

Gender and Communication: A Study on the Career Choices of Taiwanese Women

Shu-Hui Huang

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Abstract-Thanks to the universal nature of Taiwan's education, women have accounted for half of all university graduates since 1995. Women are therefore equally competent and well-trained, but Taiwan still suffers from a significant gender pay gap, and women tend to occupy lower-level positions or even leave the workplace altogether - a loss both to these women as individuals and the Taiwanese economy as a whole. This study attempts to: (1) Introduce interpersonal communication as an important variable in understanding the socialization of women and their career choices ; (2) Explore the impact of culture and communication on Taiwanese women in order to assess the impact of the father as the 'opinion leader' when women make career decisions; assess the extent to which Taiwan can be regarded as a patriarchal society. The study concludes: (1) Taiwanese women's traditional role in the family rarely conflicts with their own expectations for their future, meaning that they are unable or find it difficult to change their status. (2) Fathers are the 'opinion leaders' in women's career decisions. Regardless of whether the father is controlling or emotionally distant, they have very low expectations for their daughters, causing women to feel lost and ignored. (3) Taiwanese women tend to occupy low-level positions because they lack clear life goals.

Keywords- interpersonal communication, patriarchy, Taiwanese women, opinion leaders, career choices

I. INTRODUCTION

According to research carried out by [1][2], women only account for 4.4% of CEOs at Fortune 500 companies. Over 25% of companies have no women whatsoever in executive positions - in terms of increasing the number of women in managerial positions, progress is therefore slow or has even ground to a halt. Similarly, research carried out by the Credit Suisse Research Institute showed that even though female board members tend to improve company performance, growth in female corporate leadership has stalled [3][4][5][6][7].

According to figures compiled by the United Nations in 2013, failure to integrate women into the workforce is costing the Asia-Pacific region about 89 billion dollars a year in unrealized output. In addition, a report published by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank in 2013 states that for the past two decades, global

female labor force participation has stagnated at around 50 percent. More than 50% of nations in East Asia and the Pacific have imposed gender restrictions on many jobs, a figure that rises to 80% in South Asia. Asian women live in traditional societies and lack government support - most are confined to low-paid jobs in factories or the service industry, or help out on the family farm [8].

Thanks to the universal nature of Taiwan's education, women have accounted for half of all university graduates since 1995[9], but in 2013 women earned just 80% of the earnings of their male counterparts. There is also a gender pay gap for women in full-time positions [10]. Taiwan's gender pay gap is most acute in the real estate industry, with an average pay gap of 33.48%, followed by the IT industry with a gap of 32.43%. The gender gap is least obvious in the media and publishing industries, but still stands at 12.04% [11]. In addition, women account for just 4.4% of board members at major Taiwanese listed companies, much lower than the global average of 16.6%. Just 1.9% of board chairs are women [12], evidence of the under-representation of women in senior management roles.

As stated above, women have accounted for half of all university graduates since 1995. However, why are there still so many women with a university education who are stuck in lower-level positions? Why is there still a gender pay gap? Why do some women leave the workplace altogether? What are the reasons for these phenomena?

At a time when mass media has a profound impact on modern life, this study returns to interpersonal communication and reexamines its effect on women's career choices. The purpose of the study is to determine the reasons for women's inferior status in the job market by interviewing women on their life experiences and career choices. This study attempts to:

(1) Introduce interpersonal communication as an important variable in understanding the socialization of women and their career choices.

(2) Explore the impact of culture and communication on Taiwanese women in order to assess the impact of the father as the 'opinion leader' when women make career choices; assess the extent to which Taiwan can be regarded as a patriarchal society.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. *Life Goals and Gender Stereotypes*

In feudal societies, the fate of women lay in the hands of others both in the West and East - even the daughters of monarchs were often forced to marry into another country's aristocracy, spending the remainder of their lives in a foreign country and shouldering the heavy responsibility of maintaining national peace. For thousands of years, men and women have been expected to assume different roles. Children tend to be obedient to their parents' wishes, but in most societies, the result of this obedience is that women are unlikely to occupy important positions or manage and control family resources[13]. If this is the case, why do women acquiesce and choose to remain silent?

