

Review and Reflection on the Professional Development and Current Status of School Psychological Counseling Services: A Case Study of Full-Time Counseling Teachers in New Taipei City, Taiwan

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Abstract

This study takes New Taipei City in Taiwan as an example to explore the recruitment, training, employment, and the legal basis, content, positioning, and effectiveness of the roles and responsibilities of full-time counseling teachers. Finally, through purposive sampling, a senior professional counselor who previously served as a supervisor for full-time counseling teachers at a counseling center was interviewed to gather insights and suggestions from a supervisory perspective on the training, assessment, and utilization of full-time counseling teachers. Findings: 1. The functions of full-time counseling teachers include promoting counseling knowledge and services for the entire school community (including parents, teachers, and students) and implementing the integration of three-tiered counseling resources. 2. The cultivation of professional competence is influenced by the training courses and in-service training for full-time counseling teachers. Adjusting the current training curriculum to align with practical needs is an urgent priority.

Keywords— school counseling-teachers, job domain, legal basis.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Taiwan region is currently in a state of multicultural integration, with marriages to foreign spouses increasing daily. Educational issues for children of new residents, such as language, interpersonal relationships, and self-identity, have become significant topics within the compulsory education system [1, 2]. In 2010, a severe bullying incident at a middle school in Taoyuan County drew attention from relevant authorities and the public, leading to the establishment of an anti-bullying hotline and official website. However, Chen and Cheng [3] believe that establishing such hotlines and websites can strengthen the implementation of anti-bullying policies at the school level. Additionally, in the 2011 amendment to Article 10 of Taiwan's "Compulsory

Education Act," provisions were made to set up full-time counseling teachers (abbreviated as full-time counselors) and full-time professional counseling personnel (including social workers and psychologists) in schools, allowing professional counselors to conduct psychological counseling work in educational settings. Since then, the professionalization of psychological counseling in Taiwan's elementary and middle schools has begun to develop.

This study aims to explore the professionalization of school psychological counseling work in Taiwan and reflect on the impact of social changes on this professionalization process. The focus is primarily on the scope of work, role development, and reflections of full-time counseling teachers in New

Taipei City following the 2011 amendment to Article 10 of the "Compulsory Education Act."

II. DEVELOPMENT OF FULL-TIME COUNSELING TEACHERS IN THE TAIWAN REGION

2.1 Amendment of the "Compulsory Education Act" and the Establishment of the Role of Full-Time Counseling Teachers

In response to the need for full-time counseling teachers in elementary and middle schools, the Taiwan region passed the amendment to Paragraph 4, Article 10 of the "Compulsory Education Act" in 2011, establishing positions for full-time counseling teachers [4]. In August 2012, public recruitment for full-time counseling teachers began, with some positions filled by existing part-time counseling teachers (abbreviated as part-time counselors)¹. Since then, full-time counseling teachers have been deployed in elementary and middle schools nationwide, engaging in developmental, interventional, and treatment-based counseling work within schools.

2.2 History of Full-Time Counseling Teachers in New Taipei City—A Case Study of Middle Schools in New Taipei City

Following the 2011 amendment to Taiwan's "Compulsory Education Act," the New Taipei City Education Bureau placed significant emphasis on the scope of work for professional counseling personnel in schools. Compared to other major counties and cities regarding the regulations for full-time counseling teachers, New Taipei City outlined more tasks, such as teacher or parent presentations, student lectures, special achievement reports, and annual plan writing [5], demonstrating the higher expectations placed on full-time counseling teachers to apply their professional psychological counseling skills within schools.

¹ According to the "Guidelines for Subsidizing the Appointment of Counseling Teachers in Elementary and Middle Schools by the Ministry of Education's Department of National and Preschool Education," schools are required to implement plans for appointing part-time counseling teachers. Part-time counseling teachers are responsible for developmental and interventional counseling measures, implementing the three-tier counseling system in schools. Their weekly duties include dedicated student counseling, as well as supervision, documentation, and participation in training sessions [6].

