Taiwanese Female Counselors’ Experiences of Managing Work and Family Roles and Responsibilities

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TAIWANESE FEMALE COUNSELORS' EXPERIENCES OF MANAGING WORK AND FAMILY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

by

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TAIWANESE FEMALE COUNSELORS’ EXPERIENCES OF MANAGING WORK AND FAMILY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Joy yuyin Huang, Ph.D.
Western Michigan University, 2004

Mental health professionals work in emotionally demanding environments when they work with clients who have emotional problems and interpersonal conflicts. Self-care and managing family and work responsibilities are concerns of great importance for mental health professionals to maintain quality in their services. This is of special concern for Asian females counselors who play important supportive roles for their families. As a result, Asian female counselors not only work with clients but also assume heavy family responsibilities, yet there is a dearth of literature on this specific group (Leong, 2002; Saso, 1999; Lee, 1998).

This qualitative study using grounded theory methods explored the experiences of Taiwanese female counselors who assumed dual responsibilities for their work and families. It described their attempts to manage their work and family roles and the results of such attempts. Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted with ten Taiwanese female counselors from various life cycle stages who worked in a variety of professional counseling settings.

The findings of this study described Taiwanese female counselors fulfilling multiple roles at work and in their families while they tried to fulfill their own and others’ expectations. Key benefits of managing these multiple roles included a wider range of
experiences, development of better time management skills, and increased self-awareness. Challenges identified by the participants of managing multiple roles outweighed the benefits and included work overload, lack of adequate time, fatigue, trying to play these multiple roles well, and transitioning from one stage of the life cycle to the next. Strategies that the Taiwanese female counselors found helpful were such things as being sensitive to their own needs, resting, engaging in leisure activities, getting together with friends, and finding private space and time for themselves. They identified support they received from various sources, primarily their families and female friends, and also offered recommendations for other female counselors.

The findings were discussed in light of feminist theory, as well as of the social transition Taiwan is undergoing that affects family structure and women’s roles. Recommendations for further research and suggestions for policy changes, particularly for women in the workplace in Taiwan, were also offered.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Rationale

Mental health professionals work in emotionally demanding environments, as they work with clients who have emotional problems and interpersonal conflicts. They likely will encounter some degree of stress when they are working in such environments. Self-care and management of family and work responsibilities are concerns of great importance for mental health professionals to maintain quality in their services. Moore and Cooper (1996) assert that, although counselors promote self-care in their clients, rarely do they look at their own emotional pain. Counselors play the role of healer for clients, but they also need to remind themselves to take care of themselves in order to provide quality service to others and maintain their own mental health. Yet, in general, the longer professionals work in the mental health field, the less they like working with patients, the less successful they feel they are with their patients, and the less humanistic are their attitudes toward mental illness (Moore & Cooper).

This is of special concern for Asian female counselors. Asian females play major supportive roles for their families, and Asian culture demands that females care for their families both physically and emotionally, as well as provide for their everyday needs. As a result, female counselors not only work with clients but also assume heavy responsibilities at home and in their families (Leong, 2002; Saso, 1999; Lee, 1998).
In Taiwan, the rate of women's participation in the labor force has increased rapidly during the past few decades, due largely to socioeconomic development and the need of two salaries to support a family. A Taiwan National Statistics Report from Executive Yuan in 1998 showed that 41.5% of Taiwanese married couples were employed and received dual incomes. Of married couples whose ages ranged between 20 and 50 years, the average employment rate was 52%. The report also indicated that the reasons for dual employment in the family were financial needs, social structure changes, and the increasing number of women receiving higher education in Taiwan. Yi and Chien's study in 2002 also found that education is one of the important human assets that facilitate Taiwanese females taking formal employment.

Lee & Sun (1995) reported that among 15-64-year-old Taiwanese women, 14% of those who worked before marriage quit their jobs to bear children. However, not every family can afford the living expenses on only one salary, a situation that could add to a working woman's tension between her family and her work needs. It seems to follow, therefore, that female counselors, who are under highly emotional demand in their profession as well as in their families, should be especially aware of their necessity for successful management of their family needs and work responsibilities.

Maintaining quality service, while managing their work and family demands, is likely a prime concern for Taiwanese female counselors. But are they aware of their own personal needs, and how well do they care for themselves? There is little literature in Taiwan on this important issue, so more research and deeper exploration of it is indicated.

Statement of Problem

Stated another way, how do Taiwanese female counselors manage their work and...
family roles and responsibilities? How aware are they of their need for self-care? What actions do they actually take to care for themselves? How well do they think they succeed in caring for themselves, judging by their physical health, feelings of well-being, and professional effectiveness? These are some of the questions this study explores. In order to improve the quality of their lives and to maintain high quality of their services to their clients, it is essential that Taiwanese female counselors be aware of their need for self-care and effective management of their work and family roles.

This qualitative research study investigated Taiwanese female counselors’ attempts to manage their work and family roles; the factors that impacted their work and family roles; their reactions to their situations; their processes of managing their work and family roles and responsibilities; the challenges and benefits they experienced when they faced work and family roles and responsibilities; their self-care strategies; and the resources or supports available to them for maintaining good management.

Given the dearth of research literature on Taiwanese female counselors’ self-care and how they achieve good management of their work and family roles and responsibilities, it is hoped that this research will contribute to an awareness of the issue. Moreover, this exploratory study may identify key issues involved in this area that might be investigated further in future research.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this research was to explore Taiwanese female counselors’ experiences of managing work and family roles, first as wives, mothers, daughters-in-law or daughters; and second as professional women, particularly as professional counselors. The focus was their positive as well as negative experiences, how the experiences
affected them, their responses to those experiences, and their management and self-care strategies. The researcher conducted an exploratory qualitative study by interviewing ten full-time female counselors in Taiwan who had been in practice at least 3 years. The interviewer sought to understand how the women managed work and family responsibilities and attended to their own self-care issues.

A potential outcome of this study was to raise the awareness of all Taiwanese female counselors of the need for self-care, to suggest self-care strategies and support, and to encourage them to explore and establish good management skills for their own work and family lives. Further, results of this study might also be of use to Taiwanese females working in non-counseling fields who struggle to manage their work and family responsibilities.

Research Questions

The following six questions regarding Taiwanese female counselors provided the framework for this study:

1. How do Taiwanese female counselors manage their work and family roles and responsibilities?
2. What factors impact their work or family roles and responsibilities, such as gender, culture, self-expectations, or social expectations?
3. What challenges and benefits do Taiwanese female counselors experience when negotiating work and family roles and responsibilities?
4. What self-care strategies do they utilize that promote good management in their lives?
5. What resources or supports are available to help them achieve good management in their lives, and have they taken advantage of these resources?
6. What suggestions or recommendations do the participants offer other Taiwanese female counselors regarding useful resources and supports?

Research Design

This study explored the experiences of ten Taiwanese female counselors who had assumed the multiple roles and responsibilities of their work and families. It describes their attempts to manage their work and family roles and the results of such attempts. The study utilized qualitative research methods based on grounded theory. The researcher conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews, which consisted of open-ended questions, with ten Taiwan female counselors from various professional settings and in various life cycle stages, in an effort to understand how Taiwanese female counselors managed their work and family roles and responsibilities. All interview data were audio taped and transcribed—verbatim in Chinese—for data coding and analysis based on grounded theory. The findings and discussion of meanings of the findings were written in English.

Overview

Chapter II presents the researcher’s review of the literature to establish the context in which the reader can understand this study. Chapter III describes the qualitative methodology and grounded theory methods that guided this study, so the reader can be aware of the process that was used to gather and analyze the data. Chapter IV presents the findings of this study. Chapter V includes a discussion of the findings, followed by general recommendations and suggestions for further research.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This literature review first will focus on the stresses of mental health professionals associated with their counseling practices; and on symptoms and issues related to burnout, distress, and impairment. Second, it will explore the stressful impact of the multiple roles the counselors fulfill in their jobs and families, and their need to efficiently manage those roles. Third, it will introduce the family roles and societal expectations of Asian women in general and of professional females in Taiwan in particular. Finally, this review of the literature will discuss the development of mental health services and roles of female counselors in Taiwan, and after relating these to recent socioeconomic changes, it will describe the self-care issues the female counselors in Taiwan face.

Stresses Associated With Counseling

Statistics on Mental Health Professionals' Stresses

It is important for mental health professionals, including counselors, to be aware of the professional quality of their services. The literature can further our understanding of this importance by defining stress, distress, burnout, and impairment; by identifying the symptoms associated with each; and by demonstrating their negative impact on the professional quality of mental health care practitioners. Counseling is stressful work. Counselors usually know the necessity, benefits, and process of self-care for their clients. But in reality, counselors forget that they, as professionals and as human beings, have the
right to and deserve to care for themselves as they practice their highly stressful profession. Ackerley, Burnell, Holder, and Kurdek (1988) reported that 40% of licensed psychologists were in high burnout range (defined as a therapist at great risk of burnout) with regard to emotional exhaustion, and 34% were in high burnout range with regard to depersonalization. Mahoney's (1997) research showed similar results. He distributed a brief questionnaire to 325 mental health professionals attending a conference. Completed questionnaires were returned by 155 individuals. The most common personal problems were shown to be centered on emotional exhaustion and physical fatigue. Incidence of problems with interpersonal relationships was reported to be 37.7% in doctoral mental health professionals, and 41.2% in non-doctoral mental health professionals. Episodes of irritability or emotional exhaustion in doctoral mental health professionals were 42.6%, and 46.5% in non-doctoral. Feelings of loneliness, isolation, anxiety, and depression were also reported.

The following findings indicate that counseling is stressful work and also carries risk of vulnerabilities and limits to counselors both as human beings and as professionals. Pope and Tabachnick (1994) surveyed 800 psychologists (400 men and 400 women) randomly selected from American Psychological Association (APA) Divisions. There was a return rate of 59.5%, of whom 84% had been in therapy, 61% reported a history of clinical depression, and 29% reported a history of suicidal feelings. Of those reporting a history of suicidal feelings, 45% reported having made at least one suicide attempt, and 85% of these individuals reported having sought treatment. The psychologists also suffered when their professional distress or impairment was inadequately managed. Over one third (39%) noted that their own therapists expressed anger at them, and slightly less
than one third (31%) indicated that a therapist had acted rudely or insensitively toward them. Pope and Tabachnick concluded that these “findings are a reminder of the intense, exciting, complex, stressful, and sometimes dangerous work that psychologists do” (p. 151).

One risk for mental health professionals is related to ethical obligations. The American Counseling Association (ACA) addresses these issues in their ethical code (1995). Members shall refrain from allowing personal interest to impair objectivity in the performance of duty while acting in an official capacity. For example, counselors acknowledge that their personal problems and conflicts may interfere with their professional effectiveness.

The above-cited literature shows that mental health professionals experience some level of emotional problems, burnout, distress, or impairment in their practices or in their personal lives. The reasons for these problems may be various, but counselors should be able to restore their well-being so that they can give what they want to give to their clients.

Symptoms and Definitions of Burnout, Distress and Impairment

Counselors’ burnout, distress, and impairment are inherently related to their professional competence. The distinguishing symptoms between burnout, distress, and impairment need to be clarified, as the three are related but different manifestations of stress. The following sections will focus on the definitions and symptoms of burnout, distress, and impairment.
**Burnout**

Burnout is defined as a negative psychological experience that is a reaction of workers to job-related stress (Deutsch, 1984; Maslach, 1978; Ratliff, 1988). Kottler (2003) described burnout as the single most common personal consequence of practicing therapy. According to him, symptoms of burnout include an unwillingness to discuss work in social and family circles, a reluctance to check for messages or return calls, and unseemly delight in a canceled appointment. The syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment describes a cognitive and emotional state that mental health workers experience and that their colleagues observe in them. Clinical social workers reported significantly greater emotional exhaustion when there was a perceived lack of support from the administration of the agency, an absence of mutual trust between administrators and staff, and a belief that the organizational influence process was from the top down (Leiter & Harvie, 1996).

Workload can be one cause of burnout for counselors when they have taken an overload of cases in their practice. Work overload and lack of control over the district policies are two reasons of burnout in mental health professionals (Skovholt, 2001). This is compounded when they have to play a major role and take most of the responsibilities for their families in addition to their work. The research over the past decade has identified ways in which burnout among mental health workers is similar to burnout for teachers, healthcare workers, and social service workers (Acker, 1999; Kottler, 2003). It appears to be an issue that needs to be focused on in the near future.

**Distress**

In their research, Sherman and Thelen (1998) defined psychic distress as “the
subjective experience of discontent that may arise from various factors and that may be manifested in anxious or depressed moods, somatic complaints, lowered self-esteem, and feelings of confusion and helplessness about their problems” (p. 79). For their study, they conducted an exploratory survey. A total of 55 questionnaires were distributed to faculty members in a large university’s psychology department and to mental health professionals at a local state hospital. The purpose of this study was to examine the nature and extent of distress and impairment due to work factors and life events among applied psychologists. The research results showed a very high positive correlation between distress and impairment for both life events and work factors. The conclusion in the study was that problems within close relationships and major personal illness or injury caused the most distress and impairment across all of the life events examined. The results also showed that the amounts of distress and impairment caused by various work factors, for example, malpractice claims, changed work situations, and inadequate time for obligations induced the most distress.

One study suggests that distress among professionals usually arises from adverse employment conditions in the professional environment or from personal stress which is caused by one’s marital problems, relationships, illness or death of family members, or financial problems (Reamer, 1992). Thoreson, Miller and Krauskopf (1989) reported distress in a sample of 379 psychologists from the Midwestern State Psychological Association (MWPA), with a return rate of 54%. Ten percent had experienced frequent levels of distress in the following categories: depression (11%), marriage/relationship dissatisfaction (11%), recurrent physical illness (10%), problems with alcohol use (9%), and feelings of loneliness (8%). Thoreson et al. (1989) found diverse sources of distress

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in mental health professionals, including (a) their jobs, (b) illness or death of family members, (c) marital or relationship problems, (d) midlife crises, and (e) substance abuse. The results indicated that distress variables are intercorrelated as significant distress areas. These results remind counselors to look at the issues related to drinking problems, depression symptoms, relationship difficulties, and pressure from work. But it must be noted that professionals' burnout and distress do not always lead to impairment.

**Impairment**

Lamb et al. (1987) provide this comprehensive definition of professional impairment: “(a) an inability and/or unwillingness to acquire and integrate professional standards into one’s repertoire of professional behavior; (b) an inability to acquire professional skills in order to reach an acceptable level of competency; and (c) an inability to control personal stress, psychological dysfunction, and/or excessive emotional reaction that interfere with professional functioning” (p. 598).

In applying the term *impairment* to professional counselors, some researchers have identified a variety of forms and sources of professional impairment. Coster and Schwebel (1997) defined impairment as a decline in the quality of an individual’s professional functioning, which results in a consistently substandard performance. Guy (1987) defined impairment as the “diminution or deterioration of therapeutic skill and ability due to factors which have sufficiently impacted the personality of the therapist to result in potential clinical incompetence” (p. 199). Sherman and Thelen (1998) defined impairment as “the interference in ability to practice therapy, which may be sparked by a variety of factors and results in a decline in therapeutic effectiveness” (p. 79).

Forrest et al. (1999) reviewed the professional literature on the topic of evaluating
the competence of trainees in professional psychology training programs, which included consideration of program policies, procedures, and actual practice for identifying and dismissing trainees who are judged unable to provide competent professional care. The data gathered from Forrest et al.'s (1999) and previous studies show that most academic and internship programs (66%-95%) reported at least one impaired trainee during the past five years.

Mental health professionals are expected to be paragons. The fact that they know they are unable to be paragons makes them prime candidates for distress and burnout. Their ability to function as professionals then may become limited (Connor, 2001). Professional roles are often complex and varied and sometimes come with high expectations of others, or practitioners expect themselves to be experts. Counselors may play the roles of teachers, administrators, therapists, mediators, or crisis counselors who are frequently called upon to change their roles within a single day.

Dlugos and Friedlander (2001) used peer nomination to identify the participants for their study. They interviewed 12 experienced psychotherapists who had worked in the field at least 10 years and spent at least 50% of their time engaged in psychotherapy or related activities. This qualitative investigation of how passionately committed to their work experienced psychotherapists are over a long period of time provided a rich understanding of therapists' sustained high level of work commitment. It also revealed that the combination of multiple roles renders the therapists to be less effective in their professions, and that assuming multiple roles could be one obstacle to their passion for their jobs. However, if counselors do various types of work during their work time, it may help them have higher job satisfaction and prevent their becoming too exhausted in
one type of work (Dlugos & Friedlander, 2001). For instance, they may have cases in individual counseling, family therapy or group counseling as a variety of cases, or they might have program planning or administrative duties that also lend some diversity to their work life.

Dlugos and Friedlander’s research (2001) showed that mental health professionals have problems in their personal lives, but because of their work roles as healers or helpers, it is hard for them to reveal the negative side of their own emotions or feelings to others. If mental health professionals are unaware of their problems, this can lead to burnout, distress or impairment in their personal lives or in work. Professional impairment is important to address because of its impact on the practitioner’s colleagues and on the broader profession as well as on individual clients.

Mental health professionals need not only to be aware of their problems of burnout, distress, and impairment but also of the problems associated with managing their relationships and families. Ninety-two percent of mental health professionals maintain physical and psychological boundaries between work and personal life (Dlugos & Friedlander, 2001) to keep their balance. The personal life includes their relationships among family members, friends, and relatives. How mental health professionals maintain good management in their work and family lives and how they achieve self-care in their lives will be the essential issues this paper addresses.

Stresses Associated With Managing Multiple Roles of Work and Family

A number of studies have documented the negative impact of role stress and conflict on different aspects of women’s psychological health. There is a significant relationship between work-family conflict and various measures of psychological distress.
in women (Barling & Maclntyre, 1993; Hughes & Galinsky, 1994; Parasuraman, Greenhaus & Granrose, 1992). This section will focus on the problems of mental health professionals related to managing their multiple roles of work and family.

**Problems Related to Multiple Roles of Work and Family**

In a study outside of the counseling profession, Parasuraman, Purohit, Godshalk and Beutell (1996) examined the influence of work and family variables on the career success and psychological well-being of 111 men and women entrepreneurs. Their findings show that gender influences the career success and well-being of entrepreneurs primarily through its effects on time commitment to work. Women entrepreneurs devote significantly more time to family than men, and men entrepreneurs devote more time to work than women. They also show that work-to-family conflict is associated with heightened life stress. Especially for working women, gender and multiple roles may affect their commitment to work and to family. Because they fill multiple roles in work and family, women may have to work extra hard to perform well in all of their roles.

Aryee, Fields, and Luk (1999) did a cross-cultural investigation of the work-family interface in Asia. Eight hundred questionnaires were distributed to 10 organizations located in Hong Kong; 320 completed questionnaires were returned. Of the 320 respondents, 91 (28.4%) were women and 229 (71.6%) were men. The results indicated that job distress or satisfaction, and family distress or satisfaction, both have significant influence on overall employee well-being (depression or life satisfaction). Previous studies show that family roles and job satisfaction have significant relationships, and that multiple roles may increase burnout or distress opportunities, no matter what the country or the culture (Cheung and Scherling, 1999; Gallin, 1997; Lee and Sun, 1995; Lu,
Managing Work and Family Responsibilities

Bernas and Major (2000) examined resources likely to reduce the stress and work-family conflict in women’s experiences. Their 206 participants were recruited from daycare centers, a business community, and a university setting. The majority of the women were married (68%) with children (82%). The results showed that experiencing greater work-related stress increased the likelihood that work would interfere with fulfilling family roles. Stress experienced in parental or spousal roles (i.e., family stress) increased the likelihood that family concerns would create interruptions at work. The results also showed that women were likely to be intensely involved in both work and family roles if they felt responsible for events in their lives and tended to be dependable persons.

Psychologists tend to feel less satisfied in their personal lives when dealing with stressful life events; similarly, professional satisfaction is lowered when therapists are faced with stressful work factors (Sherman & Thelen, 1998). Coster and Schwebel (1997) interviewed six well-functioning psychologists and received questionnaire responses from 339 randomly selected psychologists. Their purpose was to focus on stress-management enhancers that help to maintain well-functioning role fulfillment, especially in times of change. The results emphasized the need for self-awareness and self-monitoring; for support from peers, spouses, friends, mentors, therapists and supervisors; for a personal value system; and for a balanced life. They found that the most important support system for counselors comes from family and spouses. Spouses and significant others are a bulwark against the overall stressors of life. They highlighted the need for
balance between counselors’ personal lives and professional work, as imbalance between work and family responsibilities may increase the potential for burnout, distress, and impairment. In summary, achieving good management of their work, family, and leisure allowed the psychologists to maintain a strong commitment to their work.

Connor (2001) also made a recommendation that might help psychotherapists’ approach to treating impaired professionals. He suggested that, being mental health professionals themselves, therapists should understand impairment, and they should understand that mental health professionals need to take responsibility to monitor themselves or seek assistance in dealing with their problems before they adversely impact those who use their services.

Therefore, the literature has demonstrated the problems associated with the multiple roles of mental health professionals and the importance of managing work and family responsibilities. As for Asian women, they play multiple roles defined by their culture and society to be fulfilled in their work and families. They also learn to go through the different life cycle stages within the dictates of their cultural traditions and social expectations.

Cultural Concepts, Roles, and Expectations of Asian Women

This section discusses general Asian culture and family structure, women’s roles in their families, the implications of family lineage for a female’s status, and the family duties women are expected to perform. It provides a broad background for the specific study of Taiwanese female counselors described in subsequent chapters of this paper. This background information should aid in an understanding of potential problems that Asian working women, and by extension, female counselors, experience and need to
address.

The Asian countries consist of the following: Bangladesh, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, and Thailand. Even though each country has its own language(s), culture, and history, the populations share many similarities in terms of family systems, living styles, and social orientation. In general, Asian women not only play major roles in their families, but nowadays they may also need to be employed outside the home due to financial reasons. They carry a lot of expectations, both from their families and workplaces (Lee & Sun, 1995; Lee, 1998).

General Asian Culture and Family Structure

Cultural differences influence family organization, family interaction, and individual behavior and are key factors in an individual’s experiences (Ho, 1987). Triandis (1994) says, “A cultural syndrome is that pattern characterized by shared beliefs, attitudes, norms, roles, and values that are organized around a theme and that can be found in certain geographic regions during a particular historical period” (p. 43). Certain general value orientations in Asian culture are authoritarianism, interdependence, conformity, intense relationships, extended family structure, the role of silence, and the importance of collective goals and responsibilities (Chandras, Eddy, & Spaulding, 1999).

Asian cultures are seen as collectivistic in nature. In a collectivist society, many decisions are made not by individuals but by families and groups, presumably with the larger good in mind. This type of society affects many aspects of a person's life, including the manner in which one communicates, the life choices one makes, and how one copes with stress (Leong, 2002).
For example, many Japanese and Chinese families assign decision-making duties to the eldest son, who is required to consider the opinions of and consequences for other family members. Every decision of each member of a family is based on the welfare of the total family unit. Asian family structure and beliefs are inseparably related to and reinforce each other.

Saso (1999) studied Chinese families for 26 years, beginning in 1972 and concluding in 1998. Saso affirms with certainty and clarity that the family is the core and center of Chinese social and cultural life. He describes the ideal Asian family as one that sits together at the table during breakfast, lunch, and dinner. While there is joy in indulging children, there is also the necessity of scolding them. Looking after aging grandparents is essential. In other words, the ideal family structure may well be three generations (grandparents, parents, and children) under a single roof or behind a single household entrance. However, the basic family structure of three generations under one roof is now beginning to change gradually due to changes in societal assumptions and economic conditions.

Currently, the realities of family structure are changing from the traditional to a more modern type, called the “modified nuclear family” (Hsu, Lew, Wu & Chong, 2001). In Taiwan, 76% of the families are “nuclear families,” consisting of a father, mother, and dependent children (Taiwan Social Development Investigation Report, 2002). While this modified family does not require co-residency of more than two generations, persistent traditionalism and ethical imperatives prevail. That means that within the modified nuclear family there is social and economic independence, but at the same time, the family maintains traditions such as loyalty toward family members, pieties toward
parents and seniors, and mutual assistance in times of need.

Lee (1998) researched the relationships between elderly parents and their married children. The study used qualitative research methods to interview three families (15 family members) in Taiwan and explored the relationships among family members. (This research also was written in Chinese and published in the *Taiwan Psychological Journal*). The results showed that the parents still have power but will leave decision-making to their children. The primary purpose of family members is to maintain harmony in the family, and if there are conflicts, members must be willing to resolve the problems in a gentle way and make everyone as happy as possible. The children may feel guilty if they do not take good care of their parents, even though their own values conflict with their parents' values. The children will sacrifice themselves for the welfare of the family.

One of the strengths of Asian culture in the past was the emphasis placed on the family. From a mental health point of view, the family is still the basis for the establishment and maintenance of good mental health. Although the family structure is changing in modern life, maintaining healthy family relations is still an important task for the contemporary person. This is particularly true for Asians, who traditionally have utilized the family as a major resource for support (Tseng et al., 2001).