In response to the advent of capitalism, Weber stated that instrumental rationality is an important supporting mechanism in a capitalist society [14]. Both instrumental rationality and rational choice theory hold that all choices are the result of rational thought and focus on an individual's goals and self-interests. Motivation is not the key variable or is difficult to measure. In today's society, women supposedly have the right to choose their own life goals, which should be the result of rational thought. However, for women brought up in a society deeply influenced by Confucian ideals and who are bound to their families [15], these life goals are often unclear.

Sandberg [16] states that traditional gender stereotypes encourage superficial traits in women because they encourage women to rely on others. She also states that women often feel guilty, believe men are entitled to top positions, underestimate their own ability and suffer from self-doubt. Women's perceptions of "what I can accomplish" versus "what I should accomplish" are shaped by society's expectations of them (pp. 42-58).

Brown [17] believes that women are victims of a culture that presents them as inadequate: women are afraid of being disliked, afraid of making the wrong choices, afraid of going too far, afraid of being judged, afraid of failure and afraid that they will be a failure as a mother, wife and daughter (pp. 38-45).

Traditional culture and deep-seated gender stereotypes that present women as inferior cause women to confuse their self-worth and life goals and suffer from anxiety in the job market. When women are only concerned with whether their behavior conforms to social norms, purposive rationality plays no role in their decisions - if we remove social and cultural factors, women have no idea what to do, what kind of person they want to become or what their life goals are.

B. *The Role of Opinion Leaders in Career Decisions*

In her book *The Triple Package*, Amy Chua talks about her strict 'tiger father': after being refused 150 times for teacher positions, her father said it was perfectly normal

and she should keep trying [18]. Chua states that both her parents had worked in the US since becoming doctoral students, so what made her father a 'tiger father'? Why does she think her father's words about being rejected for a job were so important - what about her mother?

When reflecting on her career and childhood, the famous Taiwanese actress and model Lin Chi-ling said that her father encouraged her to be ambitious, taught her leadership skills and told her to take charge of her own life[19]. Again, why does she mention her father - what about her mother?

In interpersonal communication, family members tend to communicate traditional concepts [20], and the person with the higher social status is likely to influence the other person's opinions [21]. The interpersonal communication research shows that boyfriends, husbands and fathers are the most trusted source of information, proving that men have an important impact on the opinions of others and have a higher status [22]. This idea is similar to expectation states theory. According to this theory, people establish social hierarchies and develop expectations of others. People with a higher social status therefore tend to be more active when interacting in a group; they have higher self-esteem and are more authoritative and influential because they are often seen as more knowledgeable, thoughtful, able and confident. They are also expected to have good judgement [23], therefore they tend to be the 'opinion leaders'.

Research into the relationship between status and opinion shows that these 'opinion leaders' play a key role in the formation of opinions and decisions; the impact of mass media is only limited [24]. For this reason, when it comes to making career choices, the father has a major impact on his children's achievement motivation - with the highest status in the family, they are the 'opinion leaders'.

According a report published by APEC, some of the difficulties faced by women in the workplace include a lack of mentors and role models; expectations of women's role in society and traditional social values state that women have a duty to look after the old and young members of the family [25]. Women cannot change their predicament without the participation of the 'opinion leader', but in Asian culture, 'opinion leaders' clearly have no wish to change the status quo or acknowledge the value of women to the economy. For this reason, generations of women have been unable to overcome obstacles in the workplace, proving that gender discrimination is still endemic among 'opinion leaders' - and especially among fathers.

C. *The Father-Daughter Relationship among Chinese People*

Based on the literature review above, it can be inferred that the father is the 'opinion leader' when Taiwanese women make their career choices.

Chinese parents are willing to make sacrifices to bring up the next generation...this trait is an important intangible

asset for Chinese people. [26]. This is especially true for sons, who Chinese people expect to care for them in old age. However, according to Confucian ethics, the role of the daughter seems to have been neglected. According to Confucius, “Only women and villains are difficult to provide for”. Confucian ideology affirms the father-son relationship and the dominant role of the father in the family - according to the Five Key Relationships of Confucianism (the relationship of ruler to subject, father to son, husband to wife, elder to younger and friend to friend), there is no mention of the father-daughter relationship, demonstrating the patriarchal nature of Confucian values.

An individual’s concept of gender roles is affected by cultural factors and their understanding of cultural identity, which arises from their participation in a particular culture [27]. With this in mind, what impact does the patriarchal Confucian culture have on the father-daughter relationship among Chinese people?

