

A Study on How Newlyweds Handle the Difference with Parents on Wedding Arrangements and Its Implication for Services in Hong Kong

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Abstract—This research examined the literature review of wedding preparation's challenges and its developmental tasks of family transition under family life cycle. Five interviewees were invited to share their experiences on the differences with their parents in regard to wedding preparations and coping strategies. Some coping strategies and processes were highlighted for facilitating the family to achieve the developmental tasks during the wedding preparation. However, those coping strategies and processes may only act as the step and the behavior, while “concern towards parents” was found to be the essential element behind these behaviors. In addition to pre-marital counseling, a developmental group was suggested to develop under the framework of family life cycle and its related coping strategies on working with the newlyweds who encountered intergenerational differences in regard to their wedding preparations.

Keywords—Coping strategies, difference, family life cycle, developmental tasks, wedding preparation.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Topic

THE purpose of this research is to explore how newlyweds handle differences with parents in relation to wedding arrangements and its implications for social work practice in Hong Kong. “Parents” includes the natural parents and in-law parents. “Wedding arrangement” can be defined as any arrangement that should be followed up after deciding to get married.

B. Significant Statement

Although some scholars found that the idea of “marriage is the matter between two families” has started to shift to “marriage is the matter between two people” in Taiwanese society [1], [2], people in Hong Kong still respect the thoughts and wishes of the parents in the wedding preparations. Some research found that the effects of the traditional mindset of the parents were still noticeable on wedding arrangements, even if the family structure had gradually changed [3]. However, some newlyweds had antipathy towards the traditional rituals that were encouraged by the parents [4]. Therefore, it is common to see newlyweds facing with some difficulties in reaching agreement with their parents on the wedding arrangements.

Reference [5] stated that the stress that arises from preparing a wedding and entering into a marriage not only affects the

individual's physical and psychological state, but also their future marital relationship. Therefore, we can anticipate that if conflict existed among the generations, the newlyweds will encounter greater distress, which will further damage their marital relationship. The process and coping strategies for handling the differences among the newlyweds and the parents in regard to wedding preparations are worth exploring.

C. Knowledge Gap

From the perspective of the family life cycle, family will experience changes from one life stage to another. The transition would lead to both external and internal stress for each family member. When the family is unable to resolve the conflict arising from the stress, fixation at certain family life cycle will be shown, which will regress to previous levels of functioning [6]. The wedding preparations of newlyweds act as a phase of family transition, and therefore, unresolved intergenerational differences related to the preparations were assumed to be the fixation of family transition. Various researchers present different models and coping strategies to deal with the stress of family transition for preventing fixation. For example, [7] proposed a number of coping strategies skills, which included seeking information and support, taking problem-solving action, pursuing alternate rewards, affective regulation, resigned distance and emotional discharged etc., to deal with the major adaptive task of family transition. In addition, a scholar also built the ABCX model to show that one's perception on the stressful event and the family resources were related to the degree of stress during family transition [8], [9]. However, these findings were too general. Besides, studies on the coping strategies related to the life challenges related to wedding preparations from the perspective of family transition is lacking.

While research related specifically to family transition was found, such as exploring the parents' coping strategies with adaptive tasks of the launching transition [10], the focus of this family transition research was the parents. However, the adult child also took part in parents' launching transition, so their coping strategies were also valuable to study. Recently, no research explored how the adult child, and thus, this research can fill the gap in the research by exploring the adult child's handling in the family transition of wedding preparations.

D. Service Gap

Reference [11] stated that pre-marital group counseling can help to reduce the stress of the pre-wedding period through the

sharing of common difficulties related to the wedding preparations, which should be included the gap of intergeneration's expectation. In Hong Kong, there are few agencies [12]-[15] providing pre-marital counseling for exploring the meaning of marriage, communication, family of origin, housework division, conflict management, future planning and marriage expectations among newlyweds. However, only a few agencies [16], [17] mentioned about the preparation of a wedding in the session of pre-marital counseling, but they also lacked the context for exploring conflicts with parents over divergent ideas on wedding preparation. Although some pre-marital counseling involved the preparation of wedding and intergeneration conflict, the context mostly related to the family of origin and the procedure of the wedding, which did not show a clear framework or guideline of working on this concrete aspect.

