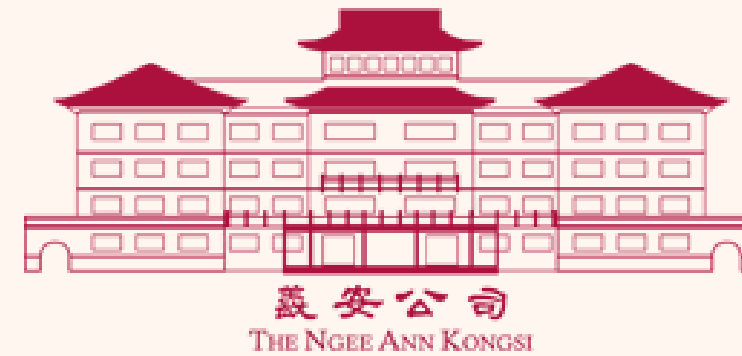# Families who eat together stay together?: Examining time use of families in Singapore by family structure

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Singapore University of Social Sciences

Acknowledgements

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The views expressed in this presentation are my own and does not reflect the opinions or positions of any affiliated organisations

Introduction

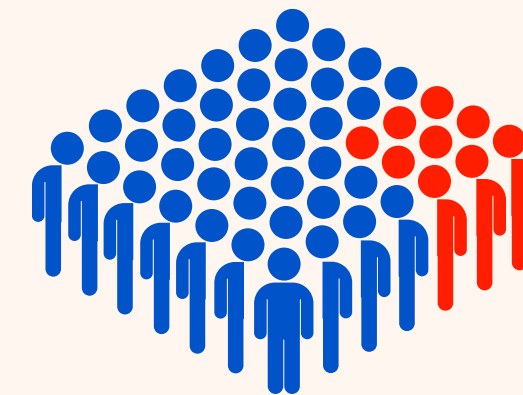**Benchmarking**

Time-use, Quality of Life, and Family Resilience

Longitudinal study spanning 3-waves

Data from 2nd wave

2171 Participants

847 households

Stratified Random Sampling

By ethnicity and housing type

Research Question

Research Question

1. How is family structure associated with the time we spend on meals and engaging in social/leisure activities?

2. To what extent is family structure associated with family resilience?

3. How is spending time having meals and engaging in social/leisure activities with family associated with quality of life and family resilience?

Participants in this Study

Nuclear Family

N = 1477

Mean Age = 38.93

Single-Parent Family

N = 65

Mean Age = 46.05

Blended Family

N = 19

Mean Age = 41.45

Extended Family

N = 305

Mean Age = 40.11

Non-Familial Household

N = 47

Mean Age = 51.93

Elderly Independent Couples

N = 251

Mean Age = 61.75

Others

N = 7

Mean Age = 62.86

Modified American Time Use Diary

Modified American Time Use Diary

Similar to the original American Time Use Diary (ATUS) but with some key differences

- Collection of 1 weekday and 1 weekend diary
- Time use logged in 5-minute increments
- Changes in coding category to match the behavioural patterns of Singaporeans

50 Categories (Including subcategories)

- Personal Care
- Household Activities
- Caring for Household Members
- Caring for Non-Household Members
- Work
- Education
- Consumer Purchases
- Professional and Personal Care Services

- Household Services
- Government/Civic Obligations
- Eating/Drinking
- Socialising, Relaxing, Leisure
- Sports and Exercise
- Religious Activities
- Volunteer Activities
- Telephone
- Travelling

Measuring Quality of Life

WHO-QoL-BREF

WHO-QoL BREF is a 26-item scale that measures quality of life across 4 domains

- Likert Scale (1-5)
- 1 = Very Poor/Very Dissatisfied/Not at all/Never
- 5 = Very Good/Very Satisfied/An Extreme Amount/Extremely/Completely
- Scoring:
  - Domain Scores = Mean scores of items in each domain
  - Overall QoL = Mean scores for each domain
 - Transformation to 0-100 scale

