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East-Asian Counselling Psychologists' Experience of Psychology in Canada

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East-Asian Counselling Psychologists' Experience of Psychology in Canada

by

Kingsley Chan

A THESIS

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Abstract

This study explored East-Asian counselling psychologists' experience of psychology in Canada. Participants included 6 counselling psychologists practicing in Alberta, each with between 3 and 21 years of experience. The cultures of origin for the participants included Hong Kong, China, and Korea. Data was gathered using a semi-structured interview, and dialogic-performative narrative analysis was completed. Four categories emerged: cultural values, personal cultural identity formation, culture in relation to practice, and personal information. Several themes and sub-themes also emerged.

The findings were the first to highlight advantages offered to counselling psychologists of East-Asian descent resulting from experiential knowledge gained through their upbringing. Cultural identification, experiential knowledge, and bilingual language skills were beneficial in work with clients. These findings indicate a need for further exploration into counselling psychologist's unique cultural identities in their work within a counselling context, and suggest that greater attention to experiential learning components be implemented at the training level.

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to:

Eric and Angel Chan

And

Sharlene Lim

For their unconditional love and support
and for their belief in my ability no matter what

I choose to do.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Culture plays an important role in determining individuals' behaviours as well as their sense of identity (Arthur & Collins, 2010). Early literature in psychology related to culture focused on arguments about the importance of cultural factors – such as race ethnicity, and diversity – within the counselling setting (Sadeghi, Fischer, & House, 2003). It is now recognized that culture plays a vital role in influencing individuals' behaviours, beliefs, and experiences (Arthur & Collins, 2010; Atkinson, Morten, & Sue, 1998; Duan et al., 2011; Pedersen, 2008; Sadeghi et al., 2003).

Culture is not a clearly defined construct and debates over what should be included in discussions of culture continue (Arthur & Collins, 2010). Traditional Western views of culture place importance on aspects such as race, ethnicity, religion, and an individual's values (Atkinson et al., 1998). Arthur and Collins (2010), however, encourage psychologists to expand their definition to include consideration of an individual's beliefs and values, rituals, language, history, geographic location, sexual orientation, mental and physical disabilities, as well as socioeconomic status. This expanding multifaceted definition of culture continues to change as a greater "understanding of how culture frames many of the fundamental attributes of human behaviour" becomes increasingly apparent (Leong & Ponterotto, 2003, p. 382). One of the major challenges that researchers face in examining the impact of culture is a lack of conceptual clarity regarding this construct.

Despite this, the profession of psychology has been urged to change in response to changes occurring within society so that it may embrace and foster a global vision

(Turner & Waehler, 2009). The advancement of technology has made immigration and migration of people as well as ideas increasingly accessible (Marsella & Pedersen, 2004). Counselling psychology, a specific discipline within psychology (Turner & Waehler, 2009), has been encapsulated in culturally biased assumptions towards Western ideologies (Hwang, 2009; Leong & Ponterotto, 2003). As such, it has been proposed that counselling psychology needs to have an increased international focus, allowing professionals to reflect on the larger social context within which the profession is practiced (Leong & Ponterotto, 2003; Turner & Waehler, 2009).

Although counselling psychology has recently made contributions towards the cross-cultural generalizability of the profession, much of this work has been found to fall behind advancements made in the other disciplines within psychology. For example, the Division of Counseling Psychology within the International Association of Applied Psychology (IAAP) (the largest organization of applied psychologists in the world) was not formed until 2002, making it a relatively new addition (Leong & Savickas, 2007). Other divisions of psychology which preceded the Division of Counseling Psychology within the IAAP were the Division of Clinical and Community Psychology, as well as the Division of Work Psychology (Leong & Ponterotto, 2003). Proponents of counselling psychology that desire this change towards increased focus on cultural topics see the need stemming from changes in the global context. The daily impact of immigration and migration, in combination with access to various media outlets which keep countries connected, highlights the need for psychology to consider the contexts within which the predominant theories and methodologies were created (Hwang, 2009; Leong & Ponterotto, 2003; Marsella & Pedersen, 2004). Due to the diversity of populations and

cultures present within our world and the continuation of this globalization, counselling psychologists must be trained to work competently with individuals of diverse backgrounds.

Perhaps due to the multidimensional aspect of culture, measuring counselling competency related to cultural factors is also difficult. Studies that have examined self-reported competence in working within a multicultural context have improved the understanding of multicultural counselling competence (MCC); but as Sehgal et al. (2011) suggested, the demonstrated use of MCC within counselling settings have differed from these self-reported measures. A better understanding of the impact that culture plays on the counselling process may help to further bridge the gap between having knowledge of multicultural issues in counselling psychology, and the practice of addressing such issues in real life contexts. Counsellors of multicultural backgrounds may provide additional information that may be helpful in understanding these differences, due to their lived experiences with diversity. Explorations of counsellor's experiences working as individuals of East-Asian (EA) descent will provide deeper understanding of the importance that cultural aspects play within the counselling context.

Situating the Research

As my study is based on the narratives of counselling psychologists, I thought it would be appropriate to share my story of how this topic became the focus of my thesis. Being an individual of EA descent myself, this population holds special interest for me in relation to the work that I will be completing in the future. I was initially drawn to this topic during a research project that was completed in conjunction with two colleagues; and would serve as the pilot study for the current project. In this pilot study reflections

were collected on the experience of dissonance between the cultural values of EA cultures and the focus of Western psychological theories and interventions. When determining the topic for my thesis I discussed the possibility of expanding this project to examine whether counselling psychologists practicing in the field of psychology continue to experience this dissonance, or whether it is the product of three students that did not have enough experience or knowledge to know any different.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this narrative study was to understand the experiences of counsellors of EA descent in their practice of psychology in Canada. The focus will be on the stories that are shared by counsellors of EA descent regarding their experiences practicing within Western psychological contexts. The term EA is used to describe individuals with cultures of origin in China, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Macao, Mongolia, and Taiwan (Dictionary, 2012).

Individuals from East-Asian decent hold a special interest for me, as I grew up in what I consider a traditional Chinese household. I was taught many Chinese values, including (but not limited to): honouring the family, valuing education, filial piety, and respecting elders. During the completion of my master's degree in counselling psychology, I became interested in this research topic for the differences in values recognized between the individualistic focus of Western counselling psychology, and the more collectivistic EA cultural values. Cheung (2000) proposes that "cultural identities and values are often learned within the context of the family. Family dynamics also provide relevant perspectives for understanding cultural similarities and differences" (p. 129). The process of this reflection allowed me to consider relevant aspects related to my

ability to be a competent counselling psychologist upon completion of my graduate studies.

In this research, I invited psychologists of EA descent with practical knowledge in the field of counselling psychology to reflect on their experiences related to cultural factors. I focused on the stories they shared regarding their journey to Canada, their decision to enter into the field of counselling psychology, and their experiences thus far in relation to their work with clients. I also explored how my questions as an interviewer elicited reflection among these psychologists as they explored and constructed with me their thoughts in relation to their work with culturally diverse clients.

Significance of the Study

The importance of cultural differences has been said to be a critical factor in the outcome of therapy. Some authors argue that multicultural topics have been present since the beginning of the discipline (Arredondo et al., 1996; Sadeghi et al, 2003); while others are more conservative in their estimation that topics of culture and diversity have only gained increasing attention in the past decade (Marsella & Pedersen, 2004; Vera & Speight, 2003). A potential reason for the increase in the focus on multicultural topics in counselling research is the notion that caution must be taken by psychologists to ensure that their cultural ethnocentrism does not influence their judgement and decision making in regards to work with clients (Pedersen & Leong, 1997).

Previous research has indicated that although multicultural counselling topics have received much attention in the past decade, the quality of training for counselling psychologists continues to be lacking (Sadeghi et al., 2003). Pederson (2003) calls for the “reinvention of counselling psychology as a profession in a global context” (p. 402)

on the basis that psychology has been traditionally rooted in Eurocentric biases and assumptions. Similarly, research conducted on graduate students in the past decade indicate that these students are not sufficiently prepared to work with clients from diverse populations that may differ from their own (Arthur & Collins, 2010). Consideration of the experiences of counsellors of EA descent warrants exploration and the findings may influence the quality of counsellor education in Canada.

In this research study, I examine the experiences of counselling psychologists of EA descent working as psychologists in Canada. My research questions were as follows:

- How do counselling psychologists of EA descent experience the practice of psychology in Canada?
- What differences are experienced (if any) in relation to EA cultural values and Western psychological theory and techniques?
- How do EA counselling psychologists share stories about their experiences practicing counselling psychology from a Western theoretical framework?

Delimitations

In this study, research participants were limited to counselling psychologists located in two major cities within the province of Alberta, Canada. Thus, the results cannot be generalized to all Canadian counselling psychologists of EA descent.

Additionally, the EA population does not account for other Asian populations that may be practicing counselling psychology. Populations such as those from Southeast Asia and Pacific Islanders were not included. The data collected may not provide accurate representations of psychologists' experience as counsellors of EA descent, as they may be influenced by the interview questions and the interview process.

This study is organized as follows. In Chapter 2, I review empirical literature related to multicultural counselling and the EA population, as well as the influence that stories play in the construction of meaning. These issues form the foundation upon which my research is based. Chapter 3 provides a detailed explanation of the theoretical framework upon which I approached this work, as well as a description of the methodology utilized to generate and analyze the data. In Chapter 4, I will present the results generated from my conversations with counselling psychologists. In Chapter 5, I discuss the implications of my findings for counselling practice in Canada, as well as potential directions for future studies.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter contains a critical review of the literature related to the impact of cultural factors on counselling psychology, and cultural considerations of psychologists to use when working with clients. It will include an overview of how the construct of culture has evolved over time within psychology, and an overview of the narrative approach I have chosen for this study.

While it was noted in Chapter 1 that *counselling psychology* is a specific field within the wider discipline of psychology, *counselling* denotes a more general discipline that is practiced by varying mental health practitioners (e.g., psychologists, social workers, child and youth care workers). When the research cited in this chapter specifically applies to counselling psychology or counselling psychologists, it will be specified as such. If the context of the research pertains to counselling in general, the term counselling will be used by itself instead.

The Evolving Use of Culture in Psychology

Beginnings of Cultural Understanding

Culture is said to be a dynamic and mutable construct (Arthur & Collins, 2010), which is reflected in the varied usage of the word. Early writings in anthropology involving culture were said to contain racist and derogatory ideas, which may have been used to maintain distinct separation between groups (Arthur & Collins, 2010; Laungani, 2007, Valsiner, 2000). For example, Laungani (2007) highlights the depiction of non-European and non-white societies as being primitive, inferior, and superstitious. This allowed for the portrayal of white, European societies to be presented as “enlightened, intelligent, moralistic, and superior” (p. 32). This use of this cultural construct is now

seen to be limiting, as anthropologists move towards unbiased, value-free purity in their exploration of culture (Laungani, 2007).

Similarly, definitions of culture in the field of Western psychology were also said to be limiting at first. Western psychologists began to explore culture from a behaviourist perspective, such that culture is displayed in the behaviour of a given community of people (Barnlund & Araki, 1985). Culture is now recognized as playing a role in the development of human psychological evolution, thus further broadening the definition of culture to include the organized use of symbols (Valsiner, 2000). Different aspects related to environmental and contextual factors (such as worldviews, values, rituals, spiritual traditions, language, geographic location, political structures, etc.) are now thought to also play a role in influencing an individual's behaviours, and have thus been included into some definitions of culture (Arthur & Collins, 2010). The basic use of the word is said to describe the full range of learned behaviours that are transmitted from generation to generation through the process of social interaction (Arthur & Collins, 2010; Laungani, 2007; Pedersen, 2003).

Culture and Understanding Behaviour

The continued evolution of the definition of culture in psychology has provided a better understanding of individual functioning as it is now recognized that "all behaviours are learned and displayed in a cultural context" (Pedersen, 2003, p. 396). The process through which this occurs is described by Valsiner (2000), who defines culture as a "system of organized psychological functions" (p. 49). Valsiner explains that these psychological functions may be a product of intra-personal orientation, functioning within the individual involving experiences of thinking, feeling, memorizing, and

forgetting; or these processes may also be interpersonal in orientation, in that it may involve different persons. The purpose of culture, as defined by Valsiner, is said to provide semiotic mediation, which acts to regulate both intra-personal and inter-personal psychological functions.

In addition to its role in mediation between intra and interpersonal functions, Cheung (2000) argues that an individual's culture will determine the nature and cause of the defined problems, as well as the suitable solutions and interventions for these problems. Similar to Pedersen's (2003) argument that all behaviour is cultural in origin, these considerations provide evidence for the notion that in order to understand the individual's attribution of the problem; one must first understand the culture within which that individual encompasses. This will help determine how that individual understands their struggles and how help may be effectively provided.

Culture and Competent Counselling Psychology Practice

Due to the importance of culture in determining individual behaviour, consideration for multicultural aspects in counselling psychology are now recognized as important factors that are required for demonstration of competence within the counselling context (Collins, Arthur, & Wong-Wylie, 2010). If all behaviour is cultural in its origin and defined by the culture within which it exists, then counselling psychologists must first understand culture in order to understand and change behaviour. As such, it has been said that "counselling needs to be deconstructed in the context of the culture in which it is offered" in order to provide meaningful and relevant services (Cheung, 2000, p. 124).

The Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) calls for professionals to practice within designated specialty areas, as psychologists “are required to declare their areas of competency to the regulatory body and required to practice within the bounds of their competence” (Canadian Psychological Association, 2012b, para. 5). As such, consideration for a counsellor’s ability to work with an individual of different cultural background is necessary due to the changing population resulting from immigration and migration (Marsella & Pedersen, 2004).

The College of Alberta Psychologists, a regulatory body for psychologists in the province of Alberta, defines competence as “a multidimensional construct that is generally considered to be comprised of four major components: knowledge, skill, judgement, and diligence” (College of Alberta Psychologists, 2012, p. 5). In order to work competently with individuals of differing cultural backgrounds, counsellors must have knowledge of the client’s culture, possess adequate skills in working with cultural differences, demonstrate sound judgement related to the application of relevant knowledge and skills, and possess the desire to maintain their competencies related to cultural topics (College of Alberta Psychologists, 2012). Similarly, Epstein and Hundert (2002) describe competence as “the habitual and judicious use of communication, knowledge, technical skills, clinical reasoning, emotions, values, and reflection in daily practice for the benefit of the individual and the community being served” (p. 226). Accordingly, attention to individual and cultural diversity in terms of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values are seen as essential aspects to the development of competent psychologists (Rodolfa et al., 2005). These issues related to culture are even more pressing when considering the role of a psychologist. According to the CPA, the work of

a psychologist involves a focus on research and practice related to “social and cultural behaviours and attitudes, the relationship between the individual and the many groups of which he or she is part of (e.g. family, society)” (Canadian Psychological Association, 2012a, para. 3).

Evolution of Culture in Relation to Counselling Psychology

The role that culture plays in the field of counselling psychology has undergone change in recent decades, as greater emphasis is placed on the necessity to consider cultural variables (Duan et al., 2011). For example, the American Psychological Association (APA) has formed divisions related to research and application of cultural knowledge related to the profession. Within the APA, the Division of International Psychology helps foster international connections among psychologists, as well as supporting the application of psychological principles to the development of public policy related to global events (Turner-Essel & Waehler, 2009). The APA also mandates the inclusion of courses that focus on multicultural counselling issues for accreditation of doctoral psychology programs in the United States (Sehgal et al., 2011). These regulatory considerations highlight the importance that is now given to issues of diversity within counselling psychology.

In addition to recognizing cultural aspects, the language used by counselling psychologists that self-identify as a practitioner competent in working with individuals of diverse backgrounds has also changed over time. Terms such as culturally responsive counselling (Kuo, 2004), cross-cultural psychology (Laungani, 2007; Lo & Fung, 2003), and multicultural counselling competence (MCC) (Sehgal et al., 2011) have been used to describe the necessity for practitioners to incorporate cultural factors into their work.

Culturally responsive counselling. Zhang and Dixon (2007) describe culturally responsive counselling as encouraging counsellors to have knowledge of and respect for other countries and cultures. This involves having awareness of the potential barriers that can influence the psychological process, and the development of specific skills in order to work competently with multicultural clients. This ability to foster open communication with individuals as well as the ability to relate to individuals of different cultures are seen as important components in fostering positive outcomes in therapy within the multicultural context (Kuo, 2004; Zhang & Dixon, 2011).

Cross-cultural psychology. Cross-cultural psychology is concerned with understanding the behaviour of people across cultures (Laugani, 2007; Valsner, 2007). A basic premise of cross-cultural psychology is that models and theories of psychology which are created in Western countries need to be tested for transferability in other countries, as human behaviour is said to be influenced by the culture within which we are raised (Laungani, 2007). Based on this consideration, cross-cultural psychology suggests that alternative ways of understanding the differences amongst individuals within a counselling context exist (Laungani, 2007). In order to provide the best service for individuals of diverse backgrounds, authors have suggested that counsellors be trained in, and gain experience with, multicultural counselling (Arthur & Archenbach, 2002; Sadeghi et al., 2003). Experiential knowledge is said to bridge multicultural counselling theory and practice (Arthur & Archenbach, 2002), which may provide valuable information regarding the transferability of psychological practice.