Therefore, this research would like to explore newlyweds' experiences of handling the differences of opinions with their parents in regard to wedding preparations. Their experience can help to give some implications on the context and direction of pre-marital counseling through interviewees' concrete successful experiences in going through this challenge.

E. Research Question

1. What is the process when discussing the wedding arrangements with parents?
2. How do you cope with the differences with parents on the wedding arrangement?
3. What is the implication for the related service in Hong Kong?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Popular Internet Discussion

Typing different keywords in the Google searching engine, web pages of various related discussions can be found and the numbers of results were showed in Fig. 1. From the numbers of results, those focusing on discussions in regard to conflict on wedding preparation with parents were more than half of the overall conflict of wedding preparation. Around 40% of the discussion of "wedding preparation", "conflict" and "parents" also showed the keyword "stressful" at the same time. The number may not give a comprehensive picture of this problem, but showed that a certain number of people who may be involved in the wedding are also concerned about this topic.

Distress was common as shown across this period of transition [18], due to the tasks and demands of transitioning to the next stage [19]. A research [20] in America interviewed 2000 persons, in which 23% of men and 16% of women agreed that wedding preparation is the most stressful matter in their whole life, while 30% and 23% of interviewees reported to be anxious and to suffer from insomnia, respectively. Some professionals also stressed the negative effects from the stress of preparing wedding. Therefore, the stress of wedding preparation cannot be ignored.

Keyword 1	Keyword 2	Keyword 3	Keyword 4	Number of result found
Wedding Preparation (籌備婚禮)	Conflict (爭執)	/	/	762,000
Wedding Preparation (籌備婚禮)	Conflict (爭執)	Parents (父母)	/	474,000
Wedding Preparation (籌備婚禮)	Conflict (爭執)	Parents (父母)	Stressful (大壓力)	185,000

Fig. 1 Numbers of result searching different keywords in Google

B. Family Life Cycle

Reference [21] presented the idea of family life cycle showing the development of a family in different periods. Stage one is called "Beginning Families", which means married couples without children. Stage two is called "Childbearing Families", which means the oldest child is newborn to 30 months old. Stage three is called "Families with Preschool Children", which means the oldest child is aged between 2.5 years old to 6 years old. Stage four is called "Families with School Children", which means the oldest child s aged between 6 years old to 13 years old. Stage five is called "Families with Teenagers", which means oldest child is aged between 13 years old to 20 years. Stage six is called "Families as Launching Centers", is the time when the first child exits the family until the last-born child leaves home. Stage seven is called "Families in the Middle Years", which is the time associated with empty nest to retirement. Stage eight is called "Aging Families", which is the time from retirement to death of the first spouse.

Every stage of the family life cycle has its appropriate developmental tasks [22]. A family developmental task has been defined as "those that must be accomplished by a family in a way that will satisfy (a) biological requirements, (b) cultural imperatives and (c) personal aspirations and values, if a family is to continue to grow as a unit" [23 p. 22].

Wedding preparation implies that the adult child prepares to get married, so the parents may transit from stage five to six or newly adjust to stage six. The family developmental task was to expand independence continuously. Reference [24] showed that the parents experienced some role transitions by allowing the child as an independent adult to leave the family and have their family and offspring. With the child's newly-constructed family, the parents were also implied to adapt the realignment of relationship by including the in-laws and grandchildren [25]. The parent-child relationship no longer functions as the child becomes more independent, and therefore, the adult-to-adult relationship should be developed [26]. Expanding independence does not mean to be cut-off; thus, the family should maintain a supportive home base to the adult child [27].

Other than the adult's transition, the adult child also entered stage one of the family life cycle during the wedding preparation. The adult child aimed to establish a mutually satisfying marriage in this stage [27]. Before developing their own extended family, the adult child also needed to differentiate the self from the family of origin [26], [28].

These tasks must be successfully accomplished for securing

social approval, present satisfaction and future success. If the tasks cannot be accomplished, later tasks were difficult to cope with [21]; this is called partial fixation. The stress from partial fixation can be suppressed. However, the unsuccessful pattern of coping with the stress would show again looped when encountering other family challenges. Frustration, the sense of urgency and of helplessness would also be followed with the unsuccessful pattern of coping strategies [24].