Physical

Social

Quality of Life

Psychological

Environmental
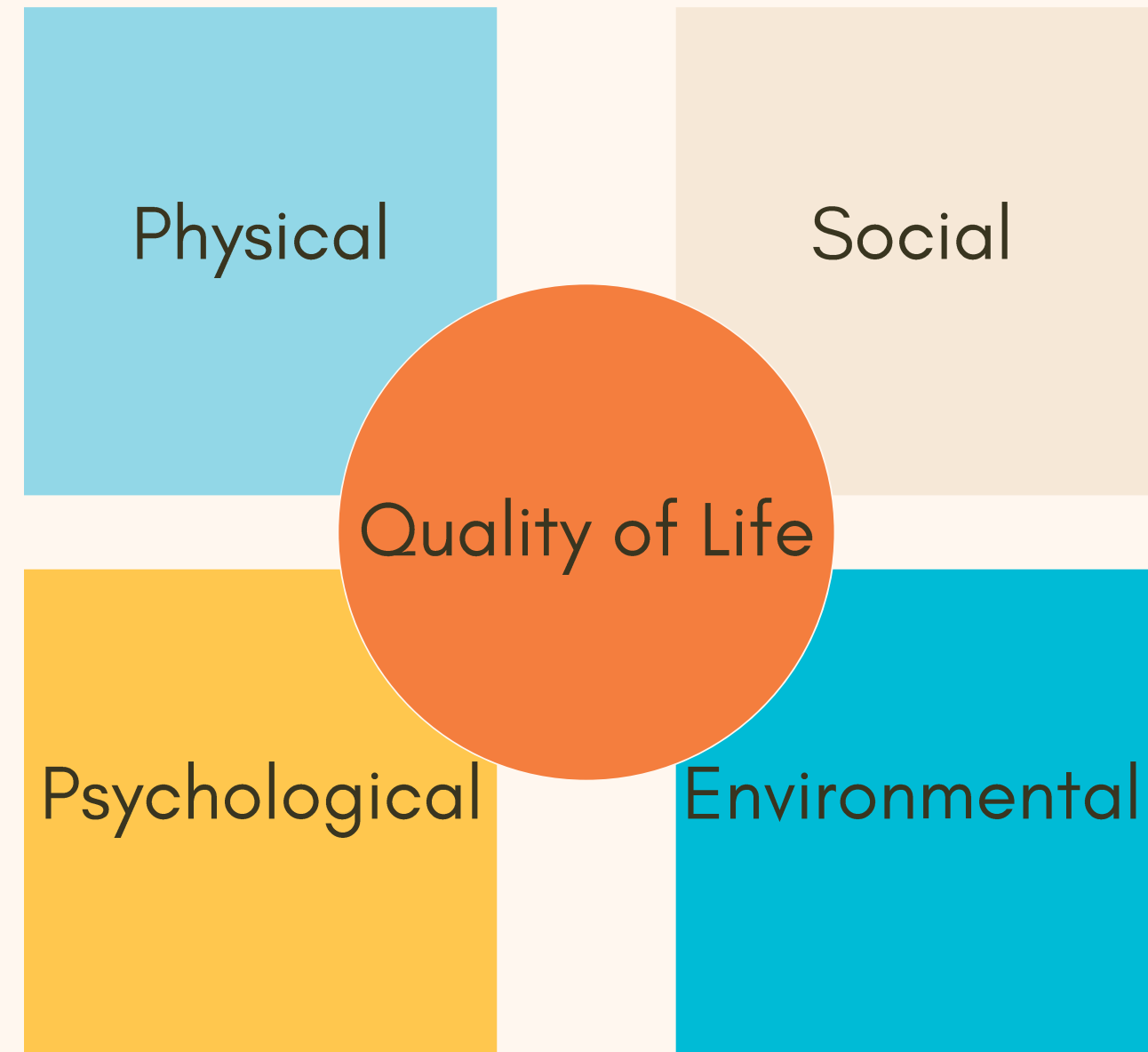
Measuring Family Resilience

Walsh Family Resilience Questionnaire

WFRQ is a 32-item questionnaire measuring family resilience across 3 domains

- Likert Scale (1-5)
- 1 = Rarely/Never
- 5 = Almost Always
- Scoring:
  - Domain Scores = Mean scores of items in each domain
  - Overall Score = Mean scores for each domain

Belief System

Family Resilience

Organisation Patterns

Communication/ Problem-solving
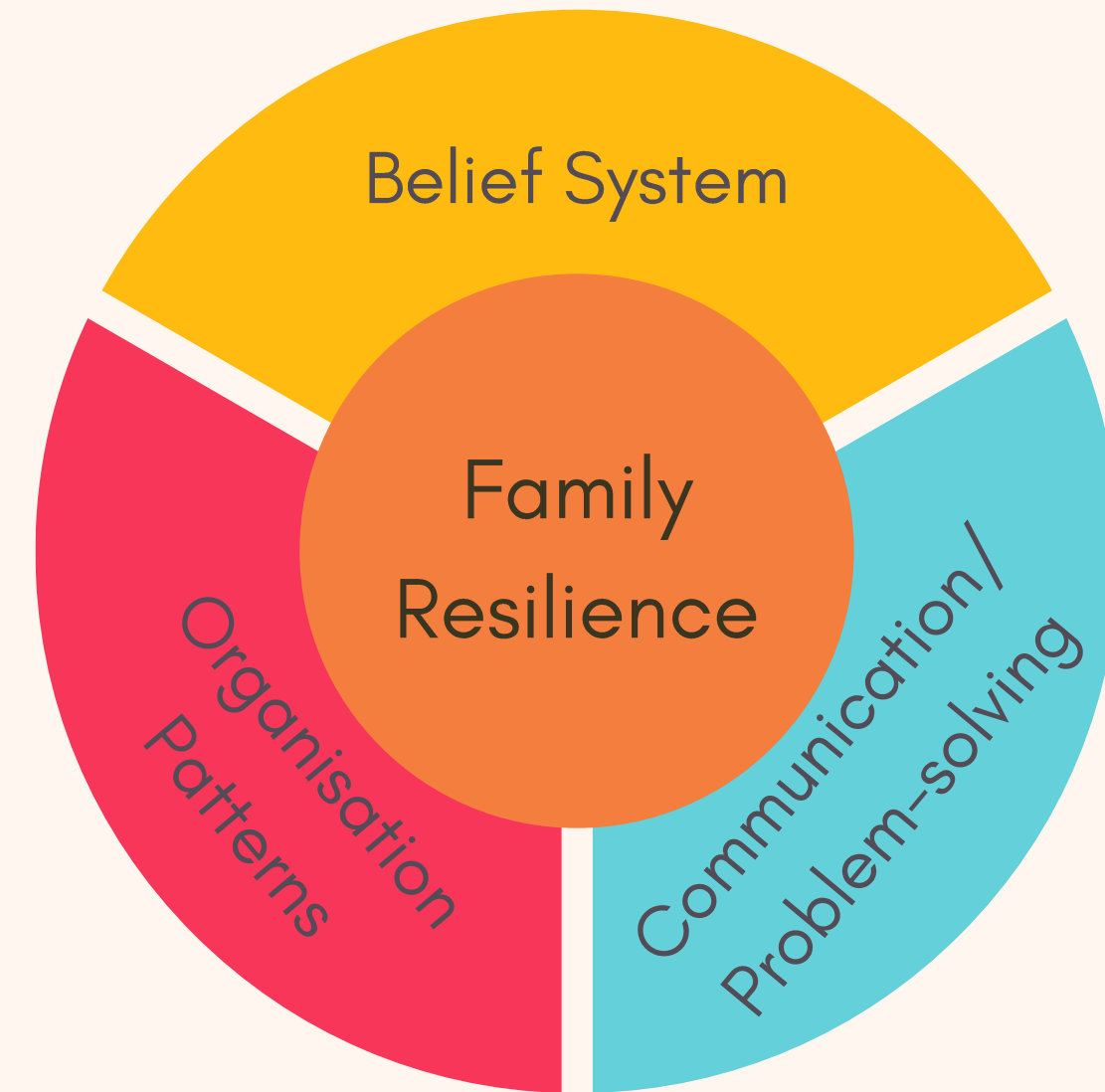
Elderly Independent Couples households Spent the Most Time Engaging in Social and Leisure Activities

