

# THE MEANING OF SUCCESS IN KOREAN CAREER WOMEN'S LIVES

by

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(Under the Direction of Juanita Johnson-Bailey)

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to understand the meaning of success in Korean career women's lives. The research questions guiding this study were as follows: (1) How do Korean career women define success in their lives? 2) How do Korean career women develop their meaning of success? 3) What are Korean career women's strategies for their success in relation to gender expectations and roles in Korean society?

A qualitative study was conducted especially based on feminist research methodology framework. Data collection was conducted through interviews and documents. Purposeful sampling was used for selecting participants for this study. Interviews were conducted with Korean career women who have worked more than fifteen years in Korean workplace. Data analysis was conducted through inductive analysis with theories in mind—theories on success, women's ways of knowing, and gender performance.

The findings of this study revealed how Korean career women define, learn, and perform their success. First, they define success in their lives in relation to promotion in the workplace, content family life, and contributions for societal improvement. Second, they learn success in two ways. Some women had clear concept of success when they started their career while other women have developed their concept of success along the way through working. Finally, they

use their femininity in two different ways, create different life styles out of traditional marriage relations, and deal with glass ceiling to achieve their own success.

The conclusions were drawn from the findings of this study. First, the notion of Korean career women's success is integrative as it connects their workplace, family, and society. Second, the Korean career women learned their concept of success through constructed knowledge. Finally, they performed their gender in various ways as a strategy for success.

**INDEX WORDS:** Adult Education, Career Development, Career Success, Feminist Research Methodology, Gender Performativity, Korean Career Women, Qualitative Research, Success, Women's Learning

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## DEDICATION

To my lovely daughter Eun Hye,  
for whom I have always been sorry for my absence because of this dissertation,  
and my husband Dae Joong, whom I always love.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

When I was taking my comprehensive examinations for my doctoral study, I was planning to write a dissertation about career development of successful women. I was eager to interview some successful women and to look for hopeful messages for ambitious women who want to be successful in their workplace. However, when I thought about whom to interview and who could be included in the category of successful women, I got stuck because there was something that bothered me in the definition of success. The generally assumed definition of success means a high position in the workplace with power and money. However, I became suspicious that there might be other things that are more important than power and money in *women's* success. I wrote down the definition of success and my suspicions on the white board at home and often stared at the board.

This uneasiness reminded me of another experience that I had several years ago back in Korea when I read a book which was my mother's present for me. The book, *Play Like a Man, Win Like a Woman*, must be a best seller since it was translated into Korean. The author says that women should know and follow the rules of the game that men play in the workplace, which leads women to a successful career. At the same time, she also says that women should use their own feminine characteristics when they play the game, which made me confused. I thought, "I don't have that kind of feminine sensibility. Why should I develop those characteristics? Why should I act like a man and think like a man although I am a woman?"

One day while I was staring at the board with my questions about success, I found that my uneasy questioning about successful women and about the book came from the same problem: a male-oriented definition of success. The traditional definition of success which means

wealth and power bothered me because I have never thought that those things are the indicator of success in my life and career. The book that I read bothered me because I am different from the women that the author described in her book. Then, I came to wonder, what would be important things in women's lives regarding success? What would be the indicators of success in different women's lives in different situations? And so my dissertation topic changed from exploring career development of successful women to exploring the meaning of success in women's lives.

There has also been an increasing number of women entering the workforce in Korea especially for the past two decades. The women's labor force participation rate in Korea was 41.9% in 1985, 48.4% in 1995, and 50.5% in 2005 (Korean National Statistical Office, 2006a). Although the labor force participation rate of Korean women, 50.5%, was lower than the 59.3% of women in the U.S. in 2005 (U.S. Department of Labor, 2006), it is the result of steady increase for the past two decades. When we look at the educational level of Korean women during the same time frame, there has been a more dramatic increase in the educational level. The percentage of women who have at least a bachelor's degree in Korea was 5.2% in 1985, 13.1% in 1995, and 25.4% in 2005. Compared to the fact that the percentage of men who have at least a bachelor's degree in Korea was 15.5% in 1985, 26.6% in 1995, and 37.8% in 2005, the gap between the educational level of women and men in Korea has been considerably narrowed.

However, if we look at the statistics more in detail, we can easily notice that there is still a gap between the status of women and men. The biggest and most basic gap starts from the earnings of women and men. According to 2005 statistics, women earn only 63% as much as men in Korea even when they have the same qualifications (Korean National Statistical Office, 2006b). This is even worse than the 77% in the U.S. (AFL-CIO, 2005). Also, there have been few women who are regarded as successful despite the large proportion of women in the labor

force. The percentage of women Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) in the Korean business sector is only 10.5% (Korean Women's Development Institute, 2004). The percentage of women ministers in Korea is 14.3% (N. Kim, 2004).

In particular, Korean women face barriers in their workplaces because of the influence of Confucianism in Korean culture and society. The last Korean dynasty, *Joseon*, was established in 1392 and lasted until 1910 when Korea became a Japanese colony. Confucianism was the official religion and philosophy of the *Joseon* dynasty. Although there has been research done by Korean feminists, insisting that not all of the philosophy of Confucianism is oppressive to women (Kang & Shin, 2000; M. Kim, 2004), there are certainly some aspects of this ideology that are oppressive to women. The basic principle of Confucianism which distinguishes women from men is the idea of yin and yang. Men were connected with yang, which symbolizes strength and goodness, while women were connected with yin, which symbolizes weakness and wickedness (M. Kim, 2004, p. 46). Within a family, a man was the person who establishes the order and the rules of the family while a woman should obey her husband's rules and follow his orders.

Based on this assumption, there were several rules that regulated the relationship between women and men. A basic principle, *Sam-gang* (三綱), presents three foundations of social relations of hierarchy: between the father and the son, between the king and the servants, and between men and women. There is another principle, *Sam-jong-ji-do* (三從之道), which is about a woman's morality: A woman should follow her father before they get married, follow her husband after marriage, and follow her son after her husband dies. It implies that women can be recognized as social beings only when they are in a subordinate relationship with men. Another oppressive social custom can be found in *Chil-gu-ji-ak* (七去之惡), which regulates the seven

valid causes for divorce. It states that a woman should obey her parents-in-law, should bear a son, should not be lustful, should not be jealous, should not have a serious disease, should not be talkative, and should not steal anything. It means that if a woman does not follow those seven rules, she has to be expelled from her husband's family (Gukjehangukhakheo [International Research Association for Korean Studies], 1999). Although these ideas on the status of women in a Confucian context were established a long time ago, they play an important role on the development of values and attitudes in contemporary Korean society, resulting in gender discrimination in the workplace.

Other than this Confucian influence on Korean women, there are several other reasons that keep women from being successful in the workplace which can be found in the literature. Although the reason why women lack economic power and success in the labor force is complex, it includes "social, cultural and psychological factors" (Dann, 1995, p. 11). We can find some clues from the studies about barriers to women's career development in general (Ballard, 1998; Bierema, 2001; Cleveland, Stockdale, & Murphy, 2000; Inman, 1998; Wentling, 1998; J. Williams, 2000). Synthesizing the literature on barrier's to women's career development, the reasons for women's under-representativeness are "possible gender differences in abilities, gender-role stereotypes, educational constraints, the influence of masculine preferences and prejudices, and the ubiquitous assumptions concerning women's role as wife and mother...formal and informal discrimination, and environmental constraints of various types" (Fitzgerald & Harmon, 2001, p. 218).

However, if we go under the surface level, we can find that a more fundamental reason about the lack of successful women is that the definition of success itself is "male-identified" (O'Donovan-Polten, 2001). Career success is traditionally measured in terms of "salary, position



and status” (Dann, 1995, p. 12). Most of the studies related to career success define success in terms of wealth, power, prestige, and recognition (Dann, 1995; De Chumaceiro, 2004; Northcutt, 1991). It seems that they do not have any problem with that definition of success. Furthermore, some of the studies related to career success do not even clarify the meaning of success (Hearn, 2000; Heilman, Wallen, Fuchs, & Tamkins, 2004; N. Kim, 2004), implying that the meaning of success is so definite and common that there is no need to clarify it.

This standard of success is the one that men established for themselves long before women entered the workforce. Before capitalism was introduced, the work that generated an income for a family was done at home by women as well as men. Then, the influx of industrial capitalism “began to draw labor out of the private home and into the public workplace” (Tong, 1998, p. 13). Men entered the public sphere to work outside the private home but, later and in fewer numbers, so did women. The women’s movement of the 1960s greatly influenced this process. Men, the dominant group in the public sphere, were “reluctant to give up their advantages” (Peskin, 1991, p. 142). They remained privileged in the workforce “because they write the rules, and the rules they write ‘enable them *to continue to write the rules*’” (p. 142). So the rules for career success in the workplace have remained much the same, developed and maintained by and for the benefit of men.

The standards for success also reflect the historical development of feminism. Due to the influence of liberal feminism, which was the very first women’s movement in the United States, the standards for career success for men were also adopted by women who wanted to survive and succeed in a male-dominated workplace. As the core belief of liberal feminism is that “women’s and men’s souls and rational faculties are the same” (Donovan, 2001, p. 24), women wanted to be treated equally in the workplace. Thus, they sought to achieve the same kind of success with

men, accepting the traditional definition of success, which means wealth, power, and authority. This fits the assumption of liberal feminism which does not “question the value of traditional male traits” (Tong, 1998, p. 15). This is still the dominant meaning and image of success which can be found in mass media including television commercials, popular books, and magazines.

Although this notion of success has been dominant, there have also been some efforts to add women’s own standard of success to the traditional definition. This stance is based on cultural feminism, which insists that women and men are fundamentally different and women have their own essential characteristics (Donovan, 2001). Based on this stance, it is believed that women have their natural attributes such as “love, creativity, and the ability to nurture” (Alcoff, 1988, p. 409). Thus, success for women in this view includes such traits as nurturing, collaboration and work and family balance as those are the important values to many women (Ballard, 1998). For example, when women talk about their success, they often refer to “helping others, contributing to society” and “happiness in their personal or family lives” (Halcomb, 1982, p. 9). In a more recent study that examined the career success of women lawyers, it was concluded that women lawyers defined success in the workplace as having, “positive mutual relationships with colleagues and/or clients; engagement in their work; and the experience of their connection and engagement bringing about greater good and/or stronger personal connections” (Ballard, 1998, p. 51). A similar finding was generated from a study on life-career success of lawyers, saying that women lawyers value “pro bono endeavors” and “socially beneficial services to the community” (O'Donovan-Polten, 2001, p. 177). A new meaning of success is emerging that incorporates women’s ideals of femininity, such as nurturing and collaboration.