Having intergenerational differences in regard to wedding preparations was common and normal among members of the family. However, if the parents insisted the adult children follow their own ideas with regard to the wedding preparation, the adult cannot achieve the developmental task of allowing the child to be independent and/ or the child cannot differentiate the self from the family of origin. In order to prevent the negative effects of failure to achieve developmental tasks, the successful coping strategies and process for achieving the family developmental tasks are important to identify.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Qualitative Method

This study is a qualitative research through in-depth interview with five married persons. The purpose of the interviews was to get their opinions, experiences and feelings directly through the interviewees' description [29]. During the interview, the interviewees reviewed their differences from the parents in preparing the wedding, and they also recalled the encountered difficulties and challenges. The form of in-depth interviews was semi-structured. The interviewer listened to the interviewees' sharing actively and reflected their content and emotions. The content of the interview did not have established questions, but an interview framework (Appendix 1), so that the interviewer was more aware of the direction in the interview. The interviewer asked some follow-up questions when necessary.

B. Sample

Five interviewees were invited to the interview through snowball sampling. The five interviewees can be male or female. They can be among the same marital relationship or not. In order to ensure a clearer recollection of memories and impressions, interviewees should have been married less than two years or will get married in the coming six months. Interviewees must have experience of differences of opinions with their parents regarding their wedding preparation, but were able to eventually come to consensus with their parents. The snowball sampling method, which can be studied by referrals of persons with same characteristics [30], was used in this research. The researcher invited family members, relatives and friends.

C. Data Collection

The timing of the interviews tried to be flexible as much as possible to accommodate the availability of the interviewees, and so interviews were mainly on weekday nights and the weekend. Each interview took about 1 hour. Quiet, comfort and a high degree of privacy were the criteria for the interview

location selection and home visits were arranged where necessary. In addition, the interviewer explained the purpose of the study, the use of information, the confidentiality and the preservation time to the interviewees before the interview. In order to allow the interviewees to prepare psychologically, the above-mentioned information (Appendix 1) was given to the respondents before the interview. Moreover, since the interviewee's answers and tone were also important to the responses, sound recordings were taken. Respondents were asked signed a consent form (Appendix 2) for their participation in the interview and allowing the sound recording prior to the interview. When the interview was completed, the interviewer debriefed the interviewee. If interviewees showed emotional distress upon completion of the interview, the interviewer would arrange follow-up support; however, no interviewees showed emotional distress after completing the interview.

The form of the interview was a personal interview. Couples or family interviews were not adopted. Reference [31] indicated that a personal interview allowed individuals to share freely without disturbance. Moreover, since no family members had been interviewed at the same time, an interviewee can share freely without worries or concerns for others present. Reference [32] also showed that personal interviews can prevent respondents using "we" as the subject, which means they put their point of views into other people.

D. Data Analysis

All recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim. Interviewees' unique gestures and facial expression were also marked in the text recording. The researcher read the context of the interview for times, for coding the context. From different categories of code, the researcher analyzed the relevance of the interviewees' experience.

IV. FINDINGS

A. Background Information of the Interviewees

	Interviewee A (IA)	Interviewee B (IB)	Interviewee C (IC)	Interviewee D (ID)	Interviewee E (IE)
Gender	M	F	F	F	F
Age Range	35-40	25-30	35-40	25-30	30-35
Education	Secondary	High diploma	University	University	University
Year of getting married	12/2016	12/2016	6/2015	9/2017	3/2016
Did the partner also being interviewed?	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Occupation	Sales	Designer	Social Worker	Social Worker	Social Worker

Fig. 2 Background information of the interviewees

Fig. 2 showed the background information of the

interviewees, which included their gender, age range, education, the year they were married, occupation and whether their partner had been interviewed.

B. Process

Three processes were found from the interviewee's sharing, which included having their own thoughts, discussing with the partner and natural parent-child interaction.