According to research by Wu [28] in Taiwan, fathers’ expectations play a major role in determining whether women become successful scientists. One scientist said that her father didn’t have very high expectations of her and that even today, she can still sense her father’s patriarchal attitudes.

The research done by Kim Koh et al. [29] shows that Asian-American parents still retain many Asian cultural values, which makes them and their children stand out as ‘Asian’, even though they are living in the US. According to Confucius, practicing filial piety is the core family value and the most important virtue in Confucian culture. Confucian ethics imply that children must be obedient to their parents, have a sense of shame, bring honor to the family’s ancestors, make their parents proud and repay their parents’ kindness through good academic results and career success. Even today, these principles are still the major driving force in East Asian and Asian-American family values and the main motive behind individuals’ drive for success [30].

Research into Asian-American and Chinese-American women [31][32] also found that during the process of socialization, daughters tend to resist traditional beliefs and behavioral norms due to their parents’ strict orders to follow traditional cultural values. Asian-American daughters are trapped between two cultures that are at odds with each other - their parents’ culture and the American mainstream culture. Chinese-American women state that their cultural values and perception of gender roles differ from the gender roles and beliefs that their parents instilled into them. This is particularly true in the case of traditional Chinese gender values, which state that men are superior and more important than women. These values conflict with modern values that promote gender equality - Chinese-American women therefore have a fairer attitude to gender equality than their male counterparts. Confronted by conflicting gender role values, Chinese-American women and other ethnic groups or immigrants often face a double jeopardy of gender and race discrimination, which

can have a negative psychological impact [33]. In addition, parents’ guidance has a larger impact on a son’s self-identity when compared with the daughter, which suggests sons tend to accept more of their parents’ traditional values. This perhaps explains why men go on to teach more traditional values to their offspring after becoming fathers.

Confucian cultural values continue to be preserved and passed down to the next generation in the Asian-American community. Within this community, parents play an important yet contrasting role in the shaping of their offspring’s self-identity. In accordance with traditional culture, Asian-American fathers tend to play a disciplinarian role, responsible for monitoring their children’s success. Growing up in an achievement-oriented culture, Asian-American children have a strong motivation for achieving success. The father plays the role of the ‘opinion leader’, whereas the mother’s role is to affirm her children’s sense of self-worth through interpersonal communication [34]. Research and debate on Chinese-American daughters have shown that girls are more likely to resist traditional concepts of gender and are therefore more likely to change. According to identity theory, changes in social networks prompt changes in self-concepts [35]. Despite traditional Confucian values that require daughters to be obedient, Chinese-American girls have been shown to change and adapt when experiencing conflicting gender roles during the process of socialization. This point is further illustrated by ‘active-self theory’, which states that girls change more than boys because the active self can influence other people’s views about the self [36]. When Chinese-American girls become aware that traditional cultural values give them an inferior social status and afford them little protection, they take proactive steps to change other people’s opinions about them.

Table I: Parent-child relationships in Taiwanese and Chinese-American families

	Parents	Son	Daughter
Chinese-American families	Instilled with Confucian values	Accepts traditional values	Conflicting cultural values
Taiwanese families	Instilled with Confucian values	Accepts traditional values	Accepts traditional values

Source: Analyzed by this study

The results above demonstrate that Chinese-American girls are more likely to change and resist traditional gender roles, in contrast to research on Taiwanese women (see Table One). Although they are still affected by their parents’ Confucian values, Chinese-American women experience conflicting gender roles and want to change their status. In Taiwan, however, women are much less likely to change - traditional gender roles and women’s own expectations tend not to conflict with each other. Although this study does not compare the career choices of Chinese-American and Taiwanese women, the above literary references do reveal one very important point: women can change their status - it just depends on

their cultural environment.

D. Conclusion

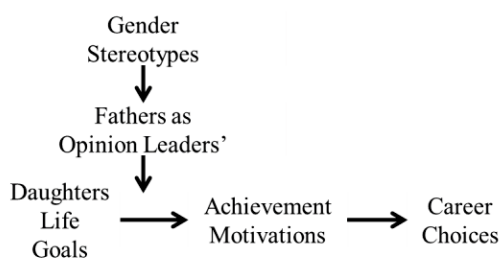
Based on the research and literature outlined above, research carried out abroad presents girls' resistance to traditional values and their tendency to change as an important variable, much in contrast to Taiwanese research and literature. However, both Taiwanese and foreign research lacks an examination of the father-daughter relationship and accepts the father's domineering role as a foregone conclusion. Both Tang and Dion [37] and Kim Koh et al. [38] strongly recommend that future research should continue to explore the conflicts between parents and their daughters relating to gender roles, as differences of opinion can threaten family harmony and personal well-being. This observation is an important motivation for carrying out this study.