However, the essentialism of cultural feminism has been critiqued for “repressing differences among” women, according to postmodern feminists (Fraser & Nicholson, 1990, p. 31). This stance insists that not all women share common characteristics such as nurturing and that every woman is different according to her positionality. If we say that all women are nurturing and thus nurturing women should be considered successful, it is an overgeneralization of theory which “necessarily represses or ignores contradictory evidence” (Donovan, 2001, p. 205). Furthermore, as feminists, we “have the right to suspect that even praise of the female may be (at least in part) motivated by a wish to keep women in a restricted (and restrictive) place” (Flax, 1990, p. 55). By praising nurturing as an element of success in the workplace for women, are women restricted to a place where they must play a traditional feminine role?

Gender performance theory suggested by Butler (1990) gives good explanation of this matter. According to her, “there is no original or primary gender” (Butler, 1997, p. 306) and the association of natural sex with a gender is merely a cultural construction. Those women who perform their gender according to the traditional feminine role do so because they want to survive given the cultural circumstances, not because it is their natural way of thinking and behaving. It is a survival strategy in a culture where “those who fail to do their gender right are regularly punished” (Butler, 2003, p. 417). If we consider success as behaving like men according to men’s rules and force women to uncritically accept masculine defined norms, it can be a form of violence because men’s standard of success is “so taken for granted...that it was violently policed” (Butler, 1990, p. xix). However, if we consider success for women as including feminine values such as nurturing, it would be violence, too, because it marginalizes many women who do not have those kinds of characteristics. Just as Fraser and Nicholson (1990) said,

[T]he diversity of women's needs and experiences means that no single solution, on issues like child care, social security, and housing, can be adequate for all. Thus, the underlying premise of this practice is that, while some women share some common interest and face some common enemies, such commonalities are by no means universal; rather, they are interlaced with differences, even with conflicts. (p. 35)

Thus, there cannot be a single answer to the question about the definition of success. Rather, the knowledge on the meaning of success would be "plural, local, and immanent" (Fraser & Nicholson, 1990, p. 23). It should be grounded in women's experiences in certain contexts so that we can understand the meaning of success from women's perspectives. In the career development field there have been efforts to theorize women's issues in career development. Some have suggested that the description of career development in traditional theories is inconsistent with women's experiences (Farmer & Associates, 1997; Fitzgerald, Fassinger, & Betz, 1995; Schreiber, 1999; Wentling, 1998). It has been agreed that the need for "the creation of theories unique to women is required because of the singular and complex nature of women's career development" (Hackett, 1997, p. 184).

However, as not all women's experiences are the same, we face a question on what kind of women we are trying to understand. Usually, career development theories have been dominated by the psychological tradition, and culture has been "largely seen as a nuisance variable or an independent variable that needs to be controlled" (Stead, 2004, p. 389). Although the psychological approach has been the mainstream, there have been efforts to pay attention to the importance of the role of culture and society in career development (Gross, 2004; Mau, 2004; Stead, 2004). Gross (2004) developed a conceptual model for the intersection of career and cultural identity, suggesting that "it is the interplay between the three dimensions [personality,

interest, and social influences dimensions] that best explains individual identity and career development” (p. 65).

A brief review of the existing literature reveals that the meaning of success in women’s career development has rarely been studied. Even though there are a few existing studies on women’s definition of success, the meaning of success in that literature seems to be limited and might reinforce women’s subordinate status to men. Thus, there is a need for a study which can explore women’s experiences in women’s terms in certain contexts. Also, the role of learning in women’s career development has not been explained well in the existing career development theories on women. As learning is the key element in the process of constructing and reconstructing the meaning of success, more focus should be placed on the role of learning in women’s career development. Through this study, I hope to see how Butler’s gender performance theory, cultural career development theory, and women’s career development theories are intertwined in women’s lives and understand how these theories may help in understanding Korean women’s career development.

#### The Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to understand the meaning of success in Korean career women’s lives. The research questions are: (1) How do Korean career women define success in their lives? (2) How do Korean career women develop their meaning of success? (3) What are Korean career women’s strategies for their success in relation to gender expectations and roles in Korean society?

#### Significance of the Study

This research will contribute to the current body of knowledge in women’s career development by increasing our understanding of Korean women’s experiences of career

development. As there has not been much research done about Korean women from the insider's perspective, this study will contribute to and expand the scope of women's career development research. As most of the current literature on women's career development uncritically accepts the male-identified definition of success, this research will contribute an integrative and women-centered notion of success. This study also has theoretical and practical implications for adult education literature and practice. Through the effort to understand the importance of learning and how women's understanding of success is intertwined with the other aspects of their lives, this study will help uncover the complexity of life experiences of women. The practical implication of this study will be that it can help out those women who struggle with career success by revealing various aspects of life-career success. Also, the practical implications for the adult educators working with career women would be that they can use the information from this study to encourage and assist career women so that they can lead more fulfilling lives while developing successful careers on their own terms. Career counselors working with women also may incorporate the results of this study into their counseling practices for career development issues with women and also for developing counseling or guidance programs for women. The results from this study would also add a new cultural perspective on successful women's career development to the existing literature.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this study was to understand the meaning of success in Korean career women's lives. This chapter includes four major sections. First, I reviewed literature related to success in terms of a binary understanding of objective/subjective and male-identified/women-centered success with the explanation of liberal/cultural feminism. Judith Butler's theory of gender as a performative act will be explored as an alternative to the dichotomous understanding of success. Second, I reviewed career development theories in traditionally psychology-dominated contexts and some alternative theories that go beyond the positivist worldview. The third section focuses on learning, a key factor in career development and the construction of the meaning of success. Finally, the fourth section reviews cultural context of Korean women.

#### Understanding Success

Cartesian dualism has dominated much of the field of science, including the social sciences. This dualism has also influenced conceptualization and actualization of important notions in our everyday lives—the dualism of mind/body, men/women, rational/emotional, objective/subjective, and so on. The meaning of success in our everyday lives has also been understood in the context of this dualism. In this section, I will review some dichotomies on which the concept of success relies and will explore whether or not there is a way that can go beyond this dualism.

#### *Objective vs. Subjective Success*

Career success has traditionally been defined and measured in terms of wealth, power, prestige, and recognition (Dann, 1995; De Chumaceiro, 2004; Northcutt, 1991). This notion of success has been so pervasive and considered natural that some studies related to career success

do not clarify the meaning of success (Hearn, 2000; Heilman et al., 2004; N. Kim, 2004) but assume that “salary, position and status” (Dann, 1995, p. 12) are the only and best indicators of success.

Recently, there has been a movement in the career development field to try to expand the traditional conceptualization of career success “beyond those typically studied (e.g., promotions, salary) while simultaneously de-emphasizing external or objective measures of success” (Eby, Butts, & Lockwood, 2003, p. 24). This effort can be summarized as the distinction between objective and subjective success. In this approach, objective success means the traditional success that can be measured and observed in terms of pay and promotion (Arthur, Khapova, & Wilderom, 2005; Judge & Higgins, 1999; Wayne, Liden, Kraimer, & Graf, 1999). Objective success is an external perspective because it “delineates more or less tangible indicators of an individual’s career situation” (Arthur et al., 2005, p. 179).

In contrast, subjective success has been conceptualized in exactly opposite to objective success. Subjective success usually includes one’s feelings and attitudes towards her/his own job which cannot be measured in the same way as objective success. It is defined as “the individual’s internal apprehension and evaluation of his or her career” (Arthur et al., 2005, p. 179), “an individual’s feelings of accomplishment and satisfaction with his or her career” (Wayne et al., 1999, p. 579), or simply “job or career satisfaction” (Heslin, 2005, p. 116). Sometimes, subjective success is used interchangeably with the term psychological success. A more inclusive definition than psychological success contains long-term and broader aspects that include reactions to actual and anticipated career-related attainments across a broader time frame than immediate job satisfaction, as well as a wider range of outcomes such as a sense of identity, purpose, and work-life balance (Heslin, 2005).



The most salient theme in the conceptualization of objective and subjective success is that the two kinds of success are viewed as in opposition to each other. Literature related to success shows the contrast between these two concepts by using strong adverbs such as ‘in contrast’ and ‘conversely’ when it mentions objective and subjective success (Arthur et al., 2005; Hall & Chandler, 2005; Judge & Higgins, 1999; Wayne et al., 1999). While objective success is thought of as measurable, tangible, and rational, subjective success is considered immeasurable, intangible, and emotional.

This dualistic understanding of success does not necessarily consider the matter of gender. Advent of the concept of subjective success arose from a general awareness that some successful people are not always happy with their personal lives as they feel that they have “traded their life satisfaction for the ability to accumulate and bank their utilities for others” (N. Nicholson & De Waal-Andrews, 2005, p. 145). Thus, it seems that subjective success is considered “more important than external or tangible indicators like salary growth” (Eby et al., 2003, p. 24). However, the notion of objective/subjective career success does not provide any explanation of how these concepts of success shape women’s and men’s career development differently. Thus, in the following section, I will review the concepts of success rooted in the awareness of the difference between women and men in their career development.

#### *Men-identified vs. Women-centered Success*

The traditional definition of success, which means gaining wealth and power, is itself a male-identified definition (O'Donovan-Polten, 2001). The rules of the game played in the workplace were set up by and for men when women had relatively minor levels of labor force participation. For women to succeed in a previously men’s world, they “had to learn to value themselves the way men did” (McKenna, 1997, p. 10). They had no other choice but to believe

that they needed the same qualities as men to succeed in the workplace—qualities such as “firmness, decisiveness, assertiveness, ability to calculate risks” (Halcomb, 1982, p. 172)—although these qualities are the ones typically prohibited for women (Heilman et al., 2004). By learning to value men’s values and behave like men, women “compounded their lives by adding the male-defined success identity onto their female identities” (McKenna, 1997, p. 10).

The traditional definition of success is also male-identified because it assumes that the workers—men—can ignore so many other tasks in their lives because “women would take care of all the other aspects of a man’s life” (Mulqueen, 1992, p. 187). In a study examined career success among lawyers that included sixty women and fifteen men, women lawyers said that the system of their law firm promoted a system that valorized values and traits historically associated with men and assumed that “all ‘successful’ lawyers have [had] an ‘invisible support system’ which leaves them free (and willing) to devote substantially all of their time and energy to the workplace” (Ballard, 1998, p. 52). However, women who have their own families to take care of could not follow this rule as they do not have the support system that men have.

Although this male-identified definition of success has been pervasive, there also have been growing voices of women who realized that their success is different from that of men. Halcomb (1982) started from the awareness that a woman seeking career success faces conflict. She said, “[t]he woman who sought success in a career was damned if she did and damned if she didn’t” (p. 3). In her case study of six women, she concluded that the women shared some notions about success, saying that “[t]hey referred to helping others, contributing to society, also utilizing their abilities, and to personal growth and self-actualization” (p. 9) and that “[o]ften too they mentioned happiness in their personal or family lives” (p. 9). She quoted one woman’s statement on success:

I consider my greatest success of all is having four very neat kids and the husband that I have. I can stand back and say, 'Gee, they're pretty nice.' It all makes life a kind of celebration.

