

**Sue McGregor and Margaret Bateman Ellison. (2003). A new research framework for family resource management applied to financial preparedness of mid-life working couples. International Journal of Consumer Studies, 27(5), 395-405. Posted with permission of the editor. Copyright held by Blackwell Publishing.**

### **Abstract**

In order to continue to move forward, the field of family resource management needs rich research programs based on holistic, synergetic approaches. To that end, this paper presents a multi-perspective research framework for designing family resource management research programs using insights from five existing perspectives to understand families: life cycle stages, life spiral across generations, unplanned life transitions, the historical context of the course of one's life, and the different levels of influence on daily life ranging from the cosmos to the unknown (spheres of influence perspective). A modernization of the life cycle perspective is proposed as well to accommodate the gap between the full nest and the empty nest. We then use this new research framework to shape the development of a program targeting retirement preparedness of mid-life working couples with dependents (children and aged or infirm adults). We anticipate that deeper, more holistic insights into family resource management strategies can be gained from using this new research framework.

Family resource management is an established field of study with a long, progressive history (Key & Firebaugh, 1989). Goldsmith and McGregor (1998) recognized an evolution occurring within the discipline (formerly called home management) such that practitioners are challenged to keep abreast of the rapidly changing relationships between families and their environments. This paper tenders a multi-perspective research framework for family resource management (see Table 1) that strives to accommodate the changing nature of families, the changing nature of their external life environment (especially policies within government and the labour market) and the two way relationship between families and their changing life context as they procure, manage and dispose of resources to fulfil their day-to-day and intergenerational needs.

[Insert Table 1 about here](#)

In more detail, the authors assume that deeper insights into family resource management strategies can be gained from integrating four life development, evolution and transition frameworks with the spheres of influence perspective into a new *family resource management research framework*. These five perspectives include: (a) the family life cycle perspective, (b) the life spiral perspective, (c) the life transition perspective, (d) and the life course perspective,<sup>1</sup> and (e) the spheres of influence perspective. Each perspective will be discussed with comments on how each accommodates particular parts of the resource management puzzle but not the entire phenomena. A modernization of the life cycle perspective is also suggested. By way of application, the discussion ends with an example of how using this multi-perspective research framework provides guidelines for developing a long term research program or strategy for studying family resource management and retirement preparedness for mid-life working couples

---

with dependents.

### **Family Life Cycle Perspective**

The development perspective tries to predict different life cycle stages depending on age, school placement of the oldest child, marital status and labour force status of parents up to the launching stage when the criteria changes to the situation faced by those left in the family unit (Bengtson & Allen, 1993; Duvall, 1957; Eshleman & Wilson, 1995; Kindra, Laroche & Muller, 1994). The family life cycle perspective, proposed thirty years ago by Wells and Gubar (1966), is still the standard model used to study resource management needs in households save for the 1979 modernization of it by Murphy and Staples, who expanded it to include divorced couples and childless couples. In review, the traditional life cycle stages include: (a) newly established couple, (b) childbearing families with preschool children, (c) families with school age children, (d) families with adolescents and young adults, (d) empty nest (children launched into the world) and (e) aging parents in retirement (Lamanna & Riedmann, 1985).

This sequence is still the standard despite that it does not accommodate the myriad of family structures emerging in society today. Even twenty years ago, Etzkowitz and Stein (1978) recognized that an increasing number of adults were not following the linear life cycle pattern of: education, career, marriage, parenthood and retirement. Three new patterns were emerging in the mid-seventies and have since become very prevalent in society: (a) alternative living arrangements including divorce, divorced single parenthood, and remarriage; (b) experimentation with a non-traditional arrangement leading to a traditional arrangement; and, (c) voluntary singlehood, common-law arrangements and voluntary single parenting. Subsequent trends include: voluntary childlessness, same sex couples and blended families (both divorced parents remarrying, more and more often for a second and third time) (Aldous, 1990; Poduska, 1993; Vanier Institute of the Family, 1994).

### **Stampfl's Consumer Life Cycle**

Stampfl's (1978) consumer life cycle model was designed to deal with consumer resource management and is based on the traditional life cycle model with important revisions. He added a pre-adulthood stage comprising children and adolescents, a mature single adult stage (never married) and a single parent stage. This revised life cycle respected the reality that "consumption [and resource management] generally takes place within one of three familial contexts: (1) the family of origin; (2) the family of procreation; and, (3) the mature singlehood household, e.g., 'the family of one' " (p.212). He further suggested the stage of mature marrieds without children but did not add it to his framework. The revised life cycle has 13 stages and six main consumer constructs are used to discuss resource management at different life cycle stages: consumer characteristics, products and services, knowledge, skills, problems, and resources. His model focussed on consumption proficiency learned during different life cycle stages. It is very task orientated and is based on the assumption that past experiences build a foundation for future successes and failures in the consuming role. He assumed that management of resources depends on appropriate development of cognitive, psychomotor and affective skills over the course of one's life. His research is mentioned in this paper to illustrate the general concern with the inability of the traditional life cycle model to continue to capture the changing reality of people's lives in today's evolving society.

