

**PARENTING STYLES OF TAIWANESE SINGLE MOTHERS
WHOSE ELDEST CHILD IS BETWEEN THE AGES OF SEVEN
AND SEVENTEEN**

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Submitted to the faculty of the University Graduate School
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree
Master of Sciences
in the Department of Applied Health Science, School of Health, Physical Education, and
Recreation
Indiana University
May 2010

Accepted by the Graduate Faculty, Indiana University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I want to thank the Taiwanese single mothers participating in this study who were willing to share their time and amazing stories with warmth and kindness. Their information and voices have not only provided me with new insights on the challenges single mothers face in Taiwan, but also gave me the opportunity to view my own family and culture in a different perspective.

Secondly, I would like to thank Hsaio-Chiang and Hui-Fen for being enthusiastic when I collected participants for this study. Without their help and introductions, I could not have conducted my interviews in such a short time.

In addition, I want to thank my thesis committee Chair, Dr. Kathleen R. Gilbert, and committee members, Dr. Maresa J. Murray and Dr. Robert E. Billingham Sr. I am lucky to have these scholars on my committee, who offered guidance and support during this study. Their advice and encouragement helped me to keep on the right track throughout the study.

I am grateful to my Taiwanese friends, Ya-Ling, Feng-Ru, and Yi-Lu, who were always supportive when I felt challenged by this project. They discussed and debated the various issues this study addresses, offering me different perspectives when thinking, restructuring and verifying the interpretations and ways of presenting these single mothers' stories.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my dear family who is always being supportive spiritually and financially. Their care and encouragement have provided the biggest motivation for me to persevere throughout the process of completing my thesis.

ABSTRACT

Chen Jou-Chen

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This study addresses parenting styles of Taiwanese single mothers, focusing on interactions between cultural factors and their approach to parenting, and how Taiwanese single mothers define and perceive their parenting styles. Using phenomenological and narrative analysis, eight participants (four divorced, four widowed) were interviewed in-depth in Taiwan, using Chinese and Taiwanese. The study identified their self-awareness as parents in terms of behaviors, beliefs, attitudes and values as well as interactions with their children, including the use of discipline. Additional issues addressed include financial circumstances, social and government resources available to single mothers, their emotional management/coping strategies and problem solving abilities, their use of self-talk/proverbs, and their children's personalities in relation to family status and patriarchal cultural attitudes about single-mother households.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Research studies on Asian parenting have increased immensely in the past two decades. Rapid changes in the last century raised interest in examining the impacts of urbanization and industrialization on family structures and family values within Asian families (Chao, 2002). Early research on parental control among Asians demonstrated that parents used harsh and strict parenting practices with their children that are not in alignment with Western child-rearing philosophies. Yet recent research shows that the negative descriptions of Asian parenting may have resulted from cultural differences or misunderstandings based on limited Western perspectives on these collectivist cultures (Chao, 2002). Researchers posited that existing studies and typology originate mostly from Caucasian cultural contexts that emphasize individualism and independence for children. As such, existing research cannot fully capture the prevailing parenting styles in Taiwan, which do not share the same social values and beliefs with individualistic Western societies (Fung, 2003). Many researchers have thus become aware of the impact of indigenous cultural notions on parenting, and take into consideration the similarity and distinctions in parenting practices among diverse cultural groups when analyzing these studies.

This study attempts to recognize and understand the parenting behavior/styles provided by single Taiwanese parents whose eldest child is between the ages of seven and 17, female-headed single-parent families. In addition, the researcher focuses on the interaction between cultural factors and reported parenting styles in Taiwan.

Statement of the Problem

The focus of this study is to understand the parenting style offered by Taiwanese single mothers. Additionally, the study will address that how cultural factors influence single mothers' parenting techniques, in particular: How do Taiwanese single mothers define their parenting and what are the differences between their parenting styles and western parenting typologies? Is the cultural context a major factor in influencing single mothers' child-rearing practices?

Purpose of the Study

Studies show that parenting is relevant and contributes to children's academic, social, and psychological adjustment, hence the quality of parenting has a great influence on child development (Bronstein, 1996). Furthermore, studies conducted in Taiwan demonstrated that mothers tend to be more involved in childcare responsibilities and hold the primary responsibilities of child training (Chao, 2002). The quality of parenting is thus directly related to mothers' parenting style. In addition, studies show that parents in single-parent families typically experience higher levels of parenting stress than those in dual-parent families, as they must sustain their families financially and fulfill both father and mother roles. As a result, they may be more likely to abuse their children (Weng, 1999). This study will be designed to understand and verify the parenting style provided by Taiwanese single-mothers. The results of the study may offer practitioners a direction for developing or modifying parenting programs in order to help single parents provide better and more sound parenting of their children. In addition, the study may help researchers understand and depict how cultural contexts and family structure can influence parenting behaviors.

Need for the Study

In Chinese, the term “parenting” (教養) has multiple meanings, such as to govern, to teach, and to restrict children’s behaviors, and to cultivate children’s virtues. In addition, the meaning of parenting in Chinese and Taiwanese has a great emphasis children’s education (Revised Chinese Dictionary, 1994). According to these Chinese definitions and compare the definition with western studies, “parenting” does not have the same applied meaning as in American society (Cheng, 2006). Parenting may have different interpretations within cultures (Chen & Yi, 2005). More examples and studies will be discussed in chapter two.

At the beginning of the 20th century, divorce had become a common phenomenon in Taiwan (Chen & Yi, 2005). Remarriage after divorce, however, is not the average case among women. Taiwanese single-parent families are thus predominately headed by divorced mothers.

Children living in single-parent families are more likely to engage in problematic behavior than children from two-parent families. Lack of discipline and weak parent-child relationships due to their parents’ tight working schedule may result in problematic parenting styles (Weng, 1999). While there is substantial research on single parenting techniques, existing research fails to recognize the considerable distinction of parenting behaviors/style of Taiwanese single parents. Therefore, a research study is needed to provide a better understanding of the parenting styles within Taiwanese single parent families.

Delimitations

This study is designed under the following specific conditions. First, it recruits five participants among Taiwanese single mothers whose eldest child is between the ages of seven and 17. Moreover, the mothers should be the primary caregivers of their children. Second, data collection includes an in-depth interview. Third, the interviews collect participants’ narratives of

parenting styles (please refer to the appendices A and B). In order to understand the uniqueness of Taiwanese single mothers' parenting style, this study is conducted in a particular geographic area. Furthermore, in an effort to collect accurate data regarding the actual lived experiences of the participants, both interviewers and participants speak Chinese or Taiwanese. Lastly, the length of data collection period depends on the interview process with the participants and the emerging theme/s.

Limitations

The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of the uniqueness of parenting styles within a particular contextual setting. As the results of the study cannot be generalized for all single-parent parents, seeking uniqueness rather than generality for other researchers in referring/duplicating may become the limitation of the study.

Assumptions

As I started to explore the relevant studies and research about parenting, I discovered that the four parenting configurations of Baumrind's (1971) became the standard typology for latter researchers to follow while conducting their studies. Moreover, most studies were conducted within western cultures. Research comparing parenting styles within different ethnicities demonstrates that parents who are not Caucasian tend to provide more authoritarian parenting styles. Due to my cultural background, the findings of these studies aroused my interests of delving into articles about parenting style within Asian society, particularly in Taiwan.

Chao (2002, 1994) pointed out that most related studies considered Chinese parenting styles as authoritarian typology, which represents Chinese parents as more autocratic than Caucasian parents. Nevertheless, Chinese parenting styles may also be considered as warm and

loving as western/authoritative parenting styles if researchers consider cultural and historical contexts as salient factors influencing child-rearing beliefs and behaviors (Chen, 2005). After reading more related studies conducted within Asian societies (Chao, 2002; Chen & Luster, 2002; Chen & Yi, 2005; Dong, Chen & Zhou, 1997; Fung, 2003; Luo, 1997; Weng, 1999), I found there is more information to be gained about Taiwanese parenting styles. Furthermore, mothers within Chinese culture are more likely to be the primary caregivers, and they provide considerable warmth and emotional support toward their children (Chao, 2002). Additionally, as divorced families become a common family structure and phenomenon in Taiwan (Weng, 1999), I believe that further understanding of how Taiwanese single mothers perceive and define their parenting style will be helpful for parents, educators, teachers, and practitioners, helping them to develop, improve, or modify parenting curriculum and programs in Taiwan.

Definitions of Terms

Definition of Culture

Culture----culture is constituted of multiple factors, and can thus be interpreted in various ways. The historic-political conditions, geographical foundations, societal consciousness, local customs, religious beliefs, perceptions of ethnicity, national identity, language and dialects, and world trends are factors that can have a significant impact on forming culture. In this study, the term “culture” will be considered as a way of life and an attitude or position adopted by Taiwanese (Chun, 1996; Alasuutari,1995). The attitudes and ways of life people adopt in any social

class in Taiwan may be influenced by specific historic-political backgrounds, such as Confucian philosophy, Japanese colonization, authoritarian control by the KMT Party, varied migration from China, etc. Hence, “culture” in this study can refer to the atmosphere or belief/value system of the specific worldview constructed by contemporary Taiwanese people. (Note: KMT, Kuomintang or the Nationalist Party, is the major political party in Taiwan).

Definition of Parenting

Parenting-----parenting includes teaching and governing children’s daily learning and behaviors through parents’ beliefs, attitudes, emotions, values, knowledge and interests (Cheng, 2006).

Definition of Parenting Styles

Parenting Style

Parenting style -----is a unique configuration that represents a combination of children’s competence and a certain group of parents who share similar parental behaviors, beliefs, value systems, attitudes, and knowledge of child development (Baumrind, 2005; 1978).

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITURATURE

Over the past three decades, the “life course” perspective has become the major research paradigm in family studies. People’s lives, changing society, time of living, linked or interdependent lives, and human agency are the major themes of the life course paradigm (Elder, 1994).

The life course can be considered a phenomenon with multi-dimensions, ranging from structured pathways through social institutions and organizations to personal social tracks and their developmental pathways. The life course perspective can be referred to as the interaction of age-graded trajectories such as family courses work career, which change due to external environments or life transitions, ranging from graduate from school to retirement (Elder, 1994).

Moreover, the life course perspective provides researchers with a framework for exploring human’s complex and interdependent pathways of life. For example, when thinking of the interaction of marriage and parenthood, new parental responsibilities and economic demands may be stressful, and help speed the negatives processes or outcomes of life, such as diminishing the quality of life and mutual companionship of a marriage. In addition, at different age/developmental stages, people have different tasks or roles to fulfill. The central premise of life course study is thus the developmental processes and outcomes formed by the social tracks that people follow (Elder, 1994).

Family life cycle/course can refer to family structures, constitutions, and behavioral changes. Goldenberg (1991) defines the family life cycle/course as a series of stages or events that help people recognize family as a systematic structure over a course of time. Other

researchers (Peng, 2003; White & Klein, 2002) concluded that family development is subjected to related social norms and societal time lines, and interactions between family members within a family unit are influenced by social roles. Transition from one family stage to another stage may be predicted based on the former stage, but the order of family developments might be interrupted or destroyed due to unexpected incidents, which may also change the original family system. Hence, such incidents can disarrange a family's original living pace, where the most common incident of disruption is marriage dissolution (Peng, 2003).

In order to understand a family's life cycle/course, the salient indicator is the children's age and development in the family. According to Duvall (1977), children at different ages represent a different family life cycle/course for a family. Moreover, the major function of the family, especially in Asian countries, is to generate the next generation which needs to be protected, raised, and socialized within society. The observation of children's development in the family setting thus conveys much information for researchers in understanding a family's life cycle/course (Peng, 2003). Furthermore, some studies showed that parenting strongly influences children's academic, social, and psychological adjustments (Bronstein, Duncan, D'Ari, Pieniadz, Fitzgerald, Abrams, Frankowski, Franco, Hunt & Oh Cha, 1996). Parents' behaviors and attitudes toward their children, as well as their beliefs, values, and practices are directly related to the outcomes of child development within a family, and can also indirectly predict a family's life cycle/course.

Parenting style

Parenting style is an indicator of children's competence, and it also designates the observed parenting practices other than abuse (Baumrind, 2005). When it comes to parenting

style, Baumrind's typology continues to have an impact, as it is frequently and commonly used as a key reference. In her studies, Baumrind divided parents into three groups according to the parental control that parents maintained with their children. These parenting style categories include: *permissive*, *authoritarian*, and *authoritative* (Carter & Welch, 1981; Baumrind, 1966).

When *permissive* parents face their children's impulses, desires, and actions, they tend to be non-punitive, agreeable, and favorable. In addition, permissive parents may consider themselves as the child's resource; nevertheless, they allow children to govern and take responsibility for themselves rather than being an active parent who takes control over the children's life.

Training their children to be obedient is often the first priority for *authoritarian* parents. Authoritarian parents tend to hold strong attitudes and give firm advice when discussing or enacting parenting. Furthermore, *authoritative* parents do not generally attempt to demand obedience from children, but tend to share their reasoning policy with firm parental control while providing direct advice with warmth and love (Carter & Welch, 1981; Baumrind, 1966).

Baumrind's parenting studies developed typologies within parenting style prototypes. These typologies include authoritarian-directive, non-authoritarian-directive, permissive, and democratic parenting style. Also, rejecting and neglecting are two disengaged subtype parenting styles (Baumrind, 2005; Smetana, 1995). Authoritative parents are considered to be very demanding, very responsive, and not overly invasive. Hence, adolescents who appear to be most competent and well-adjusted are often those whose parents practice the authoritative parenting style. Poor academic performance, yet well socialized, are characteristics of adolescents whose parents provide both the authoritarian and non-authoritarian parenting styles. Nevertheless,

children who are reared using the authoritarian-directive parenting style appear to be more stressed than adolescents who experience non-authoritarian-directive parenting styles (Baumrind, 2005). As seen in related studies, while many researchers refer to Baumrind's work regarding parenting style and child development, these studies fail to recognize the influences of cultural and contextual factors on parenting styles.

Chinese parenting style

While several studies indicate that Asian parents often endorse absolute parental control, which means overly controlling behavior and a tendency toward harshness in dealing with their children, other research studies reveal that many contemporary Asian parents guide their children with reasonable expectations and requests rather than absolute parental control (Chao & Tseng, 2002). Although Asian parents view parental authority as important under the filial-based cultural mechanism, love and affection are still considered the most important aspects of child-rearing (Chao & Tseng, 2002). Chao and Tseng also discovered that Chinese mothers noted that parental love and sacrifice were important to developing a harmonious relationship and atmosphere within families.

Moreover, the researchers described that parental respect can be viewed as "family harmony" and "love and affection," which reflect the emotional aspects of filial piety rather than behavioral aspects. Asian children are therefore socialized to follow and respect parental guidance as well as provide a certain level of financial, instrumental, and emotional support to their families (Chao & Tseng, 2002). Other studies also showed that Taiwanese parents and Chinese immigrants in the United States provide a more direct and strict, yet equally warm, parenting style as European or American parents (Chao & Tseng, 2002).

Several researchers (Chao & Tseng, 2002) noted that Confucian philosophies, such as family devotion and respecting parents and other authority figures, are linked to parental authority among Chinese parents. In Confucian-based societies, filial piety has been described as a guided principle of socialization, as well as a set of rules on intergenerational conduct. Parents and the elderly gain greater authority, obedience, and respect from their children (Chao & Tseng, 2002). The essential concept of Chinese parenting and training (教訓- *jiaxun* and 管-*guan*), refers to the introduction of the obedience and proper manners by exposing the child to explicit examples, or by comparing them to other children. While the English translation of “*guan*”(管) has a potentially negative meaning, in Taiwan’s society or Asian cultures “*guan*”(管) has a positive meaning which means “to care for” or “to love” as well as “to govern” (Fung, Lieber & Leung, 2003).

In spite of the statements demonstrated by several studies, according to the Ho (1989), Chinese/ Taiwanese parents tend to provide lenient or even indulgent parenting toward children under the age of six. Yet a stricter or even harsh discipline/parenting style would be provided by Chinese/Taiwanese parents with children after the age of six. The reason for this is Chinese/Taiwanese parents consider children under the age of six to be too immature to understand adult concerns, and thus are not capable of being responsible for mistakes or actions that fail to fulfill parents’ expectations. Furthermore, there is a lack of dramatic transformation (such as rebellion or acting out) in children from childhood through adolescence to adulthood among Chinese/ Taiwanese compared with western societies (Ho, 1989).

Taiwanese Parenting styles

Several studies examining the different roles played by fathers and mothers in Taiwanese rural families found that Taiwanese fathers are considered to offer the family economic support, moral instruction, and discipline. In contrast, mothers play the role of providing emotional support and developing warm and loving relationships within the home (Chao & Tseng, 2002). Fathers are expected to tolerate emotional indulgence; however expressions of love toward their children are constrained by the traditional parental role in Taiwan. Research conducted in East Asia indicated that mothers in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Mainland China were warmer and less restrictive than fathers, but they appeared to be more demanding. Asian mothers may therefore build up a more intimate relationship with their children than Asian fathers (Chao & Tseng, 2002).

Research examining influences of the socio-economic status on parenting indicated that parents with lower socio-economic status tend to have more restrictiveness in parenting than those among higher socio-economic status (Chao & Tseng, 2002). Within single-parent families, financial stability is always a major issue, or a stress point, as they may need to provide financial support for their elderly parents (Son, Lin & George, 2008). Furthermore, studies showed that parents in single-parent families typically experienced higher levels of parenting stress than those in dual-parent families, as they must sustain their families financially and play both father and mother roles. Children in single-parent families are more likely to engage in problematic behavior than children from two-parent families, sometimes due to the lack of discipline, supervision, or strong parent-child relationships created by the single parent's tight work schedule (Weng, 1999). Single parents are also more likely to use a less suitable parenting style due to the daily stress they encounter, which may result in abuse of their children (Weng, 1999).

Not surprisingly, some studies showed that parenting is relevant to children's academic, social, and psychological adjustment. Poor parenting may result in poor school performance, poor social skills, and poor emotional management (Bronstein, Duncan, D'Ari, Pieniadz, Fitzgerald, Abrams, Frankowski, Franco, Hunt & Oh Cha, 1996). The quality of parenting therefore has a great influence on child development. As it the case worldwide, studies have shown that Taiwanese mothers tend to bear more of the childcare and child training responsibilities than men (Chao & Tseng, 2002). As a result, the quality of parenting and child development are positively related to mothers' parenting style.

The increased numbers of single-parent families in Taiwan have caused practitioners and researchers' attention to focus on the related issues and outcomes of divorce and widowhood (Huang, 2007). The Taiwanese divorce rate has tripled over the past two decades, from 0.8 couples per 1,000 persons in 1981 to 2.7 in 2001. Divorce appears to have become a common phenomenon in Taiwan at the beginning of the 20th century, where compared to other Asian countries, with the exception of Korea, Taiwan has the highest divorce rate among Asian societies (Chen & Yi, 2005). The rate of remarriage among divorced and widowed female is not common among women, and is much lower than the rate among divorced and widowed males in Taiwan. . In 2002, the Taiwanese male remarriage rate was 50.9 per 1,000 persons and only 16.6 per 1,000 persons for females. As far fewer women got remarried after divorced and widowed than men, and women take responsibility for child-rearing, single parent families are usually headed by single mothers in Taiwan.

The modification of laws on child custody enacted in Taiwan after 1996 resulted in the increased number of female-headed single-parent families, as an increasing number of judges decided to relegate children to the custody of their mothers (Tsai, 2002). Within Taiwanese

society, the major reason for single-mother families is the death of the husband, and the second major reason is marriage dissolution/divorce (Tsai, 2002). The vulnerability of single-parent families is usually greater than the two-parent families due to weaker financial status and the pressure of double-parental roles falling to a single parent. Furthermore, among the population of single-parent families, female-headed single-parent families often tend to have weaker financial resources when compared with male-headed single-parent families (Huang, 2007; Tsai, 2002). According to the Tsai's (2002) study, males often have higher education levels than females, and thus have better opportunities for obtaining well-paying jobs. Nonetheless, single mothers tend to build and maintain better relationships and interactions with their children when compared with single fathers (Tsai, 2002).

Since the 1990s, however, a new family structure has formed in Taiwan. Families with foreign brides have emerged in Taiwan's society, with the brides immigrating from Southeast Asia and Mainland China. The notable cultural differences and values these couples engage has resulted in unstable marriages and increased divorce rates (Chen & Yi, 2005). Single parents' families are thus likely to become common family structure in Taiwan, making the parenting style of Taiwanese single mothers a timely and relevant topic.

In summary, the factors influencing Taiwanese parenting styles vary due to complex and various situations that have created change in the society. Parents may identify with a specific parenting style, but there are always differences of behavior and attitude between one parent and another. We should thus keep in mind that parenting styles and domestic circumstances may be more varied than in the past. Parenting styles categorized with the same prototype might vary due to different contextual settings or specific situations parents confront (Carter & Welch, 1981).

As such, a study regarding Taiwanese parenting styles is essential in gaining a sense of new and meaningful trends in family and parenting practices.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

The focus of this study is to understand the impact of culture/context on the parenting styles of Taiwanese single mothers. This chapter focuses on (a) methodology overview, (b) selection of participants, (c) data collection, and (d) data analysis.

Methodology Overview

Phenomenology is the study of how people make sense of what they experience in certain phenomenon by transforming the experience into their consciousness level in our everyday life (Patton, 2002). When researchers try to think phenomenologically, they attempt to understand the nature of how people experience the world. One thing to keep in mind is that perception is a description, or a form of interpretation, of a person. Phenomenology provides insight into the essence of the lived experience that we may have been unaware of but can recognize (Richards, 2007). Understanding the participant's focus of an experience is a way to know how he/she interprets the world (Patton, 2002). To better understand these experiences, researchers need to transform themselves from "outsiders" to "insiders" to understand the interpreted world of participants. The phenomenology process focuses on the lived experience, and is thus an appropriate way of understanding the lived experience of Taiwanese single mothers.

