The Impact of Social Networks on the Work-Life Choices of South Asian Women in Ontario, Canada by Anju Philip| Transcript | CIRCLE

Vinay Kanetkar:

Hello, everyone! Hello, everyone! My name is Vinay Kanetkar. I am the director of CIRCLE. On behalf of CIRCLE, I want to welcome Anju Philips. Anju is currently a PhD Candidate at Gordon S. Lang School of Business and Economics, University of Guelph.

Her research is about organizational behaviour and leadership. Specifically, she is interested in the work-life balance, social networks, racialized employees. She has over a decade of academic and industrial experience. She is currently working at the University of Waterloo. In Arts and Business program and Department of Psychology. Welcome Anju.

Anju Philip:

I'm gonna go ahead and share my screen.

Vinay Kanetkar:

Okay, thank you.

Anju Philip:

Can everyone see that? Okay.

Vinay Kanetkar:

Yeah.

Anju Philip:

Okay. Okay. Great. Good morning to all of you, once again. I just wanted to start off by thanking you all for being here. It's a really great avenue to be able to share my experiences with the research I'm doing, and thank you especially to CIRCLE for even suggesting this opportunity; giving me an opportunity to share my research with the broader CIRCLE community. And to all of you who are here today to just support and to learn more about South Asian women and their social networks.

So, the title of my study was "The Impact of Social Networks on the Work-life Choices of South Asian Women in Ontario, Canada." This is also the title and focus of my dissertation research, which I am hoping to defend in a couple of weeks. So, this is a brief agenda of what I plan to cover today, as part of this presentation this morning.

Okay, so I'm just gonna go over a bit of the background and purpose first to the study. Something I have heard, and I'm assuming most newcomers have heard as they entered and

integrated into Canadian society is the word 'multiculturalism'. And multiculturalism is just a distinguishing feature of Canadian society. The overall idea behind it is that there's freedom for all members of Canadian society, to either preserve their own cultural heritage, as well as share it.

And so Canada naturally, by default then, is a multicultural work force. And this work force continues to grow in diversity year by year. Especially with the increased levels of immigration. Just, for example, in 2022 alone, Canada welcomed over 440,000 immigrants. However, what the research shows us is that despite the high levels of educational attainment and work experience of immigrants. Visible minorities, and in particular visible minority women, continue to face discrimination when they try to enter the workforce, and within the workforce as well.

And so they've been increased calls by researchers, by practitioners, by society. For improved diversity management in the workplace. I started off with the idea of exploring the work-life experiences that are faced by South Asian women who actually belong to the largest visible minority here in this country.

And as a woman of South Asian ancestry, I have a personal interest in investigating their experiences. My own parents were expatriate workers, and I am also a first-generation immigrant to this country. And you know, even though I've only spent about— I'm going to say a quarter of my my lifetime living in India, in South Asia. And not even my formative years. I think the one aspect of my life that remains fairly constant, I would say, is my ethnic identity.

You know, my sense of belonging as a Kerala Indian, or broadly as a South Asian. And so, you know, I've witnessed firsthand the juggling abilities of working South Asian women, including my mom, who engaged in paid work, they took care of their homes and children, they contributed to their communities through voluntary activities.

And so what we see in scholarly research is that you know, especially about culture, is that South Asians are known to exhibit high collective service. And so this just means that they display higher levels of interdependence within members of the community. So one way to understand the work and life experiences of these South Asian women is to actually examine the social information they receive.

Who they're receiving it from, and how that social information actually will influence choices about work and life. And this can. You know. So basically, what I did was I ended up looking at social network analysis. To consider the multiple connections and relationships, which you know, they often provide and enhance opportunities that sometimes can pressurize to conform. They can also restrict opportunities for individuals.

So, what you see on this slide is my overall objectives as I just started my research. The study itself was exploratory. The aim was to understand and report experiences of this particular sample, that is, South Asian women in Ontario, Canada. And the aim was to provide them with a voice and a stage, you know, especially in the field of OB and HRM. And in doing so, hopefully, to provide recommendations to both practitioners as well as to inform future research.

And so, I'm going to provide, I'm gonna highlight some of my literature review, especially as it pertains to the research questions. And so to start off with, I'm going to define who I'm referring to as South Asian women in Canada. So the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, that's SAARC, they define South Asians as those who have origins or ancestry in one or more of these 8 countries. And so the term South Asian itself is used to homogenize this group of people.

And to an extent, there are many shared attributes. But I do want to make it clear that there is a great deal of heterogeneity between the members of this group as well, and this could be differences in languages spoken. It could be the food, it could be dressing, it could be religions And so, this particular study requires that ethnic identity be taken into consideration. So just to define what ethnic identity is, it is broadly defined as that commitment and sense of belonging that individuals have, when they have membership in an ethnic group.

And so just a few important stats that might set the stage to understanding South Asian women's experiences here in Canada. Participation rate for South Asian women is much lower than the general population of women. It's also interesting to note that the participation rate for immigrant South Asian women is usually lower than Canadian-born South Asian women.

And so this is something that has been consistently shown in the past 3—the data that was collected in the past 3 census. And so a similar trend is noted with unemployment. We see that the unemployment rate is higher for immigrant South Asian women compared to their Canadian-born counterparts, as well as other women in the general population of women. And something to note as well, is that during the COVID-19 pandemic, out of the visible minorities, South Asian unemployment rates was actually the highest.

We also see that, compared to 30% of the rest of the population of women, who are university educated, South Asian women have a much higher percentage with 47 of them, 47% having a university degree or higher. But what we do see is that out of that 47% who have a university degree, 71% of them are not actually working in jobs that require that degree, or in that specific field of expertise.