Socialising and Leisure (Weekdays)

Elderly Independent Couples
7 Hours and 37 Mins

>

Nuclear Family
4 Hours 46 Mins

Single-Parent Family
4 Hours 42 Mins

Extended Family
4 Hours 36 Mins

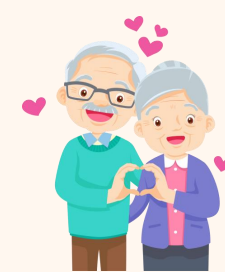**Non-Familial Household**
4 Hours 59 Mins

Socialising and Leisure (Weekends)

Elderly Independent Couples
9 Hours 05 Mins

>

Nuclear Family
7 Hours 20 Mins

Single-Parent Family
7 Hours and 1 Min

Extended Family
6 Hours 30 Mins

Non-Familial Household
5 Hours 42 Mins

• For households without children, it appears there may be a preference to devote additional time to social/leisure activities

Nuclear Families Spent More Time Engaging in Social and Leisure Activities on Weekends When Compared to Non-familial households*

Socialising and Leisure (Weekends)

Nuclear Family

7 Hours 20 Mins

Non-Familial Household

5 Hours 42 Mins

- Both nuclear and non-familial households share similar social/leisure activities
  - Relaxing
  - Watching TV
  - Shopping
  - Social Media

*The other family types were not significantly different from each other, only significant pairwise comparisons are presented.

Respondents from Elderly Independent Couple households report higher scores on Psychological and Environmental Quality of Life

Psychological Quality of Life

Elderly Independent Couples

73.80/100

>

Non-Familial Household

67.72/100

Environmental Quality of Life

Elderly Independent Couples

74.41/100

>

Non-Familial Household

68.34/100

*The other family types were not significantly different from each other, only significant pairwise comparisons are presented.

Respondents from Nuclear and Elderly Independent Couple households report a greater capacity to make meaning out of life and remain optimistic (higher "Belief Systems" Scores)

*The other family types were not significantly different from each other, only significant pairwise comparisons are presented.