1) Having Their Own Thoughts

Interviewees were shown to be clear on a) the role of their parents and the self within the wedding preparation, b) attitude towards the parents, and c) their own ideas and planning. Therefore, they recognized how much they can adjust after knowing their parents' expectations.

a) Role of the Parents and Self within the Wedding Preparation

- IA: I think wedding should involve few parties, so the arrangement cannot be rigid... the newlyweds did not have the power to decide all the things and needed to make some adjustment with the parents.
- ID: From others' experience, I found that marriage was the matter between two families rather than two people.

b) Attitude towards the Parents

- IA: The parents would not make any concessions immediately, but they will make concessions after getting "face" (dignity) and respect.
- IA: Respecting our elders was a must, so getting their ideas was a way to show them respect.
- IC: I tried to be "fair", so I tried to balance between my parents and the in-laws with regards to the arrangement as much as possible, in order to appease them.
- IE: Being the only daughter, arranging my marriage will be the first and last for my mother, so I was willing to fulfill the will and needs of my parents.

c) Their Own Idea and Planning

- IA: I had my own property before. Thus, I had my plan of buying property in the future, but not now.
- IB: I had my plan of giving birth and getting married in early age.

2) Discussing with the Partner

Some interviewees discussed their preference with their partner first, such as the period of holding wedding ceremony, guest list and their budget etc.

- IA: I discussed the preferred amount of wedding gift and wedding venue with my wife first.
- IC: I discussed the month and date of our marriage with my husband first before presenting it to my parents.
- IE: I discussed the rundown of the ceremony with my husband first before announcing it to the parents...Our experience was that my husband and I should have consensus first.

3) Natural Parent-Child Interaction

All of the interviewees also had some positive experience of

interacting with their natural parents directly rather than their in-laws. Some interviewees agreed that their relationship with their in-laws is different from that of their natural parents. One interviewee was rejected when she raised an idea with the in-laws. The reason between the interaction of natural parent-child and in-laws were shown below.

a) More Understandable towards the Natural Child

There was a difference between natural relationship and in-law relationship. Under the rationale of "Even a vicious tiger will not eat its cubs" (苦毒不吃兒), parents would not hurt their own natural child. Therefore, if the natural child negotiated a thought with their parents, they tended to make concessions compared with the negotiations with the in-law child.

- IA: I had consensus with my wife that she would express the thought to her natural parents, since the in-law relationship is like that of the outsider. The natural child will be easier to discuss with the natural parents.
- IA: I thought the natural parents tended to give in their child's view because they considered the happiness of their natural child.
- IA: I kept quiet when my wife responded on her natural parents' concern. I thought that replying by my wife was better than by me.
- IA: The request provided by my wife's parents changed to be reasonable later because her father would not put her beloved daughter in a difficult position.
- IC: My natural mother gave "face" to me... My husband took the responsibility to discuss plans with his natural parents.
- IC: My natural parents will not stand firm since they can understand their child's situation more easily.
- IC: I asked what my mother's expectations were and reported to my mother after gaining consensus with my husband. My mother accepted my proposed idea, but not my husband.

b) Reduce Intense Emotion

Triggering intense emotions in the relationship with future in-laws may affect the long-term relationship. Therefore, knowing parents' thoughts through the natural child first can help to avoid causing intense emotions with the in-law relationship.

- IC: My role is to pass on messages between the parents and husband, which can help to lighten any aggressive tones.

C. Coping Strategies

Three coping strategies were summarized from the experience of the interviewees, which are expressing thought through different ways, support seeking and information seeking.

1) Expressing thought through Different Ways

With regard to the natural parent-child interaction, interviewees also presented different ways to express their thoughts to their parents. They are explanation, negotiation and skillful presentation.

a) Explanation (by Verbal and Action)

Explaining the thought directly was a common way to explain personal thoughts and idea to parents. Interviewees shared that they would explain to their parents about their thoughts behind an idea, especially when the parents did not agree on the ideas. One of the interviewees also took action to explain the situation to the parents.