There is a lot of discrimination in hiring, and within the workplace. And there are many experiences that, you know, that I could talk about, when we tried to give you a better idea of South Asians, but I am going to focus on just a few of them, the things that were most important to the research.

What we first see is that South Asian women report experiencing a lot of difficulties in, you know the hiring practices that are taking place in Canada. So, what they see is, there's a lot of discrimination. Especially a devaluation of foreign credentials, experience. There are a lot of perceptions and stereotypes about immigrants, as you see on this slide, as well as discrimination based on religious background.

And so there are also assumptions about cultural traits. And a lack of membership, a mentorship opportunity. Sorry. Once South Asian women actually enter the workforce. And so,

as I mentioned before, you know, a collective world view is a core cultural pattern among South Asians. And so what we see is that they do what they need to do to actually protect and preserve that heritage that they have, even as they live in Canada.

And they continue to give a great value, a great importance to family, as well as their social networks. You know, normative gender roles in South Asian, in a common South Asian home would state that women would be in a more domestic role, taking care of all of her roles in the family, and with child care as well, and men are seen as the breadwinners. In addition to that, religion and spirituality are also seen as a key to making choices about work and life.

And then a very important thing is our acculturative stresses. And so this idea that you know, when people move to a new country, just immigration, it brings greater acculturative stress. The fact that you are trying to adapt to a new way of life, a new culture. And so this adds a lot of stress. It's the research shows us that there's a great added stress to South Asian women as they participate in the labor force. And so many South Asian women have been seen to manage this by adopting something known as the dualistic or hybrid view.

And this is where they tend to, you know, they adopt a liberalist, a liberal or an individualistic view, or way of acting when they are in the workplace, but they maintain that traditional views when it comes to the realm of family and home and networks. And so we we see that. You know, this is a very key point when it comes to the research itself that I've done.

Work-life balance is key to this research. What you see is that work-life balance does have, you know, positive outcomes for both individuals and organizations. And this is because it increases well-being. It's known to increase well-being. It's known to show an increase in performance, job satisfaction. There's also a reduction in turnover for those who report high work-life balance.

But what you see with the work-life balance literature is that unfortunately, there have been multiple definitions that spanned decades, and investigations you know, surrounding work-life balance over the past few decades show us many different types of antecedents, and outcomes, and different viewpoints of what work-life balance could be, based on the individual and based on the organization.

But what I did was I focused on Kaliath & Brough's definition, for application within this study. And this is because they, you know, they consider that balance could mean something different to each person. And in any possible way that would promote growth and satisfaction to that person. And this is particularly important for South Asian women who, you know, they already face the burden of trying to effectively manage multiple roles.

What we see in the work-life balance literature also is that you know, there continues to be very few studies about racialized groups. And if there are studies about racialized groups, they kind of club them into one and talk about them exactly as that— "racialized groups". And what we do see is that their experiences and their outcomes are not the same. So you can't assume that for racialized groups as well.

So, despite that, there was a study that was conducted, a national study by Pink Attitude and Cultural IQ, that showed that 50% of South Asian women, compared to all other women, had a tendency or wanted to quit work, especially post-Covid. And so this actually shows us that that one-size-fits-all strategy for policies is not going to work with a diverse workforce. And so this came to my first. This brought me to my first research question, and that was, you know, what does work-life balance mean to South Asian women living in Canada?

As I mentioned, you do see a great emphasis on the collective when you think about South Asians, and so their formal and informal networks usually can serve to positively or negatively impact choices as well as outcomes. So, what we see in social network analysis is that, when we talk about a social network, this comprises of a group of entities. So this could be at the individual level, it could be departments, it could be organizational level. And they're called actors or nodes, and they are linked to each other by what we call ties.

And these ties are usually things like a family tie, or a work tie. Network analysis in general is used as a means of understanding the causes and the outcomes of, you know the patterns in these groups and you know, or relationships. And so there are 2 approaches to social network analysis. And one is the complete network analysis, and personal or ego network analysis. I use the personal or ego network analysis, for you know, for application within this study.

The personal network analysis explores the diversity of ties that each individual has in the sample that you have. And so, going forward, you might hear the terms "egos" and "alters", and so when I'm speaking about my participants, I would probably I may refer to them as "egos." And when I talk to the members of each of their networks, I will refer to them as "alters." And so this brings me to my second research question.

And that was basically, "What types of alters within South Asian women's personal networks were most influencing, were seen to most influence work-life choices. Another important consideration is that South Asian women might have different types of networks just depending on when they came to Canada, how long they've been here, and whether they are, you know, immigrant South Asian women versus Canadian-born South Asian women.

And so this brought me to my third research question, which asks, "what are the generational differences, if any, between network formations of first-generation South Asian women and second generation South Asian women?"Additionally, I also asked in research question four, how those specific networks would help or hinder work like choices.

One use of the personal network analysis is to understand the degree of auto correlation, and that's also known as homophily. This is basically the tendency of individuals to maintain ties with others who they most identify with, so those who they think they are most similar to, in terms of attributes. And you've you've probably heard this phrase before, "birds of a feather flock together."

And so what research shows us is that gender homophily does have an impact on relationships and outcomes, both in organizations as well as outside the organization as well. And so this

brought me to my final research question, which was, "How does gender homophily in personal networks of South Asian women influence their work-life choices and outcomes?" And so I'm just giving you a snapshot of the five research questions that I asked.

So I'm gonna just quickly go over my research philosophy and grounded theory methodology as my methodological approach. I used a pragmatic philosophical approach in my research, so my aim was to look at this group of people and say, what practical consequence there was to the rich insights that they provided to me.

