

Exploring the Factors Related to Cooperative Motivation of Foreign Brides in Taiwan

Chiu-Ping. Chen^a and Chih-Chung. Wang^{b*}

^a Post Graduate Programs in Management, I-Shou University, Kaohsiung, Taiwan

k87794washington@yahoo.com.tw

^b Kaohsiung Medical University Chung-Ho Memorial Hospital, Kaohsiung,

Taiwan nicetherapy@yahoo.com.tw

Abstract

Because women in Taiwan have more opportunities to receive higher education and engage in different kinds of work, they have had higher and higher standards for their marriage partners. Men who are either in lower socioeconomic status such as agriculture, fishing and working classes or disabled cannot compete in local marriage market. Those men start to look for their brides from other countries to keep the family line, do the housework, serve parents-in-law. However, those foreign brides are often from rural areas and get married at younger age. Moreover, language problems and cultural differences make them have hard time to raise and educate their children so their children have higher percentage to be developmental delay, poor pronunciation, behavior problems and low academic achievement.

The governmental agencies and schools have realized those problems and tried to help foreign mothers take good care of their children. However, there are some influential factors related to cooperative motivation of those foreign mothers, including language barrier, parenting stress, low socioeconomic status, and cultural limitation. The governmental agencies and related professionals may take these into consideration to provide full services and better learning environment.

Introduction

Because of highly developed medical care, the number of children with disabilities has been increasing. According to the statistical data of United Nation, there are at least 25% of disabled persons in each country's population and most of their life is partially or totally dependent. Hence, it is important to early recognize their special needs, and provide needed

services when they were children in order to help them fully participate in social life and further decrease social cost. United Nations has proposed the World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled Persons to prompt national and international actions to take care of those disabled children and persons (United Nations, 2011).

There are many countries such as the United States have made some related laws or regulations like Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to help those children with disabilities (United States, 2011). Taiwan is not an exception especially after the growing number of foreign spouses.

According to the Department of Statistics, the number of foreign brides has accumulated to about 190571 for past years (Department of Statistics, 2011). Most of them are from China and the second one is from Southeast Asia countries such as Vietnam, Indonesia. This may be because women have higher education and working opportunities, they start to have high selective standards for their husbands. Men who are either in lower socioeconomic status such as agriculture and working classes or disabled cannot compete in local marriage market (Wang, 2001). To maintain family lines, those men start to look for brides with traditional virtues from different countries such as doing the housework, raising children and serving parents-in-law. On the other hand, for those brides from poor developmental countries, marrying men in Taiwan would be a chance to escape their poor life in their native countries and improve their families' economic conditions. The marriage agents start to emerge to facilitate marriages between those countries and Taiwanese men so more and more foreign brides get married with Taiwanese men (Wang & Chang, 2002).

Those brides often had their birth within two years (Sheu, 2007). Based on Department of Household Registration (DHR), the average birth rate of foreign brides was 10 % from 2001 to 2010 (Department of Household Registration, 2011). Compared to brides from Mainland China areas, brides from Southeast Asian countries may feel more stress because of language problems and cultural differences. Moreover, those brides from Southeast Asian countries were often from the rural areas which mean they were more likely less educated, and got married at younger age. Those disadvantaged factors made them become incompetent mothers so their children had higher chances to have delayed language, developmental disabilities, poor school performance, and behavioral problems (Wang, 2004). On the behalf of their disabled children, foreign brides from Southeast Asian countries may need to work collaboratively with others such as school teachers and related professionals to help their children fully engage in school environment and participate in social life.

The purposes of this paper:

(1) Explore the factors related to cooperative motivation between Southeast Asia spouses and

related professionals.

- (2) Provide suggestions and directions to related professionals and governmental agencies to give those children better learning and living environments.

Literature Review

Theoretical Perspective

Network theory

Network theory has been applied in many professional fields such as economic, computer sciences, sociology for a long time. In sociology, some researchers and were interested in searching how the embedded relationships between organizations turn into the network (Powell & Smith-Doerr, 1994). Some were interested in studying the relationship between structural holes or tie formation and strategic alliances (Gulati & Gargiulo, 1999). Those related concepts have raised attention in education fields, too. However, the definition of network may be different from sociology which defined network as a group of organizations or individuals linked by various intensities of ties formally or informally (Borgatti & Foster, 2003). Handfield, Jopling, Noden, O'Leary, and Stoll (2006) defined network in education as: "groups or systems of interconnected people and organizations (including schools) whose aims and purposes include the improvement of learning and aspects of well-being known to affect learning". Why education need to take network into consideration? Take school as an example. Schools in disadvantaged areas may need to work with external organizations to provide multiple services such as health, recreation and psychology to meet the needs of students. Schools may also develop joint activities or curriculums to save staff cost and materials.