- IB: I told my parents that my plans for children would be delayed if purchasing a property was accomplished first. Finally, the parents accepted my decision after I explained my thought for a few times.
- ID: I felt shocked when I knew my mother's expected amount of cash gift, so I explained my difficulties directly.
- IA: Since my preferred hotel for the wedding feast was next to a funeral parlor, I took the parents there to try the food and explained to them about the alternative entrance available.

b) Negotiation

In order to take the thoughts of the newlyweds and parents into account, the interviewees presented different methods of negotiation. These included offering a limited choice, a conditional offer, as well as providing compensation and maintaining flexibility.

i) Limited Choices

- IC: I provided a list to my mother allowing her to decide what kinds of gifts she wanted to be included.

ii) Conditional offers

- IA: If my father insists on inviting his relatives, I will set their seating relatively far away from the stage.

iii) Compensation

- IA: I thought of how to compensate the unfulfilled cash gift by the others
- IA: A trade-off deal was made with my father. If he did not invite his relatives, I was willing to provide more seats for his friends.
- IC: I gave some gifts, tables of feast and red packets to my parents for compensating my parents' unfulfilled expectations on the cash gift.

iv) Flexible Preferences

- IA: I asked for comments from my parents and gave them the impression of not yet having confirmed, even though I wanted to hold the ceremony at that hotel.
- IA: I prepared my mother and wife that the living arrangements can change in the future. I understood that living together with the parents after getting married or having children may result in conflict.

c) Skillful Presentation

Interviewees presented some ideas to parents delicately in order to have less discussion since they understood that some differences may not be possible to compromise on.

- IA: I took the in-law parents' date of birth to the geomancer for choosing a lucky date of getting married,

but I did not tell the in-law parents since they were Christians.

- IA: I did not explain to my parents about the pre-wedding ritual done by my wife's family, because I guessed my parents would be bothered by their Christian format.
- IE: My husband suggested a date to hold the ceremony to the parents with the support of an App (programming system), for showing the auspiciousness, since different Apps and books may have different versions.

2) Support Seeking

Support seeking was a common coping strategy for handling the differences with the parents, which include comfort seeking, help seeking and spiritual support [33]. From the results of the research, the most common person to seek help was the close family member. Interviewees also received support in the form of help from one parent convincing the other one. An interviewee sought help from outside the family from a pastor, to review the conflict and the relationship.

a) Inside the Family

- IA: My mother helped as a mediator to explain my thoughts to my father.
- IA: My in-law father helped my wife a lot, while my mother helped me.
- IB: My father said something to my mother to support for my points of view.
- IE: My father told my mother not to comment so frequently on the details of the wedding, as my mother was continually questioning the reasons behind the arrangements.

b) Outside Family

- ID: I kept on meeting the pastor to get advice in dealing with my confusion.

3) Information Seeking

Information seeking was the process to get ideas and concepts about general and special wedding arrangements from others.

a) Taking the References Others

- IA: I paid special attention to certain arrangement based on my brother's experiences of his wedding preparations.
- IB: My parents seemed to have no idea about a suitable amount for the cash gift, so I suggested taking suggestions from other relatives.
- IC: I showed examples of what others are doing in order to broaden my parent's minds.
- ID: I asked a relative before about the amount for the cash gift.
- IE: If siblings had prepared a wedding previously, the expectations of parents can be more easily assumed.
- IE: I followed my friend's suggestion for the seating arrangements for relatives for the wedding feast.

b) Searching the Internet

An interviewee also spoke about finding information on different aspects by searching the Internet.

- IE: I understood the processes of the different rituals and the variations of the cash gifts by searching the Internet.

V. DISCUSSION

Wedding preparations were not only the process in preparing a wedding ceremony, as there is also the family transition within the family life cycle. The wedding preparation was the initial practice for the family to go into the family transition of stage six and stage one. Unresolved differences between the newlyweds and the parents over wedding preparations means that both parties insist on their own standpoint; this rigid disagreement could be attributed to the failure in achieving the developmental task of expanding independence within the family and maintaining secure home-base flexibly. The successful experience of interviewees gave an implication as to the coping strategies and how process helped to solve the intergenerational differences over the wedding preparations, which means to achieve the developmental tasks

A. Research Limitation

One limitation of the research is that the “successful” experiences were only reported by the newlyweds but not their parents. Moreover, the communication between the adult child and the parents was two-way, so the effect of parents’ reaction cannot be ignored. As the “successful” experience may be attributed to both parties, rather than just the adult child, this research did not cover the data from the parents going through this “successful” experience of wedding preparation.

