivator?

5.3.2 The impact of gender on openness to change

Gender appears to have an influence on values, which may be the result of socialisation. Culture creates stereotypical behaviour and articulates appropriate roles for males and females. For example, it may help to create and shape an individual's self-identity so that a male practitioner's self-identity may be different from a female practitioner's self-identity. Self-identity will affect how a practitioner views their job and what they regard as important or relevant components of the job, in addition to appropriate behaviour on the job.

Cultural factors may also influence how a practitioner's role is perceived by the organisation they work for. However, this doesn't always follow gender lines. Different ethnicities may experience better access to management, depending on the ethnicity of management and sometimes ownership of the company.
5.3.2.1 Female practitioners and openness to change

A key theme for females is the extent to which socialisation impacts on levels of openness to change. Socialisation could be understood as a constraining factor. Respondents talked about two social influences for women which do not exist for men. The first difference is their upbringing which instils expectations and patterns of behaviour, together with constrained expectations of what they might be able to achieve. This is instilled in them by their parents, their families and the broader community. The second difference for women is that they think of work as being secondary to having a family. Respondents talked about the social expectation in the Indian community where women are not expected to succeed to the same level as men because the husband is the breadwinner.

Another theme relates to whether openness to change has a relationship with their ability to do the job. Respondents talked about females focusing on the job rather than “playing games”. It may be that women are not motivated by success or prestige or money, and are happiest working in a non-competitive environment. Is openness to change seen as a strategy for success? Is it relevant? Respondents also talked about females believing that their voice will not be heard, and therefore they don’t speak out. Women may have to overcome unfair obstacles in terms of their acceptability and survival may be an issue. Indian respondents (male and female) looked at female practitioners through a “struggle” paradigm. They see that women have to struggle to achieve and that this explains their lower motivation to openness to change.
Another theme relates to self-identity and openness to change, and whether openness to change features as a component of self-identity for female practitioners. Malay respondents (male and female) looked at female practitioners through a “power and influence” framework, and suggested that their levels of openness to change were signs of passivity, non-dominance and lack of ambition. However, comments were made that linked openness to change with positive self-identity for females, in particular where many fairly successful practitioners heading up consultancies are Indian females.

A final theme related to the success of Malay women, in business generally and as entrepreneurs, which respondents felt was due to the levels of Government assistance. They offered this as an example of a constraint which impacts levels of openness to change for Chinese and Indian women. Political variables, however, are outside the ambit of this study.

5.3.2.2  Males and openness to change

One theme to follow through on in the next analytical phase is the relationship between self-identity and openness to change. This comes from the expectations that society has for how males will behave and what characteristics they should have, even what they should aspire to achieve. The difference between males and females on openness to change may be explained by the perception that males have of themselves, their expectations for the job and society's expectations for them as males. Respondents talked about males having “an attitude”. They have a position within society and an image to uphold. They are the breadwinners -- that is a societal expectation, which
means they go into the job thinking they have to do well to provide for their families. What role does openness to change have in this?

A related theme is the role of organisational expectations in shaping levels of openness to change. It appears as though men are willing to embrace the working environment, jump at the opportunities and put the effort into making it work. What role does openness to change have in this?

Self-identity and life experiences seem very important in understanding the different levels of value priorities of males and females. For example, for senior males, events in their lives outside of work could contribute to their experiences and perspectives being different from that held by female practitioners. Their standing in society may have an influence -- as a father, as head of the household, as a guide and mentor, as an uncle within a large family unit, perhaps as the oldest son of the family guiding family decisions. In this position, the expectations are for wisdom and insight, breadth of view and thinking, tolerance but knowledge of standards and society's expectations, a model for family interactions, leadership. These expectations flow across into the workplace also.

5.3.3 The impact of gender and ethnicity on openness to change

A key theme relates to the significant difference found between male and female Malay practitioners; what leads to difference, and why the differences are significant whereas the differences between Chinese males and females, and Indian males and females, which also appear large, are not significant.
5.4 Summary of emerging issues

The interaction of ethnicity and gender on openness to change brings together the themes just discussed. In summary, they relate to issues of: the centrality of openness to change as a value dimension; the relationship between openness to change and achievement of business or work-related goals (e.g., success on the job); the impact of ingroup relationships on openness to change; the relationship between self-identity and openness to change; the difference between respondent expectations about levels of Chinese openness to change and the actual levels: the compatibility of openness to change with cultural approaches; whether negative intergroup comparisons act as a motivator for openness to change levels; the role of organisational expectations in shaping levels of openness to change; and the role of societal socialisation in shaping levels of openness to change; and why there is a significant difference between male and female Malay practitioners on openness to change.

The ANOVA findings suggest that ethnicity has more of an influence than gender on openness to change, although gender led to a significant difference for the Malay respondents ($F() = .016, p = .016$). However, both ethnicity and gender are needed to fully understand their influence. This will be further explored in Chapter 9.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter set out to examine the value dimension of openness to change, which represents the extent to which one is motivated by values emphasising own individual thought and action, and favouring change. From the first round of research, differences
on the openness to change value dimension were explained by ethnicity, and the combined influence of ethnicity and gender, and not by professional variables. The analysis of the impact of ethnicity and gender on the openness to change value dimension found different patterns for male and female practitioners. For women, there was little difference between ethnic groups in terms of motivation to openness to change. The differences among male practitioners were more pronounced: male Chinese practitioners had the lowest motivation levels, with the one male Indian practitioner slightly higher and male Malay practitioners highest overall. Only for the Malays was this difference between males and females significant.

The content in this chapter came from lengthy discussions with respondents on a second trip to Malaysia, where the relationships between variables and values were printed onto charts and presented individually for respondents to comment on. The discussions with all respondents were tape-recorded, transcribed, and coded to identify themes which could be used to analyse the relevance of the significant variables.

This chapter sets out the main themes which have been derived from this content analysis of transcripts, and each theme is supported by quotes from respondents. It is important to use these quotes because the points which were raised by respondents are best reported in the respondents’ own words, to reduce researcher bias, and to communicate the full intent of their thoughts.

The chapter ended with the identification of nine key themes to take forward into the final analysis and discussion of variables in chapters 8 and 9.
CHAPTER 6

SELF-ENHANCEMENT

This chapter examines self-enhancement, one of the four value dimensions in Schwartz and Bilsky’s values theory. It contains an account of the participants’ discussion of, and their reactions to, the analysis of values in terms of the one variable -- years of experience -- that was shown to have significant effects in the earlier analysis (see Chapter 4). The second contact with respondents enabled discussion and validation of the data collected and analysed.

6.1 Findings on Self-enhancement

Self-enhancement represents the extent to which one is motivated by emphasis on one’s own relative success and dominance over others.

The value types that comprise this dimension are power, achievement and to a smaller extent, hedonism. Power is defined as social status and prestige, control or dominance over people and resources. Achievement is defined as personal success through demonstrating competence according to social standards. Hedonism is defined as pleasure and sensual gratification for oneself.

The one variable that was relevant to self-enhancement was years of experience. The key themes identified during the coding process are documented in this chapter, with supporting quotes from respondents.
6.2 Self-enhancement and years of experience

The mid-level practitioners were significantly different from the newer practitioners and the senior practitioners, creating a U-shaped pattern where newer practitioners were most highly motivated ($m = 7.63$), mid-level practitioners were least motivated ($m = 6.65$), and senior practitioners at a level between the two other groups ($m = 7.19$).

6.2.1 Newer practitioners

The desire to succeed and to have some dominance over others is motivated by several internal factors. Several themes emerged:

It comes naturally. Newer practitioners come into the workplace with lots of ideas, and are active, enthusiastic, and keen to put lots of effort in. They have lots of energy and a pushing, driving force.

You're just so driven by wanting to do things when you're in a new profession. You want to prove a whole lot of things. (Female/Indian/Mid/Consultant)

When you just start working and your values are very fresh, are not being influenced by outside factors, I think it does motivate you in some sense because you want to see yourself grow. (Female/Malay/Senior/Corporate)

At the same time, they are ambitious and wanting to work their way up.

In the beginning you would have an idea of what you want to achieve, the level of success you want to achieve in your life, in your career. You set out to
get it so therefore of course the level of self-enhancement would be higher in your early years. (Female/Malay/Senior/Corporate)

We are young, there's nothing to work for but for yourself. You need to improve yourself, you need to learn. (Male/Malay/New/Corporate)

You start a career and when you start working you think you can achieve so much, and you're very idealistic. You're ambitious. You don't look at the pitfalls. You think you can do it. (Female/Indian/Senior/Consultant)

They want to achieve in relation to their friends and peers.

You have to achieve a certain level by a certain time. It's not wanting to lose out. "If my peer is there, I've got to be at least here, if not higher". So whether you're in this workplace or another workplace, that doesn't change. It's still in you, and it's a traditional thing. (Female/Malay/Senior/Corporate)

Now I did law. It took me three years to get the degree. Then you have to do the bar when you're chambering -- that's five years. My friends who didn't do law, three years in university then they're out working. By the time I come out, I can only come out on a salary of say R2,000. These guys would have started at R2,000. Two years on, they would be earning more. So I'll have to work a bit harder to catch up. Because we're all friends. We still move around in the same circles, and we don't want to lose out. (Female/Malay/Senior/Corporate)

They are also competitive, very competitive in terms of survival, and they want to stay ahead of the competition.

For the two years and below, they like to see changes. Like Sony, when they produce TVs, the next time they hope to see more changes to it. They want to
stay ahead of the competitors because the young people are always motivated to improvements, changes and so on. And they're never satisfied with what they've done or what they do. (Male/Chinese/Mid/Consultant)

Their desire to influence is a way of proving their capability. They feel a need to prove themselves on the job. Newer practitioners are being watched to see if they meet the organisation's expectations, and they are very determined to improve themselves and prove themselves capable.

What I can imagine is ambition. When you're a junior, you want to make your way up and you have to prove yourself still. (Female/Malay/Senior/Corporate)

People are still looking at us, at how we do our work, and we should come up to that expectation. Active, enthusiastic, put a lot of effort into it. (Male/Malay/New/Corporate)

You're out there to prove yourself in the workplace. The only way would be to show your own capabilities and you dominate over others as your own way of proving your capability. Depends on your personal values again. What is important. Level of maturity. They'll probably be in their early 20s so the level of maturity would be different. (Female/Chinese/Mid/Corporate)

Another motivation comes because newer practitioners realise that they are submissive and in a position with little power and influence. They have no dominance. Their position of little power and influence pushes them to achieve. If they're ambitious, they focus on increasing their circle of influence, and being able to impose their own values on others.
When you first start out everyone else is influencing you whereas the higher up the ladder you get, your circle of influence increases, so a need to dominate over others probably decreases as opposed to when you first start out. (Female/Malay/Mid/Corporate)

There might be a recognition at this early stage that you are submissive, that you don't know as much as everyone else, but it's something that motivates you strongly, that you want to achieve success. Because of the very position that you have. (Female/Indian/Senior/Academic)

Your own relative success. I don't think dominance over others. Dominance in what respect? I don't think it's dominating over the bosses really. But coming up with their own ideas perhaps, and thinking they are better in what they are doing, if that is the way you read dominance. More success within your own specific area perhaps. (Female/Indian/Senior/Academic)

As the years go by, I have more dominance. When I first came, I didn't feel that I could get the others to do exactly what I wanted, or to actually tell them what to do. I had to use my boss's name sometimes to get the job done. (Female/Indian/Mid/Consultant)

Newer practitioners see themselves as: Active and enthusiastic, willing to put lots of effort in, and wanting to work their way up. They felt the need to prove themselves, knowing they were being watched to see if they met expectations. They were motivated by wanting to achieve a certain level by a certain time, mainly so they could compare their success against the success of their peers. They may not be aware of corporate constraints.

Mid-level practitioners see newer practitioners as: Very determined, with lots of energy and a pushing, driving force. They have a need to prove themselves and they
want to dominate over others as a way of proving their capability. They see that newer practitioners have no dominance and are being influenced by everyone else. They desire to dominate and particularly want to have a bigger circle of influence if they're ambitious.

*Senior practitioners see newer practitioners as:* Idealistic. They don't see the pitfalls. They see that they are ambitious, very competitive in terms of survival, have lots of ideas, and know what they want to get and set out to achieve it. They see that they have a need to prove themselves and are motivated by internal factors. They see that they recognise that they are submissive and that pushes them to achieve.

6.2.2 *Mid-level practitioners*

Both internal and external factors may influence practitioner views at this time, leading to an apparent lower desire to succeed and to have some dominance over others. Several themes emerged:

By this stage, with 5-10 years' experience, practitioners have achieved some standing and a certain level of competence. Their career is on track and they start to feel that they're in a comfort zone. They know more and their confidence increases. They feel that they could keep motivating themselves to perform and achieve but why do this when they're comfortable? Why change a good track record? They decide not to try so hard, and coast, play it safe for a while.

*This group say why stir up a hornet's nest? They have a proven track record, what they've done. They don't want to see introduction of new things because*
this may result in some expectations may not be as good as what they've had. So they try to play safe -- don't want to make any changes. (Male/Chinese/Mid/Consultant)

They've already got that experience so "Why do I need to motivate myself if I'm comfortable with that experience?" You've sort of made it. Maybe they're comfortable at that age. In their mid-30s. (Female/Malay/Mid/Corporate)

Their influence has increased as they rise up the ladder, and this may result in a decrease in the need to dominate. Their value system may no longer be as dominant in driving their actions.

I would think over time somebody who's successful or is ambitious would want to see their circle of influence increase because usually the more successful you are, the larger your circle of influence is. But I don't know if that is relative to the need to do that. If you already have it, how much do you really need it? It might even go down, continuing going down. (Female/Malay/Mid/Corporate)

But as years go by, I find that I can do things on my own now. I've already learned. I'm no longer at the learning stage. I've got that experience and I know how to tell people to do it. I felt my dominance over others rose. By being promoted, I felt I had more authority to actually tell them to do things and tell them exactly what their job functions are. I feel as years go by, that increases. (Female/Indian/Mid/Consultant)

Mid-level practitioners are not "at the bottom of the food chain". They may be managing others and may have a responsibility to become a motivator for their team. They take on a coach and mentor role and become concerned about the development of others.
I think it's a very personal thing. There could be some that having reached a certain level of technical competence, a certain level of achievement, may start to feel more self-assured with the things they do, in their own role in the organisation, in the organisational chart, and at that point, they would also be likely to be having other people being managed under them, a larger group perhaps as opposed to being at the bottom of the food chain. Then they get into a position where they start to take on a coach and mentor role, they start to be concerned about the development of others. It might be a requirement, to develop the second level of succession. (Male/Chinese/Mid/Corporate)

And if you know that you have some standing in that particular industry, and in that particular company, or you have a reputation already which is safe, then you become more of a motivator to your team and less someone who wants to seek that position, who's fighting for it. By this time you would have got somewhere, and you don't have to break your back any more. (Female/Chinese/New/Consultant)

Perhaps now is the time that they're married and have children and their family affects their motivation. Their earlier drive is diluted.

Probably in the midst of getting married, having children, and they wouldn't have time. It would be important but this is a time when family takes over, and this takes a back seat for a while. You're still interested in your career but it would be an adjustment mode. (Female/Chinese/Mid/Corporate)

It may be a time of "mid-level crisis". Mid-level practitioners realise their limitations. They realise that public relations's not what they thought it would be and they start questioning and reflecting. It is a period of reflection because they start questioning what they want to do with their life. They ask "what have I achieved so far? Is it what I wanted to achieve?" They may be discouraged and feel that they're not getting
acknowledgement. They may not be sure where their career is heading, or may be frustrated that they're not yet at the management level. They're frustrated also that they're still being supervised, there is little independence and little opportunity to dominate others. They may be in a rut, and bored with doing the same things. They may feel stressed at being under-powered and under-staffed.

I'm trying to think of myself after seven years. I left my first job after seven years. I just hit the pits. After seven years life is just one big complaint. Everything is not right. Perhaps you become a little bit discouraged about where you're heading in your career. Then you start looking for different things to do. Maybe it's a little bit of frustration and a bit of self-realisation of your own limitations. (Female/Indian/Senior/Consultant)

In middle management, one concern they have is that they are not in the management level so they may not know the dollars and sense, they may not have access to networking and knowing what's happening. (Male/Chinese/Mid/Consultant)

I'm not bored yet. But I'm getting there, because it's stressful when you are under-powered, under-staffed. When you get there (mid), if they don't get the promotion, they feel "Nobody is acknowledging my work". They are not acknowledged or seen by somebody. (Male/Malay/New/Corporate)

You start questioning a whole lot of things and in terms of dominance, you're being instructed to do a lot of things. You're still under someone with supervision, and a lot of people think that public relations has a lot of independence, a lot of glamour to it. You start losing all those thoughts as you go along and then you start wondering "Am I going to be good in this area of press releases? It's not what I want it to be, and I'm still under someone else, I'm not a manager, I'm not doing this fantastic thing all by myself." (Female/Indian/Mid/Consultant)
This may not only be a period of reflection and consolidation, but also of adjustment. Mid-level practitioners may decide to do something to improve, to achieve something more and make a bigger mark on the organisation. They may be pushed up by wanting to achieve something more, or because their focus is on survival.

_Type is the time when you go for training, when there are changes in your life and you decide that you can't remain in a rut. You have to improve. You're perhaps looking for another promotional jump at this point also. Normally it occurs around five years. (Female/Indian/Senior/Academic)_

_There was that time when I fell into a rut. I wanted to do something so I started applying to do my PhD etc. It was at this point. Getting bored. Wanting to achieve something more. And wanting to do something more. Wanting to make a bigger mark on the job, in the organisation. That pushes you back up. (Female/Indian/Senior/Academic)_

**Mid-level practitioners see themselves as:** Being in a comfort zone and coasting, with their career on track, confident in their abilities. They recognised that other priorities such as family were emerging. They identified frustration at not being at management level, at being in a position where they still had to take orders with little independence, but also recognised that they weren't at the bottom of the chain, and there was some need to start thinking about their role in coaching and mentoring those below them. They saw that influence increases as you rise up the ladder, and therefore the need to dominate decreases. They also felt that the work environment shouldn't be a factor in the lower motivation at this point.

**Newer practitioners see mid-level practitioners as:** Less concerned about dominance, the focus is on survival. They see that they have achieved a certain level of
competence, a certain standing and that they become more of a motivator to their team. They see that they are not getting acknowledgement and that it's stressful -- they're under-powered and under-staffed.

*Senior practitioners see mid-level practitioners as:* In a rut, a comfort zone where they are coasting, playing it safe and not trying so hard. They see that they may decide to do something to improve, to achieve more and make a bigger mark on the organisation. They see that they are in a mid-level crisis where they realise their limitations, get frustrated and are discouraged because they're not sure where their career is heading. They see that their earlier drive is diluted and other priorities such as family emerge.

### 6.2.3 Senior practitioners

As a senior practitioner, these practitioners see themselves growing within the organisation and they feel a part of it. They have a leadership role and with that comes a natural sense of dominance because they are giving out the orders. They are given responsibility which includes moulding their team. This puts them in the position of being able to impose their values over newer staff, or staff below them. They learn also to delegate.

*As the years go by, I can have more dominance over my subordinates.*
(Female/Indian/Mid/Consultant)

*When you get more experience, you're talking about a move up in position. More often that not after 5 years, people would be into the management position already and at that point in terms of success you're seeing yourself grow to a higher level, to a management position, rather than a support staff*
position. You start to be part of the company, or that's your perception. Or you're being given more responsibility because of your experience. That creates this sense "I'm going up the ladder right now. I'm going places". In terms of dominance over others it goes up as well, because you're the manager. You have people that you're training and that once again, depending on what the person is like, is a feel-good situation. You're training somebody. You're moulding somebody, you're pretty much telling them what to do. (Female/Indian/Mid/Consultant)

By this time you would have got somewhere, and you don't have to break your back anymore. You've put in your requisite three or four years of hard work of going back till 11 o'clock at night just to prove to someone that you can do it and you want to have that position in the company. And now that you've got it you can afford to take things a bit easier and your job responsibilities would have changed. You're not the runner anymore. Now you sit down and you strategise. And you have to learn how to delegate. And with that, in doing so, you already have a natural sense of dominance over others because you're giving out those orders. Now you're saying to someone "Can you please go away and do this". (Female/Chinese/New/Consultant)

They may experience a new strong motivation to end their career "on a high". They want to be seen as an institution, to make a mark, and to push their limits. It's now or never. They decide to do something to move themselves up in the organisation. This is motivated by self-esteem and by the perks and the promotions of senior management. They want the senior management position. They want to succeed more than their friends.

In my case I think it's because if you don't do it now, you're never going to do it. That sense of pushing yourself to the limits of what you think you can do because it's your last chance. Why did I decide to start a little shop when I was 46 when I could have been comfortable in employment? People still ask
me that because it was a good job, and I had a car. But I felt like it was the ultimate challenge. If I didn't do it now, then when? Some people think it was very brave. Some people might think it was foolish. (Female/Indian/Senior/Consultant)

When you grow much longer in the industry you feel "I need another push before I retire" and you're motivated further. For me for example, I have 12 more years that I want to really work, and I'm pushing all the way for the next 12 years. I had this comfort zone initially and I was pretty okay and I was comfortable with my level at that time. Now I see for the next 12 years I just want to be the best of whatever I can and that's my motivation. You don't want to be where you are when you're within the 5-10 years because you want to end it with something that hopefully in the industry you become an institution. That's one of the reasons. (Female/Malay/Senior/Corporate)

15 years, there's that urge to be motivated. You don't want to be stale. You need to keep up with the changes and you need to have that drive so you're not rusty. People will strive to achieve something greater. Even though you have 15 years' experience, you want to see what you can achieve as a limit. What's your maximum? People will be more driven. Maybe they want a change. Yes they've achieved but they still want to go on. (Female/Malay/Mid/Corporate)

When you're promoted, that is the incentive. The antique car. When you get promotions, increments, bonuses, that's where life is beautiful, and you take it step by step. (Male/Malay/New/Corporate)

Or they may have more commitments, may be more in debt at this point, and need to work harder.

For seniors, just think like this. You are 15 years, most probably you are married, you have children, your children are getting big, you need money for
education, and you need to work better. You need to work more. (Male/Malay/New/Corporate)

Or they may be motivated by not wanting to be outdone by the younger set, and a need to prove that they're still "with it". Their position could be under threat as a result of a perception of being overpaid for the work they do, having a lack of energy, or being threatened by the young guns coming up, and they start to look after 'Number 1'. It may seem to be survival of the fittest, where they need to be politicking.

Maybe as you get older as well, and the young people start coming in, perhaps you're a lot more motivated. You don't want to be outdone by the younger set. (Female/Chinese/Mid/Corporate)

If I may suggest perhaps, beyond 10 years, you're at that point where your marketability is probably a bit less, much less in fact, I guess once you cross say 35 you know that you're stuck there in a sense. You can't move on to anything else, or it would be very difficult to move on to anything else so there is this requirement, this desire to want to prove, to want to show that you are able to really stand over anyone else. (Male/Indian/Mid/Corporate)

Along the way, they would see how things have changed over the years... For them to win more business they have to consider new innovative ideas. Probably that prompts them to look for some changes to ensure that they maintain the market leadership. (Male/Chinese/Mid/Consultant)

Like any typical corporation, if you're not working for yourself, it is a pyramid structure, survival of the fittest as you go up, so there would be that certain amount of politicking to be successful. You are making that move up that ladder. (Female/Chinese/Mid/Corporate)
As they get older they may come to a point where the company may view these people as a little bit overpaid, or a little bit lacking in energy and enthusiasm, a little bit jaded, and that there could be others who the company feels could possibly do the same or more. They become under threat, they feel a little bit unsure of their own place. Different organisations have different situations. Some person has got 15 years and he may be specialising or concentrating on dealing with government relations. That's a very fuzzy area to a lot of people. It could be strategically very important in terms of the franchise, having the influence to make sure that regulations fall in the favour of the company that you're working for. But not many may understand the impact of that and they feel that this person, at that level of their career, may not seem to be doing much except entertaining and wining and dining perhaps. That's situational obviously I can't overgeneralise with something like this. But primarily I think that's also the element of technology. The other person is not able to adapt to technological changes over a period of 15 years and somebody junior is able to do so, going into multimedia, a real whizz with the laptop. That position could be under threat. And then they start worrying about looking out for Number 1. (Male/Chinese/Mid/Corporate)

This leads them to start to assert themselves. They want to have some influence or control over their work environment.

At this point, if you're expecting a promotional jump, you have to do something. It's your values also that you would put in there, asserting yourself. We begin to assert ourselves, wanting to achieve certain things, irrespective of fitting in with the culture of the organisation, maybe trying to bring change to the organisation at this point, and taking perhaps more leadership roles at this point. I would see that also with the job. (Female/Indian/Senior/Academic)
Throughout the years, I would have thought it would be going up this way because I think you have to set your targets and you have to work at achieving it. (Female/Malay/Senior/Corporate)

Senior practitioners see themselves as: Wanting to have some control or influence over their work environment, wanting to make their mark and be seen as an institution, and they see that it's now or never to prove themselves. There is a strong motivation to end on a high and to achieve more than their friends. This means pushing their limits and asserting themselves, taking a leadership role and aiming for the senior management position. They also have more commitments and need to work harder.

Newer practitioners see senior practitioners as: Having a natural sense of dominance because they're giving out the orders. They impose their values over new people and workers. They see that they are more into strategy and are learning to delegate. They see that they have more commitments and need to work harder.

Mid-level practitioners see senior practitioners as: Feeling part of the company. They are given more responsibility, they mould their team, and they have a natural sense of dominance because they're giving out the orders. They see that they are pushing their limits and have a new motivation to prove themselves. It is survival of the fittest. They need to be politicking and don't want to be outdone. Their position could be under threat and they start to look after themselves.
6.3 Interpretations on Self-Enhancement

The content analysis reported here is interesting and valuable for two reasons: it reinforces the linkages between values and identity; and it can be taken to represent core constructs in relation to years of experience and self-enhancement. In comparison to the analysis in Chapter 5 on openness to change, this value dimension is affected only by one professional variable: years of experience.

What has come through in respondent comments are a collection of individual explanations for the effects of years of experience on self-enhancement. In chapter 9, I'll use theoretical frameworks to explain the effects. This stage is important therefore in identifying key themes which can be analysed against the theoretical frameworks.

6.3.1 **Newer practitioners and self-enhancement**

One theme to follow through on in the next analytical phase is the high levels of self-enhancement demonstrated by newer practitioners.

Another theme is the relationship between self-identity and self-enhancement. Social status and prestige are very important in Malaysia. Perhaps work status, experience, confidence and power bring respect, and the longer they work and the more senior they get in the profession, the more status and therefore the more respect they are accorded. When they're new and just starting out, those are the things they aspire for, and therefore those things are prominent in their approach on the job.
Another theme is whether self-enhancement is seen as a conscious strategy to follow or whether it just happens. Respondents talked about newer practitioners coming in with high enthusiasm which just takes over. They do it because it represents a drive and excitement that comes from moving into a new job. Respondents noted that newer practitioners are idealistic, and they don't see the pitfalls. This suggests a lack of judgement.

A related theme is the relationship between levels of self-enhancement and success on the job. They may see that being able to influence others is a demonstration of success. Success and dominance are important because they feel a need to prove themselves on the job. As a young practitioner, they want power but they don't have it, which makes it a goal and therefore of high salience. They may feel the need to achieve, for themselves, but also because it's important to their family and in terms of their social standing with peers.

6.3.2 Mid-level practitioners and self-enhancement

One theme to follow through on in the next analytical phase is the low levels of self-enhancement demonstrated by mid-level practitioners. What can explain the mid-level drop in motivation on self-enhancement?

A key theme is the relationship of these values to their interest in doing the job. It may be at this stage that they lose their interest and motivation for the job itself. Respondents talked about being in a comfort zone, where they can relax a bit on the job, and turn their attention to other interests, perhaps outside of work. Do they feel
satisfaction with what has been achieved? Perhaps initial goals have been met, and they feel confident in their abilities and that they're meeting what the organisation expects of them. Respondents talked about this being a time when other priorities, such as family, emerge. They may feel that they can now concentrate on other priorities in life.

A key theme is the relationship between self-enhancement values and levels of responsibility. Respondents noted that dominance comes naturally with the position and because they have more of it, they're less motivated by it. Alternatively, if they know more and their confidence increases as they rise up the ladder, then they naturally build influence and perhaps don't have to work at it so hard. Dominance as a motivator is less important.

A key theme is the relationship between self-enhancement and this reflective phase. Respondents talked about frustration at being under-staffed, under-powered and under-acknowledged. They talked also about this as a time of reflection about whether this is the right career. Frustrations with the job or its constraints, together with some self-doubt perhaps, may take a practitioner's focus away from the job. Their focus is on other things rather than power and dominance. The reflection and consolidation may keep them in a holding pattern for a while until they move out of it naturally, or it may propel them to take control and do something to change the situation and make it more acceptable. This may be where their sights change from the current situation to the future and what's involved in moving up within the organisation.
6.3.3  *Senior practitioners and self-enhancement*

One theme to follow through on in the next analytical phase is the high levels of self-enhancement demonstrated by senior practitioners.

A key theme is the relationship between self-enhancement values and the importance of dominance. Respondents noted that dominance comes naturally with the position and because they have more of it, they're less motivated by it. Alternatively, if they know more and their confidence increases as they rise up the ladder, then they naturally build influence and perhaps don't have to work at it so hard. Dominance as a motivator is less important. This was a point made above in relation to mid-level practitioners where it seemed to fit the findings, but the same argument could also be true of senior practitioners, yet their self-enhancement levels have risen again. Perhaps it reflects a concern about protecting their position, because once a practitioner has achieved this level within the organisation, they would want to protect it.

A related theme is the relationship between identity and self-enhancement, which in effect is asking whether social status and prestige take on more importance than control and dominance at this stage. It may that social status and prestige become stronger motivators. Respondents talked about their determination to end their career on a high. Social status and prestige are linked to identity. These practitioners have to continue to keep an eye on their own career. In Malaysia, age is revered and status is important. There are expectations that they will achieve a certain level, and that they will have all the perks and trappings associated with that. Practitioners assess whether they are
achieving in line with community expectations. They may look at the number of years ahead of them to achieve, and decide to scale up their efforts.

A related theme is the relationship between self-enhancement and their ability to do the job. As one respondent noted, in a pragmatic sense, their family commitments are increasing at this time -- education especially -- and practitioners at this level may need to work harder to maintain the income to support the family and the lifestyle.

6.4 Summary of emerging issues

While only one variable is involved in understanding differences in self-enhancement values at different years of experience, a number of issues have emerged which can be explored further in Chapter 9. They include: the high levels of self-enhancement exhibited by newer practitioners; the relationship between self-identity and self-enhancement; whether self-enhancement is seen as a conscious strategy to follow or whether it just happens; the relationship between levels of self-enhancement and success on the job; the low levels of self-enhancement demonstrated by mid-level practitioners; the relationship of these values to their interest in doing the job; the relationship between self-enhancement values and levels of responsibility; the relationship between self-enhancement and this reflective phase; the high levels of self-enhancement demonstrated by senior practitioners; and the relationship between self-enhancement values and the importance of dominance.
6.5 Conclusion

In the analysis following the first data collection trip to Malaysia, years of experience was the only variable which created a significant effect on the value dimension of self-enhancement. Self-enhancement represents the extent to which one is motivated by the pursuit of one's own relative success and dominance over others. The analysis found that newer practitioners are most highly motivated by self-enhancement, then there's a big drop in motivation for the mid-level practitioners and a rise again for senior practitioners. This documents the finding that, as practitioners gain experience in this profession, their motivations change. Through lengthy discussions with respondents on a second trip to Malaysia, a number of ideas or themes were put forward by respondents to explain this finding.

This chapter sets out the main themes which have been derived from these discussions with respondents, and each theme is supported by quotes from respondents. It is important to use these quotes because the points which were raised by respondents are best reported in their own words, to reduce researcher bias, and to communicate the full intent of their thoughts.

The chapter ended with the identification of 10 key themes to take forward into the final analysis and discussion of variables in chapter 9.
CHAPTER 7

SELF-TRANSCENDENCE

This chapter examines self-transcendence, one of the four value dimensions in Schwartz and Bilsky's values theory. Three of the four variables in this study produced a significant effect on self-transcendence -- years of experience, ethnicity, and gender (in interaction with ethnicity). The second contact with respondents enabled discussion and validation of these findings, and the respondents’ comments on these findings are reported in this chapter. The chapter ends with the identification of key themes to take forward into the final analysis and discussion of variables in chapters 8 and 9.

7.1 The findings on Self-transcendence

Self-transcendence represents the extent to which one is motivated by the acceptance of others as equals and concern for their welfare. The value types that comprise this dimension are universalism and benevolence. Universalism is defined as understanding, appreciation, tolerance and protection for the welfare of all people and for nature. Benevolence is defined as preservation and enhancement of the welfare of people with whom one is in frequent contact.

From the first round of research, two variables -- years of experience and ethnicity -- were found to be relevant to self-transcendence, and a significant interaction effect between ethnicity and gender was found which means that the influence of ethnicity on self-transcendence depends on gender. Years of experience also produced a significant
difference on the value type *Benevolence*, which is a value type within self-transcendence.

The key themes identified during the coding process are documented in this chapter, with supporting quotes from respondents.

### 7.2 Self-transcendence and years of experience

The mid-level practitioners were significantly different from the newer practitioners and the senior practitioners, creating a U-shaped pattern where newer practitioners were most highly motivated (m = 7.12), mid-level practitioners were least motivated (m = 6.13), and senior practitioners at a level between the two other groups (m = 6.70).

#### 7.2.1 Newer practitioners

Newer practitioners want to belong to the industry. They want to be accepted as equals. They want to be on a par with colleagues, rather than being under them. They want acceptance, to be part of a family. They want to create a perfect working environment. The values of colleagues and friends in the workplace are important because they want to belong.

*I think I will agree with this graph. The younger practitioner likes to be accepted and to feel belonging within the industry, within the group and therefore the values of other practitioners and the values of successful practitioners in the industry becomes something that would enhance their values... Whenever you're new in the industry, you tend to try to follow people. (Female/Malay/Senior/Corporate)*
Young ones, they want to be at the same level as other people. They don't want to be under. Otherwise they feel insecure. They want to be on the same par as their counterparts. They want to keep up with the industry. "Am I equal with them?" (Female/Malay/Mid/Corporate)

Yes I agree because when you come in, you're fresh. You want to be a part of the family. You want a good working environment. So you want others to accept you and you are also very concerned about others because you want to create a perfect working environment. (Female/Indian/Mid/Consultant)

When you come in with no experience, you want to be accepted as equals. (Female/Chinese/Mid/Corporate)

They want to prove themselves able. They have a desire to improve themselves to gain better promotions. They want to prove something to others and be accepted by them.

It is true, but why? Juniors -- they want to prove something to others, and therefore they want to gain acceptance from others. They're more energetic, more dynamic. (Male/Chinese/Mid/Corporate)

In fact I think self-transcendence would be the primary thing that the person new to the workforce would look at. I would think that this would be an accurate chart. You're really looking at showing to yourself as well as others that you able to do whatever you are able to do and to get the necessary training, so that you are actually able to do that. (Male/Indian/Mid/Corporate)

They believe that everyone starts off equal. Young practitioners are at the bottom of the heap. They get the short end of the stick and feel people should be more considerate.
I don’t know if it comes back to educational beliefs and cultural beliefs, our education system where we’re talking a lot more about diversity and equality, that comes into play. (Female/Chinese/Mid/Corporate)

Although you have a big desire to exert dominance because you’re at the bottom, at the same time, because you’re at the bottom you probably get the brunt of things and you probably feel like people should be a little more considerate or should think of the collective a little bit more. That’s usually the case. If you’re getting the short end of the stick, you want it to be more equal. Whereas if you’re getting the longer end of the stick you probably want to keep it that way. (Female/Malay/Mid/Corporate)

The influence of being freshly out of school in a very collegial atmosphere, everyone’s quite egalitarian and there’s a lot of fraternity. In a way you regard everyone as an equal starting with coming in from the basement. (Male/Chinese/Mid/Corporate)

They have no need to protect their position. They don’t see their peers as threats. They are willing to share. They have little say in things. They look to others as models. They tend to follow.

You’re a younger practitioner, you don’t look at your peer as a major threat to you. Perhaps it’s all to do with being idealistic and friendly and naïve. We have three young people in the office and they’re quite willing to share, and to do little things for one another. (Female/Indian/Senior/Consultant)

Concern for their welfare in a way because at the younger age, you do not have that much courage and say to do much, so you will show more concern. And you wouldn’t need to protect your position. This person is a mentee and they’d know that there are mentors who do not necessarily have that status of being equal but are perhaps more knowledgeable. It depends on how we describe equal perhaps. (Female/Indian/Senior/Academic)
Young people are generally selfish. They are gung-ho, more energetic and dynamic. They stress their individuality.

_ I always find younger people very selfish. They only care about themselves._ (Male/Chinese/Mid/Consultant)

_ I don't agree with this. It should increase over time. In your younger years when you're on the job, you would think that a sense of individuality is overly important._ (Female/Malay/Senior/Corporate)

_ You're really gung-ho when you start._ (Female/Chinese/New/Consultant)

**Newer practitioners see themselves as:** Being gung-ho.

**Mid-level practitioners see newer practitioners as:** Unsure of themselves and think that everyone knows more than they do. They see that newer practitioners want to be accepted as equals and as part of the family, and that they want to create the perfect working environment. They see that newer practitioners want to prove themselves able, and want to improve themselves to gain better promotions. They see young people as generally selfish.

**Senior practitioners see newer practitioners as:** Wanting to belong to the industry, and want acceptance, to be part of the family. They see that the values of colleagues and friends in the workplace are valuable because they want to belong. They see newer practitioners as idealistic and willing to share. They look to others as models, they tend
to follow and they have little say in things. They see that newer practitioners have no need to protect their position, don't see peers as threats, and stress their individuality.

**Chinese practitioners see newer practitioners as:** Wanting acceptance, to be accepted as equals, as part of a family. They see that newer practitioners see that everyone starts off equal, but that newer practitioners want to prove something to others to gain their acceptance. In doing so, they are more energetic, gung-ho, dynamic and generally selfish.

**Malay practitioners see newer practitioners as:** Wanting to be accepted as equals, and wanting acceptance as part of a family. The values of colleagues and friends in the workplace are important because they want to belong. They see that newer practitioners look to others as models and tend to follow. They see that newer practitioners realise they are at the bottom of the heap. They want to be on a par with colleagues, they don't want to be under, and because they're in this position they feel others should be more considerate towards them. They see that junior practitioners stress their individuality.

**Indian practitioners see newer practitioners as:** Idealistic and willing to share. They see that newer practitioners see no need to protect their position and don't see peers as threats. They see that newer practitioners want to be accepted as equals, and want acceptance as part of a family, and want to create a perfect working environment. They see that newer practitioners want to prove themselves able and have a desire to improve themselves to gain better promotions. They see that newer practitioners have very little say in things.
7.2.2 Mid-level practitioners

They are competing with their peers, and fighting for jobs. They want to keep their job and may be feeling threatened. They focus on self and are selfish. They are trying to make their own mark, maintain their image and aim for promotion. They feel hostility because of competition. Lots of uncertainties emerge. They are trying to be somewhere but are neither here nor there. They put colleagues' welfare second and they don't want to share knowledge with peers.

*I think in the middle years, there's a competitive spirit, keen competition, and hostility. When I was going through the middle years myself I didn't bond so well with other practitioners and want to be sharing the same platform with them.* (Female/Indian/Senior/Consultant)

*You will definitely have jobs where you'll have differences of opinion with your colleagues so you tend to become more self-centred because you want to keep your image, you want to keep your job. You want others to say you've done a good job. Sometimes you tend to put your colleagues' welfare second place. If I were to have a launch the next day, and my subordinate came to say "My father's ill, I want to have leave", initially I would say "Yes. Her father needs her." But when you are in charge of the account you would tell her "Can you still spare some time to do this and then go and attend to your father?" It comes down.* (Female/Indian/Mid/Consultant)

*In terms of growth, you are growing in position here and you're becoming more closed in terms of what your key abilities are. You tend to become a bit selfish and thinking about yourself, about promoting yourself in terms of position, pay. You start realising your values and you start becoming very*
You're really gung-ho when you start, and as it goes on you realise things are not as rosy as it seems, and you may not want to share as much knowledge with your peers. You're at the stage where you're fighting to get a job. (Female/Chinese/New/Consultant)

Here we are trying to make our own mark. Get up and others as equal as us, perhaps we begin to get a bit more confident of our own work, think we know it all, we've got 5-6 years of experience, and it's time to protect myself to get better. So not true concern perhaps. I'm too busy directing my attention to myself. To improve myself at this point. This is where I feel most threatened. There are many of us aiming for that promotion. (Female/Indian/Senior/Academic)

...at this point you're more concerned for your welfare rather than being worried about others. We're too busy putting attention on ourselves. (Female/Indian/Senior/Academic)

They are already in the group, and in their comfort zone. The values of others are not that important. They disregard a lot of others.

With the mid-group, it goes the same as with openness, self-transcendence, and all. Whenever you're new in the industry, you tend to try to follow people and then you establish yourself and therefore again the comfort zone is there and you think you have established those values and being within the group already. And therefore other values of other people are not that important. (Female/Malay/Senior/Corporate)

Mid-range it doesn't mean that much. They've had that experience. Why do they want to be on a par with other people? They feel comfortable. I still want
to improve myself -- in a way this is not applicable to me. I don't agree that it takes less of a priority here. (Female/Malay/Mid/Corporate)

Then over here they start to get into a comfort zone, the comfort zone gets a little more thick, and maybe sometimes things get to your head. You come to a point where you've got your title and you're no longer at the bottom of the pile. (Male/Chinese/Mid/Corporate)

There is a change of focus from learning to implementation. They have more confidence, and their knowledge and experience justify their confidence. They experience an increase in self-assurance, and benefits, and start to see that everyone is not equal. They don't see others as equals, especially newer staff. As a manager they are above the team, and they start to see people's strengths and weaknesses.

Why it goes down over time could very well be that you feel that you have reached a point where you have enhanced yourself enough, and from learning the strategies you are now learning the implementation. (Male/Indian/Mid/Corporate)

As you go on (mid-level) I would expect someone here to be in a manager's role. You already see yourself as above the team and you do start to see that people are not really equal -- they have strengths and weaknesses over others. That's the stage where you come to that realisation. (Female/Malay/Mid/Corporate)

You're more confident as you go along. (Female/Chinese/Mid/Corporate)

There's probably less of that at this stage because again as one goes up the corporate ladder and as one starts to increase in self-assurance and ego, in tangible assets -- what kind of car do you drive, what neighbourhood are you
staying in -- they start to appreciate that not all men are created equal.  
(Male/Chinese/Mid/Corporate)

They are jaded. They realise that things aren't as rosy as they seemed. They may be on the brink of leaving the profession. They just do their job, no added element.

I maintain what I said about this before. When you get to this stage, you're probably very tired and jaded. You've had x number of years in this industry, probably x number of years in a certain company, and the industry is so small. Everybody knows everybody else and you know what sort of undercutting is going on, and stabbing behind the back, and it happens. Everywhere. Especially now. From what I've observed of my friends who have between 8-10 years of practice, they're either on the brink of leaving "I've had enough, of the industry totally. I think I want to do something different". At that particular age, everybody has that, from what I've seen, may not be a public relations practitioner. They just want to do something else. They maybe want to be their own boss. There's a pattern.  
(Female/Chinese/New/Consultant)

"I'm very happy in this job. I have a team now. I have to motivate them. It's my responsibility to teach them, and to let them carry on, as best as they can, under my leadership. I'll do that. But I won't go all out to do it" because they're already not self-motivated at this point. It's a matter of carrying out their job. There's no added element. There's no pro-activeness in trying to get your team together "Hey guys, let's be the best here. Let's do it".  
(Female/Chinese/New/Consultant)

Concern for welfare of others shouldn't dip.

I have no idea why it would dip. It should be something innate, that you should always be equal and concerned for welfare.  
(Female/Chinese/Mid/Corporate)
**Mid-level practitioners see themselves as:** Selfish and focusing on self. They want to keep their image and their job, and they put colleagues' welfare second. They have more confidence. As a manager, they are above the team and they can see people's strengths and weaknesses and see that everyone is not equal. Their knowledge and experience justify their confidence, as do the tangible assets. They are in a comfort zone and they disregard a lot of others. They see that they're not at the bottom of the pile and that comfort goes to their head. They see that they have a change of focus from learning to implementation.

**Newer practitioners see mid-level practitioners as:** Jaded. They realise that things are not as rosy as they seemed, and are possibly on the brink of leaving the profession. They see that mid-level practitioners want to keep their job but don't want to share knowledge with peers. They see that they just do their job, with no added elements.

**Senior practitioners see mid-level practitioners as:** Selfish, focusing on self, aiming for promotion and trying to make their own mark. They see that they may be feeling threatened, and feel hostility because of competition. They want to keep their job but are competing with peers and fighting for jobs. They put colleagues' welfare second. They see that lots of uncertainties emerge for mid-level practitioners, who are trying to be somewhere but are neither here nor there. They also see that mid-level practitioners are in a comfort zone, already being in the group, and the values of others are not seen as that important. They see that mid-level practitioners don't see others as equals, especially newer staff.
Chinese practitioners see mid-level practitioners as: Having more confidence, self-assurance, ego and tangible assets, and realise that everyone is not equal. They realise that they're not at the bottom of the pile any more, and the comfort may go to their head. They see that mid-level practitioners don't want to share their knowledge with peers. They see that they may be jaded, may realise that things aren't as rosy as they seemed, and may be on the brink of leaving the profession. They see that mid-level practitioners may just do the job with no added elements.

Malay practitioners see mid-level practitioners as: In their comfort zone. They are already in the group and as a manager they are above the team and see that people are not equal, they all have strengths and weaknesses. They see that for mid-level practitioners, the values of others are not important. At the same time, they see that lots of uncertainties emerge for the mid-level practitioner.

Indian practitioners see mid-level practitioners as: Selfish and focusing on self. They see that mid-level practitioners are competing with peers and fighting for jobs, aiming for promotion, trying to make a mark, may be feeling threatened and feel hostility because of this competition. They put their colleagues’ welfare second. They see that mid-level practitioners want to keep their job, and their image and they may disregard a lot of others. They see that mid-level practitioners have a change of focus from learning to implementation, and have different priorities -- job is job and personal is personal.
7.2.3 Senior practitioners

Maturity. They understand more about life in general and what it takes to get from here to here. They are into self-actualisation. They have already achieved. They have a desire from within to improve oneself, not to gain promotion but because of what they want to be.