Multicultural counselling competence. The term MCC has been used to describe a counsellor's comfort in working with clients from a multicultural background,

which is believed to be influenced by three factors – beliefs and attitudes, knowledge, and skills (Sehgal et al., 2011; Vera & Speight, 2003). Beliefs and attitudes refer to the counselling psychologist's biases and assumptions that they possess towards cultural groups other than their own in relation to how these beliefs and attitudes may influence the work of a counselling psychologist. The knowledge component is related to the counselling psychologist's knowledge of other cultural groups in addition to knowledge regarding the individual's worldview and the influence that this may play within the counselling context. The skills component is said to be related to the specific abilities of the counselling psychologist to work effectively with other cultural groups (Sehgal et al., 2011).

Arthur and Archenbach (2002) also argue for the inclusion of considerations for the counselling psychologist's personal culture and the influence that this may have on MCC. Reflection on counselling psychologist's professional and personal socialization may provide valuable considerations for practice within a cultural context. By including these considerations, Arthur and Archenbach argue that self-awareness will be increased, which is viewed as an essential component of developing competencies in professional counselling practice.

While there is no universally accepted language for discussing multicultural issues within counselling psychology, and although the terms culturally responsive counselling and cross-cultural psychology merit attention, MCC will be used for convenience throughout this thesis. Consideration given to the beliefs and attitudes, knowledge, and skills within the definition of MCC adheres to the purpose of this

investigation. Exploration of counsellor's experiences in clinical practice will be explored to gain an understanding of these considerations.

Overview of Multicultural Research

The profession of counselling psychology in the United States has been said to generate psychologists with higher self-reported measures of MCC when compared to clinical psychologists (Sehgal et al., 2011). A possible explanation for this is the strengths-based focus of counselling psychology and work involving underserved populations (Sehgal et al., 2011). Although advancements have been made in the field of counselling psychology to prepare MCC professionals, concerns regarding the degree to which issues of diversity have been addressed in counsellor education continue.

Multicultural Counselling Training

Training programs in counselling psychology continue to have difficulty preparing professionals for work with clients of diverse backgrounds (Arthur & Archenbach, 2002; Arthur & Collins, 2010). Sadeghi et al. (2003) suggests that training programs fail to recognize the ramifications of culture in addressing issues which are important to ethnic minorities. Leong and Ponterotto (2003) urge training programs in psychology to move towards "exploring psychological constructs and theories outside of the framework of North American experiences" (p. 382) in order to adequately provide effective service to diverse populations. In this regard, psychology is encouraged to undergo a reinvention to ensure applicability within a global context (Pedersen, 2003).

Within Canada, the field of counselling psychology has been making significant contributions to research and practice related to multicultural counselling (Lalande, 2004). A partial explanation for these contributions is the willingness of counselling

psychologists to try and understand contextual properties of an individual's experience, as well as the internal strengths-based approach of the discipline (Lalande, 2004; Sadeghi et al., 2011). The willingness to embrace cultural diversity in Canada, when compared to the United States, is attributed to the preservation of cultural differences (Lalande, 2004). Researchers have shown that issues of diversity represent a fundamental value of Canada, which is reflected in the law and other legislative practices (Beatch et al., 2009; Lalande, 2004); whereas in the United States, diversity has been characterized by division of society into large ethnoracial blocs (Ryder & Dere, 2010).

Eurocentric Bias of Psychology

Supporters for the globalization of psychology have suggested that counselling psychology has utilized theories and methods rooted in Euro-American values that place emphasis on individualism, independence, and empirical thinking; which may not fit with cultures that emphasize collectivism, dependence, and spiritual or herbal methods of healing (Cheung, 2000; Hwang, 2009; Kim, Ng, & Ahn, 2009; Leung, 2003; Leong & Ponterotto, 2003; Marsella & Pedersen, 2004; Sadeghi et al., 2003; Turner-Essel & Waehler, 2009; Vera & Speight, 2003; Zhang & Dixon, 2011). The term "cultural encapsulation" has been used to describe the Eurocentric bias of Western models of psychology (Cheung, 2000; Hwang, 2009; Leung, 2003; Leong & Ponterotto, 2003; Marsella & Pedersen, 2004). Wrenn (as cited in Marsella & Pedersen, 2004) described cultural encapsulation as consisting of five identifying features:

First, reality is defined according to one set of cultural assumptions. Second, people become insensitive to cultural variations among individuals and assume their own view is the only right one. Third, assumptions are not

dependent on reasonable proof or rational consistency but are believed true, regardless of evidence to the contrary. Fourth, solutions are sought in technique-oriented strategies and quick or simple remedies. Fifth, everyone is judged from the viewpoint of one's self-reference criteria without regard for the other person's separate cultural context. (p. 417)

The danger of cultural encapsulation is that it places restrictions on thought and theory, and at the same time, prevents the recognition for the limitations and faults of knowledge which is discovered (Marsella & Pedersen, 2004).

Stemming from these assumptions, and the possibility that Western psychological theories are culturally encapsulated, questions have been raised regarding the applicability of traditional counselling theories in cultures other than those found in North America. Duan et al. (2011) argue that Western theories of psychology cannot be directly transferred to other cultures, as there may be significant differences in the values, customs and concepts of the individual. As such, caution must be applied in attempts to export Western psychological theories, with suggestions that counselling must first be indigenized to effectively serve the people to which you are attempting to apply psychological interventions to (Duan et al., 2011).

Limited Research on Culture in Relation to Psychology

Despite the presence of cultural considerations in counselling psychology, and the suggestion of a Eurocentric bias in counselling models and theories, there is relatively little research examining the impact of cultural factors on the counselling process. Marsella and Pederson (2004) have suggested that the lack of multicultural research may be the result of a sense of ethnocentricity among Western psychologists, who have little

sympathy for altering psychological thinking to better suit the needs of other cultures. This resistance has also been noted in the literature. As the value and importance of counselling psychology continues to grow internationally, however, a greater focus on the impact of culture on the outcome of therapy has been explored. Research has continued to find that culture plays a large role in shaping an individual's values, behaviours, and attitudes (Cheung, 2000; Duan et al., 2011; Pedersen, 2003). As such, Leung (2003) encourages counselling psychology training programs to prepare their trainees for work within a global context by exposing them to psychological literature from around the world. Nonetheless, Marsella and Pedersen (2004) have found that research journals in the United States routinely neglect studies that are conducted in foreign countries, even when the research is conducted in English. They contend that the profession of counselling psychology needs to incorporate a larger amount of international research into training and continued competence.

Knowledge That Leads to Application

Although training counselling psychologists to have greater multicultural knowledge is an important step towards greater MCC, this may not directly translate into effective use of this knowledge within practice (Sehgal et al., 2011). Explanations for this discrepancy have suggested that perhaps cultural aspects are not relevant to the individual's presenting concerns, or perhaps the counsellor does not feel comfortable or competent enough to address cultural aspects within the counselling session (Hansen et al., 2006). These considerations have led to arguments that although training programs may be adequate in training culturally *sensitive* counsellors, they may not be training culturally *competent* counsellors (Sehgal et al., 2011).

It is not clear whether the abilities associated with demonstrating MCC have direct benefits related to improved outcomes for clients (Sehgal et al., 2011). Thus, as advancements in the field of counselling psychology continue to place greater emphasis on the acceptance and importance of addressing issues of diversity within the counselling context, improvements must be made in the ability of counsellors to discuss these issues within this context. Vera and Speight (2003) suggest that MCC cannot be limited to awareness of cultural differences as the underlying issues related to social justice will continue to perpetuate issues in relation to cultural differences. Social justice, as defined by Vera and Speight, are issues related to “how advantages and disadvantages are distributed to individuals in society” (p. 254). As such, through the adoption of social justice, it is suggested that MCC be expanded to include issues beyond counselling interventions alone. In this view, counsellors should strive to operate as change agents within their professional and personal environments.

As questions continue to be asked regarding the generalizability of psychological theories and interventions to other cultures, so too does the focus on the importance of multicultural counselling in psychological research (Turner-Essel & Waehler, 2009). Pedersen (1991) proposed that multicultural counselling will be recognized as the “fourth force” in counselling, behind approaches to psychodynamic, behavioural, and humanistic models. Support for the importance of multicultural counselling can be seen in examining changes that are taking place in the world. The widespread migration and immigration of people coupled with the ability to access information around the world through internet, television, and other forms of social media, drives the shift towards greater multicultural training, while also resisting the sense of privileged knowledge in

North America (Cheng, 2000; Duan et al., 2011; Marsella & Pedersen, 2004; Pedersen, 2003). In order to remain effective in helping individuals during times of change within the world, counselling psychology must evolve in response to these changes (Marsell & Pederson, 2004). An argument has been made to incorporate greater cross-cultural generalizability in counselling psychology, thus making it more applicable to diverse cultures and more sensitive to the changes that are taking place in a global context (Turner-Essel & Waehler, 2009).

Application of Counselling with the East-Asian Population

The acceptance of psychological intervention amongst the EA population has been documented as being slower than in Western cultures (Chen & Mak, 2008). In places such as Singapore (Turner-Essel & Waehler, 2009), Hong Kong (Duan et al., 2011; Leung, 2003), and Taiwan (Duan et al., 2011; Leong & Savickas, 2007), the establishment and recognition of counselling psychology as a profession has only occurred in the past 2 decades. Prior to these changes being implemented, counselling was practiced by other individuals including nurses, social workers, and teachers (Leung, 2003). Despite such progressions, researchers have found that the EA population is less likely to utilize mental health services when compared to the general population in the United States (Chen & Mak, 2008; Kuo, 2004), which is thought to be related to the desire for privacy in relation to personal problems (Mak & Chen, 2006). Research into the underutilization of mental health services by the Asian population has found three general explanations: (a) conflict between Asian cultural values and Western psychological theories and practices, (b) practice of self-restraint rather than emotional expression, and (c) shame and stigma associated with seeking mental health assistance

(Chen & Mak, 2008). Further contributing to underutilization is skepticism regarding the effectiveness of these approaches, partially due to a lack of knowledge regarding counselling practices (Leung, 2003). As such, it has been argued that importance must be placed on educating the public in what counsellors are able to offer, how they can help, as well as outlining the rights and privileges related to confidentiality to EA clients (Leung, 2003).

Special Considerations for Working with the EA Population

Regardless of the reasons for the underutilization of mental health services by the EA population, some authors have suggested that there are special considerations that psychologists working with this population should take into account in order to have positive treatment outcomes (Kim et al., 2009; Kuo, 2004; Zhang & Dixon, 2011) For example, Kim (2004) outlines the values associated with EA populations' allegiance to the family; interdependency amongst family members; respect and authority associated with elders; and the use of guilt and shame by parents as indicative of potential conflicts for psychologists working from a Western psychological standpoint. As with questions regarding the generalizability of Western psychological methods to other cultures, queries have been raised regarding the applicability of these methods when working with the EA population.

Studies examining the effectiveness of Western counselling interventions with the EA population, in relation to the above stated considerations, have had inconsistent results. Some research has shown that this group prefers logical, directive, and culturally attentive counselling approaches, which are able to provide immediate symptom relief (Kim et al., 2009; Root, 1998). Zhang and Dixon (2011), however, call for counsellors to

have respect for EA clients accompanied by a willingness to learn from these individuals in order to be effective in working with this population. Furthermore, Chang, Tong, Shi, and Zeng (2005) have found that negative attitudes traditionally associated with mental health counselling among Asian populations are now lessening, perhaps due to increased exposure to Western styles of expressing and coping with stress. In contrast, authors such as Chen and Mak (2008) have continued to find that “Asian Americans who endorse more traditional values have less favorable attitudes towards seeking professional help and are less willing to see a counsellor” (p. 447), suggesting that negative attitudes persist.

A further complicating factor in the slow acceptance of counselling psychology by EA individual’s lies in cultural values associated with collectivism, in which individuals prefer to first seek help from members within their community, including family, priests, monks, and elders (Root, 1998). Mak and Chen (2006) have suggested that this value of collectivism is associated with “face concern” (p. 144), which is related to one’s social image, position in relation to the community, or one’s worth or prestige based on the performance of well recognized social roles. In relation to help seeking behaviour, concern over loss of face is seen as an important contributor to the underutilization of mental health services by the EA population, such that “individuals with high face concern may forsake their emotional well-being to reduce conflict and maintain social order”(Mak & Chen, 2003, p 151).

Need For Adaptation of Western Methodology to EA Populations

It has been suggested that the ideology of Western psychology, which places emphasis on individualism, rationality, and empiricism, may not be applicable in non-

Western cultures (Duan et al., 2011, Marsella & Pedersen, 2004). Thus, counsellors of EA descent that have come to North America to learn Western psychology may experience difficulties when attempting to apply this knowledge when returning home. Duan et al. (2011) recently completed a study examining the application of Western psychological theories by practitioners from Taiwan, mainland China, and Hong Kong studying counselling psychology in the United States as they attempted to apply their knowledge upon returning to their home country. Duan et al. found that some participants indicated feeling a sense of struggle or self-doubt, which was associated with the inability to apply local knowledge or truth to the theories and interventions that were taught during their studies abroad. The uncertainty associated with this inability to apply what is learned in Western psychology to cultures in Taiwan, mainland China, and Hong Kong, illustrates the important impact that proper cultural exploration may have on a counsellor's competency. In this regard, Duan et al. suggest that the practice of counselling psychology must be transformed to include practices which are applicable in the local context, as culture has the power to shape knowledge and practice of counselling psychology and should be indigenized to be useful in local culture.

For counsellors of EA descent, working strictly from Western theories of psychology may not necessarily be the most practical approach due to the difference in values between collectivism and individualism (Marsella & Pedersen, 2004). Duan et al. (2011) suggest that any attempts to export/import Western theories should be accompanied by promotion of deeper understanding and respect for cultural considerations related to the applicability of use. Indeed, MCC has been said to include

personal self-examination in conjunction with commitment to change and transformation of stereotypes and biases (Sehgal et al., 2011).

Section Summary

In the first part of this chapter, I have highlighted the continued evolution of cultural understanding, the importance of culture in relation to the understanding of individual functioning, how this has contributed to the beginning presence of culture within counselling psychology, and finally, literature and limitations pertaining to the research in relation to work with the EA population. The remainder of this chapter will be dedicated to exploring the social constructionist paradigm and narrative methodology which I have selected for this investigation, and conclude by highlighting the importance of this type of research.

The Role of Narratives

Stories can be seen as a tool for individuals to use in order to make sense of their world and express the important moments in their lives. There is no single story or narrative that is correct for a given event or experience. Narratives are “socially constructed and constructing, reinterpreted and reinterpretable” (Andrews, Squire, & Tamboukou, 2008, p. 4). Riessman (2008) describes narratives as those events which are perceived by the speaker as important and that are selected, organized, connected, and evaluated as meaningful for a particular audience. As these stories are first organized and connected within the individual before they are shared with the audience, narratives are said to help provide form, structure, and significance to the world for that individual (Frank, 2010). Through interpretations of experiences and of the world, a gateway into

the internal, subjective understanding of the individual's experience and their understanding of that experience is possible (Bamberg, 2012).

Narratives Are Created Through Social Interaction

It has been suggested that narratives are co-constructed in that they are grounded in interaction between individuals and the narrative environment (including the audience, the stories purpose, the result of the telling of the story, and the available cultural resources for storytelling), in such a way that narratives can only be understood within the context in which they are produced (Frank, 2010). Squire (2008) describes narratives as jointly told between the writer and the reader, as well as between the speaker and the hearer. Therefore, social patterns and functioning of stories are deemed as important factors in the role of narratives. In considering narratives as a product of social interaction, it is possible to examine whether they exemplify sequences of conversation, or broader cultural perspectives of the society (Squire et al., 2008). In telling our stories to others, even if they may not completely understand our meaning, by attempting to put into words personal experience, the storyteller is said to be speaking as a social being that is trying to make sense of the world or express an important moment in life (Squire, 2008).

The co-construction of narratives is important within the social constructionist perspective. Social constructionists challenge words such as truth, objectivity, knowledge, and reason (Gergen, 2009a); as the meanings for these items are constructed through social interaction (Hibberd, 2005). From the process of this dialogue, new ideas emerge, contributing to a constantly changing process of knowledge and meaning (Gergen 2009a). The result is that no one person is able to claim authority over ideas that

are said to represent all individuals; however, constant reflection supports the generation of new ways of understanding and new ways of interacting together in the future (Gergen, 2009a). The idea that constant dialogue provides a “process by which people come to describe, explain, or otherwise account for the world” (Gergen, 1985, p. 266) is a central principle in constructionism, which lends itself well to the current study. As I am interested in the experiences of EA counselling psychologists, I am actively attending to how the participant’s construction of their self-identity as an individual of EA descent influences their experience of working as a counselling psychologist.

Experience-Centred Narratives

The relation between a counsellor’s cultural experiences and their work in psychology is an example of experience-centred narratives. Stories shared in this regard place focus on the personal narratives related to the meaningful stories that individual’s produce connected to an event, a personal experience, or a theme (Squire, 2008).

Experience-centred narratives may extend beyond stories that recount personal experiences in the past tense to include present and future narratives about others as well as oneself (Squire, 2008). Thus, the focus on experience-centred narratives is said to provide a means of understanding human sense-making or the logic of the unconscious, which is otherwise unrepresentable (Squire, 2008).