The central idea of narrative analysis is that the story and text from participants provide researchers with a path to social and cultural meanings (Patton, 2002). The concern of narrative analysis is to understand the meanings of experience and living stories that people tell us. Hence, the meaning-making process is the linkage of relating stories together and articulating the significance of these stories (Gubrium & Holstein, 1997). Therefore, according to the focus and

concerns of phenomenological and narrative analysis approaches, this study utilizes in-depth interviews as the primary data collection method.

Selection of Participants

The study used the qualitative approach, with convenience and snowball sampling methods. Eight participants were recruited in Taiwan, four divorced and four widowed Taiwanese mothers whose eldest child is between the ages of 7 and 17 from the cities of Chiayi and Keelung in Taiwan. These were located by asking or being introduced by friends who are counseling and guidance teachers, two divorced single mothers were recruited from Chiayi and other two divorced and four widowed mothers from Keelung, who were introduced by a social worker at the Social Bureau at Keelung.

The participants of the study were originally to include divorced single mothers only, but due to the difficulties and time limitations for the Taiwanese researcher/interviewer, widowed single mothers were included the study as the participants after the discussion and approval of committee chair/supervisor of the study. Two of the participants (divorced single mothers in Chiayi) are students' parents who were introduced to the study by the guidance and counseling teacher in Chiayi. Five participants (four widowed single mothers and one divorced single mothers) are colleagues of the social worker in the Social Bureau at Keelung, and the other one participant (divorced single mother) is a relative of the social worker. Hence, two of the interviews were conducted in the Chiayi and the other six in the Keelung.

For confidentiality purposes, the names and any information that could identify these participants were removed or modified. Pseudonyms are used within the interview transcripts and descriptions in the study.

Data Collection

Face to face interviews are the primary source of data. The length of each individual interview depended on the actual atmosphere and condition with each participant. The interviews were audio recorded. Before conducting the interviews, the interviewer was trained on how to conduct interviews and was familiar with interview skills.

The interviewer/researcher followed the interview guide to conduct in-depth interviews (please refer to the appendices A and B). Based on the steps and leading questions on the interview guide, the interviewer /researcher asked (1) participants' demographic information (e.g., mother's age, mental and physical health conditions, marital status, socioeconomic status, family genogram, educational level, etc.); (2) mothers' perception of her parenting attitudes and behaviors (e.g., mothers' knowledge of child development, beliefs, attitudes, values, and behaviors toward childrearing); (3) the relationships and interactions between mothers and children; (4) where and how mothers receive certain resources to enhance/support their parenting and to reduce their perceived stress (e.g., how their social network functions and how they receive social support, and what kind of difficulties they confront), and (5) mother's advice/suggestions/reflection on being a single mother. These leading questions are the key dimensions about parenting that interviewer /researcher addresses.

The interviewer was careful not to mislead the participants or judge their answers, and did not divulge her personal opinions while interviewing. While interviewing, the interviewer was responsible for clarifying questions for participants, and the interviews were conducted in Chinese and Taiwanese in order to have better communication and understanding of participants'

responses about parenting style. In addition, the language also demonstrated the underlying meanings which come from cultural influences.

During several interviews in Keelung, there was an observant/change agent sitting aside participants and the interviewer. After those interviews, the observant gave her feedback and reflections both about the interviews and interviewer/researcher (The training background of the observant is a counselor).

Moreover, before interviewing, the researcher received the IRB approval to conduct the study and followed the related protocols. As the study was conducted in Taiwan, the interviewer/researcher had regular online meetings via Skype with her University committee chair/academic advisor to receive appropriate supervision.

Data Analysis

Researchers bracket a main knowledge about the topic by writing their assumptions, knowledge, and expectations. They get involved in a conversation without a hypothesis, and follow a “clue-and-clue-taking process” while the conversation takes place. When they analyze the data, phenomenologists often reflect on their personal experience and as well as others experiences (Richards, 2007). After collecting the data from selected participants, the interviewer should suspend her own assumptions and prejudice of possible results in order to concentrate attention on essence of the participants’ narratives. The concepts recognized in the transcribed interview notes should include not only the researcher’s interpretations of parenting but also reveal the perceptions of participants’ stories. Bracketing also helps researchers temporarily suspend their original beliefs about parenting so that other perspectives and questions may emerge (Richards, 2007). Researchers should thus be as objective as possible.

Before interviewing each participant, the interviewer/researcher tried to bracket herself by noting down thoughts, feelings, and assumptions in journals. In addition, as the interviewer/researcher was trained as a counselor when studying in university for four years, she kept in mind the difference in roles between an interviewer and a counselor, and maintained notes about personal reflections and interviewees' narratives. After each interview, the interviewer/researcher also noted down her thoughts, reflections, and observations about herself and the interview. She also summed up the similarities and differences of participants' narratives and modified the interview guideline in order to conduct better interviews.

After collecting data via in-depth interviews from participants, the interviewer/researcher transcribed the audio records of the interviews into Chinese verbatim manuscripts. She then picked one divorced and one widowed single mothers' Chinese manuscripts from all the participants to translate into English transcripts along with cultural explanations and specific customs and circumstances in Taiwan. In addition, the interviewer/researcher followed a systematic process to analyze and code the collected data (Leydon, 2000). Collected transcripts were sorted, color-coded, and categorized based on the research questions of the study, and leading questions listed on the interview guideline in order to find emergent themes and key issues (for more on the processes of analyzing please refer to appendix). The transcripts were read repeatedly to recognize identical themes and key concepts, and coding and the development of patterns or frameworks from the body of collected transcripts were used to interpret the narratives of participants. Furthermore, while analyzing the transcripts and adding explanations of cultural contexts and specific customs and circumstances from transcripts, the researcher not only verified the translation and her personal interpretation of the transcripts with both the Taiwanese and Americans, but also took journal notes to record any personal confusion,

feedback, and reflections about herself and transcripts via writing and audio recording, no matter when they were being analyzed, in her daily life.

After analyzing each transcript, the researcher summed and categorized all the emergent themes and sub-themes together on a big tree diagram, and then organized them on a big table/column that followed the order and categories for the purpose of comparing and restructuring the emergent themes.

Chapter 4

FINDINGS

In this chapter, the researcher introduces each participant's story in brief summaries, where pseudonyms are used and any identifying information has been modified. The researcher discusses findings within emergent themes along with quoted conversations from each participant's interview transcripts that demonstrate literal and underlying meanings the participants are implying or trying to express.

Summary of each participant's story

Divorced Single mothers

Chiayi City Ah-Juan

Ah-Juan is a single mother in her thirties who has two daughters, aged nine and ten with a man to whom she was not married, and who had his own family before meeting up with her. The couple cohabited and had their children before separating, and **Ah-Juan's** social economic status is not good. She has custody of their children and is their primary caregiver. **Ah-Juan** usually has to work many part-time jobs to sustain the expenses of her family, and thus she doesn't have much time to with them. She is optimistic, however, and willing to seek help from different social organizations and resources, but she faces difficulties when trying to apply for subvention or child support from the Social Bureau. These government bureaus were confused in their dealings with her, and were unwilling to offer child support at first because they considered her kids to be "legitimate." The fact that there is no marital relationship between **Ah-Juan** and her partner was a huge obstacle when she applied for various forms of subvention and child support. Luckily, her mother and siblings have been willing to take care of her kids when she is not

available. As the eldest child **Ah-Juan** helped her parents take care of her younger siblings, and in fact gave up her studying opportunities to sustain the finances of her parents and family. Her siblings have a better education than she, and thus have a higher social economic status. They are also willing to support her family expenses as needed.

Ah-Juan considers the most important parenting principles as, “Always be your children’s friends rather than being a parent,” “Try to put yourself in your children’s shoes as much as possible,” and “Adjust your attitude and beliefs at all times.” Also, a central idea she held when facing difficulties is the Chinese saying, “Kui Le Shi Yi Ten, Tong Ku Shi Yi Ten” (快樂是一天, 痛苦是一天), which means, Time passes no matter if you feel happy or sad, and holding an optimistic attitude rather than a pessimistic attitude about life will help you live happily every day instead of living painfully, or, To live happily or painfully each day is a choice one must make.

Ah-Juan and her children usually watch TV together or sleep late in the morning on weekends or after work. She works all day every weekday, and seldom has holidays or day off to rest. She usually stays home to do inside activities with her children in order for leisure and rest. When her children would like to have an outing, her siblings would usually be willing to take her children to have some fun. As a result, her children have great relationships with their aunts and uncles. She described her eldest as an independent child when compared with other ten year-olds. Her elder child also helps her to discipline her younger child, assists in doing some house chores as well. Her younger child is very thoughtful and considerate to others, and often says sweet words to **Ah-Juan**.

Ting-Ting is a divorced single mother in her thirties who owns her own business in the city, a piano studio. Most of the time, she needs to work in during the day and usually has to take care of her son while she is working. The first floor of her studio is used for business and the second floor is where she and her son live. Although she has to work in most of the time, even when her son finishes school, her son can still reach her if he needs to. **Ting-Ting** doesn't consider that she has less time spent with her son. When talking about her parenting attitude and beliefs, she said she would like to give her son a happy childhood rather than push him too hard on everything, especially academic performance. She is afraid of her son would be discriminated against by other classmates due to his coming from a single-parent household. She often asks her son hypothetical questions on how he would deal with classmates' questioning and mockery about their unique family structure in order to teach or provide him support.

Ting-Ting suffered from her ex-husband's violent behavior and verbal abuse, and was even threatened by her husband and in-laws that she needed to pay his debts. She talked a good deal about her negative relationships with her ex-husband (whom she referred to as "the man" instead of her "ex-husband") and family-in-laws, and how these people threatened her verbally and spiritually. Moreover, she worries that the domestic violence from the dissolved marriage resulted in negative impacts on her son, who experienced marital conflicts of his parents and his father's abusive behaviors to his mother. And she is afraid of her son's development because he lacks of a male model to imitate. She avoids discussing their marital relationship and current conditions between her and her ex-husband with her son. She considers that "divorce" is a vague idea for her son's age group, and believes marriage should be an adult topic that should not worry the children. Before the marriage dissolution, **Ting-Ting** and her ex-husband had a long

separation, but she didn't discuss this in detail with her son at the time. She revealed that her son was expressed disappointment about the separation and wondered why they couldn't get together anymore. When she gave a brief explanation of the separation and dissolution of their marriage, she tried not to utilize negative descriptions and imagery, to avoid ruining her son's image of his father and to protect his generally sound and happy childhood. She considered the phrase "single parent" to be a "defective" term, and tried hard to maintain the marital relationship since their son was little. She had communicated with ex-husband and family-in-laws about solving the marital issues, but in vain.

Ting-Ting said that her marital relationship was actually dissolved when his son at kindergarten, and she made up the story that his father was working at other city, as her ex-husband is not local to Chiayi. Nevertheless, when her son studied at elementary school and needed to fill in certain family information on forms, she faced the dilemma of having to tell her son the truth, and informed the class teacher of the family situation. As there is much related information required for helping or supporting single-parent families, which needs to be passed out to the parents through students, she had to tell her son about the divorce. Along with the negative relationship with her ex-husband and family-in-laws, who threatened her verbally and spiritually, **Ting-Ting** told me about her hopes for her son, that he lives a happy and sound life and not be discriminated against by classmates or others due to his "special" family structure, as a child of a single mother who may have "misbehaved" or who is part of a minority. One of the major reasons why she works hard to provide a better quality of life to her son is to prevent her son from being influenced by prevailing negative stereotypes of single-parent families. When talking to discipline her son, for example, **Ting-Ting** said she would not take too seriously the terms her son uses if they are not too negative or impolite, choosing to ignore them in hopes that

he could become tougher when facing mockery and discrimination from others. In fact, she talked a lot about the stigma of being a divorced single parent or the child of single parents. She felt that these negative stereotypes and stigma are serious obstacles for single parents in raising their children, and adds a lot of pressure for these parents. She wishes that other single parents could hold a positive and formative attitude about their status when facing the stigmatized attitude of others.

Ting-Ting also mentioned that her own mother often encourages her, that if she meets someone “nice” she can try to start a new relationship. But her former experience with her ex-husband makes her usually think twice before considering any relationship development or decision, or just give up on the option. In any case, she said that she feels content to live with her son, and just enjoys their life together as a family of two.

Keelung City Ah-Ling

Ah-Ling is a divorced single mother in her early thirties who lives with her only child, a seven-year-old girl. When talking about the issue of parental discipline, she said that she is usually open-minded when teaching and rearing her daughter. In discussing the serious discrimination between boys and girls in her own family growing up, she revealed that she used to be treated unfairly and unreasonably and thus does not want her child to suffer this uncomfortable feeling. Wanting her child to grow up happily and carefree, she often would not punish or nag her daughter if she doesn't make big mistakes or admit them after the fact. **Ah-Ling** would teach her daughter patiently, and wouldn't correct her unless her daughter does something wrong or speaks impolitely. However, that is not usually the case. She complimented her daughter a lot while

interviewing, saying she is a very considerate and precocious child who knows what to do and what to say. Her daughter seldom asks for extra toys or snacks because she probably knows that those things are not affordable in their financial circumstances. Sometimes, **Ah-Ling** would try to convince her daughter to buy the items she wants, or encourage her to reveal her true thoughts on a subject. But her daughter generally acted mature or content with the situation. While **Ah-ling** felt gratified that she has a really mature and considerate children. She felt heartbroken at the same time that she could not afford a better quality of life and that her daughter may be concealing her real desires. She also mentioned that her daughter doesn't have food dislikes and is easy to raise. Oftentimes, they would go window shopping, chatting with each other as friends or riding bicycles after school and work or during the holidays. They would usually take a walk or bicycle ride in the nearby park, or they would take the train to Taipei (the capital of Taiwan, about 40 minutes away by regular train) for a short trip. **Ah-Ling** said that her daughter is very extroverted and active, and she is easily contented.

Ah-Ling's social resources, however, are limited. She told me that her parents and family exhibit a careless attitude toward her condition. Although she comes from a family that is a respected family in the community where she born, they discriminated against girls to the point that they don't care about **Ah-Ling's** condition at all, even when she found out her ex-husband's extra marital affairs. At the beginning when she found out her ex-husband's affairs, her parents-in-law would tell her they were sorry or ask for her forgiveness. After they found out **Ah-Ling's** own family was not on her side, her parents-in-law started to defend their son and criticize her as not being a good daughter-in-law. She was not her ex-husband's first wife, and her ex-husband loves to gamble. They became separated but not divorced for a long time, due to his avoidance. As he was initially a really good father and treated their daughter very well, after their separation **Ah-**

Ling explained to her daughter that her father was working outside of town. Since he did not want to come home, he started to visit their daughter at school from time to time. After the daughter saw her father brought other children and an aunt to visit her at school, and when he would come home to ask money and abuse **Ah-Ling** when she refused, the daughter started to refuse seeing him when he came to their home. Because the ex-husband's family wants the daughter back, and the ex-husband began to grab her from school and frighten her, she felt scared when she saw her father or someone discussed him. Because of these incidents and her ex-husband's abusive behavior, **Ah-Ling** decided to apply for a Restraining Order. Based on the request, the social worker told her to apply for a diagnosis certificate as well and go to the police office to report the case for her own good. In the end, the judges forced her ex-husband to divorce **Ah-Ling** and give her custody of their daughter.

Before the court judgment, however, the manager of the school was not willing to make the promise of contacting **Ah-Ling** when her ex-husband went to school to see their daughter and tried to take her away. The school manager said that they have no right to disagree with the ex-husband's visit unless the custody was clearly declared. But **Ah-Ling** asked a class teacher who was familiar with her family condition to contact her immediately when her ex-husband went to the school and tried to take away her daughter. After the judgment, the manager and teachers were willing to contact her as long as something unusual happened. Although **Ah-Ling** doesn't forbid her ex-husband to visit her daughter, as long as he doesn't try to abduct her, their daughter refuses to hear from, talk to, or see her father out of fear.

When talking about the differences of her parenting style before and after her separation, **Ah-Ling** mentioned that for the first half year, when she found out her ex-husband had extra-marital affairs, she treated her daughter with a little bit of indifference and carelessness due to her

unsteadily emotions about her situation at the moment. She was trying to adjust and deal with all the negative emotions and poor financial conditions the separation created, and thus paid less attention to her daughter than usual. Nevertheless, her daughter was so considerate and mature; she usually took care of herself and was well-behaved. After one incident when her daughter broke the water container on her feet, **Ah-Ling** realized that she had to adjust her attitude and started to focus on her daughter that she shouldn't let her daughter carry heavy container to pull water for herself at a such young age. Furthermore, when I asked her about how she cheered and sustained herself in her family financial difficulties, while taking good care of her daughter, she related her discovery that she would never receive the support and care from her own family or in-laws, and she knew that the only person she can count on is herself. Before the separation, she had no employment experience except for working in her family's company. She therefore had to take all kinds of odd jobs to sustain her daughter and their expenses. When making a sustainable income became impossible, she started to sell out her own jewelry to support them. The mainly belief she held is that she will choose to live happily rather than with continual upset and anger. The life of being alone with her daughter makes her feel content and satisfied, even though she has had to work more than one job. She wants to provide her daughter with the same quality of life like other children from two-parent families.

When **Ah-Ling** talked about the social support she had, she mentioned an elder female friend who helps her a lot, even sharing resources when her family is not doing well financially. Before her current job (as temporary staff in the Social Bureau), she usually had to work from early morning or until late night, so she was unable to take care of her daughter. This female friend would help take care of the child for a while and even tried to help her when she was ran out of funds. Luckily, she was introduced to her latest job by the social worker who took care of her

case when she applied for the Restraining Order. And thus she only has to work during the day, which fits perfectly with her daughter's school schedule. **Ah-Ling** said that from time to time when she felt exhausted and tired, she would think of her daughter and become strong and energetic again. She always thinks that she should take great responsibilities in allowing her daughter to live in a single-parent family without sufficient resources.

Keelung City Hsiao- Jin

Hsiao-Jin is divorced and lives with her ten-year-old son, mother, and sister-in-law. She works during the day and studies during the night to complete her master's degree in the Chihlee Institute of Technology. Before the divorce, she was a housewife who took care of her child by herself, and she felt unhappy about losing part of herself in marriage. Her ex-husband didn't care about their son or help her with raising him when he came home from work before the divorce. However, after the divorce, she not only feels happy and relief, but also stated that her ex-husband had built up a closer relationship with their son, calling or visiting him actively on holidays, and wanting to take him out for fun. **Hsiao-Jin** said that after the divorce her ex-husband seems to realize that he has to cherish the time with their son, and thus cares for and spends more time with their son when he is capable. When the couple decided to dissolve their marriage, **Hsiao-Jin** asked her son's permission and agreement to divorce her husband. Her son said he could accept this and he believes his mother would become happier. In addition, after the divorce, **Hsiao-Jin** started to fulfill her dream to save personal time to find herself again. She became happier and has more confidence in herself. She didn't think that the love they give to their son decreased, nor was the quality of life she tried to provide for him insufficient. She thus

feels her son also became happier than before. She never forbids her ex-husband to contact and hang out with their son, and she believes he still “owns” both his father and mother despite the fact that they are divorced. She also told me that because she has to work during the day and study at night, the primary caregiver becomes her mother instead of herself. But she claimed that she tries to spend time with her son when she finishes school later in the evening. To make sure he has enough time to spend with her, she takes her son travel outside of the country each summer vacation.

When **Hsiao-Jin** talked about her focus of parenting, she emphasized cultivating children’s confidence and better living habits. She considers that letting her child gain as many skills and knowledge as he can will help him gain more confidence, especially when he has more abilities than others. She sends him to many “cram schools” to learn these different skills, as she doesn’t want her son to lose out to others, and encourages him toward better performances than other kids at a similar age. Yet she also points out that forcing the child to study all the time is not a good idea. She lets her son to play video games and watch his favorite TV programs when he finishes his homework on time, and gives an extra bonus of entertainment time or toys when he does a good job on his academic performance. Nevertheless, she will punish her son when he doesn’t finish his homework or what he needs to do by cutting back his entertainment time. Furthermore, she emphasizes his need to build up a fixed daily routine, such brushing his teeth and washing his face at bedtime, or finishing his homework first before his entertainment time.

Hsiao-Jin also mentioned that the adults should keep their promises and build up a positive model for the kid, such as buying the gift he is promised after doing a good job. If you break the trust with a child, she feels you will never gain it again. She finds that while good parenting is hard to practice, there’s no big difference between her parenting practices before and after her

divorce. The environment didn't change and the people who live with her son are the same. The only thing that changed is her ex-husband's moving out. When I asked her if the lesser amount of time she spent with her son after the divorce due to her job and personal fulfillment made any difference to her son, and whether the different parenting styles she and her mother utilized confused her son or not, she told me that her personal time did not seem to cause much difference between her and her son, but the different parenting practices of her mother did cause some inconsistency. Nonetheless, she made an agreement with her mother that her mother's opinion comes first and her opinion comes the second in this case, so there was seldom any confusion or conflict resulting from their different parenting approaches. Also, she usually would first discuss these approaches with her mother to maintain the same attitude and similar parenting practices for teaching and governing the child. He often reports his stories from school to his grandmother more than to herself. When I asked her if she feels jealous about this closer relationship between her grandmother and son, **Hsiao-Jin** replied that she feels great that there is another person who gives love to his son. At some special holidays or events, he may also go to her ex-husband's home to visit her parents-in-law.

In addition, when I asked her about the child-rearing differences between single-parent families and two-parent families, she told me that there are certainly some variations but make no huge differences. She mentioned that there are many two-parent families where the husband/father goes to other country for work, and doesn't stay with family members for a long time. The parent who stays in the family has to take care of children without the spouse, a situation that is much like single-parent families. Moreover, during her son's early development, his father was not absent and they are on good terms.

Hsiao-Jin does not limit her son's interests and hobbies. She tries to help him explore and experience as much experience as possible, and learn various skills. But his grandmother is not favorable toward his interest in dancing. For their leisure activities on holidays, **Hsiao-Jin** often rides bicycles in the park with her son, watches TV with him, goes to local temples to worship the Mother God, or shops in the department store when the weather is hot outside.