Seniors. Maybe they are already in that position, they have already shown a result. They are talking about Maslow's theory, self-actualisation, and they may have already achieved. (Male/Chinese/Mid/Corporate)

And really thereafter you've gone through a period of implementing and you say "It's time to now move on, to the next phase of enhancing myself again, going back to school in a manner of speaking, and getting things going". So it could be a trend where it goes down, comes up and goes down again and so forth. I don't think it's specifically related to how old a person is, but I believe it's what phase the person is at. (Male/Indian/Mid/Corporate)

At senior level, it could be maturity. It could be just the fact that they understand more about life in general and about what it takes to get from here to here. The individual who has gone through this probably has to fight very very hard, to get here. (Male/Chinese/Mid/Corporate)

Their position is protected. They don't feel threatened and don't feel challenged by the younger practitioners. It's time to look after the welfare of others.

Here I don't feel so threatened. You have got that promotion. You've got those projects to do. You've achieved something. Less threats. (Female/Indian/Senior/Academic)
They need to decide what sort of manager they plan to be. They have responsibilities to the younger practitioners, and a responsibility to share knowledge. They have a desire to teach others. They realise they have to be sensitive to the needs of others. They are more concerned about welfare than younger people are. They know their values and the values of the industry, and they want to pass these values on to younger practitioners. They want to help set the standards in the industry.

*I'm concerned for the welfare of other practitioners, sharing information that I get, not just even with practitioners locally. And concern for the welfare of younger practitioners, the older practitioners would perhaps become a little more conscious of their responsibilities towards the younger people. It takes time. It's much easier to do it yourself if you have a problem or a client has a particular need. It's much easier to just call a young person and say "Do this and this". But it takes lot of time to actually sit them down and tell them why am I editing this, and why am I removing that? (Female/Indian/Senior/Consultant)*

*Here you're looking at a management situation so it depends on what kind of manager you plan to make. Do you make the people feel subordinates or do you call them a colleague? Your mindset changes from an employee situation, a staff situation who's fighting for position, to a management position who has to see what the staff want, and to be seen as treating people equally, and to share knowledge. (Female/Indian/Mid/Consultant)*

*I find when you talk about welfare, people in the older age groups are more concerned about welfare rather than the younger groups. Maybe because they don't see each other as a threat so for that reason they believe everybody's equal. (Male/Chinese/Mid/Consultant)*

They acknowledge the importance of working as a team.
Beyond a certain level, you always believe that whoever you have in the company is part of a team. To me, no-one's indispensable. We all make the team. Like in football. There are 11 players in the team, have equal contribution. Likewise for a company, from the MD to the splash boy. To me, everyone has a role and more, so why management people are more concerned about the welfare of the place. If we have satisfied, happy workers, always leads you to expect maximum productivity. (Male/Chinese/Mid/Consultant)

Then you find out that actually there is very little to be accomplished individually and the greater test is to work with others as a team and to treat others as equals and also to be concerned about their welfare. This knowledge will be only more apparent as you grow older and as you gain more experiences over the years. (Female/Malay/Senior/Corporate)

They want to be a trendsetter and leave their mark on others. A new cycle of self-transcendence. A sudden rejuvenation. They have less to lose. Push the limits again and get on with it.

And once you are towards the end of your career, more than a decade in the industry, you feel you want to become another trendsetter and therefore it motivates, and the values of the industry and other practitioners are very important. (Female/Malay/Senior/Corporate)

Because you've passed this stage. If you haven't broken out by then, you'll never break out. "Let's get on with it". But if you have broken out, and you're starting a new company for example, you start going up again because you have to prove yourself in a different way. (Female/Chinese/New/Consultant)

They start to sense that they don't know that much after all. They don't want to be left behind by their peers. They compare themselves to others. They want acceptance from their peers.
Seniors are more willing to look up to other people to see whether they’re left behind. They also have to make an effort to be on par with those other people around them. I guess people will want to move on, and will try to be on a par if not better than their counterparts. (Female/Malay/Mid/Corporate)

At a senior level, maybe you’re comparing yourself with others, how successful others are. At your prime, and with the younger generation coming in you want to be up to date (not the right word). You want to be accepted by people who are about the same level as you. (Female/Chinese/Mid/Corporate)

But then we get another five years down the line, at 15 years, you may look at life entirely differently. It could be also due to the fact that when they realise it could be time to make a move, or they’re having difficulty coping with technology, coping with young MBAs that come out with a double degree and a laptop, and this guy took 10 years to get there. This young turk gets there in three. You start to eat humble pie. You start to sense that maybe you don’t know that much after all, Buster, because in the information age the impact of technology is going to ensure that the learning curve is much shorter. Access to information is going to ensure competition for jobs and promotions is going to be that much more severe. (Male/Chinese/Mid/Corporate)

Senior practitioners see themselves as: Feeling they have a responsibility to younger practitioners to share knowledge. They want to be a trendsetter and leave their mark on others. Senior practitioners also realise there is little to be accomplished individually -- the greatest test is to work as a team. They don’t feel challenged by younger practitioners.

Mid-level practitioners see senior practitioners as: Mature. They understand more about life in general, that they have already achieved and the job isn’t everything. They see that senior practitioners don’t feel threatened, but see that they have a responsibility
to younger practitioners, a responsibility to share knowledge, a desire to teach others, and they realise they need to be sensitive to the needs of others. They need to decide what sort of manager they want to be. They see that senior practitioners are more concerned about welfare than younger people. They see that senior practitioners may be into a new cycle of self-transcendence, into self-actualisation, and a desire from within to improve oneself. They see that senior practitioners do compare themselves to others. They want acceptance from their peers and they don't want to be left behind in comparison to their peers. They see that senior practitioners may sense that they don't know that much after all.

**Newer practitioners see senior practitioners as:** Having a sudden rejuvenation. They want to get on with it, have less to lose and push the limits again.

**Chinese practitioners see senior practitioners as:** Mature. They understand more about life in general, and that they have already achieved. They see that senior practitioners don't feel threatened, but see that they have a responsibility to younger practitioners, and are more concerned about welfare than younger people. They see that senior practitioners are into self-actualisation, want to get on with it, want acceptance from their peers and don't want to be left behind by their peers, so are constantly comparing themselves to others. They see that senior practitioners may start to sense that they don't know that much after all.

**Malay practitioners see senior practitioners as:** Not wanting to be left behind their peers. They compare themselves to others. They see that senior practitioners want to be trendsetters, to leave their mark on others, to help set the standards in the industry, and
to pass on their values and industry values to younger practitioners. They see that senior practitioners realise the value of working as a team -- accomplishing more than can be accomplished individually.

**Indian practitioners see senior practitioners as:** Mature, and entering a new cycle of self-transcendence. The job isn't everything. Their position is protected. They don't feel threatened and now is the time to look after the welfare of others. They see that senior practitioners have a desire to teach others, a responsibility to younger practitioners to share knowledge, to be sensitive to the needs of others and to look after the welfare of others. They see that it's linked with deciding what sort of manager they want to be. At the same time, they see that senior practitioners want acceptance from their peers, and have a desire from within to improve themselves, not for promotion but because of who they want to be.

**7.3 Self-transcendence and ethnicity**

The analysis of the impact of ethnicity and gender on the self-transcendence value dimension found different patterns for male and female practitioners across ethnicities. Female practitioners of all three ethnicities were similar in their motivation levels. The differences among male practitioners were more marked: male Chinese practitioners again had the lowest motivation levels, with the one male Indian practitioner in the sample much higher and male Malay practitioners highest overall. The motivation levels for male Indian and Malay practitioners were above those for all female practitioners, and the motivation level for male Chinese practitioners below. In this
section, I am only dealing with differences due to ethnicity. (See section 7.4 for discussion on the combined effect on ethnicity and gender on self-transcendence).

7.3.1 Chinese practitioners

Chinese females were more motivated by self-enhancement than Chinese men. Chinese men were the lowest on self-enhancement. Chinese women were at much the same level as Malay and Indian women. While Chinese females were much the same as Malay and Indian women, Malay and Indian males were much higher than Chinese males.

Chinese are very bonded. Interested in others. They always protect their own group. They help each other a lot within their own group. They can help one another to improve. It's the culture from China. People with the same surname will be given priority -- very strong spirit. This contributes to very strong teamwork. They still have clans and societies. They can interact between societies, but with limitations.

*The Chinese are more ambitious. But the Chinese always feel they help each other a lot. But within their own group, rather than outside. They always protect their own group. It's the culture right from China, the feudal lord, and your own province, and you protect your province. So they are most helpful that way and they would help themselves a lot more.*
(Female/Indian/Senior/Academic)

*The Chinese stand out compared to the others. The other two groups are more for everybody rather than just within their group, but the Chinese within their group stand out much stronger than either of the other two. Also because the*
Chinese are more ambitious. Within their own group they would probably be very high. (Female/Indian/Senior/Academic)

Somehow with the Chinese, although they came from China, they are not second families. They bring the family out. Not like the Indians. Indians are known for that. They maintain two families in Indian and Malaysia. Chinese are quite different. That's why they are very strong. The team spirit is really admirable. They can help one another improve, they can see their own kind growing, and allow for the person to grow. If you compare with the Malay and the Indians they are different. They will not allow their own kind to grow as much as the Chinese. (Female/Malay/Senior/Corporate)

A good example is JE (a recent health scare in Malaysia). Chinese are very very bonded. If you have a problem, you just announce it once and you can get millions of dollars in just a few days to help that group of Chinese community. I think their values are quite consistent in that sense. I think in the business world of Chinese there's not much of (this). We always feel the Chinese always help the Chinese whereas sometimes the Malays would like to stab the other Malays to be successful. They are not competing with one another. They are actually looking at each other's values and learning from one another. And that's important politically, and in a fragmented country like us, it's very important. And that's why I think politically they are looking to all these rules. (Female/Malay/Senior/Corporate)

Chinese I can understand why they are like this. Chinese still have clans, societies. One society can interact with another, but with limitations. (Male/Malay/New/Corporate)

They are more individualistic, more ambitious and more selfish about what they have. They tend to be the most selfish. They care about themselves, are less ready to share, and are suspicious and hostile. They have a strong survival instinct. Money takes precedence over most things. Chinese males have their own principles and they're set.
On the other extreme you've got the Chinese which tend to be the most selfish. The number one thing in a Chinese generally is money. More money. Number 2 is money, Number 3 is money. And that takes precedence over a lot of things. (Male/Chinese/Mid/Corporate)

I wouldn't rate this one so low - I would put it higher...This is the survival instinct, and this is very much so in a man as compared to a woman. It is a socialisation. (Female/Chinese/New/Consultant)

I'm not surprised at all. I'm not sure I can explain. I can go back to one experience I had. The Chinese practitioners have always been a bit selfish about what they have, and not being too ready to share. I think the Indians and Malays are a lot more willing to share with their friends. Even sharing in terms of resources. I spent six years in x (major company) in a huge public relations division - there were 40 of us. There must have been about 25 professionals, and then a bunch of clerks. The Chinese practitioners were very selfish with their time, and their experience. They were not so willing to share. There was always that element of suspicion and hostility. If there was someone in the organisation with an attitude of wanting to do the proper job, wanting to do their best, wanting to be prima donnas, demonstrating how great they were, and how superior they were in terms of their intellectual ability, etc etc. (Female/Indian/Senior/Consultant)

Chinese in general are more individualistic, care about themselves, and they tend to be more selfish. You'll find in areas with a mixed population interaction is better than in areas where strictly all-Chinese. (Male/Chinese/Mid/Consultant)

For the Chinese male, they all have their own principles and they're set, they're not going to change. (Female/Malay/Mid/Corporate)

Chinese are biased. They have a superior attitude because of their economic status.
They make racial jokes. It would be harder for a Chinese to accept an Indian or a Malay as an equal. They have a hang-up with Malays because of the favouritism shown to Bumiputras.

*The Chinese are just a biased lot. I know that with the Chinese, and I guess it's the same for the others but I can't speak for the others, but the Chinese do make jokes behind their backs, in their face, racial jokes. And they might have a hang-up between the Chinese and the Malays because of the favouritism given to Bumiputras.* (Female/Chinese/Mid/Corporate)

*It would be harder for a Chinese to accept an Indian as an equal, or a Malay definitely as an equal. There is this superior attitude that a Chinese harbours. By sheer dint of economic status. Background, what kind of universities they went to.* (Male/Chinese/Mid/Corporate)

**Chinese see themselves as:** Having a superior attitude because of economic status. Money takes precedence over most things. They see themselves to be the most selfish about what they have, more individualistic, and caring about themselves rather than others. They have a survival instinct. They see themselves as biased. They have a hang-up about the Malays because of favouritism shown to Bumiputras. They see that it would be harder for a Chinese practitioner to accept an Indian or a Malay as equal.

**Malays see Chinese practitioners as:** Always protecting their own group. They see that they are bonded, interested in others, help each other a lot within their own group, and help one another improve. They see that people with the same surname will be given priority. This is a very strong spirit and contributes to very strong teamwork. They see that the Chinese have clans and societies, and they can interact between
societies but with limitations. They see that the Chinese males have their own principles which are set.

_Indians see Chinese practitioners as:_ Helping each other a lot within their own group. They see that it's the culture from China, with the feudal lord and protection of the province. They are more selfish about what they have and less ready to share. They see that the Chinese have more need to focus on this.

### 7.3.2 Malay practitioners

Malay females were less motivated by self-enhancement than Malay men but were at much the same level as Chinese and Indian women. Malay men were more highly motivated by self-transcendence than Chinese and Indian males.

Malays are already on top -- don't have so much to worry about.

*Here they don't have to worry about that - they are already on top. There's no loss. If they're going to treat someone as an equal, become more of a team player, it's better for them if they do that.* (Female/Chinese/New/Consultant)

*I would have thought that the need for self-enhancement would be less with the Malays and more with the Chinese and Indians combined, about the same. The Malays to a large extent are more protected in this country and so it would make better sense that this would not be the case.* (Male/Indian/Mid/Corporate)

They are trying to progress and improve the self. They are politically inclined.
For the Malays, there is a great inclination to improve the self. They would like to improve and better themselves. (Female/Malay/Mid/Corporate)

If I look at this green line (men) it's kind of more representative of men in the Malaysian working environment in general. It's not restricted to public relations though. I don't have real grounding for any of this but if you're talking about stereotypes people would always say that more often than not that the individuals within an organisation who are politically inclined are most likely Malay or Indian, even moreso Indian. It's just the way people stereotype each other. (Female/Malay/Mid/Corporate)

The Malays is one also where again we are trying to move ourselves and trying to progress in a lot of ways. It has been stated in history, in a lot of books, although this is a Muslim country but the Chinese progress more than the Malays. I think with current policies and current practices, the Malays are given opportunities to be educated overseas and the percentage is greater and therefore those values also play a role in their self-enhancement. (Female/Malay/Senior/Corporate)

Malays are very competitive with other Malays.

If you compare (the Chinese) with the Malay and the Indians they are different. They will not allow their own kind to grow as much as the Chinese. (Female/Malay/Senior/Corporate)

We always feel the Chinese always help the Chinese whereas sometimes the Malays would like to stab the other Malays to be successful. (Female/Malay/Senior/Corporate)

Malays are more collectivist and show a preference for welfare, compared with the other two races. They are willing to share with friends. Malays are the ones who want others to accept them as equals.
Amongst the men, this is saying that the Malays and the Indians are more collectivist than the Chinese. That's probably true. (Female/Indian/Senior/Academic)

I always felt the Malays were the ones who want others to accept them as equals. More than the Indians. And Chinese the least. (Female/Indian/Mid/Consultant)

I think the Indians and Malays are a lot more willing to share with their friends. Even sharing in terms of resources. (Female/Indian/Senior/Consultant)

I find Malays show a certain preference for welfare, more so than the Chinese and Indians. (Male/Chinese/Mid/Consultant)

The Malays will never accept an Indian as an equal. Not quantifiably, not qualitatively. I would put them a bit lower (on the chart). (Male/Chinese/Mid/Corporate)

Religion plays an important role for Malays right now -- educating about what is right and wrong.

I think it's more towards religion than what other people think of you. I've never seen so many Muslims pray 15 years ago. Fifteen, 20 years ago I was quite young. The mosques were not as packed as they are now. Right now they even pray on the streets during praying hours so I think religion plays a heavy role these days for the Malays. (Female/Malay/Senior/Corporate)

I am a very liberal woman. There are more opportunities where talks on religion are given, there are schools that teach you about the religion, so people are educated from when they are young. I think the roads are (opening
up) on telling people about the religion, the roots of where you come from, and what is right and what is wrong, and that helps in terms of your morals and things. In every property development you will have to have a mosque for example. So that has been a growing thing -- educating people. “Being a Muslim doesn’t mean you have to be backwards, because God doesn’t want you to be backwards. Don’t be fanatics – you don’t have to be fanatics to be a good Muslim.” You have to know the right and wrong and I think a lot of people need that these days. There are so many things... Gives you back to your self and to your roots. I think that’s important and that’s why Malays are looking progressively. The opportunities are greater. (Female/Malay/Senior/Corporate)

**Malay practitioners see themselves as:** Trying to progress. They have a great inclination to improve the self. They see that they are very competitive with other Malays - back-stabbing, do not allow their own kind to grow, and their teamwork is not as effective. They acknowledge the increasing role of religion for them in terms of educating about what is right or wrong.

**Chinese practitioners see Malay practitioners as:** Already being on top and therefore don’t have to worry so much. They see that the Malays show a preference for welfare, compared to the other two races, but that Malays would never accept an Indian as an equal.

**Indian practitioners see Malay practitioners as:** More collectivist and willing to share with friends. They see that Malays are the ones who want others to accept them as equals. They see that the Malays are already on top and therefore don't have to worry so much.
Indian females were less motivated by self-transcendence than Indian men but were at much the same level as Chinese and Indian women. The one Indian male in the sample scored more highly than Chinese male practitioners and lower than the Malay male practitioners on self-transcendence.

Being a minority race, they tend to stick together. They need to look out for each other and accept each other, to stay together as a group. Circumstances force them to stick together, as they are the least advantaged. They have common customs and language. They are willing to share with friends.

I think in terms of the groups which are communal, the Indians probably band together a lot more, most of all because they are the minority, the least advantaged, the most disadvantaged, they have common customs and language, to a lesser degree than even the Chinese -- we all have different dialects. And I think they need to look out for each other and accept each other, to stay together as a group. (Male/Chinese/Mid/Corporate)

Maybe it's empathy. Maybe they help Indians, having been through the kind of situation they're in and seeing fellow Indians in that kind of situation, they would probably have more empathy for others. (Male/Chinese/Mid/Corporate)

But I do agree this one is the highest. Because they are a minority race and they tend to stick together, or circumstances force them to stick together. As a result, they are always very grateful if others show them that "hey, you're one of us". If someone shows them that, they will go all out to practice that too. (Female/Chinese/New/Consultant)
I think the Indians and Malays are a lot more willing to share with their friends. Even sharing in terms of resources. (Female/Indian/Senior/Consultant)

I'm thinking of an example outside of public relations. We were trying to set up a free medical clinic in a particular area and we had got through working with the Rotary club, a list of all members who were doctors, because to run the free clinic you had to have voluntary doctors. We had a list of 30/40 Rotarians in that district who were doctors. They were all ethnic groups. In the end we got just two volunteers and they were both Indian. This is typical. None of the Chinese doctors were prepared to do voluntary time, even on a rotation basis. (Female/Indian/Senior/Consultant)

They are more collectivist. They are very community-conscious and the values of community are important. They weigh up what the Indian community has to say and abide by it. They are concerned about how they should be seen by others.

The Indians are very conscious and very community-related and the values of the community are very important. They actually weigh what the Indian community have to say and it sort of runs their life – how they should be seen in the community, how the other people in the community see them, so that's important to them, so this is a true reflection. (Female/Malay/Senior/Corporate)

Amongst the men, this is saying that the Malays and the Indians are more collectivist than the Chinese. That's probably true. (Female/Indian/Senior/Academic)

Somehow with the Chinese, although they came from China, they are not second families. They bring the family out. Not like the Indians. Indians are known for that. They maintain two families in Indian and Malaysia. Chinese are quite different. That's why they are very strong. The team spirit is really
admirable. They can help one another improve, they can see their own kind growing, and allow for the person to grow. If you compare with the Malay and the Indians they are different. They will not allow their own kind to grow as much as the Chinese. (Female/Malay/Senior/Corporate)

They have a survival instinct being a minority. Indian males are a minority and acceptance is very important for them. They have more need to focus on this. It's easier for Indians to accept others as equals.

By definition, it's easier for Indians to accept others as equal but it may not be reciprocated. (Male/Chinese/Mid/Corporate)

With self-acceptance, I think the Indian males, because they're a minority, I think it's important for them. (Female/Chinese/Mid/Corporate)

I agree with this about the men. I am married to a Malay man. My boss is a Chinese. I have many Indian men friends and I find them to be really most open and quick to treat others as equals. It has a lot to do with the fact that they are in the minority. You trace their history. A lot of them started off coming from India. It's a survival instinct and being a minority. (Female/Malay/Senior/Corporate)

I don't know many Indian men who feel this way! I always felt the Malays were the ones who want others to accept them as equals. More than the Indians. And Chinese the least. (Female/Indian/Mid/Consultant)

I would rate Indians higher than Chinese but lower than Malays. (Male/Chinese/Mid/Consultant)

Indians, have castes. When they give out invitations, they use all their names of the family. I am not saying this is not correct. Why this happens is because
Indians see themselves as equals to other people. (Male/Malay/New/Corporate)

There is great inclination for Indian males to improve the self -- they are very open to ideas. Indian males want to achieve the best for their company.

For the Malays, there is a great inclination to improve the self. They would like to improve and better themselves. For the Indian male, even more so, because they want to achieve the best for their company and they're very open to ideas. (Female/Malay/Mid/Corporate)

If I look at this green line (men) it's kind of more representative of men in the Malaysian working environment in general. It's not restricted to public relations though. I don't have real grounding for any of this but if you're talking about stereotypes people would always say that more often than not that the individuals within an organisation who are politically inclined are most likely Malay or Indian, even more so Indian. It's just the way people stereotype each other. (Female/Malay/Mid/Corporate)

Indian men are more outspoken, they are more dynamic and extrovert. I can understand. (Male/Chinese/Mid/Corporate)

Indians see themselves as: More collectivist and willing to share with friends. They see that they have more need to focus on this.

Malays see Indian practitioners as: Very community-conscious, and that the values of community are important. They see that they weigh up what the Indian community has to say and then let that run their life in terms of how they should be seen by others. Indians still have the caste system, and may maintain two families -- one in India and one in Malaysia. They see that the Indians have a strong survival instinct because they
are a minority, and that there is a great inclination for Indian males to improve the self, being very open to ideas.

*Chinese see Indian practitioners as:* A minority race who tend to band together because there is a need to look out for each other and accept each other and stay together as a group. Circumstances also force them to stick together as they are least advantaged. They share common customs and language, and are willing to share with friends. They see that Indian males are a minority and acceptance is important for them. They see that it's easier for Indians to accept others as equal.

### 7.4 Self-transcendence, gender and ethnicity

Males and females had a different pattern across ethnicities. Females were consistent in terms of self-transcendence regardless of ethnicity; whereas males differed greatly depending on ethnicity. Chinese males were lowest on self-transcendence; Malay males were the highest and the one Indian male in the sample was also high, with the Indian and Malay males higher than females of any ethnicity. The differences between males and females within each ethnic group were significant only for the Malay respondents \((m_{\text{male}} = 7.39, m_{\text{female}} = 6.42; t(7) = 2.99, p = .02)\).

#### 7.4.1 Female practitioners

Women are more genuine, more tolerant, more emotional and more sincere in their feelings about helping someone else. Women are nurturers.
Women are more genuine, more sincere in their feelings in terms of helping someone else. (Female/Indian/Senior/Consultant)

I think females are generally more tolerant. More emotional and are less concerned about war, so they more believe in diversity. It comes back to their belief that they should be treated equally, and so there is no difference. Females regardless of race believe in equal rights for themselves, so race doesn't come into play. (Female/Chinese/Mid/Corporate)

Women don't have a sense of competition about social status. They accept each other as equals. Women are more prone to learn from each other. They don't want to outshine each other. There is less chauvinism among women. They may feel there's less of a need to compete than men.

Women, maybe they feel there's less of a need to compete than men. I'm not saying there isn't a need to compete, but their perception is different. (Male/Chinese/Mid/Corporate)

Women generally are the nurturers. That fits in very well. Less chauvinism amongst women. I think there's not much to talk there. Women are much the same. (Female/Indian/Senior/Academic)

For women, we all accept each other as equals. We don't want to outshine each other but we are more prone to learn from each other. If I give you an idea, it's actually taken. (Female/Malay/Mid/Corporate)

Women are consistent.

I'd say again that the difference between males and females has something to do with the female general will to be more consistent than it has to do with self-transcendence per se. (Male/Indian/Mid/Corporate)
All this graph is proving one thing. It is true that more ladies should be in public relations. We are more stable. (Female/Malay/Senior/Corporate)

Don't see the graph as typical. Females should be the same as males.

For the females I don't see that as typical, but for the males maybe. I would expect the females to be the same as the males. (Female/Chinese/Mid/Corporate)

7.4.2 Male practitioners

The graph is representative of men in the Malaysian working environment in general.

Men spend time politicking rather than being honest. They compete about social status.

I find that male professionals, particularly in large organisations, tend to be driven by politics, and wanting to get ahead. They spend a lot of their time in politicking rather than being honest and doing an honest day's job, which means being open, being professional, sharing and getting on with it. (Female/Indian/Senior/Consultant)

If I look at this green line (men) it's kind of more representative of men in the Malaysian working environment in general. It's not restricted to public relations though. I don't have real grounding for any of this but if you're talking about stereotypes people would always say that more often than not that the individuals within an organisation who are politically inclined are most likely Malay or Indian, even moreso Indian. It's just the way people stereotype each other. (Female/Malay/Mid/Corporate)

Men are better listeners and more concerned than their female counterparts.
home. He can afford to spend more time in the office doing it here. (Female/Chinese/New/Consultant)

Female practitioners see themselves as: Nurturers, more genuine and more sincere in their feelings about helping someone else. They see that there is less chauvinism among women, that they accept each other as equals, and are more prone to learn from each other. They see that women believe in diversity and in equal rights for themselves; are more tolerant, more emotional and less concerned about war. They don't see the graph as typical -- females should be the same as men.

Male practitioners see female practitioners as: Not having a sense of competition about social status, with less of a need to compete than men.

Male practitioners see themselves as: Better listeners and more concerned than their female counterparts. They also see that senior males become more accepting of other people's values.

Female practitioners see male practitioners as: Politicking rather than being honest. Female practitioners see that the graph is representative of men in the Malaysian working environment in general.

Chinese practitioners see male practitioners as: Better listeners and more concerned than their female counterparts.

Chinese practitioners see female practitioners as: Believing in diversity and in equal rights for themselves; as more tolerant, more emotional and less concerned about war.
They see that women don't have a sense of competition about social status, and see that women may feel less of a need to compete than men. They also don't see the graph as typical -- believe that females should be the same as males.

_Malay practitioners see male practitioners as:_ Similar to other males in the Malaysian working environment in general.

_Malay practitioners see female practitioners as:_ More prone to learn from each other and accept each other as equals.

_Indian practitioners see male practitioners as:_ Politicking rather than being honest.

_Indian practitioners see female practitioners as:_ Nurturers, more genuine and more sincere in their feelings about helping someone else. They saw that there was less chauvinism among the women.

7.5 Interpretations on Self-Transcendence

What has come through in respondent comments are a collection of individual explanations for the effects of ethnicity and gender on openness to change. In chapters 9 and 10, I'll use theoretical frameworks to explain the effects. This stage is important therefore in identifying key themes which can be analysed against the theoretical frameworks.
7.5.1 The impact of years of experience on self-transcendence

7.5.1.1 Newer practitioners

One theme to follow through on in the next analytical phase is the high levels of self-transcendence exhibited by newer practitioners. Newer practitioners were higher than all others, showing that they are more highly motivated by these values when they're newer into the profession. This feeling drops away after a few years of experience and then comes back again, perhaps once their position is more secure.

Another theme relates to the relationship between these values and the ability to be successful on the job. They are new to the profession, with much to learn, and they appear to focus on learning rather than being competitive. Much of their learning will come from others. Do they adopt self-transcendence values as a strategy for success?

A related theme is the relationship between these values and the need to feel accepted in the organisation. Respondents talked about wanting to feel accepted, and wanting to belong to and feel a part of the organisation. It's important to them. Their high self-transcendence values may come from the desire to fit in and be accepted. This is related to their expectations of the job and the working environment.

Another theme is the relationship between self-identity and self-transcendence. How do they see themselves in relation to their peers, and in relation to others in the organisation? Respondents talked about all being "in it together", and because they're at
"the bottom of the heap", they are aware of the differences in rank and experience. This may impact on their interactions with others.

7.5.1.2 Mid-level practitioners

One theme to follow through on in the next analytical phase is the low levels of self-transcendence exhibited by mid-level practitioners who have the lowest levels of all practitioners. What is happening for practitioners at this level which results in such low motivation levels?

A key theme is the relationship of these values to their interest in doing the job. It may be at this stage that they lose their interest and motivation for the job itself. Respondents talked about this being a time when other priorities, such as family, emerge. They may feel that they can now concentrate on other priorities in life. They may realise that there is more to life than work, and this lessens their interest and motivation. They may feel that they're achieved some of the acceptance that was important to them earlier on, and feel more relaxed about their position in the organisation.

A related theme is the importance of these values to their ability to do the job. They see their working life differently from the way they saw it when they were new into the profession. They have a more realistic view of things, and a greater knowledge of the way the system really works. They become competitive with the peers they used to share with because they are thinking about promotions and moving upward in the
organisation. They feel the need to focus more on themselves than on others, hence the comment that mid-level practitioners enter a selfish stage. They put themselves first.

Another theme is the relationship between identity and self-transcendence. Their sense of self has changed. Their competencies have increased and they can do things now that they couldn't do before. Such improvement in capabilities would be reflected in the sort of work they are asked to do, and their level of responsibility. Their confidence levels would have changed. They may be in a supervisory position where they have responsibility for the work of more junior practitioners. They may feel they have moved from "learner" status to "doer" status. To what extent is self-transcendence part of their identity?

7.5.1.3 Senior practitioners

One theme to follow through on in the next analytical phase is the high levels of self-transcendence exhibited by senior practitioners, almost to the high levels of newer practitioners. What kickstarts these values again? For example, respondents talked about senior practitioners becoming interested in self-actualisation.

A key theme is related to self-identity and self-transcendence values, and whether self-transcendence and a concern for the welfare of others feature as part of their identity. Senior practitioners who are comfortable with their own position would not see input from others as diminishing their own position. It is a mature and confident perspective. Further, senior practitioners can see things about the profession that junior practitioners can't, as a result of their experience, often with great clarity. It gives them greater
confidence in their skills and abilities. "Senior" status within a profession prompts professionals to consider how they can pass that knowledge on to others -- to their own staff and more widely within the profession. It may lead them to think about how they can make a mark within the profession and the industry -- what they might be remembered for in terms of their contribution to the development of the practice or the profession. Or they may have a sudden rejuvenation to push ahead, push at the limits, and build a stronger position for themselves. If so, then their concern about where they stand compared with their peers would fuel that drive.

Another theme is the way in which self-transcendence improves their ability to do the job. With experience there is the assumption of seniority and movement into or towards a management position. Being in a management position would carry some responsibility in relation to the welfare of staff. Not only does self-transcendence mean concern for the welfare of others, it implies a change of focus away from self to a focus on others. Senior practitioners have achieved, so their concern may not be so strongly about themselves, but may lead to broader concerns about their staff, or the profession, or the wider community.

Another theme relates to their own desire to feel accepted. They may be quite concerned about the level of acceptance they have from others, from their peers. The high level of self-transcendence motivation may be because they are still seeking that acceptance or they may want reassurance that they are still in tune with the values of the industry and other senior practitioners. Respondents talked about the rapid changes in technology affecting communication, and this could lead senior practitioners to be more concerned about their performance than at earlier times in their career.
7.5.2 The impact of gender on self-transcendence

7.5.2.1 Female practitioners

A key theme is the apparent consistency in levels of self-transcendence for women, regardless of ethnicity.

A key theme relates to self-identity and self-transcendence, and whether self-transcendence features as a component of self-identity for female practitioners. Respondents talked about women as nurturers, as being less competitive, and more genuine in their desire to help others.

A key theme for females is the extent to which socialisation impacts on levels of self-transcendence. Respondents talked about Malaysia as a male-oriented society, where the role of women is as the follower, not as the leader, and where women are judged by the success of their husband. Socialisation helps to set the expectations and the goals -- the expectations that society has for a successful female, and the goals that a practitioner will set for herself. The expectation for women is in terms of their important role of homemaker, which implies a particular set of attributes and skills which women develop.

Another key theme is the relationship between self-transcendence and their ability to do the job. Respondents talked about women being under less pressure to succeed in the working world than males, according to the traditional view of success. It is
possible that they apply a different approach on the job, possibly a co-operative relational model, where the quality of the interactions enables the work to get done. Their level of self-transcendence may lead them to develop different approaches to dealing with professional and personal issues and the mix between professional and personal lives. It may lead them to deal with conflict on the job differently, or for dealing with management on public relations issues. Cultural influence may also affect how a practitioner's role is perceived by the organisation they work for.

7.5.2.2 Male practitioners

A key theme is the difference between males of different ethnicities, which is strong contrast to the similarity between females of different ethnicities. With males, there were marked differences between Chinese, Malay and Indian males on self-transcendence values. One explanation offered by respondents was to do with the type and source of education received. The implication is that different educational environments may have an impact on the level of positive acceptance of others. One inference for example is that the Chinese might be comparatively low on self-transcendence because of their heritage and their education.

Another key theme for males is the extent to which socialisation impacts on levels of self-transcendence. Males appear to be driven by different values than females. To what extent is this a result of socialisation?

A key theme relates to self-identity and self-transcendence, and whether self-transcendence features as a component of self-identity for male practitioners.
Respondents talked about politicking being more a part of the male psyche than the female psyche which enables men to achieve their goals.

7.5.3 The impact of ethnicity on self-transcendence

7.5.3.1 Chinese practitioners

One theme to follow through on in the next analytical phase is the importance or otherwise of this value dimension among the Chinese. Chinese males were the lowest in this value which means that it is not seen as important.

Related to the first theme of the centrality or otherwise of this dimension is relationship between self-transcendence and achievement of business goals. This infers that Chinese are low on this value because they don't see that it fulfils a business goal.

Another theme is the impact of relationships within Chinese groups (whether they are families or businesses) on self-transcendence. Respondents mentioned the strong sense of heritage which binds the Chinese together and creates a distinction between their family and others. They have a bond between family which gives them high self-transcendence values within family, but they appear to feel very differently about those outside their family. It was described as "a clan mentality". To people within the family this is seen as a strength because it is protecting what they have worked hard to achieve. To those outside the family it is seen as being selfish, suspicious and hostile. In terms of the research, this suggests this Chinese are less interested in self-transcendence values in relation to the wider community.
Another theme is the relationship between self-identity and self-transcendence. Chinese were described in various ways, such as being individualistic, ambitious, selfish, less ready to share, and suspicious and hostile. They appear to focus on doing what is needed to achieve results. They are in a strong economic position, and according to respondents, they acknowledge their superior attitude.

Also on identity is how the Chinese see themselves in relation to the other ethnic groups, and whether this is related to self-transcendence levels. Respondents talked about rivalry and bigotry between the Chinese and the Malays.

7.5.3.2 Malay practitioners

A key theme is the relationship between self-identity and self-transcendence. In this research, the Malay people have been described as humane, humble, nicer, friendlier, softer, warmer, good to have in the workplace, good on the phone, more creative, who want to please and keep harmony. They consider the human factor in decision-making. In short, they are people-oriented people. Therefore it would seem consistent for them to be fairly high on self-transcendence values.

A related theme is the compatibility of self-transcendence with the Malay way of doing things (i.e., cultural approaches). Respondents described Malay practitioners and Malay organisations as being more concerned with protocol, and being seen to do things the right way, than with necessarily achieving the results. This is consistent with high levels of self-transcendence and interest in the welfare of others. Their kampong
heritage ensures a collectivist approach. Religion is also a strong influence for many Malays. For Muslims, guidelines are clear on how they should live their lives and interact with people.

Another theme relates to their own desire to feel accepted, perhaps by the other ethnic groups in Malaysia. Respondents noted that the Malays were very competitive between themselves, and that there is a growing distinction between the haves and the have-nots. I think part of the comparative picture has to do with the racial mix in Malaysia and the relationship that the various ethnicities have with each other. Malays are the largest group and are seen as being at the top. They have support from Government policies which give them preferential treatment in a number of areas. The other ethnicities are likely to resent this -- the Chinese because they see that the Malays have an unfair advantage and haven't worked hard to achieve what they're being given, and the Indians because, by virtue of their race and their smaller numbers, are denied the successes of the Malays.

Another theme relates to the significant difference found between male and female Malay practitioners; what leads to difference, and why the differences are significant whereas the differences between Chinese males and females, which also appear large, are not significant.

7.5.3.3 Indian practitioners

A key theme is why the Indian male and females display high levels of self-transcendence values. As a group, the high level of self-enhancement values are
perhaps easy to understand. The Indians are a minority group. They have to struggle for acceptance and for a place in society and are conscious of their disadvantaged position compared with the others. They focus on such issues as equality and welfare and therefore it is a strong motivator for them.

Another theme is the extent to which self-transcendence values are seen as part of their self-identity. They are concerned about how they are seen by others and what they have to do to be accepted by others. High levels of acceptance and achievement may be something they aspire to and focus on to build their position. Respondents noted that they more readily see others as being equal to them, than the other ethnicities.

Another theme is the impact of relationships within the Indian community (whether they are families or businesses) on self-transcendence. Respondents noted that the Indians gain strength from their community, and recognise that by working together they may be able to achieve more than they could by working individually. They are seen to be community-oriented, conscious of what their community think, and generally interested in following actions consistent with their community beliefs.

7.6 Summary of emerging issues

The interaction of ethnicity and gender on self-transcendence brings together the themes just discussed. In combination with the impact of years of experience, the issues include: the high levels of self-transcendence exhibited by newer practitioners; the relationship between these values and the ability to be successful on the job; the relationship between these values and the need to feel accepted in the organisation; the
relationship between self-identity and self-transcendence; the low levels of self-transcendence exhibited by mid-level practitioners; the relationship between self-transcendence and mid-level practitioners' interest in doing the job; the high levels of self-transcendence exhibited by senior practitioners; the apparent consistency in levels of self-transcendence for women; the influence of socialisation on self-transcendence; the marked difference between males of different ethnicities; the importance or otherwise of this value dimension; the impact of relationships within ethnic groups (whether they are families or businesses) on self-transcendence; how ethnic groups see themselves in relation to the other ethnic groups, and whether this is related to self-transcendence levels; the compatibility of self-transcendence with the Malay way of doing things; why there is a significant difference between male and female Malay practitioners on self-transcendence; why Indian male and females have high levels of self-transcendence values; and why Chinese males have such low levels of self-transcendence values.

This long list of issues will be further explored in Chapters 8 and 9.

7.7 Conclusion

This chapter set out to examine the value dimension of self-transcendence, and the ways in which ethnicity, gender and years of experience might influence the levels of self-transcendence held. Self-transcendence represents the extent to which one is motivated by acceptance of others as equals and concern for their welfare. The analysis in relation to years of experience found that newer practitioners are most highly motivated by self-transcendence, then there's a big drop in motivation for the mid-level
practitioners and a rise again for senior practitioners. This documents the finding that, as practitioners gain experience in this profession, their motivations change.

The analysis in relation to ethnicity and gender showed that there were different patterns of motivation between males and females, and between males in terms of ethnicity. Women displayed similar levels of motivation regardless of ethnicity. Chinese males were the lowest on self-transcendence, and Malay males were the highest. In terms of differences between males and females within ethnic groupings, gender made no significant difference to self-transcendence values for the Chinese respondents, but did lead to a significant difference for the Malays. (An analysis was unable to be completed for the Indian respondents because only one male was included in the sample). Through lengthy discussions with respondents on a second trip to Malaysia, a number of ideas or themes were put forward by respondents to explain these findings.

This chapter sets out those main themes, and each theme is supported by quotes from respondents. It is important to use these quotes because the points which were raised by respondents are best reported in their own words, to reduce researcher bias, and to communicate the full intent of their thoughts.

The chapter ended with the identification of 17 key themes to take forward into the final analysis and discussion of variables in chapters 8 and 9.
CHAPTER 8
ETHNICITY AND GENDER

Ethnic identity is an important aspect of self definition, especially in multiethnic societies (Christian et al., 1976, p. 281).

This chapter brings together analyses of the effects of ethnicity and gender on values. This chapter seeks to present and then apply theoretical frameworks which can be used to fully understand and interpret the results. Key themes arise out of the findings, and the analysis in this chapter is structured around these themes. Within this analysis, the themes identified in chapters 5 and 7 will also be addressed.

8.1 Summary of findings

Ethnicity correlated with the value dimensions of openness to change and self-transcendence, and the value types of stimulation, self-direction and power. There was a significant interaction effect also between ethnicity and gender on these value dimensions, value types and the additional value type of achievement. Generally, the effects attributable to the interaction between ethnicity and gender are larger than either of the main effects alone, and of the main effects, ethnicity generally produced a larger effect than did gender.

The analysis of the impact of ethnicity and gender on the openness to change value dimension found different patterns for male and female practitioners. For women, there is little difference between ethnic groups in terms of motivation to openness to change.
Female Chinese and Malay practitioners were similar in their motivation levels with the level being slightly higher for female Indian practitioners. The differences among male practitioners were more marked: male Chinese practitioners had the lowest motivation levels, with the one male Indian practitioner slightly higher and male Malay practitioners highest overall. The motivation levels for male Chinese and Indian practitioners were lower than for all female practitioners.

There were differences between males and females within each ethnic group, but an independent samples t-test (see chapter 4) revealed that gender leads to a significant difference only for the Malays. Gender made no difference for the Chinese respondents, and the analysis could not be undertaken with the Indian sample because it included only one male. Therefore, this value dimension is both gender and culture-bound.

The analysis of the impact of ethnicity and gender on the self-transcendence value dimension again found different patterns for male and female practitioners, and found a pattern very similar to that for openness to change. Female practitioners of all three ethnicities were similar in their motivation levels. The differences among male practitioners were more marked: male Chinese practitioners again had the lowest motivation levels, with the male Indian practitioner much higher and male Malay practitioners highest overall. The motivation levels for male Indian and Malay practitioners were above those for all female practitioners, and the motivation level for male Chinese practitioners below.
There were differences between males and females within each ethnic group, but as with the openness to change dimension, an independent samples t-test (see chapter 4) revealed that gender leads to a significant difference only for the Malays. Gender made no difference for the Chinese respondents, and the analysis could not be undertaken with the Indian sample because it included only one male. Therefore, this value dimension is also both gender and culture-bound.

The mean scores were similar for females on both value dimensions. For males, the top mean scores for both value dimensions were the same but the range of scores was smaller for self-transcendence than for openness to change. This means that the scores for male Chinese and Indian practitioners both dropped to a very low comparative level on openness to change.

The research also found a tendency for newer practitioners to identify more strongly with their ethnicity than mid-level and senior practitioners did.

It is interesting to see how the Chinese and Indian practitioners identified themselves on ethnicity. My final sample consisted of 17 respondents. Of this number, six were Malay, six were Chinese and five were Indian. The national culture is Malaysian, and using Berry, Trimble and Olmedo's (1986) categories of self-identification, the Chinese and Indians identified themselves in the following way:

- As their own ethnicity = 7/11 (63.5%)
- As Malaysian = 1/11 (9%)
• As both their own ethnicity and Malaysian (e.g., Malaysian Chinese) = 3/11 (27%)
• As neither their own ethnicity nor Malaysian = 0/11 (0%)

The dominant type of ethnic self-identification (almost two-thirds) was where people saw themselves in terms of their ethnic background. Twentyseven percent saw themselves as both their ethnic minority and Malaysian. Only nine percent discounted their own ethnic identity completely. The strength of ethnic identification with own ethnicity is likely to be a result of the Government's policy of diversity and encouragement of maintenance of the three ethnicities.

Themes emerging from the findings:

• That ethnicity is a bigger influence on openness to change and self-transcendence values for male practitioners than female practitioners.

• That there is a difference between how Malay, Chinese and Indian practitioners view themselves and the job.

These will be discussed following a review of the relevant literature.
8.2 Theoretical context for ethnicity analysis

8.2.1 Social Identity Theory as a framework for understanding ethnic identity

The most valuable paradigm in relation to my research project is Social Identity Theory (SIT), and much of the research on ethnic identity has been conducted within this social psychological framework. Social identity is seen from the perspective of the individual rather than the group, and social identities refer to identities that categorise the individual as a group member. People derive their identity from the groups they belong to and associate with, and ethnic identity is one way of self-identification and one way of determining belonging and allegiance. For them, the groups they belong to are the ingroup, and the groups outside of their own group are outgroups. The relationship between ingroups and outgroups, and relationships within the ingroup, are relevant to this research.

An early statement of the importance of social identity came from Lewin (1948), who asserted that individuals need a firm sense of group identification to maintain a sense of well being. This means that individuals derive emotional significance from group membership. Tajfel and Turner (1986) built on this view in developing their social identity theory. They proposed that the self is experienced at both the personal and the group level. Personal identities are based on the life experiences that make each individual distinctly different from one another, and in combination with social identity, these two kinds of identities give individuals a combined sense of belonging and uniqueness, or optimal distinctiveness (Brewer, 1993) and may facilitate the maintenance of a positive social identity. When personal identity is salient, a person's
individual needs, standards, beliefs and motives primarily determine behaviour. When social identity is salient, collective needs, goals and standards are primary (Dovidio, Gaertner, & Kafati, 2000, p. 4) and group membership will have significant effects on behaviour (Ethier & Deaux, 1994). This means that the relative dominance of personal or group identity, either in a given situation or in a particular individual, can change (Augoustinos & Walker, 1995).

SIT contains three central components, all of which are relevant to ethnic identification: categorisation, identity and comparison. The first of these, categorisation, relates to the many social groupings or categories that one can belong to in society. Some of these are ascribed (e.g., by birth) and some are achieved (e.g., sports teams). For any person, some of these categories will be ingroups, and some will be outgroups. Most social categories stand in real status or power relation to one another (Augoustinos & Walker, 1995, p. 106). The categories, and our perceptions of them, are our construals, influenced by our social and cultural context. A basic categorisation is the distinction between self and other, or “us” and “them”. Some evidence exists (Augoustinos & Walker, 1995) to suggest that this categorisation automatically produces ingroup favouritism, and also the common effect of accentuation where intercategory differences and intracategory similarities are seen to be greater than they really are.