*Women's Status in Families*

Asian women usually take on many responsibilities but have low status in Asian families. The home is the center of life for married women and their children. This is especially significant to the nonworking wife or mother. For Chinese people, marriage merely advances the social status of the male but changes the entire social setting of the female (Caycedo & Richardson, 1995). She leaves her family of origin and becomes part
of her husband’s family, likely moving into his parents’ home or making a place for them in her home. Her social life, also, centers on her husband and his family. The husband is held legally responsible for the actions and debts of his wife as well as the conduct of his children.

In the Asian culture, gender stereotypes are built on the traditional role of women as emotional supporters of successful men and their families. In addition, a substantial proportion of women do stop working because of childbearing. However, in Taiwan as well as in the other Asian countries, the rate of women’s participation in the labor force has increased rapidly during the past few decades, due largely to socioeconomic development and the fact that more women have received higher education. According to the Taiwan Directorate General of Budget Accounting and Statistics Executive Yuan annual report in 2003, in Taiwan about half of the women are employed outside the home, and half are not. Of the 50% of employed women, 95.3% are responsible for the major household work when they go home after work, which includes cleaning the house, cooking meals, caring for children, shopping for groceries, caring for elders, and washing clothes for the whole family.

Since the 1990s, the proportion of married women who take care of children themselves has declined as women’s participation in the labor force has increased. Now, many a full-time working mother is less of a companion to her children than one who spends only two or three hours a day with a child. According to the Taiwan National Statistics Report in 1998, 50.9% of married couples spend fewer than three hours a day with their children, and 35.6% of working mothers reported that their biggest concern is that they do not have enough time to take care of children. The measure of a good mother...
is not how much time she spends with her children, but how she spends that time (Caycedo & Richardson, 1995). The main function of the working Asian mother is making a home for her family rather than “keeping a house.”

Women who work outside the home are frequently expected to juggle work and home duties, in addition to maintaining themselves as status symbols through social activities associated with being part of the middle class. Even though Asian women have been integrated extensively into professional, technical, or other white-collar work, they live their daily lives in a highly traditional “family”. Women are expected to play the role of a warm and supportive helpmate for their husbands or fathers, who are heads of their families (Edwards & Roces, 2000).

Son Preference and Family Lineage

In their traditional family roles, Asian women’s main responsibility is to nurture the children. Women are looked upon negatively if they do not have children or do not produce a son. Lee and Sun (1995) indicated that boy preference in Taiwan is comparable to that in other countries such as Korea and Japan. Sons usually enjoy higher priority than daughters, which is related to the continuity of family lineage and the practice of ancestor worship. Sons carry the family name, their privileges are protected by family law, they are expected to inherit family property, and they provide economic support for their parents. In the Taiwan National Statistics Report in 2002 regarding social development, 70% of couples did care about the gender of their children. They preferred to have both a girl and a boy, but if they had to choose only one, they would choose boys rather than girls. The concept of son preference is still sustained in Taiwanese society.
Co-residence With Parents

Traditionally, Asian people have relied on the family system to support aged parents. This means that, unlike American tradition where the work and interests of parents and grandparents are largely focused on the children and their future lives and assets, the work and assets of Asian children (ideally sons and their wives) are focused on the future of their parents and their care.

With the gradual disintegration of such an extended family, caring for elderly parents can be problematic. In the past, the traditional family caregivers were women, but due to better education and economic need, more women prefer to or must work outside the home (Ko & Kua, 1995). Still, women generally are required to assume the heavier responsibilities in caring for the family’s elderly. In Asia, many married couples live with the husband’s parents, especially if the husband is the only son in the family. Sixty-seven percent of those married between 1980 and 1985 are part of the large majority of Taiwanese couples who are still living with the husbands’ parents (Weinstein, Sun, Chang, & Freedman, 1990).

According to the Taiwan National Statistics Report in 1998, 30.9% of elders over age 65 lived with their sons, and 22.3% of married males with their parents. But in the Taiwan National Statistics Report in 2001, only 15.7% of married males lived with their parents. More and more young couples want to have their own lifestyles that are different from their parents’. A new family style developing in Taiwan’s society is that the elders may live near their sons so that the sons can take care of them at their convenience. In some families in which there is more than one son, there may be mutual agreement that the parents live in one son’s home for a given length of time and then move on to another
son's. But whatever the arrangement, it still is the responsibility of the son to take care of his parents, especially financially, and of the daughter-in-law to take care of her husband's parents in most other ways. Additionally, a wife must also take care of her own parents if she has no siblings, particularly male siblings. Nowadays, it is more permissible for daughters to take care of their maiden families, although their obligations to their husbands' families still take precedence.

Traditional Chinese belief centers on the harmony, unity, and survival of the family. Children obey and care for their parents without question or resentment, and the firstborn son has the greatest authority and responsibility. Elder care usually is provided by the wife of the firstborn son, but all children are expected to “repay parental sacrifice via filial piety” (Huang, 1991, p. 84). Ironically, people acknowledge that daughters and daughters-in-law are more likely than sons to perform filial duties, such as caring for ailing parents. Sons have the traditional duties to take responsibility, but daughters or daughters-in-laws are actually the ones to carry out the responsibilities. Parents-in-law expect their daughters-in-law to take care of them and to do all the household tasks. If the daughter-in-law devotes too much of her money, time, or resources to her own family, her husband's family often feels uncomfortable. In Asian countries, age is respected, and elderly stages are viewed as a time of leisure and of little responsibility (Caycedo & Richardson, 1995).

Moving from this general background of women in Asian culture, the next section will deal with the places of women in the Taiwanese culture, particularly professional women.
Female Professionals’ Role Changes in Taiwan

Modern Taiwanese women see themselves as holding better positions in families and in society than did their mothers or grandmothers. Professional women tend to exert more influence in the family decision-making than women with nonprofessional jobs, especially in the management of family finances. They are the new generation who are conscious of their rights and obtain satisfaction from both work and family. Indeed, the emergence of nuclear families has given women more autonomy within their immediate domestic environs (Cheung & Scherling, 1999; Lee & Sun, 1995; Lu, 1997).

The traditional Chinese family system persists in Taiwan, although it is being altered by rapid social and demographic changes (Lu, 1997; McLaughlin & Braun, 1998). Changes besides the increase in nuclear-family households are decreases in family size, later age of women at their first marriage, and increases in the divorce rate. According to the Taiwan National Statistics Report from Executive Yuan in 1998, the average age at first marriage for Taiwanese females is 26. The improvement of women’s status in Taiwan has been due to socioeconomic changes and joint efforts of individuals in the feminist movement and those who have received higher education (Shi, 2002; Yam Women Web, 1997). Taiwan’s female professionals have their own rights to work in society, enjoy increasing gender equality, and have the ability to arrange their family lives. Cheung and Scherling (1999) analyzed questionnaire data from eight firms in the high-technology industry in the Taiwan Hsinchu Science Based Industrial Park. Of the participants, 467 (50.9%) were female employees and 451 (49.1%) were male employees. They found that in spite of recent developments, cultural and political forces may be responsible for the Taiwanese lag in improving gender equality in comparison with
According to the annual report (2000) from the Taiwan Directorate General of Budget Accounting and Statistics Executive Yuan, married female workers spent an average of 5 hours 35 minutes a day to take care of household work. The major family duty is taking care of children; the other duties are household work and taking care of elders. The Ho (2002) research showed that even though Taiwanese males think that they have to take responsibility for family happiness, the only way that they show their responsibility for the family is by working hard in their positions of employment outside the home. They still think their wives should assume most of the family responsibilities. This suggests that Taiwanese males see their role as that of financial provider, rather than of taking responsibility for home duties.

Owing to many Taiwanese females now going into the workplace, the needs for adequate child care are increasing day by day. How to find the right people or places to take care of the children is an important issue for the dual-worker family. According to the Taiwan Directorate General of Budget Accounting and Statistics Executive Yuan annual report in 2002, grandparents are still the most utilized candidates for taking care of children, but dual-worker families may choose a good daycare center if they can afford it. Another new trend developing in Taiwanese society is that of hiring laborers from other countries, such Thailand, Philippines, or Malaysia, to help dual-worker couples manage their household work or take care of children and elders. In the annual report, 2.29% of Taiwanese families employ laborers from other countries.

The literature cited above strongly indicates that the Taiwanese female counselors, whom this study more specifically concerns, have a particular need to attend to the
management of their family and work roles and responsibilities. However, difficulty in doing so is not uncommon, and this is potentially detrimental to a counselor’s personal well-being and the quality of service she is able to deliver to her clients.

Current Counseling Developments in Taiwan

We now turn our attention to Taiwanese counselors and their roles as working professionals. To help the reader better understand how Taiwanese counselors do their jobs, we shall explore the current conditions in the counseling field. The reader should bear in mind, however, that there is a dearth of research on the field of counseling in Taiwan, and the counseling field in Taiwan is still in its early stages of development.

The following sections will focus on the following: (a) developments in counseling in secondary schools and in higher education; (b) developments in community mental health; (c) professional competence and training for mental health professionals; and (d) professional licensure of counselors. The counseling field in Taiwan began with school counseling, whereas now counselors also work in private practice (usually being affiliated with a community agency), hospitals, and government and provide a full range of services including such things as group therapy, substance abuse therapy, and consultation.

School Counseling Development in Taiwan

Two deficiencies in the Taiwanese school counseling scene pose potential problems for counselors and students. First, well-trained counselors are found in public schools, but usually there are only two or three full-time counselors for thousands of students (Huang, 1998). Sometimes, the counselors can only deal with crisis conditions

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rather than provide preventive educational programs in school (Cheng, 2002). Obviously, this places a tremendous amount of work on each counselor. Second, student counseling services in public educational institutions in Taiwan are provided by counselors who for the most part are not licensed. However, the government is phasing in, by means of a five-year program, the requirement that all school counselors be licensed. For most, this will mean having to bring their formal training up to standard.

A study done by Lin (2002), using a phenomenological qualitative method, interviewed 60 university students in Taiwan. The purpose of this study was to describe Taiwanese university students’ perspectives on their seeking help through counseling, and to identify the unique characteristics of such help as related to Taiwanese culture. Lin (2002) found that the students were likely to carefully select effective helpers either to meet their psychological needs or to help them solve problems efficiently. Participants preferred effective helpers who not only exhibited positive characteristics such as warmth, genuineness, trustworthiness, humility, empathy, and altruism, but who also demonstrated professional competence within the helping process. The participants tended to seek help when they had serious problems.

One thing that begs for particular attention in the Taiwanese school system is for counselors to convince the students to seek help early rather than wait until their problems are out of control. Most counselors in the Taiwanese school system have received at least some professional training either in Taiwan or in Western countries (Chang, 2000). Even though they have professional training, they still need to think about how to improve their competence to do counseling through experience and continuing education.
Community Mental Health Services in Taiwan

The development of community mental health in Taiwan started from a social welfare organization. The social welfare system has expanded the scope of available services. Statistics for 1986, 1989, and 1992 indicate that the number of people covered by social welfare programs increased greatly, and the number of people covered by each individual program also grew rapidly (Aspalter, 2001). The rapidly changing social context in Taiwan has resulted in increased problems for society and individuals.

According to a phone survey held by National Cheng Gung Medical University in 2003, 7% of Taiwan's people have depression symptoms of feeling tired, lack of appetite, being upset, and poor sleep. Twenty-five percent of the people asked for help from family members or mental health professionals. Of the people who went to psychiatrists, 20% had depression symptoms and were in danger of committing suicide. The report shows that there are large demands for mental health in Taiwan, indicating the need for more professionals in the field and for the establishment of more professional mental health services.

Community mental health in Taiwan is not quite the same thing as in the United States. A Taiwanese counseling center typically offers individual or group counseling, as well as educational programs such as premarriage, parenting, or mental health awareness classes. The counseling centers are not government funded, however, and the services are entirely paid for by the consumers themselves, except for psychiatry which is covered by medical provisions. Some counseling centers may be affiliated with organizations such as churches or private groups, in which case clients who cannot pay full fees may be supplemented by the affiliates. The only government assistance for counseling service is
to clients who have reported family abuse to the authorities. A very recent trend is for companies to offer counseling services to employees and their families.

On the other hand, the Taiwanese public also must be more open to seeking help from professional counselors, which calls for more education about counseling as an acceptable way to receive help. Many people still are reluctant to seek counseling when they have emotional or interpersonal concerns. They are afraid of being seen as problematic people, of which they and their families would be very ashamed (Chen, 2003).

Professional Competence and Training in Taiwan

Because the counseling profession in Taiwan is still in its beginning stages of development, the level of professional training is limited. This matter demands attention to the following considerations (Chen, 2004; Lee, 2001). First, for all counselors in Taiwan, building professional competence is their most important goal. Potential danger to both the counselor and client exists when the practitioner does not have the competence to practice effectively. For example, counselors who do not have adequate knowledge or skill to handle difficult cases in their practice increase the risk of stress for themselves and inadequate care for the clients.

The results in Chen’s study in 2004 pointed out that the difficulties for counselors in a changing society in Taiwan include lack of time for clinical supervision; lack of channels of communication or consultation with other professionals such as medical doctors; and discussions among fellow counselors that are few and slow in effecting change in the professional counseling environment. In Taiwan, there are many counselors who are practicing but who have had little to no formal training. To them, in particular, it
must be demonstrated that sound education and training in theories and methods is not only an ethical requirement, but it will also build their sense of self-awareness and self-competence so they can effectively help their clients as well as improve their personal lives. Second is the challenge of ethical issues. Not only is there a shortage of counselors and mental health professionals in Taiwan, the quality of counseling is also a concern. According to the Statistics Report in 2003 from the Ministry of Examination in Taiwan, there are only 295 licensed counselors and 342 licensed psychologists in Taiwan since the government began issuing the professional license in 2001. In a country with a population of 23 million, it is obvious there are not enough licensed counselors per capita to provide services in educational institutions and in the communities One challenge for mental health professionals in Taiwan may be their need to get together to face the counseling ethical issues to ensure that all clients receive quality service.

As shown above, the counseling profession is in the early stages of development in Taiwan. It follows that the situation presents all counselors with many challenges, challenges that female counselors cannot escape in addition to their other challenges as female professionals. Owing to the demand for more and better-trained counselors, female counselors in Taiwan will find that the increasing pressure and workload will make their attention to better self-care imperative.

**Licensing of Professional Counselors in Taiwan**

Presently in Taiwan, counselor and psychologist licenses have been issued only since the year 2001 (Legislative Yuan, 2001). A licensing exam has been held every year since, and there are minimum qualifications and requirements for those who want to take it. The licensing policy allows people of Taiwan in need of counseling to identify the
professional counselors. When people go looking for the services of mental health professionals, the legal license helps them to identify the qualifications of counselors or psychologists.

Professional licensing is an important issue for both male and female counselors. The legal license is the first step to establishing professional status. For female counselors especially, professional licensure is the best means of job security within their profession, for it is the badge of professional identity that declares they have received professional training. Even though the status of Taiwan’s females has begun to improve, they still have not attained full status and recognition; therefore, female counselors need the professional license to help them secure their positions and exhibit their ability to help people. A viable licensing system establishes categories and different divisions in the mental health professions, which in turn develops the programs of specific training counselors need for their chosen specialty of service, all of which benefits clients as well as counselors.

Compared with the development of mental health services in Western countries, Taiwan still has a long way to go in professional training and establishment of community mental health services. Most counseling psychologists or professional counselors graduate from guidance or counseling departments at educational universities or from medical schools. There is large demand in educational and social welfare organizations for professional psychologists or counselors.

Counselors’ Self-care Issues

The following sections will discuss self-care strategies, preventive measures, and recommendations for counselors in general with implications for Taiwanese female counselors in particular.
Self-care Strategies

The discussion in this section has two dimensions of self-care for counselors. One is intra-personal strategies of counselors’ self-care, and the other is the importance of interpersonal relationships to counselors’ self-care.

Intra-personal Strategies for Self-care

First, counselors need to recognize the role of counselors and their commitment to their profession. Counseling is often an overloaded and demanding calling (Norcross, 2000). Counselors must understand that the mental health profession is associated with stresses and personal emotions. This recognition of the reality of the mental health profession should help counselors to prepare themselves psychologically so that they can sustain their commitment to the professional field even though they encounter difficulties.

Second, counselors’ raising of their self-awareness and self-sensitivity about the problems of distress or impairment will aid them in seeking rehabilitation (Norcross, 2000). Counselors need to know that impairment does not negate the consequences of unethical behaviors or incompetence (Connor, 2001). Counselors who are honest with themselves will seek assistance with their problems before they negatively impact those who use their services.

Third, it is of prime importance that counselors maintain boundaries between their work and their personal lives. Dlugos and Friedlander (2001) studied 15 mental health professionals who had worked in the field at least 10 years and spent at least 50% of the work week engaged in psychotherapy or related activities. They reported that attending to the nonprofessional life is essential to maintaining passion and avoiding burnout.

Fourth, balance within diversity of counseling and work activities is also a way to
maintain professional quality. One of the therapists from the Dlugos and Friedlander (2001) study pointed out that diversity in work, such as dealing with different issues of counseling and doing different types of counseling (e.g., individual counseling, group counseling), is an important means of growing personally and professionally.

Fifth, counselors need to engage in regular physical or psychologically relaxing activities, such as recreational activities, taking a vacation, relaxing in hot tubs, meditation, and spiritual support. Mahoney (1997) found that the coping practices of self-care that included having a hobby, taking pleasure trips or vacations, attending movies, artistic events, or museums, and doing physical exercises topped the self-care list. Sherman and Thelen (1998) reported that the highest frequencies and percentages of preventive behaviors in 522 psychologists were participation in non-work related activities. Prevention of a counselor’s burnout or impairment requires regular participation in relaxing and nonprofessional activities.

**Interpersonal Strategies for Self-care**

First is the need for peer and family support. Coster and Schwebel (1997) reported that stable peer and family relationships help counselors to stay well functioning in their professions. They especially emphasize “quality relationships,” which means that counselors maintain good relationships with their peers and families by spending time together that includes sharing or doing things together.

Second, clinical supervision is another way to uphold professional quality. Supervisors are the gatekeepers and monitors of the profession (Witmer & Young, 1996). Counselors who wish to improve their professional qualities may hunger for feedback and supervision from professional points of view. Professional feedback reminds
counselors to strive for delivery of ongoing, flexible, quality services.

Third is the value of support from within the professional field. Connor (2001) concluded that through regular contact with colleagues or other people with whom they can shed their more formal professional roles, and through ongoing consultation, peer-support groups, and openness to colleagues, counselors can get further professional support and feedback. Witmer and Young (1996) also mentioned the “team-building” idea, which helps counselors and mental health-related professionals to support each other in professional opinions and to give friendly personal support.

Fourth, attending continuing educational activities and training programs can serve to renew counselors’ interests in resources and information that help them update their knowledge and skills. Such activities also provide a good chance to interact with colleagues in what often becomes a peer-support group for counselors.

Self-care Recommendations and Solutions

Once counselors find they have the symptoms of stress—burnout, distress, or impairment—what are the available solutions? This section presents four recommendations for professional counselors. First, through self-reflection (Norcross, 2000), counselors slow down and try to determine what has gone wrong in their lives. They look at their professional work and personal lives, asking themselves if they are overloaded in work, if they have balance in case diversity, how long they work overtime, how often they take a break from their professional jobs, if they have regular relaxing activities, if they have close relationships with family and peers, and if they have emotional support from others. They check themselves and try to see in which ways they can help themselves to change their working and living styles.
Second is to find a support group that can help counselors release their psychological burdens. A good support group has the function of healing (Sherman & Thelen, 1998). Once counselors find themselves stressed out, support groups can play an important role in helping counselors find personal and professional balance. Support groups can help counselors release their stress or emotions through sharing experiences.

Third is for counselors to seek help through psychotherapy if they find their impairment problems are too serious to be cured by themselves or within support groups (Coster & Schwebel, 1997; Pope & Tabachnick, 1994). In Mahoney’s (1997) research, a large percentage of psychotherapists (87.7%) reported having been in personal psychotherapy, which helped them to lower their stress levels.

The fourth recommendation is actually a reminder that if counselors find colleagues who are burned out, in distress, or impaired in their work, they should take steps to confront those colleagues in a spirit of helpfulness. In fact, this becomes an ethical constraint if the colleagues’ problems appear negatively to affect the quality of their service to their clients (Gal, 1998).

As noted above, Mahoney’s (1997) recommended self-care patterns include being engaged in a hobby, taking pleasure trips or vacations, attending movies or artistic events, and regular physical exercise. If counselors do not pay attention to their leisure life, it is another potential danger to the counselors’ well-being and quality of service.

Taiwanese Female Counselors’ Management of Multiple Roles

We now turn closer attention to female counselors in Taiwan. Taiwanese women are accustomed to taking heavy responsibilities and therefore frequently are unaware of the dangers of overload. They assume their responsibilities as a natural way of life, and as...
a result are able, without giving it much thought, to make compromises between their personal needs and their family and work responsibilities. Such women, rather than viewing heavy responsibilities as sources of burnout, try to take those responsibilities in stride (Lee & Sun, 1995). Yet, they run the risk of broken health or emotions because they have not paid enough attention to themselves. Therefore, female counselors, along with all working women in Taiwan who carry multiple roles and responsibilities, should become aware of and concern themselves with their own self-care.

The fact that Taiwan faces rapid changes in economic and social structure makes it incumbent upon its female counselors to develop good adjustment skills to work effectively within their personal and professional spheres. The challenge for female counselors is to face their roles in the changing family and to adjust to different lifestyles, as well as to meet the professional standards and demands of their work. The achievement of good management of their work and family roles is an important component of self-care.

Still, in spite of the societal changes, traditional ways of regarding families and females do and will persist in Taiwan for a long time to come. As stated in previously cited literature (Caycedo & Richardson, 1995; Huang, 1991; Ko & Kua, 1995; Weinstein, Sun, Chang & Freedman, 1990), females in Taiwan have heavy responsibilities for their families. They need to take care of household work, children, and parents or parents-in-law. Also, they may be the main source of emotional support for their family members (Edwards & Roces, 2000).

The added demand on female counselors is that they fulfill the role of professional counselor in their work as well as being healers and emotional supporters in
their families. According to Bernas and Major (2000), the greater the work-related stress, the more the work interference with fulfilling one’s family role. Coster and Schwebel (1997) pointed out that the most important support system for well-functioning psychologists is family and spouse. Therefore, the family that cannot provide the best support for the female counselor or becomes an emotional burden and source of stress will increase the counselor’s risk of burnout, distress or impairment.

In conclusion, the obvious can be simply stated: for counselors to be able to take care of others they first have to take care of themselves. Counselors must manage their personal lives and professional work by using various strategies such as support from peers, family, and professional groups; by having hobbies or activities outside the profession; and by continuing to receive professional supervision. The counselor who is aware of the warning signs of stress can take preventive measures. But if counselors find they have the symptoms of burnout, distress, or impairment, they should, upon reflection, seek professional help when they realize they need it. A counselor’s personal well being is a legitimate reason for any level of self-care, and it is essential to the counselor’s ability to fulfill the responsibility of providing the best possible service to clients.

Summary

A review of the literature reveals stress and its symptoms associated with the counseling profession. Taiwanese female counselors face many challenges and difficulties because of their roles within the family and their struggles for professional identity. They face transition into new family systems even as traditional family concepts persist, development of gender equality, and matters of professional identity and development. In many instances they must handle an overload of work and family
responsibilities. Female counselors feel more stressed when the management of their work and families is out of order (Sherman & Thelen, 1998). Many female counselors in Taiwan are used to taking heavy responsibilities but frequently do not recognize unhealthy practices. They are likely to ignore signs of danger to their health and well-being or may not utilize effective strategies to manage their multiple roles.

The literature aids an understanding of the development of the counseling profession in Taiwan. It clarifies the state of school counseling and community mental health services and the work environments in which the Taiwanese female counselors are to be found. This review of the literature also points out the importance of managing work and family roles. Of utmost importance is for Taiwanese female counselors to concentrate on self-care at this time. Even though their problems cannot be resolved in a short period of time, there is a future for female counselors in Taiwan. They will find ways to build up more strength to cope with their family roles and to acquire complete, systematic training in their professional skills and knowledge. This new competence will give them confidence and improve the quality of services to their clients. At the same time, they will find new joy in the improved quality of their family and individual lives.

According to the literature, Taiwan's society has reached a transitional stage in its social structure and its cultural and gender expectations. More and more professional women are employed, but they still have to take on family responsibilities. While there is little literature in Taiwan related to self-care issues, especially for mental health professionals, it is important to understand the real experiences of female counselors as they attempt to manage their work and family roles.

The study that is the subject of this dissertation employed an exploratory
qualitative research design to discover Taiwanese female counselors’ experiences in their quest to achieve satisfaction and effectiveness in their work and to achieve the quality of life they desire for their families and themselves. The following chapter details the study’s methods.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Description of Research Methodology

This chapter introduces a qualitative exploratory research study, using grounded theory, to explore the effects of work and family roles and responsibilities on Taiwanese female counselors’ lives, to see how the women manage their multiple roles, and to determine implications regarding Taiwanese female counselors’ self-care.