In response to the amendment to Article 10 of the "Compulsory Education Act," the New Taipei City Education Bureau established the Student Counseling and Consultation Center (hereinafter referred to as the Counseling Center) on August 1, 2011, and publicly recruited full-time counseling teachers in 2012. The selection process for full-time counseling teachers in New Taipei City took place in August 2012 and consisted of two stages: a preliminary written examination focusing on essay questions and a follow-up assessment combining situational role-plays of counseling techniques and an oral interview. This marked a departure from the traditional model of textbook-based teaching demonstrations. Huang Zhengchang [7] noted that introducing professional psychological counseling knowledge and skills into the elementary and middle school systems would mark the beginning of the professionalization of school psychological counseling work.

2.3 Legal Basis for the Duties of Full-Time Counseling Teachers in New Taipei City

The legal basis for establishing the duties of full-time counseling teachers in New Taipei City's Education Bureau has evolved over time. Initially, in 2011, it was grounded in Article 10 of Taiwan's "Compulsory Education Act" and the subsequently revised "Implementation Guidelines for Subsidizing the Appointment of Counseling Teachers in Elementary and Middle Schools" issued by the Department of National and Preschool Education [8, 9]. In 2018, the enactment of the "Student Guidance and Counseling Act" [10] further provided clearer legal stipulations regarding the duties of full-time counseling teachers. These regulations encompass aspects such as training requirements, further education, group supervision, job responsibilities, and performance evaluations. The following section explains the reasons for adjustments made to certain duties of New Taipei City's full-time counseling teachers from 2012 to 2019.

2.3.1 Individual Counseling Sessions

In 2012, the job responsibilities of full-time counseling teachers in New Taipei City stipulated that at least 120 individual counseling sessions must be conducted per semester. In August 2014, this requirement was revised to a total of at least 180 individual counseling sessions per semester involving parents, teachers, and students [5]. The primary reason for this adjustment was feedback from full-time counseling teachers in practice, who observed that in the process of implementing the three-tier counseling system's division of labor and collaboration, the key influencers

affecting students could be either schoolteachers or primary caregivers at home. Therefore, a systemic approach is more likely to help improve students' physical and mental well-being. Learning from the practical experiences of full-time counseling teachers, the New Taipei City Education Bureau recognized that students' ecosystems indeed impact their physical and mental development. To enable full-time counseling teachers to conduct more comprehensive systemic collaboration and integration in school psychological counseling work, the bureau revised the job responsibilities related to individual counseling sessions in August 2014.

2.3.2 Student, Teacher, and Parent Counseling Awareness Sessions

In the first year (2012) of defining the responsibilities of full-time counseling teachers, the New Taipei City Education Bureau mandated that they provide counseling awareness sessions on mental health for students, teachers, or parents. The original requirement stipulated that each full-time counseling teacher must conduct at least one mental health awareness session for students and one for teachers or parents per semester. Following the enactment of the "Student Guidance and Counseling Act" in 2014, the number of full-time counseling teachers increased [11], leading to slight adjustments in this responsibility. In August 2018, mental health counseling awareness sessions for students remained mandatory at least once per semester, with sessions required for the entire student body or at least three classes [5]. However, mental health counseling awareness sessions for teachers or parents were adjusted to at least once per academic year. This adjustment was primarily due to the increased number of full-time counseling teachers, which allowed for a more balanced distribution of workload for teacher or parent awareness sessions.

2.3.3 Supervision and Training for Full-Time Counseling Teachers

When school counseling teachers encounter challenges in psychological counseling, the absence of a professional supervision mechanism not only deprives them of professional support resources but also affects their professional efficacy [12-15]. To ensure that all parents, teachers, and students in schools receive professional psychological counseling services, the New Taipei City Education Bureau stipulated in the job responsibilities for full-time counseling teachers in August 2012 that they must participate in full-day supervision sessions once a month. Half of the day was

dedicated to administrative supervision (conducted by retired or current principals familiar with school counseling work), and the other half to professional supervision (conducted by university professors specializing in psychology) or peer supervision. As the number of full-time counseling teachers increased year by year, and the pool of experienced full-time counseling teachers grew, the New Taipei City Education Bureau faced challenges such as insufficient funding for training, a shortage of professional supervisors, and a lack of administrative supervisors. To address these issues, in August 2017, the bureau revised the requirement for full-time counseling teachers with six or more years of experience to participate in group supervision three times per semester. In 2018, full-time counseling teachers with seven or more years of experience were required to adopt a self-directed learning community approach, where they designed their own supervision courses and invited professional supervisors to provide specialized training or supervision, totaling 18 hours over three supervision sessions per semester [5].