Impact of Culture on Narrative Construction

Narratives have been said to be influenced by, and have influence on an individual’s culture. Frank (2010) suggests that the resources which individuals use to tell their stories – in relation to the content, climax, and resolution – are directly related to their social location. The stories that we tell are related to influences stemming from the

neighbourhood in which we live, the work environment with which we are immersed, as well as the larger social context within which we interact with others. Our culture influences the stories that we believe and take seriously, and which stories we use to establish membership and power in the world. Frank goes on to further highlight the importance that culture plays in shaping our stories by suggesting that the narrative templates upon which we construct our stories are learned from our culture. Similarly, Bamberg (2011) highlights the role of narratives in passing along and handing down culturally shared values. In doing so, individuals are able to position their own values and actions in accordance with the accepted and shared processes of the culture.

Narrative Analysis

The role of narrative analysis is to explore the story in terms of function, as a means to uncover the unique experience that the individual is trying to express (Bamberg, 2012). In order to analyze the story, narrative researchers look at how the story is constructed and arranged in terms of the sequences of events, use of language, and visual images in order to communicate meaning (Reissman, 2008a).

Evolution of Narrative Analysis

Narrative analysis has been said to have separate approaches to analysis, with each approach emphasizing a different aspect of the narrative. Bamberg (2012) outlines three approaches to narrative analysis: thematic, structure orientation, and dialogic-performative. In thematic approaches, the focus lies in what is topically and thematically revealed in the story's content. The structure orientation approach focuses on the linguistic features of the story, and often utilizes Labovian approaches to analysis. This approach allows for detailed analysis which provides information about specific

structures of narratives and allows for comparison between narratives. Dialogic-performative approaches are said to combine aspects of both thematic and structure orientation approaches, and is often associated with the evolution of narrative analysis.

The evolution of narrative analysis continues to expand beyond the conventional focus on the characteristics of the story related to the content, organization, and central themes (Bamberg, 2012; Holstein & Gubrium, 2012). Researchers continue to expand the use of narrative towards a greater focus on the interaction between individuals, and the social roles of stories (Riessman, 2008a), as well as how narratives are performed between people for interactive purposes (Bamberg, 2011). Narrative analysis is no longer a static process of examining individual stories in isolation. The focus has shifted towards examination of how the audience to which a narrative is told plays a role in shaping the narrative itself (Andrews et al., 2008).

This shift in the focus of narrative analysis has led to changes that place greater emphasis on the interactive components of narrative methods. Through this process, more detailed descriptions of the story which are shaped by the listeners will be produced (Andrews et al., 2008). Thus, when narratives are viewed within the context of the social environment, they are thought to be constructed based on shared narrative resources, regardless of the individual experience expressed (Frank, 2010). It is not possible to separate out the cultural impacts on the narratives, nor is it possible to remove the interactional component from the process of narrative interviewing.

Narrative Analysis and Social Constructionist Perspective

In this study, I examine how the storytellers and the listener each play roles in co-constructing the reflections regarding the counsellor's individual experience of

psychological practice as an individual of EA descent in a Canadian context. The narratives that are produced in relation to the questions that I ask help to enrich the data collected. Thus, I am able to pay attention to the ways in which these stories were constructed, as well as the role that I played in these storytelling conversations. As narratives represent, reconstruct and transform experience (Andrews et al., 2008), the reflective aspect of the interactional component of narrative construction will provide valuable insight into the experiences of EA counsellors.

Why Does Reflecting on Counsellor's Experiences Matter?

Narratives are methods of making sense of the world and to express important moments in an individual's life (Andrews et al., 2008). Through the process of expression which occurs during storytelling, meaning is communicated and insight into an individual's personal experience is conveyed (Squire, 2008). Stories are also said to be related to the cultural context within which the storyteller exists, such that the narrative resources available to tell the story rely on the individual's social location (Frank, 2010). The result is that the cultural context which precedes the story will influence the content and aims that are accomplished through the narration (Frank, 2010).

As narratives are the means in which humans make sense of their lives and of the world, they provide an important function for researchers (Squire, 2008). Narratives provide the ability to transform experience or the understanding of experience (Squire, 2008).

The transformative ability of narratives in addition to consideration for the cultural context and social location of the narrative process allows for a breadth of exploration with counsellor's personal experience with psychology that has not been

previously focused on. Although there has been increasing attention given to the impact of cultural factors within the counselling context, much of this research has been focused in regards to the individual's perspectives of counsellors, or the effectiveness of working with individuals of differing culture. To my knowledge, there have been no qualitative studies examining how counsellors' cultural heritages influence their work as psychologists. As the EA culture is thought to impact the counsellor's perception and understanding of the world, reflection on these unique perspectives may provide valuable information related to these specific considerations

In engaging in this research, I invited counsellors to explore the ways in which their unique cultural upbringing has influenced their experiences related to educational training and practical application of Western psychological theories and methods. In doing so, I hoped to better understand how counsellors of EA descent make sense of their experiences in psychology, and highlight ways in which counsellor's construct stories related to these experiences. As understandings of the role of culture in counselling psychology continues to evolve, examining experience-centred narratives of counselling psychologists has important implications for counsellor education.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I provided a brief review of the literature on the importance of multicultural competencies in the practice of counselling psychology. As the impact of diversity and cultural influence on individual's behaviour continues to grow, so too does the need for Canadian counselling psychologists that are competent in addressing multicultural concerns. Research related to acquiring and implementing these

competencies are not yet fully understood. This applies to the EA population, related to the applicability of Western psychological methodology and help seeking behaviour.

The impact of cultural factors on the experiences of counselling psychologists of EA descent will be analyzed through the use of narrative analysis. The role of narrative in how we make sense of the world highlights the importance of storytelling. An analysis of the EA counsellors' construction of meaning will lead to an increased understanding of their cultural impacts. In turn, this understanding may provide insights that lead to improvements in counsellor training and practice with clients of EA descent.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of counselling psychologists of EA descent as they practiced psychology in Canada. The use of a qualitative research design allowed for detailed accounts of these experiences to be collected, leading to a more in-depth understanding of the experience. Through the use of a narrative approach, participants were able to share the stories related to their cultural influences in their role as counselling psychologists. In order to obtain detailed narratives from participants in relation to their work as counselling psychologists, a semi-structured interview was used to guide this research process.

The following chapter describes the methodological approach undertaken in this study. This chapter is organized into two sections: research design and research procedure. In the research design section, I will describe the social constructionist paradigm, explain my rationale for choosing this approach, and provide an explication of the narrative approach used for this study. The research procedure section will describe the biases and assumptions that I held as I entered this research. I also include a description of the method used during this study, as well as a detailed review of my process of recruitment, data collection, and data analysis. This chapter concludes with a critical evaluation of the methodology where I address potential ethical concerns.

Research Design

Research Paradigm

I approached this study from the perspective of social constructionism. In Chapter 2, I highlighted the importance that is given to social interactions between people in the creation of meaning and understanding of reality in social constructionist

philosophy. According to Hibberd (2005), social constructionists emphasize the historical, linguistic, and contextual dependence of knowledge regarding human activity. It is through relationships of interaction with one another that meaning, identity (Gergen, 2009b), and knowledge (McNamee, 1995) are created.

Accordingly, social constructionists do not believe that there are essential truths or realities that can be understood through objective study; rather, knowledge is a process that occurs through social interaction (Burr, 2003). As a qualitative researcher, I play a role in shaping the knowledge that is generated through my research such that my background influences where I position myself within the research. My interpretation of the data collected is also influenced by my personal, cultural, and historical experiences. These affect the understandings of the process being studied (Creswell, 2007).

Similarly, in Gergen's view of the social constructionist paradigm (as cited in Hibberd, 2005), the creation of meaning is a process that is indeterminate, contextual, and social, such that the "conceptual basis for understanding the world is derived from social processes" (p. 17). Comparable to the way in which understanding the individual involves acknowledging aspects of the culture from which they were raised, understanding the stories that an individual tells should be taken within the social context in which that story is told. The social constructionist paradigm allows me to account for the negotiation of meanings and understandings that are created through this process of narrative analysis from the unique perspective of each participant.

Throughout this thesis, I emphasize the role that the social interaction with the participant has played in the interpretation of their stories through the use of the *co*-prefix (e.g., co-construct, co-edit). McNamee (1995) claims that "we co-construct realities with

the people we study when we engage in research” (p. 79), and as such it is important to emphasize the interactive role that occurs throughout this process. In doing so, the stories which are shared throughout the course of the research neither belong to the participant nor the researcher, but instead they are grounded in social interaction that is based in a particular time in a particular context (McNamee, 1995).

Limitations to the Social Constructionist Paradigm

As qualitative research is said to rely on interpretation, I need to remain mindful that I cannot fully understand the meanings that are generated through the narratives that my research participants provide (Creswell, 2007). I must rely on my personal interpretation of the events for the narratives that are co-constructed to be analyzed. The social constructionist paradigm accounts for this interpretive approach to research by suggesting that the researcher shapes the data with their personal experiences and background (Creswell, 2007).

Furthermore, as culture plays a large role in the discussion of my research focus, I believe it is important to incorporate a research paradigm which allows the researcher to consider the impact of contextual factors. My upbringing within a Chinese household, as well as my lived experiences growing up in Alberta, provides different cultural experiences when compared to my research participants. As social constructionist is situated within the social context, it provides the ability to consider the impact of cultural factors within my data.

Theoretical Framework

I carried out this research project utilizing narrative inquiry with a primary focus on the dialogic-performative approach to narrative analysis (Riessman, 2008a). As

described in Chapter 2, narrative analysis encompasses a variety of analytic practices that begin with any text or discourse that place specific focus on the stories as told by individuals (Creswell, 2007). This process of storytelling that is shared and performed between people helps individuals create and express meaning, as well as helping them form an understanding of this meaning (Bamberg, 2011). As such, dialogic-performative approaches are often associated with the evolution of narrative analysis as they combine aspects of both thematic and structure orientation approaches (Bamberg, 2012). Thus, it can be said that the social process through which narratives occur is important for the generation of knowledge and understanding, such that the story's purpose and the aspects of culture and context that the storyteller draws upon cannot be ignored (Riessman, 2008a; Riessman & Quinney, 2005).

The dialogic-performative approach allows for the analysis to be focused on the content of the narrative, in addition to the social linguistic considerations of the story (Bamberg, 2012). Social considerations of narratives are important as:

All narratives are, in a fundamental sense, co-constructed. The audience, whether physically present or not, exerts a crucial influence on what can and cannot be said, how things should be expressed, what can be taken for granted, what needs explaining, and so on. (Riessman & Quinney, 2005, p. 399)

Throughout the course of this study, attention is given to the social aspect of the narrative. The influence of the interaction between research participants and researcher on the process of data collection and analysis is given consideration throughout the course of this study.

Creswell (2007) indicates that “narratives may be guided by a theoretical lens or perspective” (p. 55). Throughout the process of this study, my approach to narrative has been influenced by a multicultural lens with emphasis on the importance that issues of diversity play within counselling psychology. This multicultural lens through which I collect and analyze the data will influence the aspects of the conversations with participants that I pay attention to.

Narrative as a method. Narrative analysis is unlike traditional methods utilized in research. According to Frank’s (2010) view, narrative analysis does not and should not have a recipe that prescribes step-by-step instructions on how to analyze the data. Instead of providing instructions on how to complete narrative analysis, Frank encourages researchers to think of narrative as a practice of criticism and movement of thought rather than a prescriptive methodology.

The task then for research utilizing narrative analysis is to pay attention to the sequences of action that occur throughout the story, and how the storyteller chooses to arrange and assemble these sequences (Riessman, 2008a). This process is completed with consideration for the individual’s context during the process of storytelling. As described in Chapter 2, the context includes considerations of the participants’ personal experiences, their culture, and their historical contexts (Creswell, 2007).

Once the data is collected, the process of restorying is possible. Clandinin and Connelly (as cited in Creswell, 2007) define restorying as a process of reorganizing stories into a framework that can be understood. This includes paying attention to key elements of the story, and/or reworking the story so that it makes sense chronologically.

The emphasis on the chronological sequencing is another distinguishing factor which separates narrative analysis from other forms of research (Creswell, 2007).

Throughout the process of narrative analysis, close collaboration with research participants is encouraged. According to Pinnegar and Daynes (2006), narrative research has turned toward recognition that “researcher and the researched in a particular study are in a relationship with each other and that both parties will learn and change in the encounter” (p. 9). As mentioned previously, due to the necessity for interpretation in narrative research, it is important to negotiate the meaning of stories with participants in order to ensure that the researcher’s interpretations are correct. Through this process of negotiation, the researcher may gain insights into his or her own life (Creswell, 2007).

Rationale for choosing narrative analysis. Narrative analysis has been said to be suitable for application to a case-centred approach (Riessman, 2008a). As such, narrative analysis was deemed appropriate for use in this study as it allowed me to explore each individual counselling psychologist’s experiences of the cultural differences experienced between Western psychology and EA cultural values. According to Creswell (2007), “narrative research is best for capturing the detailed stories or life experiences of a single life event or the lives of a small number of individuals” (p. 55), making it an appropriate choice for studying the experiences of individual counselling psychologists in psychological practice.

Narrative has also been said to lend itself well to ethnographic practice as consideration is given to the narrator’s location within a specific time and place (Riessman, 2008a). This is important when reflecting upon the pilot study that this project was based upon, which was completed using autoethnography. Previous

reflection related to the impact of my own multicultural influences on my practice of counselling psychology has played a role in shaping this research study. The findings of the pilot project provided the basis for the current study. Narrative analysis was considered an appropriate means to expand this research due to its compatibility with ethnographic practice.

Critical evaluation of narrative analysis. A key criticism of narrative as a method is that the definition of what constitutes as narrative has become so diverse that it encompasses almost every form of discourse and as such, it risks becoming associated with a metaphorical approach to research rather than a research method (Riessman, 2008b). It is suggested that in order to combat this loss of focus, researchers should embrace diversity related to the use of narrative analysis (Riessman, 2008b). They should also be cautious in applying narrative inquiry to those discourses that do not represent its core components (e.g., sequence, purpose, communication of meaning or experience; Riessman, 2008a).

A further criticism of narrative analysis is the lack of a universal methodology. In this regard, the process of data collection as well as the process of data analysis has been questioned in regards to consistency across studies. Defense against this criticism is found in authors like Frank (2012), who argued that narrative analysis should not prescribe a method as it is a practice of criticism and a movement of thought. It is understood that there is a purpose behind narrative analysis. The act of storytelling, according to Frank, helps to elaborate some form of truth. Furthermore, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) have provided narrative considerations that researchers should apply

when deciding on a research methodology, which helps to guide the process of utilizing narrative analysis as a methodology.

Research Procedure

Researcher Assumption and Biases

The emphasis on the social process of knowledge formation is important when considering the role played by the qualitative researcher in the formation of knowledge through the research. Traditional research has ignored the conversational aspect of the research process such that the role of the interaction and language usage has been ignored (McNamee, 1995). The adoption of the social constructionist paradigm allows researchers to consider their role in the interpretation generated during the co-construction of research material (Creswell, 2007). I concur with Creswell who noted that qualitative research inevitably represents how my history, culture, and personal experiences shape the inquiry.

My role in the co-production of the participants' stories is influenced by my background and upbringing as a child of EA descent. I must attend to these influences throughout this study as a social constructionist researcher. As a counselling psychologist-in-training that is also of EA descent, I wanted to explore the impact that EA cultural values have on the experience of clinical practice from more experienced practitioners. The experience of differences between EA cultural values and Western psychological theory during my training prompted this exploration. The questions that I have chosen to ask during the process of data collection were influenced by this prior exploration into the influence of my EA background. While I examine the counselling psychologist's experiences of psychology, I am mindful that "we construct knowledge

about any topic in collaborative interchange with others” (McNamee, 1995, p. 72). The process through which these conversations occurred (i.e., the context, the questions, the presence of an EA researcher) impacted the reflections generated during the interview, and the understandings of the meanings which were co-created. Through this process, I helped to co-produce and co-edit the stories that were constructed regarding the counselling psychologist’s experiences of psychological practice.

The process of generating meaning through this social constructionist perspective is on-going and continually changing. Gergen (2001) argued that meaning is not fixed as we are constantly altering our understanding through social interaction and through exposure to differing contexts. Thus, the stories that counselling psychologists tell during the research interviews are not viewed as complete and static accounts of their experiences, but rather as reflections on professional practice that were composed on the basis of the questions posed to them. These questions provided a framework upon which the process of exploration occurred, and the social interaction between the participant and myself allowed for the generation of deeper self-reflection.

Recruitment, Participants, Data Collection, and Data Analysis

Data for this research study was conducted using semi-structured interviews, although participants were encouraged to deviate from the questions asked in order to obtain detailed accounts of their experiences. The flexibility of this approach fits well with the explorative function of narrative analysis (Creswell, 2007). Researchers utilize questions in semi-structured interviews as flexible guides rather than as rigid set of rules that must be adhered to (Sattler & Hodge, 2006). During these interviews, I asked participants questions about their background, experience as a counselling psychologist,

what they identified to be traditional EA cultural values, as well as instances when they experienced conflict between these values and Western psychological methodology.

Procedures for recruitment. Following ethics approval from the University of Calgary's Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board, I began to contact psychology agencies in both Edmonton and Calgary via email (see Appendix A) to inquire about the possibility of recruiting staff members interested in the study. Recruitment material was dispersed through the use of posters (Appendix B) and emails (Appendix C).

Recruitment materials included information pertaining to the purpose of my study, eligibility criteria for participants, and a brief description of what participants would be asked to do. Recruitment was focused on agencies and professional counselling psychology affiliations due to the difficulties in narrowing down counselling psychologists of EA descent by other means.