She suggests that other single parents be independent and not hold the attitude of raising kids for the sake of the parents, as when assuming that when the kids grow up, they have to take care of their parents as well. Furthermore, she mentioned that adults should never bring their own issues to their children or express negative emotions against them.

Widowed Single mothers

Keelung City Shu-Chi

Shu-Chi is a widowed single mother of with a 15 year-old daughter and a 10 year- old son. She shared her experience of raising her children as a single parent, which she found to be more difficult. She tends to train her children to be more independent than other kids of two-parent families. There are many situations where she cannot be present, and helps her kids deal with many issues in hopes that they can be capable of caring for themselves. Furthermore, she stated that if children are not independent enough, parents will not be able to focus on their own work. **Shu-Chi** said that her elder daughter is an independent child who performs well on academic subjects at school. She usually doesn't need to pay extra attention to her or worry about her academic performance. In giving her opinions about building up mutual communications with her children's school/class teachers, **Shu-Chi** said that she would talk to their teachers on the

first day of school about their special family structure and conditions. Usually there are flyers and application forms from social organizations for teachers to pass on to single-parent families in order to offer various kinds of support. However, as children are very sensitive about labeling by others, **Shu-Chi** would try to explain the family situation to teachers to protect her children's feelings and keep them from discrimination. Moreover, she also mentioned that poor financial status is usually a weakness in most of the single-parent families, where parents would usually have no extra money to enroll their children in extra-curricular activities and classes after school. She thus tells her kids to do their best to gain as much skill and knowledge as they can at school and that having a higher educational level changes living environments and conditions for the better. She also considers that children who love to study rarely become misbehaved, and she therefore does her best to provide a better studying environment for her children. Moreover, she hopes that she can help her children cultivate some specialties that will allow them to live independently in the future.

In terms of familial support, during recent years **Shu-Chi's** father suffered from cancer and moved into her place to live with them. When her children finish school and before she returns from work, her father cooks and cares for them. Her interaction with her children is limited because they need to focus on their academic performance and have to study at school late or do their homework until midnight. She told me that her younger son usually does things very slowly, which boys should not do. Her son usually does his homework slowly, and takes lots of time to finish it. While she worries about his ability in time management, she said that he is a good kid, and that no matter how late he goes to bed, he always finishes his homework first. On her days off, **Shu-Chi** and her children usually do house chores, or she takes her son to his grandmother's (on his father's side). While her elder daughter is in her teens and is sometimes rebellious or hard

to discipline, **Shu-Chi** said that she is generally very open-minded in dealing with her, and usually maintains a friendship with her children. They usually chat with each other while riding on the motorcycle, or talk about the stories that occurred at school, commenting on different situations they experience. There are no limited phrases or words for them to use when communicating or conversing with each other. Unless her daughter utilizes speech that is improper or impolite to others, she would not correct her daughter. **Shu-Chi** said that she would take the opportunity to teach or correct her children when they shared other classmates' negative stories to her in order to help them differentiate what is right and what is wrong. She also told her children that making friends should depend on personality and temperament, not on one's academic performance.

She confessed to me that sometimes she would feel upset or annoyed after work, and might have less patience with her children when she tried to teach them. She explained to them that everyone makes mistakes and will never do things right every time, and they should therefore be considerate to each other at all times. **Shu-Chi** would try to utilize verbal discipline rather than physical punishment toward her children when they did something wrong or were not being obedient. She also teaches her children that one should cultivate character, morality and the ability of sound judgment. Also, seeking greater academic performance is not the only thing they should care about. In the past, she often asked her elder daughter to help her do house chores and take care of her younger brother, but the daughter felt this to be unfair just because she is the elder child. And the daughter also hates for her mother to nag her first, or tell her that she should take the responsibility when something wrong happened because she is the elder one.

After **Shu-Chi** came to work at the women's and children center, she learned many things from her co-workers and volunteers. As most co-workers have their own children at similar ages as

hers, they would share experiences or ask each others' opinions when facing parenting difficulties. As a result, **Shu-Chi** feels that her parenting became much more fair-minded than before. Yet compared with the mental health between her daughter and son, she is much more concerned about her elder daughter's condition, as she had tried to hurt herself once and was discovered by the class teacher. This incident caused some tension because **Shu-Chi** only found out about the incident from someone who saw her daughter at the school's health center, where she was taken to heal her wounds. When **Shu-Chi** asked the teacher about this, she found out that the teacher had made a deal with her daughter not to tell her parents if she agreed not to hurt herself again in this way. **Shu-Chi** felt upset that this teacher didn't inform her of the incident, and asked the teacher to tell her about any related events that occurred in the future. She is thus afraid of pushing her daughter too hard, or nagging her too often, but she tries to explain to or teach her daughter issues around suicide when they see it on the news or TV. **Shu-Chi** now keeps a close eye on her daughter's actions and moods in order to discern her real thinking and feelings. She also mentioned that she would encourage her daughter to set up goals to achieve at school.

Shu-Chi explained that one rule her children must obey is to make phone calls to her to report their safety. If the children don't make this call when they go home, their punishment would be more serious than if they don't finish their homework or do poorly on their tests. She told me that being a single parent sometimes is more a sensitive position than parents in two-parent families, as they generally pay more attention to children's safety when guardians are away. A critical issue for single parents is also parent care. For example, as **Shu-Chi**'s father is at hospital now and is not in a good shape, she has to take care of him and her children, moving

back and forth between her work place, home, and hospital. So sometimes she cannot take good care of her kids or pay extra attention to them.

During the time when she lost her husband, **Shu-Chi** went to see the counselor to become more aware of how to manage her “dead-alive” life. She discovered that she should go to work to sustain her family’s financial condition. She also told herself that it is one’s choice to have a happy day or a miserable day, depending on what attitude one holds (per the expression, Kui Le Shi Yi Ten, Tong Ku Shi Yi Ten 快樂是一天,痛苦是一天), and everyone should be grateful for what they have and be content (per Zhi Zu Xi Fu Gan En 知足惜福感恩). **Shu-Chi** would try her best to provide a better life to her children, and she doesn’t want others to treat them differently because they come from a single-parent family. Despite of the things she teaches her children, she also talks about death on a regular basis with them. Her husband died from liver cancer and her father now has colon cancer as well. The three of them (mother and children) would chat about their feelings and ideas about dying and death. When they talked about something unusual, **Shu-Chi** would try to tell them a relevant scenario and ask her children’s opinion about it, while correcting or teaching them the better coping strategies. She tries to be as open as she can about these important issues.

Keelung City Mei-Li

Mei-Li is a widowed single mother who raises three kids by herself, a 16 year-old girl, a 14-year-old boy and an eight-year-old boy. She feels that parents should become their children’s friend when parenting, but she also holds strict parental attitudes while teaching her children. She told me that before her husband died, she taught her children very seriously and asked for full

obedience. After her husband's death, she felt sorry for her children and became less strict when teaching her children. She started to seek help from religious resources and she found support from Buddhism. She sent her children to a Buddhist class and hopes that they can find peace and learn from the meaning and beliefs of Buddhism about life. After she lost her husband, she hated others criticizing her children, saying that they misbehaved or mocking her children due to their special family structure. Therefore, she asks her children to be well-behaved, and they would be punished if she heard complaints from others due to their improper behavior. She thus plays three roles depend in different situations while practicing her parenting -- that of mother, father, and friend. When her kids choose to hang out with friends or make some decisions about activities, they must ask for her permission and opinion. **Mei-Li** corrects her children's improper or impolite behavior and language expression. She told them that everything they do or say at home is okay as long as they respect each other, but doing deeds that cause others to report their misbehavior or impoliteness is never allowed. Nonetheless, she will seek the truth and facts before correcting or punishing her kids. She does not allow others to discriminate against or mock them. She tries to offer a better quality of life for her children in order to prevent the mockery of others for having no father.

Mei-Li discussed her children's psychological growth as well, and she said that her three children were forced to grow up and be mature. Losing her husband and the mockery of her family in-law gave her painful memories, as they brought her many moments of heartbreak and sorrow instead of offering support when she dealt with her husband's suicide (who hanged himself) and having to all of the sudden raise three children alone. Her children have been through all of these processes with her, and also understood her sorrow and pain. They sometimes would protect and defend her from the family-in-law's blame and mockery. She spent

three months trying to cheer herself up after her husband's death, and chooses to live a happier life rather than a miserable one, using the same expression about one's choice to have a happy day or a miserable day depends on what attitude does one takes (Kui Le Shi Yi Ten, Tong Ku Shi Yi Ten 快樂是一天,痛苦是一天). The language abuse and intended physical attack from the family-in-law gave her strength to be strong. She doesn't allow people to criticize her children because they have no father, and she provides her children the same quality of supplies as other children. **Mei-Li** has rules for her children, where house chores are separated and done by every family member. Schedules must be followed, and children should never be reminded about more than three times, or she would punish accordingly. The elder children help to take care of younger children, and they usually watch TV at home together on the weekends and holidays. She also told her children that once they make their decisions, they should not change their minds, and should hang on to finish their goals. Moreover, the major expectation she has for her children is that they be well-behaved.

Keelung City Hui-Jan

Hui-Jan has been a widowed single mother for nine years and raises three children by herself.

When I asked her about most important concerns of parenting, she said a higher educational level and cultivating great character and ethical behavior are her expectations for her children.

Regarding the differences in her parenting before and after the death of her husband, she mentioned facing great pressures and difficulties when raising her children. Many times she feels frustrated and has no one to talk to about this. She feels depressed and it is not easy to cheer up, for her quality of life is not as good as before. When her children ask for some stationery or

supplies, she would tell them to be considerate and learn how to restrain their desires because they lost their father and life is much tougher than before. Moreover, she said it was very hard for her when at the time she just lost her husband and her children asked for their father. During the time, she worked in Taipei (the capital city in Taiwan) and had a better salary. However, she had to ask for her extended family members to take care of her children while working.

Afterward, she decided to quit her job and moved to Keelung to take care of them by herself.

Regarding her use of discipline in parenting, **Hui-Jan** said that she tried to remind her children of the right action at first, but if they are not willing to listen to her advice she would practice physical punishment. She told me that sometimes it was hard for her to discipline her children, as two are in high school and the eldest son is working at gas station where he learned how to smoke and became gradually more rebellious. **Hui-Jan** also shared a story about her eldest son when he was in junior high school. He was threatened by his classmates, who bullied him into providing money for a long time, but he was too scared to tell her and the teacher. One day when one bully came to **Hui-Jan**'s mother's store to ask for money from her son, she found out that he hadn't eaten his lunch for a long time because he gave all his allowance to the bullying students every day. The total amount of money taken is not small, and she felt bad and sorry for her son, and she thinks that this might be a result of the absence of his father. The difficulty of raising children without a partner is tough and painful for **Hui-Jan**, and she felt she had no place to turn to when she faces difficulties. However, her working experience and environment at the Women and Child Center now gives her some resources and support. Her siblings and parents also help her sometimes as needed, and she also brings her children back to the family-in-law during the Chinese New Year.

Keelung City Chu-Kuo

Chu-Kuo is a widowed single mother in her forties who has two daughters aged 13 and seven. The elder daughter lives with **Chu-Kuo's** mother and young sister during the week due to the school district. She believes that parents should train and discipline their children well when they are young, but once the children cultivate great habits and become well-behaved, parents would not need to worry a lot when the kids grow up. If her daughters don't listen to her advice after a couple times, she utilizes physical punishment, disciplining them even if they hate her. She explained that she would prefer to let her children hate her when they are little rather than becoming the "black sheep" of society and hate her when they are adults. She told me that children's mistakes would count on the parents. In addition, a parent has the responsibility of protecting, restraining, and taking care of their children until they are 18. Her children need to ask her permission to hang out with friends, and she emphasizes their proper behavior and politeness.

Chu-Kuo often makes phone calls to remind and supervise her elder daughter's life, since they only live together on the weekend. During the holidays, she and her daughters would hang out or stay at home to watch TV together in order to save money. Her mother and younger sister are physical disabled, and she usually has to take care of them as well.

Chu-Kuo shared that when she lost her husband, it was very painful and she was depressed for a while. But she changed her mind one day when she saw her children, thinking that she needed to cheer up and live a happier life. The spiritual and physical pressure of sustaining a family by herself would sometimes crash down on her at the beginning. Although she is surviving the change now, she still feels heartbroken, especially when she thinks of the indifference of her

family-in-law. She stated, “Ren Zai Qing Zai, Ren Zou Qing San” (人在情在，人走情散), meaning, the physical existence of the person is the connection between relationships. The family-in-law acted indifferent when she needed help after her husband died, even though they made promises to her husband to help care for his family. She also mentioned that she never wants her children discriminated against by others because they don’t have father, and thus tries to provide them the best quality of life and discipline them strictly.

Themes and subthemes of study results

Cultural Context/Social Climate Influences on How These Single Mothers Form, Practice, and Learn Their Parenting

(Note: the context of the social climate about single-parent-families in Taiwan I described below are based on the stories of eight participants)

Throughout my interview processes and the analysis of transcripts, I found that the cultural context/social climate as a common theme emerged from all participants’ stories. Despite the fact that narratives of each single mother depict how traditional customs and social climate influence their parenting practices, not every single mother revealed this theme deliberately. Some of the single mothers didn’t address the phenomena directly, and the researcher had to discover, unfold and pull out their underlying meanings by reading their interview transcripts repeatedly.

In addition, I would like to point out several phenomena from almost every participant regarding the influence of cultural context/social climate on their parenting. First of all, during the interviews they mentioned that they would like to provide the best quality of life for their

children, and their expectations for their children would mostly include the characteristics of being well-behaved and disciplined in order not to be criticized about their parenting, family structure or financial condition.

Quoted statement: **Mei-Li** (Widowed-Tanscripts8-Page5)

“I don’t like my children...My personality is that...I don’t like people to say something like ‘Your son is so naughty!’ Or ‘Aren’t your children having any food to eat?’ Because my sons’ appetite is very good and they usually eat a lot, I dislike my children having to watch others eat; therefore, I strictly discipline my children.”

In Chinese:

「我不喜歡小孩子...我以前的個性是不喜歡別人跟小孩子說...不喜歡說：『妳兒子怎麼這麼皮？』怎樣、怎樣，還是說：『你孩子是沒吃東西喔？』因為我兒子他們很會吃，我不喜歡說我的孩子看別人吃怎樣。我可能小孩教的比較嚴、很嚴」

Quoted statement: **Mei-Li** (Widowed-Tanscripts8-Page8)

“... whatever you like is okay at home but you cannot do so outside of the family. I don’t like to hear others talking about my kids, ‘your child is cursing and....’ If I hear such comments from others, they are dead!!... I wouldn’t utilize physical punishment except for very special occasions. I would make them squat at most.”

In Chinese:

「你在家你怎樣都可以，可是外面一律不行，外面我不喜歡人家聽到說：『你的小孩罵髒話怎樣、怎樣。』回來人家跟我講的時候就不一樣了。.....體罰只會用【去半蹲】怎樣，我不會去打你們；除非是很特殊的狀況才會，可是很少.....」

Quoted statement: **Mei-Li** (Widowed-Tanscripts8-Page19)

“... Don’t become misbehaved....that’s all. Well, I just ask that they could be well-behaved and don’t let others criticize them about anything”

In Chinese:

「不要變壞就好...反正就是他們要乖乖的，不要讓別人跟他們說...跟你說他們怎麼樣這樣...」

Quoted statement: **Mei-Li** (Widowed-Tanscripts8-Page21)

“Because the absence of their father...I wouldn't let them be discriminated against by others, such as 'You don't have anything because you don't have a father!' For example, I have a friend who still has her husband with her and also has three kids...but their children do not necessarily have the things that my kids have!”

“... And I will tell them that they couldn't say things like 'because you don't have a father, you don't have something' ... I would do my best to reduce their chances of saying this.”

“I said that 'I would do my best to offer you this and working very hard is totally fine for me, but I don't like you to do this.' I also told them that 'You just do your best to show others that without having your father, you can still perform very well!! Just do it as usual.' ... that would be fine ...”

“Yeah! Well! 'You just don't having a father and you've done nothing wrong! You just don't have your father and you should not steal or rob things ...”

In Chinese:

「因為我覺得他有沒有爸爸...因為我讓他們不會說去外面被說：『你這種沒有爸爸的小孩，什麼都沒有。』怎樣、怎樣。像我朋友她也是三個小孩子，我朋友她先生也還在、他們倆夫妻都在，可是我的孩子有的東西，他的兒子不見得都有喔！我就跟我的孩子說你們不要隨便亂說：『你沒有爸爸什麼都沒有』之類的，我盡量不要給你這個。」

「我說：『我盡量不要給你們這個，辛苦我也沒關係，可是我不喜歡你們這樣子。』我說：『你們就做給別人看，你沒有爸爸也可以做得很好，用平常心就好了。』這樣就好了。」

「對啊！『你只是沒有爸爸而已，沒有錯啊！可是沒有爸爸...可是你沒有偷、沒有搶，妳們有什麼...』」

Secondly, according to these single mothers' stories, there are many negative stereotypes or stigma about single-parent-families in Taiwanese society. Many people's impression of a single-

parent-family is that of financial insecurity or having misbehaved children. Though some of the people provide sympathy towards single-parent-families, they still label these single parents as the population who is weak and poor. In addition, within a male-dominant or patriarchal societies such as Taiwan, most people consider females as weak and disadvantaged compared with males (Brandwein, Brown & Fox, 1974). Based on the narratives of some of the participants, the elder generation or people who hold conservative attitudes usually consider women as subordinate within a family and in society at large.

Quoted statement: **Ting-Ting** (Divorced-Transcripts3-Page3)

“In Taiwan, I think that many people still can’t accept the single-parent-family . . . In their opinion, they would think that . . .”

“So, people would think of some negative stereotypes about single-parent-family...Although, I knew some of the single-parent-families aren’t good...there must some issues within the family . . . but I don’t think that we can consider single-parent-family equal to defective or unsound...single parent should just be a noun not a negative word.”

In Chinese:

「...我覺得台灣畢竟還是比較不是說...觀念上面會覺得說...

...會覺得說單親好像就是一些很不好的感覺，那我是知道有一些單親可能也不是說很好，一定會有問題。可是我覺得說不管是單親、或者說是家庭、就是爸爸媽媽都很 OK 的這樣子的話，我覺得單親只是一個名詞，但是不代表不健全。」

Quoted statement: **Ting-Ting** (Divorced-Transcripts3-Page6)

“I always think that the education in Taiwan should broaden in openness toward being discriminated against based on your gender . . . But, I found out that the gender issue is still very conservative in Taiwan and there are still many people who don’t consider that women could be financially independent . . . women could be outstanding and excel in their work as well . . . and if you perform better than some of men . . . within some families . . . this is not acceptable.”

In Chinese:

「而且我一直覺得說，我們台灣受的教育應該越來越提升，這種感覺應該是越少。...可是我發覺聽起來好像沒有...就是台灣的觀念我覺得還是很傳統，而且我覺得好像還不是很贊成說女生在經濟上面是可以獨立、而且是可以...就是說可以是很出色，也不是說出色，就是說萬一妳如果比男性出色，我覺得有一些家庭其實是不願意。」

Quoted statement: **Ting-Ting** (Divorced-Transcripts3-Page17)

“... I just feel that in this society ... people would think that if you grow up in a single-parent-family ... you would be labeled ...”

“... they said that it's as if you are abnormal ... that's the way it is!! You are unsound!! Or something else ... to tell the truth ... take me for example, I am glad that now I am not with my ex-husband anymore ...”

In Chinese:

「...就比較覺得說社會上好像會在覺得單親上面....妳是單親長大的家庭，就貼一個標籤。」

「...就說你們就是好像不正常啊！就是這樣子！不健全啊！或什麼的。其實我覺得說以我來講，我是覺得我還比較高興說我現在是沒有....」

Quoted statement: **Hui-Jan** (Widowed-Transcripts4-Page11)

“... Because others did once say to us that ... although your kids have no father ... still, they shouldn't become the black sheep of society ...” (The participant is sobbing)

In Chinese:

「...因為真的人家也講了啊~小孩子沒有爸爸也不要變成社會的甚麼敗類啊~甚麼...〈哽咽〉」

Quoted statement: **Hui-Jan** (Widowed-Transcripts4-Page20)

“.... “... When I just worked here, I was responsible for the children’s library; therefore, I had more opportunities to contact with children. The children’s library limited children between the ages of 3 to 6 needs to be accompanied with their parent. So I often heard people say, ‘See . . . they must be a single-parent-family . . . and he/she is the child of single-parent-family’ . . . they would say that kid is misbehaved . . . when I heard that . . . I felt upset . . . because I am a single parent and if you teach your kids attentively . . . they should perform as well as the average . . . at least not like what others said, that children from single-parent-families are misbehaved . . . so, what should I say . . .? I couldn’t express . . .” (wiping her tears and smiling dishearteningly)

In Chinese:

「以前我剛到這裡~因為我是負責兒童圖書室，那....因為會跟小朋友接觸比較多，然後因為我們裡面有 3~6 歲是家長要陪同進去，然後偶爾就會聽到有人說：『唉~那是單親吶~阿丹親的小孩就...』他會說那個小孩很壞，那我聽到這樣，心裡就很難過，因會會覺得說，我也是單親可是你如果用心去教小孩，應該還 Okay，不至於說每個單親的小孩都不好，所以其實...怎麼講...(擦眼淚)...不會講....(無奈笑)...」

Quoted statement: **Shu-Chi** (Widowed-Tanscripts2-Chinese Page18-English Page34)

“... and nowadays, some people would think that the minority groups or a family like us can get a lot of benefits and subvention. Nevertheless, it depends on how you define the situation. For examples, my sister believes that our [Shu-Chi and her kids] lives are pretty good and we don’t have to hand in tuition fees at the cram school. . . She would think that because we have some benefits . . . so my children could go to cram school but in fact, my daughter only takes one course and during other times . . . she just goes there to study other subjects on her own. Also, I have to negotiate/communicate with the teacher about paying the money by stages . . . in private. . .”