### **Further Modernization of the Life Cycle**

To address this collection of concerns, we propose further modernization of the family life cycle by extending it to include a new category, which we have called the *Crowded Nest*. There is a gap in the traditional life cycle model which does not accommodate the stage between

*Full Nest* stage and the *Empty Nest* stage. Those most affected by this are mid-life working couples. The *Full Nest* stage is traditionally comprised of couples with children living at home or with children gone but with the head of household (man) still working. The *Empty Nest* stage traditionally deals with no children or dependents living at home and one or both adults retired from the paid labour force. The *Crowded Nest*, deals specifically with pre-retirement mid-life working couples in transition. It incorporates three patterns:

(a) the *Crowded Nest I* comprised of mid-life working couples (dual earners versus breadwinner male earner) with older children who have never left home or have returned home due to lack of a job or breakdown of their marriage (Baker, 1993; Boyd & Pryor, 1989). These children have been called boomerang or homing pigeons (Rawson, McFadden, & Jenson, 1996). Most Canadian households (70%) headed by 45-65 year olds never go through a discrete period of having no children at home (Baker, 1990);

(b) the *Crowded Nest II* stage comprised of mid-life working couples with their dependent parents living at their home. These mid-lifers may also be providing financial support for children at university or experiencing other life transition costs but not living at home (Baker, 1990); and

(c) the *Crowded Nest III* stage made up of mid-life working couples with BOTH older children and dependent parents living in the household, called the sandwich generation (Junk, Stenberg, & Anderson, 1993; McDaniel, 1996). This is a valid extension of the life cycle perspective since families in mid-life have not been given much explicit concern in the Canadian literature (McDaniel).

### **Family Life Spiral Perspective**

Combrinck-Graham (1985) was also concerned with the linkage of family issues to stages and ages. She called her approach to the development of family systems the *family life spiral* and grounded her approach in the ecological concepts of interrelationships, interdependencies and interlocking chains of life and contextual events. Her life spiral perspective emphasized the changes in family shape through the individual life cycle but takes us beyond the traditional focus on one era of a family's life to the intergenerational and global context of individual's lives. It is a way to look at the changes in the configuration of the family system as the family moves through life stages. This approach clearly used children as markers; hence, it did not provide a framework for families without children, adoptive families or remarried families.

Combrinck-Graham (1985) recognized two types of discontinuous change within a family system as it moves through its life cycle. First order change refers to incremental task mastery and adaptation of individual family members. Second order change is the family systems adaption to each individual's change resulting in the continual evolution of the family structure. She maintained that it is not possible to predict the timing or the nature of these developmental shifts (contrary to the life cycle perspective assumption) although we may predict issues and the direction of reorganization or restructuring the family system will take. She referred to life *change* events, versus life cycle events, which happen within the context of the family profoundly affecting its evolution.

Most interestingly, Combrinck-Graham (1985) suggested that stacking these events from one generation to another yields a *family life spiral* rather than a predictable family life cycle. What happens in one generation affects the next generation and was affected by the previous generation. She used three concepts to capture the dynamics of this process: families coming together (centripetal), families in transition, and families coming apart (centrifugal) either

naturally or pathologically (see Table 2). As families move from one generation to another, they ideally oscillate between closeness, enmeshment, distance, transition and closeness again with the spiral unfolding as years pass. Aldous (1990) referred to this as a "ripple effect" of family transitions in one generation across several generations. Within this context, individuals gain or lose degrees of personal autonomy within the family context, dyads and other combinations of family members attain degrees of intimacy, past and current issues are reworked or become deadlocked, and the family system does or does not rebuild as the spiral perpetuates.