In spite of this limitation, the “successful” experiences of newlyweds are still worthy of discussion.

B. How the Process and Coping Strategies Facilitate to Achieve the Developmental Tasks

The above finding shows how interviewees used different coping strategies in specific situations throughout the process to handle disagreements with parents on wedding arrangements. Since unresolved intergenerational differences on wedding arrangements can be attributed to the failure of achieving developmental tasks, this research would like to look into the interviewees’ coping strategies regarding the developmental task of the family lifecycle.

In order to discuss the coping strategies and process of handling the differences with parents on wedding preparations, the research only focuses on the related family developmental tasks of wedding preparations. From stage five to stage six, parents’ developmental tasks were that the parents allowed their child to be independent in making some decisions on the wedding arrangement and maintaining a supportive home base to provide assistance to their child when seeking help. Besides, when encountering generational difference on wedding preparation, the newlyweds’ developmental task of entering stage one was mainly to differentiate the self from the family of origin, rather than establishing a mutually satisfying marriage. Hence, three developmental tasks are highlighted during wedding preparations (Fig. 3) a) differentiating the self from the family of origin by the adult child, b) parents allowing the child to assert their independence, and c) parents maintaining a supportive home base. However, as the last two developmental tasks are realized by the parents, the newlyweds can only assist the parents on adapting the developmental tasks passively and adapt their own task of differentiating self.

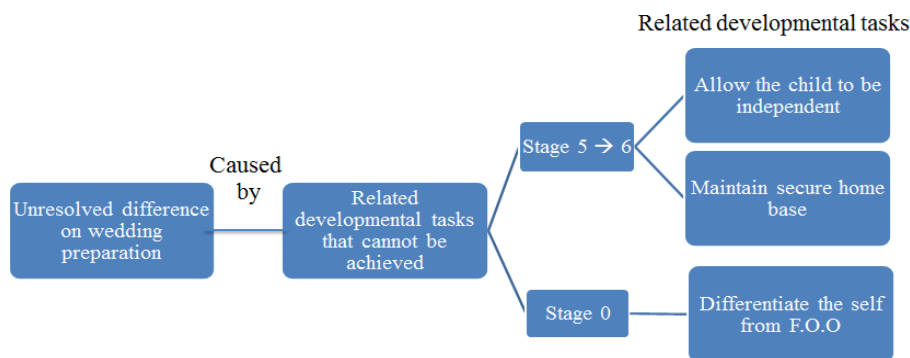


Fig. 3 Unresolved difference on wedding preparation caused by related unachieved developmental tasks

1) Differentiating the Self from the Family of Origin

Feedback from interviewees showed that the process of reviewing and reflecting their own thoughts, values and ideas helps to differentiate the self throughout the wedding arrangement process. When the newlyweds were clear about their want and the rationale behind, they were confident to communicate with other by showing their ideas.

Moreover, emphasis on the process of “natural parent-child interaction” can make newlyweds more aware of their thoughts and communicate their ideas to members of the family of origin directly, rather than to follow instructions from parents.

Lastly, when the newlyweds encountered challenges, they

could differentiate the self to be independent and solve the challenges using their coping strategies and resources, such as seeking help or advice from a pastor, friends or the Internet. These three elements can facilitate the newlyweds’ development task to differentiate the self from the family of origin (Fig. 4).

2) Helping the Parents Allows the Child to Be Independent

From the interviewees’ experience, it was learned that discussion in the natural parent-child relationship was encouraged. Other than the aforementioned reasons, discussion between the adult child and natural parents can demonstrate the

growth of the adult child, who is able to make independent judgments. At the same time, the ways of presenting, which included explanation, negotiation, and skillful presentation, to the parents were also crucial for parents to accept and adjust to this new and independent communication method. This

process, that the dependent child became an independent adult child, acted as an experiential learning to the family. Thus, the coping strategies of expressing thought in different ways and the process of natural parent-child interaction can assist the parents to allow child to be independent (Fig. 5).