And so I use a grounded theory methodology in addition to the principles of personal network analysis. So what I did was I conducted the study in 2 stages, and this is in accordance to how personal network analysis is usually done. The first stage is known as a name generator stage, where I used a pre-interview questionnaire to collect participant demographic information. I asked them network information, I also asked some questions about work-life balance.

The second stage, which is known as the name interpreter stage, is where I reached out to participants and invited them to participate in the interview section. This consisted of a semi-structured and in-depth interview. In accordance with grounded theory methodology, you know, a data collection and analyses was occurring in an iterative and concurrent manner to identify essential concepts and ideas.

And so I do want to say that these concepts obtained were grounded in the experiences of this specific sample of South Asian women I interviewed, and what they aim to do is address the fundamental question of how network impacts, how their networks are going to impact them as South Asian women, and how they specifically impact, you know all those choices that surround their work and life.

It was necessary to exercise great reflexivity throughout the research process because of my positionality as both a South Asian woman who might share some narrated experiences, as well as a researcher. And so to do this, I constantly evaluated how my experiences would influence the study. I used self-reflection, I made notes after each interview, I engaged in memo writing throughout the research process.

And so we move on, finally, to the findings of this study. My sample consisted of 31 South Asian women. Most of the sample belonged to the age group of 25 to 44. The most common place of origin or ancestry was India, and this is reflective of the general skew, when you look at the populations of each of these countries in Canada.

There were 19 first-generation immigrants, and I think it is important to understand who I'm referring to when I say first-generation. So first-generation immigrants would be those who were born outside of Canada. 8 were 1.5 generation. And so these are individuals who, according to the government of Canada, individuals who arrived in Canada before the age of 15.

And then we have 4 second-generation participants, and these will be Canadian-born, and usually, when we say Canadian-born, we are still operating under the premise that at least one of their parents was born, or has ancestry in one of the South Asian countries. A few participants did choose not to answer the question about income, but out of the rest of the participants, most fell in the range of 50 to 99,000.

15 of the 31 participants said they were married, and 13 of them said, and this is not married, but 13 of the participants, of the 31 participants, said that they had children, versus 18 of them. And so, just to start off with, I'm going to talk about my findings as they relate to the research questions. And so you will see a lot of overlap. But as it pertains to the research questions. And so the first research question was about the meaning of work-life balance to the South Asian women.

And so there were 5 main themes that emerged. What I saw, many of the women speak about or acknowledge, was that they had many role-related demands and constraints placed on them, just as a way of life. The participants understood culturally that South Asian women played a very important role as primary caretakers, excuse me, of their household activities.

Many of these women did not necessarily view this as oppressive, but instead, as just a lot to do, right. For some of them, there was a sense of pride in cultural norms. But in general, what I saw, you know, all the participants say was they just desired to be viewed as successful in managing all these roles that they played in their home as well as their work roles.

What's interesting to note is that most of the women did not acknowledge any significant changes to the allocation of labor in their households during the pandemic. So I think that in the literature there have been many studies that showed that when the pandemic hit, while in general a lot of individuals spoke of increased work-life balance.

It was women that were seen to be the hardest hit during the pandemic and that their roles, or the allocation of labor, significantly increased during that time. But this was not the case for South Asian women, which means that they were doing all the same things that they continued to do during the pandemic as well.

The remaining 4 themes for work-life balance that emerged, actually provided ways in which the South Asian women in the study thought that work-life balance could be achieved. This could be through clear boundaries, efficiency and role management, some talk about having to switch to part-time work in order to achieve balance. And most importantly, the you know, flexibility. That was what was the most important thing that these women talked about.

And so what I saw as emerging from the data was that work-life balance to these participants is the flexible prioritization of their work and life activities, such that they were able to feel that success or fulfillment or satisfaction is achieved in both the domains. And so research question 2 and 3 if you remember, was primarily about network composition and differences.

And so what I saw was the average number of South Asians per network was above 50%, at 63.59%, and the average number of women per network was 64.57%. and so most networks comprise primarily of family members, friends, colleagues. and in some cases there was a discussion of work friends as well, but family members were the most influential tie that were reported. For support, many participants did turn towards family and friends, in some cases work friends, but for the most part what was noted was that they turned to women.

For advice, family members were seen as the greatest confidants. They were seen as advice-givers. So participants turned to parents, spouses, siblings. But what we see is that participants would go to both men and women here, and this was just dependent on who they perceived as knowledgeable and able to help them for information. Participants were comfortable asking anyone who they thought could give them the information they required. And this is actually very similar to the existing homophily studies.

Some additional network composition and differences. All of the women, irrespective of generations, spoke of the expectations, like a great burden of expectations that were placed on them. So there were expectations about education, careers, marriage, role in the family, and children. All of the second generation, and some of the 1.5 generation, and especially those who are between the ages of 25 and 34, they were career-oriented, they were unmarried, and they did not have children.

Now this was a significant source of concern for their families. However. You know, while they were deeply concerned and deeply bothered by these expectations from their family members, they still seemed to be focused on what they wanted, as individuals, as what they perceived as the right part for them at the present time.

However, what we did see for first-generation immigrants was that there was a varied response. And this was not dependent on age. Some chose to cave to the pressures to follow, you know, like these expected life paths. Some worked hard in their workplaces as well as within the home and with their children. But at the same time, there were many who also said that they chose to do their own thing, despite pressures from family.

And so other things include first-generation women also had a great tendency to seek out ethnic community networks when they moved to Canada. They were also more likely to participate, or at least subscribe to, ethnic social media groups. And this was a means of obtaining information and advice. However, this was not the same for 1.5- and second-generation participants.