In Chinese:

「...他們現在的人我會覺得說都說阿你們這弱勢的很好，補助很多，我覺得有些事情看你們怎麼去解讀，像我姐姐也說不錯嘛！學雜費也不用，補習..孩子還可以補習，不知道我們只有補一科，其他都是自己去那邊讀書的，然後去跟他溝通我們錢要怎麼繳，這是私底下...」

Quoted statement: **Ting-Ting** (Divorced-Tanscripts3-Page45)

“Yeah, I thought that people in Taiwan tend to be more conservative because they blame all the faults on women when divorced. They believe that the divorce would be the result of women’s faults. They wouldn’t believe that . . . just like what I mentioned . . . if males do something wrong women could choose not to have the relationship anymore . . . so if you are a man . . . first of all, just be a man and take the responsibility when it’s yours!! . . .”

In Chinese:

「對！我覺得台灣的都比較傳統，因為有時候離婚都是女生不對，女生不好才會這樣。可是人家沒有去想到說...就像我剛剛講的，男生不對女生可以不要你，所以妳男生一定要...第一個，你們要勇敢一點、要負起責任！」

Quoted statement: **Ting-Ting** (Divorced-Tanscripts3-Page46-47)

“ . . . Like what I said. . . some of the dissolved marriages are unhappy but some of these divorced women are mature and decent. . . they are probably trying to move on, disclose the marital status and get rid of the shadow of the divorce but they couldn’t. . . they might experience the negative impressions from society. . . ”

“ . . . For example, when we fill out some forms we usually need to tell our marital status by checking the boxes of being married, unmarried or other, and so on. Sometimes I feel uncomfortable to be categorized in a certain marital status unwillingly.”

In Chinese:

「就像我剛剛講的，有一些婚姻上不是很愉快，但是女性也是很不錯的、很成熟的，想要走出來或什麼，但是不敢，會覺得說社會上有什麼...」

「...就像我們去填資料，如果說婚姻狀況勾已婚、未婚、其他，對！這一點有時候我們在勾選的上面會覺得有一點....」 「好像被迫一定要去分類這樣子」

In addition, single parents in Taiwan tend to be more subject to the traditional customs and social climate under certain circumstances than parents within two-parent families. Single parents provide their parenting based on these social climates and traditional customs as well.

There are many old proverbs in Taiwanese that perfectly describe this phenomenon, some of which were cited by these single mothers while interviewing. Mention of these proverbs imply that the impeded social climates and customs underlying the Taiwanese culture play an important role in influencing single mothers' parenting directly or indirectly. They include:

“Gia Chou Bu Wai Yang” (家醜不外揚): “Never tell/chat with others about the inner workings of your family, especially something embarrassing”; “Gia Chu Qu De Nu Er Jiu Xiang Po Chu Qu De Shui” (嫁出去的女兒就像潑出去的水): “A daughter is just like the splashed water; when they get married you will never be able to get the water back”; “Ching Guan Nan Duan Gia Wu Shi” (清官難斷家務事): “It is hard for outsiders to judge the right and wrong of a family's incidents.”; “Hao Shi Bu Chu Men, Huai Shi Chuan Qian Li” (好事不出門，壞事傳千里): “Good things do not spread out as quickly as the bad things.”; “Gong Po Bai Di Yi, Niang Gia Bai Di Er” (公婆擺第一，娘家擺第二): “A daughter-in-law should put their parents-in-law first instead of their own parents after marriage.”; “Gia Ji Sui Ji, Gia Gou Sui Gou” (嫁雞隨雞，嫁狗隨狗): “Follow your husband or family-in-law after you married no matter what kind of job your husband has or the circumstances of the family-in-law,” and “Zhong Nan Qing Nu” (重男輕女): “People pay more attention to or emphasize male more than female.”

Quoted statement: **Ting-Ting** (Divorced-Tanscripts3-Page23)

“... to probe into the reason why I felt very uncomfortable mentally, physically, and in all aspects ... First of all, there is no one to support me

because I felt that the traditional social climate reveals an atmosphere that . . . even my mom would think, that if your marriage doesn't work out well, it is an embarrassing thing.”

“ . . . Therefore, the situation occurs that you never chat with others about the inner and embarrassing things of your family . . . the only thing you could do is . . . to pretend everything is fine and endure what you are confronted with . . . I felt very strange about the phenomenon . . . ”

“ . . . I thought that stories like mine are common in society and this is truly unfair to women . . . ”

In Chinese:

「...那探討起來為什麼會這樣？第一個，我周圍沒有人支持我，因為我覺得有些傳統的社會會認為說...甚至我媽媽會覺得說：『好像你如果婚姻不愉快，好像是一件很丟臉得事情。』...所以就變成家醜不能外揚、所以都不能講，妳只能....」

「...在外面要維持好的表面這樣。然後就是遇到甚麼事情就是忍耐，除了忍耐還是忍耐，我就覺得非常奇怪，我為什麼要這樣？」

「...我覺得在這社會上還是有。我覺得對婦女來講真的很可憐...」

Quoted statement: **Shu-Chi** (Widowed-Tanscripts2-Chinese Page7-English Page14)

“ . . . Maybe it is because my parents-in-law, unlike my own parents, lived in the generation that was usually fond of boys rather than girls; therefore, they always showed their pity for my son more often and then she [Shu-Chi's elder daughter] would feel rejected.”

In Chinese:

「...可能就是因為爺爺奶奶跟外公外婆有差，那年代七十幾歲重男輕女，所以在小時候，在言語上就感覺有比較秀弟弟，所以你們在說他還小她就排斥啦.....」

Quoted statement: **Shu-Chi** (Widowed-Tanscripts2-Chinese Page14-15-English Page27-28)

“Well . . . when I talked about my father . . . He needs to go to the hospital to change the substitute bag that’s connected to his reconstructed anus . . . all his daughters are married. He had a huge surgery at that time and the cut from the operation is large . . . I told my father that he could live with us for we have an elevator in our apartment. The apartment of my parents is a three-floor old-fashioned building. Considering his surgery, I am afraid that he will be inconvenient to “Ki Ki Lo Lo” (起起落落) [climb the stairs up and down] if he needs to go to the hospital to change the substitute bag that connected to his reconstructed anus. Also, my mom doesn’t know how to change his bag, and it would be hard for me to take care of my two children and go back and forth between my parents’ apartment, my apartment and the hospital at the same time; so I asked him to live with us. In the beginning, it was really difficult for me to negotiate/communicate with the elderly about this issue, and it took me a long time. Even if you have already moved out and are not living with your parents-in-law anymore, he [my father] would still consider that it would be inconvenient for me, because that I still have my parents-in-law. But I told him it wouldn’t influence me. Anyway, my parents-in-law never visit us so it would be okay . . . you can just live here! At first, he was not used to it and felt awkward but finally . . . he lives with us and cooks for us.”

In Chinese:

「....他主要是他有人工造口要換袋子，我家就是我最小，我哥哥也五十一、五十二了，我媽媽也七十幾歲了，女兒都嫁掉了。那時候開的刀很大，傷口很大，他傷口很大住兩個禮拜出院，我就我爸爸說你來我家住，因為我有電梯，我家是舊式公寓三樓，怕不方便起起落落(台語)，阿換袋子的話考慮他的傷口起樓不方便，再來是說換袋子我媽不會，然後兩個小的我這樣我也很累，我說乾脆你來我家住，那個跟老人家要到女兒家住要溝通多久，即使你搬到外面住他也認為說你有公婆，所以他認為不方便，我說不會啦！反正我公婆沒來過，我說不要緊，你就住這邊，剛開始他有一點怪怪的後來比較能適應，他到後來...就是他煮飯給我們吃就對了啦。」(公婆擺第一，娘家擺第二)

Quoted statement: **Hui-Jan** (Widowed-Transcripts4-Page24)

“Because we live near the mountains . . . and if something happened to you and others know . . . it would be awful when others spread the news . . .”

“Yes!! The news spread very fast . . . So I think that I have to govern and educate my children well to let others know that my kids are well-behaved!! In case someone heard something and spread the bad/embarrassing news!!”

In Chinese:

「因為我們那邊....算是比較山上，然後你如果有一個甚麼讓人家聽到，人家傳出去真的很難聽....」(好事不出門，壞事傳千里)

「對呀！！啊好壞就是人家傳得很快！所以我就說小孩自己要維持要顧好，要做好的給人家看，不要說讓人家講到不好的...」

The Impact of Social Resources and Financial Status on Single Mothers' Parenting and their Interactions with Children in Taiwan

In spite of the fact that single mothers are subject to the traditional customs and social climate, including the negative labeling and stigmatized impressions of Taiwanese society, some of these single mothers also point out that they lack information on social resources at times, such as related laws, social subventions or child support that is available from the social welfare system. Some of them were having difficulties receiving social support and resources as well as financial support. Many of them have to fumble about in handling the resources to support themselves at first, and then become more experienced afterwards. The major difficulties for these single mothers are in balancing the financial needs of the family or between families (the parents' family, family-in-laws, and the single mother and her children).

Social resources and financial status have therefore become emergent themes which influence Taiwanese single mothers' parenting and their interactions with children as well. In this study, social resources available to single-parent families could include support or resources from extended families, colleagues, friends, school systems, and social welfare systems. As for

lacking information about social resources among single mothers in Taiwan, some of my participants mentioned that some legal issues and ambiguous or limited circumstances would stop them from applying for these social resources, especially the subvention.

Quoted statement: **Ah-Juan** (Divorced-Transcripts7-Page1)

“When my children are little, to tell the truth . . . because my eldest daughter is in her third year at elementary school now . . . and she went to school (*) since she was very little and no one told me that from that time we were qualified to apply for the subvention from the government . . . for example, when your kids are studying at kindergarten . . . you may receive an amount of money per month . . . and no one had told us!!”

(*) Note: The meaning of the word “School” here is similar to the “daycare center” in the United States; however, daycare centers in Taiwan usually offer curriculum for toddlers to gain certain skills and knowledge as preparation for entering kindergartens and elementary schools.

“Yes! No one told us, and even if someone knew . . . they didn’t tell us. Gradually, we came to know and collect the information afterwards . . . And now the government passes out the information via Television . . . and we . . . I would think, ‘Should I go?’”

In Chinese:

「之前小孩子還讀幼稚園的時候，其實我們也都...因為我們老大現在三年級嘛！她就是幼幼班都去上課了，然後也沒有人跟我們說政府可以補助什麼。就是幼稚園一個月可以補助多少，也沒有人跟我們講。」

「對！然後就是沒有人跟我們講，知道的人也沒有人跟我們講。那是事後慢慢的...現在就是也是政府他就是在電視上都有那個，然後我們就...我自己啦...我就會想說：『我是不是...』...」

Quoted statement: **Ah-Juan** (Divorced-Transcripts7-Page3)

“Actually, now when I apply for the social subvention . . . The subvention is only offered to the children, not the adults . . . and I could only apply for the lower amount of the subvention . . . Because . . . my children are still under the custody of their father . . .”

“... You see ... because both of my two kids are having their father’s last name and I didn’t change the identification descriptions of my kids on their ID card ... which means that their father and I share custody; however, their father didn’t offer any help or support ...”

“... No financial support ... and he didn’t help to raise the kids as well ... Not at all ... Well, at the beginning, I didn’t change their last name to mine because I don’t want others to judge them because they utilized their mother’s last name instead of using the father’s ... but ... in the end, I didn’t know that it would become that complicated ... ‘whatever you want to apply for?’ ‘You couldn’t!’ ...”

In Chinese:

「其實我現在在申請社會補助，我只能申請中低以上，就等於說小孩子可以補助，我大人沒有，因為小孩子的爸爸還是那個....」

「...對。你看它就等於是...因為我兩個嘛！我兩個小孩子，就等於就是上面有爸爸的名字、上面有爸爸的名字，就等於我們兩個共同撫養兩個，其實但是爸爸是沒有在...」

「沒有在提供經濟來源、也沒有在付出了，就是都沒有。.....其實我當初的想法很簡單，我不知道後來變得這麼複雜，『妳想要申請什麼』、『啊！妳不可以！』其實我當初的想法是很簡單的。」

「...就想說讓小孩子可以有爸爸媽媽這樣子...也不要說以後我們沒在一起了，小孩子的話...『啊！你沒有爸爸，你跟你媽媽一樣的姓。』」

Quoted statement: **Chu-Kuo** (Widowed-Transcripts6-Page12-13)

“... No ... we barely maintain contact with the family-in-law. The only person we still keep in touch with is my husband’s grandma ...”

“... well ... what should I say ... the relationship lasts as long as the person still exists ... nevertheless, as soon as the person is dead ... the relationship no longer exists(*)... everything they’ve promised is not true ... at that time ... I already learned to give up ... I have asked nothing from the family-in-law.”

(*) 人在情在，人不在甚麼都沒有了— it is speaking in Chinese

“At the time when we were in the hospital and my husband was about to breathe his last . . . they have promised to my husband to take good care of my kids and me . . . After my husband died, I still had to depend on myself! When I decided to move back to my parents’ house, I told myself that I have to be strong and stand up by myself!! I have to deal with everything on my own and not hope to depend on someone else.”

In Chinese:

「沒有沒有，我跟他們那邊幾乎都斷了，只有他阿嬤，只有我先生他阿嬤。」

「...因為其餘的怎麼講？人在生的時候喔，人在情在，人不在就甚麼都沒有，甚麼都是騙人的啦！所以那時候我就看破了，他們家裡的人。」

「在醫院的時候，要斷氣的時候，怎麼樣對我先生許下承諾啊，說照顧我們母子、母女，會照顧我們，可是等到人一走的時候，還是要靠我自己啊，後來我回到娘家我就想說，好啊，既然這樣的話，我就勇敢一點自己站出來、站起來，甚麼事都自己背啊，自己弄啊，不靠別人這樣子。」

The unstable financial status of single-mother-families is always a tough obstacle to overcome. These single mothers are often busy balancing their families’ financial needs, including living expenses, children’s tuition, mortgages or debts, and financial support for the elderly or siblings either from their original family or family-in-law. Except for the financial issues that these single mothers confront, they also need to deal with related problems, such as limited working hours due to children’s routine, or the lack of intimacy or interactions with children. These single mothers usually have to make their choices from the dilemma of making more money but having less time, to spend with children, or having limited work hours to match the children’s daily routine yet making less money to support the family. Insufficient time with their children may result in reducing needed interactions that can lead to delays in changing their children’s habits, daily routine, and school life. Although every single mother is trying her best

to maintain an intimate relationship with their children, the working schedule and exhaustion from their jobs usually consumes their energies for hanging out with children. In addition, many of them have to manage these demanding issues while lacking suitable social resources and supports. Hence, the living situation for these single mothers is usually difficult, which in turn influences their parenting adjustment to adversities they need to confront. Mostly, children growing up in the single-parent-families tend to be more independent and more mature than those who grow up in the two-parent families.

(Financial Difficulties)

Quoted Statement: **Shu-Chi** (Widowed-Transcripts2-EnPage1-ChPage16-17)

“I felt even more terrible when I had no job. When you think of the idea that . . . it’s fine if I don’t have money to eat, but my two kids need to eat . . . they are so young, one is seven years old, and the other is two years old . . . it is scary but I wouldn’t tell my family. At last, I found out that a woman can take temporary setbacks! Women have their resilience.”

“But at least I had a job. At least my kids have food to eat. Assume that I have to spend five hundred dollars (*) 1 in a day; if I don’t go to work today, then I have a five hundred dollar debt. So the more I work the less my debt . . . When I started to find jobs . . . for our situation as a single parent family, I was concerned about the kids’ age, our personal educational background, and my [older] age when I was looking for a job. It’s hard to find a job and I was worried. Therefore, we did everything we could do and we cherish every chance for jobs . . . Actually, your conceited attitude makes you lose the job and every job is an opportunity. Take me for example. I started a job as a short term worker . . . I get paid about twelve or fourteen thousand dollars a month (*) 2, and people wonder, how can we keep up our living? I said how come we couldn’t? . . . Because I had adjusted our lifestyle . . . Well . . . it depends on your attitude, whether you complain the money is insufficient or not . . . Probably it is because we are sensitive about our reputation/face, so people couldn’t tell the quality of our lives. Shut the door of the house and no one would know what you eat or use . . . For our living, I could try to balance the expenses but the cram school’s fee is quite expensive, especially for my daughter in junior high school . . . so I let my daughter ask the teacher if we can pay the tuition fees in stages, for we take only one course. People would not know our situation unless we talk about it . . . but at the end, it’s really

difficult for us to pay all the tuition fees at one time; so I tried to adjust/change our thinking; we are not stealing or robbing money from others!! In order to show our difficulties and hoping to pay the tuition fees in stages, I tried to tell the teacher about our embarrassing condition . . .”

(*) 1--500 TWD is approximately equal to 15 USD

(*) 2--12000~14000TWD is approximately equal to 364 ~424 USD

In Chinese:

「....沒工作那時候又更恐怖，你如果想說我如果沒上班，我一個人沒吃不要緊，但是兩個小朋友要吃，他們還小嘛，一個兩歲、一個七歲好恐怖，我也不會跟我家講，後來發現女生真的，能屈能伸！.....」

「....至少孩子吃飯有了嘛，假設我一天要花五百元，今天我沒上班我是負債五百元，我有上班不管我賺多少我的負債會少一點。.....，剛開始的時候.....像我們剛開始在找工作，像我們單親依我個人來講，我在找工作小朋友又小，我們都會先顧忌小朋友，本身學歷又不高然後又有年紀，不好找，然後很怕，好！甚麼工作我們都做，有機會當然要做.....其實身段就是個機會，像我來這邊是做清潔工，我從臨時工開始做.....所以我那時候領個一個月大概是一萬二還是一萬四左右，人家說這樣領有辦法生活？我說哪沒有辦法生活，因為後來調適過...錢有夠用不夠用，我們可能比較愛面子在外面人家看不出來啦！在裡面門關起來吃好吃壞誰知道，用好用壞誰知道....那個補習班不便宜，補習班我跟我女兒講，我們是補單科的，就去跟補習班老師講我們可不可以分期？這個其實沒講出去誰知道？我們都後面就是沒辦法，我們就自我調適，我們沒偷沒搶，但是剛開始就要跟他講不好意思怎樣，要講得很辛酸，你可不可以讓我說分期...」

Quoted Statement: **Ah-Ling** (Divorced-Transcripts1-EnPage 42, 51-ChPage 32, 39)

“When I got up the next morning, I would speak to myself that . . . maybe it’s just that I have to go borrow some funds from my elder sister. Because I sold all my jewelries and gold accessories I had before . . . because the price of the gold was rising up at the time and I could sell the gold for more money . . . but I pretty much had sold them all . . . because I am too embarrassed to borrow

money from others during that time, but when I really can't afford our expenses . . . when we moved out of the former house . . . I had to pay the cash pledge for renting an apartment . . .”

“And just like this, instead, I had a huge amount of debt . . . around one million dollars (TWD) (*)!! . . . To tell the truth, I am not paying . . . I have no money to pay back . . . how could I pay it back? I have problem with living a life . . . Yeah! When the bank urges me to do so, I tell them that I can't! I already have problems raising my daughter and make a living! Where would I have the money to pay?” ‘You have to deal with it! Or you can borrow the money,’ they said. I answered them, ‘If I borrow the money, I would use it for my living expenses . . . I would pay for the rent . . . there is no way for me to have extra money to pay you back! I am not out of my mind!!’ What would I do, right?”

(*) One million TWD is approximately to 30,303 USD

In Chinese:

「隔天早上起來想說，就是再去跟我那大姐先開口借一下。因為我之前就是賣東西，把全部的金子全部賣完了，也剛好金子漲價啦！可以賣得比較多，對啊！就是差不多能賣得差不多賣完了啦！因為那時候又不好意思跟人家開口，是到真的這一次房子被逼出來之後，妳租房子要押金、要房租那個...」

「...就這樣子了，反而揸了一大推債，揸了一百多萬債耶！.....其實說實在的我沒還，我沒錢還，我怎麼還？我現在生活都有問題了。.....對啊！向銀行催的話，我會說：『我沒辦法啊！我在生活上養我女兒都快成問題了，我哪有錢還?』對不對?『妳要想辦法啊!妳去借。』我說：『我借也是要自己花的，我付房租，我還借來還你咧!我神經病!』對不對?」

(Limited working hours/Insufficient time to interact with children)

Quoted Statement: **Shu-Chi** (Widowed-Transcripts2-EnPage29-ChPage15)

“I always worried about my kids at work when they were still young. Even though they were very well-behaved, as a mother, I would never let go of the worries and anxieties. Therefore, the biggest support for me . . . for a single mother, is her family and friends. Because there is no one to take care of us and being alone outside makes me feel uneasy/unsteady. When you feel

uneasy /unsteady, you are not able to do a good job on your work. It's impossible!"

"Well . . . I believe that my opinions are what an average people would also consider. I think it is all about 'time' when it comes to single parents. Because sometimes when you are at work . . . well . . . It's lucky for me to work here because the schedule is more stable . . ."

In Chinese:

「那個時候兩個這麼小要去工作是怎麼上，再怎麼上都不安心啊！再怎麼乖做媽媽都不安心，所以還是單親給我們最大的支柱應該就是朋友跟親人。因為你沒有人相互照應喔，一個人在外面還是很不安，不安的時候在工作上就會...哪做的好？」

「.....我個人是覺得一般也會這樣覺得吧，單親上就是時間上吧！因為有時候上班，像我是目前比較幸運能在這裡上班，屬於時間比較穩定...」

Quoted Statement: **Ah-Ling** (Widowed-Transcript1-EnPage 36-38-ChPage 27-29)

"... Yeah! Before, like where I work, the working schedule of O-TEN (*) 1 was not working because I had to work at 6:00 am in the morning . . . The work over there is 24 hours a day! And staffs in your age group usually want to work from 8:00 in the morning; no one wants to work from 6:00 in the morning. So they would ask people like us to work from the 6:00. I told them, 'But I have kid!' 'There is nothing we can do, and you have to work from 6:00.' He would not ask you to quit, and he would not give you the work shift from 8 in the morning either; they would just wait for you to quit the job! Just like this! I told them, 'I really can't do this, and I still have my kid with me at 6:00.' At the time, I was still living where we used to live and it's impossible for me to take her to where I worked at 6:00 . . . and my kid had to get up at 5:00!? It's impossible!! So I decided to quit the job . . . well I still would try to fit it into [my daughter's] time schedule! Yeah . . . to tell the truth . . . this time is because your mother's help (*) 2 . . . I met my Gui Ren (貴人), someone really nice who gave me timely help (*) 3."

