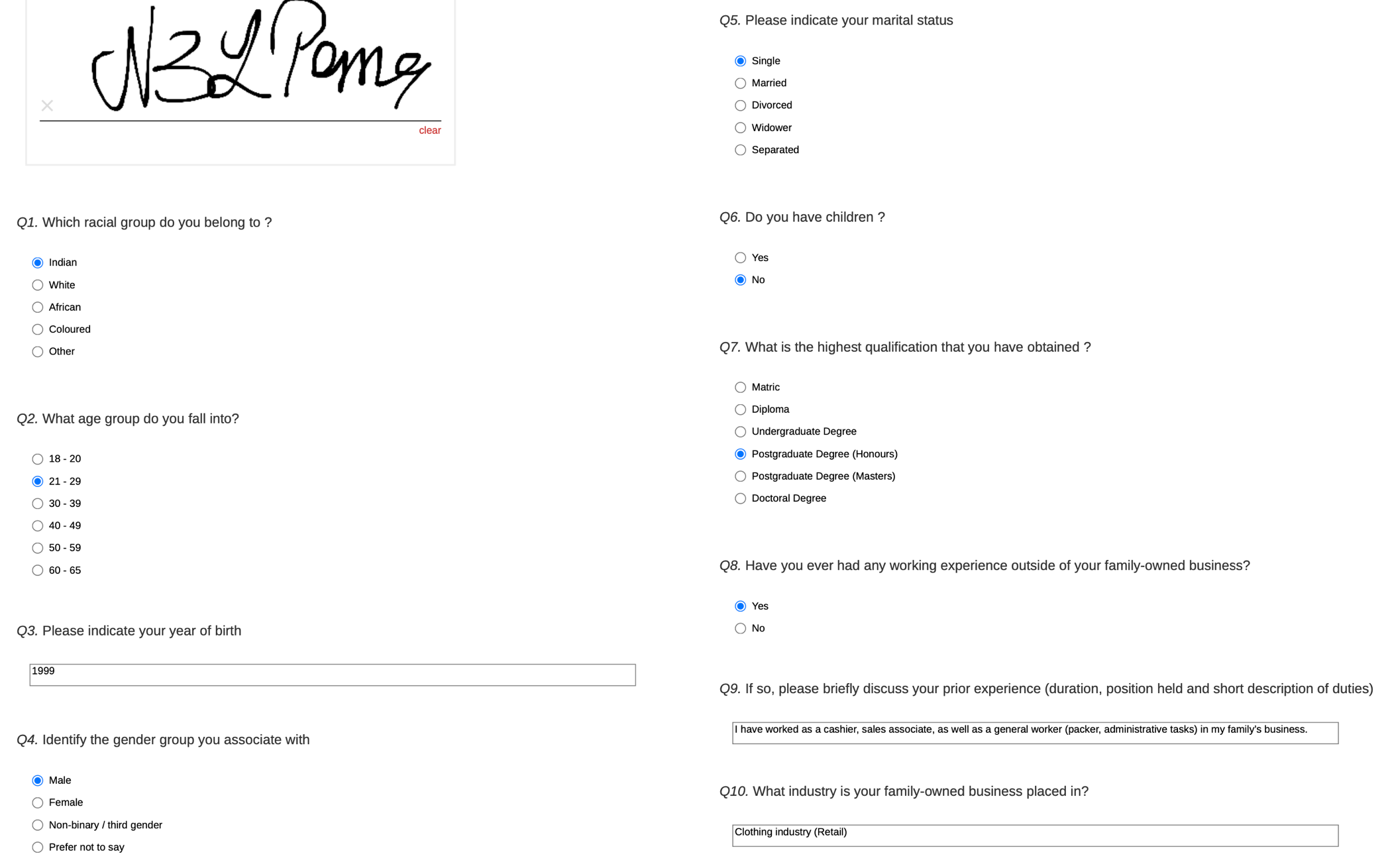
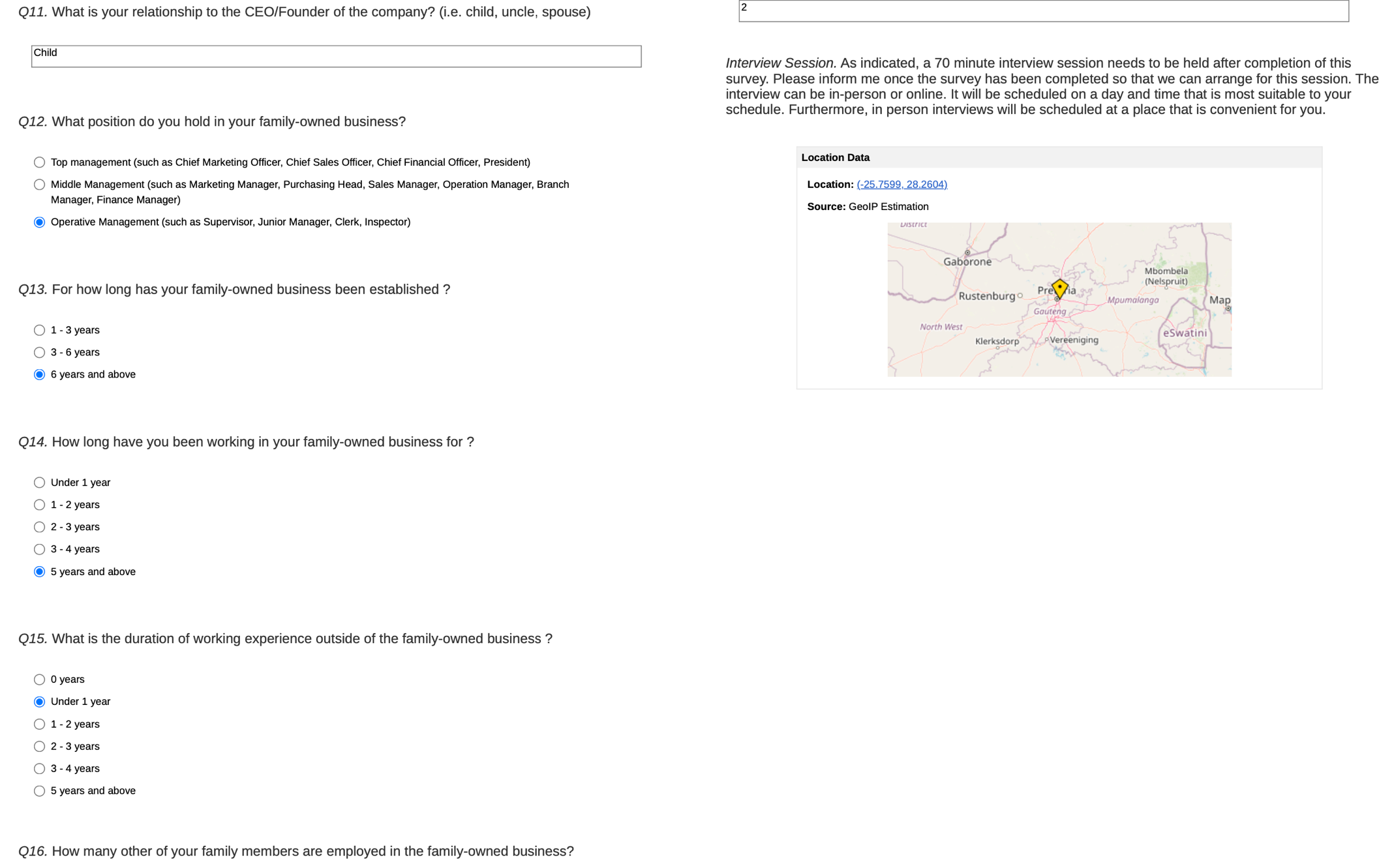
# INTERVIEW 10

## Interview Transcription

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Line Number | Person | Dialogue |
| 1 | Researcher | Good day, how are you doing today? |
| 2 | Participant | I’m good, thanks and you? |
| 3 | Researcher | I’m good thanks. Before proceeding, I want to confirm that you have completed the consent form and if you would still like to proceed with this interview? |
| 4 | Participant | Yes, I have |
| 5 | Researcher | Thank you. I would like to highlight that this interview will remain confidential and your identity will be kept anonymous through explicit and implicit methods. This implies that your name will not be used and further factors that could potentially lead to your identification will be eliminated. Do you understand this ? |
| 6 | Participant | Yes. |
| 7 | Researcher | Okay. I request that you stop me at any given point where you are uncomfortable with the interview or questions posed. On that note, I would like to remind you of your right to withdraw from participation with no negative consequences which implies that you can at any point in this interview or research process convey the intention to withdraw your contribution to this study and there will be no penalty or disadvantage presented to you. Do you understand this right? |
| 8 | Participant | Yes. |
| 9 | Researcher | Okay, I am going to record this interview for record keeping and transcription purposes. Is that still okay? |
| 10 | Participant | Yes. |
| 11 | Researcher | Okay, the admin is done, I want to thank you for carving the time to speak with me today. So the intention of this is to have a free flowing discussion regarding your experience being placed in your family-owned business. I will now start posing the interview questions but please feel free to interrupt me where you feel it is necessary. |
| 12 | Participant | Okay |
| 13 | Researcher | I see that you have been working in the family business for five years and above now, is that correct? |
| 14 | Participant | Yes so…I’ve just been working there since I left school. Started in my school holidays then eventually after I graduated I went full time into the business. |
| 15 | Researcher | Okay and I see that you are in an operative management position, can we clarify your position within the company? |
| 16 | Participant | Uhh..that’s like an umbrella term for the position. So I would call it a managerial position but (sighs) I guess with a manager, you want to take any and every role that is required to get the job done so basically I am a cashier, I am a manager, I am a stock taker, I manage stock transfers between branches, managing general queries for the staff and any potential labour issues that may come up with any of the staff. |
| 17 | Researcher | Okay so you’re in a more general management position, if I am not mistaken? |
| 18 | Participant | Ya, general manager |
| 19 | Researcher | Okay and you talk about taking these different hats at once, do you feel it is because you are the child to the owner of the business or do you think every employee outside of family would do the same ? |
| 20 | Participant | No I think it’s because it’s my own family’s business, you take the initiative to …you make the effort to do everything in your power to make sure everything goes right. So if it wasn’t my business, I would only stick to the roles stipulated in my contract but I don’t have that formal contract of my duties and responsibilities clearly listed. I do whatever it takes to ensure that the shop runs efficiently. So I would decide what I need to do and what is not necessary. |
| 21 | Researcher | So those are things not indicated that you would need to do but you kind of find yourself doing these things because it is your own business? |
| 22 | Participant | Yeah so…it’s just…just admin things. Things that typically you would send to HR or a filling clerk but sometimes you take the liberty of completing the task yourself because it’s going to make the next persons job a bit easier. |
| 23 | Researcher | Why do you find yourself doing this ? I want to understand the sentiment behind it ? |
| 24 | Participant | Well…I guess, since it’s a family business – it is your bread and butter so you want it to run as efficiently as possible and want to be as successful as possible. So I guess...you have your own tasks and what you need to do but you want to make sure that every small tasks runs smoothly and efficiently so the bigger picture is clear and …there’s no snags in any of the small mundane things. I think the success of a business is on the small nitty gritty details that people like to overlook. |
| 25 | Researcher | Yeah 100% and no job is too small, everything does accumulate to deliver that productivity. So since it is your bread and butter, you feel responsible for pushing these elements through and getting it done as efficiently as possible. That is a lot of pressure right? |
| 26 | Participant | Ya |
| 27 | Researcher | How do you cope with that ? What are some of the emotions that you felt in doing all of these things ? |
| 28 | Participant | Ya definitely, it’s a lot of pressure. Uhm…definitely a lot of frustration. You know when you’re working with family members, like I say it’s a very delicate situation. You see your colleagues on the weekends, you see them after hours, in the morning…it’s very hard to separate work and personal life so (sighs) I guess that’s what makes it difficult to working in a typical job where … I mean not in a family owned business..I feel like there is easier ways to manage conflict in non-family owned businesses. In family-owned businesses, managing conflict and managing emotions is much more trickier. |
| 29 | Researcher | Yeah. Has there been any instance where that work family boundary overlapped ? |
