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## An exploratory study of the development of career adaptability in Singapore's labour force.

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## Agenda

1. Introduction
2. Concepts of Career Adaptability
3. Methodology of research
4. Findings and Discussions.

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## Introduction

- Steadily worsening economic environment since 2015
- Between 2015 to 2107, Singapore's GDP growth was one of the lowest across ASEAN countries.
- Global trade has decreased substantially over the last 5 years.
- 60% of GDP in Singapore from Services.
- Downturn in marine, oil and gas, electronics, financial services.

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Table 1. Real GDP growth in ASEAN, China and India  
Annual percentage change

Country	2015	2016	2017	2017-21 (average)	2011-13 (average)
<b>ASEAN-5 countries</b>					
Indonesia	4.8	5.0	5.1	5.4	6.2
Malaysia	5.0	4.2	4.5	4.7	5.2
Philippines	5.9	6.8	6.2	6.1	5.9
Thailand	2.8	3.2	3.3	3.6	3.2
Viet Nam	6.7	6.0	6.2	6.2	5.6
<b>Brunei Darussalam and Singapore</b>					
Brunei Darussalam	0.6	0.7	2.0	1.8	0.9
Singapore	2.0	1.8	2.0	1.8	4.1
<b>CLM</b>					
Cambodia	7.0	7.1	7.1	7.3	7.3
Lao PDR	7.4	7.1	7.3	7.5	8.1
Myanmar	8.7	8.3	8.4	8.5	6.9
<b>Two large economies in the region</b>					
China	6.9	6.7	6.4	6.0	8.2
India	7.6	7.4	7.6	7.3	5.5
Average of ASEAN 10 countries	4.7	4.8	4.9	5.1	5.4
Average of Emerging Asia	6.6	6.5	6.4	6.2	7.0

Note: The cut-off date of data is 28 November 2016. Weighted averages are used for ASEAN and Emerging Asia. The figures for China, India and Indonesia (2016 and 2017 projections) are based on the OECD Economic Outlook 100. India data refer to fiscal years starting in April. Source: OECD Development Centre, MFF-2017 (Medium-Term Projection Framework). For more information on the MFF, please see [www.oecd.org/dev/asia-pacific/mff.htm](http://www.oecd.org/dev/asia-pacific/mff.htm).

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## Rising Unemployment and Slower Growth

### Layoffs & Redundancies in Singapore

**Higher unemployment**

Year	Citizen	Resident	Overall
2010	3.4	3.1	2.2
2015	3.1	3.0	2.1
2016	3.1	3.0	2.1

**Higher redundancy**

Year	Number
2009	23,430 (recessionary high)
2010	9,800
2015	15,560
2016	19,000

**Slower median income growth**

Level	June 2015	Nominal growth (%)	Real growth (%)
Level	\$3,798	6.5	7.0
Level	\$3,823	0.7	1.3

NOTES: Figures for 2016, other than for income, are preliminary. Figures may not add up due to rounding off. Median income figures are for gross monthly income from work, including employer CPF contributions for Singaporeans in full-time jobs. \*Including FDI, foreign growth +\$700 FDI - Foreign Domestic Workers

Source: MINISTRY OF MANPOWER, STRAITS TIMES GRAPHICS

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## Rising Unemployment and Slower Growth

### Slower employment growth

Total employment change at lowest level since 2003

Year	Total	Local	Foreign
2003	-12.9	71.4	113.3
2004	176	224.9	221.6
2005	37.6	115.9	122.6
2006	129.1	136.2	130.1
2007	32.3	18.4	10.7
2008	96	0.7	10.7
2009	34	31.6	5.7
2010	5.7	5.7	0
2011	0	0	0
2012	0	0	0
2013	0	0	0
2014	0	0	0
2015	0	0	0
2016	0	0	0

Number ('000)

### The Changing Economy in Singapore




- Changing economy arising from technology disruption.
- Labour force in Singapore needs to adapt quickly to the upcoming changes.

### Research Question

- How do individuals in Singapore develop and manage career adaptability during career transitions?
- What are strategies adopted that eases the transition process?

### Concepts of Career Adaptability

- Frank Parson's Person-Environment fit dictum (1909). 
- Many career counsellors/coaches and institutions are still using this approach for 21<sup>st</sup> Century career guidance
- Volatile nature of the global economy and technological advances require clients to learn new skills and adjust to new career realities. 

### Concepts of Career Adaptability

- Adapt = "to fit" (Latin)
- Suggests flexibility in responding to the environment



THE MIRACLE OF ADAPTATION

Quality of being able to change without great difficulty, to fit new or changed circumstances.

### Concepts of Career Adaptability

- Career adaptability is seen as "readiness **to cope** with the predictable tasks of **preparing for** and participating in the work role and with the **unpredictable adjustments** prompted by **changes** in work and working conditions (Savickas, 1997, p.254). 

### Concepts of Career Adaptability

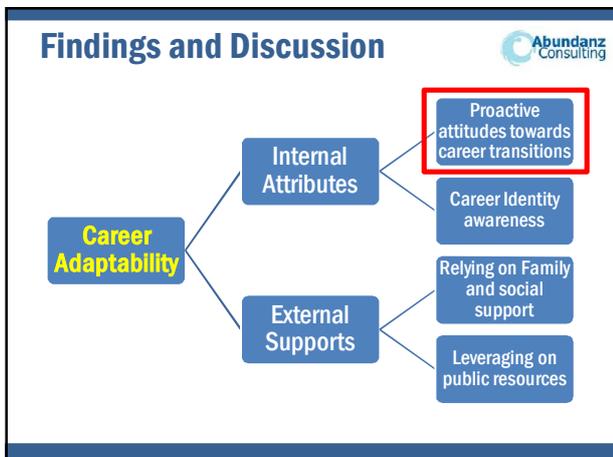
- Willingness to change behaviours, feelings and thoughts in response to environmental demands (Fugate, Kinicki, & Ashforth, 2004).
- Adaptability is essential to success in the current era of career insecurity (Hall, 2004).
- Adaptable individuals have a high tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity and are comfortable in novel situations and across organisational boundaries (O'Connell, 2007).

## Concepts of Career Adaptability

- Embedded within career adaptability is the concept of “proactive personality”.
- Proactive individuals are able to affect environmental change and are unimpeded by situational constraints (Seibert, Grant & Kramer, 1999).
- Career adaptability is a competency that individuals can prepare and develop over time.

## Methodology

- Thematic analysis of data collected from 5 semi-structured interviews of participants from different industries
  - Media
  - Construction
  - Automotive
  - Mining
  - Shipping
- All 5 have experienced being made redundant, retrenched & reassigned to relatively insignificant roles within their companies.



## Findings and Discussion

### Internal attributes-

- Proactive attitudes towards career transitions
  - Positive mindset and personal language
  - Changing or adopting new behaviours towards career goals
  - Open-ness towards seeking & receiving help (emotional/psychological and career assistance)
- Career Identity awareness
  - Rediscovering VIPS
  - Education/training background
  - Life experiences

## Positive mindset and personal language

*“when you lose your job, you’ll feel lost, lonely and frustrated. You keep thinking negative thoughts. You’re right at the bottom...I chose to go forward, keep looking forward, I cannot give up hope” (Participant 1)*

*“From feeling depressed, I begin to start thinking positively. I start to apply positive words. The right words, positive words... I begin to learn to take away all these negative words in my mind” (Participant 3)*

**POSITIVE THOUGHTS GENERATE POSITIVE FEELINGS AND ATTRACT POSITIVE LIFE EXPERIENCES.**

## Findings and Discussion

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### Changing or adopting new behaviours towards career goals

*"I'm 48 but I still choose to learn new approaches. I eat humble pie. Instead of talking the way I used to for the last 20 years as the boss, I learnt to suggest, to be mellow and talk humbly"*  
 (Participant 4)



### Findings and Discussion

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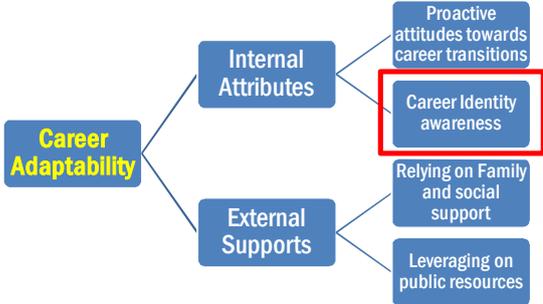
### Open-ness towards seeking & receiving help

*"when I lost my job, I just wanted to hide at home, not face people. Too embarrassing. My family, my friends were all concerned. They wanted to help. At first I rejected them..the more I rejected, the more depressed I became.*  
*In the end, I learnt that I should be open to receive help from people who want to help me."*  
 (Participant 5)

Learning to accept help, and to ask for it, was a hard-won lesson. It still is.



### Findings and Discussion



### Findings and Discussion

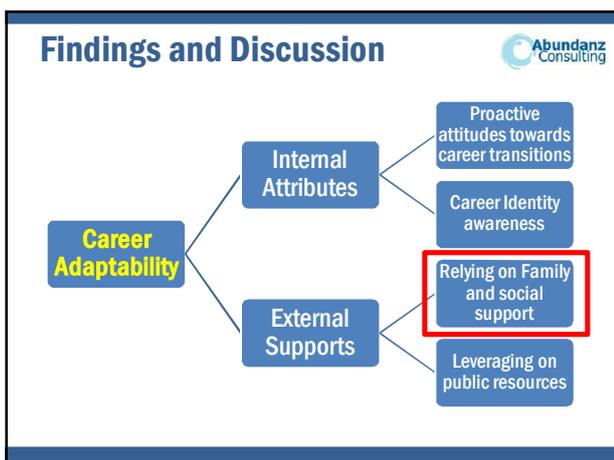
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### Career Identity Awareness

*"After attending the career facilitation workshop, my eyes were opened to what my career capabilities were. I now know what my VIPS was. I know what motivates me, I know what are my values, I have become more aware of who I am. I can adapt to any jobs as long as it is aligned to who I am"*  
 (Participant 2)



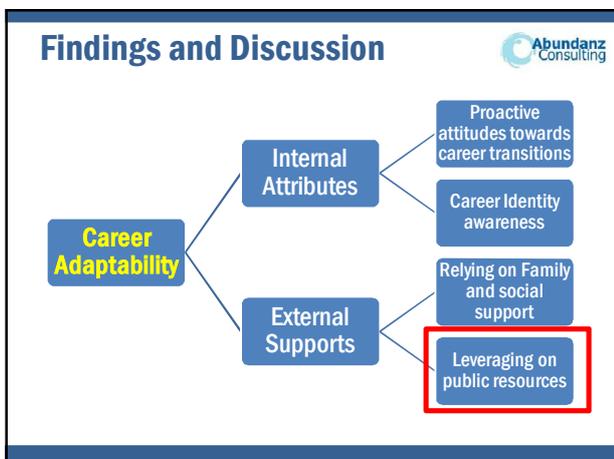


### Relying on Family & Social Support

*"My wife did not put pressure on me. She did whatever to help. My son keeps telling me to not worry, to stay positive. They give me hope, Because of them, I am ok emotionally"*  
 (Participant 1)



*"My friends know that I am jobless, I am trying my best. They will be on the lookout for me. Some bring me out for coffee, to give me a listening ear. Without my friends, I don't know where I'll be today "*  
 (Participant 15)



### Leveraging on public resources

*"The moment I knew I will be redundant, I went to WDA (workforce agency in Singapore). I went for whatever they asked me to go. Whatever training, whatever workshop, whatever course, I went."*  
 (Participant 4)

SKILLSfuture SG Wsg Workforce Singapore

### Discussion

- Career adaptability is a competency that people can develop.
  - Career resilience is about the ability to survive change.
  - Compared to the concept of career resilience, Career Adaptability has a stronger pro-active dimension.
- The Singapore experience –
  - Career services in Asia-Pacific has a massive role to play in educating and supporting the labour force by enabling them to be more adaptable through continual training & coaching.
  - Support from governments in investing in skills upgrading also plays a big role in developing career adaptability in people.

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