In this chapter, I, the researcher, use the first person pronoun because, using consistent qualitative research, I am the major instrument in this research study. First, the description of the framework of the study addresses the value of qualitative research and the role of the qualitative researcher. Next, I present the way in which the grounded theory method was conducted in this research. Finally, I describe the participant selection, data collection, and data analysis procedures that were used in this study.

I conducted all of the above in Chinese, from the interviews through the data analysis. I then translated the last step of the data analysis, selective coding, into English. That became the framework of the findings (Chapter IV), which I wrote in English.

Methodological Framework

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is not a new method of conducting research in the social
sciences. According to Creswell (1998), qualitative research emphasizes processes that are inductive, generative, constructive, and subjective. Qualitative studies are typically conducted within the participants' natural context or familiar setting; therefore, the studies tend to be field based, and usually a small number of cases are studied in depth. The various qualitative approaches have been devised to contribute to an understanding of how the world is constructed, but each approach takes on a different facet of the task (Creswell, 1998). For example, in this study grounded theory methods were used to explore how work and family roles or responsibilities affect Taiwanese female counselors' lives and how Taiwanese female counselors manage their family and work roles and responsibilities.

The purpose of qualitative research is to generate knowledge about an individual's experiences. The goal is to describe in rich detail how the research subjects perceive their experiences (Rossman and Rallis, 2003). The conductor of qualitative research examines what people are doing and how they interpret what is occurring rather than pursue cause and effect by replicating experiments in a controlled setting (Morse, 1994). Qualitative research gives participants a "voice," which allows their experiences or life stories to be documented. It helps professionals know much more about the construction of that segment of the participants' world (McLeod, 2001).

The purpose of this study was to explore Taiwanese female counselors' experiences of combining both their family and work roles and responsibilities, and how these experiences affected their personal and professional lives. The voices to be heard describe the real experiences shared by Taiwanese female counselors formed the core of the study. The women's experiences enriched this study by providing insights and new
meanings of self-care issues for mental health professionals. Overall, I found qualitative research to be well suited to the purpose of this study.

**Evaluation of the Quality of Qualitative Research**

One of the challenges of qualitative research is making judgments about the quality of the research. Two key themes identify the quality of qualitative inquiry. The first is trustworthiness, and the second is "critical reflexivity" (McLeod, 2001). This section discusses how to evaluate qualitative research based on these two key themes.

In qualitative research, two problems arise in relation to the concept of trustworthiness. According to McLeod (2001), "there is no assumption that there exists a fixed, knowable external reality: all experience of reality is constructed, one way or another" (p. 182). And, for practical purposes, "an objective external reality might exist; the signs that are used to signify this reality are words, not numbers" (p. 182). Qualitative research can only compare sets of words. On many occasions, judgments must be made concerning the "truth-value" of a qualitative study (McLeod, 2001). This means that in my study I must determine whether the findings provide a genuine or trustworthy basis for understanding the Taiwanese female counselors' experiences of handling both work and family needs. The second key theme in examining the quality of qualitative research is "critical reflexivity." Banister et al. (1994) described it as "an attempt to make explicit the process by which the material and analysis are produced" (p. 149). The aim of critical reflexivity is "to place a piece of research within a cultural tradition, so that what becomes visible includes both the way in which the tradition constructs the topics, and the way in which an engagement with the topic changes the tradition" (McLeod, 2001, p. 202).
An important piece of qualitative research is to encourage research participants to talk about their experiences in ways that are complete, honest, rich, or authentic. The goal for a qualitative researcher is to get close to what a participant really experiences. In this study, I allowed enough time during the interview sessions for the participants to think about what they wanted to tell me in answer to my questions. As they shared their experiences, I found that in talking freely they frequently generated further questions. The participants also were made comfortable to do so by having been assured of the confidentiality of the interviews and by the relaxed relationship between the researcher and the participants. Evidence of honesty in their responses included the expression of strong emotions by several, crying, or showing of anger.

Research Questions

Owing to ongoing changes in Taiwan's social structures, the participants exhibited a variety of perspectives on management of family and work roles and responsibilities. The following six questions regarding Taiwanese female counselors provided the framework for this study:

1. How do Taiwanese female counselors manage their work and family roles and responsibilities?
2. What factors impact their work or family roles and responsibilities, such as gender, culture, self-expectations, or social expectations?
3. What challenges and benefits do Taiwanese female counselors experience when negotiating work and family roles and responsibilities?
4. What self-care strategies do they utilize that promote good management in their lives?
5. What resources or support are available to help them achieve good management in their lives, and have they taken advantage of these resources?

6. What suggestions or recommendations do the participants offer other Taiwanese female counselors regarding useful resources and support?

*Grounded Theory*

The primary research questions of this study lent themselves to a grounded theory research methodology. I chose the grounded theory method for this study in order to understand the reality of Taiwanese female counselors' experiences of managing family and work roles and responsibilities.

Grounded theory serves as a means for understanding the realities of the participants and what their experiences are in their world (Glaser, 1995). Grounded theory focuses on "processes that exist within the individual or groups of individuals rather than on social structure" and is used "to explain a given social situation by identifying the core and subsidiary processes operating in it" (Baker, Wuest, & Stern, 1992, p. 1357). The basic process of grounded theory is to determine "the guiding principle underlying what is occurring in the situation and dominates the analysis because it links most of the other processes involved in an explanatory network" (Glaser, 1995, p. 45). The grounded theory method generates inductively based theoretical explanations of social and psychosocial processes. From this perspective, grounded theory is a method which helps the researcher to understand the participants' experiences as the participants understand them, learn about their world, and learn their interpretation of self in the interaction (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). My use of the grounded theory method in this study helped me to see the experiences of the Taiwanese female counselors' work and family
lives as they perceived them.

In using the grounded theory method when it comes to data analysis, the important question is the usefulness of the theory that is generated (Glaser, 1995). "To be credible, the core variables, or theory, must be well integrated, easy to understand, relevant to the empirical world, and must explain the major variations in the process or phenomenon studied" (p. 48). Therefore, "a theory should be able to explain what happened, predict what will happen, and interpret what is happening" (Glaser, 1995, p. 49). At the end of chapter IV, I present in a figure a summary of the key findings from this study that suggests an attempt at a theoretical understanding of what occurs for Taiwanese female counselors who are managing work and family responsibilities.

Researcher's Role in Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is based on the belief that subjectivity is unavoidable in any research endeavor. It is important, as much as possible, to avoid the researcher's biases so as to protect the validity of the observation and the participants' experiences under investigation (Kopala & Suzuki, 1999). Rossman and Rallis (1998) provide the following characteristics of qualitative researchers: They (a) view social worlds as holistic or seamless; (b) engage in systematic reflection on their own roles in the research; (c) are sensitive to their personal biographies and how these shape the study; (d) rely on complex reasoning that is multifaceted and interactive. Therefore, the researcher as the instrument of the research is also the instrument of decision making throughout the data gathering and data analyzing, thereby becoming an integral part of both the research process and of the knowledge generated by the research (Marshall & Rossman, 1999).

In this study, I was the sole researcher. My background as a Taiwanese female
counselor who had received professional training in the United States led to my desire to explore the actual experiences of Taiwanese female counselors who practice their profession within the matrix of the Taiwanese culture. I was interested to see how well they handle their stresses and what strategies they find to be effective in doing so. It seemed most appropriate to focus on women in my own profession, as I plan eventually to teach women going into the counseling profession. I hope that this study also will contribute to the research in the mental health field in Taiwan. Therefore, my role in this study was as a research instrument. I implemented the research protocol, personally conducted the interviews with the individual subjects, transcribed the audiotapes of the interviews, immersed myself in the data to discover the key findings, and wrote up the results.

**Personal Biases and Assumptions**

Since I was the primary researcher and sole interviewer, as well as a native Taiwanese female, it was possible that my biases or assumptions impacted the interviews and my findings. Before I began my research, I formulated in my mind my likely biases and assumptions and reminded myself of them during the data analysis process. They were that (a) as a female who received higher education in the United States, I tend to assume that females and males should share the household work and have equality in the family, but this assumption might not match the points of view of Chinese cultural tradition and Taiwanese social expectations; and (b) as a professional counselor, I might assume that Taiwanese female counselors should have better ways to take care of themselves and have better management of their lives than other full-time female professionals. In actuality, however, female counselors are also individuals in their own
unique situations and stages of life and, as such, do not necessarily have better ways to manage their lives than other professional women. My use of professional peers to assist me in the data analysis process helped to reduce the possibility of my personal biases and assumptions clouding my findings.

Methods Employed for This Study

Recruitment of Participants

My first step in recruiting participants for this study was to identify female counselors by contacting local community counseling centers, hospitals, and universities in Taiwan. I asked individuals in these settings if they could provide me with information about female counselors they might recommend for the research, or about the female counselors they found who were interested in the research. This produced a list of 37 potential participants. Before I began the research, safeguards and protection of the research participants were assured through the guidelines set forth in the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) policy (Western Michigan University, 2003). A copy of the HSIRB's permission to conduct this research is included in Appendix A. Then I made my initial contact with each of the potential participants either by phone or met them personally. During this first contact, I introduced myself and my purpose for calling upon them. I explained the research and asked whether or not they would consider participating in it. I urged them to ask any questions related to the research. I also made sure that the potential participants fulfilled the necessary criteria for the study.

Selection of Participants

The criteria for inclusion in the study were that the participants (a) were working
an average of 30-40 hours per week as full-time counselors in Taiwan, had been in the profession at least three years, and had received professional training in the counseling area; and (b) played major roles, such as being housekeepers, mothers, daughters, and wives, and took primary responsibilities in their families' lives, such as taking care of either their parents or in-laws or living with them, caring for children, doing meal preparation, shopping, and providing emotional and financial support for the family. The first contact reduced the number of potential participants from 37 to 31, because six of them did not fulfill the necessary criteria.

In an effort to select a manageable number of participants from the 31 that met the broader criteria for inclusion in this exploratory, qualitative study, additional criteria were applied. Application of these criteria narrowed the field of participants to a sampling that resulted in a rich variety of experiences that covered a range of personal, family, and professional experiences, professional settings, various ages or life cycle stages, and from traditional and modern generations of Taiwanese female counselors.

The first step in this part of the selection process was to divide the potential participants according to their age groups of the 30s, 40s, and 50s. Next I selected from each age group a sampling of the life cycle stages so that at least one or more of each stage was included: singles; newly married; married with small children, school-age children, and adult children; and married without children. The next selection was from each of the different life situations so as to include those living with parents or parents-in-law; those not living with parents or parents-in-law; those from the traditional generation; and those from the modern generation. The basis for this criterion was to achieve a sampling of women with a variety of life experiences. Finally, I chose potential
participants from various counseling settings for the purpose of getting richer data from a variety of professional experiences. This produced a group of 10 potential participants, a group in which each of the above criteria appeared one or more times.

As noted above, participants were selected to include a variety of ages. The three age groups were the 30s, 40s, and 50s. The participants’ actual ages ranged from 31 to 52. Two participants were aged 31 to 35; 3 were aged 36 to 40; 2 were aged 41 to 46; and 3 were aged 47 to 52. Regarding the ages of the children, excluding the 2 singles who were without children, 2 participants had small children (0-3 years old), 2 had young children (4-16 years old), 2 had older children (17-25 years old), and 2 were married with no children.

The selected participants lived with their parents or parents-in-law, or lived in separate households but were responsible to care for their parents or parents-in-law. Two were single and living with their parents, and 3 were married and living with their parents-in-law. Five were married and were responsible for caring for their parents or in-laws but did not live with them; however, they did visit their parents or in-laws either regularly or irregularly and also provided emotional support for them. One woman had worked as a counselor for 4 years; 6 had worked in the mental health field for 5-10 years; and 3 had worked in the field for 15-20 years. Three had received their education in counseling in the United States, and 7 in Taiwan.

Various professional counseling settings in which the participants worked were considered. Two participants were junior high school counselors as well as teachers, and 1 was a senior high school counselor and teacher. One worked as a university professor and counselor in the university counseling center; she also did clinical supervision for
counseling students in the university. Two worked in community agencies as counselors, 1 in the hospital as a counselor, 1 in the government as a counselor and supervisor, and 2 in private companies as counselors.

Finally, the period in which the interviews were to be conducted was the end of December 2003 to February 2004, so the potential participants' own schedules and availability within this time period had to be taken into account. For more details, please see a summary of the participants in Table 1 (Appendix H). I then sent an invitation letter (English version in Appendix B) to each one of the 10 who met the criteria and had expressed willingness to take part in the study. The invitation letter was translated from English into Chinese. At this point, I assigned each woman an identification number (Participant 1-10) to be used instead of her real name on the data and in the reports. I am the only one who knows the participants' real names. To those who had been willing to participate but whom I had not invited, I expressed my appreciation by either phone or e-mail. I contacted each of the 10 I had chosen to participate by either phone or e-mail to set our meeting time at her preferred location for the interview. Eight interviews were conducted in the participants' offices, and two in private locations. One participant had to cancel her scheduled interview appointment because of a family emergency, so the interview was rescheduled for one week later.

Data Collection

Interview Process

The data were collected during the course of a single in-depth, one-on-one interview with each participant, using a semi-structured interview guide (see Appendix F,
part B). Each interview lasted an average of two hours, ranging from 100 to 135 minutes overall. All interviews in this research were audiotaped.

Before the interviewing began and the participant had signed the informed consent (Appendix C in English and Appendix D in Chinese), I briefly explained the purpose of this research and the interview procedure. I provided an overview of the interview topics and the research before each signed the informed consent document. I also was prepared to provide crisis counseling in the unlikely event that a woman became significantly upset, or to make a referral if she needed further counseling about the matters she discussed with me. I gave each a copy of the referral list (Appendix E) for her future reference. The participant would be responsible for the cost of therapy if she chose to pursue it. I gave her a few moments to ask any questions and, after she had read the overview of the research and the consent document, to make the final decision as to whether or not she would like to participate in this study. Each of the 10 final candidates gave her consent and became a participant in the study.

After the participant had reviewed and signed the consent form, I expressed my appreciation for her cooperation and willingness to be interviewed for the study. One copy of the informed consent document was given to the participant to obtain her permission for the interview and for the audio-recording. I have kept another signed copy of each on file. To ensure confidentiality, the consent forms have been kept in a place separate from the interview data, coding, and research results. Therefore, participants' names were not associated with the research findings in any way, and identity of individual participants was known only to me. The building of trusting relationships between me and the women and the clarity of the consent form helped these
participants to be relaxed and talk freely during the interviews. Just before I began to conduct the actual interview, I gave notice that I was about to begin to audiotape the interview and said the participant should feel free to interrupt me at any time if she had to take a break or wished to ask questions. We then began.

The interview was divided into two parts and conducted in Chinese. During the first part, which took 15 to 20 minutes, I gained a general overview of the participant's background, including her brief descriptions of her work and family roles or responsibilities, her working environment, and her family genogram (Appendix F, part A). As we focused on her background and experiences of being a full-time counselor, she was responding to the questions that appear in Appendix F. During this time our relationship became better established, and we then moved on to the next part of the interview.

The second part of the interview focused in greater detail on the participant’s management of her family roles and responsibilities as well as her work responsibilities (Appendix F, part B). This part of the interviews averaged about one and three-quarters hours each. Here I asked the female counselor to discuss in more detail the nature of her roles within her family life and professional life and the resultant responsibilities she must manage. As the counselor told of her family and work experiences, she also revealed how these experiences affected her personally. I asked her to reflect on and discuss the factors she thought might impact her as an individual. We also discussed the relationships between the roles and responsibilities of her two life spheres. Each counselor conceptualized how she could best achieve satisfactory management of her work and family roles, and in this portion of the interview self-care strategies and support
resources were addressed. The findings of this study are presented in chapter IV.

Contact Summary

After each interview, I completed a contact summary (Appendix G) of the interview content and experiences. The contact summary helped me to pause to think about the main concepts, themes, issues and questions that I had discovered during the contact (interview). It also provided me a good chance to look at anything else that struck me as salient, interesting, illuminating, or important in the contact (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Data Analysis

In this study, the data collection and data analysis were not separate or mutually exclusive, but for organizational purposes, they are presented in this way. For example, completing a contact summary form after an interview is a type of analysis, and could influence later interviews; thus some of the potential integration and reciprocal nature of data collection and analysis in a qualitative study were retained in the design of this study.

Data Processing

The raw data of this study consisted of audiotapes, transcripts, demographic data (basic information on participants), contact summaries, and qualitative memos. The audiotapes were transcribed verbatim in Chinese from the interviews. After I had transcribed four of the interviews and carefully reread the transcripts, I adjusted the manner in which I asked the questions in subsequent interviews. For example, when I had asked the first four participants about the benefits they had from their multiple roles, they talked exclusively of their family benefits. I realized that I also had to encourage
participants to talk about their benefits from their work as female counselors and not just focus on their roles in the family.

In order to keep participants' memories fresh about the interviews, the verbatim transcription was sent to each participant shortly after the interview to verify the accuracy of the interview data and to allow her to add information or to identify personal information she did not want to be reported in the findings. Four participants responded that they would like to add information. One participant wanted to remove some negative feelings from her interview. After discussing this, we agreed on the words to be used in the data that maintained the meaning yet respected the participant's privacy. Following the interviews I had to re-contact three of the participants in order to verify some basic information that was unclear (e.g., family members and ages of children). Each follow-up contact took about 5 to 10 minutes by phone.

Data Analysis Procedure

After all data had been collected and transcribed in Chinese, I conducted my data analysis based on grounded theory. The grounded theory method is a procedure of developing categories of information (open coding), interconnecting the categories (axial coding), building a “story” that connects the categories (selective coding), and ending with a discursive set of theoretical propositions (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). I conducted open coding, axial coding, and selective coding in Chinese, and then I translated the selective coding into English. In the open coding phase, I read each transcript line by line three times until I thoroughly understood the data and had become intimately familiar with them. I then tried to generate categories, themes, or patterns from the transcripts, along with the contact summaries and memos.
In the axial coding stage, I tried to make connections between these categories and then to generate a meaningful story based on my categories and connections (selective coding). This stage of data analysis is the most difficult, complex, and creative, but herein also is the beauty of the nature of qualitative research. After the whole body of data had been analyzed using this coding system, I repeatedly reviewed it to verify relationships and categories I had constructed. I found and listed statements of meaning for individuals and then grouped the statements into meaningful units.

Analytic and self-reflective memos. Throughout the course of this study, I wrote analytic and self-reflective memos to record my insights, emerging questions, and speculations about my findings in the data and my emerging theory. These recorded musings and speculations documented my personal reactions to the participants’ narratives. Glaser (1995) listed these functions of memos: They raise the conceptual level of the research by encouraging the analyst to think beyond single incidents to themes and patterns in the data; they capture speculations about the properties of categories or relationships among categories; and they can help the researcher develop category possibilities and enable her to preserve ideas that have potential value but which may be premature. I dated and numbered the memos chronologically, in order of their writing, during the research process and have found them to be useful to this study.

The memos played an important role in my data analysis process. As Glaser (1995) explains, memos depicting major strategies of analysis include identifying categories and their properties, identifying links between categories, identifying theoretical codes, and diagrams of the relationships between categories. In the process of analyzing memos, it might be necessary to re-examine selected data related to emerging categories, or it may
be necessary to gather more data to fill in the gaps. Likewise, the contact summaries helped me to review the interviews and gain deeper insights.

The last step of my data analysis was to develop a discursive theoretical scheme according to my data categories and connections. After I had prepared an initial draft of the research findings, I gave each participant the opportunity to review the draft to verify the accuracy of the emerging findings and to identify personal information that she preferred not to have reported in the findings.

*Peer checking.* During the data analysis process, two of my peers helped me to check my coding process and provided feedback from their different points of view. One peer was a female doctoral candidate majoring in counseling in Taiwan who also had received professional training in counseling. The other was a male who had a strong background in research. I met with them separately three times during the data analysis process, with each meeting lasting an average of two to three hours. They helped me to check the open coding and axial coding process as well as selective coding with my coding set. They voiced their different opinions from mine, and we also discussed how the coding and categories had been processed. This peer checking gave me various perspectives and helped me to avoid "blind spots" in my data.

*Confidentiality of Data*

Each participant was identified by number (Participant 1-Participant 10) instead of by her name on the data. Only I, the researcher, know the participants’ real names. All of the information collected from the participants was kept confidential. That means that their names did not appear on any papers on which this information was recorded. The
forms were coded, and I isolated a master list with the names of participants and the corresponding code numbers from all other material. Once the data were collected and analyzed, the master list was destroyed. The interview data and audiotapes are stored in a locked file cabinet and will remain there for a minimum of three years. Any information about specific names, places, professional setting, etc. that the participants reported were replaced with more general terms (e.g., instead of naming a specific school the generic term *school* was used) so that no identifying data can be traced to the participants. All interviews were conducted, tape recorded, and transcribed by me, using coded identification in my computer file. No information was stored on the computer with the participants' names or any other identifying information.

Summary

In summary, 10 Taiwanese female counselors shared with me through individual face-to-face interviews the experiences of their attempts to manage their work and family roles or responsibilities. The interviews helped them to explore the effects of these experiences on their lives and to express what they perceived to be of help or support to them. This chapter has presented the procedures of participant selection, data gathering, and analysis consistent with grounded theory methods.

Participant selection was based on the number of years the women had been employed as full-time professional counselors, their levels of professional training, and the variety of the positions and settings in which they worked. They were also selected according to their individual family structures and roles, their ages, and the life cycle stages in which they resided—again, with the purpose of producing a sampling across the spectrum of their population—and, of course, their willingness and ability to participate.
in the study.

Grounded theory methods of data gathering and analysis were utilized: face-to-face audiotaped interviews, verbatim transcriptions of interviews, contact summaries, memos, open coding, axial coding, selective coding, theoretical propositions, and peer review. All of this was conducted in the Chinese language. The selective coding was translated into English, and it became the basis of the writing of this dissertation in English.

The findings of this study of Taiwanese female counselors are presented in the following chapter.
CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings of my study of professional Taiwanese female counselors. It consists of seven sections. The first section provides the context of the study by presenting the situations in which the study took place. The second section gives a brief composite background of the participants, which will help put the findings within their personal and social contexts. The third section presents the reality of Taiwanese female counselors’ multiple roles in their families and in their professional jobs. The fourth section describes both the benefits the counselors experience and the challenges they face as they fulfill their multiple roles. The fifth section outlines the Taiwanese female counselors’ responses to their problems. The sixth section details the self-care strategies and support the Taiwanese female counselors employ in managing their multiple roles of carrying out family and work responsibilities. The seventh section presents the suggestions and recommendations the study’s participants had to offer to other female counselors. Finally, the emerging theoretical scheme of this study is set forth.

Context of the Study

This study consisted of a collection of interviews with ten Taiwanese female counselors who were experienced in taking on the responsibilities of multiple roles in their families and in their work. The interviews were conducted from the end of December 2003 through February 2004 and took place in the offices of the participants or
in private locations of the participants’ choice.

Participants

Ten Taiwanese female counselors were interviewed for this study. Their age range was from 31 to 52 years. Eight of the participants were married, and 2 were single. Six of them had at least one child, and 5 of them lived with parents or parents-in-law. They all had professional training and degrees in counseling or guidance and worked as full-time counselors. They worked 30 to 50 hours weekly in hospitals, schools (i.e., junior high school, senior high school, and university levels), community agencies, private companies, and in governmental settings. They had worked as full-time counselors ranging from 4 years to 20 years in various positions and locations. Within their families, all were primary caretakers of their family members, such as husbands, children, parents or parents-in-law, or they did the majority of the household work. Seven of them had to support the family financially. They also said that they provided emotional support to family members. More details will be discussed in subsequent sections of this chapter. A summary of the participants’ backgrounds is presented in Table 1 (Appendix H).

Taiwanese Female Counselors’ Multiple Roles in the Family and Work

An interesting finding in response to the interview question, Can you describe your experiences when you are working and assuming family caretaker roles together? was that the Taiwanese female counselors overwhelmingly centered their answers on the effects their multiple roles had on their family lives. They did talk about their professional responsibilities, but not in terms of struggling at work because of the intrusion of family pressures. This is consistent with the overall finding that the women
emphasized their families as their first priorities.

*Multiple Roles, Expectations From, and Interactions With Family Members*

The participants in this study all played various roles in their personal lives. They were daughters, wives, mothers, daughters-in-law, or aunts. Different roles carried different expectations. The female counselors tried their best to fulfill these expectations so as to stay within the bounds of Chinese cultural traditions and social expectations. For instance, husbands expected their wives to take care of the family before anything else. One participant (P6) said, “My husband expects me to take my role of mother more seriously than any other roles, and he also wants me to be our children’s friend.” Female counselors tried to meet different expectations and learned well how to play the multiple roles in their lives. One participant (P9) had difficulty trying to meet her mother-in-law’s expectations. “My mother-in-law expects me to drop everything and take care of my husband when he gets a cold. But having a cold is really nothing in my family. We still do everything as usual.”

When the female counselors played multiple roles, they also encountered certain interactions with their family members. P7 stated, “I remember one time, my girl asked me, ‘How come you always treat your students so nice, but you are so mean to me?’ I am thinking, I am mean to you because I am your mom. I want you to be good, but those students are not my kids. I don’t have to be mean to them.”

The Taiwanese female counselors I interviewed also played different roles in different stages of their lives. They fell into three general age groups that more or less paralleled different life cycle stages (Carter & McGoldrick, 1999). Those in their 30s had small children who demanded much of their time, as small children do. They also were
learning how to do their household work more efficiently. Those in their 40s had older, school age children. The mothers in this group had more concerns about their children’s grades, getting them to do their homework, transporting them to other activities, and having them ready for acceptance into good schools. The Taiwanese female counselors in their 50s had children beginning college or careers. Their concerns were less about time spent with their children and more about their children’s adult personalities, social relationships, dating, and choices of mates. The household work had become less demanding and less difficult after their years of experience doing household chores.

In the following paragraphs, I report on the participants’ role changes following marriage, expectations of and interactions with their family members, and what they expected of themselves compared with the present realities of their lives.

Marriage Adjustments

Five of the eight married participants said that their roles had changed after they married. They were called upon to play different roles in their new families, instead of playing the role of daughter as they had in their families of origin. Now they were wives, daughters-in-law, and would become mothers, each bringing its own different responsibilities. PI said she likely would not be able to be as involved with her family emotionally as she had been while she was living with them before she married. There she had been the family peacemaker. “After I married, the conflicts between my mom and sister increased. There is tension between them. That never happened before I married, but I can’t be the peacemaker that I used to be for the family. So I often receive my mom’s phone call to complain about my sister” [laughs].

Role changes following marriage comprised the first step in the married women’s
learning how to manage their lives. Participants reported that role changes after marriage resulted in different interactions within the new family as well as with the family of origin. The adjustment included not only one person but the whole family. Some of the participants said that they had reduced their visits to their parents after they married. Half of the participants did not live with in-laws but lived nearby. This produced the role of being a regular visitor, which created its own stresses. One participant (P3) felt compelled to make regular visits. She said that she and her husband visited her parents’ home about once every two or three months, but they still visited her husband’s parents every one or two weeks. On the other hand, P2 and her husband reduced their visits to their parents. She said, “At first, we took turns to visit our parents; that is, one week we visited my parents, another week we visited his parents. But we fought all the time due to too much pressure at that time, so we decided not to visit our parents so often.”

As new wives, they needed to figure out how to communicate with their husbands first, then how to be part of the new families. Recently married P1 said, “Now that we are two, we have to communicate about many everyday details of living. This is much different from the single life. Deciding together what to buy, how to budget, and what we should invest are new challenges. Everything is new to us, and we have to learn to talk things over before making decisions.”

Learning how to manage household work efficiently was an important adjustment. Again, P1 described it this way: “I feel that there are some differences since I married; I feel more tired after work. Sometimes I just want to sit on the couch and don’t want to move. And I had to make a lot of effort on cooking and on cleaning clothes, because I needed to distinguish different kinds of clothes to wash. I didn’t even need to do that
before I married, because my mom took care of that for me. My husband and I both need to adjust to the new life. Sometimes, both of us just put our dishes in the sink for a long time and wait to see who will do the dishes.”

Adjustments are most successful when both parties make the effort. One participant said that she felt better after her husband had made some changes. She had more optimism about her life. “He changed after I wrote him a long letter asking him to do things for the children. I felt more comfortable asking him to help. He did make changes. Our conflicts and my feelings of helplessness were much reduced, and we are now closer than before.” P3’s recollection was that “we faced a big financial crisis two years ago, together. It was a good lesson for us, because through that we learned to do the important things together as a couple and to support each other.”

Couples also had developed unspoken consensus after years of marriage. P5 said: “My husband senses what my priorities are, what I will do first or what is most important to me. He then does the things I don’t have time for, such as after the meal when I am clearing the kitchen and doing the dishes, he sweeps the floor and takes out the garbage.” “One day I came home late,” said P9, “and I found that my husband had the meal ready for me. He told me that he thought he could do some simple things since I am so busy outside.”

The women reported that even small adjustments had made their and their husbands’ lives easier and had improved their relationships. The important thing was not the immensity of the adjustment a couple had made but that both had made the effort to improve their relationship. Several emphasized that their counseling skills had helped them to be more sensitive to their husbands’ needs and to communicate with them in a
way that aided their making agreeable adjustments together. On the other hand, the school counselors said that their work so drained them that when they went home they had neither patience nor energy to deal with family adjustment issues.

*Interactions With Family Members*

Most married female counselors mentioned that the expectations of and interactions with family members were the most difficult things for them to manage in their lives. Seven participants reported that they needed to learn how to play “just right” and suitably their roles as wives, mothers and daughters-in-law. They also needed to know others’ expectations and what their own responsibilities were in meeting those expectations.

In different stages of life, the female counselors had experienced changing interactions with various family members. For example, P9 told of her experiences of having had to take care of in-laws and children in daily life when she was in her early 30s; however, now that she was in her 50s she did not have to worry about the children’s daily lives but about their careers and interpersonal relationships.

*Expectations from and interactions with husbands.* The Taiwanese female counselors said they had to learn the expectations of their husbands, the persons closest to them. Most Taiwanese males expect females to take care of the family, even though the females have full-time jobs. According to the Taiwan Directorate General of Budget Accounting and Statistics Executive Yuan annual report in 2003, about half of the women in Taiwan are employed and half stay home. Of the employed women, 95.3% are responsible for the major household work when they go home after work. Although she had been married several years and her children were grown, P9’s husband still

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sometimes complained that she was too busy with outside activities. He wanted to see her at home and for her to take care of household work before she went out.

Childcare was another of the husbands' expectations. P2 said that if she had to study or do something else, she had to beg her husband to take care of "our daughter," even though she would think to herself, "She is his daughter, too. I don't feel comfortable having to beg him to take care of our daughter." P6's husband expected her to be their children's friend and to give them her full attention when she was with them.

Husbands also expected their wives to play social roles. For example, not only was P3's husband dependent on her in household matters, he also expected her to do social things together with him. When the reality and expectations are at odds, the interactions between couples change, too. They might feel frustrated and overwhelmed when they must handle multiple responsibilities. P10 was candid in expressing her dissatisfaction about this. "I feel the whole world is ignoring me. I am a 'nobody' in the family. No one will take care of me. I have to take care of everything before I go to bed, no matter if I am sick or tired. Actually, I do have a lot to complain about and be upset about."

The women found it necessary that they and their husbands communicated with each other and compromised when making agreements about fulfilling family responsibilities. Two participants had this to say about communication with their husbands:

After I had our second child, my husband told me that we can share the work to take care of the children. He takes care of the boy, and then I take care of the girl. That makes a lot difference to me. (P10)

If I am late leaving work, I need to call him and tell him what he needs to do for the children and for the family. He is okay with it, but he still wants me to get
home as soon as possible. (P6)

If a couple had good communication and a strong relationship, that was helpful in resolving the problems of the moment; but if the couple lacked understanding or good communication skills, their emotions became overwhelming, resulting in less-than-helpful expressions of emotion that negatively impacted their relationship.

*Expectations from and interactions with in-laws.* It was common for the female counselors to have to meet the expectations of their parents-in-law. The expectations varied, including when to have a baby, visiting, or doing things for them. As the literature review in chapter II suggests, in the Chinese culture, the daughter-in-law role carries heavy responsibilities, and it is important that females play the role of daughter-in-law well (Edwards & Roces, 2000). These expectations were made evident by the participants in this study as well. The cultural norm is that the parents-in-law have the right to ask their daughter-in-law to do something, even though the request may not seem very reasonable. For a daughter-in-law, the task is to establish the boundary between her parents-in-law and herself, especially when the parents-in-law are closely involved in her life or live with her and her husband. The position of the husband being between his wife and his parents can also be difficult. As the literature indicates, sometimes the husband stands up for his parents for the sake of maintaining family harmony, which is extremely important in the Chinese family (Huang, 1991).

The challenges for the Taiwanese female counselors in this study were knowing when and how to play their roles well and how to balance their work responsibilities with family-related demands. The parents-in-law of P10 would make unreasonable demands of her even when she did not have time to meet their demands. She nevertheless made time
to do their bidding, “There is no choice for me,” she said.

This same woman (P10) also felt her parents-in-law wanted to show her their power. When she had decided to send her child to preschool, they said they had no opinion about it. Then, when the school started, her parents-in-law told her they thought her child was too young for preschool. “I think that they should have told me earlier about their thinking, because that would have saved me a lot of the time I looked for the preschool and would have saved the deposit. I was so angry at that time, but I didn’t know what to do. I am not good at communicating with them,” P10 said.

P6 had a similar experience. She and her husband lived in a city about two hours drive from her in-laws’ home. She had a fight with her in-laws, because they said she did not know how to care for her first child and insisted that the child live with them. They fought about that for 5 or 6 years until her child was ready to start elementary school and returned to his parents.

Not all relationships with in-laws were contentious. For example, P1 and her mother-in-law were able to compromise. She said, “Between my mother in-law and me, even though we don’t live together, there are still some adjustments to be made due to personality and background differences. We have a lot of different ways of doing things that we need to communicate.” (P1)

There also were cases in which the daughters-in-law really appreciated what their parents-in-law had done for them. The key to a good relationship, however, seemed to be how well the female counselors learned to communicate with their in-laws and to know their expectations. These women also helped their in-laws to understand their positions and thinking. One mother-in-law expected the participant to be exceptionally
understanding of her family and skilled at solving their problems because she was a counselor. For most, the in-laws approved of their daughters-in-law doing any outside work, because they needed the money:

My mother-in-law is very nice. I am really lucky to have her as my mother-in-law. When she comes to my house, she helps me to cook, so I don’t have to worry about what I am going to cook for meals. She cooks meals and prepares food for everyone. And she takes care of the house very well for me when she comes. (P5)

I knew my mother-in-law likes fresh fish, and she has a certain store to go for it. So every time I went to market, I would buy the fresh fish for her, clean them and put them as packages in the refrigerator. I knew she liked that, and I didn’t think it would take me much time to do it. But the only thing I can’t do for her is that I don’t have time to sit and chat with her. I am too busy. My schedule is full, always going here and there. (P9)

*Expectations from and interactions with children.* Children also have needs and expectations of their parents. Taiwanese female counselors said it was their small children that most depleted their energy and time. It was sometimes a major struggle to care for them and look after their business:

When my twins were little, I dreaded weekends, because I had to pick up the twins from their nanny’s house. I got tired taking care of the twins together. It was more tiring than going to work. (P7)

Sometimes I wanted to use this time period [the evening time] to do something, but “the little trouble” [the daughter] would come over and want me to play with her. She would not let me do my stuff. If I was reading the newspaper, she would grab it away. (P2)

It took me about one year to understand one thing. I needed to concentrate on being the “good mother” when my role of mother was called upon. I didn’t realize that at the beginning. I felt so upset and could not stand my two girls. If I was with the two girls alone at home, my time spent with them could not be over three hours. I began to blame the kids because they were too noisy and fought with each other. Then after one year, I just figured out and learned that if I needed to be home with them alone, I should take them to the bookstore or go shopping. When I was home, I wanted to do my own things, but they wanted me to do things together with them. It is simple; they just wanted to have a “good mother” to be with them. This gave me a good lesson. (P5)
The female counselors tried to know their children’s needs and expectations and provide a good environment for them. They knew their children expressed their need of them when the children asked directly for a “good mother.” The nature of the mother role was revealed at such moments. Even though the female counselors felt tired or their time was limited, they tried their best to be good mothers.

**Expectations of One’s Self**

Besides the expectations and demands of family members, the female counselors also had their own expectations of themselves. To be good wives, mothers, daughters or daughters-in-law, they resolved always to play their multiple roles well throughout their various life cycle stages. The unmarried Taiwanese female counselors who lived with their parents also took their daughter roles very seriously, although they were not carrying as many roles as the married women. P4’s parents and her care of them were of utmost importance in her life. “At least I want them to be healthy. They can do whatever they want to do and be happy,” she said.

P8 expressed a similar thought. “As a daughter, I plan to take care of my mother as long as I can. Even though I am busy now, my mother is still my first priority. If she needs to go to the hospital, that will be my first thing to consider. . . . If something happened to my mother, I may not forgive myself for that.”

The married female counselors’ expectations of themselves were to fulfill their family roles well. “I am always aware of my roles, what and when I should do something,” said P9. “I will try my best to do it. I don’t ask myself to be perfect, but I will try my best to meet the needs of my family. For example, my mother-in-law; I will do what she wants me to do for her, buy something for her, or take her to the hospital.”
“Once I am married, I want to take good care of the family, play the role of wife, and of mother as well. I intend to care for the children, help them to do their homework, cook, clean the house, and do whatever I should do. I think that is pretty natural to me.” This was P7’s recounting of what she had thought prior to her marriage of over 22 years. This statement, as those above regarding the Taiwanese female counselors’ expectations of themselves, reflect their ingrained acceptance of their cultural assumptions about women as wives, mothers, and daughters/daughters-in-law.

The Taiwanese female counselors’ holding of full-time jobs impacted how they fulfilled their family roles in ways that caused them stress or were less than satisfactory to them. They were tired when they went to their homes after work and had to perform their family duties in short amounts of time. They also lacked the time to do things for themselves and to have their desired relationships with other family members. Overall, having virtually the two full-time jobs of their professions and caring for their families caused them to struggle more to fulfill each of these significant roles. As P6 put it, “I feel I put my best energy into my job. After I get home, I am very tired, and after I do all the household work, I am even more tired and cannot do anything.”

*Household Management and Responsibilities*

The female counselors in this study, whether married or single, all had household management responsibilities. The Taiwan National Statistics Report in 2003 reported that in Taiwanese families, women spend 2.62 hours on household work a day, while men only spend 1.05 hours on it. The definition of household work here includes housecleaning, cooking, and arranging details pertaining to children's needs. Household work was a big responsibility for these Taiwanese counselors. Eight said that they might
ignore household work or make compromises if they were busy or tired. “Usually I will take about one and one-half hour every day after I wake up to do the household work. I take it as an interest, not a burden. If I do have time and am happy during the weekend, I will do more, but if I don’t, that is okay, too.” (P8)

Only two thought household work was not too heavy a responsibility. For the participants in this study who had small children requiring their full attention at home or who were very busy at work, it was difficult to find time for household work. Eating out, cleaning the house during the weekend, or hiring someone to clean the house were some of their alternatives:

Because we live with the landlord, many times we eat out. I need to clean my room and wash clothes. Actually, I don’t have too much time for that after I come home every day. I am so exhausted when I return home from work. I also have another major job after I return home—I have to take care of my daughter. She is only two and one-half years old. We need to be with her all the time. We often pass this responsibility to each other, because no one wants to play with her. It is tiring, and I feel it is easier to do other things than to play with her. (P2)

Take house cleaning. I always feel the house is too dirty and needs to be cleaned, but I usually don’t have energy and time to clean it. So my husband tells me to just leave it; we will pay for someone to clean it. Also there is washing dishes. I used to wash the dishes after the meals, but now, if I am tired, I may leave them where they are and wash them the next day. (P3)

In addition to housework, another household management responsibility that often fell on the participants with children involved arranging transportation or making arrangements for the children after school. If female counselors had children who must be picked up and cared for after school, sometimes they had to make special arrangements for them. “If I am not able to go home on time after work, I will let her eat out in the restaurant that I familiar with. I have some prepaid money in that restaurant, so she can have meals before I get home, and she won’t get too hungry.” (P5) For Taiwanese female
counselors, household work was generally a burden, but they also seemed to take it as a
duty in their lives that they could not ignore. They perhaps thought of alternative
arrangements or adjusted the household work if they felt they were overloaded. They
were trying to do their household work more efficiently without significantly affecting
the quality of their family lives.

Quality of Family Life

Taiwanese female counselors assume the roles of major caretakers of their
families and as such have certain ideas of what they would like in their families’ lives.
During the interviews, the participants said that the aspects of family life they wished to
improve were in the areas of the amount and quality of time spent with family members,
communication with husbands and children, effective child rearing, and, for those living
with their in-laws, privacy of time and space. “I would love to have more time to chat
with my kids and still get the housework done in the evening. I especially would like to
have more time to talk with my son.” (P6)

Looking back, P9 wished that when she was younger she had been wiser in the
way she trained her children. “I just yielded to them and told them to shut up,” she said. It
seemed to her that she hadn’t taken the time she should have to pay attention to her
children, “because I was busy doing my household work and other things. I was at home,
but my mind was not at home. I was not paying enough attention to the children.”

P2 was looking for help in dealing with what to her was her less-than-ideal
situation. She said, “I long for more time and energy to talk with my family members.
But when I am exhausted, I don’t want to move, not even play with my daughter when
she wants to play with me.” She said that the time spent with her daughter was not of
good quality. She went on to explain, "I don't really know how to talk with little kids, even though I teach in school. I just know how to talk with the older kids, but I have not communicated with my daughter on her level." It turned out the child's speech was not developed for her age level, and P2 thought taking a class about the developmental stages of small children would give her more insight into her daughter's speech problem and offer ways she could help her.

P10 was living with her parents-in-law as well as her unmarried sister-in-law. She (P10) was married and the mother of a seven-month-old child and a two-and-a-half-year-old child. She revealed evidence of being overwhelmed by her multiple roles when she said, "Actually, we are thinking to move out. It is not because my parents-in-law are not good. I just want to be with our own family right now. I feel that I can never take a rest when I am at home, like I am going to another job after work. I wish I could have a home where I can have my own space and feel free to take a rest, allow myself to be lazy and not worry about how other people see me. I need a break from always considering how well I play my roles in the family." Revealing other tensions in managing work and family lives, another participant (P5) said, "I try to make myself available to my family after 6:00 p.m., even though I am very busy. I really don't want to spend the whole evening at work. I would rather be with my family, although I don't always have a choice. I still must work at least one evening a week."

The participants also had thoughts as to reasons for their inability to achieve the quality of family life that they desired: limited time; limited energy; and, in some cases, the added burden of knowing their limited financial resources made it imperative for them to work even though it may not have been their first choice to do so.
Seven of the participants mentioned that they provided emotional support to their family members in addition to the types of support noted above. Whenever the family members had emotional needs, the women were willing to give them their time. P1 reported, “My mom will call me if she needs someone to talk to or she is upset about something. Sometimes she calls me several times during the week.” If any family members had needs, the women would make it a top priority to comfort and support them. As P4 put it, “If something happened, of course my family would be my priority. I will put them first, because they are the closest people to me.”

I always give my mother priority, because she may not have too many years to live with me. After my father died, she missed him so much and would cry when she missed him. I told her it is okay to cry. I would pass a tissue to her and hold her. “I think it is normal,” I told her. I couldn’t let her not be sad, but I could hide my own sadness. (P8)

When my mother-in-law had cancer and stayed in the hospital, everyone in the family was in a panic. Their worry caused tension in the family. I felt that I was okay at that time, so I took the role of being their emotional support. I felt like we are “family.” I called my sister-in-law and my father-in-law, told them what the doctor had said to us, and then I comforted their emotions. (P10)

The fact that these women were also in the counseling profession reminded them to bring what they had learned into their families. They wanted to know how their theories and techniques would work in their own families. “I always wonder how I can bring what I use in my work into my family, such as communication skills and empathy,” P5 said. Their being females as well as being in the counseling profession contributed to the women’s ability and sense of responsibility to provide emotional support to their families.
Attitudes Toward Family Issues and Responsibilities

When female counselors play multiple roles in their lives, what are their attitudes toward family issues and responsibilities? Based upon the participants’ responses, four types of attitudes emerged from the Taiwanese female counselors involved in this study:

1. “Should” thinking. They thought that they had a moral or societal obligation to do certain things. The reasons may have originated in tradition, education, or social expectations.

2. Taking responsibility for decisions. They thought they should take responsibility for their choices, such as their choices to marry and have children.

3. Acceptance of realities. They tried their best to do what they felt they must, but they also accepted imperfections.

4. Feelings of helplessness if they thought they could not change the reality of things.

A more detailed description of each of these attitudes follows.

“Should” Thinking

Most of the “should” thinking of the female counselors came from Chinese cultural traditions, education, or social expectations. According to an old Chinese saying, “People raise children in order to support the elders.” Many people are educated to the principle that taking care of the elders in their families are responsibilities that they “should” take. If people do not fulfill these responsibilities, their elders may lose face among their relatives and acquaintances, and that is very serious to families in Chinese society:

I meet with my husband’s family weekly. We will get together to eat or chat. I think I should do that. We need to go back and concern ourselves about their lives. Sometimes we will take them out for dinner or something. (P3)
I think I am a pretty traditional woman. My parents also taught me to be this way. This is my understanding of the family situation. If I can take it, then I will take it. If my husband cannot change much, I think I will forget trying to change him. My parents always tell me, “You need to endure the situations that you cannot change,” and I think I am influenced by that. (P10)

I do most of the household work. I have done it more than twenty years. I think I am used to doing it, and I don’t take it as a burden. I used to cook and clean house for the whole family when I was young. I felt okay about it. I think my family education has taught me that. (P7)

The “should” thinking contributed much to the female counselors’ attitudes toward taking family responsibilities. I was surprised to discover that cultural traditions and social expectations were still as prominent as they were in the participants’ thinking. Even though the female counselors were living in the northern part of Taiwan in a modern city, and they also had received higher education, their thinking and family practices unquestioningly adhered to Chinese traditions. They lived in a modern society, but with traditional mindsets. The degree to which the Taiwanese female counselors held to these traditions was determined not by their ages but by what they had been taught in their families as they grew up.

Taking Responsibility for Decisions

Some of the participants said that they fulfilled their duties because they held themselves responsible for their decisions to marry and have children. Therefore, the family was their responsibility. P2 told of her experience after her child was born. Because P2 was working, her husband planned to take the baby to live with his mother, but P2 insisted on keeping the child with her. “So sometimes I feel that taking care of her is my responsibility, because it was my decision to keep her here,” she said. Further:

I never regret that I have two children, even though they make my life very busy. Every time I look at them, I know that I still love them very much. (P10)
Because we don’t have boys in my family, I always think I should take the responsibility to take care of my parents. They took care of me for my whole life, and I think I should take care of them as long as I can. (P4)

I think I have the responsibility to understand her, know how to play with her and get long with her, not just let her watch TV with me. (P2)

These women regarded their duty and responsibility as part of the natural process of a person’s life. They saw marriage, having children, and taking care of family members as the experiences or responsibilities that they should have in life. Since they had made the decision to get married, to have a family and children, they took responsibility for these decisions.

Acceptance of Realities

Most of the participants gave their best to do well what they believed they must, but they also accepted imperfection. Such acceptance helped them to deal with issues in ways that resulted in appropriate feelings. They accepted the reality of what they could not change:

After a few years, I don’t fret about my twins’ behaviors too much. They have their own personalities. I do not have to force them to follow my way. My husband also tells me that not everyone has the same personality as mine. The kids have their own ways to do things. I always have to remind myself when I compare my twins with my first child that they are totally different people. (P7)

If I don’t have time for the chaos, I either just forget it or I decide I will deal with it when I have time, but it is not a big deal. Why do I think I need to make myself so tired? My husband reminds me that no one told me I need to do everything. He doesn’t want to hear my complaining. (P3)

Different attitudes yield different results. An accepting attitude made it possible for the female counselors to be more flexible in the ways they managed their lives. They said that this lowered their levels of stress even when they were involved in carrying out
their family responsibilities. The accepting attitude also gave them patience as they moved on in their lives.

Feelings of Helplessness

Helplessness was a feeling the female counselors reported when they believed they could not change the reality or do anything about their bad or unsatisfactory life situations. They also expressed frustration:

- Sometimes I don't know how to play the role well. I just don't have energy to make extra efforts. Even when I do have energy, I don't think the extra effort is going to work. The reality is that things will just stay the way they are. (P2)

- Many times I feel like I have no one besides me in the family, no one concerned about my feelings. When I am sick, I still have to bathe the children, still need to do everything I usually do. Even though my parents-in-law know I am sick, they still watch their TV and let me take care of the children alone. (P10)

From these two participants' responses and stories, they seemed to be stressed because they had little children to take care of. One of the two was living with her in-laws. These female counselors felt tired and helpless within their situations.

In conclusion, Taiwanese female counselors went through various emotions and adjustments in their lives as they carried out their multiple roles and took responsibilities for their families. Overall, they adjusted to their role changes. The better they understood their family members' expectations and needs, the more effectively they were able to interact with them. They also were required to carry primary family responsibilities and household work in addition to their work as full-time counselors. When they dealt with their problems or issues, they were impacted by their traditional cultural assumptions that they should do it, or that it was their duty to carry out the responsibilities. They accepted the realities, endured the situations, or felt helpless to change the realities. They were
facing the challenges in their lives, but at the same time they also recognized the benefits they received from their multiple roles. Their benefits and challenges will be discussed in detail in the following section.

Benefits and Challenges of Multiple Roles to Taiwanese Female Counselors

The Taiwanese female counselors played multiple roles while living within the Chinese cultural tradition and trying to live up to its social expectations. What benefits did they receive from fulfilling these multiple roles? What challenges or difficulties did they encounter within their multiple roles? This section will explore the Taiwanese female counselors’ answers to these key research questions.

Benefits of the Counselors’ Multiple Roles

Wider Experiences and More Relationships

The participants said that through their work they had broader and better information that helped them to be engaged with the society outside their homes and families, preventing them from the isolation they might feel if they spent most of their time at home. P6 described it this way: “My vision is wider, and I receive new information every day. That helps keep my thinking from being too narrow. If I just stayed at home, my mind would be closed to many things. I think it would influence my kids, too.”

P5 was especially eloquent about what being a mother had done for her. She said, “I am very happy that my mother role has expanded my horizons. My two girls helped me to appreciate my role as their mother. It is a very precious and important experience to me.” This woman pointed out that after her second daughter was born, she felt more
completely fulfilled as a good mother who enjoyed being a mother. She had not anticipated this aspect of motherhood before she married, and had not completely experienced it after her first daughter was born.

The multiple roles also enriched the Taiwanese female counselors' relationships. A newly married female counselor (P1) acquired more social and family relationships after her marriage, as she then also had her husband’s family and her husband’s friends. She said, “For me the benefits are the new perspectives I gain from my life experiences. Especially at the beginning of my marriage the experiences of being wife and daughter-in-law are all new for me. I am still determining my identity within these roles and what they mean for me.” She mentioned that these experiences also are helpful to her in her work, because the clients, in wanting to relate to her, sometimes wonder whether she is married or has children. From these women’s responses it would seem that they appreciated the benefits of the enrichment of their lives through their roles at work and in their families.

*Good Time Management Skills*

About half of the female counselors in this study reported they did not have enough time to do justice to their myriad tasks. From another point of view, the necessity of their having to accomplish many things within a limited amount of time had forced them to develop good time management skills of which they were proud.

I am thinking that I have better time management and use of time. Actually, I will plan ahead, even when I really want to do nothing. But I can’t do just nothing; otherwise, I will feel I am wasting my time and feel guilty if I accomplish nothing that day. (P5)

Right now I have more roles than before, but the time amount is the same. So I need to work more efficiently, dealing with my work more intensively so I can get
more done in my limited amount of time. I also have fewer social interactions than before, because that takes time, too. (P10)

Experience is a good teacher. After many years in her family role, P9 indicated that her experience had helped her to be more efficient and more relaxed in her home tasks. “I manage time very well, no matter what I do. I schedule everything I must do for that day. That helps me to be organized and do everything very efficiently.” Years of experience had enabled the female counselors not only to manage well but also to cope more easily with problematic or in emergency situations when they occurred.

Benefits From Professional Training

The Taiwanese female counselors reported that their professional training had helped them as persons. They said that, as a result of their training, they had become more self-aware, seeing their own personalities as others saw them and having more realistic pictures of their own abilities and interests. They understood themselves better and were able to recognize their problems and needs. Finally, the women more readily accepted themselves as persons, because they saw themselves in a better light. The participants all agreed that the professional training brought them benefits that had improved their lives:

After I studied counseling, my own personality went through a big change. Before, I was so tough, but then I became more gentle (soft) and told myself to be more flexible in my dealings with other people. It also helped me to make myself physically and emotionally healthier. The professional training helped me to be more introspective. If I didn’t have the training in counseling, I might not know myself as well as I do now, so I might say that I really helped myself by practicing counseling on myself. (P3)

Their professional training also helped the female counselors to understand themselves and do some self-examination. P10 said, “I think all counselors should
examine themselves. That’s what I am doing. I am checking myself to really know what are my needs, what I really want, who I really am.”

The majority of the women I interviewed said that their professional training helped them to be more realistically aware of themselves. After P2 had received her education in counseling, she said, her resultant self-awareness had made her willing to seek help. “I am improving,” she said. “I feel I now have higher self-awareness. I used to handle almost everything by myself. Now, I know when I am not all right and that it is time to ask for help.” Two other participants told of having similar benefits from their professional training:

Self-awareness is very important, including self-acceptance, which means accepting our own weaknesses and shortcomings. I am calm now both inwardly and outwardly. I also understand what I want from myself. I think we should be aware of ourselves and our needs at every moment. (P8)

I think counseling training helps to improve my ability to be aware of myself, including understanding my own emotions and being more sensitive to myself and others. I have much clearer insight into my own and other people’s issues. (P4)

Professional training in counseling not only helped the Taiwanese female counselors to be more sensitive to themselves, but also to the ways in which they dealt with their own issues. By gaining clearer insights into other people they also gained insights into their own personalities and personal lives. One thing they mentioned was their awareness of their strengths and weaknesses. They thought it was important for female counselors to be able to accept their limitations when they are burned out or unable to take on too heavy a load of responsibilities. P4’s experiences in her family illustrated this. She said, “I think I am the biggest beneficiary in the process of learning counseling. I saw my limitations. We all have some things we are not able to do, and we need to accept that. A benefit of knowing my limitations is knowing that I also still have
spaces to grow, and that it's all right to admit that.”

**Problem Clarification**

A major benefit the Taiwanese female counselors had gained from their profession was their ability to see more clearly the nature of their problems and to create the best solutions for themselves. They had learned to be objective and calm in facing their problems and able to choose rational solutions. P8 stated, “I am a pretty calm person. I will calm down myself and carefully think about how I will take care of a problem. So everyone feels that I am very stable, and they think I can resolve everything. It is easy for me to see things deeper and from different angles. That’s what I have learned from my profession.” Other Taiwanese female counselors had similar characteristics:

I never try to escape the problems. I deal with them as soon as possible. But often problems take time to resolve, so I will wait, even though I have ideas of the next step I will take. I usually resolve my problems very quickly. I never put them aside or ignore them altogether. I believe that if I didn't have my profession to help me, I would be unhappy about my life. (P5)

Everything has its process and time. The important thing is that you need to find your goal and direction, once the direction is on the right track. Part of the process is learning, even though there are mistakes or frustrations. After I learned counseling, I came to look at things more open-mindedly. That helps me to see things in a more relaxed frame of mind and not to dwell too much on the details. (P9)

The Taiwanese female counselors in this study had learned through their profession that it was valuable to them as individuals as well as to their clients to become aware of and understand themselves, to realize their strengths and weakness, to accept their limitations, and to ask for help. The professional training had contributed to their open-mindedness, patience, and clarity when handling problematic situations. Not every profession provides the opportunity to see and understand one’s self so clearly, and to
know how to help one’s self as well as others, as does the counseling profession. These women indicated that they were grateful for this.

Financial Support

In the section of Taiwan where the female counselors in this study lived, the living expenses are high, and dual incomes are necessary for most families to meet their basic financial needs. Therefore, the woman’s full-time job outside the home is a benefit in that it helps to provide financial support for parents or parents-in-law, children’s education, and living expenses.

The literature on Chinese culture explains that it is the duty of children to support their parents as well as their own dependent children (Lee, 1998). This duty is based in tradition, and it is a societal constraint in a system where pensions and social security for a worker’s or a couple’s old age exist but are inadequate financial support. This, combined with the Chinese culture’s family structure of three generations living together, usually in one household, makes it imperative the family’s finances are a family matter.

For many families the children’s education is an expense from kindergarten on. All kindergartens must be paid by the children’s families. Elementary and junior high school education can be obtained for small fees in public schools, although families that can afford more expensive private education prefer it. Getting into good high schools becomes competitive and even more expensive. After-school classes, such as music, dancing, art, and English, must also be paid for.

While the income from counseling positions is average, the income was a benefit to the women who were in this study and a necessity for most. A single woman in the study (P4) said, “It’s good I have a full-time job that can help me to support my family. If
I didn't have this job I probably would not be able to support my parents.” This participant emphasized that it was her duty as well as her nature for her to support her parents: “Because we don’t have boys in my family, only three girls, I think it's normal for me to pay for the family expenses.”

A participant (P6) who had children in elementary and high school mentioned the financial reason for her having a full-time job. “My children need to learn piano and English. They have activities that cost money, so I think the income is one good reason for me to be employed,” she said.

Benefits to Others

Benefits to Family Members

The women in this study said that their professional training helped them to reflect on their interactions with their families and to know family members’ needs better. They were more empathetic, seeing more clearly how family members felt and the reasons for their behaviors. The theories they had learned in their professions they were able to apply in their families. The Satir theory (a family theory) was cited by P8 in this regard. She said that after she learned the Satir theory, she “became more sensitive to my parents’ anxieties and to put my feet into their shoes. I totally understood why they were acting so nervous and anxious.”

The following quotations depict the ripple effect of the female counselors’ training on their families. It not only changed them and their understandings of their family members, it also changed the ways their families regarded them and the ways they regarded the others:
Before I learned counseling, I just used my common sense to help my family, but now I know how to help them through my professional point of view. I know everyone's needs in the family, and I respect them more. Also, I will catch the best time to interact with them so we won't waste time and energy. They also pay more attention to my opinions and want to hear my suggestions. Take my husband, for instance. Now that I can explain things from the professional side, he listens and depends on my opinions a lot. (P9)

During the past ten years, I saw the relationship change between my parents and me. Our relationships were very tense before. I also had much anger toward them. But after I learned counseling and returned to their home, I began to see my father's weakness. Whereas formerly he was in my mind a giant, I now began to see him as he really was—an old person. I think only counseling could have helped me through that process. (P4)

Five participants thought they should be able to test the usefulness of counseling theories and techniques, and they wanted to know how counseling could work in their families. They found that their professional training did enable them to use counseling in their families, whether to gain insights, communicate with family members, or play the caretaking role. P5 thought that if the counselors could successfully apply counseling theories to their own families, they would have more confidence to use them in their practical work. "I want to test whether what I learned and what I use to help people are working or not. If a theory I learned works in my family, I have more confidence to use it with my clients. I also try to use the things I’ve learned to get the life I want."

If participants could apply the theories to their family members, their family experiences would convince them they would be able to successfully use the theories with their clients.

Benefits to Clients

Professional training and personal experiences enhanced the counselors' work with their clients. Greater variety in their personal experiences and more exposure to the
application of counseling theories, they said, helped them to treat their clients with more empathy and to look at issues from different angles. P3 summarized it this way: “I think I have stronger sensitivity to my clients, since I have been through similar feelings or experiences to theirs and can give them more empathy and understanding.” They saw the combining of their real-life experiences with their counseling theories as a boost to their skills in helping their clients in practical ways.

My experiences and training have taught me that we need to wait and be patient sometimes, because some issues require time to be clarified and dealt with. I will explain that to my clients, and they understand what I am attempting. (P4)

Actually, I will tell my clients that the way to help them is to be with them, to see the problems together or from our different points of view, and to find the blind spots in their lives. Then we deal with the issues or problems step by step. Most of the time, the clients will accept that. (P1)

An overall first impression of the data gathered from the participants of this study could be that Taiwanese female counselors have a sorry lot in life. However, the above discussion reveals that such was not their opinion, for they were able to see many positive things that had come their way through a profession that they were pleased to be in. No one said she wanted to change her job.

**Challenges of the Counselors’ Multiple Roles**

Though the Taiwanese female counselors in this study identified several benefits of their engagement in multiple roles, the benefits were far outweighed by the challenges in their lives. When they shared with me their challenging experiences, they were much more talkative, and their faces were much more animated and expressive of their emotions. In other words, their challenges and associated emotions were closer to “the surface” than their benefits. My questions about their challenges elicited immediate
responses, and it seemed the women were eager to be able to talk about these challenges to an objective third party.

The challenges faced by the Taiwanese female counselors can be grouped into these four categories:

1. The challenges produced by the different life-cycle stages
2. The challenges of the shortage of time
3. The challenges of work overload
4. The challenges of the different roles in different relationships

**Challenges in Different Life-Cycle Stages**

Participants reported that as they moved through the various stages of their lives they encountered different challenges. One female counselor (P9) described her feelings and worries that had changed as her three children grew up. She said, “I worried about their daily life and watched their school work when they were young, but now that they are young adults, I am more concerned about how they deal with their activities and plans and finding their own identities.” This woman’s family was not a typical Taiwanese family. Her children—a teenager, a college student, and a college graduate who was working—lived together, but not with their parents. She contacted them several times a week, and she spent a fair amount of time discussing how they were doing and to give them advice on such matters as their dating and careers.

Those who had small children at home may, naturally, have felt more challenged as they must assume the major caretaking role in the family. P7 recalled her experiences when her children, especially her twin daughters, were little. “I often felt upset at that time. I had to do the housecleaning, cooked meals, and took care of the children after
work. When the children were dawdling or did something wrong, I was nervous about that and made myself really upset.” But then she described her current situation. “Right now, I am kind of used to doing the household work, because I am more experienced in that. The kids are older, and I just worry about their attitudes toward their studies. Sometimes I worry about how they can get into good universities if they play around all the time.” Also, her years of experience in her job had smoothed out much of the stress she had when she was younger.

One young mother (P2) told of her experiences when she got home after work. “I feel like I am in a battle. Taking care of kids is much harder than doing my job. I can handle things pretty well at work. The problem is after I get home. I don’t always plan my time very well and end up doing things I don’t really want to do, just letting valuable time pass by. I think I should make some plans, but I am not so sure that I can follow a plan very well.” This young woman obviously was challenged by her need to plan her time at home and by her frustration over wasting time.

**Never Enough Time**

Time was the biggest concern of the Taiwanese female counselors—limited time for what they must do for their families and at work. All of them said that they were pressured by time and that their schedules were always pushing them. Several seemed to feel trapped in their situations. Even though they did not seem to have enough time, they still felt compelled to perform a certain number of basic tasks, especially those in connection with their major caretaking roles in the family. The women quoted in the following paragraphs were very straightforward in their comments about their lack of enough time.
I feel that I have so many things that need doing at once. My schedule is always pushing me, and there always is something on the waiting list. It is impossible for me to find colleagues to help me, because they are also busy with their own stuff. (P2)

Actually, I do have a little bit of worry about how I can manage my time. Sometimes I or my husband have so many activities that we don’t have time to go back to visit the parents-in-law or my mom. Then I will worry about their situations. I feel an inner struggle, because I know it will comfort them when we visit. (P1)

Time is a big pressure for me and a burden on my energy. For example, I have to take care of everything after I leave work and get it done in a certain amount of time, such as shopping, having dinner ready for the family, bathing the children, doing the laundry. I always feel time is pushing me, and I can’t get a break until I go to bed. (P10)

Work Overload

Three women claimed that they were overloaded in their work and wished they could reduce their workloads or manage their work time more efficiently. P8 knew she should consider taking fewer cases, an option that was open to her as part of her affiliation with a community agency, but she found it hard to turn people away. She said, “Sometimes I feel that I have too much work. I have to work every day, including weekends. I am too busy for my family. I wish I could arrange to attend to only the number of cases or groups that would fit better with my family situation.” (P8)

I feel I don’t do a very good job of controlling my time. Sometimes I feel tired, but if the clients still want to talk, I will let them keep talking. I should pay better attention to when it is time to close the session. If I have a full day of cases, I often do not have time to write my reports and must make adjustments for that. (P1)

Two of the female counselors said the quality of their counseling was compromised when they were unable to manage their work time well or had too great workloads.
I wish I did not have to work during the evening. I have learned from my experiences that the quality of my work suffers, because I am overtired when I work in the evening. If I have especially tough cases, I cannot even relax after I get home. I realize my life would be better if I did not work during the evening. (P4)

I have too many cases. I also teach classes, so I do not have enough time for those cases and to really think about what to do for them. The quality of my counseling is very different from what I want it to be. Sometimes all I can do is keep moving from one thing to another without having any time to reflect on what’s going on with a case. Frequently, I can confer with my students only once a month, because I don’t have time to meet with them weekly as I should. I know the quality of both my counseling and teaching suffers because of this, but I don’t know what else I can do. (P2)

Overall, these Taiwanese female counselors desired improvements in their work situations that would not only allow for better time management there as well as at home, but also that would result in their ability to provide better quality counseling to their clients.

Playing Multiple Roles Well

About half of the Taiwanese female counselors thought they were playing their roles well enough but that they should or could do better. In a sense they had set their own high standards for their performances—how to be a good mother and a good wife, how to effectively juggle the demands of family and work, how to be the perfect daughter-in-law—and were not quite satisfied that they were living up to their standards. They perhaps placed upon themselves heavier than necessary burdens of responsibility. One participant addressed her concern over the fact that her small daughter was losing some of the attention she should receive from her parents. “I think I should spend more time with my family than with my work,” said P2. “Actually, I put most of my energy into my job, then have less energy to take care of my girl. She is at the age that she
demands attention and needs to be with people. Either my husband or I should be with her. Sometimes I just feel sorry for her, since we are so exhausted from our work.”

Forty-seven-year-old P7 said it was her personality to have required herself to play very well her multiple roles in the various stages of her life, whether as a mother, a daughter, or daughter-in-law. Two of the other participants also emphasized their strong desire to do well in their roles.

My challenge is how to handle the roles in my life well. If I don’t do well or do things the way I did when I was younger, my husband will complain. When the children were growing up and before I worked, I stayed home with them. But now that the children are grown and on their own, I am able to do much more church work and visit with my friends. He is not used to my spending too much time outside the family, even though I no longer have to be the mother I once was. (P9)

If I did not play well the role of daughter, that is, caring for my mother, and something went wrong with her, probably I couldn’t forgive myself for that. I think it is my most important role. If I do not do as well in work, however, my relationship with my supervisor is good and he forgives my mistakes. But if my responsibilities to my mother become too great, I don’t think it would bother me if it meant I had to resign my job. (P8)

Not all of the participants were dissatisfied with their performance of their roles. One, P5, described a balanced and cordial relationship with her mother-in-law that apparently resulted from wise efforts on both their parts. She emphasized their normal relationship—good but not as close as a daughter with her parents. “She may discuss with me the big family decisions,” P5 explained, “but she won’t complain or ask me to do anything for her that is unreasonable. Every Chinese New Year when I give her the red packet [a specially decorated envelope containing money], I tell her that it represents my thankfulness that I have such a good mother-in-law.” The women also said that they had learned through their experiences to find ways of better management that resulted in improved family quality. In this way they were able to shed some of their guilt and make

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themselves feel better.

When the Taiwanese female counselors talked about the challenges of their multiple roles, two prominent factors in their lives stood out: their fatigue and their shortage of time. Their focus was on the effects of their full-time employment on their family lives, not of their family lives on their jobs. Other challenges had to do with their stages in the life cycle, their work overloads, and their own high standards for performing their multiple roles. In the next section we shall see how the participants of this study handled their challenges and problems in ways that were usually successful and satisfying to them.

Taiwanese Female Counselors' Responses to Problems

As the Taiwanese female counselors had to assume multiple roles and faced challenges in their families and jobs, they formed ways to manage their lives as comfortably and efficiently as they could. They described their initial or most natural reactions when confronted by problems or crises. They also told of their thought processes as they moved from chaos to calm following problematic situations. Finally, they identified the ongoing plans or strategies they employed to successfully help them to maintain some degree of emotional, physical, and intellectual equilibrium in their lives.

Reacting to Problems

Individuals react to various situations in various ways, and the Taiwanese female counselors were no exception as they described their reactions when they were confronted with problematic situations. Their initial reactions to problems or crises at the times they appeared were usually negative emotions; then they stepped back and faced
the situations.

Negative Emotions

When Taiwanese female counselors faced problems in their lives, often their first reactions were the negative expressions of helplessness or anger. They would show others that they were angry and upset, be sad and crying, or keep complaining. Their family members often bore the brunt of their negative emotions. When P2 talked about her anger when she was at home, she said her “emotions just blow out immediately.” This would lead to scolding her daughter or husband and to arguments. She identified one main source of her anger as her always having to stay home to care for her daughter while her husband went out. Her anger was apparent as she told about this. This woman also revealed the anger she had at work. “If I become nervous, it shows on my face. My colleagues think I am being mean. I rush in everything, my brain is in turmoil, and I can’t think clearly. I just feel very upset and don’t know what I should do first. The whole atmosphere is not good.” Another participant (P7) said her reaction to problems was to get angry easily, speak fast, “and everything gets out of order.” Expression of anger at work was uncommon, however, perhaps because a counselor must not reveal her emotions when she is doing her job. The women more readily expressed their anger at home.

I was so angry at him [participant’s husband] at that time. I felt that he was so selfish. Why could he have the family and also keep his career, but I could not? I argued with him often and asked him what the meaning of marriage was for him. (P5)

I was so frustrated about my life. I could not bring myself to tell him [participant’s husband] about my fatigue and how it was getting me down, so I decided to tell him in a letter that I left on his desk. Every time I wrote to my husband, I would be in tears. One time after he read my letter, he came into the bedroom to hold me and told me, “I’m sorry I allowed you to become so tired.” I think both of us were
crying at that moment. (P10) [During our interview, she was crying as she recalled the experiences.]

One thing that helped the participants was to examine their emotions. Either their professional training or personalities would prompt most of these Taiwanese female counselors to look at themselves and try to understand their own emotions when they were facing difficulties, to see themselves as others saw them, and to thoughtfully consider the course of action that would be best for all concerned.

Even though there is problem, I usually try to think carefully about what I should do. I don’t really get nervous about things. So people like to have me nearby, because they feel safe when I am with them. (P8)

The first reaction of the participants when they met problems or crises in their busy schedules was negative emotion. They may have felt angrier when they could not get understanding and support from their family members. But their professional training helped them to be sensitive to their own emotions and to manage or control them better.

**Facing the Situations**

Most participants considered how to face a situation at the moment it arose. They would decide how to communicate immediately with their family members or work supervisors, or they would adjust their perceptions of the situations and act accordingly so as to prevent themselves and the other parties from becoming upset. P8 revealed her insight when she said, “I think it is important to try understanding the other person’s point of view in a situation, rather than just asking or expecting something. Trying to understand the other person may change your thinking and attitude.”

Sometimes, there is a difference if I change my way of thinking, give myself a little bit of flexibility, don’t put too much pressure on myself. If I always put myself at the center of a situation or am angry all the time, I may be unhappy, too. But I know sometimes people easily get stuck in their own views of what is happening. (P3)
When they faced their situations the counselors acquired more positive attitudes, which helped them to deal with their problems in rational ways. That minimized their conflict with others, so that they did not upset themselves by getting angry with family members.

Enduring the Situations

Another reaction reported by three of the Taiwanese female counselors when they encountered problems was to check their emotional outbursts and endure the situations. They allowed the upsetting occurrences to pass, believing that the worst was over. P10 stated, “Most of time I just endure the situations. I don’t know what else to do. In many situations, I have to let it go since I am not good at communicating with my parents-in-law.”

In temporarily avoiding arguments they convinced themselves they had enough strength to go through the difficult time. While P10’s mother-in-law was in the hospital, P10 told herself that it would be fine once she had passed this tough period, and she didn’t think that it would last forever. P2 also said she did not do anything when she faced the problems. “I just leave the problems there sometimes, because I don’t have enough energy to deal with them.”

One participant (P6), who had work problems, told herself that “the worst of the situation would be over. I would think, ‘The more days you [her boss] and I are in the same office, the sooner our relationship will end.’” Most participants told themselves to be patient and the situations would be over someday. This self-talk was a form of inner support for them.
Reflected on Problems

In responding to problems or crises, the Taiwanese female counselors also said that reflection on their crises or problems as they faced them was an important element in dealing with and resolving them. This was usually a period in which they thought about the situations, first clarifying them in their own minds, setting their priorities as they considered solutions, and taking into account their own needs.

Clarifying the Situations

"I will take an opportunity to reflect on the problem. I may later regret it if I don’t do something about it. For example, if something is wrong with my mother and I feel I should spend more time with her, thinking it over, and perhaps planning what to do about it, calms my emotions,” said P1. She was expressing what other participants also said. They explained that when they stopped to think about the nature of a problem in relation to themselves and others, it helped them to clarify things for themselves and to consider the steps they might take to rectify the situation. Taking the time to think more clearly and deeply calmed them from their emotional responses.

What I need to think about seriously is how to get some balance in my life, beginning with better management of my working hours. I should come to school earlier, because during the time before school begins I feel my work for the day is not in order. It is important for me to try to get back the secure feeling I have when I know I will do good work. I think that there is room for some rearrangement of my time and reorganizing of my work. (P10)

I usually clam down and think, “Why am I so angry? Am I being reasonable?” I will take stock and try to figure out what is going on with me. (P5)

Setting Priorities

At the back of all of the participants’ minds—for they were, after all, traditional Taiwanese women—was that they were limited in the choices they could make when it
came to family or work problems that involved themselves. Their underlying priorities were always the welfare of the family. Yet, upon reflection, they also recognized that they could not “do it all,” that they could not be perfect, and would have to make choices. Almost all of them declared that they put their families’ needs above all else. They considered the family to be the foundation of everything. P3 said, “I have one or two nights available to my family; that’s my priority. It does not bother me to say no to my work on those nights. If people are too busy for the family, then they need to make some adjustments. You have to decide what you value most.” P4 had the same thinking regarding the care of her parents, if they would need someone to look after them. She said, “I will put them first. If I have to go to work for a living, I will hire someone to take care of them. I will arrange it.”

The responses of the participants showed that the Taiwanese female counselors were still affected by the Chinese tradition that females must take care of the family first. This tradition dictates that if family members are sick, the females will take time from work or make the arrangements, not the males. “When my second child was born prematurely, I took a half day off work for four months to take care of her.”(P6)

According to the cultural tradition, which the female counselors followed, the woman takes the major responsibility for the family’s well-being and places it in priority above all of her other interests. Still, the evidence is that not all females accept this without question. One participant (P8) agreed that the family’s well-being was basic and that females “just have to do it.” But she added, “Actually, this places many difficulties and pressures on females’ shoulders, and I know it shouldn’t be like this. Our culture is the reason why many females sacrifice themselves for their families.”
Self-sacrifice as such was not really on the participants’ minds, and was not always the most prominent factor in solutions to their or their family’s problems. They also knew that they must care for themselves if for no other reason than that they were their families’ greatest assets. In the following discussion we will see how they had worked out for themselves positive ways in which they could care for themselves, and that this, too, was for the well-being of all their family members.

Self-Care Strategies and Support

This section summarizes the ways in which the Taiwanese female counselors in the study took care of themselves. It includes how they regarded the strategies they used in managing their lives, how reenergizing themselves professionally was a form of self-care, and how they made compromises in their families and in their work.

Sensitivity to One’s Own Needs

The first step taken by Taiwanese female counselors in caring for themselves was to become sensitive to their need for rest, to the size of their workloads, and to the effects of high pressure on their physical health. The women knew they must be self-sensitive before they could take care of themselves. Their responses also revealed the stress that was evident to these women in managing their multiple roles, and the toll that these stresses could take on their physical health.

I know myself very well, both emotionally and physically. For example, I will have a very serious headache if I am too busy or under high pressure. The headache will make me really sick. I do not relax myself very easily. It’s my personality. You can tell, because I always speak fast. I feel the muscle of my neck becoming tight when I cannot relax at all. I know my headache consequences, so I have medicine for it with me all the time and take it if I know I am getting a headache. If I don’t have an opportunity to take the medicine, I will feel anxious about that, too. (P4)
My skin is not healthy if I am too tired. When I get a red rash on my body, I know probably I am too tired. Or if my eyes became red, that is a sign of physical or psychological overwork. (P1)

When I am under too much pressure, my body will respond. I will get a headache and throw up, and I may in bed the whole weekend. Then I know my immune system will be weak, and it is about time to take a rest. (P3)

Some participants were also sensitive to the emotions that signaled too much pressure in their lives. P1 said, “I know my personality is pretty stable. I won’t express my emotions very quickly, because it is hard for me to express emotions too strongly. Sometimes I have accumulated too much emotion and figured out that was not good for me.” Such awareness of their needs resulted in the women’s resolve to make adjustments so as to be better able to manage their lives.

Healthy Responses to Needs

The Taiwanese female counselors listed many ways in which they cared for themselves in their attempts to achieve physical and emotional equilibrium in their lives. P3 said that the goal should be to feel a sense of calm all the time, and that at any moment one may be called upon to use her strategies to achieve that goal. The participants’ responses to the interview question regarding their strategies for meeting their needs can be divided into the following categories.

Taking a Rest

Almost every participant said that rest is the primary way in which she restores her physical and emotional energy. Stress-induced headaches were mentioned by P4 as her signals that she needed complete rest. “I let my family know I have a headache and that I have to be alone,” she said. “All I need is sleep.” Another participant, P9, said that when she was tired she went home and took a bath, then slept. P3 rested, exercised, or
listened to music. P6 was in tune with her need for rest and sleep. “I don’t always get enough sleep,” she said, “but I also remind myself that if I am sick, I can’t take care of my family, either.” Rest was important to the women both for recovery from what had transpired and for renewal of energy to go forward in taking care of their work and families.

*Leisure Activities*

The leisure activities reported by the participants varied according to their personalities, lifestyles, and available time. Most of the women did not have regularly scheduled leisure activities but engaged in them when they felt the need to take a break and relax or to release the pressures of their stressful lives. One (P10) said that she went swimming for relaxation. She thought swimming was good exercise to help her relax physically and emotionally. Others said they listened to music, went shopping and bought something they liked, read, or went for a walk.

It was obvious that the Taiwanese female counselors cherished their leisure time as an important time to care for themselves. Two, P8 and P5, had their own unique but simple leisure activities. “I will drive outside the city for a while, have some fresh air, and see some greens. That is really good for me,” was P8’s statement, and P5 said, “I was on the mountain one time and was closely in touch with nature. The feeling was wonderful. I need that kind of feeling to keep me going.”

*Religion and Spirituality*

Three participants mentioned that they sought religion or spirituality as their support. Two of them were Christians and one a believer in Chinese folk religion. Their religion gave them spiritual support, for they felt that people cannot control everything.

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P3 said, “I think I can get through the hard times with prayer. Two years ago, my husband and I had financial difficulty. It was a big crisis for us, but we had faith in God. We depended on God to get us through it.” Religion enabled them to move on in their lives following the bad times.

The participant (P6) who sought Chinese folk religion as a way out of her difficulty went to a friend who could look at her life map. He told her that the tough time she was going through was the challenge on her life map that she was facing, the reasons that had caused it, and how moving on to the next step would work well for her. “I think that was the way to calm myself down and comfort myself. People are limited, so I think we should understand and see things from more angles.”

Private Space, Private Time

The Taiwanese female counselors sought privacy as a strategy in caring for themselves. They desired the space to be alone and the time to assess their situations and renew themselves. Either they backed away from the situations for a while or gave themselves a period of time to think and reflect.

“I may find a place where I can go to get control of my thinking and emotions, or to leave the situation for a while and calm myself,” P2 said. One participant (P4) took a “nice bath” and informed family members not to interrupt her, while another (P9) would find a coffee shop where it was unlikely she would be disturbed. Another participant (P8) stated it was helpful to “find short time periods at home or at work, just long enough to rearrange myself” rather than wait until a longer period of personal time was available. Besides enabling the Taiwanese female counselors to think through their situations and consider better ways to manage their lives, finding private space and time allowed them...
to separate themselves from chaos and return to the realities of their lives refreshed.

**Professional Development**

The next self-care strategy the Taiwanese female counselors utilized was to renew or improve their professional proficiency. Almost all (9 out of 10) mentioned that professional workshops, clinical supervision, and peer supervision had been helpful to them. No matter how much experience they had in counseling, they still thought continuing professional education was important for them. One participant (P8), who had been practicing in counseling for at least 10 years, said, “I will attend professional workshops or groups twice a year, which gives me new information that keeps me updated and helps my clients.”

Being part of a psychodrama class was a means by which P1 was able to do something for herself. It relaxed her and released some of her inner conflicts as well as added to her professional knowledge. It was also a reminder to take care of herself.

A group of professional peers, counselors, who also were social friends, were important to P4. She was also alluding to the benefit that professional growth can have on a counselor’s work as well as on her personal satisfaction when she said, “It is good to talk about professional issues with peers. I have had talks when the dialogue was wonderful. We even thought about recording our conversations and then writing a book.”

**Making Compromises in Families and at Work**

To better manage their lives, the Taiwanese female counselors were able to make some compromises at home and on the job. These compromises involved various issues. “Sometimes, when I know I will be home late, I call my husband to tell him. We often decide to eat out separately instead of waiting until I get home to eat together. Also,
[since we are recently married] many of the things we have to do are new to us and take us a long time, so we are giving ourselves time to learn them.” This was P1’s description of the compromises she and her husband were learning to make. P3’s compromising had to do with attention to in-laws. She said, “If we don’t have time to visit my parents-in-law at their house, we will have lunch or dinner out with them instead. It is much easier for all of us, since everyone is busy.”

The most frequent compromises the women were able to make at work revolved around family emergencies. Here is what some had to say about dealing with urgent family needs:

When my mother-in-law was sick, I had to take care of the family and go to the hospital. Sometimes I had to leave work early. So I talked with my supervisor about my office hours being flexible, and she was very sympathetic to my situation. (P10)

If I become too tired, I may adjust my work responsibilities by deciding to work only part time or take a smaller work load. My supervisor will approve it. (P3)

Two years ago, when my mother-in-law had surgery and stayed at my house, she needed someone to take care of her. I made an arrangement with my boss to work every afternoon and stay at home to take care of my mother-in-law in the morning, but I made up the hours during the weekends. My boss was pretty nice, and he helped me through the tough time. (P6)

The improvement of their own lives, as well as those of their families, was strong motivation for these women to press for compromises and make adjustments. As P5 said, “All the changes are to make a better life and create a more satisfactory environment for the family.”

Taiwanese Female Counselors’ Support and Resources

Taiwanese female counselors received resources and support from their colleagues, supervisors, and friends that were helpful to them in managing their problems
or difficulties. They also sought clinical supervision and professional counseling to resolve their problems in their work or personal lives. The support from family members, too, was an important element for their moving on as they played multiple roles in their lives.

**Workplace Support**

Understanding and support from their administrative supervisors when they had family emergencies was of importance to the female counselors, although they reported various levels of support. Several suggested that supervisors in the workplaces could have been more supportive of their employees. This was expressed by P6 when she said, “My previous supervisor, a woman, couldn’t understand that females need to take care of families and little kids. When I took days off, she told me that I had too many days off, even though I took my own vacation time. She said, ‘It is not your right to take vacation.’ Because she could not understand my situation, I did not even want to go to work at that time. I was very disappointed with her.”

Sympathy and flexibility on the part of their work supervisors were of particular importance when family emergencies occurred. Flexibility from supervisors demonstrated to the female counselors that they were appreciated at work. As P10 told it, “When my mother-in-law was sick, I discussed it with my supervisor, and she allowed me to get off from work earlier.” She was thankful for that, since she had to take care of both in-laws in the hospital and the little children in the family at that time. It would be more difficult for female counselors to manage their emergency situations without support and understanding in their workplaces.

The support from co-workers was mentioned as being important. P5 said that she
and her co-workers, with whom she had been associated at the same place for 10 years, were not only good colleagues but good friends. “We often go for coffee or to the hot spring together,” she said proudly about the friendships. “It is nice, isn’t it?”

**Social Support Systems**

Many participants mentioned that they would talk with their friends. Groups of friends provided valuable support for them when they encountered difficulties or needed a break from their busy schedules. “My friends give me a lot of emotional support. I will talk with them about why I am upset.” (P1) The women said they felt free to “complain to my friends. I have a group of friends. We’ve known each other since we were university students.” (P5)

It became apparent that these women’s female friends were their closest and best support, for with them they would “have meals or have a cup of coffee just to talk about what’s going on with me lately.” (P8) With their friends they could discuss their most intimate problems. P4 told of having broken up with her boyfriend a few years earlier. “My friends helped me a lot,” she said, “and stayed with me through the process of getting over it.”

On the other hand, two participants stated that they did not have support systems. One participant’s (P2) experience was that “I feel I don’t have good interactions with my friends. I am a pretty closed person. If I decide to talk to my friends about a certain thing, I think ahead of time about what I am going to say and how I can describe my problems to them. I think that at least I should figure out what’s going on with me before I talk to other people; but after I figure that out, the problems are almost resolved, and then I do not have to talk to other people.” Another participant was sure that her husband would
"lose face" if she discussed her problems with her friends, since they shared mutual friends.

These two participants' (P2 & P10) personalities were more introverted. They were used to dealing with their problems by themselves. They worried that sharing with friends would give the friends unfavorable impressions of the participants' husbands, and the good Chinese wife helps her husband to "save face." In addition, since they were professional counselors, they would be embarrassed to reveal that they could not deal with their own family problems. From their sharing, it was apparent that they were pretty frustrated when they met problems, since they did not have appropriate people to talk to and lacked social support for themselves. As P10 said, "I don't know who I can talk to. It seems there are no appropriate subjects I can share."

Compared with those who had inadequate social support, the participants who had good social support appeared to be happier and did not have feelings of isolation within their own families or workplaces. Overall, the Taiwanese female counselors' social support came mostly from female friends who could help them to release some pressure as well as give them emotional support through sharing. The sharing could be just small things in everyday life, the refreshing breath of air that made a big difference to them.

Professional Development

The Taiwanese female counselors in this study emphasized the importance of professional development in their lives. They cited the resources of professional conferences, continued training, workshops, and clinical supervision. These reminded them to care for themselves and were means of enriching their personal lives. One of the participants (P3) said that she sought clinical supervision when she was under stress from
the problems in her life. She said, “When my problems are serious, I will seek supervision. Supervision is very useful, whether it deals with my cases or my personal concerns. The supervisors work through my concerns with me.” P3 felt more secure when she could get help from her supervisor. Many kinds of workshops are available for counselors. They may choose the ones they like to attend or ones that will add to their personal and professional growth. “The problem is not that you cannot find good resources. The problem is how those resources can meet your needs,” P4 stated. Female counselors were refreshed through these professional activities, were strengthened for their work, and given new skills to help them in their personal lives.

*Seeking Professional Counseling*

P10 was the woman who had problems with her in-laws, who often changed their minds at the last minute without regard to her plans or wishes. Through individual counseling for herself, she came to be better able to handle these and other incidents, saying that if she could control something she would, otherwise she could let it go. “Counseling helped me to be aware of my own situation. After I understood my situation, it was easier for me to know how to deal with the problems. I know the difference between which things pertain to me and which things pertain to others and to cherish the things that are important to me. I see more clearly. I also tell myself not to allow my emotions to affect others or my work.”

It is quite uncommon for Taiwanese counselors to seek professional counseling for themselves. Interestingly, the two who did not have good social support had gone to counselors. “I sought individual counseling, because appointment time is more flexible than the set schedule of group therapy. Besides, groups usually have their certain
therapeutic goals, and I felt that a group would not meet my needs.” (P10) The other woman, P2, and her husband had issues that she felt required professional counseling for her. She said she had been in “counseling for a while. The counselor helped me to figure out what my husband and I are doing and what is going on with our lives.”

On the other hand, P1 did find a therapeutic support group that was right for her. She stated, “The leader helped me to deal with my problems and increase my professional energy. I know that if my professional conditions are better, I will do better in other things. I am more comfortable in that way.” In Taiwan, therapeutic support groups are available to both the general public and to counselors in particular. These groups, led by professional counselors in counseling centers and paid for by the participants themselves, are usually formed in response to public notice by the counseling centers. The Chinese cultural inhibition on exposing personal problems to others is likely an inhibition to counselors as well, but it would seem to be in order to encourage the female counselors to seek some form of counseling for themselves when they truly need it.

*Family Support*

The participants in this study talked about the understanding they received from their husbands and support from their parents. P5 said that her husband was pretty understanding and that they shared everything, usually telling each other what had happened during the day. P9 described an exceptionally close relationship with her husband. when she said, “My best friend is my husband. I can discuss anything with him. We don’t have much time to talk every day, but the quality is pretty good. Even if we go for a walk, in twenty minutes we can share many things.” These two women had been

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married for at least ten years, a length of time that allowed them to develop good communication with their husbands that resulted in good support from them.

The two single women in the study mentioned the support they received from their parents. One of them (P4) said, “My parents are very supportive. They let me make my own decisions. Even though I am the age that a woman should be married, they didn’t push me into marriage. Now I can do whatever I want to do.” In other words, P4 appreciated the fact that her parents had not pressured her into marriage and that she felt free to have her career and the lifestyle she preferred.

The other single, P8, was fifty-two years old and lived with her mother. She explained that her support from her mother was mutual. Every morning before she went to work, her mother would make for her a special tea (Chinese medicine tea) that would give her energy for her job. This exemplified to P8 her mother’s underlying constant love and emotional support, a source of security and well-being that also sustained her in her job.

Other participants talked about support they received from their mothers, sisters, and parents with whom they talked freely or who helped with such things as watching the children after school. Nevertheless, this was not a prominent theme with the Taiwanese female counselors in this study. While their lives and time were filled to capacity with their required duties, to their credit they sought or carved out for themselves something to uphold them within their personal or professional roles.

In conclusion, whatever strategies the female counselors employed in order to achieve equilibrium, a sense of well being, and emotional and physical health, they knew it was not only desirable but necessary that they take the best possible care of themselves.
This was not always easy to achieve. Yet, when they were asked, they came up with a remarkable list of strategies for taking care of themselves. In their personal lives they listed such basic things as rest, leisure activities, religion, privacy and friends, as well as more active and proactive things like making compromises and seeking counseling. In their work lives they expressed appreciation of administrators’ and colleagues’ support, and opportunities for professional growth.

Finally, the women valued what they learned from their practical ways of processing problematic situations. P1 said, “I take the attitude that I can learn from anything, even upsetting things. There is always something new, and it is normal to be chaotic. I am learning to know the boundary between being too idealistic and what I can in reality expect. I take things one step at a time.”

Taiwanese Female Counselors’ Suggestions and Recommendations

The participants provided a number of suggestions and recommendations to those female counselors who may encounter roles and situations similar to their own. The suggestions included taking better care of one’s self, since Taiwanese females tend to put their family’s needs ahead of their own needs, by doing such things as leaving more free time to themselves to do what they like. Other suggestions had to do with their advocating for themselves in their private lives and workplaces and creating support systems in their families and social circles. Making life goals, advocating for flexible work time, and seeking more humane policies at work were among their specific suggestions.
Take Care of the Self First

Many of the participants' suggestions for female counselors had to do with taking care of themselves first and loving themselves more. One of the reasons for this suggestion is that Taiwanese female counselors are used to taking care of others before taking care of themselves. They put the family as their first priority and supported their families whenever they were called upon to do so. Female counselors frequently are too busy to take care of themselves. Therefore, some participants suggested that female counselors should make more free time and privacy for themselves. P8 said, “I think they [female counselors] should leave more time to themselves and give themselves quiet time to think. That will help them to find a balance in their lives.” Another participant (P4) mentioned that female counselors need to take care of themselves before they can take care of others. “When things are chaotic,” P10 said, “we need to take care of ourselves [female counselors] first, calm down ourselves, and think how to make a balance and reorganize things.”

One woman (P5) suggested that female counselors should love themselves more. She said, “I think it will be better if they [female counselors] can love themselves more in their multiple roles and know their own needs. I suggest that those who are full-time workers find jobs that can fulfill them. At least they should have some level of satisfaction with any job they are considering, even if they find only a part of the job that they really enjoy.”

Set Life Goals and Plan Ahead

In answering my question about what advice they would have for other Taiwanese female counselors, some of the participants revealed what they wished they had utilized
earlier in their own lives and what had worked for them: setting specific goals and making better plans for their lives. Being well prepared is always a good strategy for handling life’s situations.

Many females in Taiwan feel the pressure of their families’ or society’s expectations that they accomplish certain things within a certain time, such as marrying and having children. “I think females should make plans that are suitable to themselves, because different people have different ways of doing things. Plans and goals are necessary to make before you take any actions.” (P7)

I would suggest not doing too many things at once. For example, I got married at about the same time I started graduate school, then became pregnant about a half year after my marriage. We did not do anything to avoid pregnancy, since I was 29 years old at the time, a little bit too old to put off having a baby. So I felt so tired trying to do so many things, going to school and having a baby. It seemed I never had time to take a break. (P2)

I think it is important that you make plans in different stages of your life and fulfill your own wishes and goals for each stage. If you are determined to focus on your career in that stage, you will concentrate to overcome the difficulties and resolve the problems. You need to decide what is important to you in each stage. For example, not until five years ago, when my children were already in school, did I realize how important the family is. (P5)

I know it is not easy for female counselors to play so many roles in life at once. I think planning ahead is very important. For example, when planning to have children after marriage, they should also ask themselves how many children they want. A plan helps a person to deal with life’s pressures and conflicts. If a woman plans ahead, she might have to make some changes in her life, but she will be in control of the changes. (P10)

It seems that female counselors’ lives will have more satisfactory outcomes if they plan ahead for the important things in their lives and think through the order in which they would like to do them. As P10 mentioned, preparation would help them to handle things better. For example, good plans would reduce the risk of others’ disapproval, ineffective management of the various aspects of their lives, chaos, and their own
disappointment. It would also help them to be firm in their resolve to achieve their goals.

Seek Professional Help

Some of the participants had sought out professional counseling for themselves when they met difficulties in their lives, and they found that individual counseling was helpful for them to reorganize their problems or situations. They urged all female counselors to do the same if they had the need. For Taiwanese counselors, seeking professional help is not common, especially since the public is not yet open to the counseling profession. Many mental health professionals, like the general public, are reluctant to seek professional help for themselves, because they are afraid of how other people will negatively regard them.

Other counselors indicated that, even though counselors think they should appear to be invulnerable, it is a healthy concept that everyone has weaknesses or shortcomings, and the point of realizing this is the point at which to ask for help or begin to try to improve one’s self. As P10 stated, “No matter who you are, never think that you have to do it all or that you definitely can do it alone. Such thinking can make our conditions even worse. We should accept help from others when we need it. We won’t stay in the bad conditions forever if we just allow people to give us a hand.” Another participant (P8) also mentioned that it is normal to have weaknesses, and female counselors should step forward if they have problems.

Build Support Systems

Building social support systems was another important suggestion this study’s participants had for female counselors. They said that social support would help female
counselors to hear different experiences and receive encouragement from other people. One participant (P9) suggested that female counselors should have a support net that includes professional groups and nonprofessional groups. She said, “The professional groups will help you grow in the professional field through the exchange of information. But nonprofessional groups will support you and give you assistance as you go through the difficult times in life. Both of them are important.”

Advocate for Flexible Working Time

Seven Taiwanese female counselors said the one thing they wished for in their work situations that would help them to better manage their families or jobs was flexible working hours. Most participants suggested that the flexible working hours would be helpful when there were family emergencies. Being flexible would improve their schedule management and allow them to deal with sick children or take elders to doctor appointments, thus reducing conflict between work and family.

I wish my working hours could be flexible to avoid the traffic jams. I could go to work earlier and go home earlier, or I could choose to go to work late and go home late. It would be an honest and responsible system, for we could still schedule the time for our work projects and get them done. (P6)

I wish I could work only four days a week and eight hours per day. Then the schedule would not be so tight. Right now, my daily events need to follow my work schedule, and I have to arrange everything around it. Everything has to be in precise order and on time. That’s too tight for me. (P5)

While some of the above suggestions are realistic, employers’ acceptance of the concept of flexible work time is undoubtedly far in the future. Still, the suggestion shows that the Taiwanese female counselors are thinking about options to improve their lives for which they may someday advocate. If they or their successors become more courageous and adamant about seeking changes, the following recommendations will have to be part

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of their initial thinking.

Reconcile Policies and Reality

Female counselors’ jobs are harder when there is a gap between policy and reality. For example, a government policy says employees may take days off for family care, but the reality is that it is difficult for employees to take days off from work unless it is for very urgent situations. One participant (P6), a government counselor, stated, “What the policy says is different from what the employers follow in reality.” Quite often, the employees cannot find people to cover their work when they are away, or their workloads are too heavy and they are unable to take days off. This situation was emphasized by P2, who was working in a junior high school. She said, “The policy of the Ministry of Education changes every year, so we need to prepare new curriculum and work more with other teachers. This causes more workload for us [the teachers].” The ever-changing policy is difficult for the teachers to follow.

When I asked P6 and P2 what suggestion they had for this situation, both of them said just about the same thing—that they wished the gap could be closed between the ideas of the Ministry of Education policymakers and the practicality, or impracticality, of their policies. The implication seems to be for counselors and teachers in Taiwan to join together to exert more influence on reconciling policy with practicality.

Emerging Theoretical Scheme

This section presents the emerging theoretical scheme of the study. It followed my collection and analysis of the experiences of Taiwanese female counselors as to how they managed the multiple roles in their lives (see Figure 1). This figure represents a summary

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of the key findings discussed in this chapter. The theoretical proposition first discusses
the fact that Taiwanese female counselors are living with social trends that include
cultural transitions, higher educational levels for women, and needs for dual incomes.
The cultural transition pertains to the changes occurring from Taiwan's traditional culture
to more modern concepts, which are largely influenced by Western society. For many,
including the female counselors, this results in a certain amount of ambiguity in their
thinking: They may have concepts about individualism, but they also are very much part
of the Chinese social concept of collectivism.

More and more Taiwanese women are acquiring higher education. To many this is
a matter of higher social status, earning higher incomes, or attaining self-actualization.
Another element in Taiwanese society is the need for dual incomes; therefore, more
women enter the workforce in order to meet their families' financial needs.

Since the development of the counseling profession is in its beginning stage
compared with the development of counseling in Western countries, the Taiwanese
female counselors must devote more time and energy to promoting their profession as
well as to educating their society on the concept and benefits of counseling services. All
of the above factors have impacted the multiple roles of female counselors in Taiwan.

The multiple roles of the Taiwanese female counselors were as daughters, wives,
mothers, and daughters-in-law, as well as full-time employees. Their responsibilities in
the family were taking care of family members, doing the majority of household work,
providing emotional support to their family members, and also helping to support parents
or parents-in-law financially. They were also responsible for their full-time jobs.
Social Trends

Chinese collectivism  Cultural and social transitions
Higher level of women's education  Feminist movement
Needs for dual incomes
Counseling profession in early stages of development

Full-time Taiwanese female counselors

Roles
- Full-time employee
- Daughter
- Wife
- Daughter-in-law
- Mother

Responsibilities
- Full-time work
- Taking care of family members
- Household work
- Emotional support for family members
- Financial support for family

Challenges
- Challenges in different life-cycle stages
- Never enough time
- Work overload
- Playing multiple roles well

Lead to

Impact factors
- Cultural traditional gender role
- Family teaching about role & responsibility
- Family expectations from husbands, in-laws, children, parents
- Self-expectation
- Financial needs
- Taking responsibility for decisions
- Limited by professional development

Benefits: To the self / To others
- Wider experiences & relationships
- Family members &
- Good management skills clients
- Self-understanding & self-awareness
- Problem clarification
- Financial support

Self-care strategies
- Sensitivity to one's own needs
- Healthy responses to needs
- Professional development
- Making compromises in family and at work

Support from
- Workplace
- Professional development
- Professional counseling
- Family & friends

Reaction
- Negative emotions
- Facing situations
- Enduring situations

Reflection
- Clarification situations
- Setting priorities

Suggestions
- Take care of the self first
- Set life goals and plan ahead
- Seek professional help
- Build social support systems
- Advocate for flexible working time
- Reconcile work place policies and reality

Figure 1. Emerging Theoretical Scheme
Several factors affected the Taiwanese female counselors in the ways they carried out their multiple roles and responsibilities: the traditional cultural expectations of gender roles, and social expectations of how well they performed in their roles. Division of gender roles and responsibilities are learned very early in the traditional Taiwanese homes, as they are taught both implicitly and explicitly by the parents, another influence on the female counselors in their assuming multiple roles. In addition, the expectations from family members and self-expectations pushed them to meet those expectations. Meanwhile, the financial needs of providing for the family and their taking responsibilities for their own decisions, such as marrying and to have children caused them to demand of themselves that they play their roles well.

When female counselors in Taiwan assumed their multiple roles, they received benefits from these roles as well as faced challenges in the journey. The benefits from their professional training were wider experiences, good time management skills, improving self-understanding and self-awareness, and skills for problem clarification. Some of these benefits were also seen by their family members and in their work with clients.

The Taiwanese female counselors’ challenges included never having enough time, work overload, how to play their multiple roles well in their lives, and adjusting to the different challenges of each life cycle stage. They described the ways in which they managed their multiple roles and how they accomplished self-care. The process by which the Taiwanese female counselors met problems or difficulties included their emotional reactions and attitudes to the situations, reflecting on how they were going to clarify the problems, and setting their priorities. Following the time of reflection, the women took
actions. In response to the interview questions posed to them, the women spoke of their self-care strategies as the positive actions they took.

The self-care strategies were the methods that female counselors in Taiwan used in order to manage their lives better. They also had helpful support and resources. In caring for themselves, they first examined their needs and then were able to make healthy responses to their needs, such as taking a rest, leisure activities, seeking religion or spiritual comfort, or just making private time or space for themselves. Through professional development, they also received good reminders and resources for self-care in their lives. Making compromises in the family and at work were other ways they found to manage their schedules or lives more efficiently.

Finally, the Taiwanese female counselors made recommendations for other female counselors. The participants thought that taking care of the self was the foundation of everything. They emphasized the need to take good care of themselves before they would be able to take care of others. Another recommendation was to set life goals and plan ahead, which would give Taiwanese female counselors courage to do what they thought best for them, particularly when it meant going against cultural traditions, social expectations, or family expectations. Seeking professional help and building good support systems were also suggestions for Taiwanese female counselors, for even though they are helping professionals, they should seek help for themselves when it is needed. The final two suggestions were to urge workplaces to provide flexible working hours and to work to change workplace policies for the counselors' benefit and to put the policies into practice. Some participants mentioned that even though policies for taking days off for family care existed, in reality, it was difficult to do so when the workload was too
heavy and there were not enough resources or people to cover for them if they took days off for family care.

In conclusion, the female counselors in Taiwan are in the period of cultural traditions transitioning to modern concepts, as well as under social expectations. It will take them time and energy to process the journey and prove their profession to the public. During this process, they need to utilize the most effective ways to manage their lives well, and they will have to learn to take care of themselves first before they will be able to take care of others.

Summary

The findings of this study describe Taiwanese female counselors as they fulfilled their multiple roles in work and in their families while they also tried to fulfill their own and others’ expectations. They were accustomed to taking on heavy responsibilities in their families. Although their expectations did not always match their realities, they were able to make adjustments in their marriages and families, as well as in their jobs. Those adjustments and their strategies for caring for themselves contributed to better quality of life for them and their families. The benefits and challenges they received from their multiple roles were explored. Their professional training benefited them in interacting with and managing their families as well as benefiting their clients. Specific processes and strategies that the Taiwanese female counselors had found helpful were also presented in the findings.

The participants in the study had the sensitivity and awareness of the need to take care of themselves in various ways, even though sometimes they might not completely achieve their goals of self-care. They cited support they received from various sources,
and also made recommendations for other female counselors. This chapter ends with the emerging theoretical scheme of this study displayed in Figure 1.

The following chapter will discuss the meanings of the findings, recommendations to Taiwanese female counselors regarding their roles and profession, limitations of the study, and suggestions for future research. Findings from the study are examined in light of social transition stages and of the feminist movement in Taiwan. The influence of life cycle stages will also be emphasized.
CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS

Introduction

This study of Taiwanese full-time female counselors explored aspects of their lives that pertained to their multiple family and work roles. I was interested in what their roles demanded of them, how they met those demands, and how living up to those demands affected them. More specifically, I wanted to identify the strategies the women employed to successfully or satisfactorily fulfill the duties of their roles and, in particular, the strategies that they directed toward their own physical and emotional self-care.

The Taiwanese female counselors, for the most part, revealed that their lives were indeed hectic and intense, that they frequently were short of time and overly tired. But among them there was wide variation in their coping abilities and attitudes, which ranged from frustration to optimism. On the other hand, the elements they had most in common were their adherence to the traditional Chinese view of women as the primary family caretakers, including caring for their in-laws or parents. Yet, the women were also dedicated to their professions and found that their being counselors provided them insights into themselves and support of their self-care strategies that were uniquely beneficial to counselors.

This chapter discusses the meanings derived from the findings of this study. Recommendations are also made to help Taiwanese female counselors improve their
quality of life through better management of their families and job situations.

Recommendations for further research will include Taiwanese males' places in and attitudes toward their families—males within the general population, those whose wives are Taiwanese female counselors, and Taiwanese males who are professional counselors.

Female Counselors' Roles in Taiwan

The findings in this study showed that Taiwanese female counselors took the primary responsibilities in their families even though they were working as full-time counselors. They cared for their children and elders, cleaned their houses, cooked the meals, did the grocery shopping, and washed clothes for the whole family several times a week. They were responsible not only for matters of daily living but also for family issues such as family emergencies and meetings in the children's schools. They were the main source of their family members' emotional support. This was not surprising in some ways, given the burden of expectations these women carry.

*Traditional Women's Roles*

The Taiwanese female counselors tried to live up to the expectations of the culture, their society, their families, and even themselves. Although they had received higher education or even received their professional training in the United States, their parents had raised them in the traditional Chinese cultural environment, and when they had their own families they tended to pick up the traditional roles and fulfill the expectations their family members had of them. Several were motivated by their feelings of responsibility for their own decisions. For example, they cared for their husbands' parents and treated them as their birth parents because it had been their own decisions to
marry their husbands. Quite frankly, the strength of this traditional thinking in these professional women was a surprise to this researcher.

Ho (2002) has reported that most Taiwanese men still regard females as the primary persons to care for the family, while the males’ primary responsibility is to earn the money to support the family. The men might give a limited amount of help with the household work after they come home from work, if they have time or are not tired. According to the Taiwan Directorate General of Budget Accounting and Statistics Executive Yuan annual report in 2003, only 15% of males helped with household work, and the household work they did most was take out garbage (a daily chore in Taiwan). Taiwanese females thus are likely to do much more household work than their husbands. The Taiwanese female counselors said that if their husbands were willing to help them with household work, they would consider that their husbands had done them a big favor, because the traditional gender roles do not include the norm of men taking responsibility for household chores.

One of the major challenges for females in the Chinese culture, including the Taiwanese female counselors, is the importance of the role of daughter-in-law and fulfilling that role as well as they can according to the expectations of their in-laws. In this tradition, in-laws usually have the higher authority or status in the family, and their opinions are highly respected. The in-laws frequently are the primary decision makers, even though they are a part of their sons’ own families, for they are “all one big family” (Lee, 1998, p. 180). Because it is the place of the sons or daughters to make their elders as happy as possible, the Taiwanese female counselors experienced much stress in communicating with and fulfilling their in-laws’ needs. Furthermore, in many cases they
had to adjust to in-laws who were from different family backgrounds and had living habits different from their own.

Therefore, the findings from this study indicate that the in-law relationships are special challenges for females in Taiwan, especially for employed women, who may not have enough time and energy to deal with this issue but still have to face this reality that comes with marriage. The female counselors did not say much about their in-laws’ attitudes, particularly not about negative attitudes, since good Chinese women do not want to appear to be disrespectful. It seemed that much of the relationship with the in-laws depended on the personalities of all parties. Although the in-laws believed their daughters-in-law should put the home and family first, they did tacitly approve of their working outside the home. Presumably, the financial necessity prevailed.

For all of the Taiwanese female counselors, the family was the first priority. It has been documented that household management as well as children remain the most important duty for most Taiwanese females (Yi & Kao, 1986). It was obvious that the Taiwanese female counselors saw their family roles as much more important than their work roles. All reported that they would put their families ahead of all else, no matter the reasons behind family issues. They might take a day off from work to care for sick children at home or to take elders to the hospital.

The Taiwanese female counselors also had high expectations of themselves. They expected to be able to play their multiple roles well, as mothers, as wives, as daughters, or as daughters-in-law in their families, and to be good counselors in their work. However, it may have been easier for them to be good counselors than to play well their multiple roles in their families. These women have had formal education and
professional training to enable them to handle their jobs, but there was no formal training
to enable them to play their multiple family roles. Typically, their role models for these
family roles, mainly their own mothers, would not have been engaged in full-time work
outside the home.

The Taiwanese female counselors also pictured the ideal family qualities for
which they strove, or at least wished for. For example, one (P10) wished that she and her
husband could move out of her in-laws' house so she could have some privacy, but due to
financial concerns and the fact that her husband was the only son in the family, it seemed
out of the question for them to move out. In fact, most of the women indicated that they
would prefer the more ideal situation of having their own homes and lifestyles not
dictated by in-laws. For most, however, the reality was that for financial reasons they
must live with their in-laws, even though this restricted their decision making as to what
was best for them and their children and was frequently a source of frustration.

Professional Women

The Taiwanese female counselors wanted to see changes for the better at work.
Some of them wished their supervisors or organizations would offer more flexible
working hours, especially when they had family emergencies. However, they adjusted or
made compromises related to the differences between their ideals and the realities of their
families and jobs. Depending on the differences in situations and personalities, some of
the women would speak up for changes in their workplaces, while others might wish for
changes but not try to advocate for them. They certainly would not do anything to
jeopardize their jobs, as counseling positions in Taiwan are not so plentiful that they
could easily get another.
Because of their professional training, Taiwanese female counselors had special skills in handling the issues in their lives. They provided the emotional support for the family. When a family emergency occurred, they usually were the ones to stand up to comfort family members. They took to the role of emotional supporter quite naturally, since they were helping people in their daily work.

When the study’s participants described their experiences of taking on multiple roles and responsibilities in their families and jobs, they emphasized their tiredness and need to do many things in limited amounts of time in both situations. Therefore, they were aware of the importance of self-care strategies as well as good management. The women felt they were learning how to manage their traditional roles as well as the new roles they must take by having to work outside their homes due to the social and economic changes taking place in Taiwan.

Taiwan’s Social Changes and Feminist Movement

In a 2002 study, Chang identified three historic stages of social changes in modern Taiwan. During the period of 1960-1980 Taiwan was moving from being a primarily agricultural society to one that was beginning to be industrialized. The need during that time was for more skilled and better educated workers. The government raised educational requirements and drew on foreign-educated persons to fill its higher educational needs.

The feminist movement had its beginning in Taiwan during the early 1970s, in the middle of the industrialization period. The woman who is currently vice president of Taiwan, Xio-lian Lu, was a key political figure in this movement. She is credited with having raised Taiwanese women’s consciousness of the concept of feminism and
educating them about it. At that time the society was not open to such a nontraditional idea as feminism (Yam Women Web, 1997).

Chang (2002) identified a second historic change taking place during the period of 1980-1990, a time of industrial and economic development. “The Westernized concept of seeing the life span as emphasizing change, planning, and individual differences fits with the modern opportunities of rapid economic growth and social change in Taiwan” (p. 219). The term career was introduced into the Taiwanese lexicon at this time.

Taiwanese feminism was coming into its own during these years. Women began to look at their traditional status and to break out of the traditionally restrictive lifestyle, primarily by going outside the home to work (Yam Women Web, 1997).

During 1990 to the present, the third historic period, “industrial development is the key to economic construction, and commerce is the mainstay of economic activities in Taiwan today... the number of persons employed full-time in agriculture is down to 10% of the total workforce” (Chang, 2002, p. 219). In this increasingly industrialized and urban society, with its rising standards of living and increasing living expenses, women have more opportunities for work and careers as well as need for them. It cannot be said that there is a strong feminist movement per se, but groups do exist that focus on feminist issues, and progress is being made. Laws now assure women gender equality in the workplace and protect females from sexual harassment and family abuse (Yam Women Web, 1997). Still, the majority of females follow the traditional thinking about females’ places in family and society. At the same time, the Taiwanese female counselors in this study were somewhat torn between their traditional thinking and the new trends and concepts. “In traditional Chinese culture we ask more of women,” P1 explained. “I am
trying to accept the cultural tradition and combine it with new trends and thinking. The problem is to find the proper boundary between them to fit your own family.”

What the females in Taiwan might learn from their Western feminist counterparts is that the first step is to raise public awareness of the gender inequities that place women at disadvantages. This is still a difficult concept for many women as well as men. They might also learn that gains are won in small increments, and that the best place to begin is in areas close to their interests, such as workplace policies regarding flexible time and childcare provisions. Another thing to be learned from the Western experience is that attitudes and legislation often are at odds but also can inform each other. Encouraging young women to seek educations and careers, self-fulfilling lives, and less of the family’s drudgery are issues to be placed in the public discussion.

Female counselors in Taiwan would seem to be a group of professional women in a unique position to further the feminist cause. Their profession is a caring profession that concentrates on an individual’s worth, right to health and happiness, and deserving of empathy and respect. Whether they will first regard themselves this way and then have the time and energy to convince the public remains to be seen.

The following section will discuss the self-care strategies used by the Taiwanese female counselors, with attention to how they received helpful support and resources from others for managing their roles.

Self-care Strategies and Suggestions

The Taiwanese female counselors in this study had tried different self-care strategies in an effort to manage effectively their multiple roles and resultant demands. These included strategies that had helped them physically, such as taking a rest or doing...
exercises; psychologically, such as being sensitive to their needs or creating privacy for themselves; and spiritually, as they sought out religion or other spiritual disciplines. This section presents the counselors’ ability to be aware of themselves and their needs as they went through their busy schedules; then it discusses the strategies they used in caring for themselves.

**Knowing Their Needs**

Fortunately, most of the participants in this study had some level of awareness of when they were too stressed, worked too much, or needed to take a rest. They said that their professional training had contributed to their ability to be aware of their situations, which in turn had led them to devise strategies to take care of themselves. When they got too busy in their everyday schedules, they caught themselves if they were slipping into their old ways of becoming overstressed. They would then do such things as take a good rest or quiet time, talk with friends, or find ways to make their schedules more efficient.

**Leisure Activities and Social Support**

When the Taiwanese female counselors were aware of their conditions, such as recognizing their symptoms of burnout, some of the things they did to make themselves feel better could be classified as intrapersonal strategies and interpersonal strategies (Connor, 2001; Coster & Schwebel, 1997; Mahoney, 1997; Norcross, 2000; Sherman & Thelen, 1998; Witmer & Young, 1996). Intrapersonal strategies would be such things as taking a good rest, going out alone for a cup of coffee just to relax, reading, taking a walk, driving out of the city to have some fresh air, or seeking religion. An example of what Taiwanese female counselors looked for in seeking religious help was comfort in their...
hearts when they were confused by something in their lives.

Many participants also mentioned that their ways to seek support were determined by their own personalities. Some of them were willing to talk with friends and family members about their problems. But some Taiwanese female counselors had no habits of talking with friends or seeking support; they just wanted to resolve the problems by themselves. They also were afraid their friends or family members would worry about them if they shared their problems. Others expressed the risk of sharing their problems with friends. They feared that if they did so, their husbands would lose face, since they had mutual friends, or that what was shared might be adversely reflected on the family.

The absolute importance in Chinese culture of making a good impression, being thought well of, keeping within the traditional boundaries, being a “good girl,” wife or mother, keeping up appearances, keeping your place, being respectful, protecting the family’s reputation, and anything to do with this way of thinking, cannot be emphasized strongly enough. While this way of thinking is so deeply embedded within a woman’s conscience as to seem to her to be natural, it nevertheless places a tremendous burden on her. In this the female counselors in the study were representative of all Taiwanese females.

For this reason, professional counseling offers a woman the opportunity to talk to a sympathetic but objective person about her difficulties without fear of being judged or of her problems being made known. Professional counselors are in the best position to see this value of individual counseling.

Professional Counseling

Two participants had sought professional counseling when they were bogged
down in some problems in their lives, which had helped them clarify their problems. One found individual counseling best fit her needs. The other participant had received individual counseling and said that it had helped her to clarify her issues. “At least I reflected on what I did in the past, and what I should do next.” Both women expressed the relief and relaxed feeling counseling had given them.

**Professional Development**

Finding opportunities to develop themselves professionally was another way in which the Taiwanese female counselors took care of themselves. They attended professional workshops and conferences, continued their education, and utilized good clinical supervision. The female counselors learned to see their issues from different points of view in professional workshops or classes. Sometimes that training provided them new angles for better dealing with their personal issues. Three felt their clinical supervision not only helped them in their professional development but also took care of their personal emotions and situations.

Discussing professional concerns with their colleagues or friends in the counseling profession helped them to release some stress. They could share their experiences with peers and also received helpful feedback from them. “Sometimes those suggestions or solutions are very helpful for dealing with things as they really are,” one participant said. The peer discussions not only provided opportunities to Taiwanese female counselors to look at their issues from different points of view but also provided support from their peers. The professional interactions uplifted and refreshed the women so that they could keep moving on.
Another strategy that Taiwanese female counselors mentioned is that women would be better off to make life plans and goals for the future so that they would not be overwhelmed with having to handle too many things at the same time. This would be most helpful to young women planning to pursue higher education and before they are married, especially if they have a desire to break out of the traditional molds and pressures. Many females in Taiwan get married under social and family pressure to marry and to get married within a certain age range. Women are afraid that if they fail to do so, it may become too late to choose a good mate or to have a baby. One participant had been married when she was studying in graduate school and soon became pregnant. She felt that she had not had a break in years and that she had hurried through everything. She and some of the other participants suggested that women who want professions should make good plans for their lives, think clearly about what they want most, and do one thing at a time. Having a plan that takes into consideration self-care, that results from clearly thinking out one’s life priorities, that helps one to plan a step at a time so that responsibilities do not pile up was strongly recommended by the Taiwanese female counselors.

From the Western point of view, making life decisions is an individual or personal matter, depending on the person’s interests or abilities. In Taiwan, however, individual decisions involve family harmony, parents’ expectations, and social status. For the younger, modern-minded woman, there will be conflict between the traditional and family demands and her self-interests. Therefore, the females interviewed in this study felt that a long-range plan, such as getting an education or preparing for a career, would
give the woman contemplating a nontraditional course resolve in the face of family or social obstacles. In particular, a woman contemplating a career in counseling is likely to be confronted with much skepticism, since counseling in general is not yet highly regarded in the general Taiwanese society.

Influence of Life Cycle Stages

An interesting finding that emerged in this study was that life cycle stages are significantly related to Taiwanese female counselors’ experiences in managing multiple work and family roles. As noted in the methodology for this study, an effort was made to include women who represented various life cycle stages. Based upon the experiences of the participants in this study, the women could be divided into five groups according to their ages, marital status, and ages of their children.

The first group were the singles who were living with parents. According to Taiwan National Statistics Report from Executive Yuan in 1998, of adult unmarried females, 86.6% were living with their parents. They took the responsibilities for taking care of their parents and managed all the family issues. The parents were their first priority in this stage. They may not have good skills to manage family issues, but they were learning how to do it better through the process. Their schedules were more flexible than married women’s, and they had more free time to go out with friends as they wished. Also, they did not expend as much energy as married counselors on family matters, and they felt this left them with more energy to do well in their profession. They also had more time to attend professional development activities.

The single female counselors had their challenges, too. People tended to question their knowledge and skill for counseling married clients, because they had not
experienced marriage. In their personal lives they were under pressure from families or society to push them into marriage. If they decided not to get married, they had to convince themselves as well as their parents that they would have a good life without husbands.

The second group was comprised of those in their 30s, married, with no children. Their responsibilities were taking care of husbands and family members (parents or in-laws) and doing family household work. According to Carter and McGoldrick (1999), the primary task for a Western couple in this stage is to create a new definition of their relationship as a separate system from each partner's family of origin. As has been noted in the literature review and in the findings in this study, for newly married couples in Asian countries, this is complicated by the cultural expectations to care for one's in-laws and by the collectivistic, family-honoring cultural values. For the group in this study, the challenge was to figure out how to do household work more efficiently and to communicate better with husbands and in-laws. For those recently married, the task was to learn how to play the roles of wives and daughters-in-law. If they did not live with in-laws, they were required to visit them regularly, take them out for dinner, or call them occasionally. Those wives whose husbands had moved out of their family homes after marriage definitely had to show their concern for their in-laws or parents, because they would not want to be accused of an old Chinese saying: that they wore a hat with a sign that said, "Forgot parents after married." The recently married women had the multiple challenges of adjusting to the ways of a new marriage, building a new family system, communicating with husbands about family issues, and maintaining good relationships with each set of parents. Counselors in this life cycle stage were quite involved in their
jobs. Because they had no children who demanded their time and energy, they had more
to give to their work and therefore tended to have heavy caseloads.

The third group of Taiwanese female counselors was in their 30s and had children
below 6 years of age. This seemed to be the most challenging stage. The task for couples
who were adjusting to this phase of life was for them as young parents to recognize and
grow comfortable in their positions as part of the parent generation and make room for
the new role of their parents and in-laws as grandparents (Carter, 1999). Most of the
women said it was difficult to go through this stage. They described life in this stage to be
like a “battle,” or going from one job to another—always work.

This third group not only had to take all responsibilities as did the first and second
groups described above, they also had to take care of little children, who were the most
demanding of their time. This finding is supported by Higgins and Duxbury’s (1994)
research, who reported that parents of young dependent children (especially mothers)
have higher demands than those with older children. They must arrange for childcare,
drop off and pick up their children from daycare, care for a sick child, possibly take
family elders to the hospital or take care of them, and do household work. They
frequently are exhausted when there is a family emergency or they are overloaded at
work. According to Taiwan National Statistics Report from Executive Yuan in 1998, 28.47%
of parents reported that they did not have enough time to take care of children, and 21.27%
felt that taking care of children who are under age 6 is a big burden both
physically and mentally.

The evidence was that the female counselors in this study fit the above profiles of
Taiwanese parents in general, and of full-time professional women in particular. In
addition, for counselors, whose profession was inherently stressful and almost exclusively focused on emotional issues, combining the roles of parent and working woman was as burdensome as and possibly more burdensome than for most Taiwanese parents of small children. For example, one participant in this life cycle stage illustrated its problems by saying that after listening all day to clients’ problems, she was short on patience with her family when she went home. Another said she had no energy when she went home from work to tend to all the childcare and household work she must perform. For women in this life cycle stage, it is crucial that they manage well their busy schedules to be able to fit into a day all the things they must do. Communicating well with husbands and eliciting their practical and emotional support are also important.

The fourth group was those in their 40s who had school-age children. Their task was helping their children with their school work and making sure they could get into good high schools. They still needed to take family responsibilities as in the other stages, but the Taiwanese female counselors in this stage indicated they had less stress from their work, since they had been working for a long time and had acquired confidence in their professional abilities. They had also built up good management systems for their family lives. One woman said, “I have my evenings available for my family and children. Once in a while I have to stay in the office to work in the evening; then I will arrange meals for them.” The women in this group had a more relaxed attitude toward facing their busy schedules, because their children were older and they had more experience in managing family issues and responsibilities after years of marriage. They also did more to care for themselves.

The last group of Taiwanese female counselors was in their 50s and had adult
children. As did the group described above, these women also had the advantage of years of work experience that gave them confidence in their profession. They also had more relaxed feelings, and even enjoyment, being counselors and helping people. Even though the Taiwanese female counselors in this stage had to take responsibilities for families and work, the fact was that they had had at least 20 years of experience in managing all kinds of family emergencies and issues, and their family responsibilities were not as heavy as during previous stages. They may have had more flexibility in their schedules and management in this stage. They already had fulfilled the expectations of family members and work supervisors. Since their children were grown, their concerns for their children were more about their maturity and personalities, dating and career plans. They also had good self-care strategies and were able to offer useful information for Taiwanese female counselors still going through the previous stages. It seems that the women in this stage were finding more pleasure in their present lives and more opportunities to do what they wanted to do.