2.3.4 Report Submission

In the job responsibilities for full-time counseling teachers established by the New Taipei City Education Bureau in August 2012, they were required to submit weekly reports every week, monthly reports every month, and semester-end reports at the end of each semester. These reports were to be reviewed and approved administratively before submission to the Education Bureau. After adjusting the number of full-time counseling teachers in August 2014, the requirement for weekly reports was changed to internal retention for reference. After August 2018, the Education Department mandated that all elementary and middle school counseling teachers (both full-time and part-time) in Taiwan use an electronic system to submit monthly reports.

2.3.5 Submission of Annual Work Plans to the Education Bureau for Review at the Beginning of Each Semester

This responsibility was independently planned by the New Taipei City Education Bureau. Starting from August 2013, full-time counseling teachers were required to develop their own annual work plans and submit them to the Education Bureau [5]. This aimed to help school administrative units understand the work content of full-time counseling teachers and invite administrative partners within the school to collaborate on completing primary, secondary, and tertiary counseling work.

2.3.6 Attendance at the Annual Work Achievement Sharing Session for Full-Time Counseling Teachers

Since July 2013, the New Taipei City Education Bureau has organized an annual work achievement sharing session for full-time counseling teachers every July, requiring them to report on their work over the past year. Within a 15-minute timeframe, full-time counseling teachers concisely present their annual work achievements. After two years of conducting these sessions, the Education Bureau, based on feedback from the practical experiences of full-time counseling teachers, slightly adjusted the format of the work achievement reports in the third year (August 2014). Full-time counseling teachers with three or more years of experience were allowed to submit feature reports instead of work reports, and only those with an odd number of years of experience were required to present feature reports [5]. The purpose of designing the annual work achievement sharing session by the New Taipei City Education Bureau was to understand the challenges faced by full-time counseling teachers through the process of sharing work or features. It also provided an opportunity for full-time counseling teachers from various schools to exchange professional insights, share resources, and offer mutual support and assistance. This responsibility was pioneered by the New Taipei City Education Bureau, and no similar practices have been observed in any other county or city to date.

2.4 Recruitment Methods for Full-Time Counseling Teachers in New Taipei City

In 2012, the legal basis for the recruitment of full-time counseling teachers by the New Taipei City Education Bureau was as follows:

- (1) The "Teacher Act" and the "Regulations Governing the Appointment of Educational Personnel and Their Enforcement Rules";
- (2) The "Guidelines for the Selection of Teachers in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools";
- (3) The "Guidelines for Subsidizing the Appointment of Full-Time Counseling Teachers in Elementary and Middle Schools" [11].

The quota for the open recruitment of full-time counseling teachers in middle schools was: 25 primary candidates and several reserve candidates, with the possibility of recruiting fewer than the quota. The eligibility requirements for selection were as follows (choose one of the two):

(1) Graduation from a department or program related to counseling and psychology (including minors and double majors) and possession of a valid teaching certificate for secondary schools. The definition of graduation from a department or program related to counseling and psychology (including minors and double majors) refers to departments or programs with names containing counseling, guidance, psychology, counseling psychology, or clinical psychology (including minors). Candidates must have completed at least 3 credits in counseling theory and techniques (or psychological counseling and therapy), 2 credits in group counseling and guidance (or group psychological counseling and therapy), 2 credits in psychological assessment (including psychological testing), 2 credits in child development, and at least one semester of counseling and guidance practicum (or clinical psychology practicum) with a passing grade.

(2) Possession of a teaching certificate for counseling (activity) subjects in middle schools or a specialization in counseling activities within the comprehensive activity learning domain.