Insert Table 2 about here

### **Family Life Transition Perspective**

One of the major constructs of the family development (life cycle) perspective is transitions, traditionally concerned with an event which triggers the progression to the next predictable stage of the life cycle (Rodgers & White, 1993). Life transitions are "turbulent periods during which a person looks at his or her life in retrospect and evaluates it, sometimes changing its direction" (Lamanna & Riedmann, 1985, p. 625). But given that the adult life cycles have become less predictable, we need to rethink the way we understand transitions in view of family life cycles. Indeed, in their reconceptualization of the family development perspective, Rodgers and White noted the necessity of "distinguish[ing] family changes that are developmental from those that are consequences of other kinds of events" (p.241). They further clarified that the commonsense meaning of "event," instances such as wars, job loss, depression, illness, sudden wealth, is not the same as the theoretical meaning of event. The latter refers to the normative expectation that an event means roles, and tasks associated with them, will change and move onto the next predictable stage. A transition is normative if a major proportion of the population experiences it and if society expects its members to undergo such a transition at a certain point in their lives (Hareven & Masaoka, 1988). To illustrate, there are no normative expectations about a couple who wins a lottery (an event) but norms and expectations become foremost when a couple get married (an event). Aldous (1990) also distinguished between "expectable normative changes" (e.g., marriage, children, child leaving home, retirement) and stressful events (e.g., illness or death). Hareven and Masaoka referred to turning points in the course of people's lives meaning those instances when the flow of life is interrupted resulting in a critical change or a new beginning.

Furthermore, life transitions from a commonsense perspective have no predetermined order as do sequenced events triggering transitions from one life cycle stage to another (Aldous, 1990). Life transitions are "changes which involve shifts in role involvement and the person's social identity. Not all transitions are self-initiated. Some involve ascribed roles and some... are produced by the life changes of others" (Hagestad, 1988, p.405). Some are triggered by changes imposed by other institutions such as the labour market, government policy or industry practices, respectively, e.g., job layoffs, changes in employment insurance policy or credit lending practices. Other transitions occur because people are coerced to follow prescribed patterns of timing (e.g., early retirement). Even when transitions are voluntary, their timing may be involuntary especially if the age at which they occur is legally defined (Bengtson & Allen, 1993; Hareven & Masaoka, 1988). Humans strive for predictability and want to know what lies ahead. Unpredictable life transitions or transitions which are off-time (e.g., early retirement or return of a launched child) are much more problematic than changes which were expected and even these changes can generate profound challenges to managing scarce resources (e.g., voluntary relocation or planned birth) (Hagestad).

Williams (1991) applied the transition perspective to resource management yielding an

interesting model profiled in Table 3. Her approach accommodated the commonplace, unplanned or crisis events in life which occur as families move from different situations in their life and which have profound implications for financial resource management. When transitions are off-time, unanticipated or rare, individuals will need professional help in dealing with the complex life changes which caught them unprepared (Hagestad, 1988). Indeed, "One reason the concept of *family life cycle* seems less and less accurate is that an individual's life choices and changes are neither automatic nor easy. Transition periods can be turbulent times in which rigorous self-appraisal leads to self-doubt, impatience and anger" (Lamanna & Riedmann, 1985, p. 79).

Insert Table 3 about here

Appreciating this potential reality, Williams's (1991) approach was very positive based on the premise that transitions can be viewed as a learning opportunity for growth and insights. She married the traditional life cycle stages (see Table 4) with the proactive approach to unplanned life transitions (Table 3). Her model had very descriptive labels reflecting many of life's contemporary family arrangements and life patterns including: (a) independent singles of any age, (b) adjustment while beginning a family of procreation but before having children; (c) accumulation of material goods with young children whether married or single; (d) expansion of demanding parenting role while balancing self, family, work and community; (e) middle stage with high school youth and/or elderly parents living at home, perhaps with working teens; (f) readjusting and restructuring after a divorce and/or remarriage, often with children from previous as well as current marriage(s); (g) launching of young adults appreciating that some remain at home because they cannot find employment, are not ready to leave or are attending university; (h) contracting or expanding families (likely blended families) with retirement decisions including early retirement, and finally, (i) retired married, widowed, divorced, remarried or common-law seniors.

Insert Table 4 about here

As an aside, although Williams (1991) assumed the presence of children, Poduska (1993) and Stampfl (1978) formally recognized married or single without children by choice and Poduska described the financial responsibilities and mistakes of this unique stage in the family life cycle. Poduska also acknowledged that some children do not leave home because they are expected to stay home and care for their parents. He termed this situation as failed or delayed launching.

When there is a transition in one's life, people often feel fear because of a possible loss of control of the situation. Also, people have invested time and energy in the old system and may resent having to relearn things and reprogram themselves. Williams (1991) suggested that life transitions can be an opportunity to develop aspects of life which were neglected, to clarify priorities, to reevaluate assumptions about oneself and to adopt the maxim "I *choose* to do this rather than I have to or I can't do this." Times of transition when these opportunities arise include a job loss, inflation, relocation, change in marital status, a death or birth, a decrease in income, divorce, change from dependent to independent living, retirement, and employed to self-employed. She proposed that these variations from the traditional life cycle sequences can be seen as times of growth for families which, more and more, are not typical as explained by the family life cycle perspective.