III. RESEARCH METHODS

A. Research Framework

An important conceptual diagram has been formulated based on the literature review: Confucian values of gender stratification have created deep-seated gender stereotypes in Taiwan and have reinforced the patriarchal culture. Fathers are the 'opinion leaders', passing on traditional values about the role and status of women to their offspring. Even if women have received a higher education and have a special talent or interest, the father's opinions still have a significant impact on women's achievement motivation and career choices (see Diagram One).

Diagram One: Research Framework of Career Choices of Taiwanese Women



B. Sampling

This study hypothesizes that interpersonal communication is an important variable in career decisions and that the father plays the greatest role in these decisions. However, when deciding how to collect the necessary data, a significant obstacle was noted - respondents may not be willing to admit to problems in interpersonal relationships, especially conflicts they may have experienced with their parents, which would result in a response bias [39]. This is because discussing family relationships, especially the relationship with parents or the head of the household may result in an emotional reaction, causing the respondent to use defense mechanisms such as giving hasty or half-

hearted responses. In order to overcome this challenge, evidence was collected by carrying out in-depth interviews. Furthermore, in addition to the impact of the parents, other interpersonal factors were examined in order to reduce the margin of error.

In order to collect relevant evidence, in-depth interviews were carried out with ten women aged over 40 years of age, all of whom had received a higher education and experienced making career decisions (respondents were numbered from 1-10). The respondents were mainly from Hsinchu and Taipei. An in-depth interview lasting at least 30 minutes was conducted with each respondent between March and May 2014.

C. Research Questions

The following issues were explored:

1. Despite universal education, why do Taiwanese women with a higher education occupy lower-level positions in the workplace?
2. How do gender stereotypes in Taiwanese culture affect women's life goals and achievement motivation?
3. How influential are 'opinion leaders' in the career choices of Taiwanese women?

IV FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

A. Gender Stereotypes and Life Goals

Information on the respondents' backgrounds shows that the majority come from families with more daughters than sons and grew up in a patriarchal environment where their brothers received the most attention. This was especially the case for women with brothers that were talented, for whom parents had the highest expectations.

When asked about their life goals, most of the respondents were unable to give an immediate response. Common responses included having no life goals and putting the family first. Apart from respondent 3 who said she was talented at art and knew from a young age that her goal in life was to be an artist, the other respondents did not seem to know what they wanted - they had no clear life goals and seemed satisfied with the status quo:

"...I can't think of anything in particular, I suppose I like to take things as they come. I've never really thought about it..." (respondent 8); *"...I don't really have any life goals, I'm not sure..."* (respondent 7); *"...I've never thought about my life goals before, I don't know what my life goals are..."* (Respondent 6); *"...I don't think I have any life goals."* (Respondent 9).

The above responses show that traditional Confucian culture is still evident in women today - women still seek order in life. A peaceful family life is of utmost importance; choosing whether or not to continue with professional learning is closely connected to achieving a peaceful life in

the future. In Confucian culture, peace does not just refer to the individual - it also refers to the peace and prosperity of the whole family. Typical responses included: "...I don't really have any goals, I just want to lead a peaceful life..." (respondent 1); "...My life goal is to find a stable and secure job and lead a peaceful life" (respondent 2); "...My life goal is to lead a peaceful and stable life" (respondent 10). All of these respondents said that they just wanted to lead a peaceful and stable life - this is their life goal.

For Taiwanese women, the individual is not the starting point when making decisions - career development and career choices are closely related to other family members. For women who have received a higher education, family is the most important factor in life. According to respondent 4: "...It's impossible for me to have any career ambitions...I need to look after the children...". A similar comment was given by respondent 5: "...Family, looking after the children...". Women therefore hope that the family comes above all else, implying that family and work contradict each other. The responses show that Taiwanese women have not managed to break away from traditional culture and gender roles, characterized by a tendency to conform to social stereotypes.