Once permission was given by the agency, recruitment posters (Appendix B) were posted in staff common areas. On the poster, focus was placed on two primary questions for counselling psychologists:

1. Do you identify yourself as East-Asian?
2. Do you feel like this identity influences your work in counselling psychology?

The recruitment poster was used as a visual aid in attracting participants to this project. It also provided a brief description of the purpose of the project. It was expected that only those counselling psychologists that met the criteria for inclusion and had an interest in the purpose of the study would be willing to take part in the study.

Those interested in participating in my study were invited to email me. When responding to these emails (Appendix C), clarification was provided for the purpose of

the study, as well as a more in-depth description of what participants would be asked to do. For those agencies that did not allow for the distribution of posters at their site, and for those counselling psychologists working in private practice, email recruitment (Appendix C) was used to probe for potential interest in this study. Electronic notifications sent out through the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association Alberta/Northwest Territories Chapter list-serv were also utilized to recruit participants.

These emails included a brief description of the purpose of the study, criteria for inclusion, as well as a description of what participants would be asked to do. I have included a segment of the recruitment email here to provide the reader with a sense of what was included (see Appendix A and C for full emails):

In my study I am exploring the question: How do counsellors of East-Asian descent experience practice of counselling psychology in Canada? I am using the term "East-Asian descent" to refer to any individual with cultural descent from China, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Macao, Mongolia, Singapore and Taiwan. I will conduct individual, audio-recorded interviews which will take approximately one and a half hours to complete, to engage participants in conversations about the differences (if any) that they have observed between Western psychology and cultural values that may have been instilled as a child.

Participant selection. All participants that identified themselves as being of EA descent were included in the study, regardless of time spent living and practicing psychology in Canada. Counselling psychologists did not need to be a registered psychologist in the province of Alberta, although they were required to have a minimum of one year of practical experience.

Participants. Six counselling psychologists currently practicing in the province of Alberta and that self-identified as being of EA descent participated in this study. Participants were recruited through public agencies as well as through the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association Alberta/Northwest Territories Chapter list-serv. Counselling psychologists either worked in an agency setting or owned their own private practice. Participants consisted of 5 females and 1 male counselling psychologist, ranging in age from 39 to 58. Three of the participants were born in Hong Kong, 1 in mainland China, 1 in Korea, and 1 in Canada. Three of the psychologists held master's degrees from various institutions across Canada while the remaining 3 held doctorate degrees. The median length of time spent practicing as a counselling psychologist was 10 years (range = 3-21 years). When completing their consent forms, participants were given the opportunity to select pseudonyms to maintain anonymity and confidentiality. The pseudonyms selected by participants were Alexandra, Hudson, Henry, Park, Seashell, and Ester.

Procedures for Data Collection. After participants were recruited, I agreed to meet with them in person at their place of choice. Five participants were interviewed at their office of employment and one at a coffee shop. Upon meeting, I reviewed the consent form (Appendix D) and asked if they had any questions related to the material contained on the form. If there were no questions, two copies of the consent form were signed. One copy was retained for the research study while the other was left with the participant.

Once the consent forms were signed, participants were asked to select a pseudonym that would be used to report findings throughout the study. Before beginning

the interview and the recording, participants were asked if they had any questions related to the process of data collection at this time. I began conducting the semi-structured interviews utilizing a semi-structured script (Appendix E). Participants were made aware that I had a list of basic questions that would help guide the interview, but were encouraged to deviate from the questions if they felt there was other information that they deemed to be important. Interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis and tape recorded using a laptop computer as well as an MP3 recording device for later analysis. The interviews lasted between 45 to 90 minutes.

Interview in relation to background information. The semi-structured interview began with collection of background information. This helped to ease both the participant and researcher into the interview, and provided a beginning means for open discussion. This background information was later used to describe demographic information of participants. Questions used to collect background information are presented below (see Appendix E for the full interview protocol):

1. Where is your country of birth?
2. What is your age?
3. What is culture do you most define yourself with?
4. How many years have you been practicing in Canada as a counselling psychologist?

Background information that was collected was intended to provide a brief illustration of research participants rather than a comprehensive profile. The intent of this study was to investigate counsellors' experiences of psychology, and thus an in-depth review of their background was not deemed necessary.

Interview in relation to primary research questions. To obtain data related to the primary research questions, the participants were asked questions regarding their values in relation to culture, the relation of culture to psychological practice, and the relation of their culture to their work with individual clients. A sample of the interview questions are presented here to give a sense of what was asked of participants in this study (see Appendix E for the full interview protocol):

1. What are the values that you grew up with that you would ascribe to your upbringing within the East-Asian culture?
2. What are the major differences between your culture and Western culture?
3. What do you see as major cultural assumptions that Western psychology is based on?

Questions were asked with the intention of generating narratives that would provide the foundation for further exploration and questioning. The questions selected for the semi-structured interview protocol were adapted from a previous study by Duan et al. (2011) that examined the practice of Southeast Asian counsellors that studied in North America before returning home to Southeast Asia to practice. Thus, these interview questions were deemed to be relevant based upon the purpose of the study. At the end of the interview process, participants were asked if they had any questions related to the study, and were thanked for their time and participation.

Procedures for Data Analysis

I transcribed the audio-recordings within two days of completing the interview. After the transcript from their semi-structured interview had been completed, participants were emailed a copy of the transcript and asked to verify the accuracy of information contained within the document. Participants were also told that if they did not respond to

the email within 14 days, their approval would be assumed. Participants were thanked for their time and willingness to participate in the research study if they had no further alterations to make.

It has been suggested that there are no concrete steps to follow when analyzing data utilizing narrative analysis (Frank, 2010) and that qualitative data analysis procedures are left to the interpretation of the researcher (Creswell, 2007). Although I present the process of my data analysis in a linear format to help the reader understand my procedure, it is of importance to note that I often moved back and forth between the analyses procedures selected as necessary. Throughout this process, I received supervisory feedback, and incorporated the assistance of colleagues to ensure accuracy of results.

The data analysis primarily took place in three steps:

1. Organization of the data,
2. Comparison of responses among participants,
3. Identification of major themes based on the narrative framework.

Organization of the data. I began my process of data analysis by going back and listening to the audio-recordings while at the same time re-reading the transcripts. I then re-read each transcript again to continue to familiarize myself with the themes and patterns that were developing across participants. I then re-read my semi-structured interview protocol and looked for thematic topics of consideration that were addressed through the questions being asked. Throughout the process of reviewing transcripts and interview protocols, I focused my attention on questions regarding: (a) what general idea

is the participant trying to convey? and (b) how have the questions I posed helped with the communication of this information?

I utilized two types of codes in the initial stages of my organization, splitting the transcript into structural and content based narratives (Taylor, 2007). Structural narratives were sections of the interview where the interaction between the research participant and the researcher evoked a deeper reflection or expansion of a thought. This interactive piece is important in the analysis of dialogic-performative narrative analysis (Riessman, 2008b). The following is an example of what I identified as structural narratives taken from an interview with Park:

Kingsley: Do you feel like there are instances where the values you grew up with, sort of influence the advice that you give to your clients... do you feel like that's influenced by your background?

Park: Let me see. (.) Good point, I need to think about it, good reflection because I didn't think about it.

Content based narratives were used to describe the general topics of discussion that occurred throughout all six interviews (Taylor, 2007). I identified four key topics of discussion during the interviews. I then went through each individual transcript with one of the topics of discussion in mind, and using a different coloured highlighter for each topic, I marked the passages that corresponded to one of the four topics for later analysis. Extracts were sometimes found to be related to multiple topics of conversation (e.g., both values and personal identity formation). In these instances, extracts were initially marked with both colours corresponding to the topics, and a decision was made at a later stage of analysis regarding which topic the extract best corresponded to. These decisions were based on identification of key words or phrases that were more similar to the responses of other participants.

I have included a sample of my text that I will return to later in the results section, to better illustrate this process of data analysis. This extract is a sample of a conversation between a research participant Seashell and myself, and was coded as an example of the values that were associated with the EA culture:

Basically, pushing through, persisting, or perseverance through difficulties, not complaining. Even though it's a collective culture, I don't get the sense – I don't know maybe it's just my own family – I don't get the sense that there's lots of support that you can reach out for in Chinese – in my family of origin. (Seashell, 45)

This portion of the transcription was determined to contain content based narratives, as it related to the general theme of Eastern values that was discussed during the interview.

I also made initial notes in the margins when I noticed similarities across participant's responses to the questions that were posed, or to the topics of conversation that were being focused on. For example, both Henry and Seashell specifically use the Cantonese word “yun” for the strong emphasis for Chinese endurance and perseverance when addressing cultural values associated with the Chinese population.

Upon going through each of my transcripts and highlighting segments of texts, I then copied each segment of text corresponding to each of the themes onto a separate piece of paper. These segments were then grouped by topic of discussion across participants. This would allow for easier comparison across participants later in my process of analysis.

Comparison across participants. In order to compare extracts across participants, I created a spreadsheet to help organize the data. I grouped each of the four topics of discussion among participants and entered each of their responses into a column of the spreadsheet. After the first participant's responses were entered, responses for the

second participant were compared to the first participant, and similar segments were inputted into the adjacent cell. Segments were deemed to be similar if participants used comparable words (e.g., speaking of their identity as “westernized”), or seemed to be trying to convey a related message from their response (e.g., client-driven practice). Extracts that were dissimilar were inputted into a new cell that started at the end of all of the first participant’s extracts. This process was repeated for the remaining participants until all extracts for the participant were inputted. Once one topic of conversation was fully entered, a new spreadsheet was created for each of the remaining topics following the same process. For example, I began with inputting extracts related to “values” for each participant that was followed by extracts related to “personal identity formation” and so on until all extracts were inputted.

Identification of themes. After entering all extracts into Excel, responses across participants were compared to establish themes. Examining the consistencies across participants allows the researcher to establish patterns of themes, as well as to look for correspondence between themes (Creswell, 2007). Themes were then connected and interrelated amongst each of the other participants.

Maintaining Rigour

Throughout the process of data collection, it was important that I did not allow my personal biases and experiences as an individual of EA descent to influence my interviews. I accomplished this by discussing my own values, assumptions, and biases during the initial pilot project, and by adhering to the semi-structured interview script (Appendix E). The interview script allowed me to maintain focus during the interview. The questions encouraged participants to reflect on their personal experiences of cultural

differences rather than my own personal reflections. This consideration was further addressed by allowing participants to review transcripts of the interview before I commenced data analysis. Allowing the participant to verify the accuracy of the data, as well as self-exploration, is “imperative in qualitative research because the results of a study are created by the researchers’ involvement in the data” (Duan et al., 2011, p. 34).

The lack of a distinct procedure for narrative methodology was also addressed by adhering to the semi-structured interview format for data collection and analysis. This approach allowed me to maintain some consistency across interviews. I also reflected on my process of data collection and analysis by connecting with other graduate students that were involved in the initial pilot study to ensure that I maintained academic rigour throughout the study.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

In this study, the application of dialogical-performative narrative analysis is used to gain an understanding of how the participants experience the practice of psychology in Canada. The intent of this investigation was to obtain qualitative data related to the influence of counsellor's multicultural upbringing on their work. The narratives revealed counsellors' understandings and interpretations of psychological theories, their perceived competencies in working with individuals of diverse backgrounds, and the contributions that their own multicultural background has played in developing these understandings and competencies. In particular, this research was designed to answer three main research questions:

1. How do counsellors of EA descent experience the practice of psychology in Canada?
2. What differences are experienced (if any) in relation to EA cultural values and Western psychological theory and techniques?
3. How do EA counsellors share stories about their experiences practicing counselling psychology from a Western theoretical framework?

The results of this investigation will be described in this chapter.

Themes Descriptions

Four categories of themes were identified through the participants' narratives: (a) Cultural Values, (b) Personal Cultural Identity Formation, (c) Culture in Relation to Practice, and (d) Personal Information. From these categories, nine themes emerged and 27 sub-themes. While I present the categories, themes, and sub-themes in a particular order, it is not meant to represent a hierarchy or sequential order in which they emerged

through the interviews with participants. Please see Table 1 on the next page for a diagrammatic view of the categories and themes.

Table 1

Categories, Themes and Sub-themes Identified

CULTURAL VALUES
East-Asian Cultural Values
Collectivism
Educational Achievement
Competition
Saving Face
Emotional Silence and Privacy
Persistence
Honouring the Family
Obedience
Western Cultural Values
Individualism
Independence
Freedom of Expression

PERSONAL CULTURAL IDENTITY FORMATION
Amalgamation of Cultural Identity
Balance Between Eastern and Western Identity
Identity Based on Environment
Contextual Cultural Identity
Embracing the Dominant Culture
Explorative

CULTURE IN RELATION TO PRACTICE
Assumptions of Western Psychology
Individualism
Choice
Openness
Acceptance of Western Psychology by East-Asian Counselling Psychologists
Filling a Deficit
Being Present versus Being Passive
Privacy
Influence on Theoretical Orientation

Cultural Practices in Relation to Work with Clients
Client-Driven Practice
Importance of Counsellor Self-Reflection
Advantages of Experiential Knowledge
Absence of multicultural counselling training
Advantages of Cultural Identification
Advantages of Shared Language
Impact of Physical Appearance

Cultural Values

Participants spoke about the values that they identified as being important in their cultural upbringing as individuals of EA descent, as well as values that they associated with Western Canadian culture. Within this area two main themes, EA cultural values and Western cultural values were identified as prominent in participants' experiences.

East-Asian Cultural Values. Differences between EA and Western cultural values were a common theme that emerged through interviews with participants. The following is a description of the nine sub-themes that emerged through discussion with participants regarding EA cultural values.

Collectivism. Although each individual participant had their unique perspective on what they attributed to EA cultural values, commonalities between individuals' values were identified. All participants in this study identified collectivism to be an important value in EA culture as emphasis is placed on the family unit.

I think it's very family oriented, and community based values.... I think it's very important to have family – like family is very important. And also to keep the family together is important. No matter – like do whatever it takes to keep the family together, at whatever cost. (Ester, 50)

Making connections, meaning maybe community ideas, that kind of thing.
Making connections. (.) And the value of family. (Hudson, 55)

Now, also the kind of traditional Chinese values that kind of (.) the group is more valued, has more priority than the individuals. (Henry, 58)

I value teamwork a lot. I don't want to be considered I am better than other co-workers, no, no... that part sort of collectivism, right? (Park, 39)

[I]t's a collective culture... (Seashell, 45)

[B]ut that's how I live my life – is respecting family. (Alexandra, ~45)

Educational achievement. The importance of having a strong work ethic related to educational achievement was discussed by many participants. In general, educational achievement was discussed in relation to accomplishment in school and attending university, which would be an indicator of an individual's success.

[H]ere is a common one, which is work really hard, do well in school... achieve, you must go to university, you must study something. (Seashell, 45)

I think those teachings could be very indirect or subtle, it's not direct, but I always know that... value education (.) work hard, and work ethic- those are very traditional Chinese values. (Henry, 58)

Young generation, they are probably different now, but when I was going to high school, going to university is the most important thing in life. And when I was younger, I remember my mom told me “okay, study now, and have fun after you go to university.” (Park, 39)

Chinese values – not necessarily mine, but in general I think – is to be successful... I think successful is measured by education and career, and achievement. (Hudson, 55)

The emphasis that is placed on education was found to be associated with an individual's position in the social context of EA communities. Children's education was described as a means to promote one's status within the group. Success that the children of EA descent bring to the family through education is important in determining the social status of

parents, as well as the quality of relationships that they will have with others in the community.

I think more important for her was moving up the educational ladder. That's what made [my mother] more accepting, "this is what my daughter can do"... you move up the ladder in terms of getting your master's degree, getting your PhD. There was a pride about achievement. (Alexandra, ~45)

Competition. Many participants expressed a sense of competition among the EA community during their upbringing. Narratives shared in relation to this sub-theme created a sense that there was competition amongst other members of the community for children to obtain success. Material wealth that is gained through this process is seen as an important indicator of how successful an individual is. This competition was also discussed in the role that it plays in determining your family's position within the community. Children that were able to obtain more success in their educational and career achievements would allow parents to improve their status within the community.

I think successful is measured by education and career, and achievement – achievement meaning more when you have a career, what have you achieved in your career. (Hudson, 55)

And so there was this competition among our community, among Chinese families, to see whose child would come out the most successful.... so when I got my doctorate and other kinds of accomplishments, my mother would... [have] bragging rights... I think it is [common], now that you bring it up. (.) Competition to see how children turn out. (Alexandra, ~45)

What I didn't like about Korea – my husband and me – competition. I don't want to be number one; my husband doesn't want to be number one. But my parents, you know, I have to have a very nice car, good job... I don't want to be rich, right, not that much. (Park, 39)

Saving face. Much of this process of competition and educational achievement is related to the EA value of "saving face" that is associated with how other people see you. Participants discussed saving face in terms of the emphasis placed on obtaining financial

success, and the improvement in other's opinions of the individual and the family that resulted from this. Competition to attain educational success was discussed in association with financial benefits that are thought to be related to the process of saving face.