### **Family Life Course Perspective**

The life cycle stage perspective attempts to account for predictable changes in the family system over time as well as changes in patterns of interaction over time. Today, frequent reference is made to the term *family life course* when dealing with certain events which trigger

transitions from one stage of the life cycle to another. It is more appropriate, today, to think of the course of family living rather than the family life cycle (Lamanna & Riedmann, 1985).

To reiterate, the life cycle development perspective tries to predict different stages depending on age, school placement of the oldest child, marital status and labour force status of parents up to the launching stage when the criteria changes to the situation faced by those left in the family unit (Eshleman & Wilson, 1995; Kindra, Laroche & Muller, 1994). Unlike the development perspective, family life course assumes that the course of one's life can change due to changes in one's larger, external life environment (social demographic shifts, historical factors and cultural factors). It allows us to see differences in the course of each person's life due to the changing richness and complexity of the context of their life (Aldous, 1990; Bengtson & Allen, 1993; Elder, 1984; Featherman & Lerner, 1985). The life course perspective focuses on the implications for individuals and families of the timing, sequence or duration of life events or transitions (Pittman & Blanchard, 1996). It links individual life time with social (family) time and historical time. In particular, the life course perspective enables us to distinguish the general development of families relative to those born in a specific age cohort (e.g., baby boomers) since they would shape, as well as be affected by, historical and societal events (Aldous).

While life cycle refers to a social sequence of events that are repeated by successive generations of families, life course focuses on the social time, transitions and the historical context or time within which a person is living; there is no assumption that the sequence of events will be repeated (Eshleman & Wilson, 1995). First, social groups in a given time and place are uniquely influenced by factors that other groups (e.g., teens, mid-life couples, elders) in other times and places did not have to confront. Second, cultural factors as well as a family's place in the social structure of society affect how events in the family life cycle are socially defined (e.g., marriage, retirement, singleness). Third, historical events impact on human development. Adolescence, retirement and even work status are not seen the same way from one time frame in history to another. Life course focuses on the complexity and fragmentation of the world and how gender, social class, religion, ethnicity, race, demographics, geographical regions and historical events affect a person's life in conjunction with the stage they are in their life cycle. Recognition of these factors serves to decentre broad generalizations about family life, the main premise of the family life cycle perspective. Whereas life cycle focussed on the similarity of people's life experiences, life course focuses on the differences of people's experiences (Winton, 1995).

### **Spheres of Influence Perspective**

One final conceptualization of influences on families' lives merits introduction in this discussion. To reiterate, life cycle assumes a predictable sequence of stages wherein people learn tasks which help them in the next stage. People do not repeat stages. Life spiral assumes that families build and rebuild themselves depending on individual growth and intergenerational influence. Life transitions deal with the times in life which cannot always be predicted by stage in life cycle and which can occur repeatedly. Life course deals with the context of life rather than the linear sequencing of stages or isolated times of transitions. Vaines (1994, 1998) tendered the notion of spheres of influence wherein we appreciate that the whole ecosystem within which individuals and families live and interact is comprised of eight spheres ranging through: the cosmos, the biosphere, the power sphere (politics and business), the public sphere (community and neighbourhood), the private sphere (home as factory, interrelationships and moral centre), the inner sphere (self), and the unknown and the unknowable spheres. These spheres comprise the different domains of reality with which families are related.

Vaines' (1994, 1998) spheres of influence perspective is introduced into this discussion because it also provides another contextual approach to families living their life in addition to the linear approach of the life cycle perspective. She used a geodome to conceptualize the eight levels of influence in our daily lives ranging from our universe and biosphere and power differentials and relations with government, industry and labour to the more micro power differentials and relationships within our local community, our home and ourselves. She even accommodated things we do not yet know and will never know (the mysteries of life). The latter two spheres are an interesting way to conceptualize either unknown transitions or events that are planned but have yet to unfold in the process of managing family resources.

### **Application of New Research Framework to**

#### **Design a Retirement Financial Preparedness Research Program**

Family resource management is an activity which endures for as long as the family unit endures. All families need to procure, use, dispose and restore resources to meet daily needs. Borrowing from each of these perspectives shared in this paper provides a more complete approach to understanding the resource management process and challenges than does one single approach. The most useful constructs include: stages, intergenerational impact, unplanned transitions or those events which are out of time, and the full context within which families live day to day. (a) The stages still allow us to accommodate the assumption that past experiences and learned tasks lay the foundation for future resource management activities. Extending the traditional life cycle model to embrace the Crowded Nest stage modernizes it. (b) Conceiving the family unit as one which is born, reconfigured and reborn repeatedly allows us to account for the impact of past generation's decisions on current and future resource management decisions (life spiral). (c) Allowing for the full context within human conditions evolve, cultural, historical, social and demographic, captures the complexity of daily situations, historical frameworks and the social milieu, bringing a richer, holistic approach to resource management (life course). (d) Vaines (1994) suggested that there are things we just do not know of yet and these contribute to the unplanned transitions or life events which place stress on and call for ingenuity in resourcing the situation (life transition and spheres of influence).