The second component, identity, is central to SIT. Identity is defined as our self-image or self-concept, and is derived from our group memberships. Attitude to self is defined as self-esteem. A very powerful motive is the motive to think well of one’s self, that is, to have a positive evaluation of identity, both personal and social. This motive for a
positive social identity guides much social behaviour, including actively creating social situations that support people’s view of themselves (Swann, 1983), and leads to a tendency for people to evaluate their ingroups positively so they can feel good about their group membership. Identity taps the emotional or affective significance of group membership. As people want to feel good about themselves and want to look good to others, they value memberships in relatively successful groups (Moreland, 1985).

The third component, comparison, is essential to the development of social identity. A positive social identity can only happen as a result of social comparison between the ingroup and a relevant outgroup. People engage in social comparisons mostly for self-enhancement reasons (Augoustinos & Walker, 1995) meaning there is a motive to evaluate group memberships positively to enhance social identity. It is assumed that, by establishing positive distinctiveness for the ingroup as a whole, ingroup members are establishing a positive social identity for themselves, and hence positive self-esteem (Rubin & Hewstone, 1998).

This process involves discrimination between ingroups and outgroups: positive prejudices about the ingroup and negative prejudices about the outgroup. The operation of both of these mental mechanisms results in ethnocentrism (Billiet, Eisinga, & Scheepers, 1996, p. 402). In Billiet at al.’s study (1996) of ethnocentrism among a Dutch and Flemish sample, they found that negative prejudices can continue to exist even when one has little contact with those groups.

A key issue is what happens if individuals find themselves in groups that can’t be evaluated positively in relation to other groups. Is identification with an ethnic group
that is held in low regard by the dominant group likely to lower one’s self-esteem? Phinney (1990) summarised a number of studies on this point (e.g., Hogg, Abrams & Patel, 1987; Ullah, 1985) and concluded that no definitive conclusion can be made. Rubin and Hewstone (1998) conducted an exhaustive review of studies on self-esteem to investigate two corollaries of the self-esteem hypothesis: that successful intergroup discrimination enhances social identity and thus elevates self-esteem; and that depressed or threatened self-esteem promotes intergroup discrimination because of a need for self-esteem. They concluded that intergroup discrimination leads to an increase in self-esteem but is not motivated by a need for self-esteem.

Phinney (1990) also summarised a number of studies that have examined self-esteem in relation to the stage model of ethnic identity (a personal identity formation model) and concluded that a positive self-concept may be related to the process of ethnic identity formation and the extent to which people have come to an understanding and acceptance of their ethnicity. This is different from the SIT approach, which posits that group members strive for positive self-esteem as ingroup members rather than as individuals (Rubin & Hewstone, 1998).

Memberships that are defined by readily observable dimensions such as race and gender are, in Coover and Murphy’s (2000) view, the most accessible and the most likely to influence social interactions, compared with group memberships for which the defining dimension is relatively unobservable. This is because these groups have largely impermeable boundaries. Ethier and Deaux (1994) suggest that such ascribed group memberships are likely to become core identities relative to other group identities, even though they may not provide higher social status. Tajfel (1978)
maintained that the likelihood of participation in group-oriented behaviour increases as social identity becomes more salient. The Indians in Malaysia are likely to be like the Chinese in the Netherlands in Verkuyten and Kwa’s study (1996) who have a clearly visible disadvantaged social status. The researchers found that where group boundaries are viewed as impermeable and intergroup status as stable, identification with one’s own group will be stronger, resulting in an ingroup bias and an ingroup homogeneity effect.

SIT predicts that the more group members identify with a particular group, the more they will demonstrate ingroup bias based on comparisons between ingroup and outgroup (Augoustinos & Walker, 1995). However, Hinkle and Brown (1990) showed that not all groups function the same way in providing group members with positive social identity. They found that SIT’s predictions apply most strongly to groups that are collectivist (where identity is more strongly bound up in the group and where relative position of ingroup is more important to members’ social identity) rather than individualistic; and which are relational (which are more likely to evaluate their merit through social comparison with other groups) rather than independent. In Malaysia, the overall culture is collectivist rather than individualistic (Hofstede, 1980) but the three ethnic groups may differ in the extent to which they see merit in a social comparison. For example, the Indian community may be more relational than the Malay community because their minority position leads to heightened salience of their position in relation to the two other ethnic groups.

This is an application of Bochner and Ohsako’s (1977) theory of ethnic-role salience, which proposes that people in a multi-ethnic society tend to be more aware of their
own ethnicity due to the constant contrast between and among ethnic groups, i.e. the prominence of ethnic differences. For example, a study by McGuire, McGuire, Child and Fujioka (1978) found ethnic consciousness to be significantly more salient in minority groups. When a group is a minority both in terms of its size and its status, generally the ingroup is very salient and there is a strong ingroup bias (Mullen, Brown, & Smith, 1992). Studies by Simon (1992) found that minority members perceive more ingroup homogeneity than outgroup homogeneity. A second conclusion from the McGuire et al. study (1978) was that the more predominant an ethnic group becomes in the environment, the less salient is ethnicity in their spontaneous self-concepts (Sim & Elasmor, 1997). It is also possible that in Malaysia the salient group boundaries may extend to ethnic-national-religious, given the importance of religion among Malaysians (for an Arab-Israeli example on this point see Oyserman, 1993). In my research I would expect heightened self-awareness to exist in Malaysia because it is a heterogeneous society, especially for the Chinese and Indian practitioners.

Ethnic-role salience also exists in the workplace because, in Malaysia, many people work in culturally diverse organisations. This brings them into constant contact with, and forces them to develop, working and social relationships with members of distinctly different social or ethnic groups. Practitioners of one ethnicity are likely to work in organisations where the management and culture are determined by someone from another ethnicity, leading to potential differences and conflicts in attitudes and values. Among the corporate and consultancy environments in my sample, the multi-ethnic work environment is likely to be the reality, more so than a work environment staffed purely by people of one ethnic background. Had my sample included
government public relations people, who are predominantly Malay, issues of multi-ethnicity in the workplace would not have featured.

A specific study on the issue of multi-ethnicity in Malaysia examined ethnic attitudes among Malays and Chinese in the urban setting (Rabushka, 1971), and found that higher levels of urban integration indicated more social interaction and more positive attitudes between the two ethnic groups. Nagata (1976) studied ethnicity along with the social status of the people in Malaysia and Latin America. From this comparative study, Nagata concluded that the concepts of ethnicity and class may be separate in theory but are intertwined in reality.

In Malaysia, in relation to this research, ethnic group classifications are relevant because of the strong ethnic identification in Malaysia and the emphasis by the Malaysian Government on recognising the three ethnicities rather than trying to combine them under one “national” approach, as the Singaporean Government, for example, has sought to do. The Malaysian Government has explicit policies that favour the Malays, which means that the policy of ‘recognising the three ethnicities’ is not the same as recognising equality among the three groups. One might expect this to produce resentment among the Chinese and Indians, and to heighten their sense of ethnic identity. Under SIT, perceptions of deprivation, injustice and discrimination are seen as powerful motives in social life because such perceptions are a direct challenge to personal and/or social identity (Augoustinos & Walker, 1995).

The celebration in Malaysia of annual religious and cultural events such as Hari Raya, Deepavali and Chinese New Year, heighten the salience of intergroup boundaries,
making ethnic and religious perceptions more accessible. There is strong awareness in Malaysia of differences along ethnic lines, which highlights Barth's (1969) point that some complementarity must exist between the groups which bonds them and justifies identity in terms of ethnicity.

A useful measure of ethnic identification is to apply the categories of self-identification developed by Berry et al. (1986) which include four ways in which minority ethnic groups might identify or categorise themselves: 1) in terms of their ethnic minority group (dissociative); 2) in terms of the majority group (assimilative); 3) in terms of both their ethnic minority group and the majority group (acculturative); or 4) as neither group (marginal). Self-categorisation in this way can be taken to represent identity. An application of these categories with my sample is reported earlier in this chapter (p. 2).

With my research there is likely to be heightened awareness of ethnic identification; strong ingroup/outgroup characteristics; possible observable differences on values based on ethnic lines; and differences in values depending on whether the ingroup or the outgroup is the subject under consideration. The ingroup/outgroup categorisation is also likely to have implications in relation to the variables of work environment and years of experience because it affects the process of socialisation of new entrants into the profession per se and into specific workplaces, i.e. corporate versus consultancy.

8.2.1.1 Studies on Social Identity Theory in the workplace

Social categorisation can have powerful effects on intergroup relations, as demonstrated by a number of research studies (see Moreland, 1985), because it evokes
a cultural norm prescribing ingroup/outgroup biases (Tajfel, 1969, 1970). It also affects intragroup relations. Research in this area typically shows that social categorisation is sufficient to result in perceptions of substantial intragroup similarity and intergroup differences, even when judges have no direct information about individual group members (Marques, Abrams, Paez, & Martinez-Taboada, 1998). Two studies on the impact of social categorisation in the workplace are relevant to my research.

The first, by Suzuki (1998), applied the SIT framework to examine whether employees interacted differently with colleagues on the basis of ingroup/outgroup membership. Little research has been done on communicative behaviours in work groups with culturally diverse memberships, nor on the impact of culturally diverse relationships at work on personal values. In this study, Suzuki (1998) examined whether social distance associated with social identity manifested itself in intergroup differentiation in communication patterns. Her findings supported the view that difference in communication patterns occurred based on group categorisations, where ingroup members readily shared information with each other, yet withheld information from those whom they categorised as being in the outgroup. The relevance of this finding for my research lies in the proven existence of differential interaction between colleagues in a multi-ethnic workplace based on ingroup/outgroup categorisation based on ethnic background. This could well happen in Malaysia.

A different application of social categorisation was proposed by Moreland (1985) in relation to the assimilation of new group members. Moreland explained that before newcomers can contribute fully to the achievement of group goals, they must be assimilated into the group. Assimilation involves attempts by the group to change
newcomers’ thoughts, feelings and behaviours to make them more similar to full group members. One problem that can occur in terms of this assimilation process is the tendency of newcomers to isolate themselves from other group members, interacting more frequently with one another than they do with 'oldtimers' (e.g., Becker, 1964; Dornbusch, 1955; and others, cited in Moreland, 1985). This solidarity resembles some of the behavioural biases associated with social categorisation. Moreland suggests that newcomers isolate themselves from other group members because they view themselves as an ingroup, whose outgroup consists of the more experienced practitioners.

Moreland suggests two reasons why this may happen. First, newcomers are often confused and anxious, unfamiliar with the group and uneasy about their acceptance by oldtimers. Social categorisation helps them to organise their thoughts and feelings and guide their behaviour. Newcomers are therefore likely to categorise their fellow group members in some way.

Second, most newcomers are very aware of their special role as new group members and their newness becomes a highly salient characteristic both to themselves and others. As a result, Moreland suggested that newcomers who categorise their fellow members are likely to use seniority as the basis for that categorisation. In a multi-ethnic society with multi-ethnic workplaces, ethnicity could also be the basis for that categorisation.

If newcomers do engage in social categorisation, then they are likely to exhibit affective, cognitive and behavioural biases which initially alter expectations about the
group and its members. For example, newcomers would expect to be more friendly and similar to one another than they are to oldtimers, and they expect oldtimers to be more similar and friendly with each other than they might be to the newcomers. This biased behaviour by newcomers is likely to delay their assimilation into the group (Moreland, 1985). Over time, the basis of categorisation may shift from seniority to another dimension, and this may also happen with new entrants who initially categorise on the basis of ethnicity. Moreland's proposition was supported by his study of discussion group behaviour where all members were 'new', but where experimental subjects were led to believe that they were 'newcomers' entering a group of 'oldtimers'. The experimental subjects experienced strong ingroup/outgroup biases as a result of this categorisation. The biases were strongest during the first group meeting, and weakened over time as the distinction between old and new members became less salient.

This has relevance to my research because the process Moreland (1985) outlined could explain the experience of newer entrants to the public relations profession, and particularly their preference to maintain close ties initially with others from the same ethnicity. It may also help to explain the findings in relation to self-transcendence, where the ingroup/outgroup biases of ethnic groups may explain different levels of importance placed on self-transcendence values: for example, the low importance demonstrated by the Chinese, and the high importance demonstrated by the Indians.

8.2.1.2 Polarised appraisal of outgroup members

The outgroup homogeneity effect occurs when the perceived variability of outgroups is less than that of parallel ingroups (see meta-analysis by Brewer, 1993). This can be
seen as a ‘deindividuation’ process. SIT predicts a general outgroup homogeneity effect, but also predicts greater ingroup homogeneity under certain conditions. For example, Triandis, McCusker, and Hui (1990) found that members of collectivist cultures perceive less variability in the ingroup than the outgroup.

In particular, evidence for relative outgroup homogeneity has been obtained for broad social categories such as gender, age and race (Brewer, 1993; Linville, 1982) and is generated in part by the degree to which an individual believes that outgroup members match his or her own stereotype of the outgroup. This social categorisation process produces biases which have been studied in a number of research projects (Moreland, 1985). Linville (1982) however, found that the direction of the bias depends on the favourability of the information about a specific group member, of either the ingroup or outgroup.

The relevance of polarised or homogenised appraisal of outgroup members is important in relation to my research and is a good demonstration of the effects of social categorisation (Moreland, 1985). In my study, ingroup /outgroup perceptions were generated as part of the second phase of research, where respondents were asked to comment on, discuss and interpret the interrelationships between variables and the reasons for distinctive patterns of motivation for different sub-groups. At this point, this particular effect may have been evoked and it probably contributes to the very clear perceptions that respondents have about how they viewed others; for example, how the Chinese viewed the Indians and Malays; how males viewed females; how corporates viewed consultants; how senior practitioners viewed mid-level and newer practitioners. In all of these, the polarisation effect may have been occurring. That is,
newer practitioners might view themselves as an ingroup and view more experienced practitioners as an outgroup. A key question for my research is who do public relations practitioners count as their ingroup on the job?

8.2.2 Influence of cultural dimensions on ethnic identity

The individualism/collectivism cultural dimension is particularly significant for the study of ethnic identification and self-identification (Triandis, McCusker & Hui, 1990; Triandis et al., 1988) at the national, group and individual level. The priorities or preferences reflected in individualism and collectivism function as group ideologies and as guides to individual behaviour (Schwartz, 1990). An essential difference between western and Asian societies is the position of the individual and consequently, the conception of Self, which is composed of both individual and group conceptualisations. They reflect the basic value priorities or preferences, and lead to differences in terms of what gets stressed in each culture.

At the national level for example, Asian and Western countries have been differentiated on the individualism/collectivism dimension (Hofstede, 1980; Triandis et al., 1986). Asians are described as valuing the rights and needs of the group and emphasising duty, obligation and hierarchy (Hui & Triandis, 1986) and Western cultures emphasise values that serve the self by making the self feel good, be distinguished and be independent (Schwartz, 1990). Asians are We-oriented, and get their identity from the position they hold in the group (Servaes, 2000). Weggel (1989, cited in Servaes, 2000, p. 58) sees holism as the key to understanding Asians: “This holistic attitude is expressed both in ways of thinking and behaving, and in the
structure of society. Everything is seen as interconnected, overlapping, inseparable, every part is held together by every other part or aspect”. Sardar adds (1996): “Asians value individual freedom but they value community even more” (p. 26).

At the group level, empirical evidence from a number of countries indicates that group membership is an element of self-conception that is more important in collectivist than individualistic countries (Triandis et al., 1990), and also in minority groups living in Western countries such as the Netherlands (Heuvel, Tellegen & Koomen, 1992). Collectivist orientations emphasise values that serve the ingroup by subordinating personal goals for the sake of preserving ingroup integrity, interdependence of members and harmonious relationships (Triandis et al., 1986, 1988). Carpenter and Radhakrishnan (2000) found that collectivists have more social references in their representations of ingroups than individualists do. They concluded that collectivists represent more social connections (i.e., social identities, social traits and other persons) in their concepts of people than do individualists.

Collectivism is also an important cultural dimension in intergroup research. In collectivist cultures, the individual has few ingroups (sometimes just one) and everyone else is generally in the outgroup (Triandis et al., 1988, p. 325). People in collectivist cultures are extremely supportive of their ingroup members, with group harmony and connectedness the central concerns. However, such collectivist harmony and cooperative norms are generally maintained only within the ingroup; and they may have cold, and even hostile, relationships with outgroup members (Triandis, 2000; Oyserman et al., 1998), and may interact competitively with outgroup members despite their collectivist worldviews (Oyserman, 1993). Certainly it appears that there is a
strong demarcation between ingroup and outgroup which Oyserman et al. (1998) judge to be extremely detrimental in racially, culturally and ethnically heterogeneous societies.

Schwartz (1990) also observed that collectivists often show less consideration than individualists do for the welfare of strangers, meaning that the presumed greater concern of collectivists for collective goals does not extend beyond their ingroup (Leung & Bond, 1984; Triandis et al., 1988). Ingroup and outgroup analyses largely depend on how the group boundaries are defined.

At the individual level, individuals within a culture are likely to differ in the degree to which they adopt a more collectivist or individualist set of values. Triandis, Leung, Villareal, and Clack (1985) extended the cultural distinction between individualism and collectivism to include a personality dimension -- idiocentrism versus allocentrism. Idiocentrics are individuals who are more individualistic in self-concept, and allocentrics are those who are more collectivist in self-concept. Collectivists or allocentrics are more likely to generate references to social identities (e.g. ethnicity) of people and are less likely to generate references to traits than are individualists (e.g., Bond & Cheung, 1983; Carpenter & Radhakrishnan, 2000).

The relational schemas that make sense within an individualistic frame are based in collaboration and competition between the self and specific other individuals. Individuals are free to form relationships and alliances with any other, and if a relationship is not personally satisfying it can be dissolved and a new relationship established with someone else. (Oyserman et al., 1998).
The relational schemas that make sense within a collectivist frame deal with obligations to the ingroup and specific members of the ingroup. Collectivism carries with it a sense of nested in-groupness and, depending on the context, the group may be restricted to family, clan, ethnic group or nation (Triandis, 1995). However, Triandis et al. (1988) warn that collectivism is very specific to ingroup and to domain. Collectivism promotes particularism rather than universal social obligation and for an individual who is viewed as an outgroup member, social obligation would be replaced by a sense of competition or conflict (Oyserman, 1993; Triandis, 1995).

Several researchers (Brewer, 1991; Brewer & Gardner, 1996; cited in Carpenter & Radhakrishnan, 2000) propose that individuals within a culture have self-concepts that comprise both independence and interdependence, and that it is likely that people from collectivist cultures have more frequently activated interdependent self-concepts, whereas those from individualistic cultures have more salient independence self-concepts. Verkuyten and Kwa (1996) note that all societies are assumed to have both idiocentrics and allocentrics. Culture therefore affects representations of self and others.

The organisational context, particularly the multi-ethnic organisation, provides good opportunities for the study of the impact of cultural dimensions on work values and work practices. Cox, Lobel, and McLeod (1991) cite a number of research studies that demonstrate differences in approach according to cultural origin. For example, Diaz-Guerrero (1984, cited in Cox et al., 1991) found that collectivists emphasise the value of cooperation, whereas individualists emphasise competition. Leung (1988) found that
collectivists prefer cooperative approaches like bargaining and mediation to conflict resolution. Interestingly, Wagner and Moch (1986) found that individualism/collectivism was related to job type. Collectivists tended to perform jobs that required teamwork whereas individualists performed more independent tasks.

Bochner and Hesketh (1994) claim that Hofstede’s (1980) Power Distance (PD) cultural dimension is also a widely-used variable in studies of ethnic identification and self-identification. Hofstede listed several subsidiary values that correlated with PD: Individuals from high-PD countries would be more task- and less people-oriented because the role of a manager in a high-PD system is to initiate structure; tell people what to do rather than ask for their views; and individuals from high-PD countries would be more likely to subscribe to the view that people are inherently lazy and dislike work (Bochner & Hesketh, 1994). PD and Individualism/Collectivism (I/C) are related: Hofstede (1980) found that countries with a high PD would have a low I/C score, and vice versa.

From the 53 countries in Hofstede's (1980) study, Malaysia was rated the highest on Power Distance with a score of 104 (lowest was Austria on 11); as a collectivist country with an I/C score of 26 (compared to USA which was rated the most individualistic country with 91 and Guatemala the most collectivist on 6).

In relation to my research, the collectivist/individualist orientation is likely to be prominent in helping to interpret the findings. As a collectivist country, self-transcendence values would be expected to be strong, but this will be tempered by strength and permeability of group boundaries. I would expect that stronger groups,
such as the Chinese, could afford to have less permeable boundaries whereas the Indian community, in the minority position, may need to be willing to be much more open than the Chinese community needs to be. Therefore, there are likely to be observable differences between the ethnic groups.

8.2.2.1 Challenges to the individualism/collectivism dichotomy

Schwartz (1990) has taken issue with the use of the individualism/collectivism dichotomy to explain the presumed conflict between personal and ingroup interests. He states that the dichotomy is insufficient for three reasons: 1) Some values such as wisdom and inner harmony conceivably serve the interests of both the individual and the ingroup (not either/or); 2) the dichotomy ignores important universal values such as equality for all, and a world at peace, which may not be values of the ingroup but which serve goals that are collective; and 3) the dichotomy promotes the mistaken assumption that individualist and collectivist values each form coherent syndromes that are opposed to one another.

Schwartz asserts that his 10 value types can be categorised in terms of whose interests they serve. They can be individualist (hedonism, achievement, self-direction, power and stimulation) or collectivist (conformity, security, tradition and benevolence) or both (universalism). The individualistic values, while serving the self-interest of the individual, do not necessarily do so at the expense of any collectivity. The collective values promote the interests of others, but not necessarily at the expense of individuals. The collective of relevance could be an ingroup or a broader group. The final value (maturity/universalism) serves the interests of both the individual and the collective. In
Schwartz's view, the individualism/collectivism dichotomy fails to recognise that the subtypes of individualist and collectivist values sometimes do not vary together and are sometimes not opposed. In his review of examples, Schwartz (1990) found that the individualistic/collectivistic values categorisation held together about two-thirds of the time, making it useful for broad-brush analyses, but he suggests a refinement, which is outlined below.

Schwartz proposes a redefinition of individualistic (contractual) and collectivist (communal) societies based on the social-structural typologies of Durkheim, Parsons and Toennies, where the former is characterised by narrow primary groups (nuclear families) and the latter is characterised by extended primary groups (kinship, neighbourhood and work groups). He then proposes that the more communal society would hold tradition, conformity and prosocial/benevolence values as more important. The contractual community would hold self-direction, stimulation and universalism values as more important. The values of security, achievement and hedonism may differ, but due less to the communal/contractual distinction than to the standards set by each community. The last value type, power, could be valued by both communities but for different reasons. For example, in communal societies where status relations are ascribed, power differences are part of the social structure. They are important but not challenged. In contractual societies there is more individual striving for power because status can be legitimately sought and attained through effort (Schwartz, 1990).

Others have also challenged the concept of individualism/collectivism as an 'either/or' bipolar model. Kim (1994) proposes a coexistence model which suggests that elements of collectivism and individualism are separate dimensions which can exist together,
and high collectivism can be compatible with high individualism. This explains why collectivists can interact competitively with outgroup members, and individualists can be aroused to focus on the common good of the group (Oyserman, 1993).

Proponents of the coexistence model of I/C propose a more nuanced, contextual and historically grounded view of ethnic differences than that suggested by the bipolar model. They tend not to question the fact that Asian cultures are more collectivist than Western cultures but, as summarised by Wink (1997) they argue that Asians accommodate the importance of both group and individual goals, or interdependence and independence of the self, by embracing and tolerating contradictions (Sinha & Tripathi, 1994), by maintaining a distinction between the public and private self (e.g., Doi, 1986) and by drawing a distinction between ingroup and outgroup behaviour (Bond, 1991; Redding, 1990).

Oyserman, Sakamoto and Lauffer (1998) propose a process of cultural hybridisation in which individuals and groups create a new multidimensional cognitive frame which takes into account the values and goals of both individualism and collectivism. They suggest that it is possible that the melding of individualism and collectivism results in more context-specific responses such that one or the other system is evoked in specific situations. Such cultural accommodation could be a form of assimilation, freeing individuals to behave appropriately as individualists in larger societal contexts (or in the workplace, depending on the values of the employer) while preserving collectivism as an ingroup focus. This is consistent with SIT. It may happen as the result of a country’s push towards industrialisation, democratisation and modernisation, as is happening in Malaysia. Such modernisation may carry with it an individualistic
perspective that may be at odds with the sense of communalism in a collectivist framework, and it is this process which has lead to the refocussing on Asian values discussed in chapter one of this thesis.

Among my sample, practitioners are likely to experience situational (i.e., workplace) pressures to adopt particular values and behaviours, which must be accommodated alongside their cultural values and expectations.

8.2.2.2 Studies on cultural dimensions and the impact of context

A number of studies have focused on testing cultural values and context. In the first of these, Cox, Lobel, and McLeod (1991) hypothesised that differences in the cultural norms of four ethnic groups -- Anglo, Asian, Hispanic and Black -- would result in different behaviours on a group task. The researchers expected that groups composed of people from collectivist cultures would display more cooperative behaviour than groups composed of people from individualistic cultural traditions. Results supported this hypothesis.

The study also tested the impact of situational ethnicity on work behaviour. Situational ethnicity refers to the idea that bicultural members of minority cultural groups may respond using norm sets from two different cultural backgrounds and that contextual cues may dictate which norm set is operative in a given situation (Cox et al., 1991). The researchers believed that the biculturalism of respondents might lead them to base their behaviour on the knowledge of the competitive majority-culture orientation, rather than on their cooperative minority-culture orientation. They tested the hypothesis
that Asians, Blacks and Hispanics would increase their cooperative behaviour under conditions that encourage their minority-group, collectivist-cooperative orientation, and this hypothesis was also supported.

In the second study of relevance, Lau (1992) administered Rokeach's (1973) value survey to examine whether the value choices of Chinese in the People's Republic of China (PRC), Hong Kong and Singapore would reflect a collectivist emphasis, as expected by the normal characterisations of Chinese as collectivist. The overall results instead showed a heavy emphasis on individualistic values, especially among PRC Chinese. Marked differences were found between all three groups, with the greatest contrasts between the PRC and Singapore groups.

Lau related the extent of individualistic concerns to the concept of personal control over one's environment. Lau speculated that individualistic concerns would be strongest in an environment where attainment of personal goals was difficult. "Thus, ironically, it is in a highly collectivistically structured society that individualistic pursuits would be most prevalent, as they are often denied or externally controlled" (p. 362). Lau concluded that collectivism can be a means to individualistic ends in Chinese society.

In a third study, Wink (1997) worked with a sample of 453 American college students of Chinese, Korean or European descent, and compared group differences to test the competing predictions of the bipolar and coexistence models of I/C, and to assess the influence of social factors such as generation, religion and social class on ethnic differences in attitudes towards the self and others. Wink found that ethnic identity
predicted high levels of collectivism in the Chinese and Korean Americans but that the result was due to social factors in addition to ethnicity. He cautioned that cross-cultural studies of collectivism that do not control for social variables other than ethnicity would be likely to exaggerate the strength of the direct connection between ethnicity and collectivism.

Wink found that ethnicity was weaker in predicting individualism, and its effects were domain specific. For example, Chinese and Korean Americans were less likely than Euro-Americans to report engagement in public displays of individuality. Wink concluded that his results raised issues in relation to the conceptualisation of I/C, the nature of ethnic differences and how they should be studied.

And finally, two studies by Oyserman, Sakamoto and Lauffer (1998) with a Jewish American, Asian, and Asian American sample, examined ways in which the cultural frames of individualism and collectivism influenced social obligation. Social obligation (cooperation) is derived from a person's group memberships and social roles. Three of the four hypotheses are relevant in terms of my research:

1. Social obligation is context dependent;
2. Collectivism will increase social obligation, and individualism will decrease it; and
3. Collectivism and individualism will differ in the unit of obligation. Individualism will increase obligation to individuals; collectivism will increase obligation to groups, especially ingroups.
Findings from study 1 suggested the importance of collectivism in social obligation. High collectivists felt more socially obligated, were more confident in their decisions, and responded quicker when identity was made salient (a contextual factor). The study found that this carried over to larger society when cultural hybridisation (i.e., when an individual or group is exposed to and influenced by more than one cultural context) occurs. Study 2 partially replicated these results in that the findings were inline with the hypothesised impact of collectivism on social obligation, but only when identity was made salient, and the focus of obligation was larger society.

Collectively, these studies provide support for the melding of individualism and collectivism leading to context-specific responses. This has relevance for my research, particularly to my findings on self-transcendence.

8.3 Theoretical context for gender analysis

8.3.1 Different views on differences between genders

There are various theoretical approaches to the question of differences between the sexes, some postulating stable differences between males and females, and some postulating no clear gender differences.

The first view -- theories of stable gender differences -- assumes that gender differences stem from inherent (biological) or socialised differences, and are viewed as predictable, internal and persistent traits (Deaux & Major, 1990; Mednick 1989), and as a set of “relatively fixed attitudinal and behavioural predispositions” (Cassirer &
Reskin, 2000, p. 438). According to this view, men and women have equal access to opportunities, and they rise and fall on their own merit (Hernstein & Murray, 1994, cited in Meyerson & Kolb, 2000).

This approach sees gender identity as linked to gender role, and gender development as “a complex interaction among biological gender differences; cultural belief systems as expressed both in stereotypes and behaviours and in institutionalised structures such as school and the workplace; and, equally importantly, the child's own developing understanding of gender and what it means to be female or male” (Golombek & Fivush, 1994, p. 225). Masculine and feminine identities are styles or ways of being that have been shaped differently for men and women by their different life experiences and social roles (Meyerson & Kolb, 2000).

Gender stereotypes consist of a set of specific beliefs about the characteristics that men and women are likely to possess. Deaux and LaFrance (1998), in their summary of gender research, claim that stereotypes are the most fundamental aspect of the gender belief system, both in terms of durability and pervasiveness. Such stereotypes see women as more relational, expressive and communal, and men as more autonomous, instrumental and agentic. These differences are likely to be expressed as differences in value priorities.

Bakan's (1966) two central notions of agency and communion are used in many studies of gender stereotypes. Agency and communion match with Schwartz and Bilsky's values theory. Bakan's agency concept overlaps with Schwartz and Bilsky's motivational value types of self-direction and achievement; and Bakan's communal
concept overlaps with Schwartz and Bilsky's motivational categories of universalism and benevolence. Importantly, research has indicated that several aspects of gender stereotypes appear to be universal. A 30-country study by Williams and Best (1982), which included Malaysia, found that men in the study were seen as more adventurous and independent, while women were viewed as more sentimental and submissive. Men were also consistently seen as stronger and more active than women.

The second theoretical view -- theories of no clear gender differences -- assumes that gender isn't a personal trait but "an agreement that resides in social interchange" (West & Zimmerman, 1987), where masculinity and femininity are social constructions within a cultural and political context (Hantzis, 1998). Gender beliefs do not exist independently of the social system (Deaux & LaFrance, 1998), and the "differences that make a difference" (West cited in Mumby, 1998, p. 168) including gender and ethnicity, are constructed through everyday social interactions undertaken within the context of power (i.e., the work environment).

With this view, the differences between males and females arise from the structures of organisations which Kanter (1977) calls differential structures of opportunity. Kanter (1977) concluded that sex-differentiated work behaviour results from sex-differentiated opportunity structures such as biased hiring, evaluation and promotion processes, rather than from gender. This explains why the organisational context or work environment is an important variable in my research project. This approach assumes that "socialization is not something that happened to people when they were growing up -- it happens to them every day" (Gilbert & Brownson, 1998, p. 436), and suggests
there will be inconsistent patterns of differences between men's and women's value priorities.

A third theoretical view, proposed by Deaux and LaFrance (1998), is that gender is a "significant social psychological construct that ... spans the range from individual beliefs and actions to the impact of societies and social systems". They consider gender to be a dynamic construct where gendered behaviours are highly flexible, influenced by context and often multiply determined.

Gender relations in Malaysia are, according to Hutheesing (1994), characterised by bilaterality, complementarity or parellism. Ideologically, Hutheesing sees Malaysia's social system as a deviation from the Indian caste system and the Big Man communities of New Guinea "where the worlds of men and women intermittently flow together or side by side without clear-cut notions of hierarchy" (1994, p. 341). He sees this 'fuzziness' of the gender issue as part of a Southeast Asian syndrome, an indigenous model of bilaterality based on adat (local custom) with equivalence of male and female status in the division of labour, in decision making and property rights. In Karim's view (1990) the bilateral pattern of kinship minimises gender differences and maximises generational differences and seniority. Gender remains important however, because of exclusions placed on women despite generational differences and seniority.

Hutheesing (1994) suggests that a paradigm coloured by patriarchy and perpetuation of male power would be more appropriate for the Chinese and Indian subcultures. He sees these as ideologies of masculine authority with implied male bias.
In relation to this research project, the relevant gender questions are not to identify male and female traits among public relations practitioners in Malaysia, but to explore the influence of sex role stereotyping and social roles on how practitioners perceive their job and the values that motivate them in doing the job.

8.3.2 **Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions and gender**

As with ethnicity, Hofstede’s (1980) cultural dimensions have provided a useful analytical framework. Researchers have proposed a relationship between gender and the cultural dimension of Individualism/Collectivism (e.g., Triandis, 1995) but this is the subject of some controversy (Wink, 1997). According to Triandis (1995), the fact that women tend to be primary care givers makes them more collectivist. Men on the other hand, argues Triandis, tend to be more individualistic since they have more life choices and opportunities. This view has been challenged by recent empirical studies that fail to show a link between I/C and gender (e.g., Kashima, Yamaguchi, Kim, Hoi, Gelfand, & Yuki, 1995). If these studies are right, then gender and collectivism should be unrelated.

However, Hofstede's Masculinity/Femininity (M/F) dimension of national cultures has direct implications for the discussion of gender, particularly the division of gender roles in a country. Hofstede (1998) explains the gender role variation across countries within the context of the M/F dimension, as follows. Socialisation patterns differ between countries, springing from the father/mother and parent/child relationships. This socialisation affects society as a whole, leading to prominence for the value of modesty in feminine countries and for assertiveness and ego-boosting in masculine
countries. Men's values differ more from women's values in masculine than feminine cultures, and more for younger than older persons. The position of a country on the M/F dimension impacts the trade-off between career and family interests.

Hofstede states that there are universals that apply across countries, and differences that set countries apart. One universal trend is that men stress ego goals and women stress social goals at work, which Hofstede calls a "dominant difference in their gender cultures" (1998, p. 79). Advancement, earnings and training are more important for men than for women; and physical conditions, manager and cooperation are more important for women than men (Hofstede, 1980). These differences are universal, but their degree as well as other differences associated with gender vary across societies -- for example, women's access to paid employment depends primarily on a country's level of economic development (Hofstede, 1998).

Malaysia rates about mid-way on the M/F dimension (approximately 50). It is similar to Singapore, Brazil, Pakistan and Israel. As a high Power Distance country, Malaysia is clustered with Singapore, Indonesia, Hong Kong, the Philippines, Arab-speaking countries (Egypt, Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon), India, and West African countries. Here, inequality between parents and children is a social norm and children are supposed to be controlled by obedience (Hofstede, 1998).

8.4 Bringing the frameworks together

8.4.1 The Schwartz and Bilsky values theory, and its application to gender and ethnicity
Prince-Gibson and Schwartz (1998) tested the values model developed by Schwartz and Bilsky for gender differences. Using data from a representative sample of Israeli adults, the researchers developed and tested hypotheses regarding possible gender differences in value priorities, focusing on questions of value structure, value priorities and moderator variables. In relation to value types, they expected to see the following: no gender difference on universalism and security; that males would attribute more importance than females to power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation and self-direction; and that females would attribute more importance than males to benevolence, conformity and tradition. However, they found no evidence for gender differences in value priorities.

Prince-Gibson and Schwartz (1998) proposed that gender effects would be stable but conditional; that people would hold value priorities but adjust them to their life circumstances. Given this perspective, they tested also for interaction effects between gender and other variables. They proposed that differences between genders on values would depend on interactions between gender and other factors such as age, ethnicity, education, marital status and socioeconomic status, and they expected to see evidence of the influences of age, education and ethnicity on the value priorities held.

In relation to age they cited research on life course changes in affiliation, achievement and power motivation among men and women (Franz & White, 1985; Rossi, 1980) and hypothesised that age would moderate gender differences in value priorities. For example, they postulated that power and achievement might be greater for men, and benevolence values greater for women, in younger but not older samples.
In relation to education, they postulated that gender differences may appear in stimulation, self-direction, conformity and tradition values among less highly educated groups and not among those with higher education levels.

In relation to ethnicity, they postulated that ethnicity might moderate gender differences in the tradition, conformity, self-direction, stimulation and hedonism value types. For example, they suggested that gender differences in the importance of conformity values may be obtained only in less highly westernised ethnic groups that emphasise these values especially for women.

Not surprisingly, given the lack of findings of main effects, they found no evidence of these moderators impacting the effects of gender on value priorities (Prince-Gibson & Schwartz, 1998). Prince-Gibson and Schwartz concluded that their findings contradict theories of consistent gender difference.

8.4.2 Studies combining the effects of ethnicity and gender on values and/or identity

8.4.2.1 Studies on identity

There appears to be little research which examines both gender and ethnicity. Ullah's (1985) study of 142 second-generation Irish adolescents in England aged 14-18, found that girls were significantly more likely to adopt an Irish identity than boys. Ting-Toomey (1981) examined 60 Chinese-American college students and found that 42%
of females identified strongly with the Chinese culture versus 7% of males. Masuda, Hasegawa and Matsumoto (1973) found that Japanese girls and women were more likely to score higher on ethnic identity than Japanese boys or men. In contrast, Fathi (1972) found that Jewish boys were more likely to show a preference for Jewish norms than their female counterparts.

### 8.4.2.2 Studies on gender and values

Hofstede (1998) speaks of the universality of some work goals and values, and uses the four national cultural dimensions to explain some of the differences between countries. Other researchers have also documented universals, for example, the association of science and masculinity (Weinreich-Haste, 1979, cited in Hofstede, 1998). Verhulst, Achenbach, Ferdinand, and Kasius (1993, cited in Hofstede, 1998, p. 86) reported differences between matched groups of Dutch and United States adolescents where Americans demonstrated an ego-boosting norm consistent with being a masculine culture on the M/F dimension (score approximately 60), and the Dutch demonstrated an ego-effacing norm consistent with its feminine ranking (score approximately 15).

Williams and Best in two studies (1982, 1990) documented differences in gender-related values across cultures, among adults and children. In their first study, which included Malaysia, they identified a number of pancultural similarities in sex-trait stereotypes, and identified Malaysia as a country where the sex roles were highly differentiated, both in qualitative and quantitative form. This contrasts with Hustheesing's (1994) views, discussed earlier in this chapter. In the second study involving males and females in 14 countries, they found that the difference between
actual self-concepts of men and women on their masculinity measures correlated with Hofstede's M/F dimension. That is, in high M/F countries, female respondents scored their self-concepts more like men and used more masculine terms to describe themselves. In feminine societies, women differentiated their terms more from men's.

A second finding in the 1990 study was that stereotypes recognised in the feminine countries are those associated with the female or male role worldwide, whereas the stereotypes recognised in the masculine countries are more country specific (i.e., less universal).

Akhtar (2000) used individual level analysis to examine the influences of cultural origin and gender on intrinsic, instrumental and systemic work values among a stratified sample of 111 Hong Kong Chinese, British and American managerial employees of a multinational media company. Intrinsic work values reflect how much importance individuals attach to psychological aspects of work outcomes such as work challenge and responsibility (Elizur, 1984; Sagie, Elizur, & Koslowsky, 1996). Instrumental work values refer to the importance of material aspects of work outcomes such as pay and bonuses. Systemic work values reflect the importance placed on work outcomes relating to collective welfare such as benefit plans and working conditions (Elizur, 1984).

Categorising Hong Kong Chinese respondents as collectivists and British and American respondents as individualist, Akhtar expected that Hong Kong Chinese respondents would value instrumental and systemic work values more highly than the
other respondents; and that the British and American respondents would value intrinsic work values more highly than the Hong Kong Chinese.

The study found that cultural origin affected intrinsic and instrumental values in the expected way but that cultural origin did not influence systemic work values significantly. Akhtar's explanation for this result was systemic work values do not reflect the influence of collectivism if the meaning of collectivism is limited to ingroup collective values. The study examined gender as a variable and found no significant differences. However the results of males in each ethnic group with those of females in each ethnic group were not compared.

8.4.3 Interaction between ethnicity and gender in Malaysia

8.4.3.1 Ethnicity, gender and Islam

A fundamental Islamic belief is the distinct difference between male and female in terms of their personalities, social roles and functions (Sherif, 1999, p. 204).

In Malaysia, almost all Malays are Muslim (Kassim, 1984). Their lives are ruled jointly by the teachings of Islam and the secular rules which run alongside the religious rules. Among Muslims, the family is the basic unit of social organisation. The family rather than the individual is the foundation of social, religious and economic activities, and it is the dominant social institution. Members work together to secure a livelihood and to uphold and improve the standing of the family in the community. Family members are
expected to place the group's survival above their personal desires. The success or failure of an individual becomes that of the family as a whole, and each is held responsible for the acts of every other family member (Sherif, 1999).

Personal status is defined by group membership, not individual achievement. Particularly for women, family relationships are the strongest links in their lives (Sherif, 1999). References to women, their unique nature, their place in society and their appropriate behaviour are contained within the Qur'an and the hadiths (saying of the prophet). Underlying all Islamic ideology is the belief that women must remain ‘in their place’ to enable political and social harmony to exist (Sherif, 1999). The man has authority over the woman in the family setting and has the obligation to provide his wife with material support.

There is a strong consensus about gender roles for men and women where both believe each has a different role to play in life. “Innate differences between the sexes are not perceived as a dichotomy of superior and inferior but as complementary” (Sherif, 1994, p. 207). Mothers are idolised and respected; their lives centre around their children; and their duties within the home, particularly caring for and educating the children, are considered a woman's most important responsibilities.

Muslims are socialised to remain part of the family, and are expected to sacrifice personal needs for the greater good of the family (Macleod, 1991, cited in Sherif, 1991). Personal status is defined by group membership, not individual achievement.
8.4.3.2 Gender issues for the Chinese

The influence of Confucianism on Malaysian Chinese is more pronounced in the older generation than the younger generation, and more so in women than in men (Peng, 1984). In the Chinese patriarchal family system, the man is the bread-winner. A Confucian teaching is that men should manage things outside the house while women must run the house. If there is a conflict between family and career, the majority of Chinese would decide that the family is the woman’s first obligation (Peng, 1984).

A Confucian teaching relates to being filial. It has become a belief in the patriarchal family system that the continuity of lineage depends on the male. A marriage must produce a son before all else (Peng, 1984). In Confucian thinking, women are the weaker sex and are dependent on the male.

8.4.3.3 Gender issues for the Indians

“The broad category of ‘Indian’ comprises a range of interconnected groups organized on the basis of a host of divided loyalties. Most prominent among these are differences in language, religion, caste, rural or urban residence, educational level, occupations, resulting income levels and finally generational differences” (Oorjitham, 1984, p. 113). The majority of Indians in Malaysia (approximately 80%) are Tamil speakers, and a vast majority are also Hindu (Oorjitham, 1984). The majority are also members of the working class in Malaysia, many of whom have descended from the Tamil working class brought in originally to work in the plantations when Malaysia was under British rule.
In the social structure of the tradition oriented family, the typical pattern of husband-wife relationships is male dominance and female dependence. According to the traditional norms, the husband is an authoritarian figure whose will should always dominate the domestic scene (Oorjitham, 1984, p. 118).

Hindu beliefs are that the individual is secondary to the family and society. For example, marriages were arranged based on socio-religious and economic considerations, intended to strengthen the family position (Oorjitham, 1984). Men are thought of as the major breadwinner and decision-maker, while women fulfil their role expectations within the family.

8.4.3.4 Asian values and the role of women

Malaysia’s Prime Minister, Dato’ Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, has laid out a vision for industrial, economic and cultural reform for Malaysia, called “Vision 2020”, according to which Malaysia is to become a fully developed industrialised country by the year 2020. In Stivens’ view (1998), Asian values and Asian family are seen as central to achieving this prosperity, by avoiding the excesses of western culture. “The Asian path to modernity is to be made in the Asian family and is implicitly women’s work” (Stivens, 1998, p. 3). The development of a vigorous, entrepreneurial middle class is seen as integral to development.
Stivens cites research on women at work in Asia in the last decade that suggests that as more women enter employment outside the home, a nostalgic vision of femininity is being invoked of the modern Asian woman and the modern Asian family. “In the Asian family discourse, women are the bearers of this vision of family, its keepers, its producers; the family is the bulwark against the social cost of modernity (and of dissent) and the dangers of fragmenting national and personal identities produced in the current (post)modern order” (1998, p. 17). Stivens sees this as creating tensions between modernity and tradition, and anxieties and ambivalences about the costs of modernity, built around the desire for modernity and the threats it poses to the Asian family and to the reformulation of women’s traditional roles. The role of women and men in Malaysian society is clearly undergoing ideological reexamination, or at least rhetorical and political redefinition, which creates an interesting context for consideration of gender in this research.

8.4.3.5 Objectivity in gender research

Stivens (1998, p. 19) warns that writing about women and gender from either inside but particularly from outside the region is “an anxious and ambiguous process”. Discussion about gender carries with it a responsibility to be objective; to ensure that bias from the researcher doesn't enter the project in terms of the choice of measuring instrument, the design and conduct of the studies, the behaviour and expectations of both researcher and participants during the research, or the way in which the results are interpreted and reported (Golombok, 1994); and to ensure that subjective comments from respondents are admissible within the context of the research. The challenge is to analyse and write about points of view without either (1) replicating conventional
biases, (2) inauthentically using others' voices, or (3) legitimating false knowledge (Durham, 1998).

Hantzis (1998, p. 232) calls for producing discourse that talks about “more than one difference at a time” -- i.e., integrating the study of gender with that of other psychosocial variables. The intersection of ethnicity and gender throws light on questions of masculinity and femininity and, as can be seen by the results of this research, this is also where the data appear to wish to go.

8.5 Themes emerging from the findings

8.5.1 That ethnicity is a bigger influence on openness to change and self-transcendence values for male practitioners than female practitioners.

Ethnicity is commonly associated with social status and power differences that may influence men's and women's value-relevant experiences differently (Prince-Gibson & Schwartz, 1998, p. 56).