| 30 | Participant | Uhh…definitely. lIke say there’s a long weekend and everyone is just relaxing, maybe someone will start talking about a new idea or something that went wrong in the weekend, the discussion just starts and then you don’t have that time to relax and de-stress. You just bring your work with you everywhere you go. Even if you go on holiday, you see something and it just sparks a discussion. So normally when people go on holiday, they’re relaxing but now you’re having a business conversation on the beach (laughs) |
| 31 | Researcher | Yeah a full flown debate. Okay so you find yourself in a position where you aren’t getting that breakaway or rest from work and has there been any steps you have taken to improve the work-family boundary ? |
| 32 | Participant | Uhh…like I said. It is tricky to manage when your parents are your bosses and your aunts and uncles are also your seniors in the business and in your family… ya (sigh) so certain steps I have taken is just setting boundaries , telling them ‘okay after 5, I’d prefer not to talk about what happened’ , rather just talk about it at the business like how you would at any other job. If you were working at another job, you wouldn’t just call your manager at half past five and say ‘let’s talk about what happened this morning’. So it takes time to set boundaries but if you do it in a delicate manner and courteous way then you can set those boundaries. |
| 33 | Researcher | Yeah like it is possible. |
| 34 | Participant | It is possible. |
| 35 | Researcher | Okay in terms of the timeline, how long ago did you start putting these boundaries in place? |
| 36 | Participant | Fairly recently. I think working in a family businesses you think you aren’t going to get frustrated or you think you can handle more than what you bite off but I think as you get more experienced and familiarise yourself with the daily operations, you realise that sometimes certain things need to be said. So I think fairly recently. I think in the last 18 months or so. As with any job, the longer you work then the more confident you get in speaking to your seniors and ya. |
| 37 | Researcher | Yeah and like you said as soon as you finished your undergraduate degree, you went straight into the business. Even though, you are qualified, you don’t have the experience to carry yourself about professionally. It’s funny because what you learn out of a textbook will not at all prepare you for the practicality of it all. |
| 38 | Participant | Definitely definitely (laughs) |
| 39 | Researcher | Do you think in the past 18 months, things have improved? |
| 40 | Participant | Uhm…. I’d say overall they have improved. A lot of areas that still needs improvement but like I said, it’s a delicate situation cause you’re managing a relationship with your boss and your parent so you need to be delicate in how you are compared to at a different job. So certain things have improved but I think there is room for improvement. |
| 41 | Researcher | Yeah… if we look at your well-being – we spoke about the pressure of it all where you have to keep up with daily tasks then also the fact that you aren’t getting that breakaway. It’s like you’re continuously working in that environment. So do you think that you well-being with this boundary has improved? |
| 42 | Participant | Uhm… that’s difficult to say. I think that the main boundary that still needs to be improved is carrying business over to weekends and downtime. Ya I think, over time my well-being should improve as long as I keep communicating effectively and firmly. |
| 43 | Researcher | Yeah so from my understanding, the work family boundary hasn’t been there, you are establishing it and at the moment, you do think is has improved but there is potential for more improvement? |
| 44 | Participant | Definitely. I don’t think..I don’t think it is something you can achieve overnight, it’s a long. It’s an old business with certain traditions and values that the older generation has kept up. So as a new generation entering the business, you also cant rock the boat and bring these radical changes, you need to be strategic in the changes that you want to see and to bring about. |
| 45 | Researcher | Okay let’s talk about the traditions and values, what is your business about ? |
| 46 | Participant | It’s a men’s retailing business, a clothing business. So my great grandfather started the business, he was a junior tailor. (sighs) he was at a shop in town and wanted to empower the Gujarati tailors in his community. So he said that he will open his own shop once all of his friends are formally trained to become a tailor so that they could start their own livelihoods. So I think that sense of community has followed down and trickled out throughout the generations. So I think that is one of the core principles and traditions that the business carries. He was also a tailor but I think they realised soon enough that if they wanted to achieve a certain lifestyle and if they live at a certain level that tailoring isn’t going to cut it anymore. So my father and uncle I think they joined the business and said ‘okay, lets step away from tailoring. We will keep it as a side service but let’s look at retail, wholesale, let’s expand and diversify’ so I think that’s where we’re at now. So that sense of community, giving back to community, maintaining relationships with your family. Working with family is never easy, I mean out family business is nearly 100 years old and we’ve never had …any serious disputes leading to partners leaving the business or anyone feeling like upset or hurt. So just maintaining that sense of community and maintaining respect for one another that this is built on. |