We have used this new multi-perspective research framework to shape the development of a research program targeting retirement preparedness of mid-life working couples with dependents (children and aged or infirm adults) (see Table 5).

Insert Table 5 about here

Our intent is to, eventually, develop a statistical profile of these families using special runs on Statistics Canada data and then to develop several case studies yielding richer qualitative data. The Crowded Nest *stage* captures their unique stage in the life cycle. As explained before, mid-life working couples (aged 45-55) are often dual earners with older children who have never left home or have returned home due to lack of a job or breakdown of their marriage. Some couples also have dependent parents living at their home and, in some instances, even have children at university or experiencing other life transition costs but not living at home who still need financial support. Also, there are some dual income families that have both dependent older children and dependent parents living in the household, called the sandwich generation.

The women in this age group have often only just gone back to work after the children were old enough to not need extensive child care. Indeed, this study is an extension of recent research conducted by Townson (1995) on the topic of retirement preparedness for mid-life women. She determined that the 1.5 million Canadian women in mid-life tended not to enter the workforce until their mid-thirties or early 40s because they chose to stay home with their 2.7

children. Because they entered the workforce so late, they have had less time to prepare financially for retirement. Further, mid-life women tend to live to an average age of 80 meaning that they can expect to live 20 years on what they can save up in 20 years. This is further compromised due to the reality that the full time jobs they are in may have pension plans but the final income depends on years of service and years employed in general. The 75% of mid-life women who are married are less likely to divorce thereby ensuring some income from their spouse. But, they are also less likely to invest in fixed assets, securities, and Registered Retirement Savings Plans (RRSP's) (one of four possible ways to save for retirement in Canada, the other three being the Canadian Pension Plan (CPP), private company pension plans as well as private investment portfolios) because they spend it on their children and on immediate household needs.

The life spiral perspective allows us to account for intergenerational impacts on family resource management decisions. Townson (1995) demonstrated that the segment of the Canadian population comprised of women in their mid-life (1.5 million or 5.4% of the Canadian population) is very confident of their security for retirement but may be operating under a severe sense of false security. She noted that, although three quarters of them are working and in full time positions, they will have been in the workforce for only 20 years before they have to retire and can then expect to live for another 20 years on reduced income. To complicate matters for this family type, the majority of caregivers to the dependent elderly parents or relatives also living in the family home are mid-life working women (Goldsmith, 1996; Junk, Stenberg & Anderson, 1993; Rawson, McFadden & Jenson, 1996). Women in this role are said to be living in the "sandwich generation." They face profound obstacles to well-being and financial preparedness. The most prevalent are: (a) lack of recognition of unpaid work; (b) insufficient community support; (c) balancing family, self and work; and, (d) paramount to this study, inadequate economic security (McGregor, 1996).

The life course contextual perspective allows us especially to account for the profound impact that the baby boomer age cohort is having on the Canadian population. Mid-life working couples are part of the baby boomer age cohort which comprises 33% of Canada's population (almost 10 million people). Someone in Canada will turn 50 every seven and a half *minutes* starting in 1996 and this trend will continue for some years to come. Boomers earn, on average, \$58,000 yet have, on average, only \$30,100 in RRSPs rather than the \$1.3 million necessary to retire at age 65. They have about 20 years within which to turn this \$30,100 into the \$1.3M. This need to save \$1.3M is severely compromised by reality - in 1995, over two thirds of Canadians (65%) contributed *nothing* to RRSPs; 11% paid as much as they were allowed to pay; and the rest contributed only 13% of what they were allowed to put into RRSPs. Borrowing to make an RRSP contribution is usually a good idea; yet, over 80% will not borrow the money to make the contributions (Turner, 1997). Worse yet, the number of Canadians who "planned to contribute" to RRSP's is declining (from 50% to 34% in only two years) contributing to the reality of not contributing at all (65%). Financial planners say that *people with stable incomes* who are (a) weak savers, (b) temporarily strapped for cash, and/or (c) feeling the weight of mortgage payments and other debts should give thought to their RRSPs, regardless (Townson, 1997).

Mid-life working couples with children and dependent parents face incredible combinations of mostly unpredictable life events which pose severe constraints on preparing for retirement. These transitions (often reoccurring or in stressful combinations) include illness, indebtedness maybe even bankruptcy, legal fees, institutional fees for sick parents, second and third mortgages, tuition, self employment business loans, mid-life crisis for both spouses

including job burnout or personal burnout, rebounding children, irregular family income due to downsizing and early retirement incentives, outright, prolonged unemployment, divorce and possibly a reconstituted family, increasing taxes and death of aging family members and relatives, to name just some (Williams, 1991).