*Adrienne Hal*, Executive Vice-President, Hall-Levine Advertising, Inc.

(p. 8)

Over a period of time, similar findings about women's success have been researched and developed with different women. In a survey conducted with 284 Australian women public sector employees, Dann (1995) concluded that "[w]omen's definitions of success tend to be more intrinsically based than men's and tend to place less of an emphasis on financial reward" (p.12). Women lawyers define their career success as "positive mutual relationships with colleagues and/or clients; engagement in their work; and the experience of their connection and engagement bringing about greater good and/or stronger personal connections" (Ballard, 1998, p. 51). Also, women in management said that success for them means "liking, loving, and having fun at their jobs; achieving professional and personal goals; finding harmony and balance in life; having rewarding relationships; being fulfilled; giving their personal best; making a difference; and making life better for others" (O'Brien, 1998, p. 36). Similar findings with different populations continue to be explored. A study examining the construction of life-career success among women and men Canadian lawyers stated that women lawyers value reconciling profit generating and pro-bono endeavors and contributing socially beneficial services to the community and that they consider work and family balance as important (O'Donovan-Polten, 2001). The meaning of success for entrepreneurial women in Canada is "finding satisfaction in their everyday work...the contributions they perceived themselves making to their communities, the reputations

for doing good work that they built in those communities, and their overall perceived quality of life” (Fenwick, 2002, p. 167).

Not only women in general but also women who earned wealth and power in the workplace and were defined as successful from the male-identified perspective define success differently. Northcutt (1991) found that even the traditionally successful woman values different meanings of success: (1) achieving one’s personal goals, (2) receiving recognition from others, (3) enjoying one’s work and contributing to others, to the community, and so forth. Traditionally defined successful women managers also valued “their ability to lead balanced and fulfilling lives, both in the public and private spheres” (Simon, 1996, p. 12) as well as money and status.

Summarizing the research on women’s success, it can be said that women define success differently than men. For women, success is not necessarily associated with obtaining wealth, power, and fame. Women regard success more as having good relationships with other people, finding happiness and satisfaction with their work, balancing their lives (mostly work and family balance), and contributing to the community and larger society. This meaning of success actually resonates with that of subjective success because the kind of success women seek is not objective success but rather one that can be defined in subjective terms. Halcomb (1982) stated that “[i]t’s ironic...that men are turning away from money and power and fame right now just as women are discovering them” (p. 6). Although the mostly male scholars who have discussed subjective success do not consider gender issues in the concept of success, women-centered success as described above can demonstrate a genderized aspect of subjective success.

#### *Liberal vs. Cultural Feminism*

A distinct boundary has been drawn between objective/male-identified success and subjective/women-centered success. Male-identified success, which is so-called objective

success, and women-centered success, which is related to what is referred to as subjective success, are considered mutually exclusive and opposite. In this sub-section, I will present a feminist explanation of these two concepts that can be expected to reveal the larger contexts that lie behind them.

Liberal feminism is the first kind of feminism in the history of U.S. feminism. It shares the basic assumption of eighteenth century enlightenment liberalism that humans are rational beings (Donovan, 2001). It is based on the belief that “women and men are ontologically identical” (p. 23), which specifically means that women have the same rational capacities. Wollstonecraft insisted in her book, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1796), that women remained enslaved because of a corrupt socialization process that kept women from developing the same rational powers as men (Tong, 1998). Thus, liberal feminists believe that proper education and training can enable women to develop the same rational capacity as men. This idea of liberal feminist tradition was handed down and became a basis of the Declaration of Sentiments in 1848, which was the women’s movement for suffrage and the reform of marital and property laws (Stubblefield & Keane, 1994; Tong, 1998). It was stated that “all men and women are created equal” in the Declaration of Sentiments while it was stated that “all men are created equal” in the Declaration of Independence (Halsall, 1998).

Liberal feminism supports the male-identified notion of success because it insists that women should pursue the same kind of success that men have. According to liberal feminism, women should “have access into the ‘great enterprises’ of public life, and not be confined to the domestic sphere” (Donovan, 2001, p. 26) because women have the right to the same activities as men. It was believed that “it is psychologically vital that every woman work, regardless of financial necessity” (Tong, 1989, p. 19) and that women can develop their own identities by

working outside the home just like men do (Friedan, 1963). As liberal feminists accept the rationality of men as natural and something that women should seek as well, it was also natural that they accept the same definition of career success as men. They do not question the value of male traits, the meaning of male-defined success. The traditional male value on success as wealth, power, and fame was then adopted as what women should value. As women and men are equal beings, it was believed that women *can* and *should* be successful just like men.

On the other hand, cultural feminism sought a different kind of success. While liberal feminists believed that women and men are equal and ontologically the same being, cultural feminists believe that women and men are fundamentally different and that women have their own *feminine* characteristics while men have masculine traits (Donovan, 2001). The feminine attributes that some consider all women to have are love, compassion, creativity, peacefulness, intuition, sharing, and nurture (Alcoff, 1988). These are considered to be women's natural essence that "needs to be freed from its male parasites, released for creative expression and recharged through bonding with other women" (p. 408). Cultural feminists think that women should recover and revalue the femininity that has been disregarded and undervalued by men. In particular, this idea is concretized in the practice of politics. As Donovan (2001) mentioned, "[t]he nineteenth-century cultural feminists more or less assumed that women's pacifist, reformist nature was relatively innate and that women would bring this perspective with them into the public sphere to purify politics" (p. 76).

Cultural feminism supports the women-centered notion of success because it emphasizes the feminine side of women. Women's own meaning of success, which includes nurturing relationships in the workplace, helping others, and contributing to society, can be best understood in the context of cultural feminism. O'Brien (1998) directly addresses the issue of

recovering women's femininity to make things better for women by stating that "[a]s we have gained confidence through our accomplishments, we've learned to access our femininity—because it is our very womanliness that gives us strength and makes us leaders" (p. 35). She continues:

The more these women [the women whom the author interviewed] acted according to their own feminine instincts and values, the more they used management styles that came naturally to them, and the more they sought careers that allowed them to fulfill their own definitions of success, the happier they seemed to be. (p. 36)

The women who followed their *natural* feminine attributes not only felt happy but were also "making it in a man's world today" (Halcomb, 1982, p.173) with their femininity. This idea of women's success matches the "matriarchal vision" of cultural feminism, "the idea of a society of strong women guided by essentially female concerns and values" (Donovan, 2001, p. 48). Defining success in terms of feminine traits can mean that a woman becomes "a self with needs, wants, and interests of her own" so that women can end "the game of man as master and woman as slave" (Tong, 1998, p. 57).

#### *Summary: Dichotomous Understanding of Success*

In this section I reviewed the existing literature discussing two classifications of success: objective and subjective; male-identified and women-centered success. It also stated that objective success corresponds to male-identified success and subjective success to women-centered success and that these two categories of success are considered exclusive and opposite. I also examined liberal feminist literature that indicated that women seek male-identified success and furthermore, that women-centered success is influenced by cultural feminism.

### *Beyond the Dichotomous Understanding of Success*

After reviewing the literature having a dualistic understanding of success, the following question arose: Is there another way to understand success except for this dualistic and dichotomous way? Critique of the essentialism of cultural feminism and the need for considering diversity among women regarding success will be addressed in this section, with an effort to find an alternative viewpoint on women's success.

While cultural feminism provides good support for women to develop the notion of women-centered success, it has been criticized for its essentialism and categorization of women and femininity. By claiming that all women are universally and commonly nurturing and collaborative, cultural feminism excludes those women who do not share those attributes. While this notion of gender identity gives substance to the idea of sisterhood, it does so "at the cost of repressing differences among sisters [women]" (Fraser & Nicholson, 1990, p. 31). Postmodern feminists in particular insist that gender differences advocated by cultural feminists are merely a social construction: "[G]ender itself is a product of and a contribution to modernist discourse; it is about conventional forms of meaning, practice, and representation and not at all about foundations, whether natural or metaphysical" (Di Stefano, 1990, p. 66). The category of gender itself and its essential femininity "not only fail[s] to represent the variety in women's lives but promote[s] unrealistic expectations about 'normal' female behavior that most of us cannot satisfy" (Alcoff, 1988, p. 413). Assuming that all women have and *should* have feminine traits of nurturing, collaborating, loving, and so on, cultural feminism promotes false notion of normal and true women. However, in reality the meanings of gender differences are "always relative to particular constructions in specified contexts" (J. W. Scott, 2003, p. 388).



With the help of this critique, we now know that all women are not the same but differ according to their race, class, nationality, sexuality, and other characteristics. The notion of women-centered success is problematic in this sense, because it explains the experiences of only a certain kind of woman while assuming these are the experiences of all women. Although this women-centered success research is in the mainstream of current literature on women's success, some research findings indicate that the meaning of success for women differs according to their individual goals, marital status, socio-economic status, and nationality (Boardman, Harrington, & Horowitz, 1987; Dann, 1995; Fan & Karnilowicz, 1997; Salili & Mak, 1988).

For example, Dann (1995) found that recently divorced women who were solely financially responsible for their families mentioned salary as important in defining success. A study that examined the psychological differences between traditionally successful women found that successful women who came from educationally and economically disadvantaged backgrounds had more locus of control than equally successful women who came from more advantaged backgrounds (Boardman et al., 1987). Other research found that "Australian girls defined success more in terms of happiness/self-actualisation than Chinese girls" (Fan & Karnilowicz, 1997, p. 596) and that a group of Virgin Island students associated success with being modern and attractive, which is significantly different from the Western definition of success (Steinkamp & Habteyes, 1985). The meaning of success can also be different according to an individual's personal goals (Salili & Mak, 1988).

It is time to broaden our scope of understanding of success to see how various women define success differently in their own way. Simon (1996) said that "[t]his redefinition of the term 'success' will need to be more inclusive of women's interests and hopefully will enable women (and others *who are different*) to survive and thrive without having to clone themselves

on the dominant group” [italics added] (p. 18). Women are “consciously creating their own definitions of what constitutes success” (Northcutt, 1991, p. 103) and even seem to “intentionally confront, reject, and create alternates for dominant meanings of success” (Fenwick, 2002, p. 167). Sometimes they talked of work “as a more fluid set of relations that defied ‘success’ binaries of inside/outside, up/down, and winner/loser” (p. 168). The theory of gender performance suggested by Butler might offer a useful basis for understanding success beyond the binaries of objective/subjective and men/women, thereby helping us understand individual women’s differing concepts of success from their own perspectives.