| 47 | Researcher | It’s so inspiring that this started as an initiative to uplift people around him, that’s commendable and not many people think that way nowadays. It’s interesting to see the generational shift because I mean if you look at our forefathers, they would say ‘we’ve got to do this together, it’s a team effort’ whereas now, you see children venturing out on their own and not really wanting that unit together. It’s interesting to see that it has passed down through this many generations, has there been any discussion of you maybe carrying on this business? |
| 48 | Participant | Uhh… so like I said. I think with any new changes in a business, you need to be strategic in the way you bring about your new ideas and… there is a certain formula that has been working for so many years so one can be too arrogant thinking that ‘okay my idea is going to revolutionize this thing’, I think one needs to realise that there comes patience to learn everything you can about the business before but ya, there definitely are certain ideas and plans in the pipeline for changes and innovation but ya. It requires a lot of foresight where being relatively new to the business, I don’t have so that is what I am there to learn. |
| 49 | Researcher | Yeah and since you are new to the business and you are your fathers son, have you experienced any instances where the current employees, external employees perceived you differently ? Have you had issues with them taking instructions or following through on things that you command or have you not experienced anything of that sort? |
| 50 | Participant | I think I have been lucky in that sense. I have been working in this family business from when I was a young child so I never started at the top of the ladder so to say. When I was younger, I was always sweeping, mopping cleaning, wiping the windows. Like I started at the bottom. Especially with our long standing employees that have been there for 20 years plus, they’ve seen me grow up, they’ve seen me ..I’ve done every single role. I fulfilled every single position in the business. So I truly have started from the bottom. Granted, it is a family business so if I told my father like ‘I don’t want to do this anymore’, I wouldn’t have to but I think the staff have realised that I have put in my fair share of the work and I think they respect me a bit more. They take … take what I say seriously because they know I have done what they are doing so if I have to ask them to do something, they know I am asking it’s because I know it is possible and they are able to and it’s because I’ve done what they do, I’ve been in their position before. In some sense, I think they respect the younger generation a bit more than the older generation because they didn’t see the older generation start from the bottom. They just saw the father as the big boss sitting there at the counter but they have seen us start with them and progress and progress so ya…I would say there hasn’t been any issues but on the flipside, you do feel awkward. I mean when I was in high school, you start as a sales associate with some of the staff and the next day you come back promoted in a Managerial position and that person is still stuck at their same role. So that does create some tension but nothing that communication cant overcome. |
| 51 | Researcher | So when that tension occurs, how do you go about resolving that? What do you do to make it better? |
| 52 | Participant | My family is very open so I think open and clear communication. Being clear with all people involved and making sure that even though I am a staff member but since I am in a family business, I wouldn’t need legal representation or dispute or anything like that. For non-family member staff just making sure they feel represented and feel comfortable when they have an issue, have a safe space for them to bring up this issue so…I think the main thing is just communication and making sure the other party just feels heard and they aren’t going to be judged too harshly. |
| 53 | Researcher | And also just recognised. Just acknowledging how they feel shows so much of respect to the next person. It’s interesting because that is also where the sense of community value comes in where yes, you’re creating employment but you’re also looking after the people that you employ by giving them a voice, empowering them and uplifting them. So that’s nice to see. So you mention that you worked there from a very young age, at what age did you start working there? |
| 54 | Participant | Honestly, I can’t even remember. From the stories my parents told me, I’ve been there from…I thin..before I was even one years old. I started spending holidays in the pram at the shop, I was potty trained at the shop, I learnt how to drink..I remember very clearly, I remember I learnt how to drink from a glass bottle at the shop. (laughs) It’s always just been a part of me so I don’t have any memory of a December where I was not there. Now it’s a bit different because you’re there 24/7 but growing up, you always knew on your last day of your exams, you’re at the shop the next day. |
| 55 | Researcher | Yeah a constant reminder on that day (laughs) |
| 56 | Participant | (laughs) yeah I cant say that…basically I’ve been there my whole life but working fully like employee earning a salary, for the last few years now so ya. |
| 57 | Researcher | mmm… let’s talk about that experience where it shifted from you going occasionally to you becoming employed there. How do you experience working in the family owned business? Let’s talk about the pros and cons, your typical day. |