### **Summary and Conclusion**

We have described five existing perspectives to understanding family development, evolution and transitions ranging from: life cycle stages, life spiral across generations, unplanned life transitions, the historical context of the course of one's life, and the different levels of influence on daily life ranging from the cosmos to the unknown (Table 1). The main thrust of each of the five perspectives was then taken to form the bare foundations for a new multi-perspective research framework to shape research programs designed to study family resource management (Table 5): cycle/stages, spiral/generation, transitions/events, course/context, and influences/holistic.

This new multi-perspective research framework should provide a rich and productive means of studying this, and other, pivotal aspects of family life. There seemed to be a natural and instinctively inherent coalescence of these five perspectives yielding a powerful and synergistic view of a resource management, a dynamic part of family life. Granted, much work needs to be done if scholars wish to fully integrate these perspectives and this must be undertaken with a full appreciation of the perils and benefits of borrowing and integrating assumptions, concepts and constructs from disparate frameworks. Baring this caveat, we look forward to generating compelling initial results and insights from our study and look forward to commenting on the merit of bringing a holistic, contextual, developmental, generational presence to the progressive field of family resource management.

### **References**

- Aldous, J. (1990). Family development and the life course: Two perspectives on family change. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 52, 571-583.
- Baker, M. (Ed.). (1990). Families: Changing trends in Canada (2nd ed.). Toronto, ON: McGraw-Hill Ryerson.
- Baker, M. (Ed.). (1993). Families in Canadian society (2nd ed.). Toronto, ON: McGraw-Hill Ryerson.
- Bengtson, V.L., & Allen, K.R. (1993). The life course perspective applied to families over time. In P.Boss, W. Doherty, R. LaRossa, W.Schumm and S. Steinmetz (Eds.), Sourcebook of family theories and methods, a contextual approach (pp. 469-498). NY: Plenum.
- Boyd, M., & Pryor, E.T. (1989, Summer). Young adults living in their parents' home. Canadian Social Trends, 17-20.
- Combrinck-Graham, L. (1985). A developmental model for family systems. Family Process, 24, 139- 150.
- Duvall, E. (1957). Family development. Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott.
- Elder, G.H. (1984). Families, kin, and the life course. In R. D. Parke (Ed.), Review of child development research, Vol 7 (pp. 80-135). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Eshelman, J., & Wilson, S.J. (1995). The family (Canadian ed.). Toronto, ON: Allyn & Bacon.
- Etzkowitz, H., & Stein, P. (1978). The life spiral: Human needs and adult roles. Alternative Lifestyles, 1, 434-446.
- Featherman, D.L., & Lerner, R.M. (1985). Ontogenesis and sociogenesis: Problematic for

theory and research about development and socialization across the lifespan. American Sociological Review, 50, 659-676.

Goldsmith, E. (1996). Resource management for individuals and families. St. Paul, MN: West.

Goldsmith, E., & McGregor, S. (1998). Theories, paradigms, and distance learning challenges in family resource management. In K. Turkki (Ed.), Proceedings of the International Household and Family Research Conference (pp. 113-119). Helsinki, Finland: University of Helsinki, Department of Home Economics and Craft Science.

Hagestad, G.O. (1988). Demographic change and the life course: Some emerging trends in the family realm. Family Relations, 37, 405-410.

Hareven, T.K., & Masaoka, K. (1988). Turning points and transitions: Perceptions of the life course. Journal of Family History, 13 (3), 271-289.

Junk, V., Stenberg, L., & Anderson, C. (1993). Retirement planning for the sandwich generation. Journal of Home Economics, 4-11.

Key, R., & Firebaugh, F. (1989). Family resource management: Preparing for the 21st century. Journal of Home Economics, 81(1), 13-17.

Kindra, G., Laroche, M., & Muller, T. (1994). The Canadian perspective: Consumer behaviour (2nd ed.). Toronto, ON: Nelson.

Lamanna, M., & Riedmann, A. (1984). Marriage and families: Making choices throughout the life cycle. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

McDaniel, S. A. (1996). Family/work challenges among mid-life Canadians. In M. Lyon (Ed.), Voices: Essays on Canadian families (pp.195-214). Toronto, ON: Nelson Canada.

McGregor, S.L.T. (Ed.). (1996). Women as family caregivers symposium. Ottawa, ON: National Council of Women of Canada Caregiving Coalition.

Murphy, P.E., & Staples, W.A. (1979, June). A modernized family life cycle. Journal of Consumer Research, 12-22.

Pittman, J., & Blanchard, D. (1996). The effects of work history and timing of marriage on the division of household labour: A life-course perspective. Journal of Marriage and the Family, 58, 78-90.