Besides jointed performance and resources sharing, the construct of cooperative network have been strongly integrated in national and local regulations such as IDEA in America, Special Education Act in Taiwan. Among children of foreign brides from Southeast Asian countries, there are about 17.1% diagnosed as developmental delay or other developmental problems. For goods of those children and their mothers, it is better for them to under the protection of The Special Education Act and Enforcement Rules for the Special Education Act (Ministry of Education, 2009).

Individualized Education Program (IEP) may be the most prominent and representative measure of cooperative network within The Special Education Act. The public schools were obligated to convene a team to design IEP for each child with disability, not only to meet his/her unique education needs but also help him/her participate in normal school environment as possible. The team member need include anyone who was related to children

with disabilities such as regular and special education teachers, school administrative staffs, related service professionals such as physical therapists, and parents. Those team members need to work collaboratively to design IEP on the behalf of the individual child which had to be update and revise in order to meet the needs of child time by time (Kamens, 2004).

Among team members, IEP especially stressed the importance of parents. It not only strongly emphasized the equal rights and participation of parents, but also required parents to be knowledgeable about their children's disabilities, their rights under laws, and the procedures and the policies of local offices. The school need to take any action such as parental counseling and training, early notification, and necessary information to make sure parents totally understand IEP (Ministry of Education, 2009).

Although parents play an important role in IEP, foreign brides from Southeast Asia countries who usually take full responsibilities for their children may be unable to understand the context because of the communication difficulties (Yang & Wang, 2003). They may also have no authority to follow the results of IEP because of intervention of parents-in-law (Hwang & Chang, 2003). Under those circumstances, foreign brides from Southeast Asia countries may feel anxiety, depression and purposelessness (Foss, Chantal, & Hendrickson, 2004).

According to Durkheim's network theory, an individual might feel anomie which referred to be rejected or alone because of lacking of strong tie or different values between himself/herself and society (Durkheim, 1972). This was especially corresponding to the situation of foreign brides. When they first came to Taiwan, they had to deal not only with language problems but also different values and beliefs from their native countries. These challenging circumstances may put them under substantial stress. In other words, they may have to struggle with no or few ties from families or societies.

Hence, those foreign brides had to collaboratively engage in the social network such as IEP, community activities not only to feel inclusiveness and belongingness but also improve their children's performance and learning (Shu, Chuang, Lin, & Liu, 2008).

Theory of social capital

Transnational marriages bring Taiwan new features and divergent cultures. Culture is a set of standards or norms which influence people inherently so it tells people how to frame the world, how to behave in the society and how to react to people or the environment (Helman, 1994). Moreover it helps people create a sense of self, and their own belief and value system. Since culture has greater involvement in our daily life, it would be no surprise to see how people apply it into different fields (Hess, Ganesan, & Klein, 2003).

For those foreign brides from Southeast Asia countries, the influence of cultural difference is especially significant. Because their culture is deep-rooted in their life, it would be hard to change in a short period of time. They have to quickly adjust to different language, food, living habits and religions which make them stressful and lost (Meadows, Thurston, & Melton, 2001). Moreover, they often get pregnant right shortly after their arrival. They are forced to be mothers even they are not ready for it besides struggle for adjustment (Yang, 2003).

At this time, foreign brides definitively need some sort of social capital such as family support, fiscal and family resources, and information to get with the new environment. The more social capitals they have, the more easily and quickly to adjust. On the contrary, if they have a little or few social capitals, it would be more difficult to adjust and may cause some problems or family crises. The latter situation is the real reflection of foreign brides. Because they usually get married with Taiwanese men of low socioeconomic status, their networks are insidiously limited which restrict their accumulation of social capital.