In their study, Prince-Gibson and Schwartz (1998) expected that gender differences would be moderated by ethnicity, although they were not able to predict what effect the interactions would have. Their research found that ethnicity did not moderate the effects of gender on value priorities.

However, my analysis of the impact of gender and ethnicity found different patterns for male and female practitioners. The differences between males and females and
between each ethnicity indicates that these value dimensions are both gender and culture-bound. The fact that a value can be both culture and gender-bound was also found by Elizur (1994) in his study of comparative work values between men and women in Hungary and the Netherlands.

The findings portray:

- That levels of motivation in terms of openness to change and self-transcendence are the same for female practitioners regardless of ethnic background.
- That ethnic background indicates different levels of motivation on openness to change and self-transcendence for male practitioners.
- That the difference between men and women is significant for the Malay practitioners.

Openness to change represents the extent to which one is motivated by values emphasising own individual thought and action, and favouring change. In Schwartz and Bilsky's values theory it is depicted as being opposed to the conservation value dimension. While conservation denotes conformity, tradition and security, which are more collectivist goals, openness to change represents more individualistic or personal goals. On a cultural basis, Malaysia as a collectivist country could perhaps be expected to favour conservation goals rather than openness to change goals. Similarly, self-enhancement and self-transcendence represent values that could be seen to be opposed also on collectivist/individualistic lines, with self-transcendence representing a more collectivist approach and self-enhancement representing the individualistic approach. Likewise, the value domains of significance – power, achievement, self-direction and stimulation – all serve individual interests (Schwartz, 1992).
This creates a particularly interesting point of focus for the analysis. It is interesting that similar patterns were achieved in this research for openness to change and self-transcendence values -- one an individualistic value dimension and the other a collectivist value dimension. It is interesting also that the one Indian male practitioner in the sample scored high on both value dimensions, that Chinese male practitioners scored low on both; that Malays had mid-level scores on both; and that there was little difference between values of female practitioners of all ethnicities on both value dimensions.

These results may indicate inconsistency in the model, or may be the result of a small skewed sample that may have contained respondents with strong personal characteristics relevant to these value dimensions. Alternatively, the results may indicate the relevance of context to values.

From the results outlined above, five questions in particular emerge as worth examining:

1. Why are Chinese men much less motivated, in fact the least motivated, on both value dimensions compared with the other ethnicity/gender combinations?

2. Why are Chinese, Malay and Indian women similarly motivated by both value dimensions regardless of ethnicity?

3. Why are Malay men and women significantly different on both the openness to change and self-transcendence value dimensions?

4. What is happening on the conservation and self-enhancement values and why are clear results not showing up on these value dimensions?
5. Why are Indian practitioners between Chinese and Malay practitioners in terms of motivation levels on both value dimensions?

The differences between ethnicities and genders can be examined using the theoretical paradigms outlined at the start of this chapter: the cultural dimensions perspective; the social identity perspective; and the gender stereotype perspective.

8.5.1.1 Chinese men and the value dimensions of openness to change and self-transcendence

Awareness of one's ethnic identity is strong in Malaysia, as seen by the respondents in my research, two-thirds of whom clearly saw themselves in terms of their ethnic background. On a daily basis, multi-ethnicity is part of society, in the workplace and in all interactions in every sphere of life. The social identity perspective suggests that individuals derive their identity from the groups that they belong to, and ascribed group identities defined by readily observable dimensions such as race and gender are likely to be held as core identities (Coover & Murphy, 2000).

All respondents, including the Chinese, were very clear in their view of Chinese practitioners, and of Chinese in general. The reasons that respondents gave for the low levels of motivation to openness to change values for Chinese males came from their description of the Chinese as a people who have moved, adapted, survived and as a result have become self-reliant, self-assured, and sure of their abilities to deal with any situation. They saw Chinese men as traditional in terms of how they do business. Respondents described them in this way:
They know the rules and because they work to the rules they don't feel the need to pursue different ways of doing things. They work hard to protect what they have. They don't do that by taking risks. They analyse things clinically and objectively, and remove subjectivity in business. Business is business. Results are pivotal, and the bottom line counts. They are seen as being in the mainstream of business life in Malaysia. They have good networks, good support systems, and they know what to work towards in business. (Various)

The Chinese self-identity appears to be very strong, and in terms of Phinney's (1989) three-stage progression in identity formation, would be described as having achieved the third stage of a committed ethnic identity. As an ethnic group in Malaysia, despite being a minority, the Chinese have succeeded economically and have substantial power in political and economic terms. They do not suffer an identity crisis, nor do they need to manage a marked or stigmatised self-identity (Coover & Murphy, 2000, p. 126).

The key to understanding the results obtained on these value dimensions comes from social identity theory. The boundaries between groups appear to be particularly strong for the Chinese, and because of their dominant economic position in Malaysia, although not as the majority culture, they have less need to consider the outgroup. Strong social status and self-esteem would come from the ingroup, and the boundaries around the group would be quite strongly controlled. They operate more as a closed system, with less need to be reliant on others, compared with the Indian community who by necessity operate as an open system.

However, even within the ingroup the Chinese motivation to openness to change may be quite low. It may be that the Chinese firm may not value being open to change, may be conservative and may value conservation and tradition more highly. It is the
business values that are important. The openness to change strategy may not be relevant in this sort of organisation, particularly in a Chinese Chinese (business conducted in Chinese, follows Chinese business practices) organisation where the founder is the boss, and discipline is strong. This strong operating environment would work as a constraint to openness to change. These Chinese traditions have been incultated during upbringing and are a part of how Chinese practitioners see the world.

In relation to self-transcendence, I suspect that the results from my research represent the motivation of the Chinese in relation to their outgroups, whereas the ingroup relationship is likely to be quite different. This is a different picture from that proposed above for openness to change, and demonstrates Kim's (1994) co-existence model, in which elements of collectivism and individualism can exist together, embracing and tolerating contradictions by the distinction between ingroup and outgroup behaviour.

They have a bond between family which gives them high self-transcendence values within family, but they feel very differently about those outside their family. Those who are part of the family have acceptance, inclusion, a place and a role. They are helped and their place within the family is assured. If it is a family business, then they have a place within the business and are expected to do everything they can to make the business successful. Trust is a crucial element. To people within the family this is seen as a strength because it is protecting what they have worked hard to achieve. To those outside the family it is seen as being selfish, suspicious and hostile (see also Triandis, 2000; and Oyserman et al., 1998). In terms of the research, this demonstrates the strong distinction for the Chinese between ingroup (family) and outgroup (all others), and how self-transcendence values apply only within the ingroup.
This result is explained by Hwang's model of face and favour in Chinese society (Huang, 2000) which categorises human relationships into three types. The first category is the expressive tie, representing the relationship between members in a family or other congenial groups, and the governing rule is the need rule: "people have the responsibility to strive for resources to satisfy the legitimate needs of each member" (p. 224). The second tie, the mixed tie, represents the relationships among relatives, neighbours, classmates, colleagues, teachers and students, and people sharing a common birthplace. The rules of favour and face are the means people use in this category to expand their human network and obtain resources from resource allocators. The third category is instrumental ties, representing temporary and anonymous relationships with people such as customers, salespeople, and taxi drivers. The rule in an instrumental tie is the equity rule which encompasses social exchange theory. Hwang further elaborates that the Chinese tend to adopt multiple standards of behaviour for interacting with different persons around them (Huang, 2000). The results from my research point to a difference in self-transcendence values between those in expressive and mixed ties, in comparison to those with instrumental ties.

Despite their strong position, the Chinese practitioners do look to the majority ethnic group, the Malays, as a point of comparison. They see that the Malays have many advantages which they haven't worked as hard to achieve. This may explain the rivalry and bigotry which seems to occur between the two groups.

It is interesting that the Chinese looked at the Indian position in Malaysia in terms of a minority/power framework. They saw the Indian practitioners' lack of power and
position as being the motivator for change. This suggests that the power structure is an important construct for the Chinese.

The individualism/collectivism framework is also helpful in this analysis. Chinese people are described as collectivist: high on concern for the group and low for the individual (Lau, 1992). However, Lau (1992) summarises research that appears to cast doubt on the collectivistic depiction, and challenges the collectivist characterisation in the light of this conflicting evidence. While Lau’s research found that the Chinese respondents (from People's Republic of China, Hong Kong and Singapore) showed no distinct patterns of collectivistic value preferences, and some very clear individualistic concerns, the point of particular relevance is Lau’s conclusion about the interplay between individualist and collectivist wishes and behaviours.

Lau’s conclusion is that the cultural context will determine I/C behaviour. People have individualistic wishes, and whether they will resort to act collectively to realise their wishes will depend on the means available. In a collective society, individuals have to behave collectively. They have to rely on the group and social relationships to obtain scarce and externally controlled resources. Lau concluded that the Chinese have individualistic wishes, but collectivism is a means to fulfil those wishes in a collective society (p. 366). The Chinese in my study who appear to strongly conform to ingroup expectations may be doing so because they are required to act collectively, and it is a means to achieving their own individual goals.

In a collectivist organisation such as a Chinese-run organisation, individualism may be seen as a luxury to be indulged when the group’s needs are not too strong and the
group is not threatened, as was shown in Oyserman’s (1993) study of Arab Israelis on this dimension. Individualism may be viewed as appropriate only in those domains that are of no consequence to the group.

8.5.1.2 Malay, Chinese and Indian women and the value dimensions of openness to change and self-transcendence

The findings for women in my sample are interesting in two ways. Firstly, there was little difference between women in the three ethnic groups in terms of motivation to openness to change and self-transcendence. Secondly, while there appeared to be big differences between men and women within each ethnic group, this difference was significant only for the Malays. Gender made no significant difference for the Chinese respondents, and couldn't be assessed for the Indian respondents because the sample included only one male. The second point listed above will be discussed in section 8.5.1.3 below.

In relation to the first point above, the similarity of findings across ethnicities suggests that ethnic role expectations for women in Malaysia have high commonality. Research by Crittenden (1991) on attributional patterns of female university students in Taiwan, however, presents some ideas which inform my findings. Crittenden’s study found that female students in Taiwan were more self-effacing than male students, and more external and self-effacing than female American students. Applying cultural norms and gender-role stereotypes to her analysis, Crittenden found that Taiwanese women are relatively external because they are Chinese; they are self-effacing and modest because they conform to Chinese cultural values and, more importantly, to gender-role
stereotypes within that culture. The clues for my findings are cultural values, ethnic values, and gender stereotypes.

In relation to cultural values, individualism has been linked by various analysts to internal and self-enhancing attributional patterns (e.g., Bond, Leung & Wan, 1982), leading to the expectation that collectivism would be reflected in a relatively external attributional style, where people attribute their good or ill fortune or performance to external factors, and a self-effacing pattern where individuals attribute their successes to external factors and their failures to internal causes. Taiwan, like Malaysia, was rated as a collectivist country by Hofstede (1980) so could be seen as similar in that sense.

In relation to ethnic values, Crittenden (1991) notes that traditional Chinese culture places a high value on modesty, humility and the maintenance of social relationships. She superimposes gender onto this by suggesting that society holds stereotypically different expectations of how females and males present themselves in achievement situations, and that to be judged positively, females may be required to express appropriate “feminine modesty”. This was supported through Crittenden’s findings in which both genders perceived the self-effacing pattern as the “most socially responsible, least productive, and most feminine pattern” (p. 108).

What this contributes to my research is the suggestion that the findings reflect cultural and ethnic expectations and gender stereotypes for women. Gender and culture may articulate roles for women, and through this process they may be quite influential in building value patterns, leading to the differences highlighted in these findings. The
impacts of culture and gender, however, are quite separate, as clearly illustrated by the statement: “Women are not like Asians” (Kashima, Yamaguchi, Kim, Choi, Gelfand, & Yuki, 1995, p. 932). Cultural differences relate to the individualist/collectivist orientation and the extent to which that is followed; whereas gender differences emerge from the relational dimension of the self, that is, the extent to which people see themselves as emotionally related to others (Kashima et al., 1995). Gilligan (1982) proposed that the separate self is predominantly a male perspective, whereas women’s conception is one of self-in-relationship.

Among Indian practitioners, women were seen by respondents through a ‘struggle’ paradigm. Women are perceived as having to struggle to achieve and this is preferred as an explanation for their lower motivation to openness to change. However, the consultancy sector is one where this may not hold true. In my small sample, Indian females were predominant in heading up consultancies. This may indicate that they are successful in an environment where they can choose to play by their own rules rather than society's rules.

Following Gilligan's (1982) thinking, in relation to self-transcendence values, the cultural orientation of collectivism suggests that self-transcendence values would be rated highly by everyone; the gender perspective proposes that women should be higher on self-transcendence than men; and the ethnic influence might be that each ethnic group has different expectations of the ways in which people relate to, and show concern for, others. In relation to openness to change values, the cultural orientation of collectivism suggests that openness to change values would be rated low by everyone; the gender perspective with the agentic/communal dichotomy suggests that women
should be lower on openness to change; and the ethnic influence might be that each ethnic group has different expectations on the ways in which people show flexibility and demonstrate willingness to change. On neither value dimension are all expectations met by the findings in my research. Ethnicity and gender appear to override the cultural expectations, and ethnicity appears to override the gender expectations, suggesting that ethnicity has the strongest influence, except for the Malay respondents (see next section).

Schwartz’s self-transcendence value dimension relates strongly to the concept of systemic work values, defined by Akhtar (2000) as values that attach importance to work outcomes relating to collective welfare such as benefit plans and working conditions. The self-transcendence value dimension also relates strongly to the concept of intrinsic work values, defined by Akhtar (2000) as values that attach importance to psychological aspects of work outcomes. Research consistently shows results along these lines: that women value working relationships more, while men place more value on salary, job status and prestige in the community (Neil & Snizek, 1987). From a survey of 1,079 managers, Jensen, White and Singh (1990) reported that women placed a significantly higher value on the working environment than men. Lindsay and Knox (1984) report that males value extrinsics and females value intrinsics.

Elizur's study (1994) found that the only class of values where women clearly ranked higher than men was what he termed the "affective" values. Affective values in his study included esteem, the opportunity for interaction with other people, and being a fair and considerate supervisor. The findings that these values were all ranked higher by women than men corroborates other research (Bartol & Manhardt, 1979; Manhardt,
1972; Siegfried, MacFarlane, Graham, Moore, & Young, 1981), and the theory of stable differences between genders (see Prince-Gibson & Schwartz, 1998). Elizur's affective values match with Schwartz and Bilsky's self-transcendence value dimension and clearly such findings lead to the expectation that female practitioners should value self-transcendence more highly than males do.

These findings then, also lead to the expectation that women would score higher on self-transcendence than men do, but this did not happen uniformly and was influenced strongly by ethnicity. I suggest that my findings reflect that ethnic groups can differ considerably in the manner in which gender is constructed, that gender constructs are social constructs that evolve in response to intrasocial struggles and other societal changes (Geschwender, 1992) and that the result indicates neither gender nor ethnicity/culture provides a sufficient explanation when considered on its own.

As shown from Noor's research (1999), ethnic groups can also differ considerably in the extent to which their values are drawn from their religious beliefs. Schwartz (1992) found that religiosity correlated positively with giving priority to conformity values and negatively with giving priority to stimulation values. This is relevant and indicative of potential results because of the central importance of religious ideas in the framing and organisation of values and priorities for ethnic communities (Lau, 1995).

Noor's (1999) Malaysian study into roles and women's well-being, used a sample of Malay and Chinese women, and found results relevant to this study. Chinese women for example had a much stronger preference than Malay women (62.6% - 31.4%) to work outside the home in paid full-time employment. A higher proportion of Chinese
women believed their husband definitely preferred them to work, compared with the Malay women (46.8% - 24.1%). When asked their reasons for working, the Malay women cited economic need (42.2%) and interest (26.5%), compared with the Chinese women who cited economic need (35.1%) and interest (34.1%).

Although the socioeconomic status of these two ethnic groups is similar, they are culturally different. Noor describes the Malays as being influenced by both Malay cultural traditions and the Islamic religion. Their ultimate concern in life is “to please God by following his teachings so that one will live well in the present and in the afterlife” (p. 139). Malays achieve this goal by suppressing selfish desires and leading a virtuous life.

The Chinese value system comes predominantly from Confucianism which teaches that “one should strive for the prosperity of the family” (Noor, 1999, p. 139). This stresses the collective welfare of the family rather than individual welfare. Lebra and Paulson (1980) in their study of Chinese women in Southeast Asia, concluded that overseas Chinese societies were strongly imbued with the work ethic and the pursuit of material gain, and these values, linked with relatively greater mobility and economic opportunity than in China, created conditions favourable to the employment of women. This suggests that issues of work centrality are not contributors to different value priorities between Chinese men and women.

Noor proposes that these cultural differences help to explain the differences in attitudes and commitment to work between the Malay and Chinese women. The Chinese, for example, “place a lot of emphasis on accumulating material resources as this is viewed
as helping to contribute to the continuity of the family” (p. 139). The Malays by contrast may believe that work and “material strivings” are not the most important goals in life.

8.5.1.3 Malay men and women and the value dimensions of openness to change and self-transcendence

While there appeared to be big differences between men and women within each ethnic group, this difference was significant only for the Malays. Gender made no significant difference for the Chinese respondents, and couldn't be assessed for the Indian respondents because the sample included only one male. Malay men scored more highly than Malay women on Openness to Change, \( m(\text{male}) = 7.18; m(\text{female}) = 5.84 \), and also on Self-Transcendence \( m(\text{male}) = 7.39, m(\text{female}) = 6.42 \).

For the Malays, both value dimensions appear to be gender-bound, in contrast to the results for the Chinese and Indian respondents. This means that for the Malays, as the majority group in Malaysia, gender is a stronger determinant of values than ethnicity. As the majority group, ethnicity is an assumed part of identity, and gender becomes the point of definition. Whereas, for the Chinese and Indians, ethnicity is the point of definition, being most visible or salient to those whom it excludes. Ryan's (1999) study of Chinese women in Australia revealed a similar process, where her respondents experienced a heightened sense of their 'Chineseness' in Australia.
Taking a cultural perspective, the collectivist nature of Malaysia would suggest that both males and females would rate openness to change low and self-transcendence high. The gender perspective would suggest that males would be higher on openness to change, and women higher on self-transcendence, while the ethnic Malay perspective would suggest that self-transcendence would be high for both men and women, as shown by the quote below. The findings in my study are different from those expected.

*The Malay cultural values are based on the assumption that social relationships are more important than getting the job done... The collectivist orientation makes them keep other people in mind and because of this a Malay is more likely to be concerned with fulfilling his obligations to his family and relatives than being self-fulfilled in terms of personal achievements* (Abdullah, 1996, p. 98).

Similarly with the Chinese, Malays are motivated by their affiliations with groups, families and individuals. They have positive ingroup perceptions, influenced by their demographic and political dominance in Malaysia (Ward & Hewstone, 1985). They are secure when they are confident of gaining the respect of those they know. Being accepted as one of the family or group members is highly valued as it helps to broaden the social network (Abdullah, 1996). Malays are satisfied during their work if they have opportunities to show and receive respect from superiors, peers and subordinates. This can be achieved when work is appreciated and relations with associates are harmonious, predictable and enjoyable (Abdullah, 1996). Perhaps the distinction between the Malay and the Chinese approach is that, for Malays, the self-transcendence values extend beyond the ingroup, whereas for Chinese they don’t.
While the ingroup boundaries are definitive for the Malays, they don’t act as a point which signals a different application of values, whereas for the Chinese, boundaries appear to serve this purpose.

In this research, respondents described the Malay people as humane, humble, nicer, friendlier, softer, warmer, good to have in the workplace, good on the phone, more creative, who want to please and keep harmony. They consider the human factor in decision-making. In short, they are people-oriented people. Therefore it would seem consistent for them to be fairly high on self-transcendence values. As a people, they appear more concerned with protocol and keeping people happy than with achieving the results and this also is consistent with high levels of self-transcendence and interest in the welfare of others. Religion is also a strong influence for many Malays. For Muslims, guidelines are clear on how they should live their lives and interact with people (see Abdullah, 1996, pp. 19-21, for the 10 Malay values) including three values that relate specifically to self-transcendence:

- The focus on establishing a moral relationship of trust is important in building long-term alliances.
- Malays have a strong sense of social sensitivity and a feeling of shame which makes them want to incorporate the views, needs and goals of the in-group before taking a stand.
- Being cooperative, having a sense of interdependence and harmonious relationships with others are important in enabling a Malay to become a member of a social network.
The fact that males and females are significantly different on this dimension means that the cultural and gender influences of this value are stronger than the ethnic influence. For Indian and Chinese practitioners, the ethnic influence may be stronger than for the Malays.

Among the Malay respondents, men were more highly motivated by openness to change than women. This may be the result of social expectations for Malay women.

*A lot of women go into the workforce with certain expectations already because I think a lot of women in Malaysia still think of work as being secondary to raising a family and children. So if you go into work with that sort of mindset as opposed to a normal person who goes in there expecting to make that the be all and end there, that will determine the essence of his success or not. Whereas for women there's that other dimension which probably takes a bit more priority the older they get. That's why you see the difference. Women go in with that level of expectation that doesn't really change whereas men have the high energy, then in the middle they go through that management transition I talked about, and then it changes later when they grow older. (Female/Malay/Mid/Corporate)*

8.5.1.4 The conservation and self-enhancement value dimensions

Significant interaction effects between ethnicity and gender were achieved in my study on the value dimensions of Openness to Change and Self-Transcendence, and on the value types of stimulation, self-direction, power and achievement. Stimulation and self-direction are contained within the Openness to Change value dimension, so their significance is consistent with the model. However, power and achievement are part of the Self-Enhancement value dimension for which a significant effect was not found.
How is it that effects can be achieved at the value level and not at the superordinate level? A further question relates to why no significant effects were found for Conservation.

A partial explanation comes from Schwartz’s (1990) explication of his values model in relation to the individualism/collectivism dimension. As outlined at the start of the chapter, Schwartz recast this dimension in terms of societal structure rather than value dimensions, resulting in a classification of communal vs. contractual societies. His prediction in relation to conservation values was that traditional, restrictive conformity and the interpersonal subset of prosocial (later called benevolence) values would be more important in communal societies because “such values promote the smooth ingroup relations crucial to communal organization and they avoid challenge to the accepted modes of conduct linked to ascribed roles. They also express the greater identity of individual and ingroup interests in communal societies” (p. 153). His expectation therefore was that these largely conservation values would be valued as being of benefit to the whole community, and the lack of difference on this dimension between ethnic groups suggests a commonality of approach on this dimension. In Malaysia, which can be categorised as a communal/collectivist society, this result could be seen as support for Schwartz’s (1990) recasting of the individualism/collectivism dimension.

Schwartz’s prediction in relation to the self-enhancement value dimension (which incorporates the achievement, power and hedonism value types) was different to that for conservation. He expected that differences would be weak between the two types of societies in the importance an average person assigned to achievement and hedonism.
For achievement, there may be differences in terms of who sets the standards for achievement, and who benefits from the results of achievement (i.e., self or the ingroup or the wider community), but the importance of pursuing success and exercising competence should not be different simply because of the communal/contractual distinction. What this allows is the possibility of difference in value expectations between different groups, regardless of the society. In my findings, a significant interaction effect between ethnicity and gender was found for achievement. This suggests that the ingroup/outgroup categorisation on the basis of either ethnicity or gender is valid for this sample. It would be interesting to see whether differences exist when the groups are categorised on a different basis, for example, by profession.

In relation to power, Schwartz (1990) predicted that power would be important in both contractual and communal societies, although for different reasons. In communal societies, power would be seen as important because power differences are seen as part of the legitimate social structure (see Hofstede, 1980). In Malaysia, with its high Power Distance scores (Hofstede, 1980), power would be a salient issue for everyone, as with Conservation. Yet it has resulted in a finding of significance whereas no significance was found on Conservation.

Prince-Gibson and Schwartz’s (1998) study hypothesised that power would be more important to males than females. Power was one of two value types for which the gender difference was hypothesised to be the greatest, the other being benevolence (a female preference). This expectation was because the “motivational goal of power values — to attain status and prestige and to control or dominate people and resources — corresponds most closely to the agentic-instrumental-autonomous orientation presumed
to typify men. Boys are socialised and may be predisposed to pursue power values more strongly than girls. Men are sanctioned more positively than women for gaining and exercising power, and receive greater opportunities to do so” (p. 54-55). Such a result would also be expected given research findings from other studies on power (see summary of studies in Deaux & LaFrance, 1998, p. 792). In Prince-Gibson and Schwartz's study this hypothesis was not proved. Yet in this study, the importance given to power differed on the basis of gender and ethnicity. Gender made no difference for the Chinese respondents \( m(\text{male}) = 4.87, m(\text{female}) = 5.55; t(5) = 1.70, \text{ns} \), couldn't be analysed for the Indians because of sample limitations; but led to a significant difference for the Malays \( m(\text{male}) = 7.90, m(\text{female}) = 5.54; t(7) = 2.99, p = .03 \). Malay males in my sample were significantly more highly motivated by power than Malay women.

8.5.1.5 Indian practitioners and the value dimensions of openness to change and self-transcendence

The result for Indian practitioners on openness and change and self-transcendence is potentially interesting, but with only one male respondent in the sample, gender differences cannot be analysed and the result achieved is likely to reflect the personal characteristics of that one respondent. The Indian respondents scored between the other two ethnicities on both value dimensions, and it is worth examining whether this could be due to issues of identity and salience of ethnicity. Ethnic-role salience would be important for all ethnic groups in Malaysia, and especially so for the Indian community since it is a minority (10 percent of the population) and a marginalised group.
The SIT framework is helpful in understanding the Indian practitioner responses. Identity is based on comparisons between the ingroup and relevant outgroups, and the theory proposes that group behaviour is undertaken to achieve positive social identity for ingroup members. Indians, as a minority group, may be more highly motivated than the Malays or the Chinese in Malaysia, to feel positively about their position in society, in other words, to achieve positive self-esteem. The literature suggests that two courses of action are possible: either to move out of the group or to alter the relative status of the group (Augoustinos & Walker, 1995). As ethnicity is an ascribed category with impermeable boundaries, the second option may be sought, to change a possibly negative valuation of an ingroup to a positive one. The relatively high levels of openness to change and self-transcendence may be directly rationalised by this perspective: that the Indians have adopted values that will over time lead to their improved status within the country. If so, this is directly related to perceptions of self-esteem.

Both ethnic and societal influences are likely to be relevant. In societal terms, the Indian community struggles the hardest. Indian children learn about and experience inequities in the school system. They come into the workplace and the wider world seeing that a lot of discrimination exists. Because of the inequity of their position in relation to the other ethnic groups, the Indians have nothing to lose. They are motivated because of their ethnicity and their disadvantaged position (see Augoustinos & Walker, 1995, on the motivating force of prejudice, deprivation and injustice).

Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions also provide a relevant framework for understanding the Indian position. The Malaysian society is rated as collectivist, and
the Indian community is seen, through the eyes of my respondents, as having highly group-oriented values within their own community. Cultural influences are important to them. In explaining their own motivation to change they view themselves through a cultural perspective and saw cultural reasons to explain their level of openness to change. Through a cultural perspective, high levels of self-transcendence values would also be expected.

While they maintain strong cultural values in their lives, in terms of what they have to do to survive as a group within Malaysia they may be willing to adopt different behaviours to achieve a better position. When they are fighting the bigger fight for resources, for improved status and identity, and a share of the economic market, they are driven to do whatever they have to do to succeed. Behavioural and values acculturation processes (Kim, Atkinson, & Yang, 1999) occur at different rates, with the former occurring much faster. In the same way, Indian practitioners have adopted the behaviours needed to survive economically in the dominant market (i.e., the workplace) but still maintain their own cultural values. The professional field that public relations practitioners work in requires them to be open to change.

Much of the same reasoning can be applied to the self-transcendence value dimension. In this research, we would expect all ethnicities to have fairly high scores on self-transcendence because concern about colleagues would be assumed to fit collectivist values. Similarly we would expect that a high sense of social obligation, a collectivist value, would fit closely with self-transcendence. Likewise Malaysia's rating as a high power distance culture makes hierarchy a very salient concept in organisations. Practitioners would be well aware of their own position in the 'pecking order'. For
those at the junior level a collegial feeling may exist simply because everyone is the same at that level. And finally, the expectation that collectivists place high priority on systemic work values (i.e., placing importance on work values relating to collective welfare) should lead to high scores of self-transcendence for all ethnicities.

This helps to explain the results for all ethnicities, but an additional influence for the Indian community is its marginalised position within society, and the ongoing struggle for acceptance. Self-transcendence issues would be salient, as they are conscious of their disadvantaged position compared with the Malay and Chinese communities. They are concerned about how they are seen by others and what they have to do to be accepted by others. High levels of acceptance and achievement may be something they aspire to and focus on to build their position. A further explanation comes from Lau (1992), that things will be more desired when they are out of reach, and less emphasised when they are more easily accessible.

8.5.2 That there is a difference between how Malay, Chinese and Indian practitioners view themselves and the job

The analysis indicates that:

1. Members of each group see the other ethnic groups as quite different from their own.
2. The way they view their own group is different from the way they are seen by other ethnic groups.
3. There is little commonality between the two outgroups in their perceptions of the ingroup.

The way that each group sees itself and the other ethnic groups on the self-transcendence value dimension provides a clear illustration of these findings. These views are summarised in Table 8.1, overleaf. (Views on other values are presented in Appendix C).

The existence of significant diversity in the views of each group is interesting. In a collectivist country such as Malaysia the underlying societal culture might lead us to expect to see some homogeneity of approach, particularly on self-transcendence which can be categorised as a collectivist dimension. For example, the aspects chosen by the Malays to describe themselves are different from the aspects chosen by the other two groups, which indicates that different aspects are important or relevant to each. All three groups included both positive and negative comments about the Malays on this value dimension.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How Malays see themselves on self-transcendence</th>
<th>How Malays see Chinese on self-transcendence</th>
<th>How Malays see Indians on self-transcendence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trying to progress and have a great inclination to improve the self. Very competitive with other Malays – back-stabbing, do not allow their own kind to grow. Teamwork is not as effective. They acknowledge the increasing role of religion for them in terms of educating about what is right or wrong.</td>
<td>Always protect their own group. They are bonded, help each other a lot within their own group, and help one another improve. People with the same surname will be given priority. This is a very strong spirit and contributes to very strong teamwork. Have clans and societies, and they can interact between societies but with limitations. Chinese males have their own principles which are set.</td>
<td>Very community-conscious. Values of community are important. They weigh up what the Indian community has to say and then let that run their life in terms of how they should be seen by others. Still have the caste system, and may maintain two families -- one in India and one in Malaysia. Strong survival instinct because they are a minority. Great inclination for Indian males to improve the self, being very open to ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Chinese see Malays on self-transcendence</td>
<td>How Chinese see themselves on self-transcendence</td>
<td>How Chinese see Indians on self-transcendence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are already on top and don't have to worry so much. Show a preference for welfare, compared to the other two races. Would never accept an Indian as an equal.</td>
<td>Have a superior attitude because of economic status. Money takes precedence over most things. The most selfish about what they have. More individualistic, and caring about themselves rather than others. Have a survival instinct. Biased. Have a hang-up about the Malays because of favouritism shown to Bumiputras.</td>
<td>A minority race. Band together because there is a need to look out for each other, accept each other and stay together as a group. Circumstances force them to stick together as they are least advantaged. They share common customs and language, and are willing to share with friends. Indian males are a minority and acceptance is important for them. It's easier for Indians to accept others as equal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Indians see Malays on self-transcendence</td>
<td>How Indians see Chinese on self-transcendence</td>
<td>How Indians see themselves on self-transcendence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More collectivist and willing to share with friends. Want others to accept them as equals. Already on top and therefore don't have to worry so much.</td>
<td>Help each other a lot within their own group because it's the culture from China, with the feudal lord and protection of the province. More selfish about what they have and less ready to share.</td>
<td>More collectivist. More willing to share with friends. Have more need to focus on this.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8.1: Ethnic group views of self and others on self-transcendence
Likewise, the aspects chosen by the Indians to describe themselves are different from the aspects chosen by the other two groups. The Indians were positive in their reasons whereas the other two groups were judgemental, including both positive and negative comments.

The Chinese are very clear about how they view themselves, at least as described by the Chinese respondents in my study. The other two groups chose different aspects from the Chinese respondents, and some commonality of thought between the Malays and the Indians about the Chinese existed to a greater extent than the other combinations of outgroup perceptions demonstrated. The sense of strong and impermeable boundaries between the Chinese and others came through clearly in the views of both groups.

This brief analysis illustrates and reinforces the finding that among my sample, ethnicity has a stronger effect than both gender and culture. This is a conclusion that deserves further testing.

8.6 Conclusion

This chapter has brought together the two independent variables of ethnicity and gender to examine their influence on two value dimensions, Openness to Change and Self-Transcendence. In contrast to chapters 5 and 7, where the analysis was a qualitative content analysis of respondent comments about the findings, this chapter takes the findings and examines them in the context of relevant theory and research. With my research, ethnicity has been shown to have a stronger effect than gender.
Two theoretical frameworks have been shown to be valuable in understanding the results: social identity theory and the cultural dimension of individualism/collectivism. The findings stand clearly as follows: that ethnicity leads to difference for men in terms of the levels of Self-Transcendence and Openness to Change values, but leads to similarities for women. For the Malays, as the majority group in Malaysia, gender is a stronger determinant of values than ethnicity. This analysis has analysed the findings through three perspectives -- cultural, ethnic, and gender -- to determine why the differences and similarities have occurred.
CHAPTER 9
YEARS OF EXPERIENCE

This chapter examines the influence of years of experience on the value dimensions of self-enhancement and self-transcendence, and examines the findings of significant effects in relation to the literature. This analysis seeks to present theoretical frameworks which can be used to understand and interpret the results, and then to apply those frameworks. Key themes arise out of the findings, and the analysis in this chapter is structured around these themes. Within this analysis, the themes identified in chapters 6 and 7 will also be addressed.

9.1 Summary of findings

The independent variable of years of experience has been identified by the values analysis (see Chapter 4) as an important influence on values held, on its own and in combination with work environment.

The analysis showed a significant main effect on the value dimensions of Self-Enhancement and Self-Transcendence. In both cases, the mid-level practitioners were significantly different from the newer practitioners and the senior practitioners. The distinctive U-shaped pattern highlighted by these results also emerged in all other significant relationships around years of experience. For Self-Enhancement, the mean scores were: for newer practitioners, 7.63; mid-level practitioners, 6.65; and senior practitioners, 7.19. For Self-Transcendence, the mean scores were: for newer
practitioners, 7.12; mid-level practitioners, 6.13; and senior practitioners, 6.70. The means indicate that all practitioner groups are more highly motivated by Self-Enhancement values than Self-Transcendence values, which is an interesting result also, with newer practitioners more highly motivated than the other two groups.

In relation to value types, years of experience had a significant main effect on Benevolence and Conformity, and a significant two-way interaction was produced for Power ($F (2,15) = 3.76, p = .05$), which means that the influence of years of experience on power depends on work environment, and vice versa. This interaction was followed by examining the work environment difference for each of the three categories of years of experience. These revealed that work environment makes no difference for the senior practitioners ($m$ (corporates) = 6.56, $m$ (consultants) = 5.53; $t(6) = 2.13, ns$), but does lead to a significant difference for the mid-level practitioners ($m$ (corporates) = 4.40, $m$ (consultants) = 5.87; $t(8) = 2.33, p = .05$). The analysis could not be undertaken with the newer practitioners because the sample included only one consultant.

The significant effects on Power and Benevolence are consistent with those at the higher level, because Power is a value type within Self-Enhancement, and Benevolence is a value type within Self-Transcendence. However, Conformity fits within the Conservation value dimension, which was not found to be influenced significantly by this variable.

The results indicate that a practitioner's personal values change as more experience is gained in public relations. This may be tied into a change in self-concept and self-identity which comes with experience in the field, perhaps as practitioners become
more familiar with the role of the professional, or the organisation they’re working with. There is no doubt that a practitioner who has just entered the field will have a different perspective from the practitioner with more experience. There is no doubt that a newer practitioner will see things differently from the older practitioner who sees with the benefit of longer experience, added maturity and greater exposure. This research project aims to develop an understanding of public relations practitioners at different points in their career and of the differing value patterns driving them at each point. This is what is reflected in these findings.

In analysing these findings, it is important to note the following limitations: 1) age trends may be confounded with possible cohort differences due to the cross-sectional nature of the study; and 2) historic or economic events in the country during the period of the research may have influenced the results.

As outlined in Chapter 4, I have chosen to analyse only those variables that produced significant effects at the value dimension level. That means that work environment, as a professional variable, will not be included in this analysis.

Themes emerging from the findings:

- That newer practitioners have higher motivation levels on significant value dimensions than do all other practitioners.

- That mid-level practitioners have lower motivation levels on significant value dimensions than do all other practitioners.
• That senior practitioners have motivation levels on significant value dimensions that sit between those of the other two practitioner groups.

These will be discussed following a review of the relevant literature.

9.2 Theoretical context for years of experience analysis

The challenge posed by the variable of years of experience is to determine why people with different levels of experience are motivated by different values, or rather, why they are motivated differently by values. Separate from studying the specific influence of the work environment, the focus on years of experience seeks to understand the changes that happen as people gain more experience in a particular profession. It seeks to understand the employment-related personal change that occurs among professionals, specifically the public relations professionals in my sample in Malaysia. Their perspective changes as a result of experience and familiarity with a particular profession within a particular work environment, but in what way does this lead to a change in the way they are motivated at different experience points? What personal change do they undergo that influences their values? Why do values that were very important as a guiding principle for their lives as newcomers to the profession diminish in importance several years later?

Several interrelated aspects contribute to a process of change as practitioners accumulate years of experience: progress through their life cycle, which happens irrespective of their work experiences, and the separate impacts of passage of time, and
maturation; progress in their career, including the mid-career challenges; changes in self-concept and values; the impact of role transitions and organisation or occupational socialisation which changes skills, abilities and approach; and social aspects surrounding the career.

9.2.1 Progress through life cycle

The respondents are likely to have interpreted the years of experience data in the context of what is happening for them in their own lives. Therefore, an understanding of the series of developmental stages provides a base on which to build the interpretation and analysis of my results.

The life course is described as a series of stages through which one progresses: where periods of stability, equilibrium and balance alternate, in a largely predictable way, with periods of instability and transition (Tennant, 1999). The most career-relevant facet of individual experience is development that occurs during the adult (employed) years.

Levinson (1978) found that development took place in a series of periods during which life structures were created, followed by transition periods during which these structures were altered. The life structure was defined as the underlying pattern of design of a person’s life at a given time. A fundamental process within each development stage is an attempt to build or modify one’s life structure. Levinson proposed that structure-building periods normally last five to seven years, 10 years at the most. Transitional periods usually last about five years. This means that most
people spend half their adult lives in developmental transitions (Hall, 1987). A major influence on these life transitions would be role transitions and the related socialisation experiences that occur at different points.

Levinson (1978) also found that most people have only one or two components that occupy a central place in the life structure, usually work and family. A major task of the early adult stage (ages 17-33) is to form a vocation and strive for occupational advancement. However, by the early 40s, a mid-life transitional phase occurs in which occupational achievements are questioned, suggesting that the psychological importance of work increases until about the age of 40, at which time subjective attachments to work roles should begin to decrease (Lorence, 1987). Mid-career is therefore the time for reexamination of personal values (Hall, 1976).

Super's (1980) life-span, life-space approach proposes nine major roles that people play as they mature: child, student, leisurite, citizen, worker, spouse, homemaker, parent and pensioner. He sees that these roles increase and decrease in importance with the various life stages, with importance being defined in terms of time and emotion. For example, when a person starts work, the new role reduces the amount of time and space available for other roles. When children arrive, domestic responsibilities increase, and are potentially handled by drawing time and commitment from the work role. For everyone, the balances between different roles at different times will be an individual response to the needs as they see and feel them.

A second fundamental process is that of individuation, which is the changing relationship between self and the external world throughout the life course. The
ultimate developmental task is to become a complete, complex, unique, independent
human being while being involved in caring, committed relationships (Hall, 1987).
Levinson's work has been criticised because it was initially based on a sample of men,
although he subsequently produced a model based on a sample of women (1997), and
there is growing evidence, much of it led by Gilligan (1982), that men and women
approach this developmental task from different directions. Men tend to be socialised
to form and maintain their sense of identity through separation and the development of
autonomy whereas women have learned to develop their sense of self through
attachment, relationships and caring (Hall, 1987).

Personal transitions have been found to be different for women and men. For example,
Hennig and Jardim's (1977) study of women managers found that successful female
executives tend to have a period in their careers when their work investment wanes to
permit more energy to go into their personal lives. Studies by Gallese (1985) and
Abramson and Franklin (1986) found the issue of balance between work and personal
life to be a difficult one for the younger women they studied.

An implicit assumption is that occupational reward values are formed early in life,
before the completion of formal education and that they persist throughout work
history. This assumption parallels the more general notion that personality, including
central values and motives, is formed mainly in childhood and adolescence and that
changes in adulthood only encompass more specific and superficial orientations
(Mortimer & Lorence, 1979). Brim (1966) supports this view with his assertion that
adult socialisation is less concerned with establishing values and motivation and more
concerned with overt behaviour. "The usual objective of socialization in the later-life
stages is to get one to practice a new combination of skills already acquired, to combine existing elements into new forms, to trim and polish existing material, rather than to learn wholly new complexes or responses" (p. 28).

9.2.1.1 Age and aging

In different cultures and at different periods in history, there are different conceptions of the stages of life, their boundaries, dimensions and divisions, including perceptions of age and the creation of socially standardised age categories. As with gender, people develop a posture and attitude towards themselves as belonging to an age category – part of the process of developing an identity.

Age and years of experience cannot be taken to mean the same thing in this study because not all practitioners began their public relations career at the same age. Several respondents for example, worked in a different occupation before moving into public relations and so entered the field at a later age than others who came into public relations straight after graduating.

However, as people accumulate years of experience, they are also aging. Aging encompasses two relevant aspects: firstly, that people mature as they age and therefore the perspective of more experienced practitioners in my study could reflect a more mature view; secondly that people with more years of experience have experienced more years of organisational socialisation, simply because they have been exposed to the labour market for a longer period of time. Age reflects both socialisation and maturation by work experiences (Mannheim, 1993).
The relationship between job/work involvement and age was studied by Lorence (1987) to examine gender differences in the relationship and reasons for the relationship. Previous research suggested that age differences in work involvement may be due to cohort effects, job specific factors or to the processes of adult development. The expected negative relationship between age and work commitment was not found; instead the study found that intrinsic work factors were more important determinants of affective work orientations. But for women, such attitudes increased with age, potentially because the older woman is less distracted from her work by dual-role commitments. Mannheim (1993), in his study on work role centrality and gender, noted that age has multiple connotations in terms of socialisation, maturation (psychosocial aging), and past and present experienced environments.

9.2.1.2 The impact of passage of time

The results in my study depict changes in motivation levels at different points in time: as a newcomer to the profession; as someone with five to ten years of experience; and as someone with 15+ years of experience.

The specific impact of time on motivation levels was studied by Helmreich, Sawin, and Carsrud (1986). Their study applied measures of achievement motivation and interpersonal orientation to explore the strength of the personality-performance relationship across time, with the aim of improving the ability to predict job performance. They thought it likely that, ability factors aside, stable personality traits would generate more accurate performance predictions over time. However, they saw
that the predictive power of personality dimensions would initially be less accurate for two reasons. Firstly, because a high percentage of performance variance may be accounted for initially by ability and prior experience. Secondly, because of the operation of the 'honeymoon effect' in performing new jobs which manifests itself through high output and commitment. They proposed that as the honeymoon period ended, the novelty and challenge of the task or job may wane and personality factors would become a stronger determinant of performance.

Helmreich et al. (1986) also incorporated the concept of achievement motivation, and hypothesised that measures of achievement motivation together with measures of interpersonal orientation would improve the ability to predict performance levels. Their study supported the relationships, as anticipated. Interesting findings relevant to my research were that commitment to work was a positive predictor, and mastery (the desire to undertake new and challenging tasks) showed the opposite pattern. That is, individuals with a high need for challenging and demanding activities perform less well after continued exposure to a given work environment, particularly if the job being done is more mundane. Also relevant was the confirmation of a honeymoon period effect, lasting 1-3 months, where initial enthusiasm about getting a job after graduation and job novelty give way to perceptions of a harsher reality in actual work environment. After this honeymoon period significant correlations were found between personality measures and performance.
9.2.2 Career development models

A career is defined as the combination and sequence of roles played by a person during the course of a lifetime (Super, 1980, p. 282).

A number of career development models exist which emphasise the importance of lifelong career development and propose various stages through which careers develop, including rough age frameworks and timeframes for such progressions to occur. Their main contribution is their macro descriptive approach to the patterning of occupational choices and opportunities within the life-span framework (Nicholson, 1984).

For example, Super's (1957) model theorised that an individual's work career developed in four stages: 1) an early period of trial and exploration of different vocations and employers; 2) a period of stabilisation in which a specific line of work is chosen and an attempt made to settle into the career; 3) a maintenance stage or stable mid-life period; and 4) a stage of decline and withdrawal from the work environment.

Super's (1980) career development model, and those of Greenhaus and Callanan (1994), and Levinson (1986, both cited in Blau, 1999) describe the first few years of a career as being in the establishment stage. People at this stage focus on mastering the technical aspects of their jobs and on learning the norms, rules and values of their employing organisations. Next comes the later-career-achievement phase, with an increased ability to handle complex tasks and exhibit higher levels of advanced professional behaviours including positive relationships to professional commitment. Further stages include maintenance and decline. Super's (1980) developmental
perspective attached primary importance to "career stage, career maturity, the
translation of self-concept into a vocational identity, and life role salience" (Lent &
Hackett, 1994, p. 96).

In a later refinement of his theory, Super (1994) drew on the theoretical and empirical
work of other social scientists in his concept of an "archway of career determinants".
He stated that the systematic influence of personal, social and economic forces that
shape a person's needs, values and interests will have an impact on their career choices
and level of achievement.

The four-stage organisational model of professional careers (Dalton & Thompson,
1977) incorporates these stages: 1) apprentice, where employees focus on competently
performing detailed and routine work within time constraints, while the major
psychological issue is dependence; 2) colleague, where employees learn non-routine
tasks leading to consistent independent completion of complex tasks, while
independence is the major psychological issue; 3) mentor, where training is the central
activity and the major psychological issue is assuming responsibilities for others, and
4) sponsor, which focuses on shaping the direction of the organisation, while
exercising power is the major psychological issue.

Hall (1976) has shown that the challenge level in a person's job, especially the first job,
can affect the outcome of his or her career. The appropriate sequence or progression of
job assignments can have even more powerful effects (Wellbank, Hall, Morgan &
Hammer, 1978). Baily (1981) argued that a "slow burn" or apprenticeship approach to
organisational careers, with a long training period and a slow increase in the challenge
posed by assignments is likely to result in a crisis-free mid-career stage for professional employees.