Poduska, B.E. (1993). For love and money: A guide to finances and relationships. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Rawson, K.T., & McFadden, J., & Jenson, G.O. (1996). The empty-nest syndrome revisited: Women in transition to midlife. Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences, 88(2), 48-52).

Rodgers, R.H., & White, J.M. (1993). Family development theory. In P.Boss, W. Doherty, R. LaRossa, W.Schumm and S. Steinmetz (Eds.), Sourcebook of family theories and methods, a contextual approach (pp. 225-254). NY: Plenum.

Stampfl, R. (1978). The consumer life cycle. Journal of Consumer Affairs, 12(2), 209-219.

Townson, M. (1995, April). Women's financial futures: Mid-life prospects for a secure retirement [Background paper]. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

Townson, M. (1997, January 11). RRSPs: A special report: Overview - cold comfort. The Financial Post, pp.41-42.

Turner, G. (1997, January). Boom, bust and ... ka-boooooom! Canadian Business, p.87.

Vanier Institute of the Family. (1994). Profiling Canada's families. Ottawa, ON: Author.

Vaines, E. (1994). Ecology as a unifying theme for home economics/human ecology. Canadian Home Economics Journal, 44(2), 59-62.

Vaines, E. (1998). A family perspective on everyday life: The heart of reflective practice. In K. Turkki (Ed.), Proceedings of the International Household and Family Research Conference (pp. 15-35). Helsinki, Finland: University of Helsinki, Department of Home Economics and Craft Science.

Wells, W.D., & Gubar, G. (1966, November). Life cycle concept in marketing research. Journal of Marketing Research, 355-363.

Williams, F. (1991). Theories and techniques in financial counselling and planning. West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press.

Winton, A. (1995). Frameworks for studying families. Guildford, CO: Dushkin.

**Multi-perspective research framework for family resource management**

<b>Life cycle (developmental)</b>	<b>Life spiral (evolution)</b>	<b>Life transition</b>	<b>Life course (transition and evolution)</b>	<b>Spheres of influence</b>
<p>allows us to see similarities in the progression of people through predictable stages of life despite the context; assumes that people move through predictable stages of life learning necessary skills to move them through successive stages; when people move from one stage to another, society expects changes in roles and behaviour commensurate with the new stage</p>	<p>allows us to capture the intergenerational context of individual's lives; it accommodates oscillation between degrees of closeness, enmeshment and distance as families come apart, rebuild and come together again from one generation to another; value foundations, decisions and patterns of relationships made by one generation will have a ripple effect on other generations of the family</p>	<p>accommodates the unplanned or crisis events in life which occur as we move from different situations in our life; assumes that employment status, marital status, degree of dependence, housing status, stage in life cycle, et cetera have profound implications for financial resource management; there are no normative expectations in changes in roles, although roles will most certainly change</p>	<p>allows us to see differences in the course of each person's life due to the changing richness and complexity of the context of their life (social, family and historical); special focus on age cohorts and transitions; assumes that the course of one's life can change due to changes in one's larger life environment (social demographic shifts, historical factors and cultural factors) as well as changes to one's self</p>	<p>assumes that there are eight spheres of influence on individuals' lives regardless of where they live, what stage of the life cycle they are in, or the generation they live in, influences ranging from: the cosmos and biosphere to the power sphere, community, family and individual to the unknown and the unknowable</p>
<p>Hollings and Gubar, (1966) Murphy and Staples (1979) Edgers and White (1993)</p>	<p>Combrinck-Graham (1985)</p>	<p>Bengtson and Allen (1993) Hagestad (1988) Hareven and Masaoka (1988) Williams (1991)</p>	<p>Bengtson and Allen (1993) Featherman and Lerner (1985) Aldous (1990) Elder (1984)</p>	<p>Vaines (1994, 1998)</p>

Phases of the family life spiral across generations (extrapolated from Combrinck-Graham, 1985)