Besides reach social capital, foreign brides have to learn how to use and control in order to increase information and knowledge exchange with others in the network (Lin, 1999). By involving in IEP, they can expand their knowledge and acquired some important information such as welfare policies, child allowance (Burt, 1992). This is especially important to foreign brides of disabled children. They can give their disabled children better living environments, needed medical services by subsidiary payment, free public transportation, hearing aid and prosthetic devices like wheelchair. Moreover, if those brides collaboratively work with IEP member, they children can have more access to related services such as medical services for diagnosis and evaluation, parental support, and other professional services such as physical therapy, occupational therapy to help child better accommodate with school life (Ministry of Education, 2003).

Factors Related to Cooperative Motivation of Foreign Brides

Engage in the network such as IEP or related services not only increase the social capital but also the resources and information of the foreign brides and their disabled children. Although foreign brides aware of the advantage of IEP related activities, there are some factors that may influence their cooperative motivation (Figure 1).

Language barrier

Research has consistently showed that language or literacy problems are the biggest barriers for foreign brides in Taiwan. Even some of them have lived for more than ten years, they still have difficulties with Chinese reading and writing (Hwang & Chang, 2003). Because of communication difficulties, foreign brides from Southeast Asian countries may not be able

to understand and discuss the context of IEP. All they can do is sitting aside which makes them feel useless and purposeless which decreases their cooperative motivation within IEP. Proposition 1: Language barriers would have negative influence on foreign brides' cooperative motivation within IEP.

Parenting stress

Children of foreign brides are mainly educated and raised by their foreign mothers. Those foreign brides themselves usually had a hard time to deal with local language because of short term training. Their children often have poor language development such as poor verbal communication, inaccurate pronunciation, and poor phonological awareness (Wang, 2004). Furthermore, language ability is positively related to academic achievement (Kastner, Raggio, & May, 2000). There was 38.11% of Taipei City children from transnational marriage had some kind of learning problems. Even they realize the learning problems of their children, they have hard to deal with school homework because 30% of brides from Southeast Asian countries are younger age and less educated (Chiu & Lin, 2004; Yang, 2003). Their husband start to blame their children' school failure to them and foreign brides need to spend more time to teach (Liu, 2000; Wang, 2008). If their children with some kind of disabilities, foreign brides need spend more time taking care. This may decrease their cooperative motivation to participate in IEP because they don't have extra time and energy.

Proposition 2: High levels of parenting stress would have negative influence on foreign brides' cooperative motivation in IEP.

Low socioeconomic status

Research has showed that a family's socioeconomic status may be a predictive factor of children's language abilities (Hart & Risley, 1992; Fish & Pinkerman, 2003). Some had lower academic achievement and adjustment difficulties because of low socioeconomic statuses (Chia, 2000; Chiu, 2003). Because foreign brides from Southeast Asian countries usually get married with Taiwanese men with low socioeconomic status, they may have to work to increase family's income. Furthermore, if their children are disabled, they have to run in and out between home, school and working places which means they don't have time to participate in IEP.

Proposition 3: Low socioeconomic status has negative influence on foreign brides' cooperative motivation in IEP.

Cultural limitation

In traditional view of Taiwanese elders, they always think children with developmental delay are just not mature enough. Hence, parents-in-law don't think it is necessary for their grandchildren to receive special education and needed services. Moreover, because of cultural differences between foreign brides and parents-in-law, they may have different children

rearing opinions (Hwang & Chang, 2003). Often time, the elders would spoil the children when foreign mothers try to discipline the children with misbehavior. Those children may have higher risk to have learning and adaptive problems in school. At this time, parents-in-law insist daughters-in-law should spend more time to engage children's school life. In other words, if foreign brides from Southeast Asian countries live with parents-in-law, it would have negative influence on their cooperative motivation within IEP.

Proposition 4: If foreign brides live with parents-in-law, it would have negative influence on their cooperative motivation within IEP.