### *Gender as a Performative Act*

Since 1960’s, feminist theory has been critiqued for tending to reflect only the viewpoints of “white, middle-class women of North America and Western Europe” (L. J. Nicholson, 1990). Among the efforts to include various voices of women, standpoint feminism and postmodern feminism are influential in feminist theories today. Postmodernism seeks to distance itself from beliefs “concerning truths, knowledge, power, the self, and language that are often taken for granted within and serve as legitimation for contemporary Western culture” (Flax, 1990, p. 41). Thus, the postmodern critics of science avoid any unitary claims, “reflecting their fear that any generalizing theory necessarily represses or ignores contradictory evidence” (Donovan, 2001, p. 205). In the postmodern era, multiple truths and knowledge are accepted, and legitimation becomes “plural, local, and immanent” (Fraser & Nicholson, 1990, p. 23). Postmodernism is a claim that requires a justice of multiplicities rather than a justice of a single theory.

Feminists, like postmodernists, have revealed the political power of the academy and of knowledge claims that exclude women’s voices. Moreover, feminists need a theoretical basis for avoiding the tendency “to construct theory that generalizes from the experiences of Western,

white, middle-class women” (L. J. Nicholson, 1990, p. 5). Thus, the new epistemology of postmodernism contributes to feminist theory because it is nonuniversalist and accepts diverse claims from a variety of women. Fraser and Nicholson say (1990), “while some women share some common interests and face some common enemies, such commonalities are by no means universal” (p. 35). This is especially true when we think about the intersection of race, class, and sexuality. For example, women of color and lesbians are marginalized in this society and in the constitution of feminist theories. Bordo (1990) insists that “the agent of critical insight into the biases of gender theory were those excluded and marginalized: women of color, lesbians, and others who found their history and culture ignored in the prevailing discussions of gender” (p. 138).

Butler is one of the postmodern feminists who tries to subject postmodern theories to “a specifically feminist reformulation” (Butler, 1990, p. ix). Her theory on the performativity of gender has been at the forefront of feminist discussions since the publication of *Gender Trouble* in 1990. Although her perspective on gender is considered as queer theory (Alsop, Fitzsimons, & Lennon, 2002), her theory can be understood in a context beyond sexual practice. Butler (1990) says that “[i]t is important for me to concede, however, that the performance of gender subversion can indicate nothing about sexuality or sexual practice” (p. xiv). In the following sections, I will review details about her theory of gender performance.

### *Repeated Acts for Cultural Survival*

When Butler (2003) argues that gender identity is not real but performative, she means that gender identity consists of repeated actions for cultural survival. According to her, gender is “an identity tenuously constituted in time—an identity instituted through a stylized repetition of acts” (p. 413). She insists that “there is no original or primary gender” (Butler, 1997, p. 306) and

the association of natural sex with a gender is merely a cultural construction to maintain heterosexual hegemony. According to Butler, we are compelled to accept heterosexuality as original, true, and normal. However, she argues that there is “no ‘proper’ gender, a gender proper to one sex rather than another, which is in some sense that sex’s cultural property” (p. 306). Thus, gender is an imitation for which there is no original. It is a compulsory performance that we have to act out for survival in our given society.

Based on this concept of gender, in Butler’s terms, performativity is not a singular act but “a repetition and a ritual, which achieves its effects through its naturalization in the context of a body” (Butler, 1990, p. xv). Our everyday lives are repetitions of a given set of norms assumed to be appropriate to our gender. We are taught to follow these norms from birth so that their repetition is embodied in ourselves with or without consciousness. For example, I remember that when I was in elementary school, my male middle-aged teacher told the students that girls should always carry a handkerchief, a needle, and thread. He asserted that girls who give their handkerchiefs to their friends—especially boys—and who are able to fix clothes with a needle and thread are the most beautiful girls. The image of this girl seemed so fantastic and feminine, so I decided to carry out this performance with the hope of becoming a beautiful and perfect girl that boys would beg for a handkerchief. I borrowed my mother’s handkerchief and a needle and thread, hand-washed the handkerchief everyday, and ironed it every morning, folding it in a perfect shape until I found that these actions bothered me. Although I stopped carrying those things after I realized that I did not use them, I was trying to fit into the given norms of my proper gender through this performance. It was a performance consisting of repeated acts which I accepted as natural for some time. As Butler said, the performance was a “citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names” (Butler, 1993, p. 2).

Butler (1990) poses the question, “In what senses, then, is gender an act?” (p. 178). She argues that social actions require performance which is repeated, and the repetition is “a reenactment and reexperiencing of a set of meanings already socially established” (Butler, 2003, p. 421). Gender is an act because we partake in social norms and act out its meaning by enacting the performance with our bodies. Performing gender legitimizes the social meanings of the norms in a “mundane and ritualized form” (Butler, 1990, p. 178). Those acts and enactments are performative because “the essence of identity that they otherwise purport to express are fabrications manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means” (p. 173).

In what sense, then, is gender a performance for cultural survival? It is because a person would be punished if he/she did not enact his/her gender in an appropriate way. Gender is a compulsory performance because “acting out of line with heterosexual norms brings with it ostracism, punishment, and violence” (Butler, 1997, p. 309). It is a survival strategy in a culture where “those who fail to do their gender right are regularly punished” (Butler, 2003, p. 417). And it is this performance by which discrete and polar genders are produced and maintained. Butler uses the term strategy and connects its meaning to gender: “Because gender is a project which has cultural survival as its end, the term strategy better suggests the situation of duress under which gender performance always and variously occurs” (Butler, 1990, p. 177-178).

### *Success*

Just as Butler says that “to have gender means to have entered already into a heterosexual relationship of subordination” (Butler, 1990, p. xiii), blind acceptance of the male-defined term of success means acceptance of the subordinate status of women to men. Forcing women to uncritically accept masculine defined norms can be a form of violence. The women-centered

definition of success is an example of this type of violence. Butler argued that “both the ‘masculine’ and the ‘feminine,’ strictly speaking, do not exist: they do not belong to the realm of reality” (Butler, 1995, p. 142). If we accept her perspective on femininity and masculinity and assume that women’s success is defined in terms of femininity, the result can be a kind of violence against women. On the violence of the concept of gender, Butler (1990) says that “[i]t was difficult to bring this violence into view precisely because gender was so taken for granted at the same time that it was violently policed” (p. xix). As she described, both the uncritically examined male-defined concept of success and falsely imposed notion of women-centered success might be violent to women whose experiences and culture are excluded from the history of our everyday lives.

Women are consciously creating their own definitions of success and sometimes “intentionally confront, reject, and create alternates for dominant meanings of success” (Fenwick, 2002, p. 167). If gender is not tied to sex but is a performative act, “where ‘performative’ suggests a dramatic and contingent construction of meaning” (Butler, 1990, p. 177), gender has the potential to proliferate beyond the binary understanding of success. This study investigated and addressed how different women perform their own success and how they resist through their performative act.

### Women’s Career Development

Traditional career development theories have been critiqued for not adequately addressing the career development process for women. Research literature supports the notion that traditional theories’ description of career development is inconsistent with women’s experiences (Farmer & Associates, 1997; Fitzgerald et al., 1995; Schreiber, 1999; Wentling, 1998). Along with the recognition of women’s different career development patterns, there have

been efforts to theorize women's career development. However, as the field of career development has been dominated by psychological tradition, those theories focus on the individual's internal process. In this section I will review mainstream women's career development theories in the psychological tradition and some theories and concepts which go beyond the positivistic assumptions of psychology.

### *Women's Career Development Theories in the Psychological Tradition*

When women were expected to stay at home as homemakers, women who chose to work outside the home were considered "gender-deviant" and drew attention from scholars studying the antecedents and correlates of such gender-deviant behavior (Fitzgerald et al., 1995). As it became apparent that many women pursued paid careers as did men instead of doing unpaid housework for all their lives, researchers turned their attention to describing patterns. Farmer (2006) summarized the history of career development theories for women saying, "[t]heory related to women's career development evolved slowly during the 1950s and 1960s, then accelerated rapidly during the 1970s, and has continued to evolve during the past 30 years" (p. 17).

Donald Super suggested seven categories for describing women's life-career patterns: stable homemaking, conventional career, stable working, double-track career, interrupted career, unstable career, and multiple-trial career (Super, 1957). As a result of many empirical studies based on this conceptualization, twenty years after the original conceptualization, double-track careers and interrupted careers were replaced by multiple-role women and returning women (Fitzgerald et al., 1995). After Super's categorization, many theories and models used empirical studies on women's career development have been published. Psathas (1968) insisted that the understanding of women's career development should begin with the relationship between

occupational roles and gender roles, in particular, their orientation toward marriage and children. Critiques from women's perspectives of mainstream career development theories flourished during the 1970s and 1980s. Developmental theories, trait-factor theories, and social learning theories, theories that dominated research in career development, were approached from a critical perspective with supporting empirical studies on their limitations in explaining women's career development. Theories categorized as "gendered theoretical frameworks" which "incorporated gender and, in fact, placed it at their very center" (Fitzgerald et al., 1995, p. 85) appeared in the 1980s. Among those are Astin's sociopsychological model of career choice and work behavior, Gottfredson's theory of circumscription and compromise, Farmer's model of career motivation in women and men, Betz-Fitzgerald-Fassinger model of career-choice realism in high-ability women, Hackett and Betz's application of self-efficacy theory to women's career behavior, and some social cognitive theories (Fitzgerald et al., 1995).

Farmer's model of career motivation is the oft-cited classic in women's career development. Her book, *Diversity and Women's Career Development* (1997) has been cited by almost every researcher who has dealt with women's career development issues since 1997. Her theory on women's career development is based on a longitudinal study. Utilizing a social learning theory framework, Farmer's model mainly focuses on achievement motivation. Originally published in 1978 (Farmer, 1978, 1985), Farmer's model suggested a conceptual approach for understanding inhibited academic/career motivation in women. According to her model, variables consist of personal and environmental dimensions (Farmer, 1997). Personal variables include home-career conflict, sex role orientation, risk taking behavior, academic self-esteem, vicarious achievement motive, and fear of success. Environmental variables include family socialization, resources in the community/work, and discrimination in community/work.



The basic idea is that these personal and environmental variables interact with each other, shaping one's behaviors.

These concepts contributed to the development of women's career development theories by revealing many of the barriers and facilitating factors involved. These theories also provided a "valuable tool for critiquing mainstream psychology" (Wilkinson, 2001, p. 19) by focusing on various aspects related to women's career development such as unique characteristics of women's career development due to gender role socialization and workplace discrimination. However, these theories remain in the psychological tradition rooted in the positivist paradigm and thus are points to be critiqued from a post-positivist perspective.