| 58 | Participant | Let’s start with the pros and cons. Definitely one of the biggest pro is flexibility. I mean I don’t need to go to HR and apply for leave, I just ask my dad the night before to say ‘okay I have XYZ to do, I don’t think I tam going to be in tomorrow’ so I think that’s one of the biggest pro especially in todays time where like…time is money but your own time is very precious to you. So we work Monday to Saturday so having that flexibility is one of the biggest pros that I couldn’t get at another job. Uhmm… the cons. I mean there’s many other pros like the financial freedom and you know having that open communication line feeling like maybe you deserve a little bit more this month because you did XYZ, something you couldn’t talk to another boss about, especially in your first few years of working but I think just having flexible working hours and lines of communication is the biggest pros. The biggest cons I would say…like I said earlier, there isn’t boundaries, there is no official start and end to the work day. The minute I wake up, the work day starts because over breakfast you’re discussing something then you come back and over supper, you’re always…it doesn’t end. Then because it’s a clothing business when we’re going around shopping on weekends and stuff then you think ‘ok maybe we should try and get this ‘ or ‘we sell this cheap’ or … I think… because also the nature of our business, it’s in your face 24/7 so it’s very hard to avoid. It’s the biggest cons rating that … having that balance of work and personal time. Then the typical work day… (sighs) we all go to the main branch, the main branch opens at eight, quarter past eight then the staff usually report to the main branch. Then well.. as soon as all the other staff get there then uhm… I would go open up one of the smaller branches around half past eight or so. Then…it’s just the normal mundane activities of having a shop, cleaning up, packing stock, making sure the shop is neat and also just stock take, always doing stock take, making sure we have enough stock of the popular sizes, cuts of pants and t-shirts, just …you are busy 24/7. In between you get customers, then if the customer makes a mess up of things then it adds admin time to you and ya… you always have to keep watching stock in terms of what’s selling, what isn’t selling. What isn’t selling in the smaller shops, you return back to the bigger shop because you rather just make space for something else. |
| 59 | Researcher | Worthwhile ? |
| 60 | Participant | Ya more sought after in your shop |
| 61 | Researcher | Mmm… so you still do the sweeping and cleaning? |
| 62 | Participant | Uhm… when I’m bored, yes. Because when there are no customers in the shop, you have to occupy yourself somehow. |
| 63 | Researcher | (laughs) |
| 64 | Participant | (laughs) the broom is just right there by the door so take the broom and just sweep. |
| 65 | Researcher | So easy access |
| 66 | Participant | Yes |
| 67 | Researcher | Okay I just want to delve into the pros. We spoke about the flexibility and not having to go through the processes and procedures of applying for leave, waiting for approval cause you obviously have to apply within a certain period of time, I say this with experience. |
| 68 | Participant | (laughs) |
| 69 | Researcher | So being able to rapidly get things done? |
| 70 | Participant | Ya so I have to … I am in a fortunate position to skip all those processes and procedures, just go straight to the approver and just ask. I also think I have an unfair advantage, where I ask my father something I think it’s difficult for him he sees his child asking versus his employee asking. Sometimes you use that to your advantage, you can see that…I mean I understand why other staff members would have an issue with that. Not a lot of staff could say ‘okay I am not coming in’ without a valid reason. |
| 71 | Researcher | Yeah like they would have to give proof and |
| 72 | Participant | Ya exactly. |
| 73 | Researcher | Is this only with your personal issues, or say if you see something in the shop that isn’t working or an avenue for improvement, you kind of have this discussion with him. Is it similar where you don’t have to go through the process of doing research, developing a presentation, then presenting and waiting for approval. Would it be an easy discussion with you and your dad? |
| 74 | Participant | Yes and no. I feel like if it’s something new that I want to introduce, I would first try it in my shop and see how it goes and…I think because we are the children, I think they are more critical of what we have to say compared to maybe another staff member that is working there and has been there for the same amount of time I have. So I think they expect more of us so that’s why they become more critical so…yes in a sense of I don’t need to go through all those processes with ideas but also…I think…the chances of my idea being approved and implemented are much low compared to the average employee because they hold you to a higher standard. |
| 75 | Researcher | I can completely relate to that. So we are in energy and I went to my dad a couple of years ago. This was when I was just in undergrad so a long long time ago. So I went to my dad and said ‘daddy why don’t we incorporate solar into the shop?’ and he just looked at me and said ‘I’m not mad’ and funny store, two years later there was a sales rep that came to see him and he comes home and says ‘ya we must do solar’ then I’m sitting there thinking ‘I told you’ |
| 76 | Participant | (laughs) yeah I think that’s also the issue because like I said, it’s difficult for parents to separate their child versus their employee so sometimes when you bring anything valid up or an idea, it’s just like shoved off. |
| 77 | Researcher | Just your child asking for a sweet (laughs) |
| 78 | Participant | (laughs) yeah. Yeah, same. |
| 79 | Researcher | Why do you think that comes about? Why do you think they are so…I don’t want to say dismissive but why do you think they are not ready to accept these suggestions or thought? |