Even respondents who admitted to not having any life goals were satisfied with their job, because it enabled them to lead a peaceful and stable life and look after the family. Satisfied with the status quo, they lack achievement motivation. When making career decisions, the most important factors for the respondents were ensuring a happy family and stable job, not their own financial needs or raising their social status. This is evidence of the impact of Confucian values, which state the need for harmony. It also highlights the stereotypical images of women in traditional culture and demonstrates that encouraging young women to seek a peaceful and stable life is the main reason for the gender gap in the workplace. As Sandberg [40], women do not know what they **can accomplish** and instead form views of what they **should accomplish** due to social expectations.

In conclusion, despite universal education in Taiwan, there is still a gender gap in the workplace. One of the most important reasons for this is the continued influence of traditional culture and a lack of life goals among women.

B. Factors Affecting Career Choices

1. Interpersonal Communication

As is often the case in such research, half of respondents were not fully open when responding to questions about the influence of their parents. This may be related to the closeness of the relationship with their parents. For example, respondent 1 had 10 siblings, meaning that her parents didn't have much time to look after her individually. As a result, her parents only had a small impact on her choice of career. Respondent 10 completely refused to answer any questions about her parents. For

many of the respondents, the mother played a silent role in the family, and most came from families where the father played the dominant role.

(1) What Fathers Say to Their Daughters

When asked about their career choices, respondents 7, 8, 9 and 10 said that their father had no impact on their decision. However, asking these respondents about the relationship with their father evoked an emotional response - most of them refused to go into any detail. In order to respect the respondents' wishes, no further questions were asked about why they were unwilling to talk about the issue.

"...No...my father didn't have any impact on my decisions" [resolutely refuted the influence of her father and didn't want to answer the question]. "...I have 10 siblings, both brothers and sisters. My parents didn't really care about our career decisions, but I did feel that my parents cared more about my brothers." (Respondent 1)

"None of my family members affected my decisions. So I suppose you don't need to ask me any more questions about my relatives..." (Respondent 10, said in an emotional manner).

The response below demonstrates the impact of the father as the 'opinion leader':

"My father said that you need to be good at something in order to find a good job. I thought what he said was right, so I went to nursing school...I just listened to what my father told me to do...it gave me the opportunity to be a civil servant...at the time, being a civil servant was an enviable job..." (Respondent 2).

Respondents 3 and 4 were heavily influenced by their fathers, who completely refused to encourage their artistic talent. Young women growing up in families with traditional Confucian values end up acquiescing to their fathers even if they want to escape from Confucian gender stereotypes. This is due to so-called 'social solidarity goals' (achieving to bring some degree of honor to one's family) and 'social approval goals' (achieving to gain the social approval of others) [41]. Respondent 4 gave up her dream of becoming a musician and instead followed her father's orders:

"...My father was a manager at Yamaha, so I started learning the piano when I was five years old...It was my parents that encouraged me to learn, and I developed a keen interest...but when I graduated from university, my father said to me that I should just keep it as a hobby. He told me not to become a musician. I therefore didn't choose to become a professional musician...at the moment I only have a part-time job, so I can't improve my income..." (Respondent 4).

As it is heavily influenced by Confucian values, Chinese culture emphasizes harmony in interpersonal relationships. Conflicts are to be avoided at all costs [42]. In order to maintain family harmony, women accomplish

what they should do and delay accomplishing their true wishes. This is illustrated by respondent 3, who at first acquiesced to her father's wishes but later decided to change career:

"...I have two older brothers. The younger one performed well at school and everyone in the family focused their attention on him. My father had a preference for boys; after I could fend for myself I changed my values...My first life goal was to become an artist...I knew that I probably wouldn't earn very much, but I really enjoyed art...My father said that studying art was useless and that I'd probably go hungry - he didn't support the idea. However, this only made me even more determined. At first I was really unhappy with my father, but I decided to follow his wishes and I went to study at business school. After I graduated he wanted me to become a secretary, so I followed his wishes again and found a job as a secretary. I didn't start pursuing my own goals until I felt that I'd fulfilled my father's wishes. I was quite old by the time I went abroad to study art...after so many years, I can finally be an artist...it makes me treasure my job more..." (Respondent 3).