Saving face is important... everything has to look outside, good, that's what it probably comes down to. How people think about you is important – your status, your financial background – like they look at those things. (Ester, 50)

And because our daughter has been so successful, the parents have even more pride, they're now elevated as a result. Yeah, elevated would be – so sort of neighbours would get jealous, like Chinese neighbours you know, would chat it up and say “did she really get her doctorate?” It would cause a certain rift that went on too. But, it was, ammunition. For all that she had gone through in a negative way. (Alexandra, ~45)

My husband and me, we definitely got messages from our own parents, but we do not agree with them for everything... because they think because we already finished our Master's degree there, so we can have a good job, a good car, good house, good looking, that kind of thing. (Park, 39)

Emotional silence and privacy. The lack of group cohesiveness when dealing with personal difficulties was discussed in terms of implicit and explicit encouragement for individuals of EA descent to remain silent in regards to expressing their emotion. Participants shared experiences from their childhood in which emotions that were potentially harmful to the family unit were not allowed to be expressed. The consequence of not having experience with this expression during their upbringing left some participants with a lack of emotional vocabulary, and the inability to express themselves to others.

[E]motions – we were taught to be private, not to disclose difficult circumstances. Other emotions that were not acceptable would be anger – like in front of your parents, you don't get angry at your parents – you don't pout, you don't talk back... very clearly communicated. Regularly communicated. (Alexandra, ~45)

Yes, I mean I haven't done a language analysis of Chinese language (.), a lot of things that I can say in English, I don't know what the words are in Chinese... Chinese people may have fewer words for emotions. I'm not really sure... but, because I didn't grow up with that diversity in language describing emotions or experiences, I can't connect back to it. (Seashell, 45)

People usually say I'm calm, I'm not that emotional. So probably that is from my family – do not express emotions too much... I think implied, yeah. My parents never told me not to express emotions, no. (Park, 39)

Saving face and honouring the family were previously discussed as important values in the EA culture. In order to maintain appearances within the community, discretion related to the sharing of negative emotions was found to exist. The relative silence regarding the expression of emotions or the discussion of problems was found to be related to the value of privacy. Participants discussed the importance of keeping confidential information a secret for fear of bringing shame to the family. Privacy ensures that embarrassing information related to the family is not made available to the community that is competing for a more elevated status within the group.

I had role models just with friends to be open and to share your secrets about what was going on... not hold back in case shame came to the family, or embarrassing your mother or father, yeah.... As for me personally, while I am open, I am also private. I imagine I am more private than my friends/colleagues. I don't tell the world things that are not necessary. I try to be discriminating about who needs what information... that I began learning from my parents... (Alexandra, ~45)

Like the other day, I had an Asian client, and basically to express emotions or put things into words things that are very private is not in our culture.... I grew up in a family where things just weren't talked about; and being sensitive and emotionally attuned, like I could feel everything, but nobody ever talks about it. (Seashell, 45)

There's still some boundaries – I still need some boundaries. Sometimes, because my coworkers, they want me to be their really close friends and they want me to talk about everything – about my life, about work – but to me, I feel I need some boundaries... So for me, work is, especially my relationship with my clients, so I kind of keep strict boundaries. I do not share my family things, my personal story with my clients. (Park, 39)

Persistence. The value of persistence was also highlighted by many participants as an important value in the EA culture. As mentioned earlier, both Henry and Seashell used the Cantonese word “yun” to describe persevering through difficulties, and not complaining. This was discussed in relation to the emotional silence and emphasis on privacy that is present in the EA culture. The concept of persistence in EA culture highlighted the individualistic nature that problems are approached with, despite being described as a collective culture.

If you were sulking, or pouting about what you’re being told to do. And so if we were expressing dissatisfaction, or sadness – there were judgements about “you don’t do this” or “this is unacceptable” or “this is a nuisance.” I think those were the messages. (Alexandra, ~45)

So I’m more [a] champion for my clients to have their own individual identity. But then, I also have to respect that traditional Chinese clients may not buy into that because they are brought up that it’s okay for me to suffer, it’s okay for me to “yun” to endure. (Henry, 58)

And the motto in a lot of Chinese cultures is the word “yun,” like to tolerate, right, and that’s the biggest thing. You’re just supposed to hold it in and suppress it.... so a lot of experiences are preverbal, people just don’t put it into words, or don’t have the language or skills to talk through it. (Seashell, 45)

Honouring the family. Stories about collectivism, educational achievement, and competition often were told in relation to the participant’s need to show honour and respect for the family. This value was found to be associated with the collectivistic family orientation of EA culture. The sacrifices that parents have made for their children lead participants to explore appropriate ways to achieve this as expectations for honouring the value were not always directly communicated. Honouring and respecting the family was found to be achieved through filial piety, and achieving success in both education, and career.

Respect means that there are times in which I can show that I care for [my parents]. Show that I appreciate the sacrifices that have been made... so respect means that I will give what I can – so you know, in the past I might give time; I might give money – that’s honouring... I feel satisfied when I find a way to honour. So honour is important, and respect is important.... There was also [an] implicit/explicit requirement that we honor [and] give back as we became successful. So giving back our ways of caring for parents, having success in education, career to reflect they reaped the benefits of obligation to us, and basically living life with some degree of financial success. (Alexandra, ~45)

Still, I do what I want to here, but I still respect my mom, my dad... deep inside, sometimes I feel guilty because I know what my mom wants me to do... in Korea, later, children take care of their parents. So my brother does it over there, fortunately, but I feel guilty about it. (Park, 39)

I think those teachings could be very indirect or subtle, it’s not direct, but I always know that – to honour the elderly, to respect the elderly, value education(.) work hard, and work ethic – those are very traditional Chinese values. (Henry, 58)

Obedience. Many participants shared narratives related to the importance of putting the needs of the collective group ahead of their own individual desires. These stories were related to an obedience that was required by parents. The sense of obligation to achieve in school, to respect and honour the family, and for filial piety may contribute to life decisions that may not in the best interest of an individual of EA descent. Despite this, the importance of obedience was discussed as being a significant aspect in the upbringing of 3 participants.

This is a very good example for what is Western and eastern; because I always wanted to be a psychologist, even back home, but my parents say “no, no, no, no, no. You have to do something in science.” So I have to study chemistry and become an XXXX to meet my parents’ expectations... but I was always interested, but I did what my parents wanted me to do, as a good daughter would do right. (Ester, 50)

There’s a great emphasis on honouring your parents no matter what (.) you submit to their authority... so obedience... according to how the family was brought up in terms of values... obey the parents, you do what they tell you... “this is what the parents require” and that is obedience to x, y, and z. (Alexandra, ~45)

[M]y parents, they used to be teachers – they are very kind of disciplined and strict... so I kind of learned my work ethics there, because I – people say I’m very disciplined, organized. I think that is another Asian thing, yeah. I hear from my other co-workers, they say most Asian people are organized, respectful, and disciplined – efficient. (Park, 39)

Western cultural values. Individualism, independence, and freedom of expression were identified by participants as the key differences between Western and EA cultural values. As collectivism and honouring the family were discussed as important values for understanding EA culture, exploration into these Western values was important. Descriptions of these three sub-themes are provided below.

Individualism. When participants were asked to comment on the values that they associated with Western culture, many spoke of the emphasis on individualism that is present. This individualism is associated with a right to privacy and confidentiality; and was discussed as a value that is promoted and encouraged in Western culture.

Or at least kind of pave the way for themselves, and I know I’m speaking quite generally... but I think there’s more encouragement to explore, to find your way, to choose a career that’s going to make you happy [with Canadians]. (Alexandra, ~45)

All that has got to do with, it’s not communal [in Canada] – [in China] it’s all communal – everybody shares everything, everyone knows everyone, I think that’s very huge difference. (Ester, 50)

Now, also the kind of traditional Chinese values that kind of (.) the group is more valued, has more priority than the individuals. But for us – for me... living in Canada for so long... this is not my value. So I’m more [a] champion for my clients to have their own individual identity. (Henry, 58)

Independence. Further exploration of this Western ideal of individualism showed that there is a sense of independence that is promoted in Canada. Participants discussed how this sense of independence is not only associated with the counselling context, but is

strongly emphasized by society as a whole, and was related to a sense of freedom and entitlement.

[A]n emphasis on independence and helping individuals... there's a real focus, even just out there [in society], to be independent whether it's being away from home, financially, getting your own life together; there's a strong emphasis on that. (Alexandra, ~45)

Very individualized. Like privacy wise, they very respected your individualism in terms of privacy – like in China there's no such thing as privacy, nothing is private, right. So people don't understand what the term confidentiality means, actually, because they have never experienced that back home. Here, it's like you have your privacy, you have your personal life; you have the freedom to make your own decisions. (Ester, 50)

Independence, being responsible is common and shared between [EA and Western cultures]... I think the concepts of efficiency are different [in Canada]... like, your job description is your job description, and that's it. (Hudson, 55)

Freedom of expression. Associated with the emphasis on individualism and independence was the ability to share confidential information with others. This provided some participants comfort in sharing personal information as they found that it was permitted in Canadian culture. This sharing does not necessarily need to take place between close friends or relatives, as the expression of thoughts and emotions can take place in many different contexts.

I would identify with the value of emotion, the value of sharing confidential private information with close friends, or going to counselling if I needed it. (Alexandra, ~45)

Maybe with the Canadian culture, the idea of (.) being expressive.... emotions and thoughts... Canadian culture.... is not that guarded. For example, like people on the train, or at the bus stop, or on the plane, they could tell the other fellow their life stories. (Hudson, 55)

I think I had to break through a lot of the things that I was taught. So as an Asian and as a woman, probably we're taught to be a bit more passive, not to take charge so much (.) to not be expressive (.), not to direct (.). (Seashell, 45)

Personal Cultural Identity Formation

Due to the differences in cultural values that were identified, it was important to explore with participants their cultural identity as it may play a role in their education and view of Western counselling psychology.

Amalgamation of cultural identity. Although many of the counselling psychologists recruited for this study have spent time living in EA countries, all participants acknowledged the influence that their time spent living in Canada had on their cultural identification.

Balance between East-Asian and Western identity. The most common response to being asked about the culture they most identified with involved being both EA and Canadian. No counselling psychologists that were interviewed for this investigation identified strictly with the EA cultural heritage, if they identified with this heritage at all.

I would say Chinese and Canadian, both. (Hudson, 55)

... I mean I'm very Canadian; I've been here a very long time... (Ester, 50)

I would – this is the way that I view it is Canadian born Chinese. It's kind of Canadian first because it's more me than Chinese. (Alexandra, ~45)

I'm Chinese biologically. I've lived in Canada since I was 17, but I had a hard time saying that I'm Canadian. I don't identify with it.... Although I can say that I'm very North American... (Seashell, 45)

The effect of this Westernized identity had varying impacts on how the counselling psychologists related to the EA values that they identified in response to the interview questions. Some participants still strongly identified with these values, and a balance of both the EA values as well as some of the Western values gained while living in Canada was essential.

I really think – I mean, I’m very Canadian, I’ve been here a very long time...I’ve been westernized, but I still keep some of the [Eastern] values. Yeah, I think you need a bit of both. (Ester, 50)

I value my cultural roots too. And that was emphasized – I may express it differently than what was required of me. (Alexandra, ~45)

However, 1 participant described how his time spent living within a Canadian context has influenced his cultural identification differently. In this instance, exposure to Canadian culture was found to be related to a loss of identification to the EA cultural identity.

But the small town living, I think that really, really kind of instrumental in our identity now – our values, our thinking will be more Canadian.... So, I am not rooted in Hong Kong Chinese culture. (Henry, 58)

Identity based on environment. Some participants discussed the influence of their contextual setting in determining the culture that they most identify with, and the extent to which this cultural identity was influenced by their environment.

Contextual cultural identity. For one participant, living in Canada offered a means to escape dominant EA cultural values that she did not identify with. This was discussed in relation to feeling Canadian in most instances, but being reminded of their EA cultural heritage in others.

It’s contextual... how can I explain this? Okay, when I am with my family, I do not think of Korea that much – funny thing, my husband is from Korea as well, but we do not think that we are Korean. But, when I am working here, so, people remind me that I am Korean.... My daughter was born here, but she doesn’t know many things about Korea, that’s another thing – she’s Canadian, so we don’t talk about Korea much. (Park, 39)

Embracing the dominant culture. Another example of a difference in identification with EA culture is demonstrated through discussing the influence of dominant cultural influences. In this instance, cultural identity was discussed in regards

to the influence of living in the Canadian context for such an extended period of time that it is difficult to identify with the culture to which they were born despite being raised in an EA family. Exposures to Western ideals were discussed in relation to their ability to overpower the exposure to EA ideals.

What [Canadian born Chinese] means to me is (.) because I'm born in Canada, my exposure to Canadian culture – whether it's friends, values, experiences – revolves so much more across the board (.) in terms of Canada as opposed to Chinese culture; despite living in a Chinese family. I tend to see myself as (.) Western, westernized, or whatever the term is. (Alexandra, ~45)

But I think that 10 years in XXXX... have a lot of impact, or influence on us, because in a small town, we adapt to really Canadian living... our identity, our values, our thinking will be more Canadian... that has to do with whether we insist to eat Chinese food, or insist our children has to... go to Chinese school, or to speak Chinese at home... I'm not rooted in Hong Kong culture.... (Henry, 58)

Explorative. A final theme that emerged through interviews from participants is that explaining their cultural identity is not a straight forward and static account, but rather an ongoing process. Cultural identity was discussed in regards to the experience of difficulty in identifying with both the participant's culture of origin, as well as Canadian culture. Time spent living in Canada has not necessarily translated into identification with Canadian culture, much the same as time spent being raised in EA culture has not translated into identification with that identity either. Continued exploration and blending of cultural values and beliefs was thought to be necessary for this participant.

That's the hardest question, because I've lived in so many different cultures, and I'm exposed to so many cultures, and I travel so much, and I'm interested in so many cultural diversities.... I would say that at this point in my career... I'm trying to bring together all sorts of cultural aspects and traditions..... I had a hard time saying that I'm Canadian.... Their culture, and their way of being. Although I can say I'm very North American... Canadians tend to be very conservative in their expression. They tend to be very polite, not very direct in

their communication. Very conservative... which doesn't match with I think my natural personality... (Seashell, 45)

Culture in Relation to Practice

Participants discussed many advantages provided by their EA cultural background in relation to their practice in counselling psychology. The stories shared highlighted the unique advantages offered through exposure to an EA cultural background.

Assumptions of Western psychology. Participants discussed the assumptions of Western psychology. These are reflected in the three subthemes that follow.

Individualism. Similar to discussions of individualism raised during exploration of Western cultural values, individualism and independence was found to play a major role in the counselling setting as well. A majority of the participants identified individualism as a major cultural assumption that Western psychology is based upon. Although participants emphasized collectivistic values in relation to the EA culture, this did not cause an automatic sense of dissonance associated with Western psychological theories and methods for their individualistic focus. Support for the merit of this approach to counselling was discussed as importance was seen for addressing an individual's goals and problems within the counselling setting.

I can only talk from my experience. My experience is I think it's based on individual values. Human beings have dignity, and we need to respect that... all these value the human being – put really high value in terms of who we are as a person. (Ester, 50)

A lot of emphasis on self-determination... focus on the individual's rights, or the individual perspective... Like, to explore with clients their feelings, right, like asking them how they feel... I think that there's a reason for that, there's a space for that. And I think it's important... (Hudson, 55)

My exposure through these years would lead me to say #1, like an emphasis on independence and helping individuals, and figure out or identify that way of being

in their lives.... independently is an important part of how we view life it seems.... Independence was the big one. (Alexandra, ~45)

... The group is more valued, has more priority than the individuals... this is not my value. So I'm more a champion for my clients to have their own individual identity. (Henry, 58)

Some participants, however, found the focus on the individual to be limiting. The difficulty in focusing solely on the individual was found to be isolating as other relational factors may be important. Participants discussed the importance that considerations for group influences have when working in counselling psychology as focusing on the individual is not enough, and the relational nature of human beings is not given enough emphasis in Western psychology. Some participants attributed this need to focus on aspects aside from the individual to their EA upbringing.

I find it's very isolating, if you just isolate the person without thinking about how the society will influence this person. That's why I like narrative therapy and social constructionist... because now they're thinking we're all connected... help the person see things differently instead of the individual, it's all your problem, it's very labelling and pathologizing... and I don't like to label people... I'm still resistant to the way they do things because of my deep [Eastern] roots right. (Ester, 50)

... the practice that I'm doing, I'm more coming from a systemic perspective, so I'm trying not to just focus on the individual. I see that the individual is living within the community, and the larger society... (Hudson, 55)

... an emphasis on independence and helping individuals... it's quite (.) rigid in some ways. Because not everybody lives life that way, because they could also value relationships in a different way, but this independence... has some merit for sure, but all of us are sort of relational and that's not really emphasized enough. (Alexandra, ~45)

Choice. Another cultural value that participants associated with Western psychology was identified as freedom of choice. Some participants spoke of the focus

that Western psychology places on understanding or helping the individual determine what it is they want or choose.

Well for one, I think... we always ask “what do you think?” “What do you choose?” right?... emphasis on what are your needs? What do you think? What did you decide? Yeah, so very much focus on the individual’s rights, or the individual perspective... and the freedom to choose. (Hudson, 55)

Everyone has their own meaning and purpose in life, and... as a counsellor, we need to help them achieve the goals and the dreams and to help them be who they want to be and overcome the obstacles. (Ester, 50)

Openness. A final assumption that participants discussed in relation to the cultural assumptions related to Western counselling psychology was the importance that is placed on obtaining openness in communication with clients. This ability to communicate openly was important to the discussion of emotions that is given significance in Western psychology.