The recruitment process was as follows:

- (1) Preliminary examination (written test): Professional knowledge in counseling (using essay-type questions). The written test score served as the basis for participating in the secondary examination and was not included in the calculation of the total score.
- (2) Secondary examination (counseling technique scenario simulation and oral interview). This included a 15-minute counseling technique scenario simulation, followed immediately by a 15-minute oral interview, totaling 30 minutes. Candidates whose average raw score for either the counseling technique scenario simulation or the oral interview was below 75 points would not be hired. The total score was calculated as: (counseling technique scenario simulation score × 50%) + (oral interview score × 50%), with raw scores converted into standardized normalized scores. Additionally, the supplementary provisions stated that vacancies for full-time counseling teachers were additional positions dedicated to student counseling work. After recruitment, teachers were not allowed to apply for transfers to other teaching positions within the school for any reason [16]. It is evident that the standards and process for the open recruitment of full-time counseling teachers in New Taipei City were quite rigorous. However, the restriction on whether full-time counseling teachers could transfer to other teaching

subjects raises questions about whether it limits teachers' rights to personal career development, a matter that warrants further discussion.

III. INDENTATIONS AND EQUATIONS PERSPECTIVES OF THE COUNSELING CENTER SUPERVISORS ON THE FULL-TIME COUNSELING TEACHER SYSTEM

The Counseling Center supervisors in New Taipei City (referred to as counselors before August 2015 and as supervisors thereafter; this study uniformly refers to them as Counseling Center supervisors) were primarily responsible for the submission of weekly, monthly, and semester reports by full-time counseling teachers. They also conducted on-site meetings with these teachers to assist them in adapting to the school system and fulfilling their job responsibilities. The following presents the views of a senior school counseling professional who served as a Counseling Center supervisor from August 2012 to July 2015 before returning to campus as a full-time counseling teacher. This individual reflected on the development of the role and responsibilities of full-time counseling teachers, as well as their experiences and feedback as a Counseling Center supervisor assisting these teachers in integrating into school environments.

3.1 Research Subjects

This study employed purposive sampling to select interview subjects. The inclusion criteria for research subjects were as follows:

- (1) Previous experience as a school counseling teacher.
- (2) Previous experience as a Counseling Center supervisor.
- (3) Over seven years of school counseling work experience.
- (4) Willingness to participate in the interview.

During the process of identifying potential interviewees, it was found that few individuals met the first three criteria. However, to enrich the research data, the study aimed to select interviewees who had participated in school counseling work as either full-time counseling teachers or supervisors since the inception of the full-time counseling teacher system and were willing to respond candidly to interview questions. This study utilized a semi-structured interview approach to explore the New Taipei City Education Bureau's formulation of job responsibilities for full-time counseling teachers, as well as its expectations and objectives for their integration into

school environments. Furthermore, the interview consent form fully informed participants about the purpose, methodology, and relevant information of the study, along with measures to ensure the confidentiality and privacy of personal data [17, 18].

The interviewee in this study had undergone comprehensive professional training, holding a bachelor's degree in social work and a master's degree in counseling and guidance. Additionally, the interviewee had passed the specialized examination for psychological counseling to obtain psychologist certification and had nearly 17 years of experience in the education sector, possessing considerable professional expertise. The following analysis will explore, from the perspective of the interviewee as a Counseling Center supervisor, the New Taipei City Education Bureau's requirements for full-time counseling teachers and the processes and reflections of supervisors in assisting these teachers to fulfill their responsibilities and adapt to their work environments.

3.2 Research Tools

Based on the research objectives, this study initially drafted an interview outline. To refine the instrument, a preliminary interview was conducted with an acquaintance serving as a supervisor to gather feedback and suggestions. After discussions and revisions, the finalized interview outline was established, after which data collection commenced. The interview outline included the following content:

3.2.1 Establishment of the New Taipei City Counseling and Consultation Center

- (1) What motivated you to join the Counseling Center and step away from the school environment at the time?
- (2) Did the Education Bureau provide any prior supervisor training or specific work instructions?

3.2.2 Mechanisms for Relationship Building Between Counseling Center Supervisors and Full-Time Counseling Teachers

- (1) How did you assist new full-time counseling teachers in fulfilling their responsibilities and adapting to their environment, especially while you were also adapting to your new role and environment?

3.2.3 Challenges in Assisting Full-Time Counseling Teachers with Their Work

- (1) What did you find most difficult during your work period?
- (2) How did you help full-time and part-time counseling teachers clarify their respective roles?

3.2.4 Advantages and Disadvantages of Full-Time Counseling Teachers' Job Responsibilities and Work Content in Facilitating Their Integration into Schools

(1) What are your views on the current job responsibilities and content of full-time counseling teachers?