Family Resilience – Belief System

Nuclear Family
3.90/5.00

>

Extended Family
3.74/5.00

Non-Familial Household
3.58/5.00

Family Resilience – Belief System

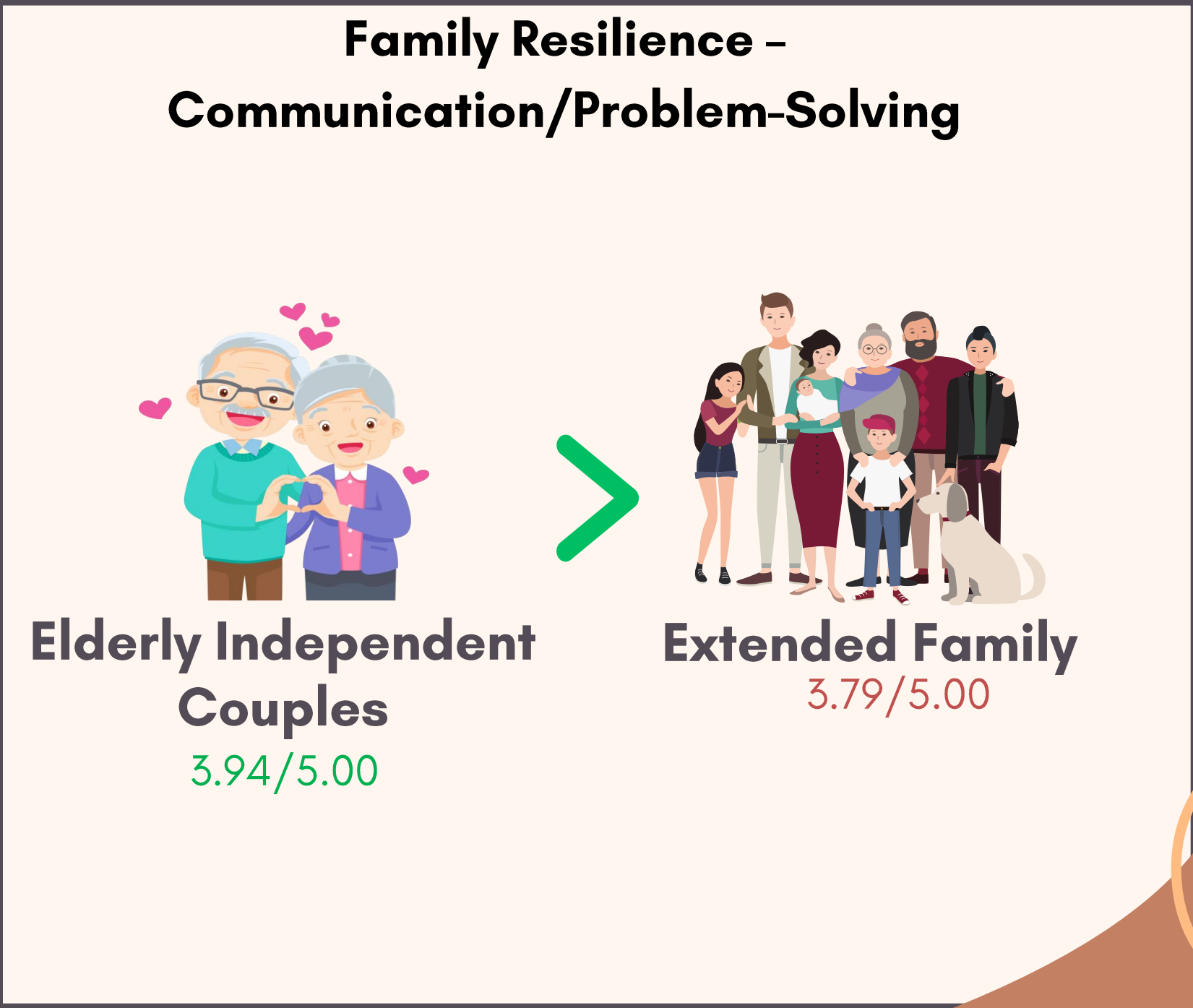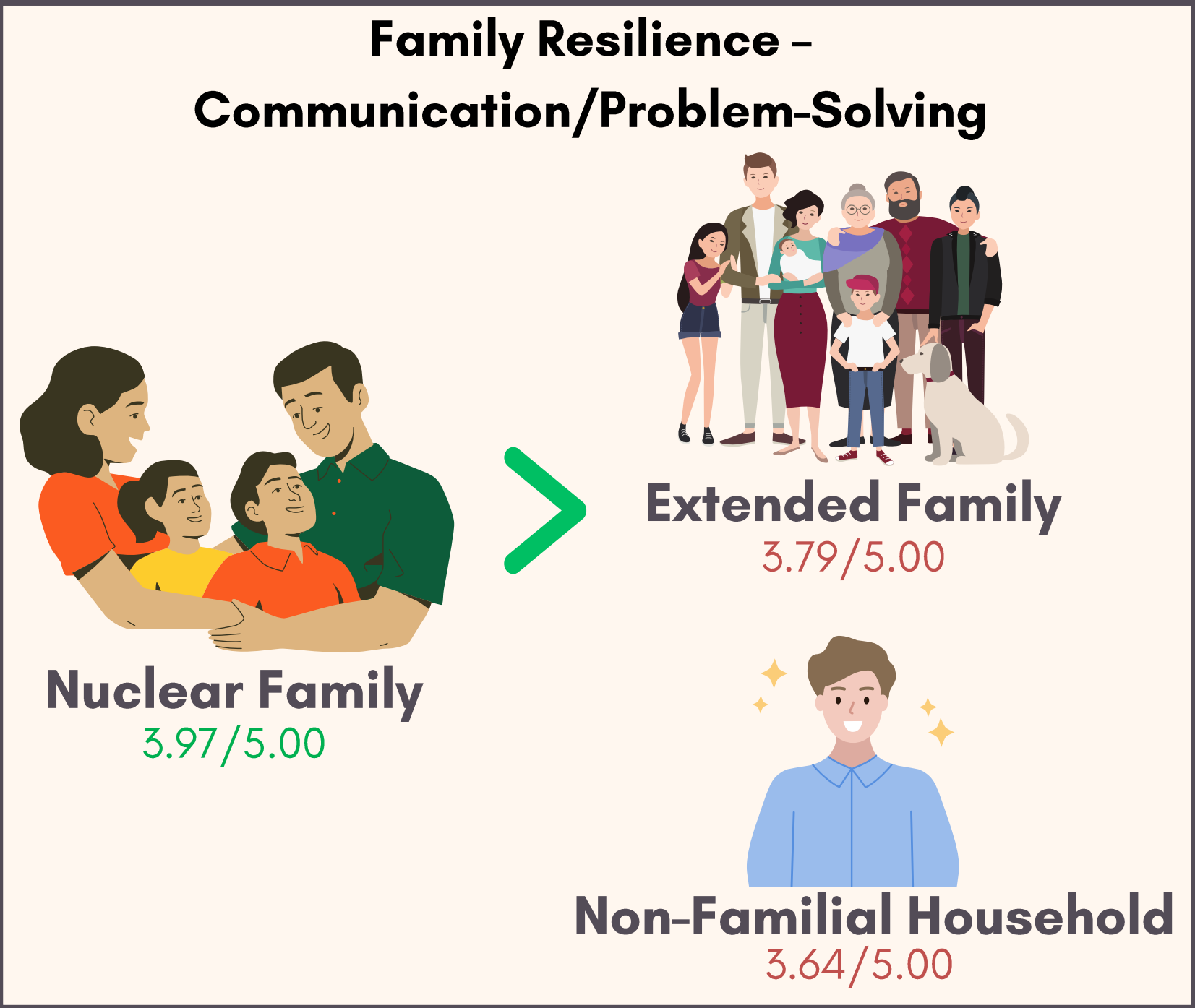**Elderly Independent Couples**
3.87/5.00