I think there’s a real emphasis on expressing your emotions... trying to get the other person to be open. Being open is a highly, highly prized aspect of Western psychology. Talking is very, very prized. (Alexandra, ~45)

Psychology is a very Western concept... it is a very foreign concept for a Chinese person to talk about their problems... to express emotions or put things into words things that are very private is not in our culture. (Seashell, 45)

[W]e want people to be verbal, intelligent... learn to share... we seem to think that oh, when the person comes through the door, right away, intervention 1, intervention 2. That’s not necessarily the case either.... I think that a lot of ground work needs to be established... I mean a lot of the background, you really have to be clear about it – interventions, you don’t do it right away... it seems that everybody is so ready to okay, let’s do therapy, but not necessarily. (Hudson, 55)

Acceptance of Western psychology by East-Asian counselling psychologists.

In exploring the influence that cultural values played in the acceptance of counselling psychology, many of the participants in this study indicated that they did not need to adjust their approach to counselling psychology when reflecting upon their cultural

upbringing. Generally speaking, being raised in an EA household did not influence counsellor's acceptance of Western psychology. From my initial pilot study and personal reflections on Western psychological methods, I anticipated a difference to exist. In my experience, the differences between the collective focus of EA culture and individualistic focus of Western psychology created some difficulty accepting some of the concepts and theories taught during my training. I expected counselling psychologists to discuss similar difficulties during our interviews; however, this was not necessarily the case. Experiences with Western psychological theory were generally positive and at times influential in the lives of individuals interviewed.

Filling a deficit. Counselling psychology was found to offer an important means to communicate and relate to life experiences that some participants felt was previously not available. A sense of deprivation was present for participants living in an EA household as there was reluctance amongst family members to discuss difficult or emotional topics. Western psychology, which places emphasis on expressing emotion and focusing on the individual, provided an opportunity to experience the world in a different manner than previously accustomed to. In order to improve as a psychologist, participants discussed the need to challenge these cultural assumptions.

I grew up in a family where things just weren't talked about, and being sensitive and attuned, like I could feel everything, but nobody ever talks about it. So a lot of things were preverbal, people just don't put it into words, or don't have the language or skills to talk through it.... my first thought is I tend to embrace [Western theories of psychology]. It's kind of like if you come from a place of deprivation, and now all of the sudden, these things are offered to you, you kind of just go "oh wow, there's another way of experiencing the world and relating." (Seashell, 45)

And thank goodness I went through counsellor training, you know? And also had summer jobs that were counselling related in undergrad. So it's really helped me

move into where I need to be. And my friends were more expressive – being Caucasian... so I had role models just with friends to be open, and to share your secrets about what was going on... (Alexandra, ~45)

Yeah, so I had to be humble, and I had to listen more and try and forget about my background, my values, all that. (Ester, 50)

Being present versus being passive. Some counselling psychologists identified the need to make minor adjustments in their values associated with EA culture in order to best utilize their Western psychological training. Participants indicated that being directive and asking questions is not a common practice in EA culture, which was found to be particularly true for Asian women. Participants found that EA culture teaches individuals to be passive and humble, and not to direct or take charge within relationships. These assumptions needed to be challenged and overcome in order to be effective in work as a counselling psychologist.

I think I had to break through a lot of the things that I was taught. So as an Asian and as a woman, probably, we were taught to be a bit more passive, not to take charge so much (.) to not be expressive (.), not to direct... Chinese culture teaches us to be humble... not take up too much space in a relationship, to be patient, to pull back and just follow versus really showing up and relating, and being a really big part of the relationship.... I think that it was under developed. Not just in my work, but in my personal life. (Seashell, 45)

Oh, one thing that I think is that we do ask a lot of questions, right, and I think in all my upbringing, listening is more common than asking questions. Listening and understanding.... [was] expected. (Hudson, 55)

As a counsellor – as a beginning counsellor – the worst thing you can do is [talk] too much, see. So I learned to listen very well... I have to really adjust so that instead of me being the centre, my client is the centre, and I am just the side. Yeah, it was a huge shift for me because I was an XXXX... I was telling everyone else what to do, but now I had to let my client have this spotlight and then listen to them, and really pay attention to what they say.... I have to give up my core – like I have to... feel how they feel. (Ester, 50)

Privacy. A further difficulty identified that was also discussed in relation to values was the issue of privacy. Privacy was discussed previously in relation to personal information and was associated with honouring the family and face saving practices. In relation to the work of counselling psychologists, it was also found to influence the depth of the counselling process by impacting the questions asked within the counselling context.

I think that the respect for privacy, in the way that I was brought up... I think that at the beginning that might have an impact on how I work because of my own upbringing.... I think more about, you know, to what extent do you ask very personal questions from your clients? That's what I'm referring to. (Hudson, 55)

I have come to value privacy... [f]or clients who are embarrassed, ashamed, or anxious about disclosing personal information, I am better equipped to respect that, go gently, give them space, establish a trusting connection as a prerequisite. Trusting me as a counsellor is earned, not automatically given. Some clients have different boundaries. They are at the opposite end of the continuum and "pour out their souls" indiscriminately on the outside and in therapy. My value of privacy can enhance our work and to enable clients to embark on learning to set boundaries. (Alexandra, ~45)

Cultural practices in relation to work with clients. In relation to practical work with clients, counselling psychologists indicated that they did not consciously change their approach to counselling, even when working with an individual of EA descent. In general, counselling psychologists found that they were most successful when adapting to the individual rather than to their culture of origin. Counselling psychologists shared stories related to the positive impact that has resulted from being able to adapt to the needs of the individual, as each person is thought to be different.

Client-driven practice. Many participants in this study attributed their ability to work effectively with a client on the therapist's ability, rather than cultural factors.

Counselling psychologists discussed the importance of the therapeutic spirit of the

counselling relationship as they often found it to be more influential than cultural factors. A potential reason for this was discussed by participants as intra-cultural differences that result from individual differences experienced between people of the same culture. Therefore, counselling psychologists suggested that the client must decide what happens in the therapeutic process that drives the healing change, further emphasizing the importance that is placed on the therapeutic relationship that is present or that can be established between the counsellor and the client.

I relate very well with Canadian clients... I don't see – when a Chinese client comes to see me – I don't have this thinking “oh, it's a Chinese client, I have to change my way of counselling for her or him” – I don't do that. I just treat it as, it's another client.... But in terms of emotional pain (.) I come to actually (.) more a reflection of how the therapist can elicit that emotion to come out... a factor of how well therapist are able to identify with the losses of the client, and because of that, whether they can touch on something in the client that just express that emotion and feeling of loss.... It could be more of the therapeutic spirit.... Yes, so you are still client-driven. There is no preconceived notion that because you are Chinese client, I should treat you this way. It's not from me. It has to be from you. (Henry, 58)

Yeah, because I'm so set in understanding where they're coming from and their context – I change it according to what they are here for, and what I have some confidence that I can offer – so if the two of us can meet eye to eye on that. But it's almost; yeah it's like treating the client as their own culture, no matter who they are because everyone comes with their own social location factors that are very different. So two guys – two male clients – will not be the same. If they're Chinese, if they're Iranian – it's like everybody is so different, I can learn to adapt more to the individual. (Alexandra, ~45)

I do believe there's also intra-cultural differences. So it may seem like, oh okay, we're all Chinese, we all think alike, but that's not necessarily the case, so I'm aware of that. (Hudson, 55)

Importance of counsellor self-reflection. The counsellor's ability to reflect on their role as a psychologist was also found to be important in navigating this client-driven process. Self-reflection was discussed by participants as a means to understand their role

and influence while working as a counselling psychologist. By reflecting on this, the influence of cultural values impacting the work of counselling is minimized.

Encouragement is made for psychologists to adapt their approach to counselling to best fit the needs of the individual, rather than having preconceived notions of what will be helpful.

I think the adjustment is always asking myself “what is my role here?” “How could I be effective or therapeutic?” so I always use that as a guiding principle.... [I]s that a legitimate question for me to ask, given what my role is, right? I find that helpful... I usually practice with my role is not to make decisions for people. My role is to [help] me and my clients see things clearer, or trying to see things from different perspectives... figure out what works, what don't.... make decisions and learn from the decisions they made... (Hudson, 55)

I've changed it according to...the people I meet in counselling. And recognizing you can't just do generic kinds of work with them.... I'm so set in understanding where they're coming from and their context – I change it according to what they are here for... it's like treating the client as their own culture, no matter who they are because everyone comes with their own social location factors that are very different... everybody is so different, I can learn to adapt more to the individual. (Alexandra, ~45)

[B]efore I see an Asian client... I don't think “okay, this is an Asian client, I should do something different” – I just enter into the environment and go from there.... I may ask – if this is an Asian client, for example a Korean client of mine – I will say “is there anything that I should know about your culture?”.... Well, you can open it up to the client whether they will tell me, it is a cultural factor, that we don't do that in our culture. Or we don't do that if we were still living in Korea. Yeah, I've done that actually. That opened up the dialogue so that the client can tell me, instead of I kind of dictate, well I think that this culture or this culture, you should not do that. But if it has to come from the client (.) (Henry, 58)

Advantages of experiential knowledge. Despite culture not being discussed as a major factor in influencing the work of counselling psychologists, either personally or professionally with clients, many of the participants discussed the advantages afforded by their upbringing in the EA culture. For many participants, the influence of their EA

descent was discussed as a strength as it helped them better understand their client's circumstances. Additionally, because this knowledge had been gained through lived experiences, rather than learned in a textbook, participants discussed the value of not needing to undergo training in order to maintain this competence. One of the advantages of having specific cultural knowledge described by participants is that it may help in understanding the meaning attempting to be conveyed, or the concept that is trying to be expressed. Without prior knowledge of the metaphors or analogies that clients are attempting to utilize, it may be difficult for a counselling psychologist to understand the meaning that the individual is trying to convey.

In terms of culture, like for myself to work with a client from a Chinese background, my own experiences shed light on the complexity of it all. When cultural values may clash, or the guilt that the client might be experiencing, or wishing something different, like a career path... it's allowed me to understand conflict. Values that can be strong. And just to appreciate the depth of struggle sometimes... And I think in a more objective way... I have a knowledge base that guides me up... so my values are, you know, identified within me, but they're not going to be shaping the direction of counselling in that subjective way. That's really how my background, I think, has really strengthened me.... I can understand (.) a certain kind of experiential knowing, that's shaped by my Chinese culture.... For clients who are embarrassed, ashamed, or anxious about disclosing personal information, I am better equipped to respect that, go gently, give them space, establish a trusting connection as a prerequisite... My value of privacy can enhance our work... (Alexandra, ~45)

For example, a Chinese client could use a common Chinese proverb, to express his or her experience. Now that may be where the EA counsellor could use – like if I know that proverb, I learned it in school as a child – then I could use that proverb as a theme to identify my client and expand that theme. (Henry, 58)

I think that when I went through elementary school or high school in Hong Kong, we learned a lot of Chinese idioms or proverbs... from time to time, I would share that with a client... within the appropriate context about what we are talking about... I throw that out there as the forum for discussion. And sometimes a client will say there's a saying like that or similar to that idea in English... it provides a lot of space to talk about and expand on... use of that [proverb] as maybe a catalyst. (Hudson, 55)

Absence of multicultural counselling training. The importance that the experiential knowledge gained through upbringing in an EA household was further highlighted by participant's discussions regarding the lack of training related to multicultural aspects in their programs. Participants highlighted the absence of graduate level courses and formal training related to this subject. As a result, participants have needed to obtain multicultural training to improve their competence, or have chosen to work with populations with which they are able to utilize their experiential upbringing.

I think that in my training, there's almost a set of blinders placed on multiculturalism, and I've had to work probably pretty hard in order to move beyond the Western way of doing things... we can no longer just keep your past training static. You know, CBT and the models that have not really examined social location... I was always interested in cross-cultural studies- so like cultural anthropology in undergrad, but that wasn't counselling it was just exposure- and so my training though in terms of diversity began really with... my supervision... So it's really important to me- I'm on the journey I just haven't arrived because there's so much to learn... Like social location- which is how do I look at my own gender, sexual orientation, ability, spirituality, religion, where might it- my biases come from? In my work with clients, how does the fact that I'm female impact a male coming with more traditional models of masculinity? So I think counseling is more a more complex venture for me. (Alexandra, ~45)

I don't think [my training in cross-cultural psychology was enough], I don't think so at all. I think the reason I chose to work with Chinese is because my background. I don't need much training to work with Chinese... (Ester, 50)

Okay, when I first came to Canada, all theories were familiar to me except one thing, multicultural theory course. In Korea, at that time, we didn't have it. But I heard we have it now. So, I found it was very interesting – it was very interesting to me. So, as you know, in Korea, we don't have kind of multiculturalism... (Park, 39)

Advantages of cultural identification. A further advantage that was identified was the ability to relate with the client based on shared cultural identification. Stories shared in relation to this sub-theme were associated with experiential knowledge gained

through being raised in an EA culture. By having similar experiential knowledge in relation to values, experiences, and vocabulary, participants discussed their ability to relate with clients in a manner that other counsellors may not necessarily be able to match. Participants described the importance of making the client feel heard and understood within the counselling setting, and this is believed to help with forming the therapeutic spirit by being able to identify with the client.

So if an Asian or Chinese client [is] using language that is more culturally related – it’s culturally specific vocabulary, or language, then I could use that to facilitate identification with the client. (Henry, 58)

I think the reason I chose to work with Chinese is because my background. I don’t need much training to work with Chinese... that’s why most of my clients will come and say to me “[Ester], how come in one session we accomplished so much here, but it takes six sessions with other counsellors which is not the same culture?” Because it’s so difficult to connect. (Ester, 50)

Because how we respond, really, is contingent on what we believe in, and what are the values. Those are the guiding principles, yeah. So that values is a big part of my work to help people... values could evolve, could change... I think a lot of concerns it appears is behavioural concerns, but a lot of things actually relate to how people view their lives – what are their values, what are their life experiences and so forth. (Hudson, 55)

Advantages of shared language. Possession of a second language was identified to provide a similar advantage related to establishing comfort within the counselling setting. Some participants found that it provided clients with a sense of security through being able to communicate with clients in their native language. Participants shared stories regarding how this had helped to provide clients with a more comfortable experience related to the process of counselling psychology.

I don’t remember wanting to do something different because she is from Hong Kong. The only difference is then I speak Cantonese.... we go you speak Cantonese, then I speak Cantonese, right, instead of English. (Henry, 58)

One thing, I mean, just because I speak other dialects, that in itself is a bonus... Like here, I've seen some patients because of their inability to speak English, they're not that comfortable. So having somebody that speaks their native language, they feel that they don't have to struggle with how to express it, for one. (Hudson, 55)

Impact of physical appearance. The process through which this ability to identify with the client based on shared cultural background is not always decided upon by the counsellor. Whether it helps or hinders work in the counselling context, counsellors of EA descent may automatically be identified as such based on their appearances. As previously discussed with examples from Henry and Ester, there are advantages to having clients identify you as being of EA descent.

I think maybe just physically right – skin colour and features – I'm different from them, so just, this in itself introduces a piece of difference – that's already a difference – but I don't know if it makes it easier for patients when I ask questions in those kind of areas right – looking at different kinds of perspectives. But does it help? I don't know, I'm just wondering... maybe people could be a little bit more patient with me. If I have a client who's Caucasian, and if they say something – some cultures or traditions – and if I don't understand, then maybe they can be more tolerant that I don't understand, and so maybe it gives me more chances to ask questions. (Hudson, 55)

When I go to see my client, I don't identify myself as an Asian counsellor, but they do. (Park, 39)

Cultural practices in relation to competence. A possible explanation for practices in psychology remaining consistent regardless of cultural considerations was related to competency. In Chapter 2, I discussed the importance that is placed on a psychologist's competency regarding knowledge, skills, demonstrated judgement related to these aspects, and maintenance of their competency. Some participants identified how their training in Western psychological methods has influenced their work as a counselling psychologist. Participants discussed the lack of training in multicultural

counselling competence, and how as professionals they are required to work from an area of competence.

In Korea, at that time, we didn't have [multicultural theory course]. But I heard we have it now. So, I found it was very interesting.... Mostly, I think when I work as a counsellor, I think I do my job from what I learned during counselling studies – so how to ask a question, those micro-counselling skills. (Park, 39)

I didn't have multicultural training class – I've trained myself... it's not easy for people to be assessing social location in session, or talking about it in supervision in terms of supervisee and supervisor and your social location; or you being Chinese – how might that shape our supervision, or you being male. And so that's how I'm sort of moving. And so it impacts counselling and supervision, and a little bit of training on diversity in the seminars, that's so not enough, but at least it's something. (Alexandra, ~45)

Influence on theoretical orientation. Culture was also found to influence some participant's choice of theoretical approach to counselling psychology. Some participants shared how their decision to use narrative therapy in their counselling practice has been informed by their EA values related to emphasis on the collective culture, as the individualistic focus of Western psychology was found to be very isolating. In their opinion, narrative therapy allows for the incorporation of contextual factors and relationships that are important in counselling, but may be overlooked as the focus is on the individual.