(2) Having served as a counseling teacher and then as a Counseling Center supervisor for three years, how do you perceive the development and positioning of full-time counseling teachers?

3.3 Research Procedure

3.3.1 Participant Recruitment

This study employed purposive sampling to invite one interviewee for a semi-structured in-depth interview. The research purpose, content, and methodology were explained, and the interviewee's consent to participate was obtained.

3.3.2 Formal Interview

During the interview, the interviewee's consent was obtained for audio recording. Simultaneously, key points and relevant non-verbal information were recorded in note form. Two interview sessions were conducted, each lasting approximately two hours. The interviews took place in a quiet café convenient for the interviewee.

3.3.3 Data Organization and Presentation

The researcher transcribed the audio recordings into verbatim text. Based on the notes, annotations were added at appropriate points to highlight content relevant to the research topic. A complete verbatim transcript was compiled and subjected to content analysis.

3.4 Analysis of Interview Content

3.4.1 Changes in the Counseling Teacher System

"From the perspective of a part-time counseling teacher, there was initial resistance to the responsibilities of full-time counseling teachers, such as delivering presentations and preparing special achievement reports. It felt like a departure from the usual norms of part-time counseling work. After all, isn't counseling primarily centered on individual cases? Moreover, counseling teachers are typically more reserved and introverted, and they often feel uncomfortable speaking in front of an audience. This aspect indeed felt like a significant source of pressure. However, over the years of working in schools, I have observed that presentations by full-time counseling teachers actually help enhance the counseling skills of homeroom teachers and foster better interaction with

full-time counselors. This, in turn, helps homeroom teachers better recognize the professionalism of full-time counselors. As for the special achievement reports, they serve as opportunities for mutual learning and improvement. Through these reports, we can hear about the experiences and insights of various full-time counselors in their work settings, which also stimulates learning and growth."

"From the perspective of a part-time counseling teacher at the time, the training for full-time counseling teachers seemed very rigorous. Workshops were well-organized, covering aspects such as job roles, responsibilities, and practical counseling skills. Additionally, the monthly professional/administrative and peer supervision sessions were highly effective, providing timely feedback and discussions on the challenges full-time counselors encountered in their work. At the time, this felt like an innovative approach."

In the first year of public recruitment in New Taipei City, only 14 full-time counseling teachers were selected, while the remaining positions were left unfilled. As a result, most middle schools in New Taipei City either had their part-time counseling teachers transition into full-time roles or faced staffing shortages. The primary reason was that many part-time counseling teachers, after learning about the responsibilities of full-time counseling roles, feared they could not meet the demands and thus avoided applying. Only a few part-time counseling teachers—those passionate about psychological counseling, confident in their professionalism, and willing to challenge themselves—opted to transition into full-time roles. This was because responsibilities such as "conducting presentations for teachers and students" and "annual special achievement reports" allowed full-time counseling teachers to qualitatively demonstrate their professional psychological counseling abilities. However, these tasks posed significant pressure for part-time counseling teachers lacking self-confidence in their professionalism. The professional training and competency requirements for full-time and part-time counseling teachers also differed. Currently, school counseling work in Taiwan is not only focused on enhancing professional capabilities but also learning from other countries by adopting diverse perspectives to implement and evaluate the effectiveness of school psychological counseling [19, 20].

3.4.2 Establishment of the New Taipei City Counseling and Consultation Center

"Since I was invited to serve as a supervisor at the Counseling Center in its inaugural year, and then again after taking one year of parental leave, I happened to have already gained five years of experience in my previous role—from counseling teacher to deputy head and head of counseling. As I had always wanted to challenge myself and embrace different experiences to learn new things, I accepted the invitation to become a Counseling Center supervisor, stepping out of the school environment and joining the Center."

In 2010, a bullying incident occurred at a middle school in Taoyuan County, where the school's handling of the situation was disorganized. Many teachers believed the principal failed to address the issue actively and petitioned for the principal's resignation. That year, higher authorities personally visited the school to investigate the bullying incident, uncovering deficiencies in the school's counseling mechanisms, unclear responsibilities and division of labor, and insufficient professionalism, which deeply impacted strategies for addressing students' physical and mental well-being. These events prompted the swift passage of the amendment to Article 10 of Taiwan's "Compulsory Education Act," which was promulgated on January 26, 2011, and further amended on May 11, 2016. Following this amendment, it was mandated that all counties and cities in Taiwan must establish counseling and consultation centers.