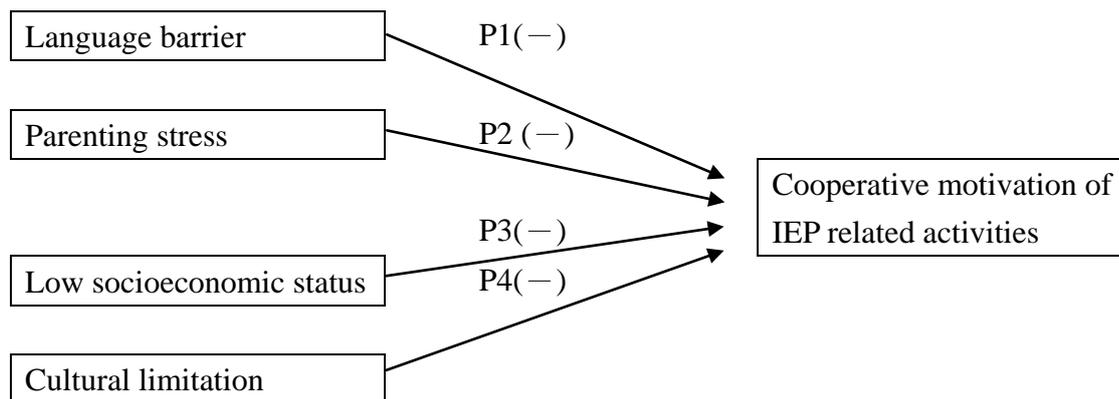


Figure1: Theoretical framework of factors related to cooperative motivation of foreign brides in Taiwan.

Conclusions and Implications

It seems like that communication difficulties, stress, economical status, and cultural differences have major influences on foreign brides' cooperative motivation within IEP. Even though they know that they and their children can be benefit from IEP related activities, it is still difficult for them to participate and get involved because of scarce time and energy. The governmental agencies, school, and medical system may need to follow the above discussion to design and execute the integrated strategies to help those foreign brides engage in school activities such as IEP, medical services such as screening test, and community activities such as leisure associations.

Language barrier

Because those foreign brides only receive short term training of Chinese before they come to Taiwan, the governmental agencies should legalize the marriage agents provide longer language training and set up the official organizations to arrange the related issues such as literacy education, systematic educational program, supportive team work including social worker, counselor, translator to help those brides overcome language obstacles.

Parenting stress

The local government should establish the support group to encourage foreign brides to join the tours or community activities in order to understand the local cultures and develop their own leisure activities. On the other hand, they can be relief temporarily. Moreover, school teachers or medical service providers can encourage those brides join the social sources such as religion groups, parenting groups to increase their knowledge of parenting and educational level (Liu, 2003; Wang, 2004).

Low socioeconomic status

The government should propose measures to provide childbearing subsidiary, child allowance and taxes cutting to assist foreign brides' families' fiscal situations. Moreover, children of foreign brides usually don't have chances to go to preschool because of budget problems. The government should provide fee public preschool and save the vacancy for children of foreign brides.

Cultural limitation

The local government should arrange social workers and counselors to provide home visit to foreign brides regularly. By doing so, it would help foreign brides and other family members understand each other's culture such as food, living habits, value and tradition. Those professionals can also give foreign brides chances to seek help when they have troubles and problems (Shu, Chuang, Lin, Liu, 2008; Tsai, 2004).

Due to the increasing number of foreign brides, the government should recognize their communication difficulties, stressful circumstances, economical burden, and cultural differences, and legalize the appropriate measures or regulations to help foreign brides quickly adjusted into Taiwan environment. Moreover, the educational and medical system should provide their children needed assistance to help them participate in school life and live in good health.

References

United Nations (2011). *World programme of action concerning disabled persons*. Retrieved from <http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=23#current>

United States Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (2011). *History: Twenty-Five Years of Progress in Educating Children With Disabilities Through IDEA*. Retrieved from <http://www.ed.gov/policy/speced/leg/idea/history.pdf>