(*) 1---O-TEN is a bakery in Keelung, Taiwan.

(*) 2--- The participant was talking to my friend who helped me find the participants in Keelung, and she is also the observer for the interviews at Keelung.

(*) 3--- In Chinese Gui Ren/貴人 is close in meaning to significant others at the turning point in your life.

In Chinese:

「...對啊！就是之前像O-TEN那邊不行，就是因為他早上六點。.....他那邊是二十四小時的啊！而且他可能像你們年輕人都要上八點正常班，六點沒有人要上，就派我們這種、叫你排六點。我說：『可是我有小孩啊！』『沒辦法耶！就是要六點。』他也不叫妳走，他不給妳排就叫妳自己離職啊！這樣子啊！我說：『真的我沒辦法上班，六點我真的小孩子...』那時候我因為還住在那裏嘛！我不可能載到這邊來，而且六點的話，我小朋友是不是五點就要起來了？不可能的事啊！我就想說那我不要做好了，還是會想說盡量去配合她的時間啦！對啊！這次說實在的，是真的多虧妳媽媽的幫忙，碰到好人、碰到貴人。」

「...對對！因為想....譬如說...有啦！像那天那個牛排店啦！說他八點、還是九點叫我上班啦！我一樣五點下班。可是我想說：『那假日咧？我假日還是不行啊！』...禮拜六、禮拜天都不能休，對不對？如果每天去把小孩子丟在那個大姊家，我也不好意思啊！因為不能麻煩一輩子。....我就想說盡量就是找可以....至少可以顧的。」

Quoted Statement: **Ah-Juan** (Widowed-Transcript7-Page4-5, 9, 11)

“... when my children were still little ... when they hadn't yet gone to elementary school ... when the younger one still couldn't walk ... my father helped me take care of them. Because at the time, my father was still healthy, and haven't had a stroke. So he took care of my children for me at the time and he would pick up my elder daughter when she finished school. I go to work at 8:00 in the morning and come home late at 2:00 in the morning. I go out when my daughters are still sleeping and I come home when they are also already in bed. Well ... to tell the truth, people said of us that we are poor ... because 'every time I saw my mom, she is sleeping ...' ... Yeah, 'Every time I see my mom, she is always sleeping.' What should we do? Except, sometime, when you take a day off, you would not want to go out because you are exhausted!!”

“... well ... it's okay ... but actually, in Taiwanese ... we have an old saying: 'Hua He Zuo, Gan Wan Shiu' (*) ... when you apply the saying ... you would not feel tired!! And you shouldn't think that you work for the money, you have to make yourself believe that you work because you like the job, so you

wouldn't feel tired and exhausted when you go to work. I only rest during the Chinese New Year, and I don't rest throughout the year!"

(*)Hua He Zuo, Gan Wan Shiu (歡喜做，甘願受) ---

In Taiwanese this means that when you decide to do something, you should consider that it is what you like/want to do; therefore, what kind of consequences come along with it are what you would be willing to accept.

In Chinese:

「...因為我之前小孩子還比較小一點、還沒有讀國小的時候，小的還不會走路，是我爸爸在帶。因為我那時候我爸爸還沒有中風、都是我爸爸在帶，然後我大女兒都是我爸爸在送上下課。我早上八點出門、晚上兩點進門。我出門的時候我女兒還在睡覺，我進門我女兒也是在睡覺。...其實說她們可憐就是說，『我每次看到我媽媽，我媽媽就是都在睡覺。』...對啊！『我每次看到我媽媽，我媽媽都是在睡覺。』還要做什麼，除非啦！除了...其實有時候妳放假了，妳也很累、妳也不想出去，就是這樣子，....」

「...是還好啦！講句實在的，台語講的『歡喜做、甘願受』。...妳就不會覺得辛苦啦！而且妳不要覺得說為了賺錢而去工作，妳要為了妳喜歡這個工作去工作，妳就不會覺得說又要去工作了、又要去工作了。我沒有在休息的，我全年無休，除了過年的時候。...就生病、有時候我人不舒服，我想說一、兩個小時、兩、三個小時去也無所謂。」

Based on the emergent themes listed above, I found that social resources, financial status, and former marital experiences are all extrovert factors in influencing these single mothers' parenting. Their emotional management/coping strategies/problem-solving behaviors and proverbs (called "self-talk" in this study) are introvert factors in influencing these single mothers' parenting.

How Emotional Management/ Coping Strategies/Problem-Solving Ability Influences Single Mothers' Parenting

The single mothers in this study often need to adjust themselves and their lifestyle after the absence of their husband either due to death or divorce. They have to take care of their kids and balancing their psychological condition at the same time. In addition, even if these single mothers already tried to adjust to what they have been through, they still need to figure out solutions to all kinds of situations in their daily life, such as poor financial status, tight and limited working schedule, and lack of social resources without their partners. They usually need to create their own coping strategies and strengthen their resilience and their problem-solving abilities while trying to maintain their emotional steadiness. I found incredible resilience coming from these single mothers while listening to their stories.

(Emotional Management, Coping Strategies, and Problem Solving Ability)

Quoted Statement: **Chu-Kuo** (Widowed-Transcripts6-Page8-10)

“How should I say . . . Compared with one person to share the childcare and family duties . . . now it appears that all the strains and pressures are on you . . . the feelings of this kind of situation . . . How do I describe it . . . ? Sometimes, when I think of this . . . I really want to wail out loud . . . Because if my husband was still by my side . . . at least wherever we went . . . he was by our side . . . but things are different now . . . although kids are never mentioned . . . however, it never can be a two-parent family again . . . there must be some differences . . .”

“When he just passed away . . . we lived in Chun-Ho and we . . . my mom asked us if we would like to move to Taipei . . . I have to take care of two children on my own and would be very tired . . . so she told me to move back. Well, frankly . . . they helped me a lot when I moved back! At that time, I felt myself . . . I had serious depressed symptoms for a while . . . I just couldn't let go . . . then my younger sister would try to take me out . . . but I didn't want to go out . . . most of the time . . . I just stayed at home . . . didn't want to go out and felt upset. Until I started to go to work and then met a lot of colleagues . . . I started to let go and move on . . . I thought that . . . It was wrong to let myself live a painful and depressed life. 'Kui Le Shi Yi Ten, Tong Ku Shi Yi Ten.' (*) I slowly adjust myself to an optimistic attitude . . . just let go and move on!

After all, everyone eventually will end up dying . . . if I followed my husband . . . what about my children?

The researcher then asked her about the parental role exchange experience:

“Well, would you have difficulties when playing both father and mother roles? And would you have problems while exchanging the parental roles? Like what you said, that after your husband’s death, your parenting tended to become stricter because you considered that you are parenting alone . . . do what your husband responsible for as a father . . . you have to cover his part as well . . .”

The response to the interviewer/researcher:

“Yeah, that’s right! I became stricter than before . . . I became stricter to my children . . . Hmmm . . . you mean parental roles’ exchange? Well . . . how should I describe it . . . I would think that . . . I need to be stronger in order to raise them and take care of them until they grow up . . . and I couldn’t have ignorant or neglected parenting with my children . . . if I did . . . once I didn’t pay more attention to my children . . . well . . . the children’s education issue might be difficult for me . . . but at the time . . . all I could think of is that if I am not doing well in parenting . . . my children already lost their father . . . they would be very pitiable . . . they already had no father . . . I couldn’t neglect the parenting . . . that was not right!! That’s what I thought at that time!”

(*Kui Le Shi Yi Ten, Tong Ku Shi Yi Ten (快樂是一天，痛苦是一天) --- In Chinese this sentences means

that it is one's choice to have a happy day or a miserable day, depending on what attitude one has.

In Chinese:

「...怎麼講，比一個人分攤...現在自己一個人等於是所有的精神啊、壓力啊都集中在自己的身上啊，那種感受，怎麼講，有時候想一想也是很想哭，因為你如果說老公在的時候啊，至少出去哪裡啊都有人在啊，對不對？啊現在不一樣啦，小孩子沒有講，比較沒有那種完整的家啊，多少還是都有差。」

「剛開始他過世的時候那時候我們是在中和嘛，然後他過世那時候啊，我們就...我媽媽就想說不要我住在台北，我一個人要帶兩個小孩會很累，所以就叫我搬回來，其實搬回來我娘家我媽媽她們也真的幫助我很多啦！那時候有一陣子，我可能...我是自己感覺啦，可能有一點得了憂鬱症之類的，都沒有辦法走出來就對了，然後我妹妹看到，我妹妹就盡量會帶我出去，那時候

我想說，啊！不想出去，反正那時候我都悶在家裡面就對了，不想出門就對了，覺得很煩。直到說來上班以後就認識很多同事啊，然後慢慢就想開了，想說痛苦這樣過，一直這樣過也不是辦法，阿快樂也是過一天啊，痛苦也是過一天啊，就慢慢慢慢想，一直在調適自己的那種心態啦！就現在想一想，啊！看開一點啦，反正人生每個人都要走這條路啊，對不對，搞不好我也走我的小孩子不是更可憐，那如果說我如果快快樂樂的活，小孩子也跟著快樂，然後至少我還在之年，我還能看他們長大，看他們做到哪裡就到哪裡啦，我的想法是這樣啦！」

And then the researcher asked her about the parental role exchange experience.

「那就是說你會不會覺得有角色轉換的問題？像你有提到就是說丈夫過世會變得更嚴格，因為覺得是少了一個人在幫忙管教，會覺得爸爸以前在做的事情你會把它拿來做。」 ----from the interviewer/researcher

「會！會！會！就是會變得更兇啦，變的比較兇一點這樣子。……轉換喔，就是想說...怎麼講，想說我要堅強的就是帶他們長大，然後不能放鬆，如果放鬆，一旦放鬆，我可能會對於教育方面我可能會比較困難，那時候我的想法是這樣，如果我放鬆的話他們很可憐，已經沒有爸爸，我還沒對他們兇的話，放鬆他們可能不對，那時候我的想法是這樣。」

Self-Talk Proverbs as the Major Personal Belief System of Single Mothers, and their Influence on their Attitudes, Beliefs, Values and Behaviors of Parenting

When it comes to introvert factors of influencing these single mothers' parenting, I would like to further extend the discussion to other emergent themes; such as how these single mothers' self-talk and self-awareness efforts via proverbs to help them deal with the difficulties in their lives, what kind of experiences or interactions with the parents, siblings and family in-laws could cause such an impact on their parenting beliefs, attitudes, values and behaviors.

The following sentences are the self-talk proverbs these single mothers have mentioned while interviewing, with notes on who said them. Some of them were speaking in Taiwanese and some were speaking in Chinese. These proverbs and words of wisdom helped these single mothers to adjust, to cheer themselves up, and to confront all kinds of problems and difficulties in their everyday life. Some of these proverbs are the quick quip/traditional words of wisdom based on Taiwanese cultural climates and customs, and others are the respondent self-talk of these single mothers.

Taiwanese cultural proverbs/self-talk:

- Kui Le Shi Yi Ten, Tong Ku Shi Yi Ten (快樂是一天，痛苦是一天): It is one's choice to have a happy day or a miserable day, depending on what attitude does one holds (used by every single mother in the study);
- Zhi Zu Xi Fu Gan En (知足惜福感恩): Everyone should be grateful for what they have and be content.
(every single mother in the study)
- Hua He Tzo, Gan Wan Shiu (歡喜做，甘願受) (Taiwanese): When you decide to do something, you should hold a positive attitude and joyful mood rather than whining and complaining all the time.
(Shu-Chi, Mei-Li, Ah-Juan, Chu-Kuo, Hsiao-Jin, Ah-Ling, and Ting-Ting)

Single mothers' responding self-talk/proverbs:

- As long as my children and I live a happy life, I don't care what others' say.
(used by every single mother in the study)
- Take whatever chance/any job I could take/do in order to make a living.
(Shu-Chi, Ah-Ling, Hui-Jan, Chu-Kuo, Mei-Li, and Ah-Juan)

- Have faith in yourself (self-assurance/self-affirmation)
(Ting-Ting, Ah-Juan, Shu-Chi, Chu-Kuo, and Hsiao-Jin)
- Don't label yourself base on the social climates
(Ting-Ting, Ah-Juan, Shu-Chi, Chu-Kuo, and Hsiao-Jin)
- People do not show their sympathy all the time, so you have to stand up by yours
(every single mother in the study)
- Men are useless, so you have to count on yourself.
(used by every single mother in the study)

I realize that these self-talk proverbs are actually these single mothers' personal belief systems, mottos that help sustain and psychologically enable them to strengthen their will and courage to cope with the adversities and stressors in their lives. And single mothers' self-talk not only influences their personal belief systems and values, but also has impacts on their parenting behaviors, their attitudes toward their children. Based on their frequent usage during the interviews, and the way they provided comfort and wisdom during difficult times, I conclude that single mother's use of these proverbs influences their parenting style as well.

Aside from the impact on parenting practices from single mothers' use of self-talk, the interaction with children and their personalities and behavioral/academic performance are later factors in influencing these single mothers' parenting. (Continually modified parenting after former experience/getting with along with their children). Furthermore, most of the single mothers in Taiwan focus a lot on their children's public behavior and academic performance.

Children's Personalities and Single Mothers' Parenting Mutual Influence

Children who grow up in the single-parent families tend to be more independent and mature than children who grow up in two-parent families. Almost every single mother mentioned

that their children are very mature, considerate, and independent, and these mothers also have the tendency to train and teach their children to become more independent and mature due to their family conditions. They would also modify their parenting behavior/attitudes/belief/values due to their children's personalities and their families' specific conditions. Single mothers would like to educate their children to have the ability to confront different kinds of situations while they are absent due to working or other difficulties. Therefore, I believe that children's personalities and single mothers' parenting behavior/attitude/beliefs/values influence each other.

(Children tend to be more independent and mature)

Quoted Statement: **Ah-Juan** (Widowed-Transcript7-Page 9)

"... She is in her third grade in elementary school ... and sometimes when they finish school, I don't have to ... To tell the truth, the elder one would take the younger one home. My children are very independent!!"

In Chinese:

「...國小三年級，所以我們...然後就下課有時候我不用...我講句實在的，老大會帶小的用走的回去。.....對對，我們小孩子很獨立、她很獨立。」

Quoted Statement: **Mei-Li** (Widowed-Transcripts8-Page9)

"... well, it's different!! My children are forced ... my three children are forced to grow up!"

In Chinese:

「不一樣的喔~我孩子是強迫性...我三個小孩是強迫性長大。」

Quoted Statement: **Ting-Ting** (Divorced-Transcript3-Page8)

"For me, I felt that children in the single-parent-families tend to be more mature, and when he was born ... his father ... well ... I don't know. ... And then when you asked about the kids, he is precocious because when he was born, he saw us argued and fighting ... Yeah! And sometime, when my ex-husband abused me ... when he was just two or three years old ... even

when . . . I felt that he was very precocious and he would say to his father, 'You can't abuse mother!! You couldn't hit mother!!' Just like this, he already was being very mature . . . so . . ."

In Chinese:

「我覺得在單親上面的家庭來講，孩子都比較早熟，而且他一出生我覺得他的父親...我覺得那個時候可能我...我不知道.....然後妳說小孩子上面來講的話，他比較早熟，所以說他從小看見、他一出生就看見我們在爭吵，對！然後甚至他就是會有暴力對於我，對！然後他到兩、三歲的時候，甚至是...我覺得他很早熟，就會說：『你不可以欺負媽媽，你不可以打媽媽。』這樣子，我覺得他已經很早熟。所以到我們....」

Quoted Statement: **Chu-Kuo** (Widowed-Transcripts6-Page10)

"I didn't aware of it but all of my colleagues and friends who have seen my children felt that they are very mature. I didn't felt like that because I just taught them as usual...."

In Chinese:

「我自己是沒有感覺，可是我同事都覺得，跟看過我的小孩他們都就是聽到他們講話之類的，就覺得他們很早熟，我自己本身是沒有覺得啦，因為我還是一樣這樣教啊！....」

Quoted Statement: **Shu-Chi** (Widowed-Transcripts2-EnPage1-ChPage1)

". . . So I trained my children to become more independent. And then I hope our children can study by themselves and use any possible sources at school because a single-parent-family usually is financially challenged. So we may not afford them too much. Then we'll let nature take its course, depend on their personalities . . . Right! If they can be independent, it will be easier for me to make a living. Otherwise I would worry about them all the time during my work . . ."

In Chinese:

「...所以我們是訓練小孩子要再獨立一點。然後在學習方面可能，因為單親的化本來就是經濟能力方面是比較弱勢的，希望小朋友在學校盡量就是自己讀，運用資源，然後看小朋友的個性去發展，順其自然。...對！也要讓他獨立我們才能生存啊！啊不然小朋友如果不夠獨立的話，妳就會在工作上就會覺得很煩心....」

Quoted Statement: **Ah-Ling** (Divorced-Transcripts1-EnPage#-ChPage2, 19)

“Yeah . . . Yeah . . . Yeah . . . She will . . . she may . . . other people say that she is mature and she would know that . . . this is . . . for example, she would like to buy things and she would think that you don’t have to buy it for her until one day you make a fortune . . . For example, sometimes she wants to buy things but she would say, ‘We seem to have this thing at our home so don’t buy it!’ She is really considerate.”

“ . . . Afterward I thought that . . . actually . . . although my daughter is six or seven years old, she is really very independent . . . she is pretty . . . she would not let you worry about anything . . . if she wanted to drink a glass of water . . . even if the bottle is full, she could pull the water by herself. She also knew when you are not in a good mood. But I discovered afterward that . . . looking at her . . . One time . . . it seem that she spilled water all over the floor or something . . . She spilled everything all over the place . . . and smashed on feet . . . Originally I was pissed off and about to angry at her but I think that . . . well . . . I could not describe the feelings . . . ”

In Chinese:

「對對對！她可能她自己...人家說比較早熟吧！她也會知道說她這個是...譬如說她想買東西，她會想說不要買好了，等妳賺錢的時候、賺很多錢、很多錢的時候我們再買。...對，她會這樣子。譬如說她要買個東西，『我們家好像有了耶！不要買好了。』她會蠻貼心的啦！」

「...後來是想說...其實我女兒她雖然說六、七歲而已，她真的還蠻獨立的、她還蠻...她不會去什麼事都去麻煩，她自己要喝開水，水再滿她也有辦法自己倒，她也知道妳心情不好。後來是我們自己想說，看她那個樣子。好像有一次她把水弄倒了還是什麼吧！她什麼東西給我弄倒了、去砸到我的腳，原本火器要起來了，我想說...我也不會講，為什麼那一次整個自己....」

(Emphasis on children’s academic performance)

Quoted Statement: **Shu-Chi** (Transcripts2-EnPage16-20–ChPage9-10)

“At this moment, I’ve asked her about which school she wants to enter when she’s a senior high school student. She answered me, “senior high . . . I don’t know what I am going to do when I grow up.” I told her that ‘whatever you would like to do in the future . . . many people don’t necessarily have their work related to what they majored in college. You should at least go to

college; if possible, you want to study at higher levels, then we'll talk.' By that time . . . probably . . . well . . . what is your major? (*) 1 For example, the boy who is the first person that served in the military service here . . . he graduated from the Department of Psychology in National Chengchi University (*) 2. She knew the boy. The elder brother (*) 3 studied in psychology and now he works for Yang Ming Marine Transport Corporation (*) 4. I told her that his work is different from what he learned in college as well. So I told her that 'No matter what kind of major or work you will have, English is the basics and the foundation of all.' That is what she should have, and if some professional knowledge or skills are insufficient, she could learn them later on; however, at least, you have the foundation already. So that is how and what I told her. Therefore, my parenting is pretty casual and easy . . ."

"I've asked her. She is going to be a junior threes student. I said to her that 'You are already becoming junior three, and you should at least know which senior high you would like to go to! Because each high school has its requirements for entering, and you need to set up your goal first and then you would have the motivation to make the efforts on it!! Senior high school comes first and then finishing college. Although you don't have to think about entering college right now, what you should think of is . . .' she said, 'I don't know! Which high school's uniform looks better?' She asked. Because she is a girl . . . so I answered, 'The Affiliated Senior High School of National Taiwan Normal University looks the best!!' She answered 'What? They don't have a uniform!' I said 'Yes! No uniform looks the best!! You wear what you like, that's why their uniform is the best looking.' And then she said 'The entering grade is too high!' I answered 'It's up to you! If you can enter any senior high school in Taipei, I'll let you study in Taipei. But I don't think you can enter the best five senior high schools in Taipei, so it would be better for you to study in the National Keelung Girl's Senior High School (*) 5.' Then she said, 'I better go to Keelung Girl's Senior High School.' Although I said so, I still think this school is not as good as the former schools that I mentioned above. I am the mother and I told her about that but in reality, I felt such a waste for paying the entire tuitions fee to the after-school program to just study in the Keelung Girls' Senior High School. I didn't tell her frankly that teachers of cram schools/ after-school programs think so as well, and she/he thinks that she doesn't need to attend the program anymore because her current level is capable for entering the school already. The former students in the Keelung Girls' Senior High School were talented indeed; nevertheless, students at the school do not seem to perform as well as the former students.