These participants spoke of only their parents belonging to the ethnic group. And they only use social media in terms of South, you know, just related to South Asian lifestyle trends, perhaps, but not really as a means of being actively involved with the ethnic community. Across all generations, family was seen as important. Not just the nuclear family, but also the extended family. And in general, what I saw was that 1.5- and second-generation participants did identify as being more individualistic compared to first-generation participants.

However, unlike the existing literature where I talked about the dualistic or hybrid view. Something that emerged in this study was, you know, a desire of South Asian women. I think all of them in some way or the other, was speaking to this, of their desire to be able to embrace both individualism and collectivism as related to the culture without compromising all on one or the other. So basically, what they were trying to say is they desired a balance.

They wanted to be able to take in the best parts of what they thought came from the South Asian culture, but also as they belonged to Canadian society. And so what I did was take a deep dive, especially research question four, it does involve a deep dive into network impacts. And so family members, close and extended, as well as members of the ethnic community, were seen as placing great expectations, as I said in the previous slide, on all of the participants.

All of the participants spoke about this, and this was often as a way to preserve cultural norms. All of the women spoke of educational and career expectations as a means to financial security, financial independence, as well as prestige here in Canada. And so the existing literature often talks about education in relation to suitable marriage prospects. But while you know, while marriage, family, and children were of utmost priority; in Canada, being a homemaker was not also considered a viable option. So where possible, there was an expectation to work.

Additionally, participants spoke of specific immigrant challenges. For many, the process of resettlement was tiring. It was stressful. For many of, especially the first-generation immigrants, they left behind jobs, they left behind their homes, they left behind rich social networks in their countries of origin, which formed a crucial source of support.

And so lack of Canadian experience also meant that there were many restrictions to the workplace, and especially in their own fields of expertise. And this meant that, you know, participants and family members had to either initially resort to survival jobs, or they had to go back to school for re-credentialing purposes. Another thing was the nature of work.

So, for some women the nature of their work. For example, if they were working in fields of engineering, in IT, in nursing, they required a great time investment. And additionally, these participants also spoke of a very aggressive post-Covid work culture. So they all spoke of, you know, the idea that they felt that they always needed to work much harder and also be better than other women in the workplace, and even men in the workplace, to be recognized, was something that stood out in their discussion of work.

Some participants spoke of subtle discrimination. They perceived that sometimes their ideas, their input did not matter as much as other colleagues' ideas in the workplace. And this was specifically when they compared themselves to other women in the workplace. What stood out, however, was same race discrimination. Where these South Asian women reported being discriminated against by other South Asians, especially South Asian supervisors, colleagues, as well as when they worked within organizations that were owned by South Asians.

And history shows that this is not really uncommon in South Asian countries, there is much discrimination based on factors such as religion, past, skin color, socioeconomic status. And

additionally, it did seem that if you know, in addition to that discrimination, it seemed also that there was a greater level of competitiveness that was seen among South Asian women, or between them.

Many also spoke of what seemed like cookie-cutter EDI initiatives that they felt really didn't apply to them or didn't take them into consideration. There were some key responses to these expectations and challenges that they faced. To cope with expectations and challenges, what I saw was that a few women resorted to more traditional strategies, such as choosing part-time work, or where only one partner in the house worked while the other stayed at home.

Many also desired the use of segmentation strategies. You know, where they had very clear boundaries between work and life. But what most of the women did speak to was the fact that this was quite hard to manage. And so, what happened was, many of them resorted to overworking. They all seemed overworked. That was what I saw. For example, one participant said, it's normal. It's like being a hamster on a wheel. And another older participant said, we just grew up knowing that we had to work harder than everyone else.

The literature by Llewellyn and Osborne uses the phrase, the "superwoman syndrome". And this is associated with women who aspire to do it all. And when they do this, when they try to, when they attempt to do it all, it often comes with harsh consequences to health and productivity. But what I was seeing in this literature was that, these South Asian women, it was one-up from the superwoman syndrome.

They felt they needed to do it all, plus more. They felt the need to do everything excellently. Which, I think for South Asian women, can be termed the Superwomen "Plus" Syndrome. For others who chose to continue, and I think this was quite reflective of a lot of them in the group. For those who chose to actually succumb to having to do all of these things.

There was this great internal pressure that was built within them. And so, what it led to them doing was, you know, they either felt like they didn't follow expectations of getting married at a certain time. They didn't have what was considered a good job. They didn't have children. This led to those constant feelings of failure, of hurt, of discouragement, self-doubt, and guilt.

And while some women chose to have that internal pressure, to continue in that internal pressure, some engaged in avoidance behaviors. Such as, you know, they would just break away from their traditional groups. They would stay away from their ethnic communities. They would, in some cases, stay away from family, or they would maintain boundaries with them.

And then, finally, just to go over the findings for gender homophily. The data actually showed that participants did often associate with, and were the most impacted by other women, specifically South Asian women. And so there was a clear sense of a light and a dark side to that influence. Much of the influence started within the family structure, and this is supported by existing literature. Participants talked about watching and learning what women in their families did. They felt most supported and sought the advice of these women.

And in a few cases, they wanted to follow in their footsteps. And this was seen especially where they saw their mother's work outside the home, and they saw, they felt that, or they perceived that their mothers were managing their work outside and within the home successfully. Participants spoke of other women, particularly friends, who are also in similar life stages as being a crucial form or source of support.

They also specifically look for role models, or people to learn from, and this usually took place within the ethnic community. That's where they would primarily look for people who they could watch and learn when they were adults. And especially what they were looking for, was how they balanced work and life. As well as that process of resettlement, how they managed it.

And so only a few participants spoke of friendships within the workplace, or even the positive impact of work relationships. All the women spoke of the negative aspects of relationships with other women. And this was actually very disheartening to hear, especially from the extended family and community members. Participants said that women were capable of being vicious, destructive, disrespectful, and sometimes jealous.