Centrifugal		Transition		Centripetal		Opening up period	
Parent generation coming apart and becoming separated by distance (geographic and personal)		Families are rebuilding, renegotiating relationships and restructuring		Family coming together and developing closeness due to birth of member of new generation		Family stability and foundation is challenged due to increasing exchange with and exposure to the extrafamilial environment	
Naturally	Pathologically	Naturally	Pathologically	Naturally	Pathologically	Naturally	Pathologically
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family members working on issues of personal identity</li> <li>Family members leave home</li> <li>Marriages are negotiated</li> <li>Careers and styles are assessed and revised</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family members are not successfully working on personal issues and goals</li> <li>Children fail to leave or return home; children leave home and mothers experience empty nest withdrawal</li> <li>Marriages breakdown</li> <li>Careers are stalled or abruptly terminated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Older people drawn closer to children due to increased availability after retirement or due to illness</li> <li>Children and adults come closer due to shared adult experiences</li> <li>Marriages bring members closer together in anticipation of grandchildren</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acrimonious relationships from earlier family history may interfere</li> <li>Alienation after dismantling centrifugal family may permit little possibility of rebuilding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Everyone moves up a generation providing chance for reflection on changed relationships</li> <li>Enmeshment, bonding and creation of new boundaries between all generations</li> <li>Lessons learned from previous centripetal periods provide positive reinforcement and personal autonomy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Centripetal forces may not be able to hold family together (sibling rivalry, spousal jealousy and envy, parent-child discord, in-law discord)</li> <li>Family members become distant from each other rather than binding; has major ramifications on next centrifugal period</li> <li>Lessons learned from previous centripetal periods provide negative reinforcement and reduce personal autonomy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Healthy emotional distance among family members (autonomy) within the context of core family values, routines and habits as they continue to work and rework issues</li> <li>Children go to school and become exposed to other views of family and discover other adults</li> <li>Changes in the children provide an opportunity for parents and grandparents to redirect their interests personally, career wise and in the community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family's doors are closed and relationships are not adequately prepared for the world</li> <li>Families are too tight</li> <li>Too long children cannot function well in society (relationships)</li> <li>Instability, promiscuity, substance abuse, indebtedness, instability, violence</li> </ul>

**Table 3**

**Model of financial resource management during times of transition (extrapolated from Williams, 1991)**

<u>OLD</u>		<u>PERIOD OF TRANSITION</u>		<u>NEW</u>
<u>Old financial management System</u>	<u>Inappropriate Old System</u> due to combination of changes:	Changes experienced by family members during period of <u>transition</u> :	<u>Reevaluation</u> of certain areas during time of transition:	<u>New financial management system</u>
	. dislocated worker	. changing assumptions of self and redefinition of self	. routine methods	
	. decrease in real income (inflation)	. financial needs	. new uses for old skills	
	. homeless	. resources	. new skills	
	. relocation (move within or to another area)	. goals	. personal growth	
	. emigration	. sense of control over self and resources	. new insights	
	. midlife financial crisis		. clarify priorities	
	. dependence to independence	. routine methods	. change life style <u>not</u> lower life style	
	. divorce		. determine which things are <u>not</u> changing	
	. remarriage or blended family		. develop human, spiritual and social resources versus material resources	
	. unemployment			
	. retirement			
	. starting own business			

**Table 4**

**Resource Management Life Cycle Stages (extrapolated from Williams, 1991)**

Stage	Age	Label
Independent	any age	independent
beginning family	18-26	adjustment
family with young children	18-33	accumulation
family with grade school children	25-36+	accumulation
family with high school children	32-48+	middle stage
remarried or blended	20-48+	<u>readjustment/restructuring</u>
family with older youth	45-56+	launching/returning
retirement decisions	50-67	contracting/expanding
after retirement stage	65-85	senior

**Application of the multi-perspective research framework for family resource management to study financial preparedness of dual-life working couples with dependents**

Life Cycle (stages)	Life Spiral (generations)	Life Transition (events)	Life Course (context)	Spheres of Influence (holistic)
<p>Empty Nest                      This unique phase of the life cycle tries to account for the gap between the traditional full nest and empty nest stages when children may leave, return or re-leave and when dependent parents come to their children's aid for care. A full nest severely challenges attempts to prepare for future retirement (normative expectations have to be theoretically determined).</p>	<p>Relationships and patterns developed in earlier phases of the family's life together will build a foundation which will impact the success of the Sandwich generation arrangement profoundly (e.g., compromise, conflict, bargaining, cooperation, sharing, task allotment as families adapt and deal with first and second order changes). Decisions made while caring for dependent parents and delayed launching or rebound children, while trying to prepare for retirement, will ripple through future generations.</p>	<p>Unplanned, or untimely, combinations of internal and external events, which do not entail normative changes in roles yet which will change family member roles, will challenge a family's ability to plan for retirement: e.g., changes in household composition, employment status, marital status, health of self and dependents, government policies, housing needs, regularity and amount of income, and debt load.</p>	<p>There are the special needs and forces of the large baby boomer age cohort that will profoundly affect them as they individually and collectively prepare for retirement at a time when society does not value aging or families as much and when government is getting out of the business of financing pension plans while the existing one goes bankrupt due to irresponsible past decisions (history, social and demographic variables).</p>	<p>In reality, there are some things we do not know yet and will not know and this imperfect knowledge (or lack of ) will impact planning for retirement. As well, the power relationships between individuals, family members, as well as family and government, industry and community, have a great impact on preparedness for retirement. Each person's individual mind set and experiences will also affect preparedness for retirement.</p>