So I told her that, 'Oh! Your choice is Keelung Girls' Senior High School? Good! The advanced class of Keelung Girls' Senior High School seems great but if you can enter the schools in Taipei City . . .' Well . . . My personal opinion is that Taipei City is a different place for me . . . so I think that if you want to go to college, it's better to study at the public schools in Taipei City (*) 6 From my points of view, I feel that if she can go to Taipei's public senior high schools,

she would have more opportunities to go to the public universities. Of course, I am not saying that it is impossible if study in Keelung Girl's Senior High School, but only the top two classes get this chance . . . so this is the selfishness of a mother who wishes her daughter the best . . .”

(*) 1--- Interviewer is asking interviewee

(*) 2--- It is one of the prestigious national universities in Taiwan. The university is famous for its institutes/studies in sociological and linguistics fields. After taking entrance examination exams, senior high school students all decide their first choice for university and hope to enter this university when interested in certain fields. In addition, unlike rankings in the U.S., most of the national/public universities/colleges have higher rankings in Taiwan.

(*) 3 --- In Taiwan, we usually refer to an elder sibling as brother/sister to show the closeness or simply just a title, where they do not necessarily have to be the sibling.

(*) 4 --- A worldwide company in Taiwan whose employees receive good pay which proves that their working ability is excellent.

(*) 5 --- The top ranking of (girl's) senior high schools in Keelung City

(*) 6 --- Using the same rules of counting the ranking of college/university in Taiwan. Without some exceptions, public senior high schools usually have higher rankings than private senior high schools.

In Chinese:

「因為現在有在講，我有在問她說：『你高中要念哪裡？』她說：『高中喔！我現在又不知道我長大要做甚麼工作？』我就跟她講說：『不管你要做甚麼工作，很多大學生讀的科系不見得她上班的科系就是這個，你要心裡有正規的...把學歷學好到大學，如果你能上去再上去那也沒問題，你到時候搞不好，你現在讀的是甚麼...甚麼系來講...』像我們裡面以前第一屆役男政大心理系，因為那役男她認識，那個哥哥他讀心理的，他現在跑去陽明海運上班，也不一樣我會跟她講，但是不一樣，我給她是在這個基礎她都會了，我說你最基本的英文嘛，你的有些底子這是最基礎，不管你學甚麼科系都一樣，去外面做甚麼工作都一樣，有些專業的東西你不足，妳再去學而已阿！其他的底子你都有，我以這樣的方式跟她講，所以我的教育方式就是很隨...」

「我有問她...因為現在要升國三了，我說：『你都已經要升國三了，你至少要知道你的高中要哪一間阿！因為那有一個門檻阿，你才有目標才會去衝嘛！念高中以後再來念大學阿，那你現在不用想到大學，你現在想到...』她說我不知道，阿哪一個學校制服比較漂亮？因為女生嘛，我說師大附中最高級，

她說哪有？那又沒有穿制服，我說對阿！沒有穿制服最漂亮阿！你喜歡穿甚麼就穿甚麼。她說師大附中分數太高了，我說隨便你，我說你這樣台北能進去我會讓你去台北念，台北我認為前五個高中你進不去，你還是念基隆女中就好了，她剛開始跟我講說，我念基隆女中就好了，我可能是媽媽，講是歸講，可是在心理層面，讀基隆女中浪費我給你補習，我是沒有在面前講，因為以前基隆女中真的不錯，阿現在好像是有一點落差，因為人才都往外了，我說要是念基隆女中，連補習班老師都說，那補習不用補，現在的程度都可以上了！所以我說阿你目標基隆女中喔？不錯阿！基隆女中前段班也很好阿，我說對啦！很好啦！我想說你如果能去台北的話，因為台北畢竟我個人覺得比較不一樣，你如果要考大學，會比較高一點公立的，我就這樣跟她講，依我自己了解還是我自己的感官，我就會覺得說，最少去台北你如果前幾個高中能上的話，是公立的在台北可能機率就比較高一點，基隆女中不是沒有，她都是在前面的大概一、兩班而已，後面的好像也不怎樣，所以媽媽的私心阿...」

Quoted Statement: **Hui-Jan** (Transcripts4-Page1, 12, 21-23)

“Important? Because I didn’t have a high education level, I hope my children study higher if they can! I think that the education level is very important as well...”

“Because I used to work in the children’s day care center/cram school, I was able to teach my children when they were at elementary school... but now they are all studying in junior high schools and senior high schools... the level is too difficult for me to teach them... so after they studying in junior high school, I send them to go to cram schools for academic help, and the tuition fees are quite expensive... there are three of them and each of them needs to go to the cram school...”

“Yes! I used to ask for higher scores when they take tests. I like them to receive 100points for each test; however, the exams from junior and senior high schools became more difficult... so they were unable to receive great grades every time... And I had to adjust my attitude, lower my standard... I only ask that their grades are above 60points. If they can’t understand the questions or homework, they could ask teachers or their classmates. I didn’t set up the standard as high before now.”

“Well, at the time my eldest child didn’t like to study and when he studied in junior high, he usually received bad grades, lower than 60points. I felt upset when I saw he received bad grades. When my second child went to junior

high, she studied very well and she always received the first place in her class. Then, I would talk to my eldest child and that, 'you should study harder . . . you see, your sister could apply for scholarship...' Because some of the organizations offer the opportunities for students from lower SES families to apply for scholarships yet his grades are too bad to apply for it . . . so he could just watch his sister apply for it."

" . . . However, my second child is the senior one now . . . and probably this is because the majors are different or other reasons . . . she didn't do well on her tests and her brother laughed at her . . . I asked her, 'Why didn't you do well on your tests? Is it because you had some parts, so that you didn't figure it out? Do you need to go to cram school?' She answered, 'No, I don't want to go to cram school!' and I told her, 'You didn't do well . . . so what would you like to do?' . . . And she unexpectedly answered me that, 'It is not fun at all if I am always first place in my class . . . now I did terrible this time but if I could get good grades to receive better ranking in the class next time . . . doesn't that sound exciting?' . . . and then . . . she improved 19 ranks in her class this exam from almost the bottom of her class!"

"I told her, 'You are going to have the exam next week and you should do your best this time and see if you can get better grades!' and 'If you could improve again this time, we could apply for the scholarship this time . . . and if I could I would buy you what you want from the money we received!'"

In Chinese:

「重要喔? 因為我本身讀書不是讀得很高, 所以就會想說小朋友如果能讀的話就讀高一點, 學歷覺得滿重要的....」

「因為以前我自己有教過安親班, 所以國小部分我還okay... 可是現在國中高中, 他們那個都太深了, 所以我就沒辦法教他們, 那我後來都國中都送他們補習, 所以這個費用也是滿蠻高的, 啊因為三個下來, 你是每一個都一直....」

「有! 我以前要求比較高, 以前喜歡看100分的, 可是後來就沒辦法就... 自己就慢慢降低分數, 想說你們就是及格就好了啦! 啊要會啦~ 如果真的不會, 看要問老師或問同學? 所以現在要求比較沒有那麼高」

「因為老大那時候不讀嘛~ 然後到國中看他都是... 後來都有不及格的, 就看了很難過, 想說為什麼會這樣? 然後老二讀的時候, 老二都okay, 在班上都是第一名.... 然後就會跟老大講說: 『你也用功一點吼~ 像妹妹這樣也可以拿

獎學金』因為有時候有一些低收的他有辦...慈善單位有辦獎學金，啊他就沒辦法請啊~所以就看妹妹請啊~」

「...結果老二現在高一的上學期，可能...我不曉得是不是可能剛進去，那科目不一樣，所以她就考得很不好，然後哥哥就開始反笑她.....結果我跟她講，我問她...我說：『妳為什麼...妳是不會嗎？我要不要讓妳補習？』她說：『才不要補習』結果她說...我說啊妳考這麼爛耶？那妳怎麼辦？她說：『每次都第一名，現在掉下來，然後再衝上去這樣才有成就感！！』.....所以她...她上一次...喔~考得真的考得很爛！然後後來是好像三、四十名掉到已經很後面了喔~結果這一次衝進前...就是進步了19名！！就往前...」

「那我就說那妳現在，下禮拜要考試了，我說：『那妳也要用功，看看你成績能不能再進步？』我說：『妳如果再進步，妳要可以申請獎學金妳需要什麼，我有辦法我就用那個錢去買！』」

Many of my participants mentioned their children's academic performance or children's learning conditions while interviewing. Although many of them stated that they would not set up high standards for their children and ask for nothing but only their healthy bodies, I found they had definite expectations and attitudes toward their children's academic performance and achievements. As some of the mothers don't have high education levels, they all hope that their children could perform well in academics, and hope they will have promising futures that give them a better quality of life. Thus, despite the fact that these single mothers may not be able to teach their children by themselves, they would seek many kinds of support to help their children receive adequate amounts of quality resources when learning. The most commonly used resources and methods they used for their children were sending them to cram schools or afterschool programs in order to solve any learning difficulties and to gain all kinds of skills and

knowledge. In summary, I consider these single mothers as actually emphasizing their children's academic performance and achievement when parenting.

How These Single Mothers Define, Describe and Perceive their own Parenting

I have discussed and mentioned many different themes and examples above about different kinds of factors that resulted in various parenting styles of Taiwanese single mothers. While interviewing these single mothers, from their descriptions of perceived parenting and the narratives of conversations with their children, I could recognize that their parenting behaviors/attitudes/beliefs/values are influenced by many interactive factors. Although these single mothers have their own personal situations and stories and that generate various parenting styles, these stories and interview transcripts allowed me to conclude that each of their parenting styles share several similarities. Of course, due to distinct backgrounds and living conditions, I discovered the uniqueness of each single mother's parenting style within their stories. The following paragraphs provide several examples that illustrate these parenting similarities and differences of participating Taiwanese single mothers.

First of all, regarding the general parental attitudes that these single mothers hold toward their children, based on the emergent themes/sub-themes I found, most of them would try to be as open-minded as they could while also doing their best to maintain accessibility to their children when they need help. In addition, they also tend to build up a mutually communicative relationships in order to have effective and immediate conversations with their children (children's personalities and conditions would influence single mothers' parenting). Many emphasize both the psychological and physical wellness of their children. Though they pay more

attention to children's academic performance and achievement, they are more focused on their children's virtue and personality first when prioritizing the importance of child development.

Aside from the general parental attitudes single mothers have, some also hold different attitudes about parenting their children. Some of the single mothers like to follow their children's own will rather than restricting or intervening in their curiosities and interests about everything. In order to build up mutual and trusted relationships with children, a number of them believe that having faith in their own children and trust in what they said and did in the first place is useful, before trying to understand the underlying meanings and reasons behind their children's words or behavior. Despite the fact that many of the single mothers try to be open-minded and build up mutual, trusted, and effective communication relationships with children, some of them altered their parental attitudes after their husband's absence (either becoming stricter or more lenient). Mothers who hold stricter parental attitudes toward their children after the husband's absence usually believe that training their children to be well-behaved is one of the indexes to verify the correctness and sufficiency of their parenting. Children's behavioral performance usually represents that they provide "good" parenting toward their children, and people would thus not judge and criticize them and their children due to the absence of the husband/father (social climate/cultural context/traditional customs have impacts on single mothers' parenting).

Secondly, after organizing these single mothers' parental beliefs and values within the emergent themes and sub-themes from the interview transcripts, I realized that every single mothers of the study insist that children should be mother's first priority and they shouldn't be distracted by other men or depend on others (especially men) while raising children. Also, these single mothers are convinced that offering the best quality of life to their children, including sufficient financial resources, academic help, and appropriate parenting, are what they need to do

every day. They refuse to let others look down on, criticize, discriminate against, and mock their children for any reasons, especially their financial status and the absence of the father.

Furthermore, several single mothers also suggest that the idea of raising children as the backup plan for care when parents become old is false. Raising and taking care of children should not be for the parents' own benefits, and parents should not expect children to take care of them, or paying back the efforts they made on children when children grow up and they grow old. Except for the parental beliefs/values of most single mothers listed above, other single mothers have pointed out that cultivating children to have the abilities of making correct judgments and differentiating what is right and wrong are also very important.

Regarding parental practices aimed at molding behavior, most of these single mothers would teach and guide their children to have proper manners, social skills, virtues, common sense or other living skills for different circumstances. They like to discuss with their children or remind them about others' opinions and thoughts about single-parent-families, and teach them to be responsible for their own choices and decisions. Again, due to the influences of others' views on single-parent-families (social climate/cultural context) they greatly emphasize their children's behavioral performance outside of the family. Despite the fact that these single mothers focus more on children's behavioral performance, some of the single mothers also try to understand the reasons and feelings of these behaviors with patience rather than depending on others' comments and critiques. Except for the general parental behaviors most single mothers practiced, some believe that providing children with a sense of steadiness and security about their life via an unchanged living environment, caregivers, daily routines, and sufficient availability of parents or grandparents for children are crucial parenting issues. Furthermore, other single mothers also indicate that giving timely and suitable compliments and positive reinforcement to children to

facilitate their appropriate performance is essential. Some of the single mothers would also remind their children to always protect themselves and to be cautious when having close relationships with the opposite sex.

When it comes to the difficulties of parenting for these single mothers, providing their children with suitable, sufficient, and correct academic support, practically and financially, is probably the most difficult things for them to do. Many of them don't have much education, and usually cannot handle the problems and questions posed by their children's homework and exams. They often try to solve this problem by sending children to afterschool programs or cram schools for certain subjects. These programs usually require certain amount of tuition expenses, which often leads to worsening financial straits for single-parent-families. In addition, almost all of the single mothers believe that helping children achieve higher educational levels is the most important element for having a promising future and successful life. They all devote themselves to providing a better living environment for their children in order to maintain their academic performance at a certain level. In addition to the disability of limited financial means and educational resources while parenting, the children's inappropriate behaviors or rebellious attitudes are another difficulty for these single mothers. Struggling for the financial steadiness of the family or playing two parental roles as children's mother and father already consumes a lot of energy from single mothers; yet facing the rebellious attitudes of their teenage children, such as smoking and other harmful behaviors may become the last straw for these single mothers. Trying to maintain their own psychological and physical wellness while managing the expenses for the family and providing suitable and effective parenting becomes an arduous task for these single mothers.

Furthermore, while these single mothers discipline or punish their children differently based on their various parenting attitudes/beliefs/values/ behaviors, they tend to train their children to become more independent and mature than children from two-parent families. They would not only train their children to help out with the house chores and take certain responsibilities, but also teach and remind their children of the correct attitudes and concepts of money and time management. Some single mothers punish their children by removing their privileges or limit time of watching TV, using the computer, hanging with friends, and the amount of allowance. Other single mothers practice physical punishment (e.g., spanking) after repeated teaching, speaking, persuading, reminding, and explaining to their children their mistakes and misbehaviors. In addition, several single mothers ask their children's obedience about their decisions and guidance in behavioral performance, and in some cases children should ask for permission before hanging out with friends. These single mothers would remind and teach their children to recognize the importance of their own safety and chastity. Some single mothers even use abusive language with their children to emphasize the consequences of certain issues, but also to remind them children about how their existence is valued by their parents.

According to the examples demonstrated above, these single mothers often try overly hard to manage the balance between offering appropriate parenting and providing a better quality of life for their children. But as most of the time these single mothers are struggling with financial issues, personal emotional conditions, and many other stressors in their life; co-parenting becomes another sub-theme in this study. Although these single mothers are the primary caregivers of their children, they sometimes receive help from their extended family, friends, colleagues, and even their elder children when rearing and parenting. Among the cases of the study, siblings and parents from the single mother's family, friends, and elder children are major

sources of social support for these single mothers. Tied up in living problems, these single mothers usually need to discuss with their siblings or parents their parenting priorities, and have certain agreements in order to prevent conflicts, disagreements, and inconsistency of parenting provided by others. The advice and suggestions of their siblings, parents, friends, and colleagues is also seen to partially alter the single mothers' parenting. Also, the interactions and relationships between some of the single mothers and children tends to be as friends, without any taboos that may result from the co-parental role the elder children plays and the mutually communicative relationships built between single mothers and children. Occasionally, the elder children would also remind and "educate" their mothers about certain habits, or offer their personal suggestions and advice to their mothers. Except for the friendship-like interactions and relationships with children, some of the single mothers interact with their children are still like parents rather than friends. Nonetheless, all these single mothers tend to practice their parenting with authority; they still hold an open-minded attitude and build up clear communications with their children.

Last but not least, no matter what kind of parenting these single mothers provide toward their children, how many resources they receive from others, the conditions that resulted in single-parent-family structures, the financial status, the emotional management/problem solving ability/coping strategies of these single mothers, and how their self-talk proverb function, these single mothers only hope for one thing: that their children grow up soundly and happily, and have a promising future.

In summary, these single mothers' parenting styles are influenced first by the Taiwanese cultural context/social climates/traditional customs and secondly, by the resources they obtain either from social or financial supports from their extended families, friends, colleagues, and the

social welfare systems. And finally, their emotional management, problem solving ability or coping strategies are also central factors in influencing the quality and style of these single mothers' parenting. In addition, these single mothers' personal beliefs and self-talk practices are also a salient indicator of altering and forming their parenting beliefs, attitudes, and values that become parenting behaviors. The interactions with their children and children's personalities are also related to these single mothers' parenting style, where these children of single mothers show a good deal of maturity and constraint when it comes to pressing for their own needs, taking care of themselves as needed, and showing support for their mothers. Therefore, the living environments, social networks, and financial status are the power and force that influences these single mothers' parenting. Their personal beliefs and values, and their children's personalities and interactions with parents, become the inner power and resilience to create their own very unique style of parenting within a generally disapproving or non-concerned Taiwanese public.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, AND IMPLICATION

This study focuses on how cultural context influences Taiwanese single mothers' parenting style and how these single mothers perceive their own parenting attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviors. The structure of this chapter is as follows: (1) the limitations of the study; (2) the salient findings of the study and the existing literature; how the study findings interact and influence each other and single mothers' parenting; (3) the suggestions and the implications for future research, and (4) the researcher/interviewer's personal insights, reflections, and journals on the study.

Discussion and Conclusion

Limitations of the Study

Although this study focuses on the impacts of cultural contexts and tradition on single mothers' parenting style in Taiwan, it was conducted in specific geographic areas (Chiayi and

Keelung) in Taiwan. In addition, the structures of single-mothers families vary and this study is only looking at the widowed and divorced single mother families. The findings of the study are only based on the parental perspectives rather than including children's points of view. Also, most of the participants work in the social welfare systems and might be a group of single mothers who receive more social resources or are more likely to seek help from others than most single mothers in other places or circumstances. As the time periods and the processes of interviews/data collection only lasted for two months, results of the study may not represent or generalize about the parenting style of single mothers' population in Taiwan. However, the study could be the starter for further research in the future, where the findings of the study could serve as the foundation, examples, and the basic understanding of Taiwanese parenting style under the influences of cultural context/social climates/traditional customs. In any case, the depth and the characteristics of this qualitative study still provide unique perspectives, understandings, and recognition of further interpretations of these Taiwanese single mothers' parenting styles.

Salient Findings of the Study and the Existing Literature

Taiwanese Social Climate/Cultural Context/Traditional Customs

According to the findings of the study, the parenting style of Taiwanese single mothers is greatly influenced by social climate/cultural context/traditional customs. These single mothers usually practice their parenting behaviors due to others' critiques and stigma. They tend to train their children to become well-behaved and independent. Most of the single mothers very much emphasize their children's behavioral and academic performance, partly to prove the quality and adequacy of their parenting are as good and appropriate as the parenting provided by two-parent families. For example, Shu-Chi, Mei-Li, Chu-Kuo, and Hui-Jan stated that they strictly monitor

their children's behavioral performance, and never want others to discriminate and criticize their children due to the absent of father or assumed misbehavior. Within Taiwanese society, many people still have negative stereotypes and attitudes toward single-parent families, and the disadvantage and vulnerability of being a single mother is much tougher than a single father when it comes to financial status, stigmatized labeling of traditional customs, and the social climates in Taiwanese culture. In Taiwanese society, most of the people, even at the government level, still consider single-parent families as "problematic" or "broken" families. The negative perspectives of single-parent family structures represent the stigmatized labeling and stereotypes of single-parent families in Taiwan (Tsai, 2002). As for widowed single mothers, in Chinese/Taiwanese culture the old saying that, "Lie Nu Bu Shi Er Fu" (烈女不恃二夫): "One man in a life time" is emphasized, and based on these beliefs/traditional social norms, a widow should carry on her life without a husband and raise her children on her own the rest of her life, with no new partner to help shoulder the burden of making ends meet and raising children, or offer personal comfort and companionship. This means that mother and children would have to deal with the loss of the father, and the family that will no longer have the presumed benefits a father provides to family identity under the embedded cultural context in Taiwan's society (Hsu, Kahn & Huang, 2002).

Based on the perceptions and traditional custom of remarriage restrictions in Taiwan, mothers usually become the only parent within the single-parent families no matter when the father dies. Hence, the heavy responsibilities of raising the children and sustaining the family falls on the shoulder of the mother, who must deal with her own grief over the loss of a husband, while also taking over his parental role (Hsu, Kahn & Huang, 2002). What's more, Taiwanese cultural considers "wholeness" as an important element of one's life, and thus losing a father

signals the incompleteness of one's life. Both single mothers and their children therefore have to deal with this sense of incompleteness, and fight against this stigma within society during their entire life. Also, public discussion about the death of loved ones, or expressing one's sorrows and sadness about those loved or lost is a taboo in Taiwanese culture. Holding these feelings, grief, and mourning process inside of the family or even in one's heart is a common coping strategy for the widowed single mothers and their children (Hsu, Kahn & Huang, 2002).

Accordingly, the taboos and traditional customs within Taiwanese culture about the sense of incompleteness (the absent of the father), the discrimination of female, the idea of "one man in a life," and the proverbs such that influenced Taiwanese single mothers' parenting styles include: "Gia Chou Bu Wai Yang" (家醜不外揚): Never chat with others about the inner workings of your family, especially something embarrassing, and "Hao Shi Bu Chu Men, Huai Shi Chuan Qian Li" (好事不出門, 壞事傳千里): Good things do not spread as quickly as the bad things.