In many cases, these women were seen to perpetuate the high expectations about gender-specific roles. So what we were seeing was that, if there was a personal failure, this was seen as—it was seen as a personal failure. I'm sorry, to just rephrase that. If you say, for example, if a woman had a failed marriage, or her child or children didn't follow societal expectations, it was seen as a personal failure through that woman.

And so I had one participant specifically say how she was shunned by her friends after her divorce. You know, so she spoke of South Asian women as being "gatekeepers of patriarchy." You know, women were seen as toxic, having high expectations about how women should act, how they should talk.

And this is actually seen in the nursing literature. Just with the idea of, you know, nurses eating their young. And that provided very useful insights for me as I went through these findings. And the nurses eating their young, it is about those who are viewed as oppressed groups. So usually, passivity of cultural norms, and a fear to challenge some of those norms that exist, can often lead to perpetuation of the same behaviors from generation to generation.

And why this is important is because, for South Asian women, they are often seen as the torch bearers of cultural norms. So they are expected to pass on the culture to future generations. Additional question that I asked the participants was what they thought organizations could do to better support them. And the most commonly cited requirement was the available of remote and flexible working options.

They talked about more effective training. This was specifically anti-racism, unconscious bias, and especially more effective onboarding trainings for new immigrants in specific industries. They also desired that organizations be clear about what they were expecting in recruitment. Oftentimes what is seen as the job description, or the job requirements, is not what they're actually looking for, which is why they weed out a lot of immigrants in the process itself.

Additionally, safe spaces, and just to be themselves, to be able to share their struggles and know that they would be heard. That was seen as very vital in an organization. And employee resource groups were seen, as you know, as not available in some organizations for some of the participants. But this was something that they thought was really important, especially South Asian employee resource groups.

Mentorship opportunities in this study were not seen as a source of influence. And this could be because it wasn't available to them in their organizations as well. But many participants did say that they desired it. Despite all of these things that they said about what they thought an organization could do better. I think that something that was clear from their conversation was that all of these solutions meant nothing if an organization did not actually take the time or make the effort to understand their specific racialized employees.

And so there is an urgent need for organizations to actually do this. Additionally, many of the women said that you can talk about organizations all you want, but education needs to start at home. About half of the women, amongst the married women, did speak about the importance of spousal support. But it was only a few of these women who actually specifically spoke about teamwork in household labor.

And based on these suggestions, just all of the suggestions and all the responses of these women, the recommendations. So what I propose is that reverse mentoring be used as an intervention to increase cultural learning in organizations. Now, reverse mentoring has been used in organizations from the nineties. But it's usually been used as an intervention to close technical knowledge gaps. I did look at a specific systematic review which is seen that the citation is up here on the slide.

That did show me, this was last year, that did show that there were 2. You know that there has been an entrance into EDI, but there have been very limited uses of it so far. Now, just to wrap up in terms of implications and contributions. This study is particularly significant because the discussion of South Asian women, and their work and life experiences is largely absent in Canadian OB and HRM literature.

So while the study was exploratory, and aimed to understand and report experiences, I think there are very important takeaways. The first thing is that we need to understand that South Asian women have many expectations. Like when I say many, I mean many, many expectations that are placed on them. They are expected to be highly educated, have high paying jobs, get married at a certain age, have children, make and keep a beautiful home, participate in the community, and ensure specifically that they preserve cultural and family ties.

And the reality of these women is that they actually have been held to a much higher standard than South Asian men in all facets of their life. In addition to that, South Asian women felt like they had to work harder to be recognized in the workplace. But they at the same time felt very overlooked in the workplace, like they didn't matter. And so this study showed that you know, women adopted traditional or segmentation coping strategies.

But they did desire a balance in a fulfilling way. The Superwoman "Plus" Syndrome that I talked about demonstrates that most of these women were just overworked, and they had this internal pressure. You know this immense internal pressure to do everything and do it all excellently. And so they did succumb to a lot of feelings that I talked about, feelings of guilt, and pressure, and failure that caused them to either break away from their ethnic groups. Or at least maintain boundaries with them.

Many of the women in this sample desired a balance between individualism and collectivism. That is, a way to embrace being both South Asian and Canadian without being categorized as one or the other. And a key finding was the double-edged sword that is gender homophily. This provided rich insights into the duality of relationships between women in the workplace.

I proposed a definition for work-life balance for South Asian women. And this is just in the hopes that, you know, this could be an interesting way, or a further understanding for organizations in how they can provide accommodations for the successful integration of these women into the workforce.

And then, as I mentioned previously as well, you know, reverse mentoring is seen as a useful intervention to increase overall cultural learning. And I think this would be a very beneficial exercise in, you know, in understanding diversity and could help create an inclusive workplace. I just want to wrap up with future research. I think more than anything, this research opened up to me so much of what I could do going forward.

And I think a lot the first thing for me is just in terms of, you know, the generalizability of the definition of work-life balance going forward. Social media groups was something that came out within the literature, the importance of them, especially to first-generation immigrants. And that's something that I would like to look further into. As well as the impact of faith and religion. Some of the women spoke about it, but not enough women that I saw it as being impactful to my current research.

I would also like to particularly explore same-race discrimination just to see you know what the outcomes are are of it specifically. Something that some women spoke about was their willingness to seek external help through therapy. And so that is something I would like to look into as well.

And I think just specifically with the recommendation of reverse mentoring. I would like to see what the actual impact of reverse mentoring could be when it's applied in an organization. And that's that's also a useful avenue for future research. And these were my references. Thank you.