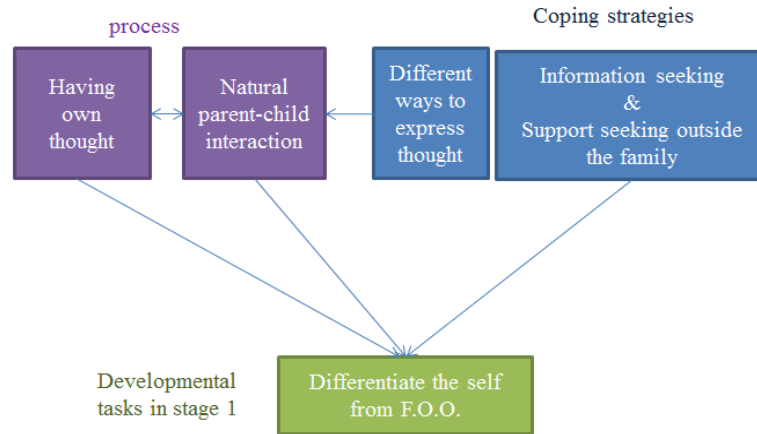


Fig. 4 Coping strategies and process for differentiating the self from the family of origin

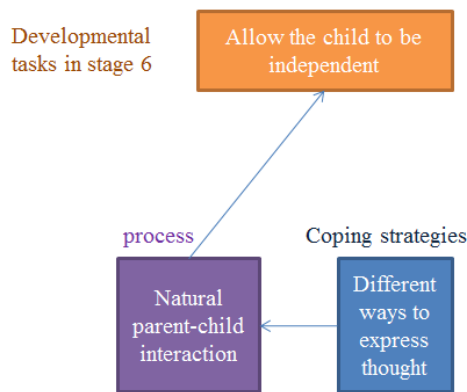


Fig. 5 Coping strategies and process for helping the parents allow child to be independent

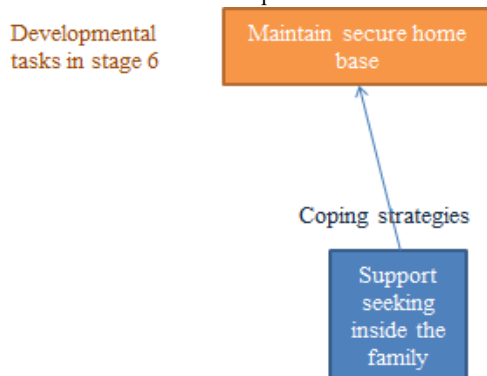


Fig. 6 Coping strategies for helping parents maintain a supportive home base

3) Helping the Parents Maintains a Supportive Home Base

Although an adult child is supposed to be more independent than before, the support from the family always acts as a crucial resource. Hence, the interviewee's coping strategies of seeking

help from the family members may help parents to understand the necessity of maintaining a certain level of support to their adult child (Fig. 6).

C. Concern towards Parents

As pointed out by [34, p. 7-8], "Coping, in sum, is certainly not a unidimensional behavior. It functions at a number of levels and is attained by a plethora of behaviors, cognitions, and perceptions". The above coping strategies and process can only provide ways to facilitate and adapt the developmental tasks, but the important element to push the interviewees to use these coping strategies and process is their "concern towards parents". This important element can be traced in the process of interviewees' thought of concerning their parents, such as showing respect and being fair. Fig. 7 shows the relationship between the related developmental tasks and the coping strategies, process and "concern towards parents".

Although an adult-to-adult relationship is encouraged throughout the transition, the elements of showing "concern towards parents" could still be found in the relationship between the parent and adult child. Learning to be independent does not mean disconnecting with the parents and being self-centered, so "concern towards parents" is also commonly found from the interviewees in soothing the parents' feelings when they are maladaptive to the family transition.

In addition to the process of parent-child interaction, different ways of expressing thought, such as explanation, negotiation and skillful presentation, also consist of the element of "concern towards parents", for understanding parents' feedback. In fact, all negotiation methods provided choices to the parents by giving them a sense of being concerned and respected in their child's wedding arrangement. Also, information seeking was also a coping strategy employed by the newlyweds to obtain more information from people outside of the relationship, in order to adjust the "concern" of the parent

and the self. Similarly, support seeking within the family was also a coping strategy adapted to convince and soothe parents, while showing “concern” towards the parents. Therefore, all of

the coping strategies and processes were not only the behavior to achieve the developmental task, but also demonstrated and rationalized the child’s belief in “concern towards parents”.