Oh definitely... I find it's very isolating, if you just isolate the person without thinking about how the society will influence this person ... that's why I like narrative therapy, because the western is more easternized now.... because now they're thinking [we're] all connected... so I picked the therapy geared towards the Eastern values. Because narrative therapy very emphasize strengths-based, they very emphasize problems within contexts... help the person see things differently instead of the individual, it's all your problem... (Ester, 50)

I felt like it embraces people from different cultures or different backgrounds... [b]ut I appreciate somebody study, talk about it, that part – cultural aspects or competence in counselling.... I like narrative approach... I really enjoy listening to my clients. (Park, 39)

I'm not, to be honest with you, I'm not a big fan of cognitive behavioural therapy – I use them – but I'm not a big fan, I'm not... I'm more and more see my counselling or therapeutic experience like a drama.... The dialogue, the talking, the emotion, there's hunches, the intuition, it's just like everyday life (.) So my way of counselling, I use more metaphor, I use more storytelling, the hunches are more intuition, that I use the language more "I have a hunch; I have a nudge." So I throw it out to see... (Henry, 58)

Summary

In summary, several differences in values were identified between EA and Western cultures. While EA cultures were described in relation to collectivism, Western culture was described in relation to individualism. Generally speaking, despite these differences counselling psychologists have learned to balance both EA and Western cultural identity during their time spent living in Canada. In relation to their practice as a counselling psychologist, participants discussed the importance of treating each individual uniquely, rather than predetermined cultural assumptions. However, when cultural considerations were found to be important within the counselling context, participants shared stories of how their experiential knowledge gained through their upbringing within an EA context was able to help facilitate their work with, and understanding of their client.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

When I began this research, I was interested in learning about how counselling psychologists of EA descent share stories about their experiences with psychology, both throughout their education and professional practice. I approached this investigation from a social constructionist perspective as the process of social interaction between individuals is important in the creation of meaning and understanding of reality. Throughout my interviews with counselling psychologists, I invited them to reflect on their journeys into the profession, and to share stories about their experiences. In doing so, I obtained information about their experiences with the practice of psychology within a Canadian context.

I discuss the findings of the study in this chapter. In order to organize this discussion, I divide the chapter into five sections. I begin by outlining the objectives of the study followed by discussing the findings with reference to relevant literature. After discussing the findings, I consider the limitations and implications of this research as well as directions for future research. I finish the chapter with a personal reflection and final conclusions.

Study Objectives

The first objective of this study was to examine the experiences of counselling psychologists in their profession related to their EA upbringing. A second objective was to add to the body of literature regarding the impact of multicultural factors on the profession of counselling psychology. The final objective of this study was to increase knowledge and awareness concerning the experiences of counsellors of EA descent as they undergo training in Western psychological methods and theory.

Discussion of Research Findings

The data for this study was collected through the use of participant interviews. Analysis of this data revealed four categories of themes: (a) Cultural Values, (b) Personal Cultural Identity Formation, (c) Relation to Practice, and (d) Personal Information.

Cultural Values

It has been suggested that there are significant differences between Western and Eastern cultures in relation to values, customs, and concepts of self (Duan et al., 2011). Participants acknowledged that they observed differences in values during their upbringing as an individual of EA descent living in a Western context. The emphasis that is placed on being independent and having freedom from the family unit was the most prominent difference identified. Overall, participants felt that Western culture focused on individualism as it places importance on the individual's ability to be independent. This independence was discussed in relation to the ability of the individual to make choices for themselves, and to survive and prosper without help from the family.

This is in contrast with Asian American cultural values that promote interdependence among family members, places strong emphasis on allegiance to one's parents, and is related to filial piety (Atkinson et al., 1998). Consequently, many participants discussed the importance of placing the family's needs ahead of their own during their upbringing.

For most participants, having a hard work ethic related to educational achievement and career success was also discussed as a prominent EA cultural value. Success was determined by financial wealth that was achieved as the result of one's position in school and in their career. Children's success allowed parents to obtain an

elevated status as they competed with other members of the EA community. This competition for success is congruent with the elements of social image and social wealth associated with “face concern,” as identified by Mak and Chen (2008); and has been found to be common in the Asian American community (Chen & Mak, 2008; Kim, Ng, & Ahn, 2005; Mak & Chen, 2008). Many participants in this study attributed this to the concept of “saving face,” such that the family’s appearances to the community must be revered. Through obtaining a high level of education that leads to the performance of social roles with elevated levels of prestige that are recognized by others, the family’s “face” could be elevated (Mak & Chen, 2008).

One of the consequences associated with the desire to save face discussed by participants was the unacceptable expression of negative emotions. Concerns that may negatively impact the family’s status in the community were taught to remain private. Often times this would mean that individuals would have to endure these negative situations alone. Previous research has found that rather than encouraging emotional expression, EA culture places emphasis on emotional restraint in order to avoid potential face-losing situations (Chen & Mak, 2008; Mak & Chen, 2008). Privacy and emotional silence helped to ensure that negative and potentially damaging information related to the family would not be made available to the community. The result of this need for emotional silence, as described by participants, was a lack of emotional vocabulary related to self-expression. This made it difficult to relate to this emotional language later in life. This was found to not only be in relation to their education in psychology, but in terms of relationships with peers as well.

Many participants also discussed persistence as an important value that was found to be related to emotional silence and privacy. Participants described persistence in relation to enduring and tolerating hardships as negative emotions were viewed as a nuisance, or as an unacceptable topic of discussion amongst EA culture. This value for persistence is related to the expectation for individuals to suppress emotional problems, place little importance on them, or to have little concern over them (Mak & Chen, 2008). This was found to be in contrast with the Western culture that allows for freedom of expression.

Participants observed that it is more common for individuals of Western cultures to be expressive and to share their emotions with others. This was said to be true even for situations aside from seeking professional help from a counselling psychologist. Participants felt that it was more encouraged and accepted in Western cultures to speak openly to friends, or to strangers, regarding personal difficulties, troubles, or worries. Some participants found that this openness and acceptance from Western culture provided them with a much needed outlet in relation to the expression of negative emotions. Previous research has supported these observations that participants made regarding Western culture. Chen and Mak (2008) argued that Western cultures place greater significance on interactions between people and the environment when considering personal problems; whereas collectivistic cultures, such as the EA culture, believe that personal problems are internal and personal causes. The greater recognition that is given to the interactive component helps to account for the acceptance of speaking openly to others regarding private matters that is observed in Western culture.

Despite the fact that some participants felt that there were advantages associated with the freedom to express emotions in Western cultures, honouring the sacrifices that parents have made for their children was identified as a motivating factor for participants to adhere to emotional silence and privacy components discussed. Obedience was found to be a major contributor in honouring the family. This obedience was expected from children, and some participants shared stories of the impact of this obedience during their upbringing, including choice of friends, choice of career, and the impact on their personality. Kim (2004) found that the values associated with EA populations' allegiance to the family, interdependency amongst family members, and respect and authority associated with elders has contributed to the high prevalence of obedience in EA cultures.

Personal Cultural Identity Formation

The multiple dimensions of culture are fundamental components to understanding an individual's experiences and behaviours (Arthur & Collins, 2010; Collins, Arthur, & Wong-Wylie, 2010), as well as shaping an individual's values, behaviours, and attitudes (Cheung, 2000; Duan et al., 2011; Pedersen, 2003). Reflections on counselling psychologist's professional and personal socialization with regards to culture provided a deeper understanding of the individual. Many of the participants in this study defined their cultural identity as a balance of both EA and Western – particularly Canadian – cultures that was largely attributed to time spent living within a Canadian context. Participants shared stories about the varying influences that their experiences living in Canada have had on their cultural identification. This is consistent with previous research that has found that contextual factors play a role in influencing cultural identity.

Arthur and Collins (2010) suggested that an individual's cultural identity evolves as the result of interaction with the world around them. This evolution has the effect of influencing values, perspectives, and behaviour.

The balance between EA and Western identity discussed by participants was largely attributed to exposure to the dominant Canadian culture to which they were exposed. From education, to neighbours, to friends and spouses, the influence of the dominant culture was acknowledged by participants in the role that it played in shaping their identity. Arthur and Collins (2010) have suggested that as cultures undergo interaction, change to the culture occurs as a result. This is consistent with some participants in this study that felt that they have embraced the Canadian culture, which has helped to change their understanding of their own culture.

Culture is said to be defined by the collective experiences of the individual, and is thus a continually evolving construct (Arthur & Collins, 2010). This was true for 1 participant in this study who found it difficult to identify herself with a specific culture. Despite being born and raised in both Canadian and EA cultures, aspects of these cultures were not congruent with this individual. As a result, definitions of her personal cultural identity were found to undergo continual change.

Relation to Practice

It has been argued that the practice of Western psychology is culturally encapsulated such that it is rooted in Euro-American values that place emphasis on individualism, independence, and empirical thinking (Cheung, 2000; Hwang, 2009; Kim, Ng, & Ahn, 2009; Leung, 2003; Leong & Ponterotto, 2003; Marsella & Pedersen, 2004; Zhang & Dixon, 2011). Participants were asked about the predominant Western cultural

values that they believe psychology is based upon as this has been found to influence the practice of psychology (Cheung, 2000; Hwang, 2009; Leung, 2003; Leong & Ponterotto, 2003; Marsella & Pedersen, 2004). Many of the counselling psychologists in this study confirmed the influence of Euro-American assumptions on the practice of psychology.

An emphasis on individualism was identified by several participants. It has been argued that the concept of mental health in North America is rooted in the conceptualization that individuals are autonomous beings whose behaviours are determined by their internal attributes (Hwang, 2009). In this study, Western psychological theory and interventions were discussed in relation to the focus that is placed on helping individual clients to establish their own agency, as well as helping the individual explore their available choices and alternatives. Some participants enjoyed this individualistic focus as it allowed the work with clients to be more concentrated, thus ensuring that the needs of the client are met.

Discontent with the individualistic focus of Western psychology was also discussed by participants and was found to be related to their EA cultural upbringing. In particular, the emphasis on collectivism was found to influence some counselling psychologists to consider the importance of the relational aspects of the individual. This is supported by literature stating that specific values related to EA cultures have been found to impact the work of psychologists (Kim et al., 2009; Kuo, 2004; Zhang & Dixon, 2011). Marsella and Pedersen (2004) also cautioned that insensitivity to cultural variations among individuals, in addition to quick and simple solutions to problems, results from this culturally encapsulated focus on the individual. Participants found the focus on an individual removed from their social context to be an isolating and restrictive

approach to psychology as environmental and relational considerations are also important.

Counselling psychologists also discussed the importance that Western psychology places on successfully attaining open communication from the client in discussing their problems and associated emotions. This was discussed as a foreign concept for many individuals of EA descent, where the values of emotional silence, saving face, and persistence are promoted by the culture (Chen & Mak, 2008). As a result, some participants experienced struggles during their training in Western psychology, as well during their work with individuals of EA descent.

The literature shows that cultural considerations are important within the counselling context, although consideration for the influence of counsellors' cultural upbringing in their work in psychology is not well understood (Duan et al., 2012; Leong & Ponterotto, 2003; Leong & Savickas, 2007; Marsella & Pedersen, 2004). Generally speaking, counselling psychologists of EA descent who were interviewed for this study did not find the acceptance of Western psychology to be difficult as the result of their upbringing. In fact, the presence of psychology was viewed as an important part of their lives as it provided a way of relating to the world that was not previously available to them. Many participants shared stories from their childhood about feeling the need for emotional expression, or a different way of relating to other individuals. However, due to their EA cultural upbringing, these conversations were not made available. Training in counselling psychology helped to fill this deficit in participant's lives by providing a means to discuss their problems and emotions openly without feeling judged, or having fear that they would bring shame to their family as a result. Thus, counselling

psychologists that participated in this study found Western psychology to be fulfilling. This is in contrast with some research that suggests that Western psychology would benefit from a deeper understanding and respect for differences in values, such as those between individualism and collectivism (Duan et al., 2011; Marsella & Pedersen, 2004).

While participants felt that psychology helped to fill a deficit in their lives, they also discussed the struggles that they needed to overcome associated with their EA upbringing in order to become a competent counselling psychologist. Participants found that it was difficult at times to overcome the passive, humble, and private nature that is emphasized in EA culture. In order to become effective as a therapist, counselling psychologists needed to challenge these values, learning when it is appropriate to take charge in therapeutic relationships, and when to ask private questions of clients. This process was described as an underdeveloped skill as a result of participant's EA upbringing.

Culture was also found to play a role in influencing the theoretical approach chosen by counsellors. Similar to discussions regarding the importance of considering relational aspects in psychology, participants discussed the value given to choosing a theoretical approach that allowed them to focus on the factors consistent with their EA values. Narrative therapy was discussed as one example of an approach to psychology which allows the counsellor to remain client-driven, and to work with the individual in a relational context. The intention behind narrative therapy has been said to help with the deconstruction of negative stories that have been shaping an individual's life in unhelpful ways (Parry & Doan, 1994). These negative stories are said to lead people to construct negative conclusions of themselves, their world, and their relationships with others

(White & Epston, 1990). The strengths-based and relational components of narrative therapy were discussed by participants as offering an approach that fits with their cultural upbringing.

Despite the willingness of counselling psychology to consider contextual properties of an individual's experience and the apparent embracement of multicultural considerations (Lalande, 2004; Sadeghi, Fischer, & House, 2003), training programs in counselling psychology have been found to have difficulty in preparing professionals for work with clients of diverse backgrounds (Arthur & Archenbach, 2002; Arthur & Collins, 2010). This lack of training related to multicultural considerations was also highlighted by participants in this study. Counselling psychologists spoke of their lack of training in multicultural counselling throughout their graduate programs, indicating that there was not enough emphasis on these considerations, and in one instance, a multicultural counselling course was not offered. Although participants indicated that there have been changes to present training programs from when they were students, the importance of this deficit in training among practicing professionals in the field is of interest to note, as debates regarding the importance of multiculturalism within counselling psychology persist.

In relation to their work with clients, counselling psychologists found that it was more important to treat each individual as a distinct being, rather than altering their approach on preconceived stereotypes. Horvath (2000) has previously found that work in counselling psychology must be personally rewarding and relevant for the individual in order to be successful. Counselling psychologists that participated in this study found this to be true, as they discussed the importance of maintaining client-driven practice.

This meant that it is up to the client to determine whether or not cultural influences are relevant within the counselling context. Previous research supports this notion that attention must be given to individual differences and cultural diversity as this client-driven practice is thought to be indicative of a competent psychologist (Rodolfa et al., 2005).

In order to achieve this goal of maintaining their competence as psychologists as well as client-driven practice, counselling psychologists indicated that they needed to undergo continued self-reflection in order to adjust their role and approach to suit each individual client. As described in Chapter 2, self-awareness of one's beliefs and attitudes regarding values, personal assumptions, and biases has been said to act as the foundation upon which psychologists may enhance their multicultural counselling competence (MCC; Collins, Arthur, & Wong-Wylie, 2010). The process of self-reflection was found to be different for each individual, and was largely associated with experiences related to the practice of counselling psychology. Each counselling psychologist shared stories of how their previous experiences of success with clients have helped to improve their ability to work with the individual. This reflection included an examination of the counselling psychologist's beliefs, values, biases and assumptions, and knowledge of when to address cultural discrepancies. Attending to these factors are important in demonstrating MCC (Sehgal et al., 2011).

There were many advantages that were identified by counselling psychologists that was attributed to being raised in an EA culture. The major advantage that was identified was having an experiential knowledge base to draw upon during their work with clients. This advantage has not been documented in the literature to my knowledge,

and represents an important consideration in the development of competent multicultural counselling psychologists. According to the College of Alberta Psychologists (2012), the display of competence in working with individuals of differing cultural backgrounds requires counselling psychologists to have knowledge of the client's culture and to possess adequate skills in working with cultural differences. The participants in this study spoke of how their upbringing in an EA household provided an experiential knowledge that could not be learned during their training in school. The knowledge component of MCC refers to the counselling psychologist's knowledge of other cultural groups, as well as an understanding of the individual's worldview that may influence the work within a counselling context (Sehgal et al., 2011).

The experiential knowledge gained through an EA upbringing provided participants with an awareness of potential cultural barriers that could influence their work with clients. This allowed counselling psychologists to better relate to their clients through the use of examples – such as metaphors and proverbs – that could help enhance the understanding for their client. This finding is consistent with literature which has found that culture impacts how we respond to and understand our problems or concerns (Arthur & Collins, 2010; Cheung, 2000). This experiential knowledge also played a role in helping counselling psychologists identify with their clients on a different level based on shared values, experiences and vocabulary. Support for this finding is discussed by Kim, Ng, and Ahn (2005) who argued that “the more the counselling participants share an understanding of each other's worlds, the easier it may be to form a therapeutic relationship” (p. 73). In addition, it has been suggested that in order to practice multicultural counselling, psychologists “need an awareness and an understanding of

their own cultural group in addition to an awareness and an understanding of other cultural groups” (Richardson & Molinaro, 2001). An upbringing in an EA household was found to be important in guiding this awareness and understanding of their own culture, as well as other cultures.

A further advantage that was discussed was having shared language with the client. Counselling psychologists shared stories of how their ability to speak an EA dialect facilitated better communication with the client. Previous research by Ramos-Sánchez (2009) suggests that bilingual ability allows for greater client comfort within the counselling session due to the ability to communicate in the language they are most comfortable with, and also allows for greater emotional expression, and the ability for “language-specific personalities” (p. 311) to emerge. Indeed, participants in this study described the importance of being able to speak an EA dialect with an EA client as it allowed them to better understand and facilitate communication with that client. This was also discussed as providing the client with a sense of security that may be present due to a language barrier with other psychologists.

A final topic of discussion in relation to participants’ practice in counselling psychology was the impact that their EA heritage had based on physical appearances alone. Physical appearances were discussed in a positive manner as it allowed other clients of EA descent to feel immediately more comfortable with the psychologist. Kim, Ng, and Ahn (2009) previously found that Asian Americans favour counsellors that they perceived as Asian Americans as well. The influence of the EA counselling psychologist’s physical appearance was also discussed in regards to the role that it plays in work with clients from other cultures. Participants shared stories of how this has

helped clients behave more patiently with them as they are more willing to consider the differences in culture as an explanation to the lack of understanding.