People selectively perceive, weigh, and incorporate information about themselves and the world around them in considering various career options. However, a multitude of factors – such as culture, gender, genetic endowment, social context, and unexpected life events – may interact with or supersede those plans.

Career stability was studied by Gottfredson (1977) to examine the phenomena that: typical careers may be initially unstable but become more stable with age; and that career stability is fostered by work environments that make convergent demands on a worker. The finding that mobility is less common in older than younger workers (Parnes et al., 1975, cited in Gottfredson, 1977, p. 436) can be partly explained in terms of the increasing job security that comes with tenure, coverage by pension plans, job satisfaction, job attachment, and monetary and labour market considerations. Gottfredson found that career stability increases with age, both because of an increasingly defined set of preferences and abilities on the part of the individual, and also because of increasingly defined social, economic and hiring circumstances.

9.2.2.1 Mid-career challenges

Hall (1986) has proposed a model of decision making applied to mid-career, based on the idea that much of the developmental work of the early career consists of establishing mastery and eliminating surprise. He proposes that this early career success can have unintended consequences because it can lead to the creation of career
routines, which are scripted forms of behaviour that become resistant to change. Thus he suggests that a major task of mid-career development is “routine busting” or breaking out of these overlearned behaviour patterns (1986, p. 308). He suggests that triggers are necessary to break a routine and create new learning, leading to an awareness of choice and exploration, or heightened cognitive activity. These new mid-career behaviours then become integrated into the person’s self-identity.

A study by Neapolitan (1980) into occupational change in mid-career operationalised a mid-career person as someone who had worked at least eight years in the occupation, with every two years in graduate education counting as one year. His study of 25 changers, compared and contrasted with people remaining in matched occupations, found that four categories of factors were important to mid-career occupational change: 1) factors associated with the first career (generally dissatisfaction arising from a lack of congruence between a person's work orientation and the rewards of an occupation); 2) factors associated with the second career (attraction resulting from a perceived congruence between the two); 3) obstacles to change (generally financial in nature which prevent the change being made); 4) and personal factors (generally differing personal beliefs about the control one has over one's life, and one's ability to succeed in new areas).

Of particular interest to my research was the finding that change often didn't happen until mid-career, despite the existence of a lack of congruence at the time of entry, because people were initially satisfied by the challenge and excitement of the new job.
9.2.3 *Personal change in self-concept and values*

Employment-related personal change comes about from the development of work skills and abilities, changes in the acquisition of appropriate role behaviours, and changes related to adjustment to the organisation or work group's norms and values (Feldman, 1981). Taking the latter aspect, a useful framework for understanding personal change is by framing personal change in terms of changes to self-concept.

The self-concept literature is characterised by a continuing controversy over whether the self-concept is stable or malleable (e.g., Crary, Pazy, & Wolfe, 1988). The self is regarded as a stable and enduring structure that protects itself against change (Mortimer & Lorence, 1981), yet in different social environments different selves appear to emerge. Markus and Kunda (1986) proposed that both apparently contradictory theories are possible -- self-concept remains fairly stable yet varies with the social environment.

Their perspective on how self-concept works is that self-concept encompasses within its scope a wide variety of self-conceptions -- the good selves, the bad selves, the hoped-for selves, the feared selves, the possible selves, the ideal selves, and so on. At any given moment, the working self-concept is a subset of this universe of self-conceptions. The working self-concept is a temporary structure, determined by the social situation at that time, which means it is situation dependent. The self-concept is stable in that the universe of self-conceptions is relatively stable, and it is also malleable because the contents of the working self-concept change. The working self-
concept consists of one's core self-conceptions embedded in a context of more tentative self-conceptions that are tied to immediate social circumstances.

Markus and Kunda (1986) suggested that general self-descriptions, that is, the terms people use to describe themselves, in fact describe core self-conceptions, whereas responses to a particular situation represent the working self-concept. In testing their perspective, Markus and Kunda found that conceptions of oneself as similar to others or different from others are core self-conceptions which are critical for self-definition and are not easily changed. This can be extended to the process of construct elicitation in Personal Construct Psychology (PCP) where core constructs represent values and self-concept (see Chapter 10).

Super (1984) maintained that a person's career choice is a function of the self-concept of that individual at the time the decision is made. Super's self-concept model describes how a person gradually crystallises a sense of self and implements the self-concept through a series of career decisions. During this process the self-concept is successively refined. Change however may come from other sources, as summarised and cited by Phillips (1994, p. 158): some will be derived by chance (Bandura, 1982; Cabral & Salomone, 1990), some will be derived from evolving definitions of self (Bordin, 1990), and some will be in response to the continuing interaction between the environment and the consequence of prior decisions (Dawis & Lofquist, 1984; Holland, 1985; Krumboltz, 1976).

A person's self-concept is also seen as a key outcome of occupational experiences and socialisation (Mortimer & Lorence, 1979; Schein, 1971), and their level of
identification with their profession (Morrow & Goetz, 1998). Existing research has
documented change and stability in occupationally-relevant self-concepts over varying
periods of time, and has identified some of the key factors which influence personal
change and stability (e.g., Kohn & Schooler, 1983; Mortimer, Lorence & Kumka,

Festinger (1954) proposed that social comparisons are central to the self-concept,
especially in the absence of objective information. He held that comparisons are
typically made with people who belong to the same social group(s) as oneself, since
such people are often similar to oneself in a number of ways and are appropriate for
such comparisons. It seems likely that individuals will compare themselves with other
people in their workplace to arrive at a clear sense of self, especially important early in
their career. At this time, individuals may typically be uncertain about how to make
sense of their working environment (Louis, 1980) and are relatively reliant on other
people to resolve their uncertainty (Feldman & Brett, 1983). In Markus and Kunda’s
(1986) view, this would be adding new self-conceptions to the universe of self-
conceptions. Over time in a particular profession, the core self-conceptions may change
to accommodate professional components.

Symbolic interactionist views of the development and maintenance of the self-concept
argue that our self-concept is determined, or at least influenced, by how we believe
others see us (Schafer & Keith, 1985). A large discrepancy between the way we
believe others see us and the way we see ourselves is likely to lead us to change our view
of actual self, since it is unpleasant and confusing to be seen in ways we believe to be
inaccurate. The extent to which a person’s present self-concept differs from how they
identification with their profession (Morrow & Goetz, 1998). Existing research has documented change and stability in occupationally-relevant self-concepts over varying periods of time, and has identified some of the key factors which influence personal change and stability (e.g., Kohn & Schooler, 1983; Mortimer, Lorenze & Kumka, 1986; Nicholson & West, 1988).

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believe they were in the past is often used as an indication of personal development (Arnold & Nicholson, 1991). This also raises the possibility that increasing experience teaches people about their deficiencies as much as about their competencies (Arnold & Nicholson, 1991), which is especially so for those who are promoted quickly or put into challenging positions as part of the socialisation and professional experience (e.g., in consultancies where there is often an approach of “throwing one in the deep end”).

Times of role transition (see section 9.2.4 below) are times when new self-conceptions are developed and tested, to help people adapt to the new roles they are asked to perform.

Motion (1997, p. 3) draws on the work of Foucault and Fairclough to put a new slant on self and subject: “Public relations practitioners have worked within a modernist paradigm, which required them to convey the true or essential self, but a postmodern public relations perspective would be that the self is but one of the many subject positions that can be changed... From a Foucauldian perspective, both the self and the subject are deemed to be constructed”. In the same way that an individual may hold multiple and changing images of an organisation (Moffitt, 1994), an individual may hold multiple and contradictory notions of self (Motion, 1997, p. 6): “Individuals occupy multiple subject positions within the multiple discourses in which they participate”. Contradictions may be inherent within these multiple positions.

Moffitt (1994) in turn adapts S. Hall’s (1986) articulation model of meaning which theorises that meaning is determined by the intersection of multiple factors, and that at each intersection one or more of the factors can overdetermine the others and affect the
meaning at that moment. The model explains how people hold multiple, everchanging, positive and negative feelings and images and concepts. Motion (1997) suggests that this may apply to public relations practitioners, as it may to other professionals who may have a concept of the "professional" self and a separate concept of the "personal self". One focus of this research is whether this is also an accurate model for explaining the existence and interrelationship of possibly conflicting values.

9.2.3.1 Changes in importance of values over time

Motivation, the activation of internal desires, needs, and concerns, energises behavior and sends the organism in a particular direction aimed at satisfaction of the motivational issues that gave rise to the increased energy (Pittman, 1998, p. 549).

The Schwartz and Bilsky values theory identifies personal value priorities, and the strength of different values as motivators. A key interest in this research is why there appears to be a change in the importance given to different values at different points in experience. Why do values that were very important as a guiding principle to newcomers to the profession diminish in importance several years later?

Values are thought to be stable over time (e.g., Rokeach, 1973). But obviously the importance of individual values or value types is judged differently over time. What impacts on this?
As Pittman explains (1998), motivation can be viewed as a cognitive approach which affects the construction of understanding, and creates mental representations of reality. Essentially it is about how our thinking energises and directs actions (Russell, 1999). Making sense of reality doesn't happen automatically. "It takes an energized and directed person to go out and explore, to seek, to make, to plan, to reflect, to err and learn from errors, and to generate, test, and revise hypotheses" (Pittman, 1998, p. 551). The critical issue is to understand why people do the things they do.

Schwartz's definition (1992, p. 2) of values as "desirable states, objects, goals, or behaviours, transcending specific situations and applied as normative standards to judge and to choose among alternative modes of behaviour" uses the goal orientation to clarify the purpose of engaging in behaviour. In an earlier definition (1987), Schwartz also defined values as being ordered by relative importance. This suggests that at different times in our careers some value types will have a stronger influence on our representations of reality than others, and may indirectly lead to different behaviours. For example, the newer practitioner who is highly motivated by all value dimensions will have a different picture of reality than the mid-year practitioners who is much lower on motivation on all value dimensions.

9.2.3.2 Studies on personal change and values

Two longitudinal studies have specific relevance to understanding the way in which personal change occurs over time, the first examining changes in self-image and the second examining changes in values over time. In the first of these, Arnold and Nicholson (1991) studied 94 graduate entrants to a multinational organisation, and
focused on how graduates construed themselves and others during early career, and whether these findings related to organisational socialisation effects. The study found that organisational socialisation did not affect the graduates’ self-concepts, nor did time spent in the company shift perceptions of self towards greater similarity with others. They concluded that socialisation may more readily affect attitudes and behaviours than self-images.

However, there was strong evidence that the graduates perceived cumulative personal change over time, in that the longer they had been in the company, the more they felt they had changed since they were in higher education. It was as if the graduates were increasingly disavowing their former self as a substitute for perceiving increasing congruence between present (actual) and ideal self. The authors found however that such change did not guarantee greater job involvement and commitment, which is in conflict with theories of person-organisation fit.

The second study (Madill, Montgomerie, Stewin, Fitzsimmons, Tovell, Armour, & Ciccocioppo, 2000) focused on career decision making among young women in Canada. Respondents were tested as eleventh graders and again two to three years later. There was little change in work-related values between the two administrations of the values scale; but variation occurred on the Salience inventory, particularly Role Value implementation. They concluded that role salience was less stable than values. This finding has some parallels to the first study, in that behaviours may vary depending on the requirements of the job, but the underlying values appear to remain relatively stable. The authors commented that levels of value endorsement were likely to shift
with changes in roles, but that such changes were likely to be evolutionary rather than revolutionary.

9.2.4 Role transitions, person-environment fit and organisational socialisation

9.2.4.1 Role transitions

Another useful framework for understanding and analysing employment-related personal change is the study of work role transitions. The personal transitions described in the life-span process include work-related role changes, which are defined as any change in employment status and any major change in job content, for example, organisational entry or job transfer. Nicholson (1984) offers the perspective of work histories as sequences in which the continuities and discontinuities are shifts brought about by changing role requirements and motivational orientations. Nicholson (1984) argues that work role transitions can have profound significance for the future development of individuals and their organisations because they lead to decisions about the extent to which an individual is prepared to change behaviour and disposition to meet the requirements of the job. Individual differences in the characteristics of people and the transitions they go through mediate the relationships of change vs. stability, and individual vs. situational adjustment.

Two approaches from the literature are helpful in understanding the transition process: Nicholson's theory of work role transitions, and the study of the process itself.
9.2.4.1.1 Nicholson's (1984) theory of work role transitions

Nicholson proposes that in addition to organisational variables, job and individual variables can also influence individuals’ adjustments to the new work role. Individuals can either make adjustments to their new role by changing aspects of their jobs, or they can adjust by changing aspects of themselves -- essentially a choice between adapting to meeting environmental requirements or manipulating the environment to meet personal requirements. The first of these, personal development, is where change is absorbed by the person altering his or her frame of reference, values, or other identity-related attributes (Strauss, 1959), and can vary in its centrality to the person’s identity. The second of these, role development, defines a more proactive approach where the individual tries to change role requirements so they better match his or her needs, abilities and identity. Adjustment and development will be unique to each individual because of different personality predispositions (Morse, 1975).

The predictor variables that determine the type of adjustment include: 1) the role requirements; 2) the motivational orientations of the individual; 3) prior occupational socialisation into previous work roles; and 4) the induction-socialisation process in terms of the new role. Nicholson (1984) proposes four modes of adjustment resulting from the interaction of the various determinants: replication, absorption, determination and exploration, presented as a matrix with high and low development along each axis. An independent third dimension is the affective response to the transition.

The Replication mode results from low role development and low personal development, and represents those transitions requiring minimal adjustment to personal
or role systems. The person performs the job in much the same manner as in previous jobs and as previous occupants have done the job. Positive feelings would result from the maintenance of valued skills and experiences through the transition, and feelings of preservation and stability. Negative feelings would be those of restriction, helplessness and obsolescence, and feeling “caught in a rut” (Nicholson, 1984, p. 177).

*The Absorption mode* results from high personal development and low role development, and represents transitions where the adjustment is borne almost exclusively by the individual, who does little to modify the parameters of the new role. This typifies role learning where the person’s energies are mainly devoted to the task of assimilating new skills, social behaviours and frames of reference to meet the requirements of the job. This would be the typical category for the newer practitioners in my study and in fact, absorption is most intense at early career stages when, as Nicholson (1984, p. 187) explains: “occupational inexperience guarantees that the novelty of role demands will be high and when openness to experience and desire for feedback have high functional utility for constructing social identities”. Positive feelings would come from satisfaction from learning and from the enlargement of personal capacities. Negative feelings would come from skill degeneration, the disconfirmation of valued self-images and anomie.

*The Determination mode* results from low personal development and high role development, and represents transitions where the person remains unaffected but works hard to alter the new role by determining elements in the content or structure of the role. Positive feelings would come from a sense of one’s own capacity for innovation, inspiration and reform when redirecting the work of others. Negative feelings would
come from unsuccessful attempts to reshape the role, and the signalling of their own inadequacy. Determination is more characteristic of people who have the established identities, practiced skills, high self-confidence, and desire for control inspired by partly fulfilled career plans, and who are aware that they have time and energy to pursue future challenge, i.e., people in mid career and middle life (Nicholson, 1984).

*The Exploration mode* results from high personal development and high role development, and represents transitions where there is simultaneous change in personal qualities and role parameters. This may be one category for senior practitioners in my sample. Positive feelings would come from the pleasures of sensing one's growth or successful travel through cycles of thoughtful experimentation, feedback and change. Negative feelings would come from confusion and anxiety because of the loss of internal or external bearings.

Nicholson added two further dimensions to the model: 1) job factors, including level of discretion and novelty of role demands; and 2) individual factors or motivation orientations including personal need for control and need for feedback, that would directly affect adjustment. Discretion determines the scope for role development, while novelty of job demands relates to the dimension of personal development and defines the degree to which the role permits the exercise of prior knowledge, practised skills and established habits. Individuals with a high need for control seek to construct environments in which the consequences of their actions can be accurately predicted. Therefore they will aim to adjust the job rather than themselves (Black & Ashford, 1995). Individuals with a high need for feedback would be more likely to change aspects of themselves rather than trying to change the job. The desire for control relates
to discretion and role development, and desire for feedback relates to novelty and personal development. Combining the predictions for discretion and novelty, and need for control or feedback, makes it possible to predict the mode of adjustment expected in a particular work role transition.

Nicholson (1984) saw his model as dynamic, meaning that a mode of adjustment following transition may shift into other modes in the long term, eventually reaching a stabilisation point. The novelty of job demands may persist until the limits of role learning are reached. This might occur over a whole career, or it may be cyclical where personal development and stabilisation continue to occur as fresh insights and new challenges continue to open up.

Black and Ashford (1995) tested Nicholson's (1984) theory of work role transitions in the first year by examining the impact of individual factors (personal need for control and need for feedback), job factors (job discretion and job novelty) and organisational factors (socialisation practices) on two modes of adjustment for newcomers, which they termed job-change and self-change (self-change equating with personal change). They found that both individual factors had a significant impact on self-change as a mode of adjustment but not on job change. That is, individuals with a high need for feedback reported more self-change after one year on the job than those with a high need for control who reported less self-change. They explained this result by suggesting that a desire for control tends to focus individuals outward, away from changing themselves and concluded that individuals engage in a variety of adjustment mechanisms beyond simply changing themselves or their job.
They found that job novelty and job discretion had no impact on modes of adjustment. Post hoc testing on this point led them to suggest that while job discretion may free up individuals to tailor the job to better fit their skills and preferences, this will be more likely to result in job change when the individual feels that the job is a poor fit initially. If the job already fits, greater discretion will be less likely to stimulate job change as a mode of adjustment. They found that investiture/divestiture socialisation tactics had a significant impact on self-change as a mode of adjustment, and only the variable/fixed tactics were significantly related to the job change mode of adjustment.

Ashforth and Saks (1995) also tested Nicholson’s model and found mixed support. They argued that the model could be enriched by considering newcomer desires that are directly aroused by situational-specific cues, by considering personal and role development as interacting rather than independent processes, by considering the valence of certain personal and role developments, and by considering the influence of social referents on role transitions.

A study by Feldman and Brett (1983) studied ways in which new hires coped with their new position compared with job changers. This is relevant for my study because the new hires equate with newer practitioners, and the job changes equate with mid-level and senior practitioners who are promoted into positions higher up in the organisation, or in their profession. In general, job changers favour strategies that involve higher activity levels for themselves and more control of others (Nicholson’s (1984) desire for control). In contrast, new hires favour strategies that solicit the aid and social support of others (Nicholson’s (1984) desire for feedback). Job changers generally have more opportunities to structure and change their environment (higher job discretion), but
they also have higher performance expectations placed on them. New hires have less power to change their work environments (low job discretion), but are more likely to be seen as needing training and social support (due to high novelty). This helps to explain why the transitions may lead to different value motivations depending on different years of experience.

Nicholson’s theory of work role transitions is useful for my research as a framework for understanding the type of personal change that practitioners experience when moving into new roles as a result of their professional development, (i.e., years of experience in the profession). It enables hypotheses to be developed about the variables that might determine personal change at each of the experience levels in my study. For example, I would expect the following:

- That newer practitioners would be highly motivated by the desire for feedback than by the desire for control. In terms of Schwartz and Bilsky’s values theory, this equates to an expectation of high self-transcendence and low self-enhancement values.

- That mid-level and senior practitioners would be more highly motivated by the desire for control than by the desire for feedback. In terms of Schwartz and Bilsky’s values theory, this equates to an expectation of low self-transcendence and high self-enhancement values.

Given that these hypotheses were not supported, both Schwartz and Bilsky’s values theory and Nicholson’s (1984) models provide frameworks for analysis of the results.
9.2.4.1.2 The transition process and its impact on self-identity

An alternative approach to the study of transitions is to focus on the process by which a person enters a new role and is socialised by the institution in the process, and what changes these create in the individual. Van Gennup (1960, cited in Hall, 1987) defines transition as a movement from one status to another through three distinct stages: separation from the old role, initiation into the new role, and incorporation of the new role into one's self-identity. Hall (1987, p. 302) explains that to function effectively in a new role, a person must develop a way of viewing himself or herself in that role - a sub-identity related to that role. Individuals who are career newcomers as well as organisational newcomers are particularly likely to be focused on the establishment of their roles (R. Katz, 1980). Newcomers are also concerned with the extent to which they are expected to change personally in order to fulfil organisational roles (Fisher, 1986).

Self-identity change comes at transition points on the job when the work role changes. The first of these is at the newcomer stage - the focal point for socialisation efforts - but transition points occur whenever an employee is asked to expand their role, take on new responsibilities, move from a technical job to a client advisory role, or from a subordinate to a supervisor position. Such career transition passages provide opportunities for renegotiating both public and private views of self (Ibarra, 1999). Mansfield (1972) sees two parts to this: the first where the individual decides on a new identity, and the second where the identity is ratified by significant others. Because new roles require new skills, behaviours, attitudes and patterns of interactions, they may produce fundamental changes in an individual's self-definitions or self-concept.
(e.g., Hall, 1976; Schein, 1978). Socialisation itself is a negotiated adaptation whereby people strive to improve the fit between themselves and their work environment. With experience, they improve their understanding of the new role and refine their emerging notions of who they want to be in that role (Bandura, 1977). Over time, people adapt aspects of their identity to accommodate role demands and modify role definitions to preserve and enact valued aspects of their identity, attaining a negotiated adaptation to the new situation (Nicholson, 1984).

Professional identity is defined as the relatively stable and enduring constellation of attributes, beliefs, values, motives and experiences in terms of which people define themselves in a professional role (Schein, 1978). At any transition point in a professional position, professional identity is involved, and practitioners must convey a credible image long before they have fully internalised the underlying professional identity. A basic assumption is that professional identity forms over time with varied experiences and meaningful feedback that allow people to gain insight about their central and enduring preferences, talents and values (Schein, 1978), and therefore professional identity is more adaptable early in one’s career. People enact qualities they want others to ascribe to them, for example qualities prescribed by their professional roles such as judgement, business acumen, competence, creativity and trustworthiness (Ibarra, 1999). While some of these qualities may be well-defined aspects of their identities, others may be incongruent, and others will develop with experience.

Ibarra (1999) proposes that people adapt to new professional roles by experimenting with images that serve as trials for possible but not yet fully elaborated professional identities. She proposed that these “provisional selves” are temporary solutions that
people use to bridge the gap between their current capacities and self-conceptions and the representations they hold about what attitudes and behaviours are expected in the new role. Her own study (1999), to determine how people adapt to new roles by experimenting with provisional selves, found that adaptation involved three tasks: 1) observing role models to identify potential identities; 2) experimenting with provisional selves; and 3) evaluating the experience against internal standards and external feedback.

Career transitions in professional service work such as consulting or in-house provision of communication advice are particularly interesting in Ibarra’s (1999) view because of the necessity to convey public images of competence and credibility. Ibarra gives three reasons for this: firstly, the firm’s performance depends on the professional’s ability to sell the service, and because of the intangibility of the service, a professional’s demeanour strongly affects the client’s perceptions of quality; secondly, as representatives of the firm, professionals are expected to embody the firm’s identity; and thirdly, what will occur in the course of client interaction is often difficult to anticipate, requiring discretion and improvisation by the professional. The ability to come across as confident, in control and prepared is paramount. This is especially challenging for a practitioner at any level who has not been faced with such demands before.

9.2.4.2 Organisational socialisation

To perform adequately in a new role, an individual needs ability, motivation, and an understanding of what others expect (Brim, 1966). Organisational socialisation is a
powerful influence during work role transition, through which those entering a new role can learn about job-related tasks, work roles, group processes and organisational attributes (Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992) to facilitate their adaptation to the new role. The task domain reflects such features as understanding duties, assignments, priorities, how to use equipment, and how to handle routine problems. The role domain focuses on the boundaries of authority and responsibility, expectations and the appropriate behaviours for the position. The group domain is concerned with coworker interaction, group norms and values, and the work group's normative structure. The organisational domain focuses on the politics, power, and value premises of the organisational system, its mission, leadership style, and special languages (Ostroff & Kozlowski, 1992). In newcomer socialisation, Ostroff and Kozlowski (1992) hypothesised that learning would focus in the task domain initially, followed by role and group issues, and would then move on to organisational issues.

Traditionally, organisational socialisation has been viewed from two different perspectives: that of the organisation as it seeks to induct, train and indoctrinate the new employee; and that of the employee as he or she seeks to break in, learn the ropes and work how to be successful in the job. Schein (1978) describes these two processes as leading to a psychological contract -- a matching of what the individual will give with what the organisation expects to receive, and what the organisation will give relative to what the individual expects to receive. The newcomer attempts to integrate the organisational role in a manner consistent with his or her own personal needs and values (D. Katz & Kahn, 1978).
Nicholson (cited in Hall, 1987) has defined a four-step process of socialisation into a new job: preparation (expectation or anticipation before the change where recruits develop expectations about their life in the organisation and on the job), encounter (sense-making during the first days or weeks), adjustment (personal or role change to improve fit), and stabilisation (settled connection between person and role). Merton (1957) frames it as a progression from outsider, to newcomer, to insider. The effectiveness of the transition process from gathering information to mastering the relevant job components should affect and improve the outcomes of socialisation. In the process however, personal change and situational adjustment (Fogarty, 2000), affective change and behavioural outcomes (Nicholson, 1984), and new dispositions or self-identity components (Hall, 1987) may be required. Over time, the socialising of employees can result in changes to their values or personalities in the direction of organisational values (Fisher, 1986).

The organisation plays a vital part in this learning and adjustment as experienced members of the organisation selectively provide reinforcement, communicate the approved range of strategies for action, and serve as examples of achievement (Fogarty, 2000). Newcomers are also proactive agents in the socialisation process. On entry to the organisation, the new employee assumes a role that has explicit and implicit connections to other employees, and these linkages are important in the socialisation process. For example, bringing the recruit into contact with specific others helps with the process of sense-making requirements for new employees (Louis, 1980). Through such contact, recruits learn the organisational values. This implies the concept of social control (Lachman, Nedd, & Hinings, 1995), where the organisation supports particular approaches and discourages others.
The outcomes which are normally measured to assess effectiveness of socialisation include role orientation, job involvement, level of commitment and turnover. It is generally agreed that socialisation can be expected to influence newcomers’ behaviours, attitudes and self-images so that they become more congruent with their work environment but disagreement centres on the extent of this influence and how it relates to whether newcomers seek to change their work environment (innovation) as well as being changed by it (personal change) (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Of interest also is whether conformity to established roles and procedures (a custodial orientation in Jones' (1986) terminology) actually have any impact on personal values.

While generally discussed as a process that takes place in the first few years of employment, organisational socialisation can in fact last throughout a career, starting prior to organisational entry. Orpen (1995) found that socialisation tactics upon entry can have benefits for up to three years. However, the effects of socialisation in terms of personal change are likely to be more extreme early in the organisational career, and there has been much more focus in the literature on early career experiences than on the middle or late career years (Hall, 1987). The category of newer practitioners in my study would be still actively involved in the first phase of organisational socialisation.

When material needs are satisfied, the salience of extrinsic rewards decreases and the worker's attention turns to more intrinsic job satisfactions (Maslow, 1954). Following this reasoning, it has been shown that concern with intrinsic occupational rewards steadily increases with occupational prestige; and extrinsic rewards are more highly evaluated at lower occupational levels (Kohn, 1969).
The basis of Schneider’s (1987) Attraction-Selection-Attrition (ASA) process is that, as a result of socialisation and attrition, the people who remain will be similar to each other, and further, that they will be a more homogeneous group than those who were originally attracted to the environment. Therefore, at increasing tenure levels, the people and the situation become more congruent. In my study therefore, I would expect respondents in the senior practitioner category to be positive in their view of the profession, because those who were negative could reasonably have been expected to leave the profession before this point.

Neither role orientation, job involvement, level of commitment nor turnover was a part of my study, but there may be a linkage between all four elements and the levels of motivation expressed during the mid-years of my sample. At that time, 5-10 years of experience, motivation is at its lowest which may have an impact on role orientation, job commitment, involvement and potentially turnover. For example, the low motivation levels were explained by respondents as the result of review and introspection where people at this level asked themselves whether public relations was the right career choice, and in fact considered a move.

9.2.4.3 Occupational socialisation

Employee commitment in countries with increasing levels of turnover is shifting from organisation to occupation (Johnson, 1996). This would suggest that the concept of organisational socialisation could usefully be extended to include occupations and professions (Saks & Ashforth, 1997) as people align more with their profession than
their employer. Professionalism is defined as the extent to which one identifies with one's profession and accepts its values. Professional socialisation is the processes through which one becomes a member of a profession and over time identifies with that profession (Heck, 1995). Morrow and Goetz (1998) suggest that professional commitment is a more stable type of work commitment than feelings about a job or organisation.

Hall (1968) identified five attitudes indicative of professionalism: 1) use of the profession and fellow professionals as a major referent; 2) a belief that the profession provides an important service to society; 3) a belief in regulation of the profession by its members; 4) a belief that practitioners of the profession feel a lifelong sense of calling; and 5) a belief that individuals should have the right to make decisions in their work without the approval of others.

Van Maanen and Barley (1984) have defined the concept of occupational community (see Chapter 2, section 2.3.4, for a full discussion on this point) and suggest that the more specific the task socialisation is, the less likely the person is to see his or her occupational identity in one organisation, and the more likely he or she is to see themselves as part of an occupational or professional culture that cuts across many employing organisations. Morrow and Goetz (1998) propose that professionalism is a measure of work commitment that will become more valid as people increasingly identify with their profession rather than with their occupation or with their employing organisation. Yet the work context can sometimes conflict with formal professional training, and where this happens, organisational socialisation is more pervasive, at least in some industries (Heck, 1995).
Of importance to my research is the idea that professionalism may change over time as practitioners become more experienced, become more familiar with what is required, and change their self-identity to accommodate the profession and professional attributes. Level of professionalism may be an indicator of employment-related personal change. It would be useful to know whether professionalism is positively correlated with years of experience.

9.2.4.4 Expectations -- surprise and occupational reality shock

Newcomers enter an organisational setting with a set of expectations about the new context and their specific roles within that environment. The differences between an individual's anticipations and what they experience on the job has been termed both surprise (Louis, 1980) and occupational reality shock (ORS: Dean, Ferris, & Konstans, 1988). Both may result from unmet expectations with respect to professional norms and values, the specific organisational context, and the specific job content (Dean et al., 1988), or simply the job, the organisation, or self (Louis, 1980). Louis (1980) suggests that occurrence of unmet expectations and surprise are nearly inevitable.

Louis (1980) identifies surprise as something to be recognised and planned for by organisations to facilitate newcomer transitions. Surprise propels newcomers into a sense-making cycle where they can interpret the findings and build understanding and improved expectations of what the role involves, leading to effective transition into the role.
By contrast, when the socialisation process is either not complete or not successful, ORS can emerge, and its existence can reduce organisational commitment (Dean et al., 1988). There is substantial evidence that this phenomenon exists in the accountancy profession (Sorenson & Sorenson, 1972, 1974). Dean et al. (1988) studied the impact of ORS on the work-related attitudes, intentions and behaviour of accountants in two organisational environments -- a public accounting firm and a department in a large industrial firm, testing two hypotheses:

1) That recent graduates entering accounting organisations have expectations that are not confirmed by their work experience; and

2) That an accountant's commitment to an organisation, as determined by measuring the individual's attitudes, intentions and behaviour, is inversely related to the extent of reality shock experienced.

The findings varied between the two organisational settings, being present in both but to a lesser degree in the industrial firm setting. The relationship between ORS and commitment was found to be asymmetrical: unmet expectations were negatively correlated with organisational commitment, but surpassed expectations and commitment were unrelated.

ORS may also exist in other professions, including public relations, where the perception of what the job will be like often differs from the way it turns out to be. In relation to my research, the existence of ORS in public relations may account for the findings for those with several years of experience. The existence of ORS would be worth further study, particularly as a comparative exercise, to research differences
between the consultancy, corporate, government and not-for-profit sectors where the expectations are probably likely to be very different for each environment.

### 9.2.4.5 Studies on organisational socialisation and personal change

A number of studies have been done which examine organisational socialisation in relation to personal values and person-organisation fit over time.

In relation to newcomers, a study by Ostroff and Kozlowski (1992) found that newcomers put more emphasis on learning about task, role and group issues rather than about organisational values, norms, goals and culture, during early job experiences (at least within the first 6-9 months). The contextual features of the organisation play a more important role after newcomers have achieved task and role mastery. This result came from a study of 151 new organisational members across a variety of organisations which investigated newcomers' information acquisition about organisational contextual domains from different sources.

Fogarty (2000) examined the impact of socialisation on values. He tested Van Maanen and Schein's (1979) six dimensions of socialisation, and found the sixth dimension, relating to investiture or divestiture of values as part of the socialisation process, to be the most influential. Specifically, he found that divestiture socialisation, which infers a significant amount of personal change and revision in beliefs and values, leads employees to more readily accept the firm's values, and improves performance on organisational objectives. This is in contrast with most of the findings in the literature.
For example, Ashforth and Saks (1996) found the investiture strategy to be correlated with higher performance and lower levels of personal change.

In relation to person-environment fit over time, Mortimer and Lorence (1979) undertook a longitudinal study of male college graduates in the United States, and hypothesised that people would choose occupations on the basis of their work values (the selection hypothesis), and that work experiences would engender changes in occupational values over time (the socialisation hypothesis). They proposed that people with high extrinsic reward values would select occupations with great income-generating potential; that people who valued people-oriented rewards would choose occupations providing opportunities for work with people; and people with strong intrinsic values would attempt to maximise interest and self-expression in their work. On the second hypothesis, they proposed that initial value differences would heighten and become more salient over time due to organisational socialisation.

On the socialisation effects of work autonomy and income, they found that work autonomy impacted on intrinsic work values, and influenced the people-oriented value construct. Income, a prominent extrinsic reward and indicator of occupational success, enhanced the intrinsic value construct, while lessening the importance of intrinsic and people-oriented values over time. More importantly, they found that values change in response to reinforcing occupational experiences, and the rewards of work increase in salience and value over time. A second major implication was that occupational work values in the senior year of college (i.e., towards completion of formal education) are predictive of work experiences 10 years later, demonstrating the relevance of self-selection into occupations (Mortimer & Lorence, 1979).
9.2.4.6 Summary

The focus on years of experience seeks to understand the changes that happen as people gain more experience in a particular profession. It is useful to conceptualise a career as a series of work role transitions, where practitioners go through a constant cycle of moving into a new role, coping with that role, planning for the next move and repeating the process. Professional development is ongoing and continual. Organisational and occupational socialisation contribute to the employment-related personal changes that occur. The focus of this study is the resultant impact on values, where values that may be very important as a guiding principle in the lives of newcomers to the profession, diminish in importance after several years of experience, and then increase in importance again. These specific findings are discussed in the sections below.

9.3 Themes emerging from the findings:

9.3.1 That newer practitioners have higher motivation levels on significant value dimensions than do all other practitioners.

Time and space become problematic at the moment of entry. At that particular time, all surroundings, that is, the entire organizationally-based physical and social world, are changed. There is no gradual exposure and no real way to confront the situation a little at a time. Rather, the newcomer's senses are simultaneously inundated with many unfamiliar cues (Louis, 1980, p. 230).
Louis (1980) describes the experience of entering a new organisational setting and role as characterised by disorientation, foreignness, and a kind of sensory overload. Hughes (1958, cited in Louis, 1980, p. 230) calls it "reality shock" and Nicholson (1984, p. 181) calls it a "passage into unknown territory". Van Maanen (1977) suggests that time and space remain problematic until the newcomer is able to construct maps of time and space specific to the new setting.

Using Nicholson's (1984) theory of work role transitions, newer practitioners could be categorised as belonging to the absorption category, where the adjustment involved in the transition is borne almost exclusively by the individual, who does little to modify the parameters of the new role. The practitioner's energies are mainly devoted to the task of assimilating new skills, social behaviours and frames of reference to meet the requirements of the job. The new practitioner has a lot to cope with including a change in role, a change in professional identity (from student to public relations person), changes in status, and differences in basic working conditions (such as scheduling of work, and peer interaction).

The extent of transition and change is described in Schein's (1971) boundary framework which states that an individual entering an organisation crosses three boundaries: functional, hierarchical, and inclusionary. The newcomer takes on a set of tasks within a functional area and must learn how to do them. The newcomer acquires a position in a hierarchy, with reporting requirements and relationships. Also the newcomer fits into a position in the informal and influence networks in the
organisation, initially a peripheral position and moving gradually towards being on the "inside".

A practitioner in this type of transition would have little ability to change the role (i.e., low discretion) and would have many opportunities for personal development because, apart from the application of skills learned at university, they are trying things for the first time and need to develop a whole new set of skills (i.e., medium to high novelty of job demands) (Nicholson, 1984). They may be able to take some initiative in how the roles are performed but have little ability to change task or organisational goals. As this is a new position, they are likely to be feeling positive about the role and would derive satisfaction from learning and from their growing personal capacities.

The type of induction and socialisation they experience will determine their adjustment and the effects of the adjustment, as will any prior socialisation experiences before coming into this job. Their motivational orientation will also determine how they deal with the transition and Nicholson's (1984) theory predicts that practitioners in the absorption category -- the newer practitioners in my study -- are motivated by low desire for control and a high desire for feedback.

Within this framework, the relevance of the two value dimensions where significance was found can be examined. A separate question is why the level of motivation is so much higher for the newer practitioners than for those with more years of experience.

This may be partly explained by Helmreich et al.'s (1986) honeymoon effect, where initial enthusiasm about getting a job after graduation and job novelty colour
perceptions of the work environment for an initial period -- the "rose coloured" perspective, and the excitement of entering a new profession and starting to establish a place in the "adult" world. The first few years represent an awakening of realism, so that by the time five to ten years have passed, the view is less rosy and more hard-nosed and cynical.

For newer practitioners, this is a major transition into a new profession, and work priorities are extremely important for them. They are open to the organisational socialisation process. My respondents characterised newer practitioners as being full of energy and excitement and enthusiasm, keen to learn, keen to adapt, willing to try anything new, and with a desire to prove to everyone, including themselves, that they can do it. Acceptance appears to be important to them. They look to learn from others about the ways of the organisation and the job. They appear to be highly impressionable and willing to forsake what they know in favour of what they need to know to fit in. This position will add new components to their self-concept, as shown by this quote:

_I see my role in the PR department as someone who has to facilitate building the business, in the department, and in the company, because X is an integrated communications company. And to all of our clients all of us, each division, plays a role. Advertising, PR, direct marketing, so we are not just a PR consultancy. We are housed within an integrated communications group and expected to work with all our colleagues in trying to get the best communications mix for all our clients. My role is very much a business building role and trying to keep the clients happy. I also have to get into execution because the department is not big enough for me to let go of the executional details. (Female/Chinese/Newer/Consultant)_
9.3.1.1 The findings in relation to Nicholson’s (1984) theory of work role transitions

9.3.1.1.1 Self-transcendence

Nicholson’s (1984) theory of work role transitions accommodates the self-enhancement and self-transcendence value dimensions through two specific constructs – desire for control (self-enhancement) which relates to discretion and role development, and desire for feedback (self-transcendence) which relates to novelty and personal development. Applying the model would lead to the expectation that newer practitioners are motivated by low desire for control and a high desire for feedback.

While self-transcendence in Schwartz and Bilsky's values theory is not specifically about feedback, it is about relationships and the extent to which practitioners value their colleagues, accept others as equals, and are concerned about their welfare and the nature of their interactions. There is a linkage with the collectivism concept because their focus is other-oriented, with high recognition of the importance of others, (i.e., colleagues and supervisors) in their work lives. This is linked with the high desire for feedback because of the need to feel accepted and to feel belonging with the work group, and the need to know how they are doing relative to the expectations others have of them. In Nicholson’s (1984) theory, individuals with high need for feedback would be more likely to try to correct ‘gaps’ between others’ expectations and their own performance by changing aspects in themselves rather than trying to change the job, or the expectations of the job. In the absorption mode (Nicholson, 1984), where the individual undergoes significant personal development, colleagues and others in the
workplace are the vehicle through which organisational socialisation occurs. The high levels of motivation on the self-transcendence value dimension therefore fit with Nicholson's theory.

Newer practitioners come in at the bottom of the organisation. They appear to be focused on learning rather than being competitive, and see their peers as being in the same situation -- learning together rather than competing against each other. They do not see the need to protect their position. Because they're at "the bottom of the heap", and also because they live in a high Power Distance country (Hofstede, 1980) with high salience for hierarchical structures, they are aware of the differences in rank and experience, and the differences between themselves and their superiors. What this highlights for them is what they can aspire to if they are accepted within the organisation. Therefore they want to be accepted and to belong. This determines the nature of their interactions with others. They focus on fitting in and building good working relationships with others.

They realise that much of their learning will come from others, from their supervisors and from those with more experience and so they look to others to follow and model. Co-workers, supervisors and mentors all have an important role in the learning process. Co-workers particularly can help new employees integrate the various pieces of information in the workplace (Van Maanen, 1984), can communicate subtle values, norms and expectations that may not be well understood by supervisors or mentors (Schein, 1988) and will generally be the most critical source for group issues. Colleagues and others in the work setting are seen by Louis (1980) as critical to the sense-making process newcomers go through because they can guide newcomers to
important background information for assigning meaning to events and surprises. Adjustment outcomes are likely to be mediated by the kinds of feedback a person gets on successes and failures in their early learning and performance (Nicholson, 1984).

The importance of self-transcendence values helps to define their expectations of the job and the working environment. They have come from a family environment into a "new" family environment. They want to believe that this working environment will provide acceptance and belonging, and safety and security, and they appear to put a lot of effort into making the workplace welcoming and comfortable. This may change as they gain more experience of working, and as they mature, and as the influence of home diminishes.

Deaux and LaFrance's (1998) concept of asymmetrical power is relevant to the discussion of self-transcendence because it is about the nature of social interaction among unequals compared to equals. "People high in power pay less attention to the person with less power, but will increase their attention as the power of the other person increases. For people who have less power, it is typically important to pay attention to those who do have power and exercise some degree of fate control. The powerful, in contrast, frequently believe themselves to be less contingent on their subordinates and hence have less need to pay attention to them" (p. 792). This suggests that those at the lower levels, the newer practitioners, have a survival reason to be higher in self-transcendence, which fits with my findings.
9.3.1.1.2 Self-enhancement

Newer practitioners are also highly motivated by self-enhancement. In Schwartz and Bilsky’s values theory, self-enhancement emphasises the pursuit of one’s own relative success and dominance over others, both in terms of control of people and resources, and in terms of status and prestige. Nicholson’s theory (1984) of work role transitions proposes that those in the absorption mode, newer practitioners, tend to be motivated by a low desire for control because their focus is on learning and adapting rather than with altering content or context of the job. Jacques (1976) and Fox (1974, both cited in Nicholson, 1984) found that discretion is directly related to occupational status. It appears that my findings are counter to Nicholson’s theory.

The need for control reflects a personal stance related to uncertainty and the response to the loss of control that characterises transitions. Organisational entry has been described as a stressful period where individuals experience feelings of uncertainty and less ability to control, predict and/or influence cause and effect contingencies in their immediate environment (see Black & Ashford, 1995). Individuals with a high personal need for control are likely to try and regain some feeling of control by trying to change the job to better suit their capabilities and preferences, or by engaging in other activities such as seeking information about the new environment, or by establishing relationships with others in order to reduce the uncertainty associated with organisational entry (Black & Ashworth, 1995). However, given Malaysia’s ranking in Hofstede’s (1980) study as a country with a high tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity, the level of need for control is perhaps not the explanation for my findings.
Still at the macro societal level, my findings reflect the societal context in Malaysia. The salience of authority, position, power and status in Malaysia (reflected by the high Power Distance ratings in Hofstede's (1980) study) means that these become goals for newer practitioners. They see that being able to influence others is a demonstration of success. Power is linked to tradition. Tradition equates with respect. Social status and prestige tie in with security, having a harmonious stable work environment, trying to please parents and self. Success and dominance become important because they feel a need to prove themselves on the job. Newer practitioners need to feel that they've done well in their job, and to do that they need a secure job, and if they have a secure job they feel confident. Work status, experience, confidence and power bring respect, and so the longer they work and the more senior they get in the profession, the more status and therefore the more respect they are accorded. These are goals for the newer practitioner.

In summary, it appears that Nicholson's theory of work role transitions is helpful in explaining the high levels of importance placed in the motivational goals of self-transcendence but not self-enhancement.

9.3.1.2 The findings in relation to Schwartz and Bilsky’s values theory

As described in chapters 2 and 4, Schwartz and Bilsky’s values theory, on which this research is based, conceptualises people’s value systems as integrated structures of motivational types. The four value dimensions are organised into two sets of opposing values -- Openness to Change vs. Conservation (which opposes values emphasising own independent thought and action and favouring change to those emphasising
submissive self-restriction, preservation of traditional practices and protection of stability), and Self-Enhancement vs. Self-Transcendence (which opposes values emphasising acceptance of others as equals and concern for their welfare to those emphasising the pursuit of one's own relative success and dominance over others). As a bipolar relationship, values in terms of the extent to which they motivate people to enhance their own personal interests (even at the expense of others) are presented as incompatible with values which motivate people to transcend selfish concerns and promote the welfare of others, close and distant, and of nature (Schwartz, 1992).

The integrated structure between value domains means that every finding that specifies the association of one value type with an outside variable has clear implications for the associations of the other value types as well (Schwartz, 1992). For example, a hypothesis that suggests that conformity increases with age would also engender a finding that stimulation would decrease with age because conformity and stimulation are opposed within the value structure. It also follows that the importance of tradition and security values is likely to increase with age, and the importance of hedonism and self-direction values is likely to decrease. Deviations from such expected relationships indicate that special circumstances exist (Schwartz, 1992). Schwartz and Bilsky (1987) foreshadowed that observed differences would imply that cultures differ in the individual motivational patterns and social arrangements that shape value systems.

My finding that newer practitioners are highly motivated by two value dimensions on one continuum is clearly contrary to the expectations of the model. The model does not allow for high rankings on conflicting value dimensions at the same time, in this case on both self-enhancement and self-transcendence. Schwartz and Bilsky confirmed this
point in reviewing the finding on power in the Hong Kong sample in their 1990 study, and concluded: "This supports our assumption that an emphasis on status and dominance conflicts both with a concern for others' well-being and with restraining oneself so as not to harm them. In Confucianism, as in Western thought, pursuing power is disruptive of social harmony. Future research will assess whether the motivational dynamics involving power hold across societies" (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1990, p. 888).