Respondents 5 and 6 were confused as to whether their father had had an impact on their choice of career - their relationship with their fathers was neither close nor distant. According to respondent 5: *"...No [my father didn't say anything], fathers of that generation tended not to say much..."*

Respondent 6 said that her father was a distant figure and had low expectations for her future:

"...My father was always very busy. He subsequently went to Mainland China to do business. Although he didn't necessarily have an absolute preference for boys, he didn't seem to expect much from me. He said that study was very important, but my results weren't very good compared to my brothers and sisters. My self-esteem was very low - I don't know whether it was because my father didn't have any high expectations of me, but he was very busy. I often felt that he was always away from home - we had a very distant relationship..." (Respondent 6)

The above comments that fathers made to their daughters suggest that there are two types of father, as outlined below:

a. Distant fathers: These fathers are often away from home, tend not to say much and do not have an intimate relationship with their daughters. As they are often away from home when the daughter is growing up, the father-daughter relationship is distant - daughters are unable to recall what their fathers said to them. Nevertheless, these fathers still have an influence when it comes to making important career choices: by not recognizing their daughters' achievements, fathers leave their daughters with a lasting sense of low self-esteem.

b. Controlling fathers: These fathers are proud 'opinion leaders' and have a decisive impact on their daughters, requiring their daughters to choose a career according to their stereotypical views on gender. The daughters tend to be obedient and rarely attempt to resist. These fathers have no expectations for their daughters, even when the daughter has received a higher education - they tell them that a peaceful family life is most important. In addition, these fathers treat children with good academic results differently, especially sons, and have no expectations for daughters who demonstrate a talent for art or music, even when this talent is cultivated. They do not encourage their daughters to raise their status in society.

The above evidence demonstrates that the impact of both kinds of fathers on their daughter's career choices is the same: fathers have low expectations for their daughter's future, and do not encourage them to increase their social status and income.

(2) What Mothers Say to Their Daughters

For most of the respondents, the mother was a reticent, hard-working figure who didn't complain. Respondent 6 reported that her mother was very busy and tended not to say much:

"...My mother only has a primary school education. She's very traditional, so she didn't have much of an impact on my choice of career. After my father went to China to work, she became very busy - her time was taken up looking after me and my brother and sister..." (Respondent 6).

Respondent 5 said that her mother played a self-sacrificing role: *"My mother didn't say much...she was a reticent figure..."*

Those mothers that did have opinions had low expectations of their daughters and instilled traditional values, believing that women don't need to achieve good academic results. However, they believed that marriage was very important. According to respondent 4, *"...My mother said that I didn't need to go abroad to study, because I wouldn't be able to find a husband when I came back..."*. Respondent 2 gave a similar response: *"Women can learn about the fashion and haircare industries...women don't need to achieve good academic results..."*

The above interview responses demonstrate that Taiwanese mothers are deeply influenced by Confucian culture: they are reticent, obedient, hard-working and self-sacrificing and do not encourage their daughters to change their status.

(3) The Influence of Friends

For the respondents, their peers are often 'frenemies' when it comes to career choices - they are seen as competitors and often envied. Their friends do not seem to have a big influence; some of the respondents reported making friends with their colleagues.

Research carried out by Slotter and Garder [43] found that social relationships are often an important factor in self-change. This is because people often subconsciously prefer to approach friends who may prove to be helpful in achieving their goals - evidence that people hope to become their desired self. Slotter and Gardner seemingly assume that individuals already know what their goals are, therefore they subconsciously prefer to approach people who can help them achieve those goals. In Taiwan, however, young women may meet friends who have the potential to help them achieve their goals, but due to women's low achievement motivation, these friends do not have a major impact in women's career decisions.

(4) The Influence of Teachers

The respondents were very positive and affirmative when responding to questions about their teachers. They were very grateful to their teachers and had many happy memories, because their teachers were different from their parents - they encouraged the respondents to continue with their studies and pursue their own dreams:

"...My teachers wanted me to continue with my studies..." (Respondent 2); *"...There was one teacher who was very kind, she had a big influence on me..."* (Respondent 8); *"...My teachers were very important to me..."* (Respondent 6); *"...My teachers always had an impact on me..."* (Respondent 10); *"...When I was at junior high school, the homeroom teacher encouraged me to pursue my own dreams...he told me that I was very unique and that I'd be able to find something that I was passionate about..."* (Respondent 3). According to respondent 4, who studied music from a young age: *"...the homeroom teacher at junior high school encouraged me to pursue my studies abroad..."*. However, respondent 4 abandoned the idea of studying music abroad following her father's disapproval.