| 80 | Participant | Uhm…like I said I think it’s because they hold us to a higher standard. We have been born in this business so we know what it is all about. They expect us to be at a certain level of thinking when it comes to making decisions, they expect us to I think.. they think we have been there for such a long time so they expect us to have a certain level of hindsight and foresight where they want us to present these ideas but it’s difficult for us to explain ‘yes, we have been there for a long time but this formal role only started recently so we don’t necessarily have that foresight’ so…I think that also makes them, the way they listen to our ideas and stuff, they think we’re new to the business so…what do they say ‘a leopard doesn’t change it’s spots’ (laughs) I mean they went through the same thing with their father, they knew how long it took to convince him when they changed the whole business up so..I think in that sense they are very open to listening to ideas but when it comes to implementing new ideas, it’s another story. |
| 81 | Researcher | Okay do you think over time as our professional skills develop, do you think that when we get to a point where we present something, explain the risk involved and fully uncover implementing a new idea, do you think maybe things would change to give them the push they need? |
| 82 | Participant | Ya so I think (sighs) that’s where my personal studies come into play where I’m like I have these set of skills you know that I learnt during my studies. So maybe if I incorporate them in my ideas, the skills and just fully analysing the problem and giving them a full report on what I think and expect to happen once certain changes are implemented, I think they would appreciate it a bit more rather than just chatting about it in an informal environment. So I think it would probably be more beneficial if you approach these things in a more formal manner so…like all the protocols that someone else would have to follow. |
| 83 | Researcher | So there is kind of leniency when it comes to self-management like leave but when it comes to organisational changes then that level of professionalisation, processes and procedures would be applicable? |
| 84 | Participant | Yes, definitely. I think when it comes to personal matters and just general leniency then that’s fine but I think when it comes to decisions that impact other aspects of the business then that they might be a bit more reluctant to listen because they’re just afraid that you don’t have enough experience to be making such calls so… there is that fear of trying something and it doesn’t work out. |
| 85 | Researcher | Ya and obviously that’s time and money of the company invested, that’s loss then that feeling of guilt, and anger, and frustration. |
| 86 | Participant | Definitely |
| 87 | Researcher | Okay well we’ll go to your career in a bit, your studying and so forth. I just want to talk about the cons before we move on. You mentioned that you guys sell clothing which is pretty much anywhere. I know, I love doing my clothing sprees. So obviously for me, that’s a pleasurable experience but for you, that’s different because when you go there, you’re looking at all of these products and thinking ‘okay maybe we should stop that’, ‘maybe we should lower our prices on this item’ seeing that they’re doing this and we’re doing that. So how do you deal with that? It’s such a delicate situation to be in because it’s something so fundamental and common. We spoke about it being difficult for you to breakaway and this in some way contributes to it. How do you manage this experience? How does it feel ? |
| 88 | Participant | Well like you said, clothing is everywhere. When we go shop, you cant go to a mall without entering a clothing shop (sighs) so it’s unavoidable. I guess if you enjoy what you do then it doesn’t feel like work, I think that’s the biggest takeaway. I think shopping for everyone is a fun activity especially when it is for yourself but I think…working in a clothing business you actually appreciate certain things a bit more than the average consumer. Uhm…for example, when I look at a le coq sportif shop or a superga shop, I know what goes into uhm…just maintaining a shop like that. I mean it’s always fun to see like if someone else has the same stock and if they carry the same items, it’s always fun and interesting to see how they display it and things like that. Every outing feels like a research trip. A bit boring at times but when you’re not at the shop, it feels fun. Obviously when you’re at the shop, you’re much more serious and that’s when the pressure is on but usually on the weekends, you treat it as research. So that’s why it feels like sometimes the job never ends. Sometimes when you go out on the weekend or something, you always relate it back to your own business. |
| 89 | Researcher | So I am getting a sense that even though there is no sense of separation, it is a humbling experience like a learning curve. |
| 90 | Participant | Definitely. This lack of separation, it’s a con but I think it’s also a pro because it allows you to just have some… just to discuss all your spontaneous ideas or spur of the moment thought, decisions. You can just being that up at any point in time. That’s also a con in itself because if you see something nice and interesting, you want to tackle it now to do so but in a normal job, you would have to wait for offices to open. It will be a con as well in the sense that say on that day, you aren’t in the mood to talk about these kind of things but someone else does so you just have to go with it. Then you get sick of shopping for clothes, it’s like with anything. Too much just makes you tired of it then when it comes to your own things, you just stop caring anymore because you’re surrounded by this all the time so it’s just pieces of clothes, it doesn’t matter what brand and how much you paid for it. It’s just a piece of cloth. |
| 91 | Researcher | I am also getting a sense that you do have an appreciation towards the fact that it takes a lot to manage a store, it’s a lot of hard work, sweat and tears but what are some of the sacrifices or compromises you have made personally for the family business? |