Newer practitioners are keen to prove themselves, but they come in not knowing the groundrules within the organisation, nor the practical application of their profession. They seek guidance, and the guidance comes from a range of sources, primarily their own values instilled by their family and by education, their professional values, the academic learning from their university courses, and guidance from colleagues and superiors, those in mid management and higher management levels. They are aware that they don't want to make too many mistakes.

The two value dimensions of self-transcendence and self-enhancement represent opposite value groupings but they are related because achievement of one will facilitate achievement of the other. For example, with belonging and acceptance in the organisation comes success and status and prestige, which is also important to the newer practitioners. Likewise, the newer practitioner who achieves success and status within the organisation is likely to feel belonging and acceptance. The high motivation levels across these value dimensions for newer practitioners fit as an explanation for the transition they are going through in adapting to a new career. In this sense, high
motivation levels on both value dimensions can be explained, but it challenges the
expectations of the model.

In 1990, Schwartz recast the model to remove the problems that he perceived with the
use of the individualism/collectivism dichotomy to explain the presumed conflict
between personal and ingroup interests (discussed in Chapter 8, section 2.2.1). He
proposed a redefinition of individualistic (contractual) and collectivist (communal)
societies, and then proposed that the more communal society would hold tradition,
conformity and prosocial/benevolence values as more important. The contractual
community would hold self-direction, stimulation and universalism values as more
important. The values of security, achievement and hedonism may differ, but due less
to the communal/contractual distinction than to the standards set by each community.
The last value type, power, could be valued by both communities but for different
reasons (Schwartz, 1990).

It may be that the results for power specifically lead to the conflict perceived at the
value dimension level. Yet, in Schwartz’s (1990) recasting of the model, high power
motivation may be consistent with high scores on self-transcendence because in
communal societies where status relations are ascribed, power differences are part of
the social structure. This recasting of the model therefore also helps to explain the high
levels of motivation on both dimensions for newer practitioners.

In 1992, Schwartz indicated that he had started to think of the model more as a
continuum of related motivations, rather as discrete categories. At that point, he
concluded that: “The fuzziness of their boundaries notwithstanding, however, the
differences between value types are meaningful. We therefore continue to treat them as
discrete when beneficial for research” (Schwartz, 1992, p. 46). This is an interesting,
albeit tentative, modification to the model and, in the light of my findings, would be
supported.

9.3.2 That mid-level practitioners have lower motivation levels on significant
value dimensions than do all other practitioners.

We’re willing to do something for a while, then there’s a stage.... It would be
interesting to see how this matches the human psyche. We get bored, the
middle age trauma in the job. The job is there, and you’re doing it for five
years and then you decide either you’re going to move jobs or do something to
improve yourself within your job and move up again. (Female/Indian/Senior/Academic)

The mid-level “slump” – the consistent dip for mid-level practitioners across both
significant value dimensions -- is an interesting feature of the results.

Using Nicholson’s (1984) theory of work role transitions, the mid-level practitioners
could be categorised as belonging to either the replication or determination category.
The categorisation isn’t as clear cut as with the newer practitioners, because it depends
on conditions in the organisational environment. The transition framework is relevant
because during this time, practitioners will be continuing to develop their skills and
abilities, increasing their levels of responsibility and authority, and in structural terms,
after five to ten years on the job, they are likely to be in a management or at least a
supervisory position. The marked drop in the importance of these values in the mid-
level category suggests either that their feelings about their role are negative, or their
work centrality has lessened and they get more excited and motivated about other things.

A practitioner at this level may have some ability to change the role (i.e., medium discretion) because of their position, but there is likely to be little pressure for change in their job-related skills or professional identity (i.e., low novelty of job demands) because they have settled into a pattern of well-practised routines and familiar work methods (Nicholson, 1984). The difference in ability to change the role determines whether the mid-level practitioner fits best in the replication or determination mode, and as this is a job factor it is likely to depend on their employing organisation. For example a consultancy may provide the opportunity for high discretion in terms of how the job is done, whereas a corporate environment may require that practitioners follow established procedures. Likewise, the novelty of job demands may change from organisation to organisation depending on the actual job held at this time.

The replication mode is defined as those transitions that represent minimal adjustment to personal or role systems. The practitioner in this mode performs the job in much the same manner as in previous jobs and as previous occupants would have done the job. A transition into this category would come about by promotion where there is an increase in job scope but where existing skills suffice and where former work practices and experiences are valued. The replication category typically involves low levels of discretion which allow little latitude for the practitioner to change the work. Practitioners are typically motivated by a low desire for control and feedback. Negative feelings might be due to feelings of restriction, helplessness and obsolescence, and feeling “caught in a rut” (Nicholson, 1984, p. 177).
The replication transition focuses on supporting corporate culture and maintaining organisational stability through the “orderly upward progression of managers into tasks that offer some increase in discretion but little scope for new learning” (Nicholson, 1984, p. 181). It may be that this model is particularly illustrative of the position of mid-level corporate practitioners. Practitioners in this category, where no further significant change is likely in the person or the working environment, are actually quite stabilised, until something triggers either a strong desire for personal control, or a desire to change the role or leave it. If the practitioner seeks more personal development than the new role allows, they may look for it outside the work setting, thereby lessening the centrality of the work role. Changes in external family and community involvements can also influence adjustment cycles and career patterns (Nicholson, 1984).

The second relevant mode for mid-level practitioners, the determination mode, is defined as those transitions where the person is not required to change but works hard to alter the content or structure of the new role. This mode typically involves high levels of discretion because some degree of role development is required and/or desirable. A transition into this category would come about again through promotion but may be accompanied by a decrease in discretion because of the increase in constraints at this higher level (Nicholson, 1984). Alternatively, the practitioner may try to remake the new role to fit their requirements but may be frustrated because of the organisational constraints.
Negative feelings might come from unsuccessful attempts to reshape the role, or the recognition of their own inadequacy in the role (Nicholson, 1984). These practitioners are typically motivated by a high desire for control and a low desire for feedback. Mid-level practitioners in this category will no longer be in transition once they have reached the limits of desirable or feasible change. At that point, if things aren't going well in terms of role development, they may move to a replication mode where they can adopt a minimalist approach to meeting the role requirements (Nicholson, 1984). Alternatively, they may shift to the absorption category if they decide to focus on personal rather than role development. Nicholson makes the point that changes in motivational orientation may arise through influences quite external to the workplace, such as various life events and the aging process itself (Eichdorn, Clauson, Haan, Honzik, & Mussen, 1981; Rychlak, 1982).

Within this framework, the relevance of the value dimensions can be examined.

Respondents in my study consistently described the replication mode rather than the determination mode. Their responses relate to the sort of job they see the mid-level practitioner doing, and the role requirements in that position. For example, they identified that mid-level practitioners feel secure, safe and somewhat complacent because they, their knowledge and their work practices are valued. Respondents suggested that the job at this point is likely to be implementation and overseeing implementation rather than strategy which means that the job may not lend itself to lots of different approaches. Strategy development requires innovative thinking, so with a reduced job requirement for innovation their focus is less on the new ideas and more on getting the job done.
I am quite happy with what I have achieved so far. When I first came in I was very fresh. I'd only worked in an advertising agency prior to this for six months, as a copywriter, and then I came into PR. When I first came in it was to start a department, and how you go about designing a department, and then later on make that department into a subsidiary. I learnt a lot. But after three years I was already a senior PR Executive, and the following year I was already a PR manager. So I look at myself as somebody -- I know I can do it, it's just that sometimes I need more self-motivation. Something to spice up my life so it doesn't get mundane. (Female/Indian/Mid/Consultant)

Practitioners in my study didn't talk about this as a time of transition, but as a time of consolidation and reflection. I see these as part of the same process or cycle because self-reflection can create internal turmoil as practitioners review what they have achieved so far, whether they are satisfied with their achievements, whether public relations is where they want to be, and whether they are satisfied and/or happy. This turmoil focuses practitioners internally, possibly reducing their motivation on the job while they're sorting things out. This may help to explain why the level of motivation at this point dips to such a low level when, a few years earlier, the levels were high. As can be seen by the analysis below, respondents in my sample clearly placed mid-level practitioners in the replication category.

The dip could be a manifestation of Dean's (1988) Occupational Reality Shock, documented and studied in accounting firms. It is likely that a similar phenomenon could exist also in the public relations profession, as in other professions, where a discrepancy exists between an individual's work expectations prior to joining the organisation, and their perceptions after becoming a member of the organisation,
leading to a decline in organisational commitment as seen in attitudes, behaviour and intentions.

Certainly the mid-level practitioners appear to be less driven than newer practitioners. The earlier excitement and energy have been replaced with knowledge, common sense and realism. Their ideas change. Their willingness to continuously adapt and learn decreases and perhaps the need to do so diminishes. They appear to care less than they used to.

Mid-level practitioners see the world, and their working life, differently from the way they saw it when they were new to the profession. Their competencies have increased and they can do things now that they couldn't do before. Such improvement in capabilities is highly visible in terms of the sort of work they are asked to do, and the level of autonomy and/or responsibility they are given to do the work. Their confidence levels have increased and they have confidence in their own ideas and their own approaches. Respondents frequently identified that mid-level practitioners were in a comfort zone, and were feeling stable and complacent. This appears to lead to a feeling that they can relax a bit, enjoy the job, feel confident in their abilities and know that they're meeting what the organisation expects of them.

Respondents also mentioned frequently that this is the time when families start to arrive and practitioner priorities might move from the job to home and other interests. Work priorities no longer assume the dominance they did initially. New pressures outside work affect their motivation on the job. For example, mid-level practitioners may choose a safe path on the job to ensure they keep the job to be able to provide for
the family. Alternatively, they simply may not have the same focus on work that they used to because their focus now is on their family. They choose to put their main energies elsewhere rather than on the job, and their motivation levels consequently decrease.

9.3.2.1 The findings in relation to Nicholson's (1984) theory of work role transitions

9.3.2.1.1 Self-transcendence

Nicholson's (1984) theory of work role transitions accommodates the self-transcendence value dimension through the construct of the desire for feedback, which relates to novelty and personal development. Applying the theory, mid-level practitioners in either the replication or determination mode would have a low desire for feedback. In the replication mode, this is because they know the job, they know what is required and they are happy to just get on with it. They don't need to know if there is a gap between their performance and others' expectations. In the determination mode this is because their focus is on changing the job rather than changing themselves. In Black and Ashford's (1995) study, the need for feedback was positively related to self-change, but was not significantly related to job change, which supports the expectation that low need for feedback indicates being less other-oriented. Respondents' comments support the expectations of low importance on self-transcendence values.

In their position a few steps up the ladder, mid-level practitioners have a more realistic view of the workplace, and a greater knowledge of the way the system really works,
which contributes to their sense of comfort and security. In this position, they would be fully aware that people hold different positions at different levels, with different responsibilities and rewards, (i.e., that everyone is not equal). As a manager or supervisor, they become aware of other people’s strengths and weaknesses, particularly in relation to their own abilities. They would feel strongly that they have moved from “learner” status to “doer” status, and their sense of self has changed. This view fits with the replication mode in Nicholson’s (1984) theory.

At the same time, while they are above those they supervise, they start to think about what they have to do to move upwards. They look to their future and realise the competitive nature of the job. Their colleagues are seeking the same promotions, the opportunities are limited, and one way of proving their value is to protect their way of doing things. This leads them to become competitive with the peers they used to share with. Respondents stressed the “selfish” nature of mid-level practitioners, explaining that they needed to focus on themselves at this point in their career and do what they felt was more important to enhance their promotional opportunities. This view could fit with the determination mode where they focus on making the job work, changing the job, doing what they need to do to be successful and to be noticed. They tend to be more instrumentally-focused at this point, rather than relationship-focused, less on the needs of the job and more on the needs of the individual.

*I think in the middle years, there's a competitive spirit, keen competition, and hostility. When I was going through the middle years myself I didn't bond so well with other practitioners and want to be sharing the same platform with them.* (Female/Indian/Senior/Consultant)
In terms of growth, you are growing in position here and you're becoming more closed in terms of what your key abilities are. You tend to become a bit selfish and thinking about yourself, about promoting yourself in terms of position, pay. You start realising your values and you start becoming very self-centred. You start looking toward yourself and you disregard a lot of other people. (Female/Indian/Mid/Consultant)

You're really gung-ho when you start, and as it goes on you realise things are not as rosy as it seems, and you may not want to share as much knowledge with your peers. You're at the stage where you're fighting to get a job. (Female/Chinese/Newer/Consultant)

Here we are trying to make our own mark. Get up and others as equal as us, perhaps we begin to get a bit more confident of our own work, think we know it all, we've got 5-6 years of experience, and it's time to protect myself to get better. So not true concern perhaps. I'm too busy directing my attention to myself. To improve myself at this point. This is where I feel most threatened. There are many of us aiming for that promotion. (Female/Indian/Senior/Academic)

Alternatively, the lower importance of self-transcendence values may reflect their recognition that they can now concentrate on other priorities in life. They may realise that there is more to life than work, and the effort that they used to put into building the perfect working environment now gets put into other things, perhaps away from work. This lessens their interest and motivation for self-transcendence values. It may even be at this stage that they lose their interest and motivation for the job itself. Nicholson's (1984) theory is consistent with my findings on self-transcendence.
Nicholson's (1984) theory of work role transitions accommodates the self-enhancement value dimension through the construct of desire for control which relates to discretion and role development. Applying the theory, mid-level practitioners in the replication mode would have a low desire for control, whereas those in the determination mode would have a high desire for control. In my study, mid-level practitioners were low on self-enhancement values, which suggests that the replication mode may represent a more accurate and/or relevant picture. In the replication mode, practitioners have a low desire to change anything -- the job or themselves. An explanation for the low rating of self-enhancement values could be that their influence and dominance grow naturally as they rise up the ladder. Because it comes with the position, they don't focus on it and are not motivated by it.

*I've got more experience. When I see a client I know how to defend or not defend, how to sell the concepts across. I feel I can make decisions compared to before. I can justify my actions, compared to before. I have become more confident. Definitely more confident. Handling a job, handling a client, and even public speaking. Mainly experience, and by mixing with more and more people. Your contacts getting bigger. It helps.* (Female/Indian/Mid/Consultant)

In the determination mode, which is characterised by high levels of discretion in terms of how the job is done and where the focus tends to be more on changing the role requirements than changing self to meet the demands of the role, particularly for those with a high need for control, the expectation is for higher levels of importance for self-enhancement values, yet the importance with my sample was low.
Jacques's (1976) and Fox's (1974, both cited in Nicholson, 1984) findings that discretion is directly related to occupational status, would also lead to the expectation that self-enhancement values should be higher. Yet at the mid-level stage, in a higher position than when they entered their career, mid-level practitioners find these values less important. This suggests that mid-level practitioners in Malaysia are seen as being in the replication transition at this period of five to ten years of experience, as shown by this quote:

_I see the values of my workplace here. I am in control. I know what I'm doing. I don't have to ask around as much as five years ago, because five years ago I'm still learning. When I was two years in the job I remember it was like still exploring how to do things, whether it's correct. Now, it's on my fingertips. If you ask me to draft up a press release, or arrange an event, I don't have to check with people above me because I know the ropes. Things which are important now, versus five years ago, is doing it to the best of my ability, doing it so that it's perfect, that there are no hiccups. So yes I do find that I'm more in control. (Female/Malay/Mid/Corporate)_

The reflection and consolidation phase that they're in may keep them in a holding pattern for a while until they move out of it naturally, or until they decide to take action and do something to change the situation. This may be where their sights change from the current situation to the future and what's involved in moving up within the organisation.

In summary, the replication mode appears to fit, in qualitative terms, with the experiences of mid-level public relations practitioners and graphically explains the lack of importance in all values at this time. Of interest is the question whether the low
interest/low energy/self-focused approach has resulted from the organisational conditions, the work role transition, or growing importance of other priorities. This could be a topic for further inquiry.

9.3.2.2 The findings in relation to Schwartz and Bilsky's values theory

As was found with the newer practitioners, on these value dimensions the findings are contrary to the expectations of Schwartz and Bilsky's values theory which proposes that opposed dimensions have an inverse relationship. For the mid-level practitioner, values are low for both self-enhancement and self-transcendence. The dimensions appear to act in partnership with each other rather than as opposites.

The first explanation offered for the high levels on both for the newer practitioners was that high levels on one enabled high levels on the other to be achieved. This instrumental explanation doesn't seem to explain the low levels of the mid-level practitioners. At the mid-level, practitioners assign low importance to both dimensions. The second explanation offered in relation to the newer practitioners was that with Schwartz's (1990) recasting of the individualism/collectivism dichotomy, allowed for similar scores on each because power, as a component of the Self-Enhancement dimension, had a particular role within communal societies that could be seen as compatible with self-transcendence values. However this assumed high importance of collectivist or communal interests, which are not reflected in the low scores exhibited by mid-level practitioners.
This suggests that the professional variables used in the study don’t fully account for the results obtained. These results are contrary to the Schwartz and Bilsky values theory, and that theory cannot account for the changes.

9.3.2.3 Respondents’ view of their personal change

In keeping with the concept of professional development as a series of transitions, respondents saw that they had undergone personal change since commencing work in the profession. The question asked was: “What are the things that have changed from you as a practitioner five years ago?” The responses from the mid-level practitioners focused on themes of improved confidence, better knowledge, and improved abilities as the differences for them over the past five years.

I would value myself higher through experience and having the knowledge and confidence. Application from my knowledge to the work demands (better ability). (Female/Chinese/Mid/Corporate)

Five years ago it would all have been to do with getting the news out. Now it is all about getting the right message out. The content rather than the method. (Male/Indian/Mid/Corporate)

Five years ago I was still trying to acquire a good grasp of the skill set. I only had 2 years' experience by which time I knew the basics, but didn't yet have a handle on the best ways to apply them, and also how they worked in tandem with other disciplines. The place of PR in the larger marketing world, where does it fit in. Whereas I think now I do. I also had no experience working across geographies. (Female/Malay/Mid/Corporate)
Five years ago, you'd be still "How do you get the press release across? How do you develop media relations?" At this stage, it's a lot deeper than that. It's about strategising and developing messages, and developing an identity, how we can work on marketing, marketing communications, and you start thinking how you can pull other elements together to develop a program as opposed to five years ago, that level of understanding, maturity. (Female/Chinese/Mid/Corporate)

I wasn't doing PR 10 years ago. The biggest difference for me is this job has put me higher up in the food chain. Banking as an industry is definitely much higher up in the food chain than the other things I've been doing... here in corporate banking it's a different stratosphere altogether. And because of the exposure to the business and the access to information, and the access to technology I've obviously benefited professionally and personally, and financially by being in this kind of environment. That is the biggest difference, looking at things from a financial point of view, from a larger macroeconomic point of view. Understanding the forces, both political and economic and financial that actually shape the economy and the lives of people. (Male/Chinese/Mid/Corporate)

9.3.3 That senior practitioners have motivation levels on significant value dimensions that sit between those of the other two practitioner groups.

Senior practitioners scored high on the two significant value dimensions, reaching almost the levels of the newer practitioners. Practitioners with 15+ years of experience would be in their mid to late-30s and older. With experience there is the assumption of seniority and movement into or towards a management position. They would be likely to have some management and possibly consultancy ownership responsibility which includes management of resources, staff, business development, strategic planning and achievement of results.
They may have experienced a range of working environments over this time and their exposure is likely to be extensive across communication issues, management decision-making styles, a range of programs, and a diversity of economic and social conditions. They would see the world and the workplace differently from someone with lesser experience. They may be in a position where they have more of a "helicopter" view of the organisation, the macro perspective, and can see more broadly. They would be expected to be able to do technical aspects of the job competently, and also to apply judgement in giving advice to management. At this stage they are less likely to be technicians, and more likely to be counsellors.

Using Nicholson's (1984) theory of work role transitions, the senior practitioners could be categorised as belonging to one of three categories: replication, determination, or exploration. As with the mid-level practitioners, the categorisation isn't clear cut because it depends both on the organisational environment and the personal qualities of the practitioner. Self-doubt and reflection were features of the mid-level practitioner’s transition. The senior practitioner however has passed through this reflective period and is someone who shows a commitment to the profession, perhaps by choosing not to leave it, and has developed a self-concept which is likely to include the professional role as a central component. Schneider's ASA theory (1987, 2001) would also support this.

Transition is as relevant a framework for senior practitioners as for those at other levels of experience, because among my respondents there was a perception that senior practitioners were still striving towards goals. Some saw that they were striving to
build their career further, so they could position themselves to finish their career well. Some saw that they were striving to keep ahead of, or at least keep up with, technology and the bright younger practitioners coming up through the ranks. Some saw they were striving to contribute something back to the profession, to continue to build the knowledge and reputation. Some saw they were striving to fulfil management's expectations of increased effectiveness and measurable results.

In relation to Nicholson's (1984) transition modes, the senior practitioner could work in an environment where, as they gain seniority, they increasingly have to conform to company procedures, therefore with low discretion to change the job, and low novelty of job demands (i.e., replication). This might most typically represent a senior government communications position, but may also exist in traditional corporations where maintenance of image, reputation and practices are more important than change and adaptation.

Also plausible is the environment where as practitioners gain in seniority and responsibility, they are given considerable leeway in how they achieve the results, therefore with high discretion. There is little pressure to change job-related skills or professional identity, but there is the ability to bring about change in how the job is organised (i.e., determination). My expectation is that this could typify progressive corporations and/or consultancies.

A third transition mode is for the senior practitioner who moves upward in a fast-moving, competitive environment where there is considerable scope to challenge the current work practices, and where considerable personal development is also needed to
meet the demands of the job (i.e., exploration). This could also typify progressive organisations and consultancies. The exploration category, defined as those transitions where there is simultaneous change in personal qualities and role parameters (Nicholson, 1984), is likely to occur in jobs where the two-way processes of 'social contracting' and interpersonal role negotiation occur to shape the person and the role together. Positive feelings might come from a sense of personal growth, and the recognition of cycles of thoughtful experimentation, feedback and change (Nicholson, 1984).

Practitioners in the replication category, where no further significant change is likely in the person or the working environment, are actually quite stabilised, until something triggers either a strong desire for personal control, or a desire to change the role or leave it. If the practitioner seeks more personal development than the new role allows, they may look for it outside the work setting, thereby lessening the centrality of the work role (Nicholson, 1984).

Practitioners in the determination category are in a growth transition until they have reached their goals or limits of job change and development. At that point, they then move to either the replication mode where they can have “time out” for a while, or to the absorption mode where they can focus on personal growth rather than job change for a while (Nicholson, 1984).

Senior practitioners in the exploration category are in an almost permanent state of role transition, with continual renewal of discretionary possibilities and recurring novelty of
job demands (Nicholson, 1984). This appears to be a “highly charged”, high motivation mode of work life.

Nicholson makes the point that changes in motivational orientation may arise through influences quite external to the workplace, such as various life events and the aging process itself (Eichdorn et al., 1981; Rychlak, 1982).

Within this framework, the high levels of motivation on the significant value dimensions can be understood. As can be seen from the analysis below, drawing from the responses of the people in my sample, it appears that exploration and to a lesser extent the determination modes better explain working life for senior public relations practitioners in Malaysia than the replication mode.

9.3.3.1 The findings in relation to Nicholson’s (1984) theory of work role transitions

9.3.3.1.1 Self-transcendence

A practitioner in the replication category is likely to be low on self-transcendence values because of low interest or desire in feedback. A practitioner in the determination mode is also likely to be low on self-transcendence values because their focus is on changing the job rather than changing themselves. However, a practitioner in the exploration mode has a high desire for feedback because of the transition they’re going through where much of the work they are doing and the way they are doing it is different from what they have experienced before. Feedback in this sense is akin to self-monitoring that they are heading in the right direction.
As stated earlier, self-transcendence is not fully described by the level of desire for feedback. It is about relationships and the extent to which practitioners value their colleagues, accept others as equals, and are concerned about their welfare and the nature of their interactions. There is a linkage with the collectivism concept because their focus is other-oriented, with high recognition of the importance of others, (i.e., colleagues and supervisors) in their work lives. This is linked with the high desire for feedback because of the need to feel accepted and to feel belonging with the work group, and the need to know how they are doing relative to the expectations others have of them. Nicholson’s theory holds true only for the senior practitioners in the exploration mode.

The self-transcendence value dimension implies a change of focus away from self to a focus on others. The “selfish” perspective of the mid-level practitioner reverses at the senior level to accommodate a concern for others. Being in a management position carries a level of responsibility in relation to the welfare of staff, which may be reflected in these results.

"I’m very honoured, because the industry feels that I have been playing a fair bit of role in the industry, and contributing to the practice. I’ve been asked to give a lot of talks and seminars, and give topics of communications. As a senior practitioner in this industry it’s something which I like to pass on to the junior practitioner because a lot of the things that you do in PR are basically common sense, and you have to be a very very sensitive person because PR has to do with human relations. Of course your image can always be built through seeing how people see you and being very empathetical. As a senior practitioner it’s very important to lay the foundation correct because once you lay it correctly and if you get the right people to follow through then it’s
something that I think you've contributed to the industry.  
(Female/Malay/Senior/Corporate)

A senior practitioner is in the position of having gained a lot of professional knowledge about how best to do the job, and has something of real value to pass on to less experienced practitioners. “Senior” status within a profession prompts professionals to consider how they can pass that knowledge on to others -- to their own staff and more widely within the profession. Respondents acknowledged that senior practitioners may be concerned about how they can make a mark within the profession and the industry -- and how they want to be remembered in terms of their contribution to the development of the practice or the profession. They may be concerned about their staff and what each person needs to build their skills within the profession; it may be an acknowledgement that teamwork is very powerful, and that more can be accomplished if people work together; or they may have a broader concern about the contribution the organisation could make to the wider community. It is a focus on higher level concerns -- issues that younger practitioners are unlikely to be thinking about.

It has been quite fulfilling for me. I have served the plantations industry, banking industry, finance industry, also academic, I have done part-time lecturing, and I involve myself in voluntary activities to promote the profession through the Institute, so I find it extremely fulfilling. But then also I think to achieve this state you must be the kind of person to want to do the work; to create work; to self-motivate because nobody is going to ask you to do it. You have to want to do it yourself. Then again, the theoretical aspects of PR, and the practical aspects are really quite different. I've reached stage where I think I should put down all my learnings and impart to the younger people who are coming out. (Female/Malay/Senior/Corporate)
The importance of self-transcendence values may also reflect that they are seeking acceptance or reassurance that they are still in tune with the values of the industry and other senior practitioners. With the rapid changes in technology affecting communication, this could be a real concern.

9.3.3.1.2  Self-enhancement

Applying Nicholson's (1984) work role transition framework, senior practitioners in the replication mode would have a low desire for control. Some respondents suggested that if practitioners have power they would no longer crave it and therefore their motivation should go down; that as they become more senior, their motivation in terms of power and dominance should decrease. This fits with the replication mode view. However, in further applying Nicholson's (1984) theory, we would expect those in the determination and exploration modes to have a high desire for control. Again, the high importance placed on self-enhancement values indicates a closer fit between my sample and the determination and exploration modes for senior practitioners.

*Clearly confidence is one thing, and also freedom and independence. Ten years ago I was in an in-house situation and I didn't have latitude and that freedom and independence to do what I really thought was good for the organisation. And now I have that freedom and independence to do at least counsel my clients and give them my best advice, and it's up to them to take it or not. (Female/Indian/senior/Consultant)*

In Schwartz and Bilsky's values theory model, self-enhancement emphasises the pursuit of one's own relative success and dominance over others, both in terms of control of people and resources, and in terms of status and prestige. Senior practitioners
assume power and dominance as a natural result of their rise within the organisation. They choose to focus on power and dominance and influence because they may feel they need to -- to meet the requirements of the position, and also to meet their own and society's expectations for their performance and success. Social status and prestige help to explain the determination of senior practitioners to end their career on a high. They are motivated to achieve according to social standards and expectations (i.e., social status and prestige). In Malaysia, age is revered and status is important. Senior practitioners have expectations that they will achieve a certain level, and that they will have all the perks and trappings associated with that. Practitioners assess whether they are "on course" towards their goals. They look at the number of years ahead of them to achieve, and they may decide to scale up their efforts.

They may be concerned about protecting their position, which equates with a concern about their position of dominance and power being threatened, particularly control or dominance over people and resources. Once practitioners have achieved this level within the organisation, they would want to protect it.

Children and family commitments may be increasing at this time -- education costs especially -- and they may realise that they need to work harder to maintain the income to support the family and the lifestyle. This is a pragmatic explanation for the increase in desire for power and dominance and is based on concerns about social status and prestige.
The results for self-enhancement indicate that senior practitioners in Malaysia are more likely to be in the exploration or determination mode, which fits with Nicholson's (1984) model.

### 9.3.3.2 The findings in relation to Schwartz and Bilsky's values theory

As discussed in relation to the results of both the newer and mid-level practitioners, Schwartz and Bilsky's values theory model, on which this research is based, does not explain the findings reported in relation to senior practitioners. The oppositional structure of the model is counter to the results for senior practitioners who rated Self-Transcendence and Self-Enhancement value dimensions highly, in contrast to the expectations of the model. The explanation provided in relation to the newer practitioners holds for senior practitioners also.

### 9.3.3.3 Respondents' view of their personal change

The responses from the senior practitioners about their employment-related personal change focused on themes of the centrality of the professional role, increased self-confidence, and different types of work.

*I’ve grown on the job. I never imagined that I would take this profession so seriously. That it would reach my heart. That everything I do, from the way I raise my kids, to the way I deal with strangers, I really practise PR. (Female/Malay/Senior/Corporate)*

*New skills - people management has grown a lot. Presentation skills. I’ve always been quite a good communicator in terms of writing skills and I'm able*
to express myself very well on paper. That's the sort of feedback I've had all these years. I've not been too good at the presentations, stand-up verbal delivery skills, and that's changed a lot. Partly it's the nature of being a consultant. You have no choice but to present your ideas and think quickly on your feet. And you've no choice but to stand up and pitch for new business. (Female/Indian/Senior/Consultant)

Five years ago I would be more concerned about positioning a company in the right light where it's always positive. Whereas right now after five years it's a different ballgame... In terms of my role it's more philosophical, and that philosophy should be distributed among all the subsidiaries we have so that it becomes the culture in the communications policy for the group. So that's very different because previously it's a lot of execution of things, more of implementation, and now it's more on concepts of philosophy, of the culture and so forth. And to me that's more important because at the end of the day, once you've built a culture it becomes the seeds for everything. That's important. You probably plant the wrong seed, you get the wrong fruits and the wrong results. So the basic things need to be cemented properly now. (Female/Malay/Senior/Corporate)

9.4 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the influence of years of experience on the value dimensions of Self-Enhancement and Self-Transcendence. In contrast to chapters 5 and 7, where the analysis was a qualitative content analysis of respondent comments about the findings, this chapter takes the findings and examines them in the context of relevant theory and research.

The study has shown that people undergo changes to their values as they gain more experience in the public relations profession. It may be that such findings could occur
equally well within other professions. The particular point of interest was that respondents were found to be similarly motivated by both sets of values at the same times in their career, when Schwartz and Bilsky's values theory structures self-enhancement and self-transcendence as bipolar values. Nicholson's (1984) work role transition theory provided a useful contextual framework to understand the types of transitions practitioners experience at the newcomer, mid-level and senior stages, as an explanation for the different levels of importance placed on the two value dimensions at various career stages. The rise and fall of value priorities was depicted by the U-shaped pattern, where newer practitioners scored high, mid-level practitioners scored low and senior practitioners again scored high.
CHAPTER 10

AN EXTRA DIMENSION -- THE REPERTORY GRID DATA

This project aims to examine the role of cultural and professional factors in shaping the values and self-identity of public relations practitioners in Malaysia. Previous chapters have examined the impact of two cultural variables -- ethnicity and gender -- and two professional variables -- work environment and years of experience -- on values. Based on the belief that public expression of a value is an expression of self-identity, the study to this point has also examined self-identity of public relations practitioners in Malaysia, and the influence of cultural and professional variables on the development of self-identity.

This chapter, which analyses the material generated through the repertory (rep) grid process, adds to the understanding of values and self-identity of practitioners by examining the values that underwrite public relations practice in Malaysia, by identifying role model attributes for public relations practice, and by examining aspects of respondents' self-concept as a professional and in relation to other practitioners. What professional values are important in doing the job? What professional values lead to effective public relations practice in Malaysia? What attributes comprise the identity of those perceived by others to be involved in best practice in public relations? The use of the rep grid technique is valuable in its ability to uncover an individual's personal framework for creating meaning, and to my knowledge, this is the first time that a rep grid study has been done involving values and self-identity within the public relations profession.
10.1 Recap on the foundations of Personal Construct Theory

Kelly's (1955) Personal Construct Psychology (PCP) is a constructivist theory that contends that our psychological processes are guided by the way in which we view future events, and that people actively engage in making sense of their world. The theory is explicitly stated and is based on one fundamental postulate and 11 corollaries, outlined in Chapter 2.

The corollaries are in fact background guiding principles which guide people as they individually erect for themselves a model of the world, and test the model against external events in their search for a better predictive model (Featherston, 1995). The mental templates or models are described by Honikman (1976) as a hierarchical system of understandings and meanings, called constructs. A construct is defined as that which is formed when some things are construed as being alike and different from other things (Kelly, 1955). Each construct is a dimension for evaluation because the sense made of an event depends upon the relationship between the anticipation and the actual experience. Constructs can be either superordinate or subordinate. When small differences occur of subordinate importance, adjustments can be made easily to the system to accommodate the change. When the experience begins to relate to more superordinate constructs, then change and adjustment become more difficult.

PCP links with the values and self-identity analysis, and this is discussed below. More fundamentally however, it provides a raison d'être for the strivings of the public relations practitioner. Chapter 9, which looked at the impact of years of experience on values, based the analysis on the theory of work role transitions. It suggested that
practitioners go through a constant cycle of moving into a new role, coping with that role, planning for the next move and repeating the process. It suggested that professional development was ongoing. Personal construct theory likewise emphasises the importance of making progress. Kelly advocated what he called the “full cycle of experience”, which entails involvement, unequivocal prediction, evaluation of the results of testing and “ingenious approximation” which, when combined with constructive alternativism, allows people to “transcend the obvious” (1971, p. 13). Walker (1992) interprets this as a statement about our possibilities, not a necessary characterisation of the boundaries of our nature. “They speak of what we could be, rather than what we are” (p. 266). Burke and Noller (1995) stress that this process is particularly important during a period of transition.

Kelly (1955) saw individuals as scientists, as theorisers and predictors, but more importantly as involved in a process of putting theories to the test and venturing beyond the obvious. This conceptualisation of experience cycles, and of moving forward in terms of better understanding the world, is a useful conceptualisation for progress within a profession, any profession, not just that under study here. People enter a profession with a view to understanding more about it, learning how to do it, making increasing sense of what it involves and what it can accomplish, and generally the more one learns, the more the scope for understanding increases. Within this conceptualisation, the identification of values and self-identity have an important role because the identification of both leads to greater understanding of the journey these practitioners are taking and the direction they are heading. The rep grid can be used as a tool in relation to any value system, and, in this case, it focuses on values inherent in public relations practice.
10.2 How this study integrates with the values and self-identity findings

10.2.1 Values

As discussed in chapter 2, values are the same as core constructs. The rep grid method, by eliciting constructs of public relations effectiveness from respondents, is in fact eliciting their values. It is difficult to determine precisely what a value or core construct is unless the researcher is able to probe respondents. One measure of values was achieved through the use of the values survey, but the rep grid method goes further in allowing respondents to put their own thoughts into words. In this sense, the rep grid is extremely powerful, and the constructs elicited can largely be considered core constructs.

While not all self-construal deals with core constructs, construal of the ideal self does appear to be a function of core construction. The core role structure was described by Kelly (1955) as the subsystem of a person’s constructions that defines the person’s role or identity. Kelly identified core constructions as those constructions essential to a person’s maintenance processes (Forster & Schwartz, 1994). Horley (1991) explains that people may not always act in accord with their standards or ideals, but ideals exist nonetheless. Core construction, insofar as it contains the expectations and behavioural strictures of others (in this case, other public relations professionals), represents practitioners’ ideals. In my study, role model equates with the ideal.
Values come from a moralistic perspective, and values are seen to guide ethical behaviour. In their article on feminist values in public relations, L. Grunig et al. (2000) equated ethical practice with effective practice, and hypothesised that increased acknowledgement of feminine and feminist values would lead to more effective ethical practice. L. Grunig et al. saw an individual’s personal values as a more dependable predictor of ethics than a code of standards established by a professional association.

To an extent, my research follows a parallel path in trying to establish a link between professional values and effective practice. It does this by identifying values and attributes of role models and others in the profession, based on the assumption that respondents equate role models with effective practitioners. By knowing what role models look like and what drives them, it is possible to determine what values and attributes are needed to be effective in Malaysian public relations (non-government) practice.

10.2.2 Self-identity

_We each have our own complex notions of professional models, aspirations, horror stories and enthusiasms that mould our practice and our behaviour when working_ (Walker, 1996, p. 45).

Prevalent in the previous four chapters has been the framework of self-concept and self-identity. An individual’s self-identity is seen as being integral with behaviour (Norris & Makhlof-Norris, 1976). The choices people make depend on their self-identity system and the outcomes validate or invalidate their self-conception. Further, a
person’s core constructs are the key to his or her self-esteem (Forster & Schwartz, 1994). Norris and Makhlouf-Norris (1976) describe the rep grid as a method for collecting and comparing essentially subjective data in a standardised and quantitative form to obtain measurements of self-identity and indeed, in this study, the rep grid technique has generated information that enriches the understanding about what is important to public relations practitioners in Malaysia. Adams-Webber and Davidson (1979) point out that within the framework of personal construct theory, individuals have a clear and distinct notion of their own identity only to the extent that they are able to discern a specific pattern of similarities and differences between self and others. This is central to the process involved in the development of self and social identity.

In this study, rep grids were used to investigate concepts of self and others, and constructs about effective public relations practice. Through the rep grid process, respondents were able to map their perceptions of themselves relative to others in their profession. This is possible because “Myself” was included as an element in the study, and represents the ‘objectified self’ which enables the respondent to look at self in the same way that they look at others (Forster & Schwartz, 1994). The material shows how each respondent sees self compared to others, and what each sees as his/her own attributes, the components of self-concept. The material shows the extent of similarity between respondents in terms of how they view the characteristics of “the ethical practitioner” and “the capable practitioner” and “the role model”, for example, so that we can profile the values attributed to each of these practitioner roles. Conversely, the rep grid material also shows the qualities and values of the “practitioner not admired”, and this is also useful information.
In addition, the rep grid data are useful for considering temporal progression, from present experience and constructs to future ones. Respondents were able to locate themselves and their values in relation to their ideal self and its values, which provides a picture of the way in which self-concept, including constructs, needs to be progressively construed to support a move towards the ideal self position. The process of mapping perceptions of themselves relative to others in their profession enabled respondents to generate constructs about effective public relations practitioners, specifically identifying core constructs which describe professional values. All of this contributes to understanding effective public relations practice in Malaysia, through a focus on values and identity, which is in keeping with the values and identity framework in this thesis. While my study chose to look at practitioners’ views of their own profession, in contrast to Pope, Denicolo, and de Bernardi’s (1990) rep grid study which examined teachers’ views of themselves in relation to other professions, both studies start from the same premise. That is, that the way professionals view professional practice and the profession of, in my case, public relations influences their personal approach to the job.

10.2.3 The focus of this analysis

The grid technique allowed close investigation of five important issues related to values and identity in the public relations profession in Malaysia.

1. It was possible to identify self-concepts of respondents through two specific measures: attributes of self, and the rating comparison of who they saw themselves as close to. Of particular interest was how they saw themselves in
relation to their role model. In their rep grid study of how graduates construe themselves and others during their early career, Arnold and Nicholson (1991) included the three 'selves' – actual self, ideal self, and perceived self. They looked at the degree of similarity between actual self and ideal self and took this to be an indication of self-esteem. Along similar lines, I would expect that closeness between self and role model in my study would be an indication of self-esteem and confidence. Concepts of self have emerged as central to this research. For example, the position of the self relative to others determines the practitioner's worldview, and the extent to which they are motivated by collectivist rather than individualist values, or by self-enhancement versus self-transcendence values. The comparison of self in relation to others determines social identity and self-concept. The allegiances one forms through participation in ingroup/outgroup comparisons contribute to the development of self and social/professional identity. The perceived similarity of self to specific others indicates a degree of positiveness towards those others, and their attributes are likely to be regarded positively by the respondent.

2. It was possible to identify constructs of effectiveness in public relations. Through the process of comparison of triads of elements, practitioners identified what attributes made practitioners effective or non-effective. Effectiveness relates to public relations values, where the effective practitioner is someone who adheres to the values of the profession and enacts them in their work, leading to better achievement of results.
3. It was possible to identify the centrality of professional values to practitioners' identities, through the priority ranking determined from the data and confirmed in the follow-up discussion. Professional values form part of the practitioner's professional identity and approach to the job. Professional values are critical also to self-identity and self-concept. The linkage is strong between personal values and professional values, and conflicts between professional and personal values will diminish practitioner effectiveness.

4. It was possible to identify the role model attributes and the importance of the role model, which is consistent with social identity theory and also socialisation theory. The role model typifies the characteristics of the ideal practitioner – the person each practitioner would like to become, and whose attributes they regard very positively.

5. It was possible to isolate and compare the constructs of mid-level practitioners from those of newer and senior practitioners to explore whether perspectives on public relations, including professional values, are different for those in this mid-level stage. This would be consistent with the findings on years of experience – that mid-level practitioners experience a drop in the importance they give to all value dimensions because of both job-related and other factors. As discussed in previous chapters, organisational commitment and job involvement were documented as apparent casualties at the mid-level stage of 5-10 years’ experience where practitioners were much less motivated by all value dimensions compared with practitioners at other experience levels. If attachment of identity to the role is seen through the extent to which a practitioner relates in
that role to others in the work environment, then the rep grid data for mid-level practitioners may show lesser centrality of "other"-related values than the constructs identified by newer and senior practitioners.

Given the focus of this thesis on values and identity, and my linkage of both to effective public relations practice, I'll draw on the rep grid data most relevant to these five aspects.

10.2.4 Recapping on the elements used and analysis done

The process used in the study was described in detail in chapter 3. Both components of the process – elements and constructs – provide useful data. In this research, eight elements were used, drawn from each respondent's own professional network. They are listed here:

- E1: A PR practitioner who is a strong company person
- E2: A PR practitioner who is a very capable practitioner
- E3: A PR practitioner who has a strong sense of ethics
- E4: A PR practitioner whom I don't admire as a professional
- E5: A PR practitioner who is very experienced
- E6: A PR practitioner who is my role model
- E7: A PR practitioner who is new to the profession
- E8: Myself
As explained in chapter 4, the rep grid material can be analysed in several ways and each of these generates different relationships and points for discussion. The Focus Algorithms, Principal Components analysis and Sociogrids analyses present the data in different ways and all contribute to the discussion in this chapter.

10.2.5 Limitations

One of the practical limitations of grounded theory research is that much of the knowledge and recognition of what one has discovered comes at the end. If one had some idea at the start of what might emerge, then the methodology used might have been more closely tailored to enable verification of the results.

In this case, the independent variables emerged after the first round of data collection, which included the rep grid interviews. Had I realised that I would end up with four ‘valid’ independent variables, I would have been able to insert more structure into the rep grid process to accommodate this. Specifically, I could have included elements that would enable direct comparison of results in terms of years of experience, such as “a practitioner with 15+ years of experience” or “a practitioner with 5-10 years of experience”. The category of new practitioner is covered among the elements, and responses in relation to this element can be compared directly with data on newer practitioners derived through the values discussion. The category of experienced is included, but this is ambiguous because it doesn’t operationalise the term to the point where its findings could be assumed rigorous.
Likewise, I could have focused on gender and equity issues, by including elements such as “a male practitioner” or “a female practitioner”, or “a Malay practitioner”, and so on. In retrospect, while this would have been a possible option, I suspect that it would have focused on these points of differentiation to the point of impacting on the whole process.

I could have focused more specifically on issues of work environment. The category of “a strong company person” was included but this was not intended to identify the corporate practitioner. In fact a strong company person could exist in any working environment. The description is of their commitment to the organisation, not of their working environment. However, I could have included “a consultant” and “a corporate practitioner’ as elements to assist in the direct comparison of findings.

Despite these shortcomings in the rep grid design, it has produced some valuable information that contributes substantially to the study.

10.3 Results – Aggregated data

The aggregated data are useful in examining self-concept and the extent of similarity between self and others; attributes of the role model and the identification of professional values in public relations in Malaysia; the extent of similarity between respondents in relation to the constructs generated; and the centrality of constructs generated.
Two aspects of the aggregated data were presented in chapter 4, which reported the initial analysis undertaken following the first data trip. In that chapter, I presented the results which depicted self-concept and extent of similarity between self and others, derived through two methods: 1) the *favourability of elements* analysis, which calculates the ranking of the elements from most to least admired; and 2) the *proximity* between practitioners and those with whom they feel more closely matched. In the first analysis, the role model emerged clearly as the practitioner most admired, and in the second analysis, the majority of practitioners saw close links between themselves and other practitioners, indicating high self-esteem.

In chapter 4, I also reported results on similarity between respondents on their constructs of effectiveness in public relations. This was established through the categorisation of constructs into nine categories to provide a content framework, and through the Sociogrid analysis (Shaw, 1980), which calculates the index of agreement between respondents and constructs, specifically identifying the extent to which people are alike in the ways they construe. The Sociogrid analysis was undertaken with sub-groups based on the four variables of ethnicity, gender, work environment and years of experience in public relations, and found high levels of commonality between respondents about their views of effective public relations practice. (See example of Sociogrid analysis in Appendix D). In other words, the sub-groupings were highly consistent and identify similar constructs of public relations effectiveness. This is a measure of Kelly’s (1955) commonality corollary and indicates that their psychological processes are similar.
The remaining aggregate analysis is reported below, and relates to the attributes of the role model which is an important concept in understanding both values and self-identity.