### *Critiques on Positivist Career Development Theories*

Positivism assumes that there is a one world reality, the truth, that can be "seen, understood, and reduced to measurable laws" (Merriam & Simpson, 2000, p. 51). Verified knowledge in positivism is "what we experience through our senses (immediately, or by way of the instruments of science that extend the operation of our senses)" (Crotty, 1998, p. 25). Thus, positivist research in the social sciences usually employs quantitative methods to measure the objects and to get at the truth about the objects of a study. The women's career development theories described above are all in the psychological tradition, which is rooted in the positivist paradigm. According to Wilkinson (2001), "[f]eminist positivist empiricism is by far the most widely used theoretical perspective in the psychology of women, particularly in the United States" (p. 18). Although women's career development theories and models using "the standard techniques of positivist empiricism (e.g., random sampling, quantification of questionnaire data, statistical testing)" have contributed for "some of the 'classic' findings of feminist research" (p. 18), these theories have some limitations.

It is well known that research situated in positivism objectifies women and women's knowledge and identifies male-identified objectivity as a norm. A more detailed explanation of the assumptions of feminist epistemology and feminist qualitative research compared to positivist research using quantitative methods is discussed in chapter three of this paper. Based on the assumption that there is "the" truth out there to be observed and found, mainstream women's career development theories overlook the possibility that there are multiple truths rather than one and that these truths are changing and shifting according to one's positionality within a given socio-cultural environment. Lacking a holistic perspective, these psychological career development theories are interested in individuals rather than in the systems and structures of culture and society that lie behind an individual's career. Thus, they are theories that look for variables and linear relationships between the variables: that is, which variables affect which relationships. Trait-factor theories are good examples of conceptualizing career behavior in terms of "the fit between persons (e.g., personality traits) and their educational or work environments (e.g., reward structure)" (Fitzgerald et al., 1995, p. 81). Their basic assumption is that one can establish solid career development if one finds a proper match between one's own aptitude and various career possibilities. Another example is self-efficacy, considered one of the most important factors in facilitating women's career development (Farmer, 2006). By reducing complexities to self-efficacy, only individual's internal psychological attitudes are considered of primary importance in women's career motivation and achievement.

Another critique of mainstream women's career development theories is that they are mainly concerned with heterosexual married women who have a husband and children. For example, Fitzgerald (1995) clearly stated that "women's career development is *unique* because of the intertwining of work and family in their lives" (p. 68). "Home-career conflict" is one of

the variables in Farmer's (Farmer, 1997, p. 7) women's career motivation model. By assuming that all women have husbands and children and thus experience work-home conflict in their career development, these theories marginalize women who do not have a typical heterosexual family. This assumption is similar to that of cultural feminism which essentializes women by stating that all women share a common definition of femininity. Thus, it is relieving to find that "[t]heories are currently emerging that are more relevant for various subgroups of women who experience discrimination of various kinds and who have career development needs similar to the men in their subgroup but different from those of middle-class heterosexual White women" (Farmer, 2006, p. 17).

### *Alternative Career Development Theories*

These critiques of mainstream positivist women's career development theories consequently lead one to examine alternative career development theories. In the existing literature, there are no career development theories specific to women's experience that go beyond the positivist traditions, as the career development field is dominated by positivist psychology (Stead, 2004). Therefore, in this section, I will review theories and concepts outside positivist tradition which might be helpful in our understanding of the women in this study although these theories do not specifically address women. The theories I will focus on are contextual career development theory, cross-cultural career development theories, and the concept of planned happenstance.

#### *Contextual Career Development Theory*

The contextual career development theory suggested by Young and colleagues (Young, Valach, & Collin, 1996, 2002) is grounded in "social constructionism as opposed to positivism" (Isaacson & Brown, 2000, p. 50). This theory challenges traditional career development theories

which “break[s] phenomena into their component parts for purposes of understanding and analysis” by recognizing “the wholeness of an event and the interpenetration of its features” (Young et al., 1996, p. 477). It also rejects “a theory of truth based on the correspondence between mental representations and objective reality” (p.480) and focuses on individuals’ interpretation of their life events and how they construct narratives through context. A main concern in this theory is not on building universal theory based on causal propositions but on proving its validity in different contexts (Young et al., 2002).

Action is an important concept in this theory as it views career development as an action system that achieves social meaning through an interaction between individual intention and social context (Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2005). In this view, people construct their careers through action which is understood as “goal-directed, intentional behavior” (Young et al., 2002, p. 213) with social meaning. An element of action can be contextualized by seeing it as one of a series of contiguous behaviors. Although individual intentions and goals are recognized, people work together as a group to develop joint goals and joint actions. According to Young and Associates (1996), “[c]areer identity, values, interests, and behaviors are not shaped from the outside ‘in’; rather, they are constructed, perhaps largely through language, in conversation with others” (Young et al., 1996, p. 486). People make sense of action and context through their own interpretation and they construct narrative for interpretation. The narrative is understood as “not a reproduction of events but a construction that the teller thinks the other should know about for some reason” (Young et al., 2002, p. 219). In the construction of career narratives, people frequently use “continuity and causality as criteria for the judgment of adequacy” (Young et al., 1996, p. 491).

The role of emotion, gender, and culture in career development is important in contextual career theory. Emotion has not been adequately addressed in career theories despite its important role in people's lives (Young et al., 1996). Contextual career theory puts emotion in a central place. Positive emotions are vehicles for individual growth and social connection; thus, emotion is connected to "needs, goals, plans, and purposes" (Young et al., 2002, p. 222). In this theory, emotion is considered important in understanding career development within context because it serves to energize and motivate action, regulate and control actions and careers, and provide the key to narratives of careers.

Although an explanation of the role of gender and culture in a contextual understanding of career has not been addressed by many theorists, Young and his associates discuss its importance in their theory. Career is understood as a gendered construct which "is inextricably interwoven into the structure, functions, and social meaning of career" (Young et al., 2002, p. 225). Culture is considered important because the specifics of career are always tied to specific times and places and also because culture changes and provides different affordances and constraints for career.

This contextual understanding of career development is important in understanding women's career development because women's career development is itself contextual (Bierema, 1998). Women's career development is not simply a women's issue that can be reduced to individualism. It is a social issue which is contextualized by "[p]atriarchal segregation and discrimination, workforce diversity, and technology" (p. 97). It is an issue that should be understood integratively in its cultural and structural dimensions (Evetts, 2000) rather than split into fragmented components. Thus, contextual career theory based on social constructionism

helps us understand the complexity and flexibility of women's career development in contemporary society.

### *Culturally Relevant Career Theory*

Though outside mainstream career development theories, some researchers are trying to build culturally relevant career theories in the emergent field of cross-cultural career psychology. With an emphasis on the role of culture in one's career development, this literature insists on the importance of developing cultural career theories. It has been said that "cultural-contextual factors have a strong influence on individuals' career behaviors and outcomes" (Mau, 2004, p. 68) because culture provides "access to resources for some but also creates boundaries and limits resources to people inside and outside the culture" (Stead, 2004, p. 394). With the critique that existing career development theories are developed by and for mainstream white males, there have been efforts to pay attention to the importance of the role of culture in career development (Gross, 2004; Mau, 2004; Smulyan, 2004). The main theories in career development, such as Super's life-span development theory, have been criticized for disregarding the minorities who are culturally different from the mainstream; in response, they have been revised to consider the cultural influences on career development (Hardin, Leong, & Osipow, 2001).

Career theories in psychology actually considered culture and have incorporated it into the research. In a cross-national study, Mau (2004) found that Taiwanese college students perceived more career decision-making difficulties than did American college students. In a study of Latino students, Gross (2004) developed a career learning model for intersections of career and cultural identity. In terms of career maturity and cultural accommodation, a cross-cultural perspective was added to Super's career development theory (Leong & Serafica, 2001). Cultural relativity in the conceptualization of career maturity was explored with Asian American

and European American students (Hardin et al., 2001). A meta-analysis of research was conducted to investigate the relationship between culture and vocational choice variables, and it was concluded that there are differences among racial/ethnic groups in perceptions of career-related opportunities and barriers (Fouad & Byars-Winston, 2005).

However, culture in these theories is considered an independent variable which causes certain behavior and needs to be *controlled* to get “universal laws and theories that would be applicable for all peoples” (Stead, 2004, p. 390). Stead insists that “while some researchers and practitioners underscore the importance of cultural issues to better understand vocational behavior, such issues remain largely sidelined in the career literature” (p. 390). His suggestion is that we build culturally relevant career theories rooted in social constructionism in the field of career psychology: “Most perspectives on culture in career psychology seem to be rooted in positivistic ideologies and seldom look at how relationships between people define the culture. There are numerous cultures and sub-cultures that are marginalized” (p. 392).

This stance starts from understanding culture differently from the traditional theories that consider culture as authoritatively “passed on from one generation to another” (p. 392). Based on a social constructionist perspective, Stead (2004) suggests viewing culture as a “social system of shared symbols, meanings, perspectives, and social actions that are mutually negotiated by people in their relationship with others” (p. 392). As an example, he critiques the dichotomy of individualism/collectivism in attempts to understand culture, which is a dominant view in cross-cultural career development literature. He says that such dichotomies “tend to be simplistic and fail to account for the heterogeneous and constantly changing nature of cultures” because individualistic and collectivistic characteristics vary across cultures and are “not an either/or dichotomy but both/and depending on the historical time and the context” (p. 396). He suggest

that new insight in career development is to understand culture as being created discursively and to recognize the heterogeneity of culture.

Therefore, there is a developing need of “indigenous” (Stead, 2004, p. 399) theories in the career development area. Instead of accepting and applying the existing theories that were developed for European American populations to groups with different nationalities, we have to be careful about what happens when the cultural context changes and how existing theories are modified according to new cultures. This perspective on culture in career development is helpful in understanding Korean women’s career development as they have their own culturally specific influences related to career development. Emphasizing the cultural aspect of these women’s career development, this perspective can help to reveal how these women “create and are created by cultures in a complex matrix of interweaving relationships” (p. 403).

#### *Concept of Planned Happenstance*

The last concept I will explore in this section is the concept of planned happenstance suggested by Krumboltz. He is famous for his social learning theory in career decision making (Krumboltz & Henderson, 2001; L. K. Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1990, 1996). He modified Bandura’s social learning theory to focus on career decision making and career counseling. The core theme of his theory is that individuals make decisions related to their career based on their cumulative learning experiences that are affected by their environmental circumstances and their cognitive and emotional reactions to those learning experiences and environment (Krumboltz, 1979).

Based on the context of this theory, Krumboltz and several researchers developed a theory of planned happenstance. Planned happenstance theory may be considered as “an amendment to the learning theory of career counseling” (K. E. Mitchell, Levin, & Krumboltz,



1999, p. 115). Krumboltz (1998) says that Parson's trait-factor theory, which has been widely used in career counseling practice, "makes occupational choice such a rational and reasonable process, there is no room for chance or unplanned events" (p. 391). In most of career development theories, chance was not included or was included "only as a source of error" (p. 391). However, research suggests that individuals do not describe their career experiences as a succession of logical choices: instead, "a myriad of chance-situational events and unintentional encounters with people have had great impact on both career development and occupational choice" (Miller, 1983, p. 16). Bandura (1982) also noted the importance of chance, saying that "chance encounters play a prominent role in shaping the course of human lives" (p. 747). Unexpected chance plays an important role in everyone's career. No one can accurately predict the future. On any given day, "no one knows for sure what people will be met, who will call, or what letters or e-mail messages will arrive" (K. E. Mitchell et al., 1999, p. 120). Happenstance can be defined as "(a) a circumstance regarded as due to chance; (b) luck or fortune; (c) without plan or intent; (d) accidentally" (Miller, 1983, p. 118). Betsworth and Hansen also revealed the categories of happenstances which influence people's career. They include professional or personal connections, unexpected advancement, right place/right time, influences of marriage and family, encouragement of others, influence of previous work/volunteer experiences, military experiences, temporary positions becoming permanent, obstacles in original career path, influence of historical events, and unexpected exposure of interest area.