"The Education Bureau's planning, much like for full-time counseling teachers, involved arranging professional supervision for Counseling Center supervisors only later. The focus of this supervision was on self-care and role positioning within the context of being a Counseling Center supervisor."

The New Taipei City Education Bureau is currently the only county-level unit to establish the role of supervisors within counseling and consultation centers. That year, to help newly appointed full-time counseling teachers understand their job responsibilities, adapt to the school environment, and enhance their professionalism, all four Counseling Center supervisors (covering the north, south, east, and west districts) participated in full-day supervision and training sessions alongside the first cohort of full-time counseling teachers. While assisting full-time counseling teachers, the supervisors realized the importance of adjusting their own roles and managing work-related stress. This led to the planning of specialized supervision and training sessions for Counseling Center supervisors, which, like the sessions

for full-time counseling teachers that year, were held once a month.

3.4.3 Mechanisms for Relationship Building Between Counseling Center Supervisors and Full-Time Counseling Teachers

"At the time, through mechanisms such as on-campus guidance, professional supervision, and peer supervision, I was able to meet regularly with full-time counseling teachers every month. This helped clarify their responsibilities and provided mutual encouragement to adapt to the environment. Simultaneously, as a newly appointed Counseling Center supervisor, I adapted to this new role through professional and peer supervision tailored for supervisors. Over time, accumulated experience further enabled me to fulfill the role of a Counseling Center supervisor effectively."

Counseling Center supervisors had opportunities to build relationships with full-time counseling teachers through the requirements for group supervision and training, as well as through on-campus visits to support and assist them. This working model revealed that the supervisors' familiarity with and trust in the full-time counseling teachers influenced the level of assistance they could provide. After establishing the counseling and consultation centers, the New Taipei City Education Bureau invited teachers with relevant counseling backgrounds from schools in New Taipei City to transition into the role of Counseling Center supervisors. The aim was to help full-time counseling teachers better fulfill their job responsibilities, enhance their professionalism, and adapt to their work environments [21].

3.4.4 Challenges in Assisting Full-Time Counseling Teachers with Their Work

"I found the most difficult aspect to be acting as an intermediary and coordinating between parties, especially when school administrators misused full-time counseling teachers. I hoped to guide administrators toward having appropriate expectations and avoiding misuse. However, when things did not go as planned, I often found myself caught in a dilemma, which was the most challenging part for me. Since it was the first cohort of full-time counseling teachers, I only had my past experience as a counseling teacher to draw from. I tried to empathize and consider what assistance full-time counseling teachers would hope to receive in their positions. The professional and peer supervision for Counseling Center supervisors also encouraged me to view the role

of full-time counseling teachers within systemic collaboration objectively, aiming to foster their growth.”

“The first cohort of Counseling Center supervisors had at least five years of counseling work experience and rich professional backgrounds. We often discussed ways to enhance the professional capabilities of full-time counseling teachers. During administrative supervision sessions for Counseling Center supervisors, we also relayed the needs of full-time counseling teachers to department heads—for example, regarding the placement of their offices. In one case, a full-time counseling teacher was assigned to the physical education office.”

In their first year, the Counseling Center supervisors were also learning how to define their roles and job responsibilities. Much like the first cohort of full-time counseling teachers, they explored and grew together. In the early stages, full-time counseling teachers entering schools were often misused by school administrators, preventing them from embodying the spirit and responsibilities of school psychologists². According to the job responsibilities of full-time counseling teachers in New Taipei City middle schools, they are only required to teach two classes and cannot take on additional substitute teaching duties. The rest of their time is allocated to individual counseling sessions, small-group counseling, mental health awareness presentations for students, mental health counseling sessions for teachers or parents, teacher and parent consultations, systemic collaboration, and report submissions [5]. In the early stages, full-time counseling teachers entering schools were often perceived as having light workloads and were thus misused by administrators, leaving them with insufficient time to focus on professional psychological counseling work.

“In fact, clarifying the roles of full-time and part-time counseling teachers is straightforward—simply refer to their job responsibilities.”