10.3.1 Values and attributes of the role model

The role model emerged as the most admired of all the practitioner categories, and provides a reference point against which to compare other practitioners and self. Through the Principal Components analysis, where elements and constructs are mapped together, it is possible to identify constructs related to the role model, which are constructs of public relations effectiveness. These can be taken to be core or superordinate constructs, because construal of the ideal self appears to be a function of core construction (Horley, 1991). Therefore, this listing (shown in Table 10.1, overleaf) is crucial to understanding practitioner self-identity in Malaysia, as the constructs generated in relation to role models provide the standards against which practitioners compare and model themselves. The constructs are listed according to the substantive categories identified earlier.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Constructs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Work practices and approach | Takes responsibility for their work  
Takes a win:win approach  
Committed to getting the job done  
Provides a value-added service  
Gives and shares advice; Seeks advice  
Adopts high standards in approach to PR  
Works on building relationships  
Looks at all sides  
Uses personal networks professionally  
Takes longer-term approach; Takes macro perspective  
Operates fairly  
Works at a higher professional level  
Strong in corporate “big picture” PR  
Deals effectively with problems  
Develops solutions quickly and effectively  
Develops appropriate solutions  
Gives advice based on experience  
Gives value to client  
Works independently  
Works as part of a team  
Sets frameworks and standards for subordinates  
Brings out the best in staff  
Has autonomy to make decisions  
Responsible for achieving results; Accountable  
Advises on PR issues  
Strategy-oriented  
Focuses on goal; Goal is starting point in planning; Meets objectives  
Tailors PR programs to company needs  
Adapts to changes  
Organised and systematic  
Achieves objectives without help  
Deals with criticism rationally |
| Skills, abilities and knowledge | Can give advice to management  
Good grasp of issues important to the company and the industry  
Uses PR knowledge to optimise company’s image  
Understands what’s required; Knows the job  
Has knowledge  
High level of technical ability  
Capable of strategy and execution; Can do all PR activities themselves  
Deals with difficult issues  
Good understanding of PR and media requirements  
Strong team and interpersonal skills  
Good communicator; articulate; can present  
Specialist in PR |
| Experience and background | Has solid experience  
Long and broad PR exposure  
Track record  
Sound journalism background  
Has government PR experience |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Constructs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Personal attributes and descriptions | High degree of professionalism and quality  
People-oriented  
Genuine  
Committed to the organisation  
Works to build own knowledge and expand professional capabilities  
Shares knowledge with others  
Has good corporate citizen values  
Puts in heart and soul, passionate; Strong personal beliefs show through in work  
Creative  
Effective; creates impact  
Capable; strong inherent capabilities  
At career pinnacle  
On leading edge of PR  
Separates personal and professional  
Mature and worldly; maturity leads to success  
Confident in abilities  
Highly integrated with company values  
Operates effectively in Malaysia  
Disciplined  
Role model, internally and externally |
| Judgement and ethics                 | Honest  
Ethical  
Has integrity; will do what they feel is right  
Aware of implications |
| Purpose                              | No aspects attributed                                                                                                                   |
| Relationship with management         | Is seen by management as contributing to organisational goals  
Management sees them as equals; accepted by management                                                                                   |
| Image and reputation                 | Highly regarded by industry  
Good reputation in industry and the profession  
High credibility and acceptance  
Well known in PR industry  
Very established in industry  
Inspires confidence in their PR advice |
| Professional concerns                | Builds the profession  
Protects image and reputation of the profession  
Gives time to develop the profession  
Committed to the profession  
Sets standards in making PR a management tool  
Builds image and importance of PR to company |

Table 10.1: Values and attributes of the role model

Respondents saw role models as the ideal practitioner, but at the same time they frequently clustered role models with other practitioners, including self. The respondents clustered the role model with a number of different elements, as shown in Table 10.2. The lack of any dominant configuration could indicate overlap between the
way role models, experienced, capable, ethical, strong company practitioners and self are perceived.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role model (RM) clusters</th>
<th>Number of times cluster appears</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RM on own</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RM with capable practitioner</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RM with experienced practitioner</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RM with company practitioner</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RM with ethical practitioner</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RM with self</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RM with company and experienced practitioner</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RM with company and capable practitioner</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RM with capable practitioner and self</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RM with company, experienced and ethical practitioner</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RM with experienced and ethical practitioner and self</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RM with company, experienced and capable practitioner</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RM with company and capable practitioner and self</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RM with capable and ethical practitioner, and self</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RM with experienced, capable, ethical practitioner and self</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>21</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10.2: Role model clusters

The interconnectedness of these elements is shown in the following quote:

*My role model has to be a strong company person. In the PR industry you've got to make sure that the company image is always maintained and nothing is done to tarnish the image of the company. (Female/Indian/Mid/Consultant)*

The following two respondents saw the role model as an active agent in the development of new practitioners. The comments below were given in response to the question: "*What helps a new practitioner move to the other side to be seen as a role model or as an experienced practitioner? Is it purely the passage of time that achieves this transition?*"
If you have honesty first; guidance, you need the guidance with the right kind of people; to understand theory and practice; but you will need a good role model to follow. That would be the determining factor. What the person teaches, taught the right way, this new practitioner can adopt it. Theory is important, but you need the practice and you need the right kind of guidance. That's very important. (Female/Chinese/Mid/Corporate)

They need to gain a good grasp of the basic skills. If you start off with a good teacher or mentor then you're halfway there. That person will allow you to develop the right basic skills and the right thinking skills, the strategic thinking skills, and the job hopefully would also give you enough exposure. (Female/Malay/Mid/Corporate)

The richness of the data comes from the individual results and the exploration of how individual practitioners look at their colleagues and concepts within public relations practice, and therefore several case studies are included in the next section.

10.4 Results – Individual data

As stated earlier, core constructs equate to values, and self-identity is derived from specific patterns of similarities and differences between self and others. Therefore, the constructs derived through the rep grid method are an insight into the concepts a person has about him/herself. The constructs or verbal labels used by each person reveal a lot about the person's private perceptual system, and therefore the integrity of the data is best maintained when the constructs and their relationship are analysed on an individual basis, particularly as my focus is on the very personal constructs of values
and identity. Rowe (1973) states that the verbal labels that reveal most about people's private perceptual structure are the labels they apply to themselves.

On an individual basis, I was able to interpret various aspects from the display and statistical data generated through the rep grid analysis, including:

- how the practitioner construed him/herself in relation to other practitioners. It is interesting to see where "self" is placed on this ranking exercise;
- ranking of constructs from those that were more important or central to those of less centrality to each respondent; and
- how closely the various constructs matched each other.

While I was able to interpret the findings, it is important to discuss them with respondents and allow them to explain what the analysis shows. This was undertaken on the second interview.

Individual case studies enable exploration of individual worldviews, and by comparing and contrasting case studies of practitioners representing different sub-groups in my sample, relative differences in perceptions and constructs can be highlighted and examined. For example, comparing the grid from a newer practitioner with those from a mid-level practitioner and a senior practitioner, may lead to findings which relate to those discovered through the values analysis in the previous chapters, thereby providing some triangulation of data. Comparison of a grid from a Malay consultant and a Malay corporate practitioner may allow us to see observable similarities and/or differences that can be related back to findings in previous chapters.
10.4.1 Comparing the values and self-identity of practitioners with different lengths of experience

The principal components analysis reveals specific relationships between elements and constructs and is used to identify groupings of constructs and elements. It is a general measure of association. From these associations, hypotheses can be developed which can then be discussed with the respondents to determine why the relationships exist and how they can be explained. The patterns of associations reveal much about how professionals in public relations are perceived, and about how respondents perceive themselves. Arnold and Nicholson’s (1991) study suggested that the constructs people use in describing themselves and others tend to reflect their own internal developmental struggles. The mapping of elements and constructs together enables a characteristic description to be developed for each element, at least relevant to that respondent. The focus algorithm which produces element and construct trees also provides useful information on values and self-identity of individual practitioners.

The practitioners whose responses are examined in this section have been chosen because they represent diversity. A mix of ethnicities, gender, and work environment combine with different years of experience to provide a holistic analysis rather than an analysis based purely on a single variable. An alternative way of choosing practitioners to examine in this section would be to compare the grids of, for example, male Chinese corporate practitioners at different experience levels, and then do the same for female Chinese corporate practitioners at different experience levels, then male Chinese consultants, and so on. Unfortunately the smallness of the sample doesn’t allow full comparisons to be made across the four variables, and therefore I’ve deliberately
chosen practitioners who differ from one another in more than one way. While this doesn’t allow direct comparisons to be made to the same extent, it treats the data in the spirit with which the rep grid method was designed: to investigate the way each practitioner individually makes sense of their experiences.

10.4.1.1 The newer practitioner

The new practitioner is Malay, male and a corporate practitioner with 18 months' experience. This practitioner saw himself differently from the stereotype of the newer practitioner. The rep grid technique, and subsequent discussion, provided valuable clarification of his self-concept, his constructs about public relations and his values. His focus algorithm, including element and construct trees, and the principal components map are shown below.

10.4.1.1.1 Self-concept

The element tree (Figure 10.1) displays how this practitioner sees himself compared with other practitioners. There are three element clusters that are clearly separated. This practitioner sees himself as closest to a capable practitioner (94.5%) and a role model (89.1%). The next closest is the practitioner with a strong sense of ethics (80%), although this is a more distant linkage. This is consistent with the favourability of elements analysis, which puts role model first, followed by self, then the capable practitioner. It is interesting that ‘new practitioner’ is seen as distinctly different from himself and is clustered with ‘someone I don’t admire’.
Figure 10.1: Element/construct tree for newer practitioner

Figure 10.2: PrinCom map for newer practitioner
On the principal components map (Figure 10.2), the two elements of ‘myself’ and ‘capable’ appear very close together, with the ‘role model’ slightly further away, in a different quadrant. Attributes which appear very close to both elements are: ambitious, impatient to progress; works within company constraints; and has proper theoretical PR knowledge. At our second interview when I sought confirmation that this was how he saw himself, his response was:

Yes, (this is) how I see myself. For the capable practitioner, I would have to add more. He should be patient (not impatient). When you're impatient you tend to do a lot of mistakes. Patient, takes their time. Also, trying to expand the PR role; firm and persuasive; deals with criticism rationally. Not necessarily lots of experience.

In the second interview I asked him to describe his professional identity at this point:

I've become a bit lazy. That's the frustration. I still propose for new things. I like to implement new things, eg. internet for everybody, email for everybody in the company. We would not like to be cavemen in the next millenium. I wouldn't like to see that in the company because later on if you give me managership, if I want to implement this later on there would be a big hesitant buffer because it's difficult to change immediately at one time. But at least do something. Even though it is costly, but you have done the initial stage of giving everybody one. Most probably you learn yourself and then you have a bit of knowledge. When that knowledge comes in, then you implement further and further technology.

This respondent's comments indicate a sense of frustration with his role and position at the time of interview, hence the impression of impatience, and wanting to achieve but
being held back by the corporate constraints. I then asked "Do you have a picture of where you want to be in another five years?"

*My expectation is to be in that room (to be the manager). To have at least another officer under me. From there on, I'll be more thinking than doing. I believe that when you're in the manager's post you do more thinking, more thinking and a bit of doing. As it is, I'm doing and also thinking.*

10.4.1.1.2  Professional values

Looking at the construct clusters (see Figure 10.1), there are two clusters at the 90.0 level:

1) *Constructs 5, 10, 6, 9, 11 & 3: Improves their knowledge and shares it with others; Sets standards in making PR a management tool; Protects the image of PR; Deals with criticism rationally; Lots of PR experience; In leadership role in PR.*

2) *Constructs 1 & 8: Works within company constraints; Ambitious, impatient to progress.*

The first cluster conveys ideas about professionalism, and attributes which I would normally associate with a senior practitioner because of their inherent broader perspective. The second cluster conveys a sense of frustration and impatience. At the second interview, I asked him to explain the constructs and their grouping. His comments about the first cluster linked all attributes back to education, specifically
formal education in public relations, a process he had gone through himself and which he obviously believes is very important. This was borne out in his comments and also in his rating of the construct means (explained later):

*If you’ve got formal education on PR you have to relate this. People in PR would not like people to say "You're in guest relations" because it's totally different..."Improves their knowledge and shares with others". PR always changes with technology. There are new things, new ways to handle press, new ways to develop press releases. You improve your knowledge by learning from other people. They have to have a good background in PR, especially educational.*

*"Sets standards in making PR a management tool". Everybody knows, every PR practitioner would like to become management themselves. But we would like management to notice us, that we are very important, we are actually the tyre of a vehicle. What makes the company goes around. Without us you cannot move at all. You don't have control. We have to protect our image and educate people along the way. How we educate them will come back to education.*

*"Deals with criticism rationally". There is no right, there is no wrong. It is how you see it and look at it. You have to take everything openly. It's how you encounter a problem. It's how you encounter a crisis. Even an economic crisis there must be a good to it. If you see an economic downturn as depressing, some people see it as a profit, as a benefit to them. You cannot be pro to one side only, you have to see all various sides of the story. When you take criticism you analyse it.*

*"Lots of PR experience". As time goes by, everyday is a new day for you. Everything is new and you learn from other people, how to do things. When you're not sure of something you have to ask for somebody's guidance. That guidance would be from somebody in a related field. The more knowledge and*
experience that you have, the better person you will be. You can also advise the management on what to do, in a very polite manner. You can use questions that they themselves can answer.

"In leadership role in PR". If you've got education and experience, it leads you to this. It all makes sense.

His comments about the second cluster were:

Company constraints, let's say financial. They give you a budget that you have to work within, but when you work within the budget, what you most probably want will not be achieved. It will be achieved but it will take a long time. Like red tape. There are company constraints. I have to go through these various people in order for me to progress. That makes you impatient.

Analysis of the construct means adds more to the picture of what this practitioner values, where constructs with a lower mean are more important and more central to the individual than those with a higher mean. It also underwrites the respondent's rating of all practitioner elements because the elements are rated towards the most important construct, having theoretical knowledge. This practitioner's core constructs (in order of importance) were:

- Has proper theoretical PR knowledge (m = 1)
- Sets standards in making PR a management tool (m = 1.75)
- Works within company constraints/In leadership role in PR/Improves their knowledge and shares it with others/Lots of PR experience/Deals with criticism rationally (m = 2)
- Ambitious: impatient to progress (m = 2.25)
- Firm and persuasive/Trying to expand the PR role (m = 2.63)
- Protects the image of PR (m = 1.88)

His comments explain his reordering of the constructs to place Protects the image of PR as least important:

First will always be proper theoretical knowledge. Protects the image of PR would be last. The perception by people of PR is better (now).

10.4.1.1.3 Relationship between elements and constructs

The PrinCom map (see Figure 10.2) provides additional information. The material is ordered based on its relationship with the first two components (a mathematical calculation): 79.79% of the variance is explained by these first two components. The vertical axis relates to levels of experience, and the horizontal axis appears to relate to levels of formal knowledge and how it is applied. Increased distance from the centre indicates increased importance.

I identified five groupings, based on associations between constructs and elements. These groupings led to five hypotheses, which I discussed with this practitioner to see what meaning he derived. The first grouping around self was discussed above in relation to this practitioner’s self-concept.

- The experienced practitioner, the strong company person and someone with a strong sense of ethics are close together, with these attributes: Lots of PR
experience; and In leadership role in PR. I asked whether he viewed the company person, the ethical practitioner and the experienced practitioner as similar?

No I don't see these three as similar. Attributes relate more to the company person and the experienced practitioner. The ethical practitioner would be different.

- The role model is close to a number of qualities: Sets standards in making PR a management tool; Improves their knowledge and shares it with others; and Deals with criticism rationally. Is this an accurate reflection of qualities of a role model?

Yes - role model. Should go a lot more.

- A number of qualities are grouped together: Doesn’t care if people don’t agree; Knowledge is misapplied; and Can’t take criticism. Why have these qualities appeared close together?

Not good PR. Not good people for the company or personally. This is ineffective PR.

- New practitioner appears with the attribute: Still makes mistakes.

We didn’t discuss this point, but clearly this practitioner didn’t see himself as a new practitioner and had distanced himself from that identity. He had moved part way along the pathway from being inexperienced to experienced, although he acknowledged that he was still a distance from his goal. His objective in five years’ time was to be in the manager position (see quote above). He saw that he had moved from the new
practitioner stage which he associated with 'making mistakes'. When asked what helps a new practitioner to move towards the role model position, he said:

*It takes a lot of time, experience, patience. As a new practitioner you are still impatient to progress, even to succeed in anything. So what you do is actually what you think is right. But in reality, you are doing it wrong. Then you learn from mistakes. When you learn from mistakes, that should at least educate you in some ways. You learn from mistakes. And when people see that now you're doing something right, and you're improving and improving, then you become a role model. When people criticise you when you're new you say "I know what's best for the company and for me". Now when people criticise you, you're thinking positively. "You're criticising me, on what basis?" Now you are taking it rationally. Maturity of the person.*

*I still do make some mistakes, but not big mistakes. I used to get mad when people criticised or gave ideas. But now I'm looking at it in a positive way, taking it into consideration. Maybe we could implement this. I'm starting to listen, to realise that what people promise may not come true but with a little patience most probably your target will be achieved.*

For this practitioner, self-identity came also from his position in his family, which probably contributed to the mature outlook expressed above.

*I'm also the oldest grandson. Your cousins, your nephews will look at you. "This is what big brother is doing. Why don't you follow his footsteps?" That is a guideline for them to work harder. There are also responsibilities to my brother siblings.*

*It's actually similar. First it will be as a leader, in the unit, of my own family, my wife, my father's family, of all the families as grandson. That coincides with everything. It comes naturally. It may differ a bit because you go more on*
personal knowledge when it comes to family. You must be more professional when it comes to business. But what you say, language-wise, how you talk to people would be the same. Because in PR you have been taught to be the type of person who is really in the middle, no pros, no cons, but you see it as both ways. And you use that every day. When people ask me for advice, I'll ask the same question. "What do you think? What do you feel? How comfortable are you with this decision?" I do not go on a directive basis, because we are not living in an old world any more. We are coming to a new millenium where other people's feelings and other people's ideas must be taken into consideration.

10.4.1.2 The mid-level practitioner

The mid-level practitioner is Chinese, male and a consultant with 7 years' experience. He appears to be comfortable, and on track in terms of his career, which is in keeping with the profile of the mid-level practitioner obtained through the values analysis and interpretation. His ethnicity and gender did not appear as overt components of his self-identity. His focus algorithm, including element and construct trees, and the principal components map are shown below.

10.4.1.2.1 Self-concept

From the element links (see Figure 10.3), this practitioner sees himself as closest to the experienced practitioner (91.7%), and as part of a fairly tight cluster comprising the capable practitioner, the strong company person, the practitioner with a strong sense of ethics, and the role model. The two remaining elements -- new practitioner and the practitioner not admired -- are clustered separately from the main cluster. This is consistent with the favourability of elements analysis which puts role model, self and a
capable practitioner together, followed closely by the experienced practitioner, the strong company person and the practitioner with a strong sense of ethics. On the principal components map (see Figure 10.4), this group shows up quite clearly. The circles of association could be drawn to create either two groupings -- myself, and a capable practitioner; and the role model, the experienced practitioner, the strong company person, and the practitioner with a strong sense of ethics -- or it could be drawn to create one group comprising all. The new practitioner and the practitioner not admired are very distant from this practitioner.

Figure 10.3: Element/construct tree for mid-level practitioner
Attributes which appear very close to self and the capable practitioner are *Winning the business* and *Delivering the goods*. At our second interview I asked him to describe his professional identity at this point, and his answer incorporated both of these constructs:

*In my case, half the battle is won for me because my role is media relations and I was a journalist many years ago and it helps to know how one gets stories into the newspapers and tv. I don't really have a problem. That would be my main role but it is only one component of the entire work, but the most important thing is the relationship with the people who are more senior than you. And relationships with your clients, because at the end of the day, it's staying power. A good benchmark for effectiveness these days is how long can you retain the client? There's no point winning new business, and then after six months it's up for review.*

I then asked "What are the things that have changed for you in the past five years?"

*Things have not really changed in the basic approach of PR business. Maybe in terms of the routine things, you are less dependent on support staff.*
I think this practitioner was feeling confident, relaxed and content, indicative of the mid-year slump documented in earlier chapters and described by respondents as being "in a comfort zone", as shown by this comment:

*I like to have time on my own to do certain things. When you have worked for many years you will not be as ambitious as you used to be. Obviously you want to earn more but it is not your priority in life. You like to have time for your own to do things that you like best, whether it is to travel or to do your own things... Work dominates but it is not the topmost priority.*

I asked him about his personal values and whether he felt he could bring his personal values into the workplace. His answer revealed more of his self-concept and the aspects of his personal approach to the job which he sees as important:

*One of the most important things, especially in consultancy, is time management. You handle so many things at one time, so it is a question of how you manage your time to ensure that your level of service to your clients will not be affected. I don't see that so much in those working in the big organisations. Time is never important. It is not their priority. It applies to individuals as well. Another thing is to work smart. There's no point in working very hard. Another important thing is discipline. It applies anywhere for that matter. In everything I do, I always believe I have certain deadlines to meet, or how you dress up when you go out, and I know a lot of people who are good in their work but they are not disciplined. Once you reach a certain level, you must do leadership by example, show good points to your staff down the line.*
10.4.1.2.2 Professional values

There are two large clusters at the 90.0% level (see Figure 10.3):

1) Constructs 10, 8, 5, 1, 9, 11 & 4: Track record and broad experience; and Works independently and as a team (these two constructs are 100% matched which means they are seen by the respondent as identical). Both are linked to the remaining constructs: Wins business and delivers the goods; Goes "by the book", ethical: Professional; Takes responsibility for work; and Advises on PR issues.

2) Constructs 12, 6 & 7: May not adapt solutions to situations; Value-added service; and Solid experience.

Both clusters convey ideas about competitive advantage and winning the business, the first focusing on teamwork and the second focusing on identifying points of differentiation. The second cluster contained a construct which to me didn’t seem to fit May not adapt solutions to situations, and it didn’t emerge as important in our follow-up discussion. At the second interview, I asked him to explain the constructs and their grouping. His comment in relation to cluster one was:

"Track record and broad experience"; and "Works independently and as a team" are the same thing. It's quite simple. When companies look for a PR firm, they all basically offer the same service. What is there to differentiate between A, B and C? The key points are track record and the experience you have, and in a team it does make a difference. When both are equal, this makes the difference. Drawing on the strengths of everybody.
You need a little bit of everything to support each other. "Goes by the book; ethical" -- that alone may not be good enough. You need to have the others. Each and every one of these components need to work together. You obviously need the support of each other. There's no way you can do it alone.

His comments about the second cluster were:

"Value-added service" -- all being equal, if you can provide something of additional value it does make some difference. Being flexible. "Solid experience" is the key point in doing whatever you want to perform for the company looking for a PR firm. Every PR firm will say "We can do this. We can do that". How you're going to differentiate one from the other? It is the little things that count.

Analysis of the construct means enables the identification of core constructs (in order of importance):

- **Track record and broad experience/Works independently and as a team (m = 2)**
- **Wins business and delivers the goods (m = 2.13)**
- **Takes responsibility for work/Goes "by the book", ethical (m = 2.38)**
- **Professional/Advises on PR issues (m = 2.5)**
- **All-rounder (m = 2.75)**
- **Uses proven methods (m = 2.88)**
- **Value-added service (m = 3)**
- **Solid experience (m = 3.13)**
The strong focus on winning business may come from the consultancy environment where this practitioner would have been required to generate business; and where his prior experience as a journalist would have been judged as important to clients who rate the ability to generate media coverage highly. In short, he is a valued member of the organisation, and feels confident in doing the job he is hired to do – no challenges, no surprises.

10.4.1.2.3 Relationship between elements and constructs

The PrinCom map (see Figure 10.4) provides additional information. Eighty-one percent of the variance is explained by the first two components. The vertical axis could relate to breadth of exposure and subsequent skill levels, and the horizontal axis appears to relate to professionalism of approach. The constructs and elements appear to be positioned more towards the horizontal than the vertical axis which suggests the centrality of professionalism of approach. Increased distance from the centre indicates increased importance.

I identified four groupings, based on associations between constructs and elements. These groupings led to four hypotheses that we discussed to see what meaning he derived.

- Self and capable practitioner appear together, plus the attribute of Winning the business and delivering the goods.

In this instance I think how a person or a company is judged is based on your track record in getting new business or maintaining existing clients and on
that point, if you talk about using proven methods, I think it's quite common for us each time you see people, you expect to hear success stories of things of previous things we have done.

The strong company person, the experienced practitioner, the ethical practitioner and the role model are close together and appear next to these attributes: *Advises on PR issues, Takes responsibility for work, Solid experience, May not adapt solutions to situations, and Value-added service.* Does this suggest that a strong company person is seen as experienced and ethical? And do these qualities typify an ethical and experienced approach to public relations?

*It would cover all four areas.*

- A number of qualities are grouped together: *Can't take responsibility, Not professional, Less experienced, Adapts to the situation.*

  *These would obviously apply to those who are new in the business with a couple of years experience because obviously you would take less responsibility compared with someone more senior. To say they are less professional, I don't know that that's it. They may not be.*

- A number of qualities are grouped together: *Wins the business but not good on follow-through; No specialist experience; Depends on input from the group; and Anyone can do what they do.*

  *These would apply to smaller PR firms, one-man operators. Lack of follow-through is partly because they don't have the support. Not because they are*
not capable but because they don't have the full support. This is quite common in one-man operators.

In terms of his own personal progression, this practitioner is not far removed from the role model position. I asked about what practitioners need to move to the experienced position:

You need some time and additional responsibilities given to them. It's a progression. Apart from passage of time, it's also the environment they're in. Some PR firms are more conservative in their approach. Some individuals are very ambitious. They feel they can't get on in one company, they move to another company.

10.4.1.3 The senior consultant practitioner

The senior practitioner is Indian, female and a consultant with 20 years' experience. She is confident, focused, positive, and sure of her abilities, which fits with the profile of the senior practitioner obtained through the values analysis and interpretation. There were a number of similarities between her outlook and that of the mid-level practitioner profiled above (Section 10.4.1.2). However her responses included some negative perspectives on the strong company person. Given that the analysis in chapter 4 reported some differences based on work environment, I felt it would be useful to look also at a senior corporate practitioner's rep grid data to see whether this distinction was mirrored in the corporate perspective. The senior consultant's focus algorithm, including element and construct trees, and the principal components map are shown below, and those of the senior corporate practitioner follow in section 10.4.1.4.
10.4.1.3.1 Self-concept

From the element links (see Figure 10.5), this practitioner sees herself as closest to a capable practitioner (92.0%) and as part of a cluster that includes the role model, the practitioner with a strong sense of ethics, and the experienced practitioner. This is consistent with the favourability of elements analysis which puts role model first, followed by the capable practitioner and practitioner with a strong sense of ethics.

![Diagram](image-url)  

**Figure 10.5:** Element/construct tree for senior consultant practitioner
On the principal components map (see Figure 10.6), this cluster shows up clearly with self appearing close to an experienced practitioner, a capable practitioner, a practitioner with a strong sense of ethics and a role model. The new practitioner and the practitioner not admired are a separate cluster, and the strong company person is also very distant from this practitioner.

Figure 10.6: PrinCom map for senior consultant practitioner

Components of self-concept from the map, which appear very close to self and a capable practitioner, are: **Strong ethics and integrity; High degree of professionalism and quality; Takes a win:win approach; Role model; Involved in building the profession; High level of technical ability; On leading edge of PR; Track record of being capable; Good reputation in industry and the profession; Can do all PR activities themselves; and Protects image and reputation of the profession.** At our second interview I sought confirmation that this was how she saw herself, and this was confirmed. She described her professional identity at this point:
I'd have to say that I see myself as one of the senior PR practitioners in the country. I see myself as a mentor to a lot of young practitioners. I see myself as having earned the respect of quite a good number of clients and a good number of media, senior business editors. Clearly that's important. Your credibility with them is very important, and being able to do a good job. I see myself as having a good foundation in terms of the technical skills required for the job and that came from my journalistic and my writing background. I see myself as being very lucky in that sense because practitioners that are just "fixers" and liaison persons - taking on a job and then finding someone to copywrite and edit - they're just fixing. I do feel sorry for them and I tell them they have to hone up those basic skills. Because you're sitting in front of the client, and you're being put to the test. "Half an hour. Do that release, I want it now!" Or "Write this speech. I need it now!" You have to summon your best wits about you.

I see myself as being a bit of a counsellor because people do call and ask me for help in terms of their careers, and what do I think. They've been offered this opportunity. Should they move now and why not?

I then asked "What are the things that have changed for you in the past five years?"

Clearly confidence is one thing, and also freedom and independence. Ten years ago I was in an in-house situation and I didn't have latitude and that freedom and independence to do what I really thought was good for the organisation. And now I have that freedom and independence to do at least counsel my clients and give them my best advice, and it's up to them to take it or not.

New skills - people management has grown a lot. Presentation skills. I've always been quite a good communicator in terms of writing skills and I'm able to express myself very well on paper. That's the sort of feedback I've had all these years. I've not been too good at the presentations, stand-up verbal delivery skills, and that's changed a lot. Partly it's the nature of being a
consultant. You have no choice but to present your ideas and think quickly on your feet. And you've no choice but to stand up and pitch for new business. But also partly because I've taken on some new teaching and training assignments, I've had no choice but to get thrown into doing it. I've had to develop those skills.

This respondent's comments indicate a feeling of satisfaction, of personal growth, of achievement and a sense of purpose. Also she felt that she was recognised for these achievements. Her comments reinforce a finding from the values analysis – a re-emergence of motivation to learn and being open to change. After 20 years she is continuing to develop those skills, and is thriving from doing so. The following comments also indicate her determination and discipline to ensure that her personal values and her sense of self have a place in her work:

I do try to as much as possible. I am Christian, and I try to, without trying to appear to be Christian, I want to be a bit value-driven or value-conscious. And when I take some decisions, I try to explain to them why we're doing a particular thing so they understand there is sometimes a moral issue. I'm not being hard because I'm nasty.

However, she also indicated that she was entering another reflective stage of reassessment of priorities:

I guess I'm driven by stress. The sense that there's so little time, so much to do, and you don't have the luxury of allowing things to take its course before it comes to a conclusion. You want to hurry it along and I'm always doing that, and I'm actually coming to a stage where I'm beginning to self-assess again and I'm wondering whether this is really something I want to be doing for the next 10 years. I'm not even sure who I am.
10.4.1.3.2 Professional values

In the construct clusters (see Figure 10.5), there is one large cluster at the 90.0% level:

1) Constructs 3, 7, 9, 14, 11, 1, 13, 2, 10, 4, 12, 6, 15 & 5: Strong loyalty to the company/client; Conscious of the need to protect stakeholders' interests; Strong ethics and integrity; Takes a win:win approach; Role model; High degree of professionalism and quality; Involved in building profession; Track record of being capable; Good reputation in industry and profession; High level of technical ability; Can do all PR activities themselves; Protects image and reputation of profession; On leading edge of PR; and Provides quality options.

At the second interview, I asked her to explain both the constructs and their grouping:

I think there's maybe two groups. One would be the technical competence which would be the technical ability, handling PR activities themselves, providing quality options, track record of being capable, good reputation. The other group would perhaps be ethics or values - loyalty, protecting stakeholder interests, integrity, ethics, quality.

Analysis of the construct means identified the following core constructs (in order of importance):

- Strong loyalty to company/client (m = 1.88)
• Conscious of the need to protect stakeholders’ interests/Strong ethics and integrity (m = 2)

• Track record of being capable/Provides quality options (m = 2.13)

• High level of technical ability/Flexible and responsive to changes/Good reputation in industry and profession/Takes win:win approach (m = 2.38)

• Role model (m = 2.5)

• High degree of professionalism and quality/Involved in building profession/Can do all PR activities themselves (m = 2.75)

• Protects image and reputation of profession/On leading edge of PR (m = 3)

This practitioner appears to be fully aware of the implications of public relations practice and what is at stake. This equates with operating at a senior level where the need to take responsibility for actions underwrites the very solid professional approach. This practitioner runs her own business and has very strong views on what is needed to be successful. The analysis of construct means depicts the same story as the construct tree outlined above – all these professional values are important in effective public relations practice.

10.4.1.3.2 Relationship between elements and constructs

The PrinCom map (see Figure 10.6) provides additional information. More than 92% of the variance is explained by these first two components. The horizontal axis relates to professionalism of approach, and given the positioning of the constructs and elements towards the horizontal rather than the vertical axis it is difficult to identify
what the vertical axis could represent. Increased distance from the centre indicates increased importance.

This perceptual map has a number of similarities with that for the mid-level practitioner discussed above. The horizontal axis is the same; the positioning of the new practitioner and the practitioner not admired at a great distance from the self/primary cluster is the same; and the strong cluster of role model, the practitioner with a strong sense of ethics, the capable practitioner, the experienced practitioner and self is similar, except that the senior practitioner puts self firmly within this cluster whereas the mid-level practitioner was just outside of this cluster. A major difference is the positioning of the strong company person, which appears on the opposite side of the map from the self/primary cluster, indicating a negative perception. This was one of the hypotheses generated for discussion at our second interview, as outlined below:

- Self appears close to an experienced practitioner, a capable practitioner, a practitioner with a strong sense of ethics and a role model. All are close to a number of qualities: Strong ethics and integrity; High degree of professionalism and quality; Takes a win:win approach; Role model; Involved in building the profession; High level of technical ability; On leading edge of PR; Track record of being capable; Good reputation in industry and the profession; Can do all PR activities themselves; and Protects image and reputation of the profession. Are these characteristics of a role model? Do they typify capability and experience? Is this how you see your attributes?

Role model - yes. And being capable and experienced. And how I see myself.
• Strong company person is close to a number of qualities: *Can't provide a range of options; Doesn't exhibit respectable qualities; Can't do it all themselves; Doesn't have experience and track record; No reputation; Not on leading edge; and Lacks basic technical requirements.* Is this an accurate reflection of company practitioners?

*It is accurate. I don't mean to imply that all company practitioners have all of these qualities to the same extent. Some have all of these qualities. And some may not have all of them. I do appreciate that these are all negative qualities. I wouldn't say that this is typical of all company practitioners. But many company practitioners in my experience - the dozen regular clients that we have - they can't do it themselves, they can't provide a range of options, they are not on the leading edge, and they lack basic technical requirements. They all exhibit these, but some to greater degree than others. But in terms of ethics and commitment, they have those qualities. I think generally it's the technical competence that is probably lacking.*

• A number of qualities are grouped together: *Not a role model; Not involved; Driven by the interests of one party; Loyalty intrudes on objectivity.* Why do you think these qualities have appeared close together?

*I'm not sure that the link about not being a role model and being driven by the interests of one party. (I can't look at this and say these are the characteristics of someone who is not a role model). It's not that simple. I think it was coming from a particular person I had in mind. Some practitioners tend to want to protect their position in the company.*

• A number of qualities are grouped together: *Flexible and responsive to changes; Strong loyalty to company/client; Conscious of need to protect stakeholders*
interests; and Strong ethics and integrity. Are you identifying these as qualities of someone with strong ethics and integrity?

I guess I'd identify those as qualities of someone with strong ethics and integrity, but perhaps what's missing is upholding the traditional values of PR. I'm not sure whether that should have been in there.

• The final cluster wasn't discussed. It grouped a number of qualities together:

Concerned with keeping position; Short-sighted; unsure of direction; and Not so flexible or responsive.

The perception of the strong company person is interesting, and to test whether it is a 'consultant' perspective, I looked also at a senior corporate practitioner's responses. This is examined below.

10.4.1.4 Senior corporate practitioner

The senior practitioner is Malay and female with 15 years' experience. As with the senior consultant practitioner, this practitioner is confident, positive, sure of her abilities, and conscious of the personal growth she's gone through to reach this point. Her responses indicate a corporate perspective, rather than the consultant perspective reflected in the comments of both the senior and mid-level consultants examined above. Her focus algorithm, including element and construct trees, and the principal components map are shown below.
10.4.1.4.1 Self-concept

From the element links (see Figure 10.7), this practitioner sees herself as closest to a capable practitioner (92.0%) and as part of a cluster that includes the role model, the practitioner with a strong sense of ethics, and the experienced practitioner. This is consistent with the favourability of elements analysis which puts role model and the capable practitioner first, then the practitioner with a strong sense of ethics.

Figure 10.7: Element/construct tree for senior corporate practitioner
On the principal components map (see Figure 10.8), this cluster shows up clearly with self appearing close to an experienced practitioner, a capable practitioner, a practitioner with a strong sense of ethics and a role model. The new practitioner and the practitioner not admired are a separate cluster, and the strong company person is also very distant from this practitioner. While the spacings are different, the pattern is the same as that of the senior consultant discussed above.

Figure 10.8: PrinCom map for senior corporate practitioner

The map shows a very focused pattern with almost all the constructs at the positive end situated close to the element cluster outlined above. Components of self-concept for this senior practitioner are: Very people-oriented; Sets standards for subordinates; Sets frameworks for subordinates; Organised and systematic; Goal and result-oriented; Role model, internally and externally; Years of experience and knowledge; Uses PR know-how to optimise company image; Creates impact; Achieves results based on
credibility; Very established in the industry. At our second interview I sought confirmation that this was how she saw herself, but she saw these more as role model qualities. She described her professional identity in this way:

I’m very honoured, because the industry feels that I have been playing a fair bit of role in the industry, and contributing to the practice. I’ve been asked to give a lot of talks and seminars, and give topics of communications. As a senior practitioner in this industry it’s something which I like to pass on to the junior practitioner because a lot of the things that you do in PR are basically common sense, and you have to be a very very sensitive person because PR has to do with human relations. Of course your image can always be built through seeing how people see you and being very empathetical. As a senior practitioner it’s very important to lay the foundation correct because once you lay it correctly and if you get the right people to follow through then it’s something that I think you’ve contributed to the industry.

I then asked what had changed from her as a practitioner five years ago.

Five years ago I would be more concerned about positioning a company in the right light where it’s always positive. Whereas right now after five years it’s a different ballgame, not that I’m saying you don’t have to worry about positioning, and the image of the company and so forth. In terms of my role it’s more philosophical, and that philosophy should be distributed among all the subsidiaries we have so that it becomes the culture in the communications policy for the group. So that’s very different because previously it’s a lot of execution of things, more of implementation, and now it’s more on concepts of philosophy, of the culture and so forth. And to me that’s more important because at the end of the day, once you’ve built a culture it becomes the seeds for everything. That’s important. You probably plant the wrong seed, you get the wrong fruits and the wrong results. So the basic things need to be cemented properly now.
And on the personal front:

Right now it's a balance between my family and the work. After more than 15 years of working it's that balance. I'm balancing building my career and still my family...You work so hard for so many years and towards a peak time of your career you want to value that with your family because you've already earned your rewards in a lot of ways and you would like to use that, what you have always wanted to with your family. That's what my challenge is now. Previously work was dominating very much.

10.4.1.4.2 Professional values

Looking at the construct clusters, there is one large cluster at the 90.0% level:

1) Constructs 12, 13, 1, 8, 10, 9, 11, 4, 5, 3, 14, 2, 6, & 15: The first two constructs are seen as identical: Ethical approach; and Focus on internal and external publics. They are linked to the remaining clusters: Uses PR know-how to optimise company image; Achieves results based on credibility; Very established in industry; Goal and result oriented; Years of experience and knowledge; Role-model, internally and externally; Optimises use of funds; Very people-oriented; Creates impact; organised and systematic; Sets frameworks for subordinates; and Sets standards for subordinates.

Her explanation for the constructs and their grouping was:

"Ethical approach" and "focus on internal and external publics". Yes they do tie in. I see them as quite close to one another because when you want to do
events, and when you want to organise events in terms of PR exercise you would want to consider again for which purpose, for which group, and if you know if internal or external. You need to understand the ethnic group of who you’re targeting for and that approach depends on your target market, and that’s important.

Yes I feel it is very related for PR practitioners. Set parameters, organise ... -- these are attributes that are very important for PR practitioners because it becomes a basic guideline for PR practitioners to see how an event can be a positive factor, rather than a negative factor. When you want to do any PR exercise, or when you want to do anything that’s related to PR, you need to be able to weigh these things, and weigh it in terms of optimising the funds and in terms of creating impact, organising systematic. It plays an important role for the success and positive impact of that exercise that you plan to do. To me, these are the guidelines, the rule of thumb, what you should do, like a checklist for PR practitioners.

It would be a very important factor during your hiring of your PR practitioner to look at whether they are result-oriented, how do they see things, whether their values are important, their standards of things. I think in terms of their exposure, their knowledge of things, their understanding of things on PR. It’s very important. Basically I think also to say attitude is a very important factor. PR has to do with a lot of human relations. You can call it human, customer relations – it touches base with human beings and therefore your attitude of being very sensitive to things is one criteria which is very important. You have to have an open attitude, not very narrow-minded, you have to be a bit liberal to see things, you cannot be too fanatic in doing things. That attitude and those characters are very important in PR.

Analysis of the construct means showed the following priorities (in order of importance), with one change made to the order (optimises use of funds) at our second meeting:
• Very people-oriented/Years of experience and knowledge (m = 1.38)

• Focused on media relations and publicity/Sets standards for subordinates (m = 1.5)

• Role model, internally and externally/Creates impact (m = 1.63)

• Organised and systematic/Achieves results based on credibility/Very established in industry/Ethical approach/Focuses on internal and external publics (m = 1.75)

• Uses PR know-how to optimise company image/Sets frameworks for subordinates/Goal and results oriented (m = 2)

• Optimises use of funds (m = 1.5)

These values indicate a strong concern for employees with a number of responsibilities articulated. They also indicate a concern to operate ethically with the company’s interests in mind. These reflect the corporate approach rather than the consultancy approach, and are very different from the winning business focus of the previous two respondents. This supports a finding of different perspectives based on work environment, as detailed in Chapter 4.

10.4.1.4.2 Relationship between elements and constructs

The PrinCom map (see Figure 10.8) provides additional information. Close to 90% of the variance is explained by these first two components. The vertical axis relates to the specialist focus of activity, and the horizontal axis relates to professionalism of approach. All the constructs except for one are clustered very close together, along the horizontal axis. The horizontal axis is the same as that for the senior consultant and the
mid-level consultant, suggesting that professionalism of approach may be a common framework. Increased distance from the centre indicates increased importance.

This perceptual map has a number of similarities with that for the mid-year and the senior practitioners discussed above. The horizontal axis is the same; the positioning of the new practitioner and the practitioner not admired at a great distance from the self/primary cluster is the same; and the strong cluster of role model, the practitioner with a strong sense of ethics, the capable practitioner, the experienced practitioner and self is similar, except that the senior practitioner puts self firmly within this cluster whereas the mid-year practitioner was just outside of this cluster. As with the senior consultant, the strong company person is a distance from the self/primary cluster, although it does appear on the same side of the map which indicates professionalism of approach. Unfortunately, the isolated position of the strong company person was not something we discussed because I didn’t realise its relevance at the time.

Two hypotheses were generated for discussion at our second interview, the first of which related to the self/primary cluster and the many attributes surrounding these elements. As reported above, this practitioner saw the attributes as describing a role model, rather than herself. However, given the proximity of self to role model, the attributes must relate also to the senior practitioner.

The second hypothesis related to the new practitioner, who was linked with these attributes: *Unethical in approach; Goes for popularity; and Achieves results unethically*. What is the relationship between experience and ethics? Do ethics change with experience?
I think a good practitioner doesn’t abuse things in terms of the things that are
given to you and empowered to you. Abusive of funds, abusive of authority
and abusive of ways and approach of doing things starts something that is
right. Although you probably reach the same goal, but it’s not the right way of
doing. And I think that’s what I’m trying to say. You can still probably make
people talk about your company but it has been done wrongly and on the way
you have hurt a lot of people or a lot of groups, which might become at the
end of the day, in the long term a negative impact. Initially it could be a
positive impact. That’s the kind of thing that I think is not right. It can be
trained. It’s something which an organisation should not encourage because
you are given a fair bit of empowerment of how to run the thing and if the
management encourages it then it will become a culture in that company. But
if it is discouraged and you are reprimanded for doing that process then
therefore this is something you can be trained to do the right way.

An interesting feature from the analyses of the two senior practitioners is the marked
marginality of the strong company person, apparently seen as an outgroup, and
regarded as different. It is apparently important for these respondents to perceive a
difference between the cluster of role model, effective and capable practitioner, and the
strong company person. From the intergroup perspective, this illustrates an important
component of group differentiation – the maintenance of ingroup distinctiveness. The
strong company person is not necessarily a corporate practitioner as opposed to a
consultant because the term could apply equally to both and has been used in both a
narrow and a broad interpretation by respondents in this study. If the study were
repeated, it would be useful to operationalise this element more clearly to reduce
ambiguity. However, these responses indicate that strong loyalty to the company is not
necessarily seen positively. An indication of why comes from respondents’ comments
suggesting that a practitioner who was strongly loyal to the company and its procedures
was overly constrained by the company culture and ethics which were seen as running counter to best practice in public relations and the ability to be objective.

It is noteworthy that the mid-level and newer practitioners did not marginalise the strong company person in this way, suggesting that judgements about the strong company person are made as practitioners gain more experience. This might be an example of the Experience Corollary (Kelly, 1955), which indicates that an individual's construct system varies as they successively construe the replications of events. Marginalised perceptions of the strong company person have developed from responses to construals over time. Those with more experience have had more opportunities to test and modify their construals than those with lesser experience. This progression from past experience to present constructs is an important ingredient in PCP (Forster & Schwartz, 1994). This interesting finding would be worth further research.

The analyses from all four practitioners provide a lot of information also about newer practitioners and how they are perceived by professionals in this field. From the intergroup perspective, new practitioners are also strongly marginalised. Interestingly, they are largely seen in negative terms, and among these four respondents the new practitioners have been lumped together with the practitioner not admired, even by a respondent supposedly in this category. The strength of this observation suggests that a cultural influence may be contributing to this result, as Malaysia is a country which reveres age as opposed to some western countries which revere youth. Malaysia is a country with a high Power Distance culture (Hofstede, 1980), which supports a hierarchical approach and gives power and credence to those in the upper levels and
not to those in the lower levels. Newer practitioners, generally in the lower levels, are looked on quite differently from those in senior positions, and this may be reflected in this result. This interesting finding would also be worth further research.

10.5 Conclusions

The rep grid method provides another source of perceptions in this study on values and self-identity, and complements the previous analysis. Its strength comes from several characteristics: its ability to examine values and self-identity in depth; its ability to tap core constructs (i.e., values) and record them in each respondent's own words; and its ability to graphically present relationships in ways which can be easily understood and discussed. While the rep grid method works with the data statistically to produce the relationships between elements and constructs, its output is in a different form to that obtained by SPSS, used in the remainder of this study, making direct quantitative comparisons between constructs and Schwartz and Bilsky's values impossible. However, the content of the rep grid comments and constructs has both reinforced observations in support of the values analysis, and provided additional information to help contextualise the values analysis. It has extended the reach of the values analysis by providing more data to help with its interpretation.

Specifically, it has helped to profile the world as seen by practitioners at different levels of experience. Years of experience have been shown to have a significant influence on values held, and, in the rep grid material, years of experience also made a difference to the way practitioners thought about themselves, who they saw themselves as close to, what values were important at different stages of professional development,
and how their progress moved closer to role model status with increasing experience in the profession.