Krumboltz suggests the term planned happenstance. The words 'planned happenstance' have been intentionally united as an oxymoron (K. E. Mitchell et al., 1999). We must plan to generate and be receptive to chance opportunities. Planned happenstance theory should not be confused with magical thinking or reliance on fate. We should not merely meander through

experiences initiated by others while passively awaiting a ‘knock on the door.’ We need to learn to take action to generate and find opportunities (K. E. Mitchell et al., 1999). The reason we can generate and create happenstance is because “whether an event is chance or deliberate, planned or unplanned, depends on the view of each participant” (Krumboltz, 1998, p. 391). Actually, as Krumboltz (1998) insists, “[i]nfluential unplanned events are not uncommon; they are everyday occurrences. Serendipity is not serendipitous. Serendipity is ubiquitous” (p. 392).

There is an emphasis on the importance of action in generating chances. Serendipity requires “action on the part of the recipient—action to create favorable circumstances, action to recognize opportunities when they arise, and action to capitalize on unplanned events in a timely manner” (Krumboltz, 1998, p. 391). This theory suggests that we should question the general assumption that logical rational career planning is possible and desirable because “*the world is not necessarily a just place*; good grades and hard work are no guarantee of anything” (Miller, 1983, p. 19).

Rather than depending on social learning theory, the background of the concept of planned happenstance, I would rather adopt the concept as one tool for explaining Korean women’s career development. Although Krumboltz did not mention that this concept is especially applicable to women, the concept of planned happenstance captures the complexity and fluidity of careers in contemporary women’s lives, which are rapidly changing and thus hard to predict. For example, heterosexual women’s careers are influenced by marriage and family more than men’s, and no woman can plan whom she will marry before she meets her spouse. Farmer (2006) found that a research study on girls in 1966 stated that “many girls cannot realistically plan on a career until they know what kind of man they will marry, because a woman’s financial status and potential freedom to continue her education or career are partly

dependent on the attitudes of her husband toward educated working women” (p.18). Betsworth and Hansen (1996) found that women report situations related to spouses and children as critical incidents. Two types of situations were described: “the influence of their husbands’ careers on their own choices, including lifestyle, occupation, homemaking, and nonwork activities; and changes in their marital relationships that altered their career paths, such as the illness or death of a husband or divorce” (p. 97). Bandura (1982) also wrote about the fortuitous events that brought about his meetings with his wife, saying that “initial chance encounters often play in the formation of partnerships of marriage” (p.748). Also, an empirical investigation found similar results in a study of women (E. N. Williams et al., 1998). Thus, happenstance theory can include and explain the unexpected events that shape women’s career development such as career interruptions and work and family conflict.

However, it should not be overlooked that this theory needs to be articulated with consideration for one’s positionality. The lack of perspective in considering positionality is especially revealed in the explanation of actions to generate chances. That we have to direct our efforts to create these chances is an important concept in planned happenstance theory, which gives meaning to the word *planned*. Mitchell et al. (1999) suggest the skills to generate chances are curiosity, persistence, flexibility, optimism, and risk taking. However, there might be obstacles around one’s situation when one tries to generate happenstance. Here, this theory goes back to psychology which “cannot foretell the occurrence of fortuitous encounters, however sophisticated its knowledge of human behavior becomes” (Bandura, 1982, p. 750). The broader social and cultural context that prevents women in various situations from developing the skills and generating positive happenstances for their career should be addressed and integrated into planned happenstance theory when examining Korean women’s career development.

### *Summary: Women's Career Development*

In this section, I reviewed mainstream women's career development theories in the positivist psychological tradition. Critiques of these theories were provided and alternative theories and concepts beyond positivism were reviewed; these alternative theories and concepts include contextual career theory, culturally relevant career theory, and the concept of planned happenstance. The three are thought to be helpful in understanding Korean women's career development.

### *Women's Learning*

In this section, I will review how women's learning has been dealt with in an adult learning context. There are already feminist perspective critiques of mainstream adult learning theories developed by and for white males. First, I will review some feminist critiques of mainstream adult learning theories. Then, I will examine how issues related to women's learning have been addressed in feminist pedagogy. Finally, I will present a summary of what has been written about women's ways of knowing.

### *Feminist Perspectives on Adult Learning*

Andragogy is one of the most important and widely used concepts in adult learning literature. Suggested and well-conceptualized by Knowles (1984) and used among European adult educators, the term andragogy is defined as "the art and science of helping adults learn" (p. 6). Although Knowles (1970) first conceptualized andragogy in opposition to pedagogy— andragogy for adults, pedagogy for children, he later viewed andragogy and pedagogy as not mutually exclusive (Knowles, 1970, 1980). The basic assumptions of andragogy include the followings: (1) the learner is self-directing; (2) adults enter into an educational activity with both a greater volume and a different quality of experience from youth; (3) adults become ready to

learn when they experience a need to know or do something in order to perform more effectively in some aspect of their lives; (4) adults enter an educational activity with a life-centered, task-centered, or problem-centered orientation to learning and; (5) adults have internal motivation to learn—self-esteem, recognition, self-actualization, and other affective factors (Knowles, 1984).

While this concept of andragogy has been accepted and widely used by adult educators and researchers, there has also been debate on and critique of this concept. One important critique pointed out that “in its slavish focus on the individual learner, the sociohistorical context in which learning takes place is virtually ignored” (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999, p. 275). It has been said that Knowles relied too much on humanistic psychology and that he viewed the individual learner as “one who is autonomous, free, and growth oriented” (p. 275). There is little awareness that a person is influenced and constructed by social, historical, and cultural context of the time and place. Other than this example, there is also a critique of andragogy from a feminist perspective.

Sheared (1996) critiqued the concept of andragogy by saying that it fails to acknowledge the lived experience of learners “grounded in race, class, gender, and other factors that contribute to their understanding of the process for producing knowledge” (p. 7). She takes the perspective of Africentric feminists focusing on the intersection of race, class, and gender in regard to learning. According to Sheared, the andragogical perspective acknowledges a universal truth while “the Africentric feminists reframe[s] and reexamine[s] that truth in relation to its socio-historical, political, and economical antecedents” (p. 8). She continues by noting that while andragogy assumes that the teacher is in control and maintains control over what knowledge is presented and understood, “knowledge is subjective and that teaching practices are grounded in prescriptive and predetermined normatives” (p. 7). Reflecting the aesthetic essence of African art,

music, dance, and language, she suggests the metaphor of women's learning as "polyrhythm" (p. 5), reflecting the intersecting and interwoven points of one's multiple realities as she moves in multiple directions.

There is additional research focusing on multiple identity and positionality in adult learning. Those studies emphasize the intersection of race, gender, class, and other positionalities in adult learning. Starting from the point that all women are not the same but women differ because of race, class, sexual preference, and other characteristics, feminist perspectives "challenge the concept of single, unitary identities, and instead point to the significance of multiple identities shaping a women's self-concept" (Flannery & Hayes, 2001, p. 32). One's positionality also has importance in the adult education classroom as it is "a duplication of the existing societal relations of power replete with hierarchies and privileges conferred along lines of gender, race, class, sexual orientation and other status markers" (Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 1998, p. 398). Flannery and Hayes (2001) critiqued the mainstream adult learning literature by pointing out "the lack of diversity within the adult learning literature, wherein one-dimensional and static generalizations about adult learners are pervasive" (p. 34). From a poststructuralist feminist perspective, Tisdell (2001) states that we should be aware that the "socially constructed nature of our identity around structural systems of power and privilege" and that "our identity is *constantly shifting*, particularly around our understanding of our 'positionality'—our consciousness of our race, gender, class, and so on" (p. 275).

Another feminist perspective on adult learning is related to embodied learning. Embodied knowing or somatic knowing is experiential knowing that "involves sense, precept, and mind/body action and reaction" (Matthews, 1998, para 5). This new concept of learning emerges from critiques asserting that existing traditional adult learning theories focus only on the rational

aspect of learning and thus distance our bodies and emotions from learning. Western culture has been dominated by “the separation of cognitive knowledge from embodied knowledge and the distrust and denigration of bodily knowing” (Kerka, 2002, para 1). Being aware of this cultural assumption, adult educators recently began to be conscious of the body as a source of knowledge and thus acknowledged a connection between the body and learning (Clark, 2001). In a study that examined how bodily experiences are connected to university students’ learning, McClelland and his colleagues (2002) concluded that “[t]he lived body is more than the body alone; it connotes the integration of the physical body, mind, consciousness, and how we are in the world” (p. 4).

The importance of women’s bodies in women’s lives has been the “object of a proliferation of feminist theorizing” over the last two decades (Frost, 2001, p. 12). Bordo (1993) insists that “what remains the constant element throughout historical variation is the construction of body as something apart from the true self (whether conceived as soul, mind, spirit, will, creativity, freedom...) and as undermining the best efforts of that self” (p. 5). Whether radical, liberal, cultural or postmodern, most agree that the body is frequently the arena where gendered inequities, among other constructions, are played out (Chapman, 1998, para 14). In conjunction with this analysis on women’s bodies, feminist efforts to integrate the understanding of women’s bodies into an embodied learning process have been presented in adult education literature. Scott and Derry (2005) explain how they incorporated experiential embodied learning experiences into their curriculum and thus increased the awareness of female students of objectification of their bodies. Gustafson (1999) describes her experience as a student in a feminist classroom where embodied experience helped her construct knowledge, insisting that “[e]mbodied learning contests the primacy of andocentric, Eurocentric, institutionalized knowledges as a way of

knowing our bodies, ourselves, and our world” (p. 250). Based on a feminist epistemology, she points out that “the language, grammar, references, and concepts that constitute academic knowledges exclude embodied knowledge and the knowledges of women who experience the world from a different standpoint” (p. 253).

### *Feminist Pedagogy*

Along with critiques of male-centered adult learning theories, feminist pedagogy emerged as a form of understanding women’s learning and teaching from a perspective different than andragogy (Brickhouse, 2001). Feminist pedagogy is based on a larger framework: feminist epistemology. Feminist epistemology posits the struggles of women to have their own legitimate understanding of the world against the knowledge of traditional philosophy that has consistently undermined women’s claims to know (Alcoff & Potter, 1993). It is based on the belief that knowledge is socially constructed and situated and that women can be the subjects and agents of knowledge (Harding, 1991). A more detailed explanation of feminist epistemology is presented in chapter three.