²School psychologists are uniquely qualified members of school teams who support students’ learning abilities and teachers’ instructional capabilities. They apply expertise in mental health, learning, and behavior to help children and adolescents succeed academically, socially, behaviorally, and emotionally. They also collaborate with families, teachers, school administrators, and others to create safe, healthy, and supportive learning environments, thereby strengthening connections between families, schools, and communities [27].

When the first cohort of full-time counseling teachers began working in schools, their roles were met with controversy. Due to a lack of understanding and recognition of their professionalism, some part-time counseling teachers questioned the expertise and scope of work of full-time counseling teachers. Therefore, the New Taipei City Education Bureau clearly defined the job responsibilities for both full-time and part-time counseling teachers to assist in the division of labor and clarification of roles within schools.

3.4.5 The Current Status of Full-Time Counseling Teachers’ Job Responsibilities in Schools

“I have observed that the job responsibilities and work content for full-time counseling teachers have become more precisely defined over the years. While this has clarified their roles, as staffing gradually aligns with school sizes, I hope for more flexible job descriptions and a more humanized approach. Beyond numerical report requirements, full-time counseling teachers should be empowered to embody the proactive research spirit of school psychologists, collecting data on student issues within schools and proposing counseling solutions for improvement.”

“Back then, the department head hoped that the work of full-time counseling teachers in New Taipei City could embody the professionalism of school psychologists, helping schools understand and implement the three-tier counseling mechanism. Therefore, the initial job responsibilities for full-time counseling teachers were drafted by the department head in collaboration with several experienced principals and have been fine-tuned annually since.”

“Back then (August 6, 2012), we learned about the recruitment of the first cohort of full-time counseling teachers. The monthly reports were also jointly drafted by the first cohort of Counseling Center supervisors, based on the job responsibilities outlined by the New Taipei City Education Bureau.”

Revisions to the job responsibilities and training requirements for full-time counseling teachers in New Taipei City were partly driven by the random stabbing incident on the Taipei Metro in May 2014, involving a university student surnamed Zheng, which caused significant societal anxiety and sparked broader discussions and reflections on school counseling mechanisms [1, 12, 22, 23]. Consequently, in November 2014, Taiwan passed the “Student Guidance and Counseling Act,” which not only established specialized legislation to protect student rights but also increased

the staffing quota for full-time counseling teachers to ensure every school had such a position. Article 10 of the Act regulates the organization and staffing of elementary and middle schools, strengthening the allocation of counseling teachers and allowing for the appointment of full-time professional counseling personnel and volunteer counselors [11].

The responses from Counseling Center supervisors clearly highlight the current direction for the development of full-time counseling teachers. Both the Education Department and the New Taipei City Education Bureau expect full-time counseling teachers to embody the spirit of school psychologists in terms of their professional knowledge, initial and ongoing training, and job responsibilities. They also hope that school psychological counseling work can focus more on genuine human interactions rather than cold, hard data. The supervisors believe that the New Taipei City Education Bureau places excessive emphasis on quantitative data in report submissions and recommend reducing the burden of report writing.

3.4.6 Development and Positioning of Full-Time Counseling Teachers

"Since 2001, I have served as a middle school counseling teacher, experiencing the Nine-Year Integrated Curriculum and a time when I taught 22 classes per week (including four additional substitute classes) while also counseling students. The multiple role expectations during that period were quite draining, and I hoped the roles of counseling and teaching could be separated. Finally, in 2012, this became a reality with the establishment of full-time counseling teachers. This allowed for more in-depth student counseling and significantly reduced the proportion of high-risk students. For me, it was a joy to see more full-time counseling teachers in place, promoting the professionalization of counseling work. However, since full-time counseling teachers only teach two classes per week, their opportunities to interact with students are limited, making many students hesitant to seek help proactively. Therefore, I hope that in the future, full-time counseling teachers can use counseling outreach and awareness campaigns to encourage more students to seek assistance voluntarily."