>

Non-Familial Household
3.58/5.00

Respondents from Nuclear and Elderly Independent Couple households report greater capacity to express emotions and communicate with each other appropriately (higher "Communication/Problem-Solving" scores).

*The other family types were not significantly different from each other, only significant pairwise comparisons are presented.

Family Resilience – Communication/Problem-Solving

Extended Family
3.79/5.00

Nuclear Family
3.97/5.00

Non-Familial Household
3.64/5.00

Family Resilience – Communication/Problem-Solving

Elderly Independent Couples
3.94/5.00

Extended Family
3.79/5.00

Respondents from Nuclear and Elderly Independent Couple households report greater capacity to navigate through stressful times by being flexible, connected, and able to utilize resources (higher "Organisational Patterns" scores)

*The other family types were not significantly different from each other, only significant pairwise comparisons are presented.

Family Resilience – Organisational Patterns

Nuclear Family
3.92/5.00

>

Single-Parent Family
3.64/5.00

Non-Familial Household
3.58/5.00

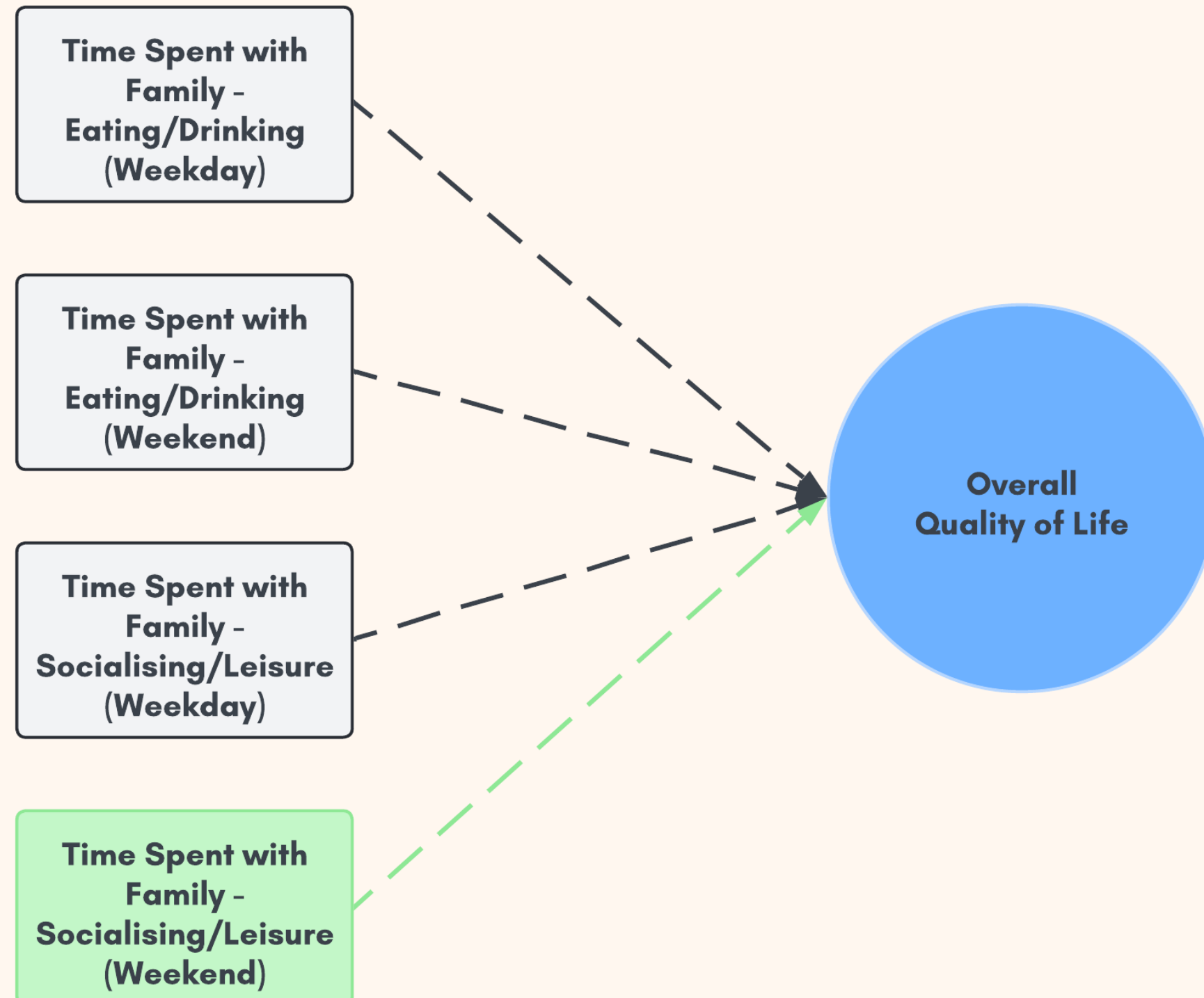## Family Resilience – Organisational Patterns