Although the above responses claim that teachers were very encouraging, in general they did not have a noticeable impact on the respondents - the family was the most influential factor. Even when teachers were encouraging, they were not able to play the role of an 'opinion leader' in women's career choices. This proves that higher education in Taiwan only trains women's professional skills and has not enabled women to confront deep-seated gender inequalities and increase their achievement motivation in the workplace.

2. The Impact of the Media

The results of the study do not suggest that the media has a major influence on the career choices of Taiwanese women. Interpersonal communication - especially the impact of the father - is a more important factor. The respondents did not mention stereotypical images of women presented in the media or the impact of the media on gender roles.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Conclusions

Despite universal education in Taiwan, women who have received a higher education are heavily influenced by their fathers, who play the role of the 'opinion leader', as well as traditional Confucian values. As a result, women have no clear life goals and suffer from low achievement motivation, causing women's inferior status in the workplace. The following conclusions can be drawn:

1. One of the important findings of this study is that none of the respondents thought it was unacceptable that there was a gender pay gap. The main reason for this is traditional gender roles and social expectations - women are confronted by deep-seated patriarchal attitudes. As the respondents' comments show, even women with a higher education have low self-expectations and are unable to observe the relationship between their own status and social structures.
2. Taiwanese women are obedient and have not been able to change their status. When making career choices, the needs and expectations of family members are of primary importance; a peaceful and stable family life is the best possible outcome. Some common phrases used by all of the respondents include: "should", "care for the family", "peace", "others are more important than myself" and "patriarchal views". This demonstrates that there is rarely a conflict between traditional gender roles and women's own expectations. Women therefore find it difficult to change, as illustrated in the comparison of Taiwanese and Chinese-American daughters in the literature review: the lack of a clash of cultures is an important factor in Taiwanese women's inability to break free from their traditional roles.
3. The father-daughter relationship is complex in Taiwan. Fathers play the role of an 'opinion leader' and do not encourage their daughters to strive for change. They have a deep and long-lasting impact on their daughter's lives. According to the findings of this study, women with distant fathers find it difficult to remember what their fathers said to them - cold attitudes and low expectations leave women feeling confused and ignored. On the other hand, controlling fathers are 'opinion leaders' and prevent their daughters from pursuing their goals and choosing their own career, forcing them to conform to traditional gender roles in order to lead a peaceful life. Mothers who are left at home to look after the children are extremely busy and most of them have very traditional attitudes on gender, believing that the most important goal for their daughter is finding a husband.
4. The restrictions of traditional values mean that Taiwanese women lack clear life goals. Their pursuit of a higher status in society goes no further than receiving a higher level of education; there is no desire for career or earnings progression. Even for women with a higher education, achievement motivation is very low, revealing

that the goals of professional training in Taiwanese higher education conflict with the traditional female role expected by society and family. This serious waste of human resources is a significant social problem in Taiwan today.

5. Despite the rapid development of mass media, especially the major influence it has in portraying gender, the media only plays a weak role in the career choices of Taiwanese women - the most decisive factor is interpersonal communication, especially the role of the father as the 'opinion leader'.

B. Recommendations

This study proposes the following recommendations for future research:

1. A surprising finding of this study is that despite adequate academic and professional training, women have an inferior status in the workplace or even leave the job market altogether. This is both an individual loss as well as a loss to the Taiwanese economy as a whole. The results of this study aim to raise awareness among women and promote their rights and interests in the workplace. This study recommends that future research explores and devises a strategy for changing women's status in the workplace.

2. This study returns to the long-standing topic of interpersonal communication and reexamines its effect on women's career choices. This approach is of great significance in an age full of electronic media accompanied by a change in communication methods. This study recommends that future research should explore how to change the traditional gender attitudes and expectations of 'opinion leaders' in Taiwan; this could then be followed by a discussion on how these 'opinion leaders' could contribute to increasing women's achievement motivation and status in the workplace.

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AUTHOR'S PROFILE

Dr. Shu-Hui Huang is an Associate Professor and Dept of the Department of Mass Communication at Hsuan Chuang University in Taiwan. In 1989, she received her master's degree in journalism and mass communication from Iowa State University. In 1995, she received her doctoral degree in sociology from North Carolina University. Her current research interests focus on gender and communication, media and society, and organizations and dark culture.

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