Limitations of the Study

A major limitation in this study was the geographic location of the participants recruited to take part in this study. Due to limited time and resources, only those counselling psychologists residing in three major cities within the province of Alberta (Calgary, Edmonton, and Red Deer) were contacted regarding potential recruitment for this project. Of those contacted, only those located in Calgary and Edmonton agreed to participate. I did not attempt to recruit participants from other Canadian provinces, although consideration was given to this possibility of conducting interviews via conference call or Skype with those counselling psychologists located in Vancouver, British Columbia. Thus, although I look to address how counsellors of EA descent experience the practice of psychology in Canada, my representation of counselling psychologists within a Canadian context is minimal.

A further limitation for this study is my representation of the EA population. The definition I used to describe individuals of EA descent included China, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Macao, Mongolia, and Taiwan (Dictionary, 2012), which my sample of counselling psychologists does not fully represent. I was only able to obtain participation from 1 psychologist of Korean descent, while the remaining 5 participants had cultures of origin in China and Hong Kong. As such, there was no representation for individuals from the other EA countries, which may have offered different insights in relation to the primary research question.

Data was collected through the use of a semi-structured interview, and as such, the questions chosen for this interview may have influenced the participants' responses. However, it is important to note that participants were encouraged at the onset of the interview to deviate from the questions if they felt that there was other information that they deemed to be important.

The subjective nature of the data collected and analyzed through the use of narrative analysis is another potential limitation for this study. As narrative analysis does not prescribe step-by-step instructions on how to analyze the data (Frank, 2010), choosing instead to rely on the interpretations of the researcher, it may be said that my interpretations represent only one of many possibilities to be explored, and are influenced by my personal, cultural, and historical experiences (Creswell, 2007).

In addition to the influences of my interpretations, a final limitation of the study stems from my prior knowledge on this subject due to my personal experience as a counselling psychologist in training who is also of EA descent. This prior experience had the potential to create expectations for the data that I had collected, as well as to influence my interviews with participants. However, in recognizing the potential for biases in this study, I engaged in constant self-reflection, incorporated assistance from colleagues to ensure the accuracy of my results, and sought supervisory feedback.

Implications of Research

Qualitative research is not intended to be generalizable. Instead, the goal is to provide insight into the experiences of the counselling psychologists who participated. This study highlights the need for continued efforts to be placed into understanding cultural impacts in the field of psychology. Through the examples that I have provided

from this investigation, I demonstrated that counselling psychologists' experiences with the practice of psychology differed based on their EA cultural upbringing. There was no universal or automatic alteration in their approach to counselling psychology that was consistent across all participants. Subtle alterations were discussed by some participants as being related to their cultural upbringing, or the cultural upbringing of the client.

Implications for Counselling Psychology

The results of my research also have implications for the practical application of psychological theory within a counselling context. Interviews with counselling psychologists highlighted the advantage that their EA descent provided as a product of their upbringing in a multicultural background. This supports Arthur and Archenbach's (2002) recommendation for experiential learning as an important method to further connect theory and practice related to cultural issues in counselling psychology. By using examples from interviews with counselling psychologists, I demonstrated the importance that was associated with having an experiential knowledge base to draw upon when working with individuals of similar cultural descent. This allowed counselling psychologists to be better able to relate to and support these individuals, which was reported to improve the therapeutic process.

The process of displaying MCC is said to be accompanied by a depth of self-reflective practice in order for the individual to better understand themselves, their racial or cultural identities, and their biases (Arthur & Collins, 2010). The results of this study also highlight the importance of reflecting on the role that a psychologist's personal cultural experiences have played in shaping their understandings and work as a professional.

Directions for Future Research

In future research, I recommend researchers utilize a larger sample of counselling psychologist from differing provinces within Canada in order to obtain a sample which is more representative of the country. As different provinces are given the authority to determine the licensing requirements of psychologists within Canada, the requirements are said to differ from jurisdiction to jurisdiction (Canadian Psychological Association, 2012b). As some provinces require a doctorate degree in order to be registered as a psychologist (Canadian Psychological Association, 2012b), samples may be different as a result of these different training experiences.

A more diverse representation of the EA population is another direction for future research. Due to the inability to secure counselling psychologists other than those of Chinese and Korean descent, cultural perspectives and values of other EA populations were not represented in this study. While I have provided initial considerations for the importance of focusing on this topic, a larger and more diverse sample population will provide a more comprehensive understanding of this topic.

Future research should also further examine the specific impact that experiential knowledge and physical appearances of counselling psychologists play in the therapeutic relationship with clients. This study provided initial considerations for these topics. Future research that hopes to better understand these impacts may help to provide important considerations for the advancement of multicultural counselling.

Personal Reflection

At the onset of this project, I was interested in the role that my background as an individual of EA descent who is training in counselling psychology played in shaping the

research question. Through self-reflection, I identified particular differences between the collectivistic focus of EA cultural values and Western theories and models of psychology that place emphasis on the individual. I was concerned with whether or not these differences continue to play a role for psychologists as they practice counselling within the Canadian context. This led to my interest in how counselling psychologists shared stories about their personal experiences as they reflected on the cultural aspects of their work.

I recognized that my presence as an EA counselling psychologist in training would influence my approach to this project. At the onset of this study, I reflected upon the biases and assumptions that I held prior to conducting interviews with participants. I recognized that my experience through my master's degree and practicum experiences have led me to identify specific instances in which my cultural upbringing did not adhere to my training in counselling psychology. These reflections were important to consider as I began the interview process with participants. As such, I approached this research from a social constructionist standpoint, thus allowing me to reflect upon my role in the co-construction of narratives through which I hoped to generate meaning relevant to the profession of counselling psychology. Further, I applied Riessman's (2008a) dialogic-performative approach to narrative analysis in order to examine the ways in which interaction between EA counsellors and myself played a role in the process of co-construction of these experience-centred narratives.

The 6 counselling psychologists that participated in this study did so despite of their busy personal and professional schedules because they recognized the importance of this reflective practice. I am thankful that they too saw the importance of this reflective

practice in the advancement of the profession of counselling psychology. In a number of interviews I received positive feedback indicating that my study allowed these counselling psychologists to reflect on the impact that their cultural upbringing has had on their current practice. Narrative research has been said to offer a means through which both the researcher and the researched will learn and change following the interaction (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2006). I hope that I have truly contributed to their continued evolution as psychologists.

Conclusion

In this research I engaged counselling psychologists in discussions about their personal experiences with psychology in Canada. I focused my analysis on how counselling psychologists constructed and shared stories related to their experiences with training, understanding, and practice of psychology. I also paid attention to how the questions that I asked prompted the construction of these stories, as well as how my questions may have served to enhance the process of reflection and meaning making during this process. As a result, I reflected on how these stories were co-constructed and co-edited through this process.

I found that through this process of narrative exploration, the participants and I were able to reflect on the many important considerations associated with being a counsellor of EA descent. Experiential knowledge afforded to counsellors due to the diversity of their backgrounds should be examined further and given more attention within training programs. Encouragement for experiential training of counselling psychologists may be an important method to help them relate to their clients, and provide competent psychological services. Consideration for the impact that cultural

values play on understanding how the individual makes sense of the world and in the formation of their identity is an important consideration for psychologists. Thus, it is important for counselling psychologists to reflect on their own personal experiences with cultural influences in order to gain a better understanding of how these influences impact the therapeutic process. To illustrate the importance that culture plays in the counselling context, I conclude with a passage from my interview with Ester, in which we discussed her opinions on the role of culture in psychology.

I believe culture is everything; counselling is about culture. If you can't understand the culture of that person, you can't help that person because they don't feel understood and they don't feel accepted, and there is no way you can help them... and culture is really in the background, it's a learning process – it's ongoing. You can't [simply] take a course and think you understand it. (Ester, 50)

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Agency Email

Dear (Contact person's name):

My name is Kingsley Chan, I am a graduate student in Counselling Psychology at the University of Calgary; and I am writing you this email to request your help with my research.

This research hopes to answer the question: How do counsellors of East-Asian descent experience practice of counselling psychology in Canada? I am using the term "East-Asian descent" to refer to any individual with cultural descent from China, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Macao, Mongolia, Singapore, and Taiwan. I am looking to conduct individual, audio-recorded interviews with counselling psychologists providing assistance to clients for a period of one year or more. The interview will take approximately one and a half hours to complete, to engage participants in conversations about the differences (if any) that they have observed between Western psychology and cultural values that may have been instilled as a child. This research project has been approved by the University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Board.

In my initial stages of recruitment, I would like to distribute recruitment posters (see attached) in staff areas of your agency to increase awareness of my project with those psychologists who meet the above criteria.

If you are interested in helping me with my research project, or would like further clarification, please feel free to contact me at klfchan@ucalgary.ca. I would like to thank you in advanced for your consideration. I look forward to discussing this topic with you

further in the near future.

Regards,

Kingsley Chan

Appendix B

Recruitment Poster

How do East-Asian Counsellors Experience Practice of Psychology in Canada?

Do you identify yourself as East-Asian?

Do you feel like this identity influences your work in counselling psychology?

You are invited to participate in a research project.

The purpose of this project is to examine the experience of East-Asian (including China, Hong Kong, Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Macao, and Mongolia) counselling psychologists reflecting on their personal and professional experiences of the differences between East-Asian cultural values and Western psychological methodology in the province of Alberta. This is important to the development of culturally sensitive counselling practices. If you are interested in participating, please contact Kingsley Chan.

Kingsley Chan Email: kfchan@ucalgary.ca Mobile: (780) 266-8823

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY EDUCATION

Appendix C

Recruitment Email

Dear Mr./Ms/Mrs:

My name is Kingsley Chan, I am a graduate student in Counselling Psychology at the University of Calgary. Thank you for agreeing to take time out of your schedule to consider my research project, it is greatly appreciated.

In my study I am exploring the question: How do counsellors of East-Asian descent experience practice of counselling psychology in Canada? I am using the term "East-Asian descent" to refer to any individual with cultural descent from China, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Macao, Mongolia, Singapore, and Taiwan. I will conduct individual, audio-recorded interviews which will take approximately one and a half hours to complete, to engage participants in conversations about the differences (if any) that they have observed between Western psychology and cultural values that may have been instilled as a child. This research project has been approved by the University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Board.

If you are interested in helping me with my research project, or would like further clarification, please feel free to contact me at klfchan@ucalgary.ca. I would like to thank you in advanced for your consideration. I look forward to discussing this topic with you further in the near future.

Regards,

Kingsley Chan

Appendix D

Consent Form

Name of Researcher, Faculty, Department, Telephone & Email:

Mr. Kingsley Chan
Faculty of Education, Department of Educational Studies in Counselling Psychology
(780) 266-8823; klfchan@ucalgary.ca

Supervisor:

Dr. Helen Massfeller, Faculty of Education, Department of Educational Studies in Counselling Psychology

Title of Project:

East-Asian Counselling Psychologists' Experience of Psychology in Canada.

This consent form, a copy of which has been given to you, is only part of the process of informed consent. If you want more details about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

The University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board has approved this research study.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

I am a graduate student in the Faculty of Education at the University of Calgary. As part of my Master's thesis, I am conducting research under the supervision of Dr. Helen Massfeller, and am inviting you to participate in my research study. The purpose of my study is to explore experiences of East Asian Counselling Psychologists reflecting on their experience with the differences encountered between their cultural values and Western psychological methods as they practice psychology in Canada.

WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO?

This interview will require approximately one and a half hours of your time, and will be audio recorded using an mp3 recording device for later data analysis. A semi-structured interview will be used to guide the interview; however, as the focus of this research study is your lived experience as a psychologist, you are encouraged to alter the interview protocol as you see necessary.

This study will help to further enrich understanding of culturally sensitive practice for psychologists. This is an opportunity to share your experience of your unique multiculturalism. **Your decision to participate in this study is completely voluntary.** You may withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. If at anytime you feel uncomfortable with the questions asked, or feel like you need to take a break, please feel free to communicate this. If you choose to withdraw from the study, any data collected until the point of withdrawal will be stored and potentially used to report the final findings.

WHAT TYPE OF PERSONAL INFORMATION WILL BE COLLECTED?

Information pertaining to your sex, country of origin, cultural identification and years of experience as a psychologist will be collected. All information obtained in this study will be kept strictly **confidential**. Necessary precautions will be taken to help protect your anonymity and confidentiality during the process of reporting research data collected. All identifying information will be removed from the collected materials, and you may select a pseudonym to be used throughout the process of data collection, data analysis, and reporting of the results.

Despite my best efforts to remove identifying information and keep your participation in this study confidential, there is the possibility that other individual's at your place of employment may become aware of your participation in this study due to the presence of this researcher. However, information pertaining to your involvement in this study will not be discussed with these individuals.

ARE THERE RISKS OR BENEFITS IF I PARTICIPATE?

The purpose of this research project is to focus on your unique experience as a psychologist, owing to your multicultural upbringing. There is the possibility, however, that you may become fatigued during the course of this conversation, or upset while discussing this topic. In the event that sensitive or disturbing material is revealed through the course of the interview, please contact:

In Calgary: Distress Centre of Calgary at (403) 266-1605
In Edmonton: The Support Network at (780) 482-4357

Or another agency in your area which you are aware of.

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE INFORMATION I PROVIDE?

All information obtained in this study will be kept strictly **confidential**. All identifying information will be removed from the collected materials. You may select a pseudonym to be used throughout the process of data collection, data analysis, and reporting of the results, which may include direct quotes from interviews. All materials will be stored on a password protected computer document, and all physical files will be stored in a locked filing cabinet at the private home of this researcher. Data that has been collected will be kept for a period of 5 years from the collection date, after which, all written materials will be shredded and audiotapes will be destroyed. Access to this data will be limited to the researcher, supervisor, transcribers, and potential future researchers. All data collected in this research project will be used for the purposes of this researcher's completion of a Masters degree in Counselling Psychology.

Material that is discussed throughout the course of this research study may be quoted directly, although your anonymity and confidentiality will be protected during these instances. Results of this study will be presented in the context of overall themes, rather than individual findings. Due to the sensitive nature of the material discussed, and the research methodology selected, it is considered an important step to allow the participant the opportunity to review the findings of this research study for overall accuracy. Please initial beside the box if you wish to review the material:

	I wish to review the transcripts, or other data collected during the research pertaining to my participation. Changes must be communicated to the researcher within 14 days of receiving the results. Please note, the lack of response within the time period will be taken as approval of the materials as is.
--	--

SIGNATURES (WRITTEN CONSENT)

Your signature on this form indicates that you 1) understand to your satisfaction the information provided to you about your participation in this research project, and 2) agree to participate as a research subject.

In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the investigators, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from this research project at any time. You should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

Participant's Name: (please print) _____

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's Name: (please print) _____

Researcher's Signature: _____ Date: _____

QUESTIONS/CONCERNS

If you have any further questions or want clarification regarding this research and/or your participation, please contact:

Mr. Kingsley Chan
Educational Studies in Psychology, Faculty of Education
(780) 266-8823, whatever.study@gmail.com

Dr. Helen F. Massfeller
Educational Studies in Psychology, Faculty of Education
(403) 220-3866, hfmassfe@ucalgary.ca

If you have any concerns about the way you've been treated as a participant, please contact the Senior Ethics Resource Officer, Research Services Office, University of Calgary at (403) 220-3782; email rburrows@ucalgary.ca.

A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference. The investigator has kept a copy of the consent form.

Appendix E

Semi-structured Interview

Speech intended to be repeated to participants in plain font, notes for researcher in italics.

Obtaining Consent

- Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study. This is a copy of the consent form that describes in further detail the purpose of the study, what you will be required to do, as well as how the information obtained will be handled, and how the results of this study will be communicated. Please review it and sign when you are ready. If you have any questions about the consent form, please ask and I will provide clarification.

Allow participant time to review the consent form. After obtaining consent, be sure to draw participant's attention to the "counselling resources available in Calgary" section of the consent form, informing them that these resources are offered should they become distressed through the process of the interviews.

Obtaining Background information

- Would you like to select a pseudonym that will be used for data collection and reporting purposes? *If yes:* What would you like the pseudonym to be?
- What is your sex?
- Where is your country of birth?
- What is culture do you most define yourself with?
- How many years have you been practicing in Canada as a counselling psychologist?

Record responses.

Conducting the Interview

- What are the values that you grew up with that you would ascribe to your upbringing within the East-Asian culture?
- What are the major differences between your culture and Western culture?
- What do you see as the major cultural assumptions that Western psychology is based on?
- What are your experiences, interpretations, and understanding of the training that you have received thus far in relation to counselling psychology?
- How have the values that you identified in the previous question influenced your acceptance of Western psychological theories, if at all?

If vague response given:

- Tell me about a specific instance when the values that you were brought up with influenced your acceptance of Western psychological theories.
- How have the values that you identified as related to your upbringing in the East-Asian culture influenced your counselling practice in Canada, if at all?

If vague response given:

- Tell me about a specific instance when the values related to your upbringing in East-Asian culture influenced your counselling practice.
- What Kind of adjustment/changes have you had to make in practicing psychology so that it fit with your cultural values?

Closing Statement

- I would like to thank you for your participation in this research study. Do you have any questions for me at this time?

Record any questions asked.

- Thank you once again for your contribution.