| 92 | Participant | Mmmm…(sighs) I’d say you… I sacrificed a lot of my friendships and personal relationships because like I said you’re working Monday to Saturday and everyone else is usually working Monday to Friday so that Saturday is usually when you catch up with your friends, go out and socialise so I think the social aspect is one of the biggest compromises I’ve had to make but also …like I said you have the flexibility of getting leave whenever you want and that’s not always necessarily a good thing and say when a certain staff member is gone on leave and you can’t go anywhere. It puts that additional pressure on you. Generally everyone likes to take leave on long weekends or like Easter so all my friends take that kind of leave and stuff but like those specific holidays are times where I know I have to be at the shop, I can’t be anywhere else. So I think my social life has been the biggest compromise so far. |
| 93 | Researcher | Ya it’s funny because I feel the same thing because in December, usually one of the cashiers go on leave and that’s when everybody is out and about on holiday, road tripping, doing things and you’re just like ‘oh sorry, cant come, I’m working’ so I sympathize with that and I think it takes a certain amount of strength and emotional intelligence as well. I mean you obviously don’t want to have feelings of missing out on experiences with friends and it takes a lot of growing up to do to get to that level of acceptance. |
| 94 | Participant | Yeah. |
| 95 | Researcher | Do you think you have reached that point where you don’t have that fear of missing out ? |
| 96 | Participant | Uhm…of course sometimes you fell like okay, you wish you could just be a normal person with a nine to five and…working in a family business gives you the opportunity to see the bigger picture and the more you put in, the more you get out so I think once you’ve…once you’re in the business for a while, you realize that you know…sacrifices are worth it in the end. |
| 97 | Researcher | I agree 100%. So let’s talk about your career, you spoke about your degree and the skills and so forth that you gained. What degree did you study ? |
| 98 | Participant | Okay so I studied an undergraduate in BSc actuarial sciences and maths. Did my honors in mathematical statistics so … I think …I think working in the family business also maybe guided me towards studying something along those lines. I mean you’re always hearing about numbers, you’re always hearing about your parents talking about profit and margins and stock and just surrounded by numbers all the time. Being the cashier, you’re looking at the screen, seeing numbers going up and down and entering invoices and stock and so I think that definitely pushed me to do something with numbers. But I think my studies has formalized my analytical thinking skills and my critical thinking skills. I think those are valuable now to the business where maybe I can provide an alternative perspective on something of like a stock take or maybe I can do a better stock analysis of items that are selling fast or…just try to see what items are popular. I mean most of the other managers don’t have formal training…their training just comes from experience so a lot of their analysis of what is a good seller and whats a slow seller is just based on intuition. I think with my formal education, I am able to add …able to quantify those…uhm…those… what did I say… quantify that instinct that they have. They have those years of experience but now I am able to put a backing to that. So I think ya, it really helps. |
| 99 | Researcher | Ya and that’s also assisting the business because now you’re not working solely on your gut but rather your gut plus actual hard evidence that there is enough reasons for you to consider the fact that this is a good seller. |
| 100 | Participant | Yes. |
| 101 | Researcher | You did say that you were exposed to numbers and so forth, if you think about the extent to which the family business drove your decision to study this, do you think it was to a very large extent or small extent? |
| 102 | Participant | Uhmm…for me personally, it was a very big contributing factor pushing me to study with numbers. I have always been in the meetings with accountants, you hear about these numbers, you see these figures, you want to know what they mean. For me personally, I wanted to know how do they calculate these things, what does it actually mean, I always hear my father talking about the analysis like ‘this is a fast mover, this is a slow seller’ like how do you just have an opinion about that? Obviously, they have the experience where it’s not an opinion, it’s a fact. So I have always been curious about that field of work, just analyzing data and things like that, looking at profit margins, so that definitely forced me to study something that would make sense |
| 103 | Researcher | So it kind of peaked your interest? |
| 104 | Participant | It definitely did. |
| 105 | Researcher | So the business had a significant decision on your career decisions thus far and is there any steps in place in terms of your career development and progression? Like you can’t be a general manager forever so has there been any conversations, where do you see your career going in the next few years? |
| 106 | Participant | (sighs) well like I said there’s a lot of changes and innovation to bring about to the business so you’re right, I don’t see myself being a manager forever but I think where I am right now is necessary to move up the next step. Just bring more growth to the business and maybe just trying something new I mean my father and them are an inspiration. They had the courage to change stuff about the business so that kind of inspires you and makes you want to change things in the business, thinking you cant be stagnant forever, the only way to change this business and carry on this legacy is to change with the times so obviously plans in the motion but ya, it’s risky to introduce new things and new roles and things like that but |
| 107 | Researcher | So I am getting a sense that you do see yourself in the family business but you still have a lot to do at the point where you are. You want to prove your worth, you want to prove why you should be there, why you are the right fit and things like that ? |
| 108 | Participant | Mmmhhmm |
| 109 | Researcher | Okay and there is no formal steps in the sense that by this year, you have to be in the next position or anything of that sort? |
| 110 | Participant | Ya there hasn’t been any formal goals like written down on paper but you have to set personal goals, like by this time this year – you want to achieve XYZ and you know, you have your personal goals clearly stipulated but there are no formal goals where you can be held accountable. I think that’s also one of the pros of working in a family business that you are accountable for the actions but there is always some leniency involved. |
| 111 | Researcher | Yeah there is no set route or KPA’s |
| 112 | Participant | Exactly. |
| 113 | Researcher | Uhm…okay and are you satisfied with where your career is and where it is going ? |
| 114 | Participant | I don’t think anyone can be fully satisfied, I am happy with where I am right now but definitely changes need to be implemented. I am a very curious person and I get bored easily so I cant be in the same role forever. So for now I am satisfied but overall, there is a lot more that can be done, a lot more that can be changed. |
| 115 | Researcher | Mmm…that’s good to hear. It seems like you are content but you are still looking forward to the future. |
| 116 | Participant | Ya |
| 117 | Researcher | I just want to delve into the family dynamics. You spoke about your father being your boss and dad, has either relationship – well we have spoken to how the employee employer relationship has been affected – but do you think that the personal relationship, the father son relationship has been affected? |
| 118 | Participant | Uhm…I think it definitely has affected the relationship but I think in a positive manner. I think maybe they respect your decision making and thought process a bit more especially in your personal life because they know that decisions and …uhm…your thinking process in the business, once they see that, they know what you’re talking about in a business sense, they start trusting you in your personal life a bit more. I think in that sense, it helps them to not see you as a child forever I mean…helps them realise that they have adult children now not teenagers anymore. |
| 119 | Researcher | Okay so in terms of the family dynamic, the employee-employer relationship has positively contributed in the sense that you father perceives you as a capable adult and not as a little boy? |
| 120 | Participant | Exactly yeah. |
| 121 | Researcher | Okay that’s good. I also want to get a sense of the support you have in the work environment. We spoke about you having extreme flexibility and not having to follow process and procedures. I just want to get a sense of the instrumental support like having workplace mentors or having somebody on standby to …fill in if you’re not around. So let’s talk about that instrumental support, do you have those things? |
| 122 | Participant | (sighs) like I said, working in a family business uh…you do feel alienated from the rest of the staff because they feel you have this chip on your shoulder. You try very hard to make yourself feel that you are a part of them, a part of this workforce, a part of the staff even though technically you aren’t in some sense the perks that you receive …the support structure is there but I can’t say confidently that I can rely on it because I am the owners son, if I had to ask one of the managers for a favor or something, I think they would always in the back of their mind be like I don’t have the right to ask them for their help maybe I should just go straight to my father to ask for help and things like that. It’s like a …delicate situation, they also feel like they can’t talk to you openly at times. Everyone wants to complain about their boss at some point in their lives but if your boss is your colleagues’ father, you think twice before talking to them. So I think that father-child dynamic influences your relationships with your colleagues and I think that also negatively impacts your support structure at work. |
| 123 | Researcher | Okay so the support is there but primarily out of bare obligation and not collegial warmth. So most of the work you have been doing, I assume you have been learning from your dad? |
| 124 | Participant | Uhm… so… the structure of the business is that my dad handles certain aspects, my uncle handles certain aspects and there are certain aspects that the managers handle on their own so…I mean of course my father knows how to handle every single thing but I think it’s always better to consult everybody and to learn from someone that specializes in that specific skill so like managing the relationships with the staff and the reps and just processing general admin. The managers are responsible for the general buying of stock and things like that. My uncle is more in charge of uhm…just day-to-day operations, making sure payments are done and stuff like that. So…(sighs) if I need help with a specific task, I first try and isolate to see who the best person is to ask for this, then I go straight to that person so I don’t necessarily learn everything from my dad. |
| 125 | Researcher | Okay but you do have that mentorship in many roles. We have spoken about instrumental support, I want to talk about emotional support, you spoke about that distinction between work and family not being there and sometimes things can get heated with your family members so when you experience difficult times, who do you turn to for that emotional hug? |