Feminist pedagogy has been influenced by many sources other than feminist epistemology; they include “the consciousness-raising practices derived from the women’s movement, the progressive tradition in American education created by John Dewey, and the more general forms of ‘liberatory teaching’ espoused by Paulo Freire and others” (Maher & Tetreault, 1994, p. 3). However, feminist pedagogy is unique because it pays attention to the particular needs of women and because it is grounded in feminist theory as the basis for its multidimensional and positional view of the construction of knowledge. Feminist pedagogy has two basic assumptions:



(1) what is taken to be universal, value-free truths is actually situated knowledge, that is, knowledge embedded in cultural values, including gendered ones and (2) the construction of alternatives to the conventional dualisms of objectivity/subjectivity, mind/body, masculine/feminine are part of what is necessary to create a science that is truly by and for everyone (Brickhouse, 2001, p. 284).

Critiquing the current notion of theory building that relies on “logical/analytical modes of thought, ‘empirical’ data, and the values and assumptions of white, middle-class male scholars” (Flannery & Hayes, 2001, p. 37), feminist pedagogy urges adult educators to place value on “the kind of knowing that is based in experience, intuition, connection, and embodiment” (p. 37) which is disregarded in traditional theory building. The term ‘pedagogy’ as used in feminist pedagogy is not simply about teaching techniques but rather about the whole process of knowledge construction, in the classroom as elsewhere (Maher & Tetreault, 1994). Feminist pedagogy challenges “all aspects of adult learning and participation theory that treat[s] women learners in particular as passive victims of social forces” (Flannery & Hayes, 2001, p. 39).

It begins with the recognition of female invisibility in college textbooks in various fields where “students may still learn about a world of male accomplishment and female invisibility” (Sadker & Sadker, 1994, p. 175). Its goal is teaching through feminist discourse by “discussion aimed at understanding and resisting women’s oppression” (Fisher, 2001, p. 3). hooks (2003) suggests “[t]eaching and learning in the directions of justice, peace, and love, of creating and maintaining academic and or intellectual community” (p. 21-22). In this way, it consciously relates “localized systems of gender relations” to the “larger societal structures of patriarchy” (Holland & Eisenhart, 1990, p. 227). In addition, feminist pedagogy agrees that there is “no generic feminist pedagogy” but one “informed and honed by our positionalities” that takes into

account our cultural uniqueness (Johnson-Bailey & Lee, 2005, p. 114). Feminist pedagogy makes it possible to conduct research on women's learning differently. For example, the meaning of gossip in women's learning has been re-illuminated (Leach, 2000) and the homeplace has been defined as an important place of women's lifelong learning (Gouthro, 2005). More importantly, Maher and Tetreault (1994) provide a detailed explanation and new focus on four themes in women's learning—mastery, voice, authority, and positionality that contributed to a more inclusive understanding of women's learning. In the following, I will present these four themes considered important in feminist pedagogical literature.

Mastery in an educational context has traditionally meant the “rational comprehension of ideas on the teacher's and expert's terms” (Maher & Tetreault, 1994, p. 17). In this conventional context, pedagogy signifies teaching methods that will “transmit the *content* of knowledge” (p. 57). However, in feminist classrooms committed to feminist reconstruction of knowledge, mastery has come to mean the social construction of knowledge on students' own terms as well as in concert with others. In this context, pedagogy means “the entire process of creating knowledge, involving the innumerable ways in which students, teachers, and academic disciplines interact and redefine each other in the classroom, the educational institution, and the larger society” (p. 57). Students are encouraged to ask and answer their own questions rather than to passively accept knowledge of the subject matter transmitted from one expert. Through this re-defining of mastery in feminist classrooms, students become aware that knowledge can be produced by all groups in society, “including students, rather than solely by the academic disciplines, experts in a field, or teachers” and that “all knowledge, including her own, is partial, contextual, and diverse” (p. 57).

The concept of voice as presented in Maher and Tetreault (Maher & Tetreault) is a process of finding one's own identity by relating one's experiences to theory, understanding the larger context and structure, raising her voice so that the others can hear what she thinks, and engaging in class discussions and the other process/activities in class. Feminist scholars have been aware that women learn to internalize their subordination to male standards by silence. Sadker and Sadker (1994) found that "men are twice as likely to monopolize class discussions, and women are twice as likely to be silent" and thus they insists that "[w]omen's silence is loudest at college, with twice as many females voiceless" (p. 170). Maher and Tetreault (1994) learned from numerous stories about females in their college years that many female students "do indeed disappear and remain silent in the college classroom" (p.92). Thus, the traditional classroom has a "chilly classroom climate" (Sadker & Sadker, 1994, p. 171) that silently robs women of knowledge and self-esteem and threatens women's capacity to develop a sturdy and coherent voice. This deprivation of women's voices extends to the workplace setting beyond college classroom as men still "dominate workplace conversations just as they controlled classroom discussion" (p. 195). The more men there are at a meeting, the more uncertain and powerless the women become. At work, they have mastered the fine art of the muted voice. This is not surprising when one thinks that "it is a lesson they have studied for twelve, sixteen, or more years at school" (p. 195).

Thus, feminist teachers try to help female students find their own voices. They are aware that the "classroom can also be a place in which previously silent students are encouraged to express the strong identities they often suppress in a culture where they feel alienated" (Maher & Tetreault, 1994, p. 104). As a strategy to engage silent students in conversation, they monitor classroom discussions closely "by encouraging silent members to voice (sometimes through

writing) and by monitoring and possibly censoring class members who monopolize discussions” (Johnson-Bailey & Lee, 2005, p. 119). Feminist teachers try to make change based on the belief that women will be heard in the boardroom and in the workplace “[o]nly when their silence is broken in the classroom” (Sadker & Sadker, 1994, p. 196).

Feminist pedagogy recognizes that the classroom is not a vacuum and neutral place but a place where deep societal inequalities are reflected and power relations are accorded and exercised (Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 1998; Maher & Tetreault, 1994) and where individuals are unaware of them. Traditionally, professional authority comes from a superior knowledge of the academic discipline. It is “lodged in the hierarchical relationship of expert to teacher to student, and enforced institutionally by the power and duty to assign grades” (Maher & Tetreault, 1994, p. 127). However, authority in a feminist classroom is different from traditional authority. It is shared with students so that it does not reinforce patriarchal relations that have made them passive and deprived them of the authority in other areas of their lives. Students and teachers together participate in a mutual learning process where they learn from each other’s uncertainties “rather than being silenced by distant authority figures with the right answer” (p. 137), and they share authority by mutual consent.

Although positionality is a separate theme among the four themes in feminist pedagogy, it comes into play in the other three—mastery, voice, and authority. As a classroom is not an “isolated laboratory that can be analyzed for its pedagogy or its treatment of the ‘Other,’ but rather a place embedded in a web of social relations” (Maher & Tetreault, 1994, p. 177), the different aspects of student’s identities relate to the process of mastery of knowledge, voice, and authority in the classroom. The influence of gender, race, class, culture, and our other positionalities are linked to “the development of voice” (p. 97) as “students could see themselves

both reflected by and in contrast to each other” in classrooms (p. 101). Positionality sometimes makes changes in the presented meaning of sharing authority in feminist classroom. Johnson-Bailey and Lee (2005) insist that, as women of color teachers, it is essential to first claim the power and authority in the class instead of sharing the limited power and authority available to them. A different meaning of authority is suggested by claiming it:

Taking the active role of authority could be educational and inspirational for students who rarely see women of color assume the roles of experts or leaders in public arenas.

The ultimate goal of claiming our authority is to use it to address the racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression that permeates the classroom. (p. 120)

Finally, feminist pedagogy is characterized by ‘embodied reflexivity,’ “a self-conscious, critical, and intense process of gazing inward and outward that results in questioning assumptions, identifying problems, and organizing for change” (Gustafson, 1999, p. 249).

### *Women’s Ways of Knowing*

A remarkable work on women’s learning is the work of Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule (1986), *Women’s Ways of Knowing*. In a time when the commonly accepted stereotype of women’s thinking as emotional, intuitive, and personalized was pervasive, the authors conducted a large scale study by interviewing 135 women to explore women’s “experience and problems as learners and knowers as well as to review their histories for changing concept of the self and relationships with others” (p. 11). This study is situated in psychology as it is based on the work of Gilligan on women’s moral development. As a result of this study, the authors found that there are five major categories of women’s knowing: silence, received knowledge, subjective knowledge, procedural knowledge, and constructed knowledge. The authors recognize,

(1) that these five ways of knowing are not necessarily fixed, exhaustive, or universal categories, (2) that they are abstract or ‘pure’ categories that cannot adequately capture the complexities and uniqueness of an individual woman’s thought and life, (3) that similar categories can be found in men’s thinking, and (4) that other people might organize their observations differently. (p. 15)

In the silence mode, women experience themselves as mindless and voiceless and subject to the whims of external authority. Women blindly obey authorities and have a very difficult time speaking for themselves. The way of knowing is limited to the present, the actual, the concrete, and the specific, and to actual behaviors. In the received knowledge mode, women conceive of themselves as capable of receiving, even reproducing, knowledge from the all-knowing external authorities but not capable of creating knowledge on their own. Women in this mode of knowing equate receiving, retaining, and returning the words of authorities with learning. In subjective knowledge mode, truth and knowledge are conceived of as personal, private, and subjectively known or intuited. A sense of voice arises, and experience becomes a valuable source of knowledge. In procedural knowledge mode, women are invested in learning and apply objective procedures for obtaining and communicating knowledge. Knowing requires careful observation and analysis and knowledge is perceived as a process. In constructed knowledge, women view all knowledge as contextual, experience themselves as creators of knowledge, and value both subjective and objective strategies for knowing. Women develop a narrative sense of self and a high tolerance for internal contradiction and ambiguity (Belenky et al., 1986).

This ‘women’s ways of knowing’ has been popularly recognized and has contributed to adult learning literature by acknowledging the “previously invisible yet significant informal

learning that takes place in the traditionally female activities of motherhood and household management” (Hayes, 2001, p. 35). However, feminist researchers critique the perspective as having led to an overgeneralization of women. As it is based on a psychological model, it rarely addresses the larger structure of our society other than by addressing individuals’ personal learning styles (Tisdell, 1998). In addition, a further critique is that women’s ways of knowing focuses more on “the needs of white middle-class women” (p. 141) because it pays no substantive attention to race, ethnicity, class, culture, locality, and other factors (Hayes, 2001; Tisdell, 1998). Ten years after the publication of *Women’s Ways of Knowing*, the authors published revised and expanded stories on the same topic (Goldberger, Tarule, Clinchy, & Belenky, 1996) as a reaction to the numerous critiques. Their work, *Knowledge, Difference, and Power*, explains applications of the ideas of women’s ways of knowing in different disciplines, expanding on the women’s ways of knowing theory, and explores that the roles power, positionality, and culture play in knowledge construction and strategies for knowing. Despite all the critiques of this conceptualization of women’s ways of knowing, it is one of the most significant and oft-cited classics in women’s learning literature.