The married Taiwanese female counselors felt better if their husbands assisted with household work or gave them support if they were too tired. For the young couples in their 30s, the husbands helped with household work more than those in their 40s or 50s. This is consistent with data from the Taiwan National Statistics Report from Executive Yuan in 1998, in that about 45% of husbands who were aged 20-39 helped with household work as compared with only 34% of husbands aged 40-59. This finding also applied to the Taiwanese female counselors who were in their 30s. Their small children demanded more of their parents' attention, so the husbands helped their wives more than did the older husbands. Also, since the young couples had more favorable concepts and
attitudes about gender equality, the husbands were more willing to share the household work. One participant also believed that the Taiwanese female counselors who were in their 40s and 50s were more traditional in their thinking, as were their husbands. Therefore, they might not be accustomed to having husbands help them with household work or deal with children’s issues. Thus we see the overlapping influences of both life cycle stage and adherence to traditional norms for gender roles that one would expect, with older women and men in later life cycle stages holding more traditional views, while younger couples might be grappling with tensions around traditional ways and more modern trends.

Recommendations for Self-care

A primary focus of this study was Taiwanese female counselors’ self-care strategies. The participants talked at length about the hardships they encountered in carrying out their multiple work and family roles. They also shared numerous ways in which they cared for themselves in spite of their full and stressful lives, and gave specific suggestions and recommendations to pass along to other female counselors.

If there is one overriding result of this study that this researcher wishes for, it is that it will be a tool to show all Taiwanese female counselors their need for self-care and for them to glean from this study what will be most helpful to them in improving the quality of their own lives. With that in mind the following recommendations are offered.

Self-care

As stated above, this paper is filled with implications and suggestions for Taiwanese female counselors’ self-care. Self-care can be a one-time or occasional act,
usually in response to an immediate need or crisis, but effective self-care is a way of life. Therefore, it is recommended that female counselors adopt not only self-care strategies that are effective for the short term but strategies or activities that deeply interest them and that can become ongoing parts of their lives for the long term.

**Career Planning and Training**

The second recommendation is for young and future Taiwanese female counselors to receive adequate career education and career planning to guide them in determining their life priorities. Doris H. F. Chang (2002), owner and publisher for the Psychological Assessment Corporation in Taipei, Taiwan, advocates for this, “Only after Taiwan has established a professional vocational guidance organization, filled the educational systems with career concepts, and developed a group of well-trained counselors, will the multinational corporations and the employees themselves have access to information about each individual’s abilities, interests, and personality” (p. 224).

My own personal experience as a Taiwanese female was that there was no concept of career planning and one got an education only for an education’s sake. The participants’ experiences in this study (especially P2’s experiences of being a graduate student, marrying and having a child before she finished her education), showed that Taiwanese females need the confidence in their own decisions that comes from good career education or career planning. As P7 said, “It’s important to make a good plan, to know when and what you are going to do in your marriage and career.” Many Taiwanese women graduate from college or university before they begin to think about a job. Knowing what they really want in their lives and being firm in following their plans would give them resolve when they are under the stress of social or family pressures,
especially pressures to marry and have children.

Professional Support

Another suggestion is that Taiwanese female counselors seek professional help or professional support if they are at the point of frustration in their lives. With professional help they can see their issues in new ways and be supported through the tough times. One value of professional help is that the counselor is an objective “outsider” who, unlike friends who know family members or husbands, can preserve confidentiality, which is extremely important to prevent a husband or family from losing face.

Counseling as a Profession

One recommendation that comes out of this study, although the participants did not explicitly address it, is for counseling as a profession in Taiwan to advance itself in quality and in the public perception. To build its credibility, the counseling profession will have to urge the government to require everyone who practices counseling to be licensed, an assurance that the practitioner has at least a minimum of professional qualifications. The public also must be shown that counseling will meet certain needs and that it can help people work through their problems. This will result from a multifaceted and long-term promotional effort.

Finally is the matter of funding to meet the needs of all the people who seek counseling. At present, medical insurance is shared by employers and the government, but it has no provision for mental health services other than psychiatry. It would seem reasonable for the government to either create funding to cover counseling expenses for needy people or to legislate its inclusion in medical insurance.
Recommendations for the Workplace

The following suggestions address improvements in the Taiwanese female counselors’ work situations: (a) flexible working hours; (b) provision for family emergencies; and (c) building of supportive relationships among colleagues.

Flexible work time is good for working mothers. Flexibility would allow the Taiwanese female counselors to deal with their family needs and emergencies in reasonable and less stressful ways. According to Lee and Duxbury’s research (1998), 58% of Canadian working mothers received family-responsibility leave from their workplaces, 48% received support and understanding from supervisors or co-workers, and 32% had work-time flexibility. This research represented the needs of working mothers in fulfilling their family responsibilities and the support they desired from work. The finding was also supported by Matsui, Ohsawa and Onglatco’s research in 1995, which demonstrated flexible schedules as one means by which organizations can provide their female employees help in minimizing life’s strains. Taiwanese policy makers and those advocating for such changes as more flexible working hours might do well to study effective strategies from Western nations and to adapt these to Taiwan, taking into consideration the cultural values therein. Further provision for family emergencies could offer assistance to the employees in the form of such things as on-site daycare, flexible work arrangements, or time off for sick-child care.

The building of supportive relationships among colleagues was cited by study participants as helpful and desirable. One would expect professional counselors to be especially sensitive to their colleagues’ conditions and to offer help. But they, like any group of people, are a collection of individuals with individual personalities, and a female
counselor may find herself in a work situation less than ideal in this regard. A warm, open, supportive atmosphere is something that all in a group of colleagues must encourage and nurture.

**Gender Equality Education**

The final suggestion is to educate Taiwanese males and females about gender equality. Based on the interviews with the participants, it was found that the females still do the major amount of household work and take on most of the family responsibilities. Female counselors are emotionally as well as physically fatigued after a whole day of dealing with clients and then going home where they are required to expend more physical and emotional energy. This is undoubtedly true of women in all the helping professions, and energy-draining work probably is done by most employed women in general. Therefore, the need to educate males, as well as females, to the unfairness and unhealthiness of this imbalance exists not only for the husbands of female counselors but the husbands of all Taiwanese females.

It would not be an easy step for Taiwanese males or society to change quickly, but it is the trend of modern society, and societies all over the world have made progress in this area. The Taiwanese government has begun to educate the younger generation on the concept of gender equality in the schools but with varying degrees of success—not because of poor quality of education but because of the ingrained strength of traditional thinking within the Chinese culture. Females should assert their rights and equality, but Taiwanese males also will have to convince themselves to give up the traditional clothes from their shoulders and put their feet into Taiwanese females' shoes.
Limitations of This Study

Several limitations of this study present themselves. First, the research was done in Taiwan, the interviews were conducted in Chinese, and the data were transcribed in Chinese as well. Because of language differences and cultural nuances, some words might not translate exactly into English and thereby skew the real meaning of the data. Thus, the quotes from participants may have lost nuances of meaning in their translation into English. The early stages of the analysis were carried out in Chinese up to doing the selective coding; then, writing up the findings was done in English.

Second, I as sole interviewer, researcher, coder, and reporter am also a native Taiwanese female. It is possible that my biases or assumptions could have affected the interviews or findings. One way to reduce this possibility was that I had each participant review the verbatim Chinese transcript of her interview and review the draft of the research findings so as to verify the accuracy. I also identified personal experiences that I thought might interfere with my ability to examine the data objectively and acknowledged these in advance. Furthermore, I had professional peers to help me examine the data coding and analysis processes (see p. 56 in chapter III). One peer was a Taiwanese male who also gave me his opinions from a male’s point of view, which were helpful to the study. Finally, in my effort to reduce the effects of my biases and assumptions, I used the participants’ own words as much as possible and supported my assertions with specific data from the transcripts of the interviews.

A potential limitation possibly lurked in the selection process that narrowed the number of participants from 31 to 10. Because they were chosen based on their ages, life situations, and professional settings and represented a range of each criterion, others were
eliminated who did not fall into these categories. Regrettably, many who were eliminated likely could also have contributed valuable stories.

Ten was a rather small number of participants for this study. All were in a large metropolitan area in the northern region of Taiwan, a region most likely to have the most counselors and largest variety to choose from. Female counselors in other regions most likely would all be school counselors, although they may have had different stories to tell that would have enriched the data.

Suggestions for Future Research

Future research is needed for comparing more details in each life cycle stage of Taiwanese female counselors. More work is needed to understand what is most challenging in each stage, and what will be helpful knowledge of that stage for Taiwanese female counselors and other female professionals. Through the findings in this research, I discovered that the different life cycle stages might produce different lifestyles and challenges. Because life cycle stage differences were not a main focus of this study, I did not address the issue very extensively. This issue would be a good point to address in further research. How one’s career development relates to life cycle stages and vice-versa could also receive additional attention in future research.

The need for hearing males’ voices is obvious. Only a female population was studied here. The findings showed that Taiwanese female counselors have taken primary responsibilities for their families, and they were heavily influenced by Chinese traditional cultural and social expectations to play multiple roles in their lives and how to play them. Future research might explore how the husbands regard their wives’ multiple roles and if they understand how their wives feel. If the men were able to see the reality of their
wives' burdens from the wives' points of view, would they change their traditional ways of regarding their wives? Also, it would be good to compare the life-experience differences between Taiwanese male counselors and Taiwanese female counselors. The consequences of combining spouse, parent, and worker roles for mental health professionals are important subjects, and more research on the gender differences in self-care strategies is implied. All of this would increase our knowledge of how traditional culture and expectations have affected males in Taiwan and how gender roles influence the self-care strategies for mental health professionals. This study was limited to the perspective of female counselors in Taiwan. Future studies might also consider the perspectives of other key people in Taiwanese female counselors' lives, such as spouses, parents, or in-laws.

The last suggestion is for future research to be conducted on Taiwanese workplaces regarding their organizational policies in dealing with female employees' family emergencies and what practices would be helpful to the workplaces as well as to the female employees. The more information we gain from workplaces, the better we can help all Taiwanese females to manage the multiple roles in their lives.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Taiwanese female counselors carry many responsibilities for children, husbands, parents, and in-laws as well as household work, especially during the current period of transition between Chinese cultural traditions and social structural changes. In adhering to Chinese cultural traditions, social expectations, and expectations from family members, the Taiwanese female counselors have no choice but to take over their responsibilities. They might have complaints, but they still take their roles and
responsibilities seriously, trying their best to play the roles well and do the duties
diligently. Therefore, good management skills, and strategies to take care of themselves
are necessary. More sensitivity to their own needs rather than only paying attention to
fulfilling their multiple roles may help them to be aware of their potential for burnout.
They may need to have good career plans so that they will set and maintain their life
priorities.

The Taiwanese female counselors in this study were either going through difficult
times in their lives at the time I interviewed them or had been through tough situations in
the past. They all contributed accounts of their experiences that were invaluable to this
study. The meaning of these experiences will, I hope, contribute to increased
understanding of the need for professional development and self-care for female
counselors in Taiwan.
Date: December 18, 2003

To: Gary Bischof, Principal Investigator
   Yu-yin Joy Huang, Student Investigator for dissertation

From: Mary Lagerwey, Ph.D., Chair

Re: HSIRB Project Number: 03-12-01

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project entitled “Taiwanese Female Counselors’ Experiences of Managing Work and Family Roles and Responsibilities” has been approved under the expedited category of review by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board. The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the Policies of Western Michigan University. You may now begin to implement the research as described in the application.

Please note that you may only conduct this research exactly in the form it was approved. You must seek specific board approval for any changes in this project. You must also seek reapproval if the project extends beyond the termination date noted below. In addition if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the HSIRB for consultation.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

Approval Termination: December 18, 2003
Appendix B

Letter of Invitation to Participate in a Dissertation Research Project
Date:

Dear

I would like to thank you for your interest in and willingness to participate in my dissertation research entitled “Taiwanese female counselors’ experiences of managing work and family roles and responsibilities.” This research is conducted as a partial fulfillment of requirements for my Ph.D. degree in Counselor Education, Department of Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology, Western Michigan University, USA.

Since this dissertation research is qualitative in nature, I intend to explore in depth your experiences of managing work and family roles or responsibilities. Hopefully, your detailed descriptions of your unique experiences will help to enrich this research. In trying to gain access to your experiences, you will be asked to recall your incidences, situations or events of managing between work and family roles and responsibilities. In doing so, it is important that you describe your thoughts, feelings, reactions, and reflections according to your personal experiences.

Your participation in this research will provide valuable information on this topic. I would like to highlight that your information will be confidential. That means that your name or any other identifying information will not appear on any papers on which this information is recorded. The forms will all be coded, and I will keep a separate master list with the names of participants and the corresponding code numbers. Once the data are collected and analyzed, the code sheet and master list will be destroyed, and all other forms and the audiotapes will be retained for at least three years in a locked file in the principal investigator's office. You also may withdraw from this research any time without penalty. You will not lose the services you deserved from this research (e.g., referral counseling). If you have any questions or concerns about this study, you may contact either Dr. Gary Bischof at 269-387-5100, e-mail: gary.bischof@wmich.edu; or Joy yuyin Huang at (02)27693446, e-mail: yuyinhuang2004@yahoo.com. You may also contact the chair of Human Subjects Institutional Review Board at 269-387-8293, e-mail: research-compliance@wmich.edu; or the vice president for research at 269-387-8298, e-mail: jack.luderer@wmich.edu with any concerns that you have.

Once again, I greatly appreciate your willingness to consider sharing your experiences to my research in terms of time and effort. If you have any questions or concerns with regard to this research, please feel free to contact Joy yuyin Huang (the student investigator) at (02)2769-3446, email: yuyinhuang2004@yahoo.com; or Dr. Gary. Bischof (the principal investigator) at 269-387-5100, email: gary.bischof@wmich.edu.

Dr. Gary. Bischof
Principal Investigator/Date

Joy yuyin Huang
Student Investigator /Date
Appendix C

English Version of Informed Consent Document
Western Michigan University  
Department of Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology

Gary Bischof, Ph.D., chairman of doctoral committee, Department of Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology

Joy yuyin Huang, doctoral candidate, Department of Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology

You have been invited to participate in a research project entitled "Taiwanese female counselors' experiences of managing work and family roles and responsibilities." This research is intended to study how work and family roles or responsibilities affect the personal and professional lives of female counselors in Taiwan. This project is Joy yuyin Huang’s dissertation project.

You will be asked to do one interview of approximately two hours in length with Joy yuyin Huang. You will be asked to meet Joy yuyin Huang for the interview at a mutually agreed upon location. The purpose of this research is to explore Taiwanese female counselors' self-care issues; how these experiences have affected their family and work; and how they have dealt with these issues. This researcher will use a qualitative research method and interview eight to ten full-time female counselors in Taiwan. These interviewees have been practicing in the mental health field for at least three years and in a variety of professional settings. This research also will potentially identify support systems and strategies for Taiwanese female counselors that may help them to be aware of their self-care issues and prevent imbalance between their work and family roles.

Data during the interview will be collected in two parts. The first part will be collection of participant’s basic information and family background information. The second part will ask participants questions about their experiences of how they attempt to manage their work and family roles, and how these experiences affect their lives. Please feel free to ask any questions about the study either before participating or during the time you are participating. Neither your name nor other identifying information will be associated with the research findings in any way. You will be provided with an opportunity to review a draft of the findings and confirm that what you stated in your interview was accurately portrayed, and also you may request that particular information be altered or removed if you are concerned that the information might be sensitive or identify you. A final copy of the completed dissertation findings will also be made available upon request. You may contact with the researcher (yuyinhuang2004@yahoo.com) with your mailing address to request the completed dissertation findings.

One potential risk of participation in this project is that you may be upset by the content of the interview; however, Joy yuyin Huang is prepared to provide crisis counseling in the unlikely event that you become significantly upset, and she is prepared...
to make a referral if you need further counseling about this topic. You will be responsible for the cost of therapy if you choose to pursue it. A referral list will also be provided by Joy yuyin Huang for your future reference.

One way in which you may benefit from this project is having the chance to talk about your experiences, which research indicates is beneficial for individuals who may have the same experiences. Your participation may also be helpful and valuable in identifying effective strategies or useful resources or support for other female counselors.

All of the information collected from you is confidential. That means that your name or any other identifying information will not appear on any papers on which this information is recorded. The forms will all be coded, and Joy yuyin Huang will keep a separate master list with the names of participants and the corresponding code numbers. Once the data are collected and analyzed, the code sheet and master list will be destroyed, and all other forms and the audiotapes will be retained for at least three years in a locked file in the principal investigator's office.

You may refuse to participate or quit at any time during the study without any penalty. You will not lose the services you deserved from this research (e.g., referral counseling). If you have any questions or concerns about this study, you may contact either Dr. Gary Bischof at 269-387-5100, e-mail: gary.bischof@wmich.edu or Joy yuyin Huang at (02)27693446, email: yuyinhuang2004@yahoo.com. You may also contact the chair of Human Subjects Institutional Review Board at 269-387-8293, e-mail: research-compliance@wmich.edu or the vice president for research at 269-387-8298, e-mail: jack.luderer@wmich.edu.

This consent document has been approved for use for one year by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board as indicated by the stamped date and signature of the board chair in the upper right corner. Do not participate in this study if the stamped date is more than one year old.

Your signature below indicates that you have read and/or had explained to you the purpose and requirements of the study and that you agree to participate. This consent form also presents your agreement on the audio-taping of your interview. A copy of this consent form will be given to you to keep.

Signature of Participant ___________________________ Date __________
Consent obtained by: ___________________________ Date __________
Initials of researcher ___________________________ Date __________

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Appendix D

Chinese Version of Informed Consent Document
Chinese Version of Informed Consent

參與研究同意書

密西西比大學 諮商教育與諮商心理系
Counselor Education & Counseling Psychology, Western Michigan University

指導教授: Dr. Gary Bischof

博士候選人: 黃友音 Joy yuyin Huang

您被邀請參與“臺灣女性諮商師之多元角色與責任之經驗”。此研究主旨欲探討工作與家庭之多元角色如何影響臺灣女性諮商師之個人經驗。此研究為博士候選人黃友音之博士論文。

您將被邀請參與1-2小時的面談。面談之時長和時間將由您與黃友音一起決定。此研究的目的在探討臺灣女性諮商師之多元角色經驗如何影響到他們的生活。您將不會被問及您個人的敏感問題，除非您同意。研究將採用質性研究方式。請問10位臺灣女性諮商師面談。受訪者皆從事諮商領域至少3年以上，並且來自不同之ビジネス職場。此研究將為臺灣女性諮商師提供參與系統與策略，也幫助她們提高對自我完整性的認識與建議，預防她們在家庭與工作多元角色中失去平衡。此次研究分為兩部分，第一部分將收集受訪者的需求資料，第二部分將訪問女性諮商師之工作與家庭之多元角色之經驗。您在訪談過程中或過程中如有任何問題，歡迎您隨時提出。研究者（黃友音）亦樂意與您分享研究的結果。研究者也會為您的身份及資料保密，除了研究者，將不會有其他人知道您的身份。您將有機會審查此研究之結果報告並確定您的資料被正確地引用，以及移除您認為對您敏感之個人資料，也可因應您的要求給予您論文結果，可email至yuyinhuang2004@yahoo.com索取論文。

在訪談的過程中，您也將會被詢問其願意分享研究的結果，如果您因訪談的原因而有任何需要，研究者會為您安排，但您需自行支付。研究者也會提供您諮商機構的名單以便將來您的需要。

從此研究中，您有機會被邀請的經驗，並提供您的經驗給其他女性諮商師或有類似經驗的專業從事者作爲參考，您對此研究的幫助及價值將是其他女性諮商師提供有效之策略及資源或支持。所有的訪談資料將被保密，您的名字將不會出現在報告中。

訪談過程將會被錄音以便日後之研究，所有之錄音帶及資料將會完全保密並密封3年以上。如果您在訪談過程中同意不願意參與研究，您可中途中止研究。您若有任何與此研究之相關問題，請可與Dr. Gary Bischof（論文指導教授）聯繫269-387-5100，email:gary.bischof@wmich.edu 及黃友音（研究者）聯繫02-27692446，email:yuyinhuang2004@yahoo.com。您也可與HSIRB（人體研究審核單位）聯繫269-387-3293或269-387-8298或email至 research-compliance@wmich.edu。或jack.luderman@wmich.edu。

此文件以被審核通過並使用一年之期限，審核單將置於本文之之方。如果審核單已超過一年期限，請您勿參與此研究。您對此文件之同意及簽名同時亦表示您同意訪談及錄音。在簽名之前，請確定您已清楚此研究之目的及過程。此文件之副本將由您保存。謝謝您對此研究的參與及提供您寶貴的經驗。

感謝您的寶貴時間及對此研究的付出！！
Appendix E

Counseling Referral List

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Counseling Referral List 諮商轉介名單 (Chinese & English version)

1. Hua-ming Counseling Center
 臺北市中山北路一段二號 8 樓 830 室
Room 830, 8th floor, No.2. Sec.1. Jungshan N. Road. Taipei, Taiwan
Tel: 2312-0969

2. Wesley Counseling Center
 臺北市光復南路 438 號 B1
B1, No. 438. Guan-fu S. Road. Taipei, Taiwan
Tel: 2700-1900

3. Huai-Ren Developmental Center
 臺北市中山北路一段 2 號 9 樓 905 室
Room 905, 9th floor, No.2. Sec.1. Jungshan N. Road, Taipei, Taiwan
Tel: 2311-7155

4. Shiu-liu Memorial Foundation
 臺北市羅斯福路三段 245 號 8 F 之 2
Room 2, 8th floor, No.245. Sec.3. Roosevelt Road, Taipei, Taiwan
Tel: 2363-9425

5. Grace Counseling Center
 臺北市信義路四段 265 巷 21 弄 26 號
No.26, Alley 21, Lane 265, Xin-yi Road, Taipei, Taiwan
Tel: 2325-4648

6. TA Communication Counseling Center
 臺北市敦化南路二段 172 巷 5 弄 4 號 3 F
3 F, No.4, Alley 5, Lane 172, Sec.2. Dun-hua S. Road. Taipei, Taiwan
Tel: 2735-9424

7. Christian Cosmic Light Holistic Care Organization
 台北市大安區 106 和平東路二段 24 號 8, 9 樓
8, 9 F, No.24, Sec.2, He-ping E. Road, Taipei, Taiwan
Tel: 2363-2107

8. Taipei Counseling & Guidance Center
 臺北市敦化北路 131 號 No.131, Dun-hua N. Road, Taipei, Taiwan, Tel: 2717-2990

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Appendix F

Interview Guide Part A – Participant’s Background Information
Participant No:

Interview Date:

Time:

Place:

1. Age:
2. Education / Training:
3. Marital status :
4. Number and ages of children :
5. Occupation :
6. Working hours per week :
7. Years of service employment as a full-time counselor:
8. Job description :
9. Family responsibilities or caretaker roles:
10. Working environment / content :
11. Family background/genogram:
Interview Guide Part B - Main Research Questions
1. Can you describe your workload on your job? How do you feel about your workload as it is right now?

2. Can you describe your experiences when you are working and assuming family caretaker roles together? Can you describe your experiences of managing your work and your family? How do you usually achieve good management between the two of those?

3. What kinds of challenges do you have when you are working and have family roles and responsibilities at the same time? Can you share a story or an example that happened in your life related to the challenges?

4. What kinds of benefits do you have when you are working and have family roles and responsibilities at the same time? Can you share a story or an example that happened in your life related to the benefits?

5. How do you usually deal with your stress from work or family?

6. How do you usually recognize your emotional or physical reactions when you come home from your work or following doing your family responsibilities? Can you share a story or an example about this?

7. What will be helpful to you or make you most comfortable in maintaining better management between your work and family responsibilities?

8. What factors influence you when you are working and also taking family responsibilities? Are there any cultural, gender or social expectations involved with these factors? Can you share a story about it?

9. How do your family members react to your multiple roles or responsibilities?
10. Where do you get resources or support to assist you in achieving better management between work and family?

11. What ways of taking care of yourself usually work for you and why?

12. Does your education or training help you to deal with managing your work and family responsibilities, and how?

13. What would help you to achieve better management between your work and family roles or responsibilities?

14. What suggestions or recommendations can you make that would be helpful to other female counselors to effectively manage their work and family roles or responsibilities?
Appendix G

Contact Summary
Contact Summary

Main issues or themes in this contact

Summary of the information I got (or failed to get) on each of the target questions I had for this contact

Anything else that struck me as salient, interesting, illuminating or important in this contact?

What new (or continued) target questions do I have in considering the next contact with this participant?

Impressions/ reflections of participant or interview

(Adapted from Miles & Huberman, 1994)
Appendix H

Table 1 - Participants Summary
Table 1. Participants Summary

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<td>Three (16,9,3)</td>
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<td>None</td>
<td>Three (25,21,18)</td>
<td>Two (2½,7ms)</td>
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</table>

*Note. TW = Taiwan; U.S.A = United States; HW = Household work; ES = Emotional support; FS = Financial support.*
BIBLIOGRAPHY


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