The interviewee possesses professional psychological counseling knowledge and experienced the Nine-Year Integrated Curriculum, having served as a part-time counseling teacher, deputy head of counseling, and head of counseling. This provided a

deep understanding and professional competence in both the administrative work of counseling departments and the professionalism of counseling teachers. As such, the interviewee is optimistic about the integration of full-time counseling teachers into schools but regrets the limited teaching hours for these teachers. Fewer teaching hours mean fewer opportunities for students to get to know full-time counseling teachers and learn about counseling concepts. Leuwerke and Shi [24] mentioned that to provide students with a better campus life, administrative units must invest more resources and professional training in school psychological counseling. Therefore, the main purpose of amending Article 10 of Taiwan's "Compulsory Education Act" was to allow more professional psychological counseling personnel to work in schools under legal provisions.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Functions of Full-Time Counseling Teachers

Since formally entering schools in August 2012, full-time counseling teachers have taken on the responsibility of providing psychological counseling services to parents, teachers, and students. Over the past 11 years, with the three-tier counseling system at its core and guided by their job responsibilities, full-time counseling teachers have fulfilled the following functions:

- (1) Their professional intervention has shared the burden of counseling administrative work, enabling a tiered responsibility system for student psychological counseling and improving overall outcomes.
- (2) The addition of their professional capabilities has made direct interventional counseling more effective.
- (3) For preventive first-tier counseling work, full-time counseling teachers are readily available to address teachers' questions about students' psychological issues. Additionally, their semesterly or annual mental health awareness sessions (for teachers, parents, and students) provide opportunities to implement preventive counseling.
- (4) Full-time counseling teachers identify and report at-risk students, facilitating systemic collaboration [25-27].

Overall, full-time counseling teachers have proven more effective than part-time counseling teachers in providing psychological support to students.

4.2 Systemic Collaboration and the Recruitment, Training, and Utilization of Full-Time Counseling Teachers

In 2012, following the amendment to Article 10 of the “Compulsory Education Act,” all elementary and middle schools in Taiwan began recruiting full-time counseling teachers. To help the first cohort fulfill their job responsibilities, adapt to their environments, and promote the comprehensive implementation of the three-tier counseling system, the New Taipei City Education Bureau required full-time counseling teachers to take on roles beyond traditional counseling. They were expected to embody the macro perspective of school psychologists, providing psychological counseling services and systemic collaboration to meet the needs of parents, teachers, and students [27].

The broad responsibilities of school psychologists include assessment, intervention, and consultation, with consultation being a part of intervention work [28]. The job responsibilities of full-time counseling teachers in New Taipei City explicitly require them to conduct individual and small-group counseling sessions, classroom-based guidance, school-wide mental health awareness presentations, teacher consultations, teacher mental health awareness sessions, parent consultations, and parent mental health awareness sessions—all falling under intervention and consultation work [5]. Plotts and Lasser [28] noted that school psychologists serve as a bridge, closely monitoring the outcomes of recommendations and interventions. Similarly, the role of full-time counseling teachers in New Taipei City involves acting as liaisons for systemic collaboration, engaging with social workers, probation officers, and law enforcement agencies as needed. From initially unclear role definitions to the amendments of the “Compulsory Education Act” and the “Student Guidance and Counseling Act,” the legal framework has now established the recruitment, training, and professional roles of full-time counseling teachers over the past eight years. It has also become evident that the training process significantly impacts their psychological counseling competencies. How to equip prospective full-time counseling teachers with a systemic perspective and practical skills during their training is a key consideration for relevant authorities [29]. Legislative and policy implementation can directly influence the allocation of resources for school psychological counseling work [30]. Therefore, future efforts could explore revising the training curriculum for full-time counseling teachers through legal

amendments or designing courses and training programs better aligned with their roles.

V. Conclusion

It is not something that can be achieved in just one or two years for full-time counseling teachers to fully leverage the functions mentioned above in schools. The first three years for full-time counseling teachers are a critical growth period, during which many systems and adjustments are in the initial stages. Starting from the regulatory implementation that brought full-time counseling teachers onto campus, the New Taipei City Education Bureau has thoroughly immersed itself in the frontline of school psychological work (through school visits by supervisors from the Counseling Center, group supervision sessions for full-time counseling teachers, annual work achievement sharing sessions, etc.), creating opportunities to identify the work difficulties and needs of full-time counseling teachers. Therefore, during the turbulent first three years, continuous revisions were made to the job responsibilities of full-time counseling teachers in New Taipei City. The aim was to align with the needs of frontline workers, assist full-time counseling teachers in addressing work challenges, and ensure that the psychological expertise of full-time counseling teachers is effectively integrated into every aspect of the school campus.

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