Elderly Independent Couples
3.84/5.00

>

Non-Familial Household
3.58/5.00

Time Spent Engaging in Social or Leisure Activities As a Family is Associated with Higher Quality of Life for Nuclear Families

Time Spent with Family - Eating/Drinking (Weekday)

Time Spent with Family - Eating/Drinking (Weekend)

Time Spent with Family - Socialising/Leisure (Weekday)

Time Spent with Family - Socialising/Leisure (Weekend)

Overall Quality of Life

Controlled Variables
1. Age
2. Gender
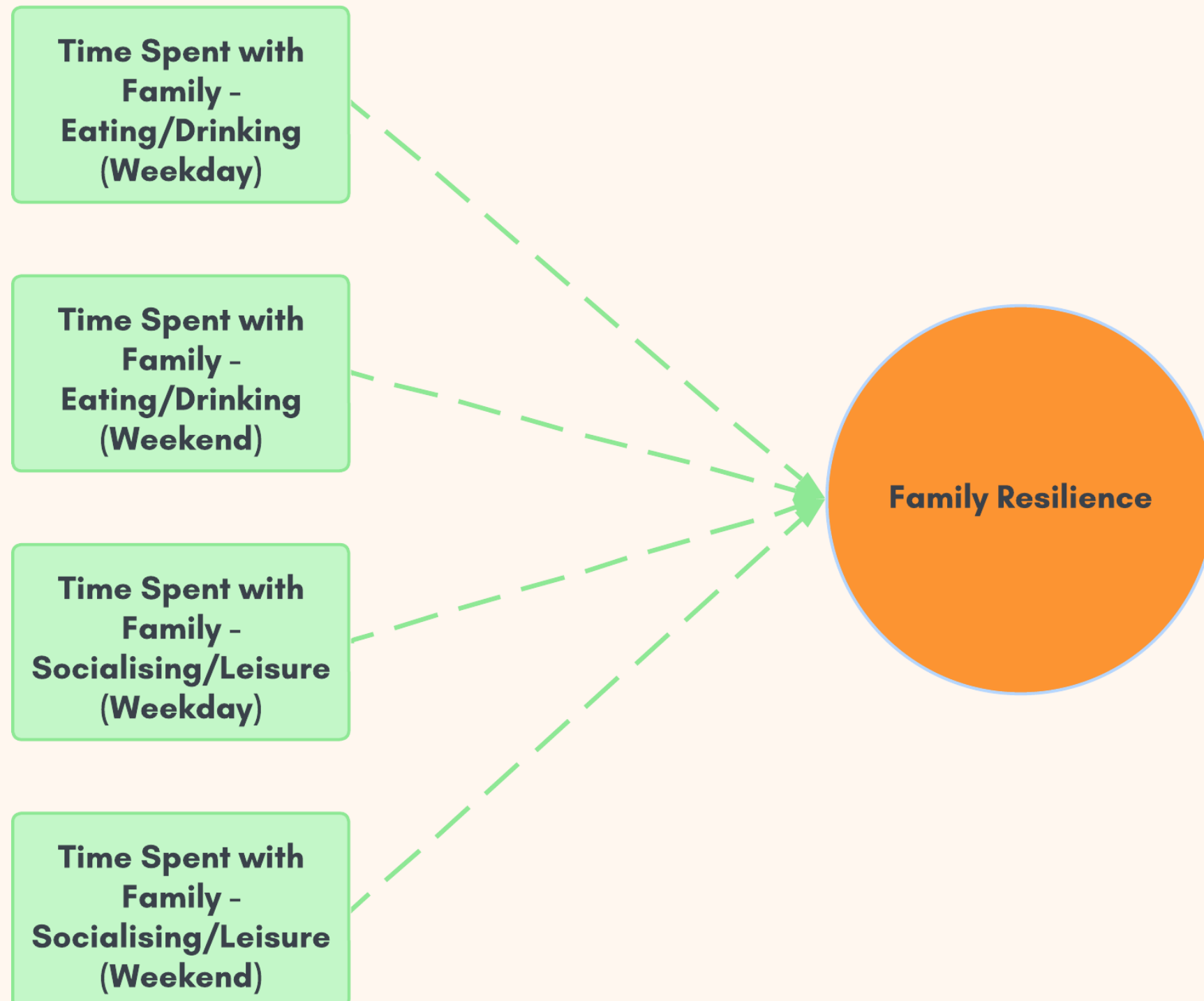3. Ethnicity