| 126 | Participant | I can say that when a situation arises at work, then you have no choice but to turn to your colleagues and other managers and be like you know even though this person is my father or my uncle, you have to not trash talk them but tell them that ‘I also don’t agree with what’s going on, I am also not happy with this situation’ like in that sense, you turn to…I mean we all have friends in the workplace, you just turn to someone you can trust and uhm…I don’t have that fear that this person will go tell my father that I said this because that would put them in an awkward position so I think it puts you in a bit of an unfair power play with your colleagues but other than that…like working at any job, you turn to your family for support so you just turn to your siblings, or cousins or members that are not involved in the business so they can just …see the picture for what it is and not taking sides as someone that is external. You need an external set of eyes on the situation. |
| 127 | Researcher | Yes cause often when you’re too close to the situation, you don’t see clearly. |
| 128 | Participant | Exactly but also I think it’s hard to find friends to confide in because having a family owned business is a very unique experience and the problems you face and ..the solutions you want to hear can’t be offered by just anybody, you need to speak to somebody in a similar position to you, in the same position that you experience. |
| 129 | Researcher | Yeah like the challenges are intricate. Yes, I agree with that 100%. I went to one of my friends and told them about this thing that had happened at the business, and she felt it was not a big deal and I was shocked because it actually was. Then I speak to someone who isn’t in the family business, but they’ve been there, then they are more understanding towards the situation being bad and wondering what we are going to do about it. So I completely understand what you are saying, it needs to be from somebody that understands the sacrifices, the pros, the cons that encapsulates a family business. So it’s funny to see that we all experience the same. Yeah. Okay and do you take any tangible steps to manage your well-being like exercise? Or a hobby? Anything of that sort? |
| 132 | Participant | I think the main this is definitely avoid unnecessary shopping (laughs) just separate yourself from that but ya just you know exercise, doing a lot of reading, just you know…trying to reinforce that separation between business and social so just going for a walk or going for a hike, making time to meet people that are outside of the family business. I think family businesses are very isolating when it comes to meeting new people and generally people our age have stories of meeting new colleagues, expanding their network so just making time on just networking, building, getting to know new people. It’s much harder when you’re working in a family business because you’re not exposed to different people all the time. |
| 133 | Researcher | Yeah, and you hear a lot about workplace romances, and I mean that is not an option (laughs) |
| 134 | Participant | Exactly (laughs) |
| 135 | Researcher | Okay but that’s nice to hear so in terms of support, I think you have It covered. |
| 136 | Participant | Ya…generally. |
| 137 | Researcher | Okay so we have come to the end of our session, I just want to check if there is anything you would like to discuss before I let you go. |
| 138 | Participant | Mmm no, I’m fine for now |
| 139 | Researcher | Okay then I just want to check if you would be willing to have a follow up interview should I require more information regarding certain issues discussed? |
| 140 | Participant | Yes |
| 141 | Researcher | Okay I am going to let you go, thank you for taking the time to participate in this process. You time is highly valued and your input has been extremely insightful. |
| 142 | Participant | Thanks so much. |

## Demographic & Questionnaire Responses:





## Notes

### Observation:

Candidate seems to foster a high sense of awareness regarding the pros and cons of working in a business. He is able to critically analyse how a certain instance may prove beneficial and detrimental at the same point in time (for example; being a part of the workforce but receiving additional perks, being able to talk to colleagues but having power in the sense that there would not be backlash. He does seem to have a negative experience in implementing a work-family boundary. The nature of their business is such that it can not be easily avoided and he does appear to experience frustration in that regard impacting his well-being. However, he tries to take steps in enforcing a boundary through saying that he does not want to talk about things after a certain point of time in the day, avoiding shopping, physically removing himself from family (walks, networking with external individuals). He is analytical in his work approach where he targets the best suited person to assist him with a specific task at hand and received instrumental support from managers, his dad and his uncle. In terms of his career, the family business sparked an interest in the mathematical aspect of operations and he is now able to make a meaningful contribution in backing the experience based intuition with factual forecasts. He does appear to be content with where he is but enforces the need for change, innovation and improvement letting on a sense of critical analysis once again and a certain amount of ambition.

### Reflection:

Could relate in many instances to the participants sentiments and experiences, it appears that sharing personal experiences probed the participant to let out more information regarding certain aspects as he felt comfortable to do so given the level of understanding present. Interesting to see how his degree has moulded his personality type to be analytical and critical towards each and every aspect of working in a family decision but it is reassuring to know that all of these statements are well-thought out in some sense.