- Department of Statistics (2011). *Annual marital registration statistics*. Retrieved <http://sowf.moi.gov.tw/stat/year/y02-06.xls>
- Wang, H. (2001). Social stratification, Vietnamese partner migration and Taiwan labour market. *Taiwan: A Radical Quarterly in Social Studies*, 41, 99-127.
- Wang, H. & Chang, S. (2002). The commodification of international marriages: Cross-border marriage business in Taiwan and Vietnam. *International Migration*, 40, 93-117.
- Sheu, Y.H. (2007). Full responsibility with partial citizenship: Immigrant wives in Taiwan. *Social Policy & Administration*, 41, 179-196.
- Department of Household Registration. (2011). *Number of newborn by nationality of mother*. Retrieved from <http://www.ris.gov.tw/ch4/static/y2s3000000.xls>
- Wang, W (2004). The parent-teacher communication of international marriages families. *Early Childhood Information*, 17,1-2.
- Powell, W.W. & Smith-Doerr, L. (1994). Networks and economic life. In N. Semelser & R. Swedberg (Eds.), *The Handbook of Economic Sociology*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Gulati, R. & Gargiulo, M. (1999). Where do organizational networks come from? *American Journal of Sociology*, 104, 1439-1493.
- Borgatti, S., & Foster, P. (2003). The network paradigm in organizational research: A review and typology. *Journal of Management*, 29, 991-1013.
- Handfield, M., Jopling, M., Noden, C., O'Leary, D., & Stott, A. (2006). *What does the existing knowledge base tell us about the impact of networking and collaboration? A review of network-based innovations in education in the UK*. Nottingham, UK: National College for School Leadership.
- Ministry of Education. (2009). *The Special Education Act*. Retrieved from <http://edu.law.moe.gov.tw/EngLawContent.aspx?Type=E&id=23>
- Kamens, M.W. (2004). Learning to write IEPs: A personalized, reflective approach for preservice teachers. *Intervention in School and Clinic*, 40, 76-80.
- Yang, Y.M., & Wang, H.H. (2003). Life and health concerns of Indonesia women in transnational marriage in Taiwan. *The Journal of Nursing Research*, 11, 167-176.
- Hwang, S.C., & Chang, W.Y. (2003). A study of marriage adaptation and children's education of foreign brides. *The Journal of Social Studies Education Research*, 8, 135-169.
- Foss, G.F., Chantal, A.W., & Hendrickson, S. (2004). Maternal depression and anxiety and infant development: A comparison of foreign-born and native-born mothers. *Public Health Nursing*, 21, 237-246.
- Durkheim, E. (1972). *Selected Writings*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

- Shu, B.C., Chuang, L.Y., Lin, L.L., & Liu, K.L. (2008). The mothering experience: Perspectives of women from Indonesia married and living in Taiwan. *Journal of Nursing Research, 16*, 169-176.
- Helman, C.G. (1994). *Culture, health and illness*. Oxford, UK: Yale University Press.
- Hess, R.L., Ganesan, S., & Klein, N.M. (2003). Service failure and recovery: The impact of relationship factors on consumer satisfaction. *Journal of the Academic of Marketing Science, 31* 127-145.
- Meadows, L.M., Thurston, W.E., & Melton, C. (2001). Immigrant women's health. *Social Science & Medicine, 52*(9), 1451-1458.
- Yang, Y. (2003). Eugenics and health of foreign brides. *Feedback Newsletter, 69*.
- Lin, N. (1999). Building a network theory of social capital. *Connections, 22*, 28-51.
- Burt, R.S. (1992). *Structural holes: The social structure of competition*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Ministry of Education. (2003). *Enforcement Rules for the Special Education Act*. Retrieved from <http://edu.law.more.gov.tw/LawContentDetails.aspx?id>
- Kastner, J., Raggio, D., & May, W. (2000). The relationship between language skill and later academic achievement in children. *Archives of Clinical Neuropsychology, 15*, 787-788.
- Chiu, Z., & Lin, W. (2004). Moving toward multiple culture and social inclusion society – The current assistance measures for foreign spouses families. *Community Development Quarterly, 105*, 6-19.
- Wang, Y.H. (2008). Cinderella or little mermaid? Transition stories and changing identities of foreign wives in Taiwan (Doctoral thesis, University of New York, UK). Retrieved from <http://sw.hcu.edu.tw/front/bin/partprint.phtml?Part=020115&>
- Hart, B., & Risley, T.R. (1992). American parenting of language-learning children: Persisting differences in family-child interaction observed in natural home environments. *Development Psychology, 28*, 196-1105.
- Fish, M., & Pinkerman, B. (2003). Language skill in low-SES rural Appalachian children: Normative development and individual differences, infancy to preschool. *Applied Developmental Psychology, 23*, 539-565.
- Chia, C. (2000). International marriages under capital internationalization-the phenomenon of foreign brides of Taiwan. *Taiwan Social Research Quarterly, 39*, 45-92.
- Chiu, F. (2003). Family problems and needs of South-East Asia international marriage families. *Community Development Quarterly, 101*, 176-181.