Nuclear Family

Most common activities done with families on weekends:

- Watching TV/Movie
- Shopping
- Family Time/Visiting relatives

Time Spent Eating/Drinking and Engaging in Social/leisure Activities with Family is Associated with Higher Family Resilience in Nuclear Families

Time Spent with Family - Eating/Drinking (Weekday)

Time Spent with Family - Eating/Drinking (Weekend)

Time Spent with Family - Socialising/Leisure (Weekday)

Time Spent with Family - Socialising/Leisure (Weekend)

Family Resilience
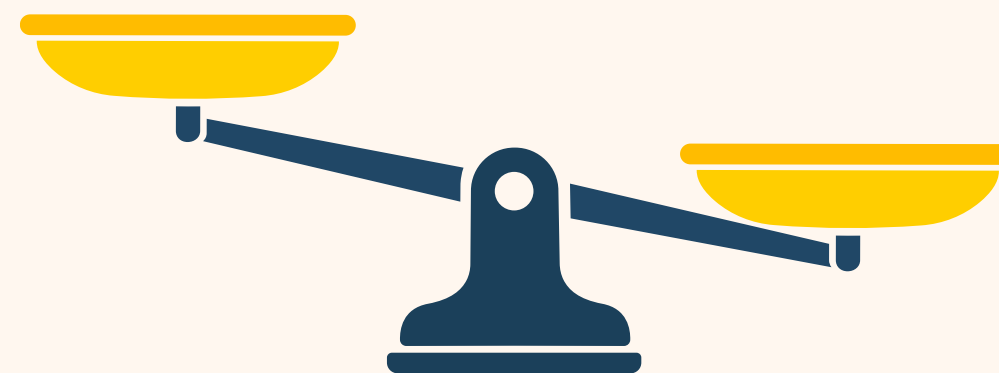
Nuclear Family

- Most common mealtimes with family
  1. Dinner
  2. Lunch
  3. Breakfast

Next Steps

✓ Extended families might require further deep dive into their time use patterns.

Resource inequality?

Unbalanced time spent with family?

Increased likelihood of more complex family relationships?

(Briole et al., 2020; Chen & Yang, 2016; Thomas et al., 2017)

Conclusion

✓ Family structure plays a role in the way we use our time

✓ Difference in time use could be key to building more resilient families

- Encourage families to spend more time engaging in social/leisure/having meals together

Conclusion

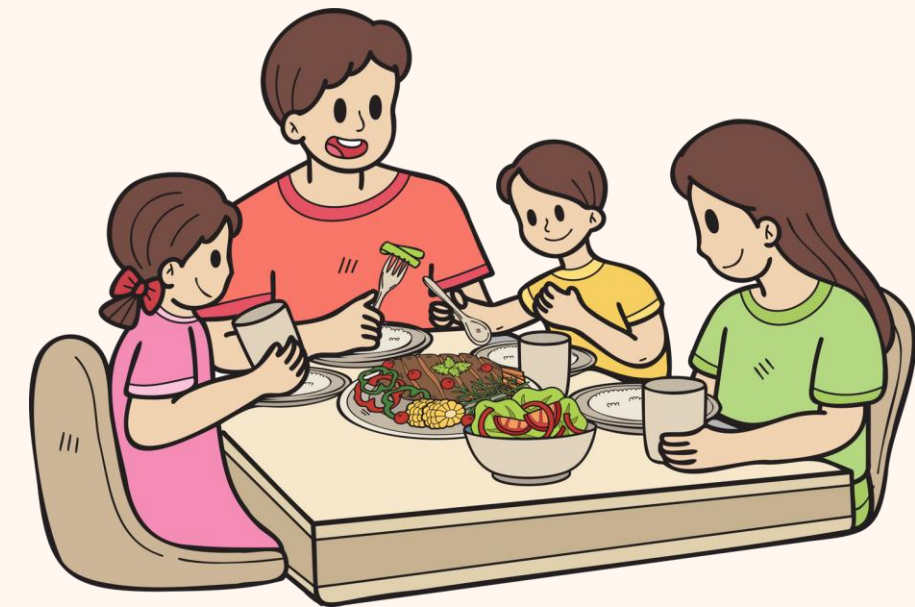✓ Promote more family-friendly policies to encourage families to spend time engaging in meals and social/leisure together

Centre for FATHERING

Eat With Your Family Day

Leave work an hour earlier every Friday! (4.30pm?)

Encourage F&B establishments to promote more family combos!

Conclusion

Have a meal with your family everyday!

...But maybe don't invite your in-laws?