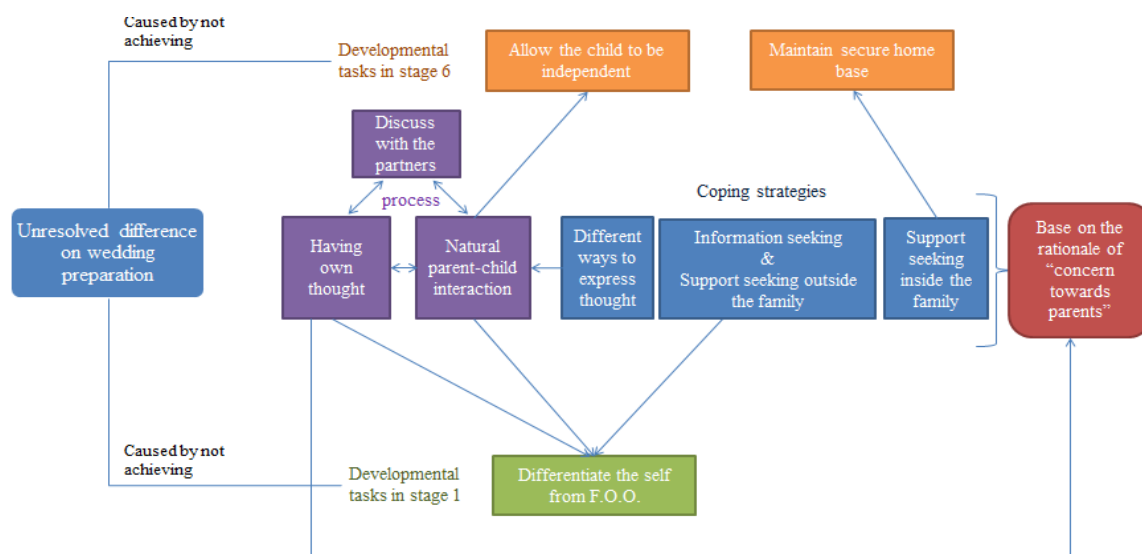


Fig. 7 The cause of intergenerational difference on wedding preparations from the family life cycle perspective for viewing the family’s needs and developmental tasks

To conclude, the intergenerational differences on wedding preparations can be resolved through achieving the family developmental tasks. Coping strategies, process and “concern towards parents” attitude were the indispensable elements to be included in facilitating and adapting the family developmental task. Once parents felt to be concerned and respected, they may be more willing to allow the child to be independent and be more confident that the child is able to make wise decisions about their wedding. At the same time, parents were also more flexible to maintain a secure home base for the adult child to seek help from the family on the wedding preparations when necessary. Thus, the intergenerational difference can be overcome through achieving the developmental tasks.

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Wedding preparations were the first practice for the newlyweds to be the subject of family transition, so in-depth exploration can help the family members to transit to the next stage successfully and maintain a functional relationship afterwards. Some supportive services for wedding preparations for the newlyweds were suggested to assist them to go through this challenge. Currently, pre-marital counseling mainly covers the procedures involved in a wedding under the theme of wedding preparations. From this research, the framework of the family life cycle (Fig. 7), which explains the causes of intergenerational differences on wedding preparations from a systemic perspective for viewing the family’s needs and developmental tasks, is proposed to be included in pre-marital counseling as part of the theme of wedding preparations.

Newlyweds can understand the mechanism of the family transition and reflect on their attitude towards their parents from this role transition. In addition, an educational group

within the above-mentioned framework (Fig. 7) was suggested to be held for those newlyweds who may encounter differences with parents/in-laws over wedding preparation. In the group, participants not only learned about the traditional rituals surrounding the wedding and family, but also the concept of the family life cycle and its development task of family transition from wedding preparations. The group would invite someone who is experienced in a similar situation to share the successful experience of “coping strategies”. After learning some “coping strategies”, participants will be encouraged to reflect on their own idea of wedding and the role of the parents in their wedding plans. Lastly, sharing on the theme of “concern towards parents” rationale will be used as a reference for the participants to construct their own rationale of coping strategy and process.

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