Vinay Kanetkar:

Anju, you might want to stop sharing.

Anju Philip:

Okay, thank you so much.

Vinay Kanetkar:

Questions, comments? Audience? It was a wonderful presentation Anju. I think there's a lot of takeaways from there, particularly how the stereotype works against individuals, think that's really interesting take away from me. Thank you very much. I hope people in the audience would ask some more questions.

Belinda Leach:

I have a question. Thank you. Thank you. Thanks, Anju. That was a really great presentation. I enjoyed it tremendously. I'm part of a team with people in India. We received a Shastri grant, for a study of Indian women's experiences during Covid as workers, either in Canada or trying to get to Canada, going through the immigration process. And we're still in the process of analyzing the data.

So your work is really fascinating, and I'm excited to read your thesis and anything else that you might have to. But I have at least a couple of questions that spring to mind, and one of them is around your strategy, your method, strategy for getting to the question of discrimination. Because that's one thing that's troubled me about our data is that there's an unwillingness apparently to acknowledge the experience of discrimination, and you know I'm not convinced.

I'm sure that it's there, but we couldn't get people to talk about it, and I was not doing the interviewing right. It was, you know, people of Indian origin, or you know, actually living in India, who were asking the questions in in our interviews. So you know that was not the issue. But I'm just wondering what how you got people talking about the discrimination.

Anju Philip:

Oh, thank you. That's actually a really interesting question, because it was something that in general, I think played to my advantage sometimes and didn't sometimes. So I think, firstly, was the difference between people who are younger and who had lived in Canada for a much longer time. So for them the ideas of discrimination, the discussion of discrimination is more vocal here.

And so, they had spent a lot of time hearing about it. In many ways people have told them that they probably a group that has been historically discriminated against, and so I felt that there was more of an openness to talk about it. With other women, and this was not dependent on age, like the actual openness to discuss discrimination. With some of the women, what I noticed was that they, when you talk about discrimination, they will kind of say yes, it exists.

And it just seemed like they assumed that that was just the way it was, and that was what they were to expect from the people they worked with. Yes, there isn't an understanding. Yes, they don't treat me the same. And so yes, I have to work much harder. But it's not that they would

be vocal about it. I remember I had, I think, 2 or 3 participants who specifically told me South Asian women are taught to endure. They're taught to keep quiet. They're taught not to speak back.

And so I feel like that might have been, and that might be the issue that maybe you have faced in your research as well, and it was something that I saw as long as it. And there's another thing, there was another thing of trust as well. So if they didn't feel like it was you know, that there was safety in the conversation. I feel like that too, whether you're in.

And I think maybe, I don't know if I spoke to this, but just that idea that there's also a heterogeneity in the groups of people that I talked to. So when it's South Asian, it could be across country. But even when it's India. The people within India are so different, depending on the states they're from. And so I felt like for me in my study. I noticed that, you know, I had fewer participants from countries other than India. Now this is reflective of the populations in Canada.

But I also felt like there was this element of trust. Because I used snowball sampling. And I saw a lot of people required that word of mouth. They needed somebody to actually refer the study to them to participate. And so that was that first level of trust. But if they didn't feel like I could associate with their struggles, they would give me very simple general statements.

And so I don't know, I know I said a lot, but these were the different things that I feel came up in terms of just learning more from the participants. So I also had to exercise this idea of knowing when to probe further and when to, just, you know, be able to stop speaking, you know. Stop asking more. Yeah.

Belinda Leach:

Yes. Yes, yeah. That's very helpful. Yeah, it's yeah. I think it's a challenge. I mean, I've seen it in other studies, too. Now, a PhD Student of mine just completed working with Syrian refugees, and found the same thing, you know, and she's a native Arabic speaker. But people would not talk to her about discrimination. So it's a it's a very interesting phenomenon. Yeah. Thank you. I have a couple of other questions, but I don't want to. Take away from other people's opportunities.

Vinay Kanetkar:

No, go ahead Belinda.

Belinda Leach:

Okay, if that's okay. So, Anju, I'm really curious about well, and I'm thinking about this question in terms of comparing to the general population, Canadian population. And I think you know what we're seeing is a lot of younger people saying they don't want to have children. And I think there are very many factors in that.

But I'm wondering about whether you're seeing that among the younger women that you talk to, you know, do you think there's a shift towards saying I'm not going to have children at all? Or do you think that they'll eventually, you know, do what is culturally expected?

Anju Philip:

I think I had one participant and she wasn't a part of, she wasn't. I wouldn't say the younger demographic. It was just her experiences that led her to say she would not have children. But to answer your question, I think, with the younger participants in this group. What I was seeing was that they wanted to fulfill other interests, or, you know, especially like their careers.

They wanted to reach a certain place in their careers before they got married and had children. So not to say that they were not in relationships, or anything like that, but to say that they were putting it off, but they still saw it as important. So I feel like there was one participant, I know, who was already really worried about the future. So she knows that culturally it was expected of her to get married and have children.

And so she was like, that's going to happen. But this is what I want to do before that happens. And I'm already stressed out about how I'm going to manage everything when that happens. So that's what I saw more of, you know that idea that, no, I still want to look at what I can do with my career, with my education. And then we'll think about this.

Belinda Leach:

Yeah. And that is consistent with what I've read about what's happening in India, where, with the higher educational achievements of women, there is a delay in having, in marriage and childbearing, but particularly childbearing. No, it's not happening at 20, 22, it's, you know, closer to 30. Because women have education, and they want to actually pursue it where they can.

Yeah. So that is, that is consistent. And I think that works here, you know, to an extent as well. And then there are other factors like, I'll never be able to afford a house. You know, which is across the board right? It's not just immigrants who are facing that, and not to mention, you know, climate anxiety, and all that. All of those sorts of things today.