Annex A

Slide	Analysis	Statistic
10	ANCOVA – Socialising and Leisure (Weekdays)	$F[4,1965] = 16.139$, $p = <.001$
10 – 11	ANCOVA – Socialising and Leisure (Weekends)	$F[4,1965] = 14.403$, $p = <.001$
–	ANCOVA – Eating/Drinking (Weekdays)	$F[4,1965] = .809$, $p = .519$
–	ANCOVA – Eating/Drinking (Weekends)	$F[4,1965] = .808$, $p = .520$
13	ANCOVA – Belief System	$F[4,1555] = 7.159$, $p = <.001$
14	ANCOVA – Communication/Problem-Solving	$F[4,1555] = 7.430$, $p = <.001$
15	ANCOVA – Organisational Patterns	$F[4,1555] = 6.048$, $p = <.001$
–	ANCOVA – Overall Family Resilience	$F[4,1555] = 7.687$, $p = <.001$
–	ANCOVA – Physical QoL	$F[4,1775] = 1.269$, $p = .280$
12	ANCOVA – Psychological QoL	$F[4,1775] = 3.536$, $p = .007$
–	ANCOVA – Social/Relationships QoL	$F[4,1775] = 2.222$, $p = .064$
12	ANCOVA – Environmental QoL	$F[4,1775] = 3.858$, $p = .004$
–	ANCOVA – Overall QoL	$F[4,1775] = 2.915$, $p = .020$
–	Multiple Linear Regression [Enter] (Overall Model) – QoL	TSWF Social/Leisure Weekday B = -.010, $p = .770$
		TSWF Social/Leisure Weekend B = .182, $p = <.001$
		TSWF Eating/Drinking Weekday B = .036 $p = .206$
		TSWF Eating/Drinking Weekend B = .011 $p = .694$

Annex B

Slide	Analysis	Statistic
16	Multiple Linear Regression [Enter] (Nuclear) – QoL	TSWF Social/Leisure Weekday B = -.029, *p* = .445
		TSWF Social/Leisure Weekend B = .203, *p* = <.001
		TSWF Eating/Drinking Weekday B = .024, *p* = .504
		TSWF Eating/Drinking Weekend B = .017, *p* = .614
–	Multiple Linear Regression [Enter] (Single-Parent) – QoL	TSWF Social/Leisure Weekday B = -.154, *p* = .324
		TSWF Social/Leisure Weekend B = .038, *p* = .804
		TSWF Eating/Drinking Weekday B = -.073, *p* = .634
		TSWF Eating/Drinking Weekend B = .194, *p* = .213
–	Multiple Linear Regression [Enter] (Extended Family) – QoL	TSWF Social/Leisure Weekday B = -.062, *p* = .441
		TSWF Social/Leisure Weekend B = .032, *p* = .688
		TSWF Eating/Drinking Weekday B = -.003, *p* = .970
		TSWF Eating/Drinking Weekend B = -.127, *p* = .082
–	Multiple Linear Regression [Enter] (Non–Familial Household) – QoL	TSWF Social/Leisure Weekday B = .106, *p* = .743
		TSWF Social/Leisure Weekend B = -.298, *p* = .399
		TSWF Eating/Drinking Weekday B = -.007, *p* = .981
		TSWF Eating/Drinking Weekend B = .085, *p* = .788

Annex C

Slide	Analysis	Statistic
–	Multiple Linear Regression [Enter] (Empty Nest/No Kids) – QoL	TSWF Social/Leisure Weekday B = .040, p = .706
		TSWF Social/Leisure Weekend B = .117, p = .258
		TSWF Eating/Drinking Weekday B = .085, p = .295
		TSWF Eating/Drinking Weekend B = .093, p = .210
–	Multiple Linear Regression [Enter] (Overall Model) – FR	TSWF Social/Leisure Weekday B = -.080, p = <.001
		TSWF Social/Leisure Weekend B = .143, p = <.001
		TSWF Eating/Drinking Weekday B = .076 , p = <.001
		TSWF Eating/Drinking Weekend B = .066, p = <.001
17	Multiple Linear Regression [Enter] (Nuclear) – FR	TSWF Social/Leisure Weekday B = -.097, p = .023
		TSWF Social/Leisure Weekend B = .126, p = .002
		TSWF Eating/Drinking Weekday B = .094 , p = .015
		TSWF Eating/Drinking Weekend B = .115, p = .001
–	Multiple Linear Regression [Enter] (Single-Parent) – FR	TSWF Social/Leisure Weekday B = -.223, p = .191
		TSWF Social/Leisure Weekend B = -.116, p = .474
		TSWF Eating/Drinking Weekday B = -.070 , p = .666
		TSWF Eating/Drinking Weekend B = .019, p = .909

Annex D

Slide	Analysis	Statistic
–	Multiple Linear Regression [Enter] (Extended Family) – FR	TSWF Social/Leisure Weekday B = -.077, p = .371
		TSWF Social/Leisure Weekend B = .158, p = .069
		TSWF Eating/Drinking Weekday B = .115 , p = .141
		TSWF Eating/Drinking Weekend B = -.133, p = .089
–	Multiple Linear Regression [Enter] (Non-Familial Household) – FR	TSWF Social/Leisure Weekday B = .487, p = .156
		TSWF Social/Leisure Weekend B = -.503, p = .210
		TSWF Eating/Drinking Weekday B = .320 , p = .224
		TSWF Eating/Drinking Weekend B = .170, p = .624
–	Multiple Linear Regression [Enter] (Empty Nest/No Kids) – FR	TSWF Social/Leisure Weekday B = -.057, p = .623
		TSWF Social/Leisure Weekend B = .048, p = .666
		TSWF Eating/Drinking Weekday B = -.038 , p = .667
		TSWF Eating/Drinking Weekend B = .013, p = .876