Along with the multicultural critique of women’s ways of knowing, feminist scholars still insist on a need for addressing diversity among women. Categorizing feminist pedagogy as psychological, structural, and poststructural models, Tisdell (1998) insists that “[w]hile there is increasing discussion of women as learners, there is a tendency to consider ‘generic women’ even here, with limited consideration of race, class, or sexual orientation differences among women, and virtually no consideration of these positionality factors of the instructor” (p.140). English (2006) also asserts that “[a]lthough there has been substantial critique of stereotypic/humanistic readings of women’s learning, the stereotypes linger, and the ways in

which women's learning is approached have been largely framed by gendered and stereotyped ways of knowing" (p. 88). She critiques the understanding of women's learning in the area of adult education by saying that:

This third wave moves feminism out of individualized and psychologized preoccupations such as self-development, personal growth, and women's liberation and allows us to honor the female student who likes studying independently and attending lectures. It allows us to value the informal learning that is central to women's learning in feminist, nonprofit organizations. Unfortunately, adult education's understanding of women's learning has not always kept pace with these trends in feminist studies. (p. 88)

Thus, feminist adult educators always need to reflect on whether our research essentializes and universalizes women and reinforces a stereotypical understanding of women's learning.

#### *Summary: Women's Learning*

In this section, I reviewed literature related to women's learning. Critiques on andragogy from feminist perspectives were reviewed and one of the alternative learning theories, embodied learning, was briefly reviewed. Feminist pedagogy focusing on mastery, voice, positionality, and authority was also presented because it is crucial to understand how women learn in their everyday lives as well as classroom settings. Finally, the five categories of women's ways of knowing were reviewed along with critiques and direction for recognizing diversity among women.

#### **Korean Working Women**

A brief overview on the historical and cultural context of Korean working women will be presented in this section to help understand Korean women's lives. As Korean women are not a



homogenous group but differ according to their socioeconomic status, educational level, age, family background, and other life experiences, it might be impossible to explore the differences in this short paper. Rather than focusing on the differences, a broader historical and cultural context of Korean women will be presented as a starting point to understanding Korean women.

### *Korean Culture and History*

Korea is a small peninsula country located on the north-east side of Asia. It has been divided into North and South Korea since 1945 after liberation from Japanese occupation and the ensuing Korean War. Korea had maintained a long history as an independent unified country for more than a thousand years. Korean people are racially homogenous and use one language. As Korea has its own unique history and cultural heritage from Confucianism, it “has to be understood as different from Western” countries (Won & Pascall, 2004, p. 271).

### *Historical Overview*

The history of Korea can be traced back half a million years to when people first lived on the peninsula. In 2,333 B.C., *Gojoseon*, the oldest Korean kingdom of Korea, was founded by *Dan-gun*. *Dan-gun* and his descendants reigned in *Gojoseon*, the ‘land of morning calm,’ for more than a millennium. *Gojoseon* was defeated by the Chinese kingdom of Han in 108 B.C., and *Han* established four administrations in the northern part of the peninsula. Many people of *Gojoseon* moved into the southern part of the peninsula. The people left in the north later established *Goguryu* and defeated the four Chinese administrations. Those in the south established *Baekje* and *Shilla*. These three kingdoms lasted until 676 when *Shilla* defeated the other two and unified the country. During this period, Buddhism and Confucianism were introduced via China. The *Shilla* kingdom was replaced by a new dynasty, *Goryeo*, and Buddhism became the official religion and the ruling ideology of the nation (Ahn, 2003). After that, in 1392,

*Joseon* dynasty replaced *Goryeo* and lasted until 1910 when Korea became a Japanese colony. The Confucian scholar-officials in *Joseon* looked on the *Goryeo* past with scorn and praised the Confucian precepts for their reformatory power. They propagated the kind of literature they thought would best describe Confucian morality and provide practical advice about how to emulate it (Ko, Haboush, & Piggott, 2003). Confucianism was adopted “not merely as a moral principle but as an ideological basis for the political, social and economic formation of the society” (Y. Kim, 2005, p. 28).

During the Japanese occupation, it was forbidden to teach Korean in schools and to use Korean in daily life. Japan exploited Korean industry, killed many people who were fighting for the country’s independence, and harshly suppressed the freedom of the people in their everyday lives. When Japan was defeated at the end of the Second World War, Korea was freed from occupation after thirty five years of colonial rule, in 1945. With the defeat of Japan, allied forces occupied the Korean peninsula as Japan retreated. The southern part of the Korean peninsula was occupied by the United States, while the north was occupied by the old Soviet Union (S. O. Lee, 2000). Then, the Korean War began in 1950; this was a civil war between the south and the north part of Korea divided by Western countries’ ideologies (Hanguksaheoisahakheoi [Korean Social History Research Association], 1997). Since this war, the divide between South and North Korea has solidified.

After the Korean War, South Korea underwent rapid economic growth at an annual rate of 9.2 percent. The GNP increased from \$87 in 1962 to \$1,503 in 1980. Foreign countries called this economic development a “Han-river’s miracle” and Korea was named one of the four dragons in Asia. Since then, it appears that the Korean economy has steadily expanded increased. However, in 1997, Korea faced a major economic crisis, which necessitated a relief loan from

the IMF (International Monetary Fund). The crisis was caused by international as well as intra-national problems, which were part of the side effects of rapid economic development. At that time, many people lost their jobs. Now, the crisis has been overcome to a certain degree.

### *Women's Status through History*

Korean women's socio-cultural status can be understood in this larger context of Korean history. In the period of the three kingdoms, it seems that women and men had a more equal relationship than in the following dynasties. Although evidence of patriarchy was still found, women's power was relatively strong in this period. There were three queens in the *Shilla* kingdom, an event which did not occur in the other dynasties (K. J. Lee, 2001). Following the three kingdoms and the *Shilla* kingdom, the *Goryeo* dynasty still allowed women to "enjoy a great deal of social and economic freedom" (Ko et al., 2003, p. 143). Women possessed a high degree of liberty in decision making and economic power. Their bond with their brothers often lasted for a lifetime, while an incompatible husband could be easily deserted, making divorce an easy affair without negative social or economic consequences (Deuchler, 2003).

The next dynasty was *Joseon*, the dynasty having the most influence on today's society. As reviewed above, Confucianism was introduced at the end of the *Goryeo* dynasty and became the official religion and philosophy of the *Joseon* dynasty, which had a profound impact on women (Ko et al., 2003). *Joseon* dynasty is even called the "dark ages for women" because "[f]ewer societies have had more rigid restrictions on women's social positions than the Choson [*Joseon*] Dynasty driven by Confucian male politics for five centuries" (Rowe & Kim, 1997, para 6). There are certain valuable attributes in Confucianism such as respect between people and cultivating our minds and bodies. It certainly provides valuable wisdom about human development and morals that we should bear in mind. However, it left a negative legacy in

regard to women. Confucian *Joseon* society was a “family-oriented, patriarchal society which virtually existed to satisfy men’s need alone” (Ro, 1998, p. 28). Women were treated as mere tools to propagating the family bloodline and as subordinate housekeepers (M. Kim, 2004, p. 29). The relationship between men and women was “equivalent to that between heaven and earth” (Y. K. Kim, 2005, p. 135).

The Confucian regulations and restrictions for women can be found in the literature used for educating women in those times. One of the earliest pieces of Korean literature exclusively directed at women was the *Instructions for Women (Naehoon)*, which was “popular reading throughout the Choson [*Joseon*] dynasty and underwent several printings” (Ko et al., 2003, p. 148). It was compiled by the mother of King Songjong, Queen Consort Sohey, Lady Han, in 1475. She excerpted “important passages” from several Chinese Confucian works as she was “worried about female ignorance and the lack of appropriate instructional materials” (p. 147).

It [*Naehoon*] is a collection of stories that depict the dutiful life of the young girl growing up in her natal home and the supportive and devoted role of the married woman in her husband’s family. Quoting celebrated precedents from history, the book highlighted how human impulses and emotions could be transformed into disciplined disposition of character sustaining behavior appropriate to Confucian social values. (p.148)

Characterizing the power relation between men and women as similar to that of heaven and earth was repeatedly stated in *Naehoon* so that women “came to believe that it was of benefit to themselves to serve the husbands well” (Ro, 1998, p. 38). The *Three Kinds of Morals for Women, Sam-jong-ji-do* (三從之道), is also quoted in *Naehoon* as the words of Confucius; it directed women to submit completely to men and designated women’s domain as strictly within the house:

Confucius said that women should be humble and modest. Since they do not have any wisdom of their own, they should follow three rules: *before they marry, they should obey their father; after they are married they should obey their husband; and if the husbands are dead, they should listen to their sons*. Similarly, women should spend their lives on the premises and should not attend funerals even within the distance of 40 kilometers. They should not make decisions, nor do anything else on their own. [italics added] (Ro, 1998, p. 32)

This implies that women can be recognized and defined as social beings only when they are in a subordinate relationship with men. This relationship was based on strictly divided gender roles. For example, a housewife was called “a mistress” and a husband was called “a master.” According to the Confucian instructions for women, married women devoted themselves to “winebrewing, cooking and clothmaking and not to political affairs” (Ro, 1998, p. 28). No matter how talented and wise women might have been, they were not allowed to interfere in public matters and were taught to stay inside the house to prepare every meal. Also, women were expected to be devoted to their parents-in-law. Confucian morality demanded that a woman transfer filial piety from her own parents to her husband’s parents—“a transaction that more than anything else tested her emotional stability” and “the most dramatic action dictated by an oppressive Confucian system that severed a woman from her natal bonds and forced her to give priority to an *untested human relationship* [italics added]” (Ko et al., 2003, p. 153). Ultimately, a woman’s worth was judged according to her ability “to avoid friction and conflict within the family, to create harmony in the larger domestic realm, and thus to contribute to an ordered world” (p. 165).

At the end of the *Joseon* dynasty, a new philosophy called *Sil-hak* (實學), practical science, appeared. It introduced the necessity of improving women's social status and establishing equality between women and men (Park, 2001). Since then, many women have come to think about their status and to have new thoughts about it. More women have become educated, and an increasing number of women have become gender-conscious. Under the control of Japan, Western culture and values were introduced to Korea because Japan had earlier accepted Western culture. Educational institutes for women were established and some gender-conscious women participated in the independence movement of Korea; at this time, the first woman doctor appeared in Korea. After liberation from Japanese occupation, with rