

*A Case Study on the School Counselor's Work Predicaments at Elementary Schools  
in Xinzhung District, New Taipei City*

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**Abstract**

This study aims to investigate the work difficulties” and social support of new full-time counselors in junior high school, and then to provide some practical suggestions to the situation. This study adopted a qualitative research method. The subjects were six full-time junior high school counselors who were selected by purposeful sampling from Xinzhung District, New Taipei City. Semi-structured interview was applied for data collection. In addition, the study acquires five consulting directors' and thirteen home teachers' questionnaire data in five elementary schools. Through the analyses of the interview transcripts, the study aims at four dimensions: the work load, the social relation problems and communication, the sense of achievement and identification from work, role ambiguity and conflict. The findings show:

1. The work load is heavy and the work is complicated.
2. The social relation and communication are good for them with other staffs.
3. They possess high sense of achievement and identification from work.
4. They seldom had role ambiguity and conflict.

At last, several suggestions regarding working difficulties and following research have been proposed based on the research results: The division of labor, the demand for professional improvement, the human resource of counseling, the extension of the research.

Keywords: counselor, work predicaments

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## **Introduction**

Currently, as the society is losing its order, the importance of tutorship has been revealed: in view of this, the department of Education in Taiwan starts to promote a teaching system of full-time counselor. As a result, the research serves as an attempt to investigate on full-time counselors, and get a deeper understanding of the working conditions and problems they are faced at school.

## **Theoretical Framework**

According to teaching grading, work of full-time counselors is basically focused on the second level, with the first and third level assisting. However, researches from 2007 to 2014 found that, these teachers generally felt a heavy working load, and they lacked a sense of achievement and identification; besides, there was a role conflict. Consequently, nowadays, there are more and more positive plans promoting, and whether the current plan makes a difference is the main aim of the paper.

## **Method**

This study is a case study, and the Xinxhung District in Taiwan is the case. Researchers have selected six full-time teachers from Xinxhung District, New City, Taiwan. In order to understand their “work load”, “social relation problems and communication”, “sense of achievement and identification from work”, and “role ambiguity and conflict”, researchers have designed an interview outline, conducted an interview, concluded and analyzed, for the sake of probing into their current working situation and problems. Furthermore, questionnaire was used for collecting suggestions from directors and mentors, proving evidence as bystanders.

Research samples have been chosen upon a standard that teachers shall have at least one-full academic teaching year, and continue the job as a career for now. Based on this, the researchers are looking forward to providing a comprehensive understanding and course of teachers from Xinxhung District, New City, Taiwan.

## **Results**

### **1. The Working Load**

During the promotion course of full-time counselors, interviewees commonly believe that: policies of government organizations have yet made specific practices, classroom teachers lack professional counseling knowledge, counselors are running short, and psychologists and social workers fail to make stable cooperation, these are major problems they're faced at present. Interviewees also generally feel a huge work load and difficulty.

### **2. The Social Relation Problems and Communication**

In view of these two aspects, interviewees believe: leaders' ambiguous working functions and frequent changing rate are major causes for relation problems. Nevertheless, most of them also indicate that, if leaders have more experiences and

assist full-time counselors, it should not be problems to quickly adapt to a new school culture.

### **3. The Sense of Achievement and Identification from Work**

For most interviewees, compared to their previous experience, today's job is to cooperate with leaders (directors) and mentors as a team. Such a form allows them to acquire more support and successful experiences instead of working alone. As a result, they could get the sense of achievement and identification from work.

### **4. The Role Ambiguity and Conflict**

In terms of role ambiguity and conflict, interviewees say, they are of multiple roles. In Taiwan, counseling work is classified into three grades; but despite the grade they are at, they shall adjust working conditions at any time and be able to do the work of all three grades. Some mentors, team leaders and directors may not have enough counseling experiences and counselors are likely to help these people to increase professional skills. Though multiple, interviewees say they can handle it with ease.

### **Conclusions and Suggestions**

Generally, interviewees reflect that they are faced with a heavy work load and pressure; whereas, there's not much trouble in social relation, role ambiguity or role conflict. They can also feel a high sense of achievement and identification from work. According to results of the research, the author has put up some suggestions: 1. the government should clarify work functions; 2. Trainings on full-time counselling should be provided to all school staff; 3. More incentive systems should be set up to encourage and support related personnel.

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