It has indicated support for the existence of significant differences in values between work environments, as shown by the differences in constructs nominated by the consultant and corporate practitioners. In short, it has reinforced the findings on the influence of professional variables on values, and has gone one step further than the values analysis by providing a list of values which are critical to effective practice in Malaysia. This then, is the list of values that can be used for comparative purposes to compare whether the values that underwrite public relations practice in Malaysia are the same as those that underwrite the practice in other countries. This outcome was a major objective of this research project.

In addition, the rep grid material has contributed to a much greater understanding about practitioners and their self-identity, in terms of how a successful practitioner in Malaysia sees themselves, and how closely each respondent matches that ideal. This is very powerful, particularly because it is done using a methodology which uses respondents' own constructs rather than constructs imposed by a researcher. Further, by undertaking a second interview stage, it allows for acknowledgement and confirmation of the findings, which improves their validity.

The rep grid has not provided much which allows direct comparisons in terms of the cultural variables of gender and ethnicity. I think this is because the cultural variables provide context, and are assumed, and have not been seen by respondents as something special to comment on. Had my sample been bigger to allow for a full comparative
analysis across all variables, then these cultural variables may have been more fully revealed.

Finally, the rep grid data show that effectiveness as a public relations practitioner in Malaysia comes from congruence between personal values and self-concept. Respondents saw very clearly what values were needed to be successful, and whether they felt they had those values. They could articulate how to get to “role model” status, and they clearly understood that having the right values was necessary to be effective. While self-esteem of practitioners was inferred rather than explicitly examined through this analysis, Forster and Schwartz (1994) suggest that self-esteem can be studied if core constructs are elicited from elements which represent past experiences rather than people known to the respondent, for example, “times when I was being my most valued self”. As a future research project, this could also provide valuable information about successful and effective public relations practice, to complement the findings from this study.
CHAPTER 11
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter discusses the contribution of this research to understanding values and identity of public relations practitioners in Malaysia. The outcomes of this research have the potential to provide a new, and hitherto largely unexplored, basis for comparative research between the profession in Malaysia and other countries.

11.1 Intended contributions of this study

This is a study of values and identity within the public relations profession in Malaysia. Its implications, however, are global, because its context is created by the intersection of three current areas of debate and examination. The first is the renewed focus on Asian values, which seeks to articulate Asian values as a way of helping countries in this region create a sense of self that stands strongly in relation to “western” culture, and that will support Asia’s pathway to modernisation. The second is the open challenge to assumptions about the transferability of theory between countries around the world, about whether theory can be universal or whether different theories or different versions of theories are needed to help explain practice in different parts of the world. This has been a topic of interest within public relations for almost two decades, and has come under renewed focus because of the growth of international public relations practice. The interest has centred on whether theory largely developed in the United States sufficiently explains public relations practice around the world. The third is the re-emerging desire within public relations academics and practitioners to
reconnect the study of public relations with values underwriting the profession, to improve the effectiveness of public relations activity. This is what my study specifically addresses. Values underwrite the practice of public relations, and if we can clearly identify the values of practitioners in a particular country, then we have a basis for comparing public relations practice between countries.

The contributions of this study are three-fold: through a focus on values that underwrite the profession, to provide a different but equally useful framework for comparison of public relations practice between countries, particularly those that are different from the dominant Western models; to investigate the influence of specific cultural and professional variables on public relations practice, through the values framework, to add to the discussion about the influence of universal vs. specific variables in determining public relations practice in different countries; and to contribute to the definition of Asian values by defining one component, that is, the personal and professional values of a sample of public relations practitioners in Malaysia.

The research was undertaken in two parts: the first, using a survey and structured interviews, examined the influence of two cultural variables (ethnicity and gender) and two professional variables (years of experience and work environment) on values held. The second, using repertory (rep) grid methodology, examined values and identity. Part of the challenge of the project was to link the output generated by these different methodologies in a meaningful way. The first part found that ethnicity and years of experience led to significant differences in the values held, with gender and work environment having some influence but generally in combination with ethnicity and years of experience respectively. The second part identified core values central to
public relations practice in Malaysia, and interpreted these core values as statements of self-identity. Together, the study has revealed values that underwrite public relations practice in Malaysia, the aspects of self-identity important to the profession, and the way in which those values and identity have been influenced by cultural and professional factors.

Through this research project, it has been useful to conceptualise a career as a series of work role transitions, where practitioners go through a constant cycle of moving into a new role, coping with that role, planning for the next move and repeating the process. Professional development is ongoing and continual. This framing allows the distinct threads in this project to be drawn together. Personal construct theory emphasises the importance of making progress and stresses that the process where individuals continually try to make sense of their lives and try to predict events in their lives is particularly relevant during times of transition. The process involved in actively making sense of the world draws on underlying assumptions and values, constructed as a mental map of how things work. Central to understanding what is important as a motivator for practitioners is an understanding of the values and assumptions which create meaning for them. Central to understanding self-identity of practitioners is an understanding of the values and constructs which create meaning for them. Thus this project, through its various methods, pulls together separate threads to provide a clear picture of values and identity of public relations practitioners in Malaysia.

It is a picture of values and identity at a point in time, the point when the research was done, but it has a temporal component, contributed by the rep grid analysis, which shows what the future might be for practitioners in terms of what they see as their
professional direction and destination, seen through the values, attributes and identity of the role model, the ideal practitioner. Within this conceptualisation, the identification of values and self-identity have an important role because the identification of both leads to greater understanding of the journey these practitioners are taking and the direction they are heading.

Thus the challenge of combining different methodologies has resulted in knowledge of value to the profession of public relations.

11.2 What this study has found

As stated above, the research was undertaken in two parts: the first, using a survey and structured interviews, examined the influence of two cultural variables (ethnicity and gender) and two professional variables (years of experience and work environment) on values held. The second, using rep grid methodology, examined values and identity. In the first part, values were defined by the Schwartz and Bilsky values theory, and in the second part, by respondents' constructs.

Schwartz and Bilsky found that the crucial aspect that distinguishes among values is the motivational goal they represent. Their theory derived 10 motivationally distinct value domains (self-direction, hedonism, tradition, power, achievement, security, stimulation, universalism, benevolence, and conformity), postulated to be recognised implicitly in all cultures. The theory also specified the interrelationships of conflict and compatatability among the 10 value types that give structure to value systems. Schwartz and Bilsky theorised that values form a continuum of related motivations which can be
plotted in terms of their relationship with each other. The 10 value domains are organised in two bipolar dimensions – Openness to Change vs. Conservation, and Self-Enhancement vs. Self-Transcendence.

The first part of my research – the values analysis – examined separately the influence of cultural variables (ethnicity and gender) and professional variables (years of experience and workplace) on values held. Ethnicity and years of experience led to significant differences in the values held, meaning that both are important variables in terms of influencing value dimensions and domains, both on their own and, for ethnicity, in combination with gender. Their influence was on different value dimensions however. Ethnicity produced significant main effects and significant interaction effects with gender on Openness to Change and Self-Transcendence, while years of experience produced significant main effects on Self-Enhancement and Self-Transcendence. Work environment appears less influential than both ethnicity and years of experience, with its only significant effect being an interaction effect with years of experience on Power.

To further understand the interaction effect of ethnicity and gender on Openness to Change and Self-Transcendence, the gender difference for each of the three ethnicities was examined. In relation to both value dimensions, gender made no difference for the Chinese respondents, but did lead to a significant difference for the Malays. The analysis could not be undertaken with the Indian sample because it included only one male. This means that for the Malays, as the majority group in Malaysia, gender is a stronger determinant of values than ethnicity.
Three of the four value dimensions defined by Schwartz and Bilsky -- Self-Enhancement, Self-Transcendence and Openness to Change -- are important value dimensions in terms of their dependent relationship with the variables. The fourth value dimension -- Conservation -- appeared to be marginal to this research, with none of the four independent variables producing a significant effect. Among the value domains, power, achievement, stimulation, self-direction, conformity and benevolence are also clearly influenced by the variables. It is interesting that the cultural variables of ethnicity and gender produced significant effects at the value domain level on domains that serve primarily individual interests (power, achievement, stimulation and self-direction), rather than on those that serve collective interests.

Another interesting feature of the results was the distinctive U-shaped pattern depicted in all the findings on years of experience, where newer practitioners scored high, mid-level practitioners scored low and senior practitioners again scored high. This suggests that a practitioner’s personal values change as more experience is gained in public relations, which is tied to changes in self-concept and self-identity. The interaction of years of experience and work environment on the value domain, Power, produced a change to this pattern, with corporate practitioners following the U-shaped curve, and consultants following an inverted U-shaped curve.

The second part of my research -- the rep grid analysis -- identified core values central to public relations practice in Malaysia, and interpreted these core values as statements of self-identity. As discussed in chapter 2, values are the same as core constructs. The rep grid method, by eliciting constructs of public relations effectiveness from respondents, is in fact eliciting their values. One measure of values was achieved
through the use of the values survey, but the rep grid method goes further in allowing respondents to put their own thoughts into words.

The constructs identified through this method are the values that underwrite the profession in Malaysia, including the role model attributes which represent the ideal. The analysis and the discussion that followed, in the second trip to Malaysia, served a dual purpose: not only to clarify and confirm values/construct hierarchies, but also to confirm measurements of self-identity. Core constructs equate to values, and self-identity is derived from specific patterns of similarities and differences between self and others. Therefore, the constructs derived through the rep grid method are an insight into the concepts a person has about him/herself. Through the rep grid process, respondents were able to map their perceptions of themselves relative to others in their profession, and describe the identities (i.e., attributes) of different categories of practitioners. The process of mapping perceptions of themselves relative to others in their profession enabled respondents to generate constructs about effective public relations practitioners, specifically identifying core constructs which describe professional values.

Key findings from the aggregated rep grid data include: identification of role model attributes for public relations practice in Malaysia; and identification of the ways in which respondents construct public relations and the values/attributes required to do the job effectively. The study found high levels of agreement between respondents and constructs, indicating that respondents in this study are alike in the ways they construe; clear support for the role model as the practitioner most admired; and high levels of practitioner self-esteem, as shown by the majority of practitioners seeing close links
between themselves and other practitioners. This study has been able to answer the questions: What professional values are important in doing the job? What professional values lead to effective public relations practice in Malaysia? What attributes comprise the identity of those perceived by others to be involved in best practice in public relations? Specifically, the study has generated desired attributes for effective performance within nine categories of professional practice, including: work practices and approaches; skills, abilities, and knowledge; experience and background; personal attributes and descriptions; judgement and ethics; purpose; relationship with management; image and reputation; and professional concerns.

Together, the two parts of this study have revealed values that underwrite public relations practice in Malaysia, the aspects of self-identity important to the profession, and the way in which those values and identity have been influenced by cultural and professional factors.

11.3 The importance of the results in terms of public relations theory and practice

The main contribution of this research in relation to public relations theory and practice is in the area of international public relations, specifically, comparative public relations practice (Culbertson & Chen, 1996). In line with the academic shift towards a focus on the specific variables which cause public relations practice to differ from country to country, this research examines the influence of specific cultural and professional variables on the profession. This study therefore leads towards the development of a theoretical foundation for "culture-specific" public relations in Malaysia.
In seeking to examine public relations practice in Malaysia, this study has chosen to follow a different path from much of the previous work in comparative public relations. It has not, for example, sought to examine the relevance of US-developed models of public relations practice (Grunig & Hunt, 1984) in other countries; nor has it sought to explore different paradigms such as rhetorical or critical approaches in the practice of public relations; nor to examine the behavioural aspects of the way public relations is done. Rather, it has chosen to link into the psychological and sociological foundations of public relations practice by focusing on values and identity.

This choice was prompted by the objective of wanting to find a different but equally useful framework for comparison of public relations approaches between countries, beyond the approaches outlined above. I wanted to investigate the influence of culture on public relations, understanding that culture is one of the specific variables that determines public relations practice in different countries (Sriramesh, 1996; Sriramesh & White, 1992). Further, I wanted to do this using tools which could be less vulnerable to criticism of having a “western” bias, hence the use of the Schwartz and Bilsky values theory which has been tested and supported cross-culturally, and the rep grid method which, through the use of respondents’ own words and constructs, is designed to reduce researcher bias.

In investigating the influence of culture, again there were choices to be made in terms of which part of the public relations process to focus on – the influence of culture in the framing of strategies, for example, or the influence of culture in creating the environment within which public relations campaigns would be successful. I chose to
focus on the values that drive practitioners, because values provide the foundation for any profession. The values that practitioners hold and are motivated by are fundamentally linked with their approach to the job, and if the values important to a profession in a particular country can be identified and analysed, then we have a basis for comparing public relations practice between countries. The study aimed to develop and test an alternative framework and method for investigating specific differences in public relations practice between countries, and, through the values approach, has achieved this.

Importantly, the study has identified some significant impacts of cultural and professional variables on public relations practice in Malaysia. The study found that the cultural variables of ethnicity and gender have an impact on values, specifically on values emphasising own independent thought and action and favouring change (Openness to Change) and on values emphasising acceptance of others as equals and concern for their welfare (Self-Transcendence). Chinese respondents were less motivated on both value dimensions, Malay respondents were more highly motivated on both, and Indian respondents were between the other two. Females were motivated at a consistent level regardless of ethnicity, but only with the Malay respondents was gender a significant factor in the scores achieved. This means that the practitioners in my study carry values into the workplace, and into their professional practice, which are influenced by their ethnicity and their gender. As ethnicity is different in different countries, and the gender roles for men and women in each country may also be different, it is possible that ethnicity and gender could be significant in accounting for difference in professional practice in other countries.
The professional variable of years of experience has an impact on values, specifically on values emphasising the pursuit of one's own relative success and dominance over others (Self-Enhancement) and on values emphasising acceptance of others as equals and concern for their welfare (Self-Transcendence). The U-shaped curve indicates that practitioners become significantly less motivated after several (5-10) years in the profession, and this is a time when they tend to 'coast' on the job, reflect on whether they've chosen the right profession, and/or become focused on new non-work priorities. Self-identity as a professional is related to years of experience, with identity changing as experience increases, and as practitioners undergo work role transitions in the pursuit of their career. The nature of identity as a public relations practitioner, and the values held at different stages of a career may also account for differences in public relations practice between countries.

Importantly, the study found that work environment had little impact on the values held. Intuitively, I would have expected work environment to make a difference to public relations practice, as respondents drew some clear distinctions between the nature of consultancy and corporate life. A larger sample may allow significant differences to emerge, and this may be an interesting aspect to pursue in follow-up studies.

While four specific independent variables were examined in this study, other variables could have been used. The framework and method for investigating specific differences in public relations practice between countries, developed and tested in this study, is therefore flexible to the needs of the researcher, and the country being studied. This
study, I believe, achieves its goal of helping to develop a theoretical foundation for
"culture-specific" public relations in Malaysia.

11.4 The importance of the results in terms of Schwartz and Bilsky's values
theory

The Schwartz and Bilsky values theory was central to my study. My study was not
focused on testing the structure or content of the theory, nor solely on identifying value
priorities among public relations practitioners in Malaysia. Rather, it explored the
effects of different social structural variables (as Schwartz and Bilsky, 1987, suggested
could be done) and professional variables on values (using Schwartz & Bilsky's
motivational domain framework), and found significant effects in relation to specific
variables.

While the theory itself has been well developed and tested, particularly in terms of its
ability to be used as a universal model, studies are continuing which examine its
explanatory power in different countries and cultures. A central part of the theory's
structure is the set of hypothesised values conflicts and compatibilities, and it was on
this aspect that my results differed from those expected in the theory.

The theory presents people's value systems as integrated structures of motivational
types. That is, every finding that specifies the association of one value type with an
outside variable has clear implications for the associations of the other value types as
well (Schwartz, 1992). For example, a hypothesis that suggests that conformity
increases with age would also suggest that stimulation would decrease with age
because conformity and stimulation are opposed within the value structure (Schwartz, 1992). The dimensions of Openness to Change vs. Conservation, and Self-Transcendence vs. Self-Enhancement portray these conflicts. Two domains are conceptually close if it is compatible to place high priority on values in both domains at the same time (e.g., security and conformity). Domains are conceptually distant if it is practically or logically contradictory to give high priority to values in both domains simultaneously (e.g., self-direction and conformity).

Deviations from such expected relationships indicate that special circumstances exist (Schwartz, 1992). Schwartz and Bilsky (1987) foreshadowed that observed differences would imply that cultures differ in the individual motivational patterns and social arrangements that shape value systems. In my study, I found deviations from the expected relationships. The variable of years of experience had a significant effect on Self-Enhancement and Self-Transcendence, with high priority being given to both value dimensions by newer practitioners, low priority given to both by mid-level practitioners, and high priority given to both by senior practitioners. As a bipolar relationship, values in terms of the extent to which they motivate people to enhance their own personal interests (even at the expense of others) are presented as incompatible with values which motivate people to transcend selfish concerns and promote the welfare of others, close and distant, and of nature (Schwartz, 1992). These results suggest that the Schwartz and Bilsky values theory does not apply fully in this Malaysian sample.

The occurrence of high levels of motivation on both dimensions at the same time can be explained (see Chapter 9) in that achievement of one facilitates achievement of the
other, i.e., self-transcendence leads to self-enhancement, and vice versa. The question to be asked however, is whether this result is peculiar to Malaysia, or the public relations profession, and how these findings reflect on the values theory.

Malaysia is regarded as a collectivist country (Hofstede, 1980), and public relations could be regarded as an individualistic profession. The spread of multinational corporations throughout the world, and especially into the Asian region, has brought with it the individualistic “western” approach, and this must create a dilemma for practitioners such as those in Malaysia who are forced to accommodate two different sets of expectations – cultural and professional. There are similarities here with Lau’s (1992) study of the value choices of Chinese in the People’s Republic of China (PRC), Hong Kong and Singapore. Lau expected that value choices would reflect a collectivist emphasis, in line with the normal characterisation of Chinese as collectivist, but found instead a heavy emphasis on individualistic values. Lau’s explanation was that individualistic concerns would be strongest in an environment where attainment of personal goals was difficult, and Lau’s conclusion was that collectivism can be a means to individualistic ends in Chinese society.

The melding of individualism and collectivism leads to context-specific responses, as in the case of this study. Malaysia is undergoing industrialisation and modernisation, which has involved “a kind of ‘leapfrogging’ from the old order into the structures and mentalities of modernization” (Kwok Kian Woon, 1999, p. 30). The focus on values is part of the response, to ensure that old values are not compromised in the move towards modernity. Within this context, public relations is a relatively new profession. As stated in Chapter 1, much of the theory guiding public relations practice comes from
the United States, based on assumptions and values that are Western in origin, and the practitioner in Malaysia has to find a way of blending the two sets of values and expectations. Hence the findings of this study depict a context-specific response.

In 1990, Schwartz recast the values theory to remove the problems that he perceived with the use of the individualism/collectivism dichotomy to explain the presumed conflict between personal and ingroup interests (discussed in Chapter 8, section 8.2.2.1). He proposed a redefinition of individualistic (contractual) and collectivist (communal) societies, and proposed that levels of achievement values would be due more to the standards set by each community than the communal/contractual distinction, and that power could be valued by both communities but for different reasons (1990, p. 154). By removing the individualism/collectivism dichotomy, this recasting of the theory accommodates a finding of high levels of both Self-Enhancement and Self-Transcendence.

In 1992, Schwartz indicated that he had started to think of the model more as a continuum of related motivations, rather as discrete categories. At that point, he concluded that: "The fuzziness of their boundaries notwithstanding, however, the differences between value types are meaningful. We therefore continue to treat them as discrete when beneficial for research" (p. 46). This is an interesting albeit tentative modification to the model and, in the light of my findings, would be supported.

11.5 Effectiveness and limitations of the study
This study is an exploration into a relatively new field. As outlined above, it intentionally took a different path from previous research in the area of comparative public relations, and, in the spirit of grounded research, gained shape as it progressed. It set out to investigate the influence of culture on public relations, and found a way of doing that through psychological and sociological frameworks, rather than through the more usual focus on validity of the dominant models of practice. In the process, an alternative framework and method for comparing public relations practice between countries has been developed and tested. If other researchers choose to follow on from this study, it will be possible to build a body of knowledge of the values and identity of public relations practitioners in different countries. This knowledge could then be synthesised with the dominant models (Grunig & Hunt, 1984) to build a deeper understanding of what drives professional practice differently in different parts of the world. I believe the findings of this study therefore have significance.

A further contribution of this study has been to demonstrate the effective use of research methods which are not normally applied to public relations, but which could expand the repertoire of research methods available to public relations practitioners. The values survey, developed by Schwartz (1992) has not been used before on the public relations profession, but of more potential interest is the rep grid method. The rep grid method is a recognised counselling tool, and within this study it has been a powerful tool to understand self-identity, effective and ineffective practice, values, and linkages between practitioners and concepts.

However, the study has two key limitations. One limitation is the variables that were chosen for examination. From the matrices discussed in chapter one, there are many
choices of possible variables, for example environmental and political variables, that could have been selected for use in this study. None of the variables used were relevant for explaining the value dimension of Conservation, and one variable, work experience, had little influence on values.

The cultural variables of ethnicity and gender were easily determined, and were shown to be significant. Other cultural variables that may have been useful include age, education, and time spent overseas working or studying. A number of respondents indicated that education, particularly the type of schools attended, and whether they had attended university outside Malaysia, would make a difference to values.

The professional variable of years of experience demonstrated significant effects. Other professional variables that may have been useful include ownership/management of organisation (e.g., multinational, local-owned), size of work group, membership of professional organisations, level of professional training received, and type of job tasks undertaken.

Given the weaker effects for gender and work environment, other variables may be tested and found to have more significance in explaining values and value priorities.

A second limitation of the study was the size of the sample. In qualitative terms, the sample was adequate and a great deal of valuable information has been generated and analysed. In quantitative terms, however, the smallness of the sample prevented further statistical analysis of interaction effects between the four variables. Had the sample been larger, full analyses could have been undertaken to include such combinations as
gender and years of experience, or ethnicity and work environment. In addition, some combinations of the independent variables were not adequately represented. The smallness of the sample also means that the ANOVA results can be interpreted only as indicative, but worthy of further examination.

The sample is not representative of the public relations profession in Malaysia, which means that the findings of this study would need to be retested with a larger, representative sample before any comparative use could be made of the results.

11.6 Recommendations for future research

The area of comparative public relations research is really just beginning. Researchers are experimenting with different methods and processes to better understand the ways in which public relations practice differs between countries, and what accounts for the difference. Should other researchers be interested in continuing along the path taken by this study, using a values-based approach, there are a number of steps which could be taken.

The study could be repeated within the Malaysian public relations profession with a reasonable sample size and a representative sample, and could incorporate a quantitative phase to test the findings more widely. I would be particularly interested to see whether work environment was still insignificant across a broader sample. I would also be interested to see whether gender differences were significant for Indian respondents -- an analysis that could not be undertaken in this study because the sample
included only one Indian male. The results generated could then be used for comparative purposes with similar studies in other countries.

The study could be expanded to include other variables, as discussed above. Schwartz (1992) proposes that his model of value systems as integrated structures, can be used to generate hypotheses about the relations of value priorities with other variables. He states that substantial support is emerging for the idea that associations between value priorities and variables such as age, education, political orientations, religiosity, and social desirability, reflect the integrated motivational structure (1992, p. 59). Given the weak influence of work environment and gender, other variables may be more influential in determining values.

The study could be undertaken in other countries to enable the process of comparison between countries on the basis of values and identity to begin. Once this happens, this stream of research will be able to generate valuable information to explain comparative practice in different countries.

The study could be extended to discover how similarities and differences become manifest in the actual practice of public relations in different countries. Coombs et al. (1994) concluded their study of comparative public relations practice with a similar recommendation.
11.7 Conclusion

I have learnt a great deal over the duration of this project. The process of learning to work with research methods that were new to me was just the beginning. I have learned the realities of grounded research, and to have confidence that even though much of the time the boundaries around the work are indistinct and ever-changing, it will ultimately lead to something significant and tangible. My hope is that sufficient issues of interest are highlighted by this research to motivate others to continue the process.
REFERENCES


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Sha, B. L. (1999). *Cultural public relations: Identity, activism, globalism, and gender in the democratic progressive party in Taiwan*. Unpublished Doctorate, University of Maryland, College Park, USA.


APPENDIX A
VALUES RATING SCALE

Please read the first set of 30 values in this list. Choose and rate the value most important to you as a guiding principle in your life and rate the value that you are opposed to, or the value that is least important as a guiding principle in your life. This will give you a comparison on which to rate the remaining 28 values. Please write the rating numbers in the spaces next to each value.

I would like you to rate each value as A GUIDING PRINCIPLE IN YOUR LIFE from:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supreme Importance</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Not Important</th>
<th>Opposed to my Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. ____ EQUAILITY (equal opportunity for all)
2. ____ INNER HARMONY (at peace with myself)
3. ____ SOCIAL POWER (control over others, dominance)
4. ____ PLEASURE (gratification of desires)
5. ____ FREEDOM (freedom of action and thought)
6. ____ A SPIRITUAL LIFE (emphasis on spiritual not material matters)
7. ____ SENSE OF BELONGING (feeling that others care about me)
8. ____ SOCIAL ORDER (stability of society)
9. ____ AN EXCITING LIFE (stimulating experiences)
10. ____ MEANING IN LIFE (a purpose in life)
11. ____ POLITENESS (courtesy, good manners)
12. ____ WEALTH (material possessions, money)
13. ____ NATIONAL SECURITY (protection of my nation from enemies)
14. ____ SELF-RESPECT (belief in one’s own worth)
15. ____ RECIPROCATION OF FAVOURS (avoidance of indebtedness)
16. ____ CREATIVITY (uniqueness, imagination)
17. ____ A WORLD AT PEACE (free of war and conflict)
18. ____ RESPECT FOR TRADITION (preservation of time-honoured customs)
19. ____ MATURE LOVE (deep emotional and spiritual intimacy)
20. ____ SELF-DISCIPLINE (self-restraint, resistance to temptation)
21. ____ DETACHMENT (from worldly concerns)
22. ____ FAMILY SECURITY (safety for loved ones)
23. ____ SOCIAL RECOGNITION (respect, approval by others)
24. ____ UNITY WITH NATURE (fitting into nature)
25. ____ A VARIED LIFE (filled with challenge, novelty and change)
26. ____ WISDOM (a mature understanding of life)
27. ____ AUTHORITY (the right to lead or command)
28. ____ TRUE FRIENDSHIP (close, supportive friends)
29. ____ A WORLD OF BEAUTY (beauty of nature and the arts)
30. ____ SOCIAL JUSTICE (correcting injustice, care for the weak)

PLEASE TURN OVER
Now look at the remaining 26 values and determine which is the most important as a guiding principle in your life and score it. Then find the value which is the least important as a guiding principle in your life and score it. This will give you a comparison on which to rate the remaining 24 values. Please write the rating numbers in the spaces next to each value.

I would like you to rate each value as A GUIDING PRINCIPLE IN YOUR LIFE from:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supreme Importance</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Not Important</th>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1  ____ INDEPENDENT (self-reliant, self-sufficient)
2  ____ MODERATE (avoiding extremes of feeling and action)
3  ____ LOYAL (faithful to my friends, group)
4  ____ AMBITIOUS (hard working, aspiring)
5  ____ BROAD-MINDED (tolerant of different ideas and beliefs)
6  ____ HUMBLE (modest, self-effacing)
7  ____ DARING (seeking adventure, risk)
8  ____ PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT (preserving nature)
9  ____ INFLUENTIAL (having an impact on people and events)
10 ____ HONOURING OF PARENTS AND ELDERS (showing respect)
11 ____ CHOOSING OWN GOALS (selecting own purposes)
12 ____ HEALTHY (not being sick physically or mentally)
13 ____ CAPABLE (competent, effective, efficient)
14 ____ ACCEPTING MY PORTION IN LIFE (submitting to life’s circumstances)
15 ____ HONEST (genuine, sincere)
16 ____ PRESERVING MY PUBLIC IMAGE (protecting my “face”)
17 ____ OBEDIENT (dutiful, meeting obligations)
18 ____ INTELLIGENT (logical, thinking)
19 ____ HELPFUL (working for the welfare of others)
20 ____ ENJOYING LIFE (enjoying food, sex, leisure, etc)
21 ____ DEVOUT (holding to religious faith or belief)
22 ____ RESPONSIBLE (dependable, reliable)
23 ____ CURIOUS (interested in everything, exploring)
24 ____ FORGIVING (willing to pardon others)
25 ____ SUCCESSFUL (achieving goals)
26 ____ CLEAN (neat, tidy)

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS SURVEY
APPENDIX B
**REPERTORY GRID FORM**

Concept: effective performance as a public relations practitioner

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONSTRUCT</th>
<th>E1</th>
<th>E2</th>
<th>E3</th>
<th>E4</th>
<th>E5</th>
<th>E6</th>
<th>E7</th>
<th>E8</th>
<th>CONTRAST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Very unethical, not nice to deal with.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Very people-centred, polite, approachable, systematic.</td>
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<td>3. Can be done well, if you have a good team.</td>
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<td>4. Dilutes the funds - doesn't get the best out of it.</td>
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<td>5. Focused on media relations + publicity.</td>
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<td>6. Focused on corporate + financial PR.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Achieve results using unethical means.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Not selective, doesn't judge whether the right medium to use.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Very established in industry, can make judgements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Still learning, new.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Doesn't have an ethical approach.</td>
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<td>12. Ethical approach - honesty, integrity.</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Focus on internal as well as external publics - where should be balanced. Taking care of employees</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>Gose for popularity, rather than doing something out of sincerity. Notice is different.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Create impact by focusing on a few big things</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>Spreads too thinly - doesn't create impact anywhere.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Have established the standards to guide subordinates' activity</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>More ad hoc</td>
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Name: _______________________
Date: __________
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<th>E6</th>
<th>E7</th>
<th>E8</th>
<th>CONTRAST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uses PR knowhow to optimise com. image</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Unethical in approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organised &amp; systematic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Doesn't aim just shoots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very people-oriented</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Insincere</td>
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<tr>
<td>Role model - internally &amp; externally</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Inconsistent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optimises use of funds</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Dilutes funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set framework for subordinates</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>No time to set foundations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focussed on media relations &amp; publicity</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Focussed on corporate &amp; financial PR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achieve results based on credibility</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Achieve results unethically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal &amp; result oriented</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Not selective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very established in industry</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Still learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of experience &amp; knowledge</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>New &amp; still learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical approach</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Unethical approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on internal &amp; external publicity</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Goes for popularity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create impact</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Spreads too thinly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set standards for subordinates</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>More ad hoc</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX C
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHINESE</th>
<th>MALAY</th>
<th>INDIAN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Schools more traditional  
- Chinese should be more open to change - as a nation they've adapted & accommodated  
- Chinese males low because of education - difference between studying locally & studying abroad  
- Degree of independent thought & self-assuredness is highest among Chinese  
- Have the heritage to know ancestors have been doing something correct  
- Would feel quite good about their network  
- Have support systems, extended family, & feel quite comfortable  
- Can do what's expected of them  
- They fill the comfort zone a lot faster, so don't feel the need to be open to change | Take the middle road  
- More easy-going  
- Distinction between the haves & the have-nots  
- Having to compete among themselves more now | Conformists (eg. still have arranged marriages)  
- Being a minority they're more ambitious  
- Surprising that Indians are so open to change  
- Has to struggle the hardest in Malaysia  
- Dissatisfied with status quo & want change  
- The least satisfied  
- Indian women have the most glass walls  
- Would feel they're not getting fair share |
| Chinese are hawkers/traders  
- They have dared to go and to change places | Bounded by religion, old beliefs  
- Educated like that from the book  
- They face constraints | Are keen to change because they don't want to be seen as seen during history  
- Have guts  
- Are improving themselves | |
| Surrounded by others  
- Chinese women more set in their ways  
- For Chinese males, willingness to change is very low  
- Cultural emphasis is on tradition, respect for elders, & the collective over the individual | More conservative  
- More willing to listen & to change, to adopt new procedures  
- Cultural emphasis is on tradition, respect for elders, & the collective over the individual | Followers  
- The need to be accepted  
- Indian males will try whatever works |
| More competitive  
- In mainstream of business life  
- Are the ones most affected by the economic policy  
- Want to protect what they have  
- Suspicious & hostile  
- Chinese women are more open to change than Chinese men. Have to prove themselves  
- Very motivated  
- Chinese are more open to change than others  
- Chinese are most dynamic  
- They are hard workers, & actually do the job  
- If not broke, don't fix - the mate view. Happy if things are going fine  
- Chinese men traditional in terms of how they do business  
- Chinese women comfortable with what they have, not very ambitious | Most opportunities are available to the Malays  
- Change-oriented  
- More driven to reform & change things  
- Malays should come higher because of their high level of commitment to religious beliefs  
- Malay women want change & variety | Indian women want to achieve but the men need to achieve more than the women  
- Men have to work harder because they're competing with other men for much more senior positions  
- Not too many Indian women are fighting for senior positions  
- Women happy with a settled position because they're more concerned about getting married  
- Main breadwinner is supposed to be the man  
- Wives don't want to earn more than their husband, if they can help it  
- Men have to prove a lot more - wanting same kind of position as Malay/Chinese  
- Have to prove themselves  
- Least opportunities available to Indians  
- Always have to work hard  
- Cultural thing with Indian women, less ambitious than the men  
- Don't have a business base to protect so can afford to be open to change  
- Will be open if driven by professionalism | |
| Malay women higher than others because of the govt assistance  
A lot of Malay women are entrepreneurs compared to Chinese & Indian women -- they're more to look forward to  
There are opportunities the govt pushes all the time - you want to go further, be more ambitious  
A lot more Malay women at higher levels | Malay women should come higher because of their high level of commitment to religious beliefs  
Malay women want change & variety | Malay women should come higher because of their high level of commitment to religious beliefs  
Malay women want change & variety |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ETHNICITY</th>
<th>MALAY</th>
<th>INDIAN</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHINESE</td>
<td>Traditionally, have always had to prove they can do it, so very careful when they make a move. Don't want to make wrong move. People see them as shrewd. Have survived by working hard. If we are Chinese-owned, they want a Chinese team as you speak language, and know what sort of entertainment they want. I look at Chinese knowledge &amp; education &amp; perhaps PR is very new. You don’t have good models &amp; tools. Have no choice but to base on Western model. We should have our own identity. Culture is definitely part of that.</td>
<td>It helps with some clients if you are Malay. It’s easier for clients to accept you. When you embrace the religion, you embrace the traditions &amp; way of life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MALAY</td>
<td>People with same surname will be given priority - very strong spirit. Contributes to very strong teamwork.</td>
<td>Would want a Malay person to front the account.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INDIAN</td>
<td>If co is Chinese-owned, they want a Chinese team as you speak language, and know what sort of entertainment they want. A very Chinese client will feel more comfortable &amp; will share more with a Chinese consultant. Would pitch to a Chinese orgn with a Chinese consultant in the team - make them feel they can be safe. Cultural values very important, more than religious values in the way you carry things out.</td>
<td>The Malay race would be more confident of getting certain things. Both religious &amp; ethnic values equally important. Malays insist they want a Malay to service them. A Malay co would want you to be sensitive to their culture, &amp; feel a Malay would do it better. A Malay co may only appoint a Malay consultancy.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hindus would see cultural and religious values as equally important. An Indian co may look for a consultancy with more Indians in it.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX D
Construct Links (at least 80% over 80.0)
Construct Analysis of 15 grids

Constructs at 70.0

1. Construct 1: 221 constructs in 15 grids at 70.0

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>Lopsided execution - Go for gold; go for extra mile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>Operates fairly - Relies on personal connections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3</td>
<td>Good teamwork and chemistry - Not a strong commitment to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C4</td>
<td>Less strategic - Strategists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C5</td>
<td>Still learning and unsure - Know work 'back to front'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C6</td>
<td>Not as well-liked - Excellent track record;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expected by media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C7</td>
<td>Not there yet - Performance driven - &quot;Calculating, unethical approach&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C8</td>
<td>Out for personal glory - Very disciplined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C9</td>
<td>Balanced win:win approach - Has company interests in mind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C10</td>
<td>Passionate; put in heart and soul - More of a façade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C11</td>
<td>Use personal networks professionally - Uses personal networks for own</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C12</td>
<td>Not a genuine community concern - Good corporate citizen values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Longer-term approach - Shorter-term approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C13</td>
<td>Opportunistic - Not as crafty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Doesn't have these beliefs - Strong personal beliefs show</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rough in work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C14</td>
<td>Ineffective - Effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C15</td>
<td>PR only part of job - PR is core business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strong on implementation - At high management level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C17</td>
<td>Less experienced - More experienced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C18</td>
<td>Training on the job - Theoretical PR training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female; harder to achieve acceptance - Male: greater acceptance at</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Higher levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C19</td>
<td>Not professional - Strong sense of ethics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Can afford to make mistakes - Guide people; can't make</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Entrenched - Creative; try something</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C21</td>
<td>May bend principles to achieve results - Sticks firm to principles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Takes time to consider solution - Immediately knows how to act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C23</td>
<td>Will develop appropriate solution - Inflexible in developing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C24</td>
<td>Chinese - Malay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not in position of responsibility - &quot;Senior, in position of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Responsibility&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lesser role in this area - Strong role in creating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Company image</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C31</td>
<td>Follows same path - Question methods; seek other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Can abide by strong ethics - Ethics constrained by co.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enquiresments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C33</td>
<td>New to profession - Wide and broad experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C35</td>
<td>Doesn't have background - Know their business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Able to maintain integrity - Willing to compromise ethics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C36</td>
<td>Good understanding of media and PR requirements - May not understand what's</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C37</td>
<td>Has overall perspective - Limited perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C39</td>
<td>Doesn't work at quality professional level - Works at higher professional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Needs support team - Strong inherent capabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C41</td>
<td>Still developing - Very capable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C43</td>
<td>Brings out best in staff - Can't bring out best in staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C45</td>
<td>Expanding professional capabilities - Not trying to improve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Focusses on getting job done - Looks at all sides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C47</td>
<td>Give value to client - May not give value to client</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C49</td>
<td>Understand co.'s issues and environment - Less understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Give advice based upon experience - Implements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C51</td>
<td>Strong level of skills and knowledge - Still building skills and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wisdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C53</td>
<td>Effective - Ineffective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Understand implications - Doesn't worry about</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C55</td>
<td>Unethical in approach - Uses PR know-how to optimise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C57</td>
<td>Needs to think about - Needs to develop thinking skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C59</td>
<td>Understand implications - Doesn't worry about</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C61</td>
<td>Unethical in approach - Uses PR know-how to optimise</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Doesn't aim just shoots - Organised and systematic
Insincere - Very people oriented
Inconsistent - "Role-model, internally and
Dilutes funds - Optimises use of funds
No time to set foundations - Set frameworks for
Focussed on corporate and financial PR - Focussed on media relations
Achieve results unethically - Achieve results based on
Not selective - Goal and result oriented
Still learning - Very established in industry
New and still learning - Years of experience and
Unethical approach - Ethical approach
Goes for popularity - Focus on internal and external
Spreads too thinly - Create impact
More ad hoc - Set standard for subordinates
Finds solutions intuitively - Finds solutions with logical
Has worked in other fields - Strong PR background
Less professional - Professional in client
Still learning to see big picture - Very experienced: at the top
Not a team player - Good team workers
Can't give advice 'off the cuff' - Can give immediate advice
Fewer fresh approaches - "Fresh approach, thinking
Not as exposed to different cultures - More exposure
Local - Expat
Personal feelings intrude - Personal feelings don't
Not as highly regarded - Respected for their
Has fixed ideas - Adapt solutions
Needs guidance - Can work independently
Identifies legal implications - Identifies image implications
Not as open - Encourage contributions from
Limited experience - Give sound advice from wide
Less credibility - People listen to their advice
Can do strategy and execution - Can do one but not both
Stand by strong religious values - Could sway ethics to keep
"Experienced, but not PR background" - Operates effectively in
Not part of decision making process - Seen by management as
Gets results by using networks - Achieves PR objectives in
Make compromises - Don't compromise beliefs to
Needs to consult for decisions - Have autonomy to make
Less experience and breadth - Experienced and broader
Vulnerable to pressure on job - Resistant to pressure
Uses personal networks - Uses knowledge and personal
Same strategies all the time - Creative strategies
Hard to define skill base - Specialist in PR
Trying to establish themselves - High credibility based on
Not well known in PR industry - Well-known in PR industry
Not a pioneer - Pioneers in PR profession
Non-journalistic background - Journalistic background
Bring industry down - Enhance image of profession by
Theoretical background - "Experienced in PR, good
Doesn't understand expectations - Understands what expected in
Still learning standards - Develop better communication

C6: Uses similar strategies each time - Strong sense of ethics
C7: Lack of experience in understanding diff envir - Strong in corporate 'big picture'

C8: Willing to experiment - Don't try new approaches
C9: Don't understand role of journalists and media - Understand role of journalists and media

In PR - De-emphasise media relations

C10: Media relations is main selling point - De-emphasise media relations
C11: Create negative concept of PR - Build image and importance of

to company

C12: Has long way to go - Wide exposure and experience
C13: Not results-focussed - Results-focussed
C14: Don't have client's interests in mind - Encourage client to be

Crafts

C15: Doesn't provide standards - High standards in PR approach
C16: No government PR experience - Have government PR experience
C17: Bad media reputation - Good media reputation
C18: Still building credibility - High credibility and


C19: Newer approach - "Conservative, go by 'the

C20: Gives in to co culture and loses objectivity - Strong sense of ethics
C21: Background as secretary - Proper PR qualifications
C22: Doesn't see need to focus on publics - Tailor PR programs to company

C23: Uses personality and networks - Emphasise research as basis

C24: Doesn't realise importance of ethics - Present ethical stance and

and firm
C25: No long-term view for profession - Commitment to pursue best
C26: "Accepts, doesn't question" - Ability to create and innovate
C27: May not make things happen - Can make things happen
C28: Less experience - Long and broad experience
C29: Doesn't do work professionally - Identify important issues and

C30: Doesn't participate to develop profession - Give time to develop the

C31: Not swift to adapt to changes - Adapt to changes
C32: Keeps quiet on difficult issues - Deal with difficult issues
C33: Charges flat rate - Can win business
C34: Not good interpersonal skills - Good interpersonal skills
C35: Unsure about PR as career - Committed to PR and company
C36: May leave it to subordinate - Capable of strategy and

C37: Little experience on ethics and execution - Good ethical judgement
C38: Not a strong sense of ethics - Personal goals do not intrude
C39: Free to leave and try something else - Works to protect company

C40: A higher authority - management trusts and support
C41: Not interested in learning from them - Can learn from them
C42: Not willing to share - Willing to share knowledge
C43: Threatened and insecure in capabilities - Feel confident in their

C44: Contribute to results - Responsible for achieving
C45: Is directed to achieve results - Responsible for creating co.

C46: Play by personal rather than by company ethics - Strong on maintaining

Corporate image
C47: Able to prioritize - Takes it easy
C48: Still learning - Identifies solutions quickly
C49: Serious about career - Doesn't take work seriously
C50: Asks 'am I doing it right?' - Committed to getting the job

C51: Unsure - Will always seek advice
C52: Incomplete knowledge base in PR - Have knowledge and experience
C53: Different person away from work - Same persona on and off job
C54: Does it her way - Consistently maintains co.

C55: Don't always know their job - Know their job
C56: Seeks advice - Able to give and share advice
12: No attention to detail - Attention to detail
13: Always accessible - Not accessible
14: Needs guidance and supervision - Works independently
15: Will take advice - Won't take advice
16: Authoritarian style - Conciliatory negotiating style
17: Impulsive - Macro perspective
18: Strategy-oriented - Implementation oriented
19: Emotions driven - Separates personal and
20: fessional
21: Can-do attitude - Set in ways
22: Separates work and private - Work and private life mesh
23: Less mature and experienced - Experienced and capable
24: Focus on activity - Focus upon goal
25: Goal is starting point in planning - Doesn't look at objectives
26: Personal feelings don't get into the work - Personal likes and dislikes
27: eference
28: Need to listen to more viewpoints - Stands ground
29: Workaholic - Has judgement about when to
30: g back
31: Loyalty intrudes on objectivity - High degree of professionalism
32: Doesn't have experience and track record - Track record of being capable
33: Unsure of direction - Strong loyalty to co/client
34: Lacks basic technical requirements - High level of technical
35: lity
36: Can't provide range of options - Provides quality options
37: Doesn't exhibit respectable qualities - Protects image and reputation
38: profession
39: Short-sighted - Conscious of need to protect
40: Not so flexible or responsive - Flexible and responsive to
41: Concerned with keeping position - Strong ethics and integrity
42: No reputation - Good reputation in industry
43: l
44: Not a role model - Role Model
45: Can't do it all themselves - Can do all PR activities
46: seselves
47: Not involved - Involved in building
48: session
49: Driven by interests of one party - Takes win:win approach
50: Not on leading edge - On leading edge of PR
51: Too ingrained in co culture - Fully capable
52: "Younger, background not in PR" - "Long PR exposure, track
53: ord"n
54: eord"n
55: Make more mistakes - Accepted by management
56: "Achieves objectives, with support" - Achieves objectives without
57: p
58: Has potential - Management sees them as equals
59: Has difficulty getting management to listen - At career pinnacle
60: Follows Islamic way of business - Knowledge of theory
61: Consultancy experience and objectivity - "Strong co. experience, less
62: active*'
63: Not highly regarded by industry - Highly regarded by industry
64: Sound journalism background - No relevant training
65: Not able to give advice on own - Can give advice to management
66: More objective - Less objective about co.
67: Not as experienced in local market - Thorough
68: Inconsistent - Good understanding of PR and
69: that
70: Doesn't understand client/agency relationship - Understands theory and
71: edice
72: Terrible people manager - Good managers of people
73: Doesn't always follow 'book' - Guided by 'the book'
74: Will be unethical to get job done - Honest and ethical
75: Operates at different level - Able to give strategic
76: Different style of working - Professional procedures
77: Never know what they're up to - Consistent
78: Trust their own capabilities - Others trust their
79: Abilities
80: Not professional or effective - Position Co. in positive light
81: Doesn't know how to build relationships - Build relations and service
82: ents well
13: Not liked - Liked and respected by staff
14: Hasn't had proper training - Good training
15: Lacks people skills - Role model
16: Not experienced in this culture - "Local, understands market"
C1: May not see co. shortcomings - Do job without misleading
C2: No ethics - Balance between subjectivity
| objectivity |
C3: Not keeping up with new ideas - Keep up with latest trends
C4: No respect - Respect their capabilities
C5: Uses interpersonal skills to manipulate - Good interpersonal skills
C6: Strengths are in other areas - Strong writing and
| personal skills |
C7: No integrity - Integrity
C8: Broad experience in older techniques - Broad experience in new
C9: Management more comfortable with locals - Expats not as tuned in
APPENDIX E