Anju Philip:

And if I might add to that, I think a key difference also is that I think women, and I've heard a lot of maybe older women say, speaking to this. I think previously there was still this notion that even if you worked, you should have, you know, you should get married at a certain age, and you should have those children. You know your biological clock is ticking.

There was still that idea that you know, do what you want, but do it all together. And that's probably why we see this general mentality of them having to and wanting to do everything and do it well. Because that was the expectation. And so now I feel like with younger generations.

We're seeing a lot of individuals saying, well, no, I can wait a little longer. Maybe I should do this first. This will be better for life, you know, just in terms of being able to balance things. And so that is, you know it. It has its pros and cons, I guess, according to the community. But we, that's what we see as happening.

Belinda Leach:

And it'll be interesting to see, you know, in 20 years or a little less, whether there is a shift, you know, as those young women become potential grandmothers, you know. Are they going to be putting pressure on their kids, or are they going to support them in? It's I think, looking at these things, longitude is gonna be quite exciting. And you're at the beginning of your career, so you can do that. Thanks.

Vinay Kanetkar:

Thank you very much for your question, Belinda. It was insightful.

Belinda Leach:

I think Puneet has a question.

Puneet Bhela:

Hello, Hi.

Anju Philip:

Hi Puneet.

Puneet Bhela:

Hi, Anju. Thank you so much for your presentation. It was really nice to hear, and then get more ideas about what's happening. I might be in the wrong position to at least like participate in the argument, because, although I might be South Asian, but I'm not a woman, so I don't know how much of the input I could absorb.

But I could relate to some aspects, I guess. The one thing, and I apologize, I didn't make notes as we were going through your presentation. I just wanna get, well like re-capture it, these demographics that you had with your research. So I think you mentioned first-generation, one and a half, and then second generation. In which category did most of your respondents come into?

Anju Philip:

Yeah, I it was 19 of them out of the 31 who was first-generation, and then I had more 1.5. I had nine 1.5 and then 4 second generation.

Puneet Bhela:

Okay? Cause I think, like, even for me, I might be generation 0, because I have a temporary status here as a student. But if and then the boundaries of like South Asian countries, so does that goes further down in East Asia, or is it specific to countries around India?

Anju Philip:

It was the countries around India. I used SAARC ‘s definition, the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation. So it's 8 countries. It's Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Nepal, and then the Maldives and Sri Lanka.

Puneet Bhela:

Okay, cause. I think so having this idea, and the first-generation being most of our respondents in the research, I was wondering, if there is this aspect of working scenario and familiarity, because in India most of them are men. Although you can say they are working. But they're working in a domestic scenario where it's like a family tasks. And then even you can say the firm itself is the family.

And then shifting to, you can say a Western society, where we are working as in a job scenario and working against ours. That difference itself would put a pressure in terms of the work-life balance idea, and then working against the clock, whereas even the time construct. For example, in India you will have this morning, which is like 6:30, 6 to 7. You're preparing your kids, husband going to work, and then all the stuff.

And then this 9 to afternoon, which is one, you can say one aspect. Like you do some tasks, and then the afternoon comes and the evening comes. Rather than having each hour defined as something supposed to be done. Something. So, yeah, thank you. Thank you for those comments. So just as a clarification.

So when I did this to frame this study, I was very, I narrowed down who I was talking to. So I did look at educated women. So women who already had, I started off with University educated but actually brought it down before I started my study to anyone with a post-secondary, certification, diploma, and anything above that.

And so, these were also women who had work experience. I specifically looked for them, having at least one year in Canada. So to speak, to the difference between, you know, moving from, say, for example, one of the South Asian countries to Canada, and then having to start work. I don't think I saw that at all, because these were women who, if they were in they were in India.

I think all of them worked in India, or one of the South Asian countries as well. And so it was. It was the same thing that was happening here. I think most of their challenges were primarily due to the fact that- Okay, so I think this is a key finding as well, which I didn't include in my slides, but I think is important.

So in South Asian countries, I feel like there is more access to help, to domestic help in the home. So women are expected to do a lot of work in the home, but they usually have, you know, they might have a nanny, or they might have a maid in the home helping them with chores. In addition to that, some households are joint households, and so they have the help of parents and grandparents, or extended family as well. Now I see, for the women who moved to Canada, I feel as first-generation immigrants.

I see the bigger issue as not them not working in India, versus coming and working in Canada. I think the issue was that they had an access to a larger network of support there versus here. And so I think that's where the addition of household tasks and chores, and you know, it became more cumbersome, it became just more burdensome to them.

So I think that is a key difference that, you know, like you just said you're on a temporary work permit. I mean, you're, I think maybe you're a student. So I didn't include anyone who is not a permanent resident or a citizen in this study, and the reason being, I think, that people who are temporary, who are on temporary visas, including that work permit, I think that they have a different a different goal in mind.

So you know how many hours they work. So the idea of work-life balance, I feel, is not priority to them. They are working towards getting a job, making enough money, so that they can work towards that permanent resident visa so that they can attain the permanent resident visa. So I feel like their goals are different. And so I didn't use their inputs in this study.

Because I feel like their work-life balance would be, you know, trying to understand their work-life balance would be very different to trying to understand the work-life balance issues of South Asian women who are permanent residents or citizens.

Puneet Bhela:

I agree, because even for me the work-life balance idea is not salient enough as much as you know, just get a hold of your life, you know. Early on you can wear yourself out, and then, once the age and the stability part comes in, then you sort of think about work-life balance. The other thing I wanted to ask like, did any of your respondents share the aspect of having culture training. And then, by that means, for example, for my generation, we would watch a lot of American or like Western TV series that give us an idea like how the culture is rather than you know, just reading Shakespeare and then familiarizing ourselves with English.

Anju Philip:

Oh, that's actually interesting. I didn't have any participants who specifically spoke of that. My second-generation and 1.5-generation. I think it was through their parents that they learned a lot about their culture. They were expected to attend some South Asian, you know, like festivals, weddings, things like that where they are, they get to be a part of the South Asian community.

So that was their foray into Indian culture. But when it came to first-generation immigrants who moved here, I'm going to say out of the population that you know, the sample that I had women from the ages of 25 to even the 54 category. I feel like they all, there was already a great impact of globalization in their parts of the world.

And so they did have, you know, they did have access to books and English books, I'm saying, like, you know, the popular English novels and movies. And so yes, it did play a part, but the women, and this could be a, you know, a limitation in terms of understanding a broader sample of the women. But the women that I did speak to did have that, you know. They seemed to already have enough of an entrance into the individualistic culture, the Western culture, so to speak. That they already knew enough information. It was just a matter of acculturating to it.

Puneet Bhela:

Yes, yes, I think that's great. These are all the answer that I had. One of the things I wanted to ask is that the variety of tools that were available to you for conducting the survey of like use sampling. So I guess service sampling. So you used Qualtrics. But were there any other tools that you wanted to experiment with, or the options that there could be, you know, innovations in these tools so that it makes the job easier for you.

Anju Philip:

So I feel like this was the easiest way that I, you know, I arrived at to come to the answers that I was hoping to see, or, you know, was looking forward to. So what I use is almost like mixed methods if you think about it, using that grounded theory, methodology, but also keeping the pragmatic research philosophy in my mind.

And so even with grounded theory methodology. The idea is that systematic but flexible means of collecting data. And so with the personal network analysis. And this is specific to the personal network analysis. Usually, it's done in those 2 stages. I don't know if you saw that slide with my Qualtrics survey. So the way I had to approach people to, you know. I don't think I struggled with so much with the tools.

I did not explore too many new tools. Qualtrics was just the way that I chose to go. But I think for me, what I struggled most with was the fact that I chose snowball sampling. I think that given different circumstances, I might still choose snowball sampling. I thought that was the best way to reach my sample here in Canada, but I think that what I did notice was that a lot of the South Asian women I talk to, out of the 31 women I feel like, I'm gonna say, I think it was 27 of them.

Actually joined the study because of someone else telling them to join the study, like someone referred it. Someone said, Hey, here's a great study. Did you see this? It was on social media. Do you wanna join? I know the person, I've heard of this university. It could be one of those things, you know. This seems like a great study. But they needed to hear it from someone that they trusted for them to join.

So I think for me, that was my challenge. And so my data collection took about 6 months. And it took like, I approached professors. I approached, you know, CIRCLE also marketed my, you know this in the study information. I contacted many organizations, and a lot of groups as well, social media groups as well. And there were many that wouldn't even respond.

So I think that's just a normal part of research. But I think that's probably where I struggled with more. And it's definitely something, something to think about going forward in terms of how there could be greater participation. But tools-wise. I think I did speak with Qualtrics, and I didn't think of you know, using any other format.

I wanted to do a survey. I didn't want it to be written. I didn't want them to be forced to, you know, knowing that there was going to be an interview was already a deterrent. They didn't want to give me that time, and so you know a lot of people, you know, and then you also have to think of my survey shouldn't be long enough. So the aim was, get in, get as much details about the networks, and then use that information for the interviews.

Puneet Bhela:

Was this Zoom, in-person, WhatsApp calls? How did you do the interviews?

Anju Philip:

Yeah, all of the studies were conducted using Teams or Zoom. Actually, not all. I'm not gonna say all. 30 out of 31 were conducted using Teams or Zoom. I experimented with one method, which was I had one participant who really wanted to participate in the study, but she was not available. She was a nurse. She was working part time, she was in school as well, and she had 2 children, so, putting aside the 30 to 60 minutes to be interviewed was hard for her.

And so, instead what we did was we did was I sent her questions, she wrote about those questions. And she gave me answers to them. And she, you know, there was like a dialogue. But it was via email, and via written responses. Just to talk more about that, if that was, I think it's an idea worth exploring, where people have time to put down their thoughts on paper. But I didn't explore it as something to continue within my research, as long as people are willing to speak to me. I think that's what gave me the richer insights.

Puneet Bhela:

Thank you so much. I think that will be most this. After the research, I think one of the things I wanted to ask you is, have you come across any archival data, or do you think there is a case could be made for making, I guess, a museum, or something of the sort, to capture all this. What's going on in terms of immigration, work-life balance, other documents around it, so that it could be used for future research.

Anju Philip:

Yes, absolutely. I do think that. I do have to say that there was a study, And I think I pointed this out in one of my slides. But there was actually a study that was done by, they're known as

Cultural IQ. And then Pink Attitude. And Pink Attitude is, they do cater more to South Asian women. But this study was very useful. It covered all those points that you just talked about. That study actually does cover a lot of, and they have a report out, and that report is freely available online. If you want to look at it.

Puneet Bhela:

Okay, thank you so much.

Anju Philip:

You're welcome.

Vinay Kanetkar:

Anybody else has a question? I think we should take the time to thank Anju for the wonderful presentation and Q&A. Anju, I hope you got as much as you expected out of the.

Anju Philip:

Thank you so much. I really appreciate it. This is really good. This is a good place to present my research.

Belinda Leach:

All the best with the defence, Anju.

Anju Philip:

Thank you so much. Thank you.

Vinay Kanetkar:

Bye, bye.

[End of transcript].