Social Resources and Financial Status

Social Resources

Based on the results of the study, single mothers received social resources mostly from their own families, friends, and colleagues, and the social welfare system in Taiwan. However, these single mothers also expressed that the resources from the social welfare system and the school are not as sufficient as people thought. They usually lack information and knowledge about laws that allow them to take the advantage of the social resources provided by the government, or fail to apply for the subvention or other social support from related organizations. Also, due to the social climate expressed in the proverb, "Ching Guan Nan Duan Gia Wu Shi"

(清官難斷家務事): It is hard for outsiders to judge the right and wrong of a family's incidents, people often act unconcerned with other families' business. Most outsiders tend to criticize and gossip rather than offer their help or support to those families in need. For example, Ah-Ling mentioned that others knew her husband was having an affair with another woman, but these outsiders not only covered up for her husband, but also discriminated against her when she suffered the pain of marriage dissolution. In addition, before she realized that she was able to apply for the Restraining Order and fought for a divorce, the school teacher and manager were unwilling to offer her help most of the time.

These single mothers have to struggle with this rough treatment while trying to provide quality parenting and futures for their children. Accordingly, although many of the single-mother families obtained supports and resources from their original families, the accessibility and availability of suitable and sufficient resources and support from parents and siblings is not as common among the single-mother families as two-parent households (Tsai, 2002). Furthermore, due to the social climate that “Gia Chu Qu De Nu Er Jiu Xiang Po Chu Qu De Shui” (嫁出去的女兒就像潑出去的水): A daughter is just like splashed water when they got married; the water will never be able to get it back, single-mother families usually live separately from their extended families, and are unwilling to bother their own family members except for emergencies (Chen, 2008).

Despite the fact that single mothers are influenced by social climate/cultural context/traditional customs, and are often unwilling to bother others unless they are confronted with a crisis, they still receive most support and resources from their parents and siblings families when they face

difficulties. In Taiwan's society, the patrilineal structure is still dominant and women are considered outsiders when marrying "into" the husband's family. Therefore, the death of husband usually results in disconnected, detached, or even conflict relationships with the family in-laws. As a result, many of the widowed single-mother families tend to move closer to their parents and siblings in order to receive some kind of supports (Hsu, Kahn & Huang, 2002). The social resources offered by single mothers' own families usually helps them when co-parenting their children, resolving the difficulties of financial crisis, sustaining them in their emotional and mental steadiness, and providing adequate and quality parenting of their children.

Financial Status and limited working schedule

Many study results show that single-parent families are more likely to live below the poverty line and thus become more vulnerable than two-parent families. In addition, female-headed single-parent families are more likely than the male-headed single-parent families to be subjected to poverty and its consequences. Once the family suffers from insufficient financial resources, other related issues such as the quality of parenting resources become a challenge for the family (Huang, 2007; Tsai, 2002).

Compared with male-headed single-parent families, female single parents are disadvantaged in their working ability and financial independence, and single mothers in particular may not have a job or working experience before a divorce or becoming a widow. Also, the salary paid to women is far less than that paid for men. In Taiwan, women's salaries are 60% to 70% of men's salaries, and opportunities for women's promotion are fewer than those for men (Chen, 2008). What's more, after divorce or the death of husband, many single mothers choose to shrink their working hours in order to take care of their children, not only because they are subject to the social climate that says mother should be the primary caregivers of children,

but also the stigmatized image of “single mothers” in the society. For example, Ah-Ling and Hui-Jan shared choose to spend more time with their children rather than working overtime or having a job with higher salary in a different city. They are willing to do whatever kinds of jobs are needed to sustain their living expenses for the family, and also manage to provide adequate and timely parenting for their children.

The weakness of financial conditions within single-parent families often results in chained reactions and influences on single parents’ parenting, and thus has impact on children’s development (Chen, 2008). This study showed that female-headed single-parent families usually lack sufficient financial support, and they thus need to work over time or double and even triple jobs to make ends meet. These single mothers often have little time to spend with their children, and provide appropriate and timely parenting (Chen, 2008). The conflict of doing overtime work to earn more money, as opposed to choosing to spend more time to take care of their children, is a difficult decision for single mothers. Most of the single mothers in the study do not have a great education, and thus have difficulties teaching their children when facing academic problems. Moreover, as many of the single mothers believe that having a higher education level leads to a promising future, they work hard in order to pay extra tuition for after-school programs or cram schools to be competitive in academics. Such situations are demonstrated by the single mothers’ narratives of this study. Shu-Chi, Hui-Jan, Mei-Li, Chu-Kuo, and Hsiao-Jin in fact had mentioned these very concerns during the interviews. Yet Hsiao-Jin in particular can also pay more attention to her son’s education and skills training, for the financial situation within her family is much better than any other single-parent families in this study. Accordingly, the pressure of managing the balance of living expenses, children’s education budgets, and

entertainment fees is much lighter for her than for other single mothers, confirming that the lack of finances has a huge impact on single-mother parenting.

Emotional Management/Problem Solving Ability/Coping Strategies

Losing a partner for single mothers often means that the only income resource of the family is themselves. The need to sustain the family and rear the children thus become the inspiration for single mothers to move on in their lives after the loss of a partner. No matter if these mothers became single parents due to divorce or the death of husband, they all need to adjust their lifestyle and thinking, and cope with the emotional issues while raising their children. Ah-Ling mentioned that she suffered from depression for a while, and had a hard time moving on with her life, until her daughter's condition reminded her she has a child to take care and a life to live. Shu-Chi, Chu-Kuo, Mei-Li, Hui-Jan, and Ah-Juan all shared their feelings that the idea of raising the children and offering them a better life empowered them to deal with negative feelings about the aftermaths of marital separation and the death of husband. Single mothers have to tell and force themselves to be strong enough to sustain the family and properly care for their children. The heavy responsibilities of raising the children and sustaining the family thus falls on the shoulder of the mother, who has to not only deal with their own grief over the loss of a husband, but also take over the parenting role of the absent husband (Hsu, Kahn & Huang, 2002).

These single mothers' emotional condition becomes a great concern when their approach to problem solving and coping strategies become the model or primary examples for their children in dealing with their father's absence. Moreover, the coping strategies that keep feelings and sorrows inside in order to maintain the harmony within the family may turn to potential threats

and anxiety that endangers the relationship and interactions between the mother and children. Therefore, the taboo within Taiwanese culture about not talking of death, the concept of the completeness/wholeness of one's life being threatened in the loss of a partner or parent, the pressure to create harmony in the household that falls on the mother, and the idea of "one man in a life," where emphasis is placed on children rather than new husbands, greatly influences single mothers' parenting (Hsu, Kahn & Huang, 2002).

After divorce or the death of husband, the steadiness of single mothers' emotion and their wellness becomes a critical issue when it comes to the quality of parenting. In addition, the coping strategies and the problem solving abilities of these single mothers are the salient factors for researchers and practitioners to evaluate the quality and the adequacy of their parenting (Tsai, 2002).

Self-Talk/Proverbs

Each of the single mothers in the study have suffered the aftermaths of marriage dissolution, and regardless of the reasons, they all go through similar yet various stage of adjustment to circumstances in their lives. For example, after Shu-Chi's husband died, she lost the direction and meaning of living, but when she thought of her children, she told herself the same proverb that all of these single mothers said: "Kui Le Shi Yi Ten, Tong Ku Shi Yi Ten" (快樂是一天, 痛苦是一天): It is one's choice to have a happy day or a miserable day, depending on what attitude does one holds. She had reconstructed her life and try to rear her children with quality conditions. Chu-Kuo was also empowered by this self-talk, which gave her strength to sustain herself and to adjust her husband's death and raising her children alone. While adjusting and coping with the difficulties and piled stressors at

various stages in their lives, these single mothers usually generate strength by recognizing the responsibility of childrearing and the recognition of their inner strength expressed in their use of proverbs. At different adjusting stages after being a single mother, the conversation and dialogue with each single mother varies (Huang, 2007). Ah-Ling, Shu-Chi, Ah-Juan, Hui-Jan, and Mei-Li also said that they would encourage and remind themselves to “Take whatever opportunity or job I could take/do in order to make a living” to better their circumstances. By reasoning with themselves, providing themselves words of self-assurance, these personal beliefs or proverbs that applied to the circumstances and the cheering attitudes become part of the positive strength and their self-resilience. The repeating of self-talk and self-assurances gradually guided these single mothers to find their way and purpose of living (Huang, 2007). In addition, the self-talk proverbs help to form coping strategies and problem solving ability that is based on conventional and time-tested wisdom. Therefore, this researcher concludes that the self-talk single mothers used while facing all kinds of stressors in their life can also be directly applied to the working beliefs and attitudes of single mothers’ parenting styles.

Children’s Personality and the Interaction with Children

The fact that children who grow up within single-parent families tend to become more independent, considerate, and mature than children growing up within two-parent families (Chen, 2008), is due to the reorganizing of the family structure within single-parent families, where children had to adjust to these changes and deal with them more as adults than as unconcerned or carefree children. Mei-Li mentioned during the interview that her children were forced to grow up and become very independent, mature, and considerate and they even know that they have to protect their mothers while arguing with family-in-laws. Also, the working schedule of single mothers and the absence of their husband leaves them with no choice but to train their

children to be self-sufficient and well-behaved, and to take care of themselves while sharing the burden (family chores, parenting the younger siblings, or having part-time jobs) of sustaining the family. Shu-Chi stated that as single mothers tend to train their children to be independent, they could feel more relief while working. Additionally, the interaction between single mothers and children may become closer or more intimate than in two-parent families (Chen, 2008). Shu-Chi, Ah-Juan, Hsiao-Jin, Ting-Ting, and Ah-Ling described how the relationship and interaction between their children and them are equal or more like friends. They have become closer and more intimate with their children, listening to their thoughts and feelings while parenting, educating, and disciplining them. Nonetheless, Chu-Kuo and Mei-Li also believe that they became stricter and more serious about disciplining their children than before, because they must pay more attention to their children's behavioral performance in order not to be criticized by others due to the absent of father and "problematic" parenting.

No matter what kind of relationship and interactions occur with their children, single mothers' parenting thus becomes altered and modified due to children's personality and their particular relationships and interactions with them.

Parenting

There is no doubt that parenting immensely influences child development, and parenting style is related to the primary caregivers' personal circumstances. The parenting attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviors are greatly related to the family's physical and mental wellness, and the circumstances and atmosphere of their surroundings (Chen, 2008; Huang, 2007). According to the findings of this study, these single mothers' parenting attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviors is tremendously impacted n by social climate, cultural context and traditional customs.

Although these single mothers have mentioned the importance of “Having faith in yourself” (self-assurance/self-affirmation), or “Don’t follow the social climate to label yourself” and “As long as my children and I live a happy life, I don’t care what others’ say” while interviewing, they still practice parenting based on the social climate and traditional customs in society. They seriously emphasize their children’s performance outside of the family and hope for the highest achievements and educational performance their children can achieve, partly because they believe that to prove they are also good and responsible mothers, they must teach their children to be independent, well-behaved, and perform well at school. Most of these single mothers said that their parenting style is pretty much the same before and after the divorce or the death of husband, but the focus and the worries of their parenting have changed, and they pay more attention to children’ behavioral performance than they used to, due to the cultural generalizations that children within single-parent families tend to have problematic behavior.

Despite the fact that single mothers tend to pay more attention to their children’s behaviors, many also worry about the aftermath of marriage dissolution, where the death of father may result in psychological dysfunction or damage, which can influence children’s development in all aspects. Ting-Ting, Ah-Ling, Shu-Chi, Hsiao-Jin, and Mei-Li all have concerns about the adjustment and mental wellness of their children in regards to the absence of their fathers, and the subsequent incidents in daily life. Some of them hold an open attitude toward their children in order to build up mutual communication and trustworthiness, while others seek help from spiritual and religious support systems (Mei-Li mentioned the value of Buddhism in this case). In addition, they also turn to their own families and friends for tangible, informational, and emotional support in order to achieve the financial stability of the families, to

protect their rights and well being, and to maintain and adjust their own emotional steadiness. They are thus able to provide quality parenting for their children under difficult circumstances.

Parenting difficulties

The greatest concerns and difficulties these single mothers have about parenting are teaching their children's homework, providing for the safety of their children, and offering sufficient financial support for their children in all aspects. In Taiwan, one study identified the top five difficulties for single parents are parenting, children's academic performance, the tuition fees for children's education, the safety of children, and the energy and time spent with their children (Chen, 2008). Some of the single mothers like Ting-Ting and Chu-Kuo also worried about that the absence of the father may result in maladjustment and insufficient child development, and noted that there must be differences in parenting between single-parent families and two-parent families. Beaty (1995) indicated that children growing up in fatherless families tend to have a poorer sense of masculinity, and also have more difficulties in getting along with peers (Hsu, Kahn & Huang, 2002). The self-image of children from single-parent families tends to be lower than children from two-parent families. Also, there might be an incorrect identification or negative impacts around sexual issues, such as intimate relationships with the opposite sex within single-parent families (Chen, 2008).

Parenting expectations

Regardless of circumstances and parenting styles, the single mothers in this study work hard so that their children grow up in a good environment and have a promising future. Basically, the researcher finds there is no particular parenting style for Taiwanese single mothers, because each has her own story and experience, and these various experiences and circumstances influence

their personal condition. I thus conclude that the living environments, social networks, and financial status are the power and force in influencing these single mothers' parenting. Along with their use of self-talk proverbs, their personal beliefs and values as well as their children's personalities and interactions with parents provide the necessary resilience to form their own style of child care and training. In general, each of the Taiwanese cultural elements, social climates, and traditional customs created a great impact on these single mothers' parenting, even though some of them resisted the cultural norms that put women in a lower status than men.

Future Implications of the Study

New Direction, Suggestions, and Focus of Further Study

This study is only focused on the parenting style of single mothers and paid little attention to the single fathers. While conducting the study, the researcher discovered that the vulnerability of single-father families is also crucial to understanding the overall issues around single parenthood. The findings of this study are interpreted based on mothers' perspectives about parenting rather than including the viewpoints of the children's experiences. I believed that fully understanding both mothers and children's perspectives and experiences of parenting could help the researcher give better and more precise recommendations about depicting and modifying single-parent families parenting in Taiwan. Moreover, the participants of this study only included divorced and widowed single mothers, so study designs of single-parent families in the future could also include unmarried single parents to complete study results. In addition to the fact that remarriage is not common among women in Taiwan, and considering the idea of "one man in a life" and the whole concept of "incompleteness" in single parenthood mentioned by Taiwanese

widowed mothers, it would be interesting to see those who remarry and do find comfort and steadiness from a second marriage.

Recommendations for the Government Level and Social Welfare System

According to the findings of this study, single mothers in Taiwan are not receiving sufficient and suitable support from the social welfare systems, except for when applying for funding for children. Yet the crucial qualifications needed to apply for subvention is limiting, and the amounts offered are not adequate. Many of the single mothers have to seek help from informal resources such as extended families, friends, and colleagues. As they are influenced by the stigmatized labeling of single mothers in Taiwan, these single mothers are uncomfortable turning to others for help, or sharing their frustration and concerns about parenting with others.

Moreover, the services and the social resources provided by Taiwan's social welfare system for single-parent families is often not as accessible for them, and most of the services for these single parents require a service fee for counseling or consulting services. The disadvantaged financial status of the single-parent families and overtime working schedule of single parents usually keeps them from receiving services from the system. Also, the resources and budget of the social welfare system at the government level usually depends on the annual budget of the local government, which is dependent upon various and changing circumstances. The resources offered by the government to assist single-parent families are therefore unsteady and insufficient. In addition, single parents often suffer terribly after marriage dissolutions or the death of partners. The adjustment and emotional management of single parents is related to their appropriate coping strategies and problem solving abilities. Although the stress release issues have already raised the attention of researchers or welfare workers working to improving the

living conditions and personal health of single parent families, the inadequacy of resources and services provided has not received much attention. Moreover, most of the researchers and service providers of the government still look at single-parent families as “problematic” and a “broken” family structure while dealing with related issues. The negative labeling usually ignores the resilience and the positive strengths within these family units and family members themselves. In addition, the available resources and services for these single mothers, even when insufficient, need to be accessible and properly promoted so that all are aware of what services are available to them. According to the narratives of the single mothers in this study, many noted that their friends or colleagues who are also single mothers usually give them a lot of useful advice and suggestions, providing suitable and timely support. Based on the current situation in Taiwan, the researcher suggests that the social welfare system could adapt the “strength perspectives” in portraying and dealing with these families, and take the advantage of the self-resilience and protective factors of the single-parent families.

In fact, these single mothers present many qualities that society admires: resilience in overcoming problems, putting children and others first, working as hard as possible to get ahead in life, sacrificing for the sake of their children’s education and appreciation of ancient cultural wisdom in the use of proverbs. Indeed, we all should alter our perspectives of viewing single-parent families, in particular those headed by women. In Taiwan we need to reduce the stigmatized social climates and negative stereotypes about single-parent families, and thus train and cultivate single parents to perceive their own resilience and the elements of recovery within their family units as valuable (Huang, 2007).

Hence, according to the findings of the study that Taiwanese cultural context, social climates and traditional customs seriously influence single mothers’ parenting, I would suggest

that social service providers be made aware of the potential negative impact of the prevailing cultural and social attitudes about single mothers and their children, and to develop a compassionate attitude and respect for the fortitude of single-parent families. Their job is to help them practice parenting and enjoy childhood under difficult circumstances, by giving them easy-to-use and well-advertised access to social services. It is thus important for practitioners and service providers to be trained to handle these issues when they develop and advertise programs and interventions that assist parents and their families.

In addition, this researcher believes that joining informal group counseling may facilitate and cultivate single mothers' capacity for raising their self-confidence, self-comprehension, and self-esteem, and thus empower themselves to recognize and obtain the strength and resilience coming from themselves. Interacting, sharing experiences, and communicating with other single mothers is a good way to neutralize the negative feelings of single mothers, as is receiving proper support, advice, encouragement, and knowledge from people who have similar situations and family stories to share.

In short, I would like to recommend the creation of a place for single parents and children to interact with each other on a regular basis, to share their frustrations, experiences, and all kinds of feelings in a relaxing and secure atmosphere. Providing such a space with people who suffer similar adversity can be a great help for these single parents, while effectively saving resources/budget of the government at the same time.

My Diary of the Study

Reflections and Feedback of the Interview Processes, Participants, and Study

- Interviewer's reflection: I provided my opinions and also made my conclusions. This does not seem to be right. I might bias participants' perspectives. (Ah-Ling) 09/2009
- Interviewer's reflection: Participant seems to think that interviewer believes her daughter is not smart enough to understand the common knowledge needed for daily life, etc. Therefore, she seems to have some defensive intonation and expressions while making her statement, noted in the sentences that are underlined above. But this observation is only based on the interviewer's guessing and feelings. This interviewer discovered the possible atmosphere created when coding and coloring English transcriptions after the interview had been conducted. (Ah-Ling) 09/2009
- Interviewer's reflection: Although participant mentioned that the word "divorce" seemed sensitive to her son, and thus she didn't want to talk too much about the topics with her son. However, I believe that she herself was pretty uncomfortable about the word "divorce" or the condition of her dissolved marriage, for she was unwilling to bring up any related topics with her son. She also showed her strong attitude of resenting others labeling and stereotyping divorced parents or single-mothers families. (Ting-Ting) 09/2009
- Interviewer's reflection: I felt that the interviewee really hated to be labeled by the stigmatized image of single-parent families in Taiwan. This conclusion is based on her obvious and elaborate opinions, questions, and confusions about how the society views single-parent families in Taiwan. (Ting-Ting) 09/2009
- Interviewer's reflection: Interviewee asked the interviewer questions about her opinions about lacking a male model in the single-mother family. Is it okay to express interviewer's own viewpoints? Nevertheless, the interviewer did answer at the time,

which seemed to be okay afterwards, because I may provide wrong or misleading information to the interviewee during the interview. I should not answer it, or answer the question after the interview had finished. (Ting-Ting) 09/2009

- Interviewer's reflection: This is the first participant (according to interviewer's memories) who directly talked about the differences of parenting before and after the loss of her husband, or the absence of the father role and the differences of parenting between single mother and two parents. Other participants also mentioned some parts/degrees of the differences indirectly, which were mentioned only briefly while interviewing. (Chu-Kuo) 10/2009
- Interviewer's reflection: Interviewee seemed to think further about her children's life in the future: (a) intimate relationships with others, and (b) how to develop and map out their study plan. (Ah-Juan) 10/2009
- Interviewer's reflection: The participant kept talking about her stories of her parents and siblings rather than her current family and parenting. Maybe it is because this is my first formal interviews for the study and I am still adjusting and trying the best way to conduct the interviews; therefore, it is kind of irrelevant at the beginning of the interviews. (Ah-Juan) 10/2009
- Interviewer's reflection: Participant kept assuring me that her children are very extroverted and vigorous, unlike other children from single-parent families. This showed that she doesn't want her children to be criticized by others for having no father (their family structure). She wants to prove that she can provide good parenting for her children, and that her children are well-behaved when compared to children from other single-parent families. (Ah-Juan) 10/2009

- Interviewer's reflection: Interviewee actually held very open and friendly attitudes toward the interviewer during and after the interviews. She showed that she is willing to help me or talk to me again to follow up the formal interviews as needed. She also made several phone calls to the interviewer in order to make sure that the interviewer understood her accessibility and availability. (Ah-Juan) 10/2009
- Interviewer's reflection: Maybe because the participant's parenting style is stricter, most of her parenting efforts involved disciplining her children a lot. (Mei-Li) 10/2009
- Interviewer's reflection: Participant utilizes “人家” (an epithet of “we” or “us” in Chinese) to refer to herself rather than utilizing “me” or “I” to represent herself while talking. I think she would like to reduce the first impression of others about her strict parenting while listening to her narratives about how she practices parental discipline and punishments of her children. (Me-Li) 10/2009
- Interviewer's reflection: Participant talks a lot about their financial difficulties while interviewing and she tended to blame their circumstances on her husband's death. According to her narratives, I find two possible reasons to explain her perspectives and conclusions are her financial condition is much worse than when her husband was alive, and the pressure on her is so huge that she needed someone to blame it on, in order to make herself feel better. (Hui-Jan) 10/2009
- Interviewer's reflection: I could feel that this participant has high self-awareness and is very open to expressing herself. I also could sense that she is confident and feels positive about her own parenting, and she is also willing to help others by giving others her opinions and advice about parenting. She also built up her own social network for seeking help and receiving resources. She maintains mutual relationship/communication

with the school teacher, and she cares about her children's condition at school and in daily life. She provides advice and guidance when her children face difficulties or have confusion and doubt. She tries to solve the problems and to repair conflicting relationships between her children. She is well aware of her own emotions and is not scared to admit her wrong doing and bad temper in front of her children. She shared a lot of personal beliefs and self-talks about life and parenting while talking about her children. (Shu-Chi) 10/2009

- Interviewer's reflection: I think that there must a personal contradiction or conflict inside the participants' heart, because she utilizes the title of "her mother" when referring to the relationships between her daughter and herself, rather than "I" in the sentence. I considered that the participant is unwilling to admit the fact that her daughter has the tendency of hurting herself instead of this being one incident. In addition, she may feel that this fact about her daughter points out her parenting/child-rearing practices that resulted in this kind of consequence. Others may have accused her of being an inadequate or inept mother in this specific case. (Shu-Chi) 10/2009
- Interviewer's reflection: I found that participants/interviewees usually use "we" to refer to themselves when making statements or describing their stories. I believe that may be a way to generalize her situation/behavior/feelings, placing them among average people. This may result in a sense of belongingness, and research shows that they are indeed not unique or different from others in the general sense. They want to be a part of the public and they don't want to be different. (Shu-Chi) 10/2009

- Interviewer's correction: I believe that the interviewee/participant is trying to say the proverb: 有體無魂 "Wu Tei Mo Hun," but she seemed confused about the order within the sentences. (Shu-Chi) 10/2009

Personal Insights

- Interviewer's personal Journal notes: While interviewing, both interviewer and interviewee utilized Chinese and Taiwanese to speak. However, while listening to the recorded interview, the interviewer found that she was unable to differentiate the gender differences of certain epithets such as "you," "she/he," and "they." Chinese language does not specifically point out the gender differences of these epithets while talking, yet it indicates these words when writing "Bu Shou" (部首): traditionally recognized components of Chinese characters. It is more like the prefix and suffix in English) aside the word. For example, ^{0 0}你/你們 is a male radical word for "you" in Chinese Characters; ^{0 0}妳/妳們 is a female radical word for "you" in Chinese Characters; ^{0 0}他/她 are male and female radical words for "he/she" in Chinese Characters; and ^{0 0}他們/她們 are male and female radical words for "they" in Chinese Characters. During the interviews, the interviewer was used to the phrases and words used but were unable to follow up and clarify the differences while typing the verbatim Chinese manuscripts. (Ah-Ling) 09/2009

- Interviewer's reflection: It is hard to be consistent and use the same first epithet while talking. Therefore, interviewer needed to put many parentheses after certain epithets of interviewee's statements to clarify their statement while typing the manuscripts. (Ah-Ling) 09/2009
- Interviewer's personal Journal notes: I usually stuck while translating the transcripts because I often fell into a dilemma about how to translate; verbatim and literal translation is better for expressing participants' meaning, or to translate the central meaning of participants' statements/narratives. Because the main purpose of translating the recorded interviews manuscripts is to present these participants' stories, I would like to reserve both the literal and underlying meaning of their statements while also depicting their tone, facial expression, and emotions while sharing their stories. In addition, many sentences contain impeded cultural meanings, social climates, and traditional customs, making it difficult to explain and describe these ideas in most cases. (Ah-Ling) 09/2009
- Interviewer's personal Journal notes: In Chinese we don't have the tag question as the sentence pattern while talking and writing, so it is confusing when translating participants' narratives when there are sentences that should be translated into tag question's sentence pattern. Also, in Chinese people usually add the confirmation sentences after their statements, and those sentences often sound like questions rather than positive sentences. Yet these sentences are not seeking for answers when "asking". Hence, interviewer/researcher faces certain level of difficulties while translating. (Ah-Ling) 09/2009
- Interviewer's reflection: During the interviews, participants usually described a lot of the processes and conditions or divorce and marriage dissolutions interwoven into their

narratives in fragments. Therefore, sometimes it is hard for the interviewer/researcher to separate the combined and mixed themes and sub-themes. (Ah-Ling) 09/2009

- Interviewer's personal Journal notes: All the themes mixed and combined together, and the oral narratives of these participants were not as organized to the degree needed for people to differentiate and recognize topics. As a result, the interviewer/researcher usually found the process of coding and categorizing the emergent themes/sub-themes to be confused and chaotic. (Ah-Ling) 09/2009
- Interviewer's reflection: Most of the participants seemed to give few definitions of their parenting style (or I am unable to differentiate it from other themes? (e.g., parenting behaviors/attitudes/beliefs/values) (Chu-Kuo) 10/2009
- Interviewer's personal Journal notes: I took more time analyzing divorced single mothers' transcripts, as they seemed to be more complicated. I need to take more time to differentiate the various themes, or separate and recognize sub-themes that underlie the major themes, a time consuming and energy consuming process for me. I got tired easily when compared with the task of analyzing the widowed single mothers' transcripts. (Ah-Juan) 10/2009
- Interviewer's personal Journal notes: Something just came to my mind about some themes' name and the differences of identifying them: (a) Co-Parenting: I consider that this is the behavior that elder children adopt to help parents to take care of younger children within the families, (b) Parentification: It is a relationship or condition within a family that instead of taking care of their children, parents become the ones who are taken care of by their children, who do parenting on levels that include physically, psychologically, emotionally, and socially caring for them.) (Hui-Jan) 10/2009

- Interviewer's reflection: Due to interviewer/researchers' training background in counseling, skills/techniques utilized during the interviews helped a lot to facilitate and assure the smoothness of interview processes. In addition, the interviewer often utilized the techniques/skills to sum up participants' narratives by implying/guessing interviewee's thoughts and feelings. Therefore, it sometimes became awkward or a strange situation when the researcher/interviewer usually found overlapping conversations or confirmed statements of both interviewer and interviewees' narratives while analyzing. Also, while quoting/analyzing interviewees' statements, the interviewer/researcher often quoted her words rather than the original narratives of interviewees' stories although these statements were all confirmed and clarified by participants. Thus, while the skills/techniques of the counseling training facilitate the smoothness of the interview process, these skills/techniques also became the obstacles in conducting interviews. The reason why the researcher/interviewer considers this as a drawback while interviewing is the focus of the study and the approach of the study (Narrative Inquiry/ Phenomenology) is to understand/see the world interpreted/experienced through the interviewee's lenses or hearing/listening their stories in their own words. (Hsiao-Jin) 10/2009

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APPENDICES

Announcing the
Final Examination of
Chen Jou-Chen for the
Degree of Master of Science in Applied Health Science
May, 4th, 8:30 am-10: 30 am
Room 34, HPER Building

Title:

Parenting Styles of Taiwanese Single Mothers Whose Eldest Child Is Between the Ages of Seven and Seventeen

Summary:

This study attempts to understand the parenting styles provided by Taiwanese single mothers whose eldest child is between the ages of 7 and 17, with a focus on interactions between cultural factors and provided parenting styles in Taiwan. My research questions for the study are: (a) How do Taiwanese single mothers define their parenting style and what are their perceptions of this parenting style? and (b) How influential is cultural context and tradition in parenting styles in Taiwan? Based on phenomenological and narrative analysis approaches, eight single mothers (four divorced, four widowed) were interviewed in-depth in Taiwan, using Chinese and Taiwanese. This study identified themes related to perceptions of parenting behaviors, beliefs, attitudes and values as well as interactions with their children, including the use of discipline. Additional issues addressed include social climates/cultural context and traditional customs, financial issues, social resources, and the relevance of self-talk/proverbs/personal beliefs about life. The findings of the study not only depict how social climates and cultural traditions influence Taiwanese single mothers' parenting styles, but also show how financial issues, social resources, mothers' relationships with children, and children's personalities and conditions interact with each other and thus influence the formation of each single mother's own parenting style.

Outline of Current Studies

Major: Human Development and Family
Studies

Educational Career

B.E.d, Department of Guidance and Counseling,
School of Education, National ChangHua
University of Education, Taiwan, 2006

Committee in Charge

Associate Professor, Kathleen R. Gilbert, Chairperson
(812) 855-5209, Applied Health Science

Assistant Professor, Maresa J. Murray, Committee member
(812) 856-5213, Applied Health Science

Associate Professor, Robert E. Billingham, Sr., Committee member
(812) 855-5208, Applied Health Science

Approved: _____
Kathleen R. Gilbert

IRB Study #0904000238

INDIANA UNIVERSITY BLOOMINGTON

STUDY INFORMATION SHEET

PARENTING STYLE OF TAIWANESE DIVORCED SINGLE MOTHERS WHOSE ELDEST CHILD IS BETWEEN THE AGES OF SEVEN AND TWELVE

You are invited to participate in a research study on the parenting style of divorced single mothers in Taiwan. You were selected as a possible subject because you are a divorced single mother and your eldest child is between the ages of seven and twelve. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

The study is being conducted by Chen Jou-Chen, Masters in Human Development and Family Studies, Department of Applied Health Science, Indiana University in the USA. It is funded by Chen Jou-Chen.

STUDY PURPOSE:

The purpose of this study is to recognize and understand the parenting styles provided by divorced Taiwanese single mothers whose eldest child is between the ages of seven and seventeen. In addition, the researcher would like to focus on the interaction between cultural factors and parenting styles in Taiwan.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE TAKING PART IN THE STUDY:

If you agree to participate, you will be one of five subjects who will be part of this research.

PROCEDURES FOR THE STUDY:

If you agree to be in the study, you will do the following things:

You will be asked to participate in one face-to-face interview that will not last longer than one hour. During the interviews our conversation will be audio recorded with your permission and notes will be taken to collect narratives.

The researcher and faculty supervisor will be the only people to have the access to the data, and the audio recordings will be destroyed after completion of the study.

BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THE STUDY:

The benefits to participation is having the opportunity to consider the relationships with your children, finding new insights about yourselves, and to assist in providing social service network recommendations that will serve the population of single parents in Taiwan.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

All efforts will be made to keep your personal information confidential, but we cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality. Your personal information may be disclosed if required by law. The obtained data will be destroyed after the study has been done, and any data that might allow you to be identified will be removed for publishing. Additionally, the researcher and faculty supervisor will be the only people to have the access to the collected data.

Organizations that may inspect and/or copy your research records for quality assurance and data analysis include groups such as the study investigator and his/her research associates, the IUB Institutional Review Board or its designees, the study sponsor, Chen Jou-Chen, and (as allowed by law) state or federal agencies, specifically the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) who may need to access your research records.

PAYMENT:

You will receive payment for taking part in this study. Participants will receive \$5 USD for participating in the study per 30 minutes, and will receive additional \$5USD for fully participating in the one-hour interview, and another \$5 at the end of the study. The total amount of the compensation will be \$15 USD for each participant (approximately 500 TWD). However, participants will not receive the final \$5 USD fee if they decide to withdrawal from the study.

CONTACTS FOR QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS:

For questions about the study or a research-related injury, contact the researcher **Chen Jou-Chen** at **002-1-812-272-5614 / 886-0933363473** or mail jouchen@indiana.edu.

For questions about your rights as a research participant or to discuss problems, complaints, or concerns about this research study, or to obtain information or offer input, contact the IUB Human Subjects office, 530 E Kirkwood Ave, Carmichael Center 203, Bloomington, IN 47408, 812-855-3067 or by email at iub_hsc@indiana.edu

VOLUNTARY NATURE OF STUDY:

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to take part or may leave the study at any time. Leaving the study will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled. Your decision whether or not to participate in this study will not affect your current or future relations with the investigator(s).

Form date: May 4, 2009

IRB Study #0904000238

INDIANA UNIVERSITY BLOOMINGTON
INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT (Chinese Version)

台灣離婚單親媽媽之教養方式---其第一位孩子之年齡介於七歲至十二歲間

您被邀請參與一個了解台灣離婚單親媽媽教養方式的研究。由於您是因離婚的因素而成為單親媽媽，並且您最大的小孩的年齡介於七歲至十二歲之間，因此您被挑選為參與本次研究的候選人。我們希望您能詳細的閱讀本表格，並且在您同意參與本次研究之前，提出您的疑慮與疑問。

本次的研究將由一位名為 陳柔岑，目前就讀於美國印第安納大學布魯明頓校區，健康科學應用學院，主修為人類發展與家庭研究的碩士生進行。而本研究的贊助者也是研究生本人。

研究目的

本研究的目的是為了辨別與了解台灣因離婚的單親媽媽之教養方式，且其最大的孩子年齡介於七歲至十二歲間。此外，研究者將聚焦於了解台灣之社會文化與台灣父母教養方式交互影響的結果。

參與本次研究之受訪者的數目：

如果您同意參與本次研究，您將成為五位參與本次研究之受訪者的其中一員。

本研究進行的過程：

若您同意參與本次研究，您將會從事與經歷以下的過程：

1. 經過受訪者簽妥同意書之後，本研究的訪談才會進行，且在受訪者受訪前將確保每位受訪者已清楚了解本研究的目的及訪談的進行過程。
2. 訪談過程將會遵循訪談指南的原則進行（請對照附件的訪談指南）。訪談過程中，訪談者會以錄音及速記的方式紀錄談話的重點與受訪者的故事。
3. 訪談的次數與長度將取決於訪談當下的狀況以及受訪者的意願與狀況。
4. 每位受訪者將保有在任何時間退出該研究訪談的權利，且受訪者亦保有校對與刪改訪談紀錄的權利。

5. 研究者以及研究者之指導教授將會是唯一有機會處理與觀看訪談紀錄的人，且所收集之訪談資料，除卻撰寫論文之外，將不做他途之用，受訪者之個人資料也將以保密或刪除的方式處理。

參與本研究會面臨的風險：

參與本研究將不會面臨風險。

參與本研究能得到的好處與回饋：

參與本研究可預期且合理的好處與回饋將可能是幫助受訪者有重新審視自己與孩子的關係以及了解自己教養方式的機會；另外，也許可以讓該位單親媽媽在日後提供更好的教養方式。

其他參與本研究的替代方案：

除了參與本研究之外，您還有其他的替代方案：該替代方案將是選擇不參與本研究。

保密條款

我們將會致力保障您個人的隱私與機密。但我們無法全然的保證絕對的保密，若以下的情況發生時：若相關的法治機構要求調閱您的個人資料時。然後您所有的個人資料將會在研究完成後被銷毀與刪除。而在研究發表的場合或者研究結果出版的書籍文章中，任何可能被辨識的個人資料也將會被移除。除此之外，研究者本身以及其研究督導者將會是唯一可經手研究資料的人。

相關的研究組織也將會檢視與複製本次的研究進行過程的資料，例如該研究的研究者與研究者之督導，以及學校確保研究將不會傷害到人體本身的學術組織之成員，或者在法律的保護下，相關的聯邦或州(政府的)組織人員，還有人類相關研究保護組織以及食物與藥品試驗組織等；若有需要，國家健康機構(若該研究是由國家健康機構所贊助也將有可能檢視與了解本次的研究過程。

花費

參與本次的研究可能會讓您有部分的開銷。您可能會需要支付參與本次研究的通勤費用。

酬勞

您將因參與本次的研究而得到酬勞。在參與研究之過程中，受訪者將可領取參與本研究之酬勞共約新台幣五百元。每位參與者於參與訪談後三十分鐘，即可獲得約一百七十元新台幣之酬勞，且於完整參與完一小時之訪談後，更可多獲得一百七十元新台幣作為完整參與研究之酬勞(每位受訪者將可領取新台幣伍佰圓整，價值相當於十五圓美金的酬勞)。然而，

受訪者若在中途決定退出參與本次的研究，那麼該位受訪者將不會領取到約一百七十元的獎勵獎金。

聯繫方式

若對於本研究有任何相關的問題或者因本研究而受傷或有所損失，請聯繫該研究者：陳柔岑，連絡電話：0933363473 或者透過 郵件信箱：jouchen@indiana.edu

任何有關您身為研究受訪者的權益問題，或者任何相關問題的討論、抱怨、關於研究的疑慮、相關資訊的獲取以及相關的資訊提供，請聯絡印第安納大學布魯明頓校區的保護人體相關研究的辦公室，其地址為：530 E Kirkwood Ave, Carmichael Center, L03, Bloomington IN 47408；電話為：002-1-812-855-3067/886-0933363473，或者您可以透過郵件信箱聯繫：iub_hsc@indiana.edu

自願性的研究參與

基本上本研究採取自願性參與的方式，您可以在任何時間選擇參與或者退出本研究。您決定停止參加本次研究，將不會因此受到任何的責罰或損失。而您參加或選擇退出本研究的決定將不會影響現在或未來您與本研究者的關係。

受訪者的同意權

在閱讀以上的相關內容與權利後，我同意參與本次的研究訪談。

我將會保有一張同意書的副本以茲保證。我同意參與本次的研究訪談。

受訪者的簽名：_____ 日期：_____
(一定得由受訪者本人填寫)

進行研究訪談者的簽名：_____ 日期：_____

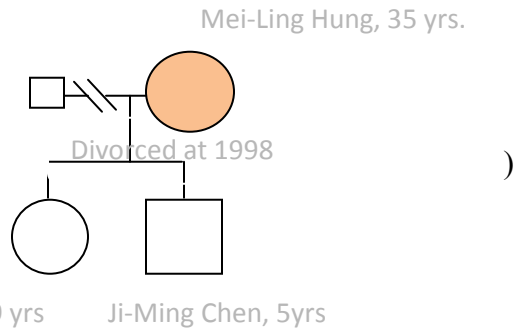
INTERVIEW GUIDELINE (A) English Version

Demographical information questions

➤ Date: _____

➤ Name: _____

➤ Current Family Structure: (e.g. _____)



➤ Marital status: _____

➤ Years of being a single mother: _____

➤ Educational level: _____

➤ Occupation: _____

➤ Number of children: _____

➤ Children's ages : (a) first child: _____ (b) second child: _____

(c) third child: _____ (d) forth child: _____

➤ Contact information: a) phone numbers: (H) _____ (Cell) _____

b) address: _____

➤ Records of medical status a) Parental: _____

b) Children's: _____

➤ Others: _____

Open-ended Questions (Sample Questions)

Hello, how are you? First, I would like to thank you for participating in the study. Before we start chatting, I wonder if you understand the purpose of the study and how will we practicing the study. In addition, I would like to let you know that you can totally feel free to talk about anything you would like to share with us. I want to let you know that you are the expert of your own life, and I am here to listen to your story about the topic.

So, are you ready to start?

Could you tell me your ideas about parenting?

(The following list contains issues that the interviewer would like to touch on if participants don't bring out during the interviews.)

- Perceptions of their parenting behaviors/attitudes/beliefs/values
- Definition of parenting
- Interacting with their children
- How do you handle discipline?
- Suggestions and advices to improve other single/divorced mothers and families
- Anything we haven't talked about that you feel I need to know?

These stories will definitely be very useful for me and help me a lot to conduct my study. I also would like to thank you for trusting me and sharing these great stories with me. If you feel you would like to share with me more that you come up with after the interview or you are having some questions and ideas about the study, you are more than welcome to contact me.

Thank you very much again for participating in the study and I hope you have a great day!

➤ 其他

開放問句(範例)

您好，首先我想要先感謝你願意參與這次的研究訪談。在我們開始之前，我想先跟您確認您是否對於該研究目的與訪談的過程已有相當程度的了解？此外，我也想讓您知道在本此的訪談過程中您可以暢所欲言的分享你想分享的故事，在教養小孩方面您才是專家，因此在本次訪談過程中，我將會是個向您請教的人。

那麼，請問您準備好要開始了嗎？

能否請您告訴我您對於教養小孩的想法呢？

(以下所條列的內容是研究者在訪談過程中，若受訪者並未提及但另想深入了解的部分)

- 關於受訪者的教養行為/態度/信念/價值觀 的知覺或觀念
- 受訪者對於教養方式的定義

- 對於與孩子相處經驗的描述
- 受訪者將如何懲罰或教導小孩?
- 受訪者給予其他離婚/單親媽媽或家庭的建議
- 其他受訪者在已談論的話題外，感覺想再向研究者補充或分享的部分

這些您分享對於我的研究一定會有很大的幫助，我也非常的感謝您願意給我您的信任並且分享了許多很棒的故事與經驗。另外，如果在訪談結束後，您還有其他想再與我分享的想法或故事，又或對於本研究或訪談有任何的疑問，我非常歡迎您跟我聯繫。再次感謝您參與本次的訪談，並且祝福您有愉快的一天。

The Processes of Analyzing the Collected Data

The analysis of collected data is based on the research questions and leading questions listed on the interview guideline to color the transcribed and translated transcripts of the interviews. Different colors represent different categories of participants' narratives. If sentences or paragraphs could not be categorized or differentiate into categories, the researcher put descriptions and notes aside the paragraphs for reference and then coded or categorized them later on. When coloring the sentences and paragraphs from the transcripts, the researcher also stuck colored post-it notes on the margins aside the sentences and paragraphs for future reference. The represented colors for each category are listed below:

1. Parenting attitudes/beliefs/values/behaviors
2. The definition of parenting and mother's perceived parenting
3. The interaction /relationship with children/extended family and between siblings (children's sibling)
4. Emotion Management/ Problem Solving Ability/Coping Strategy
5. Marital issues and condition of the participants (the relationships with family-in-law or ex-husband or the trauma of marriage dissolution; the adjustment of husband's death)
*this part usually overlapped with categories No.3 and 4.
6. Parental Discipline
7. Suggestions/advices of others or from the participants about parenting and single-parent-families
8. Other: a) Financial resources/condition; b) social resources/support; c) cultural context or traditional customs; d) irrelevant narratives.

Examples of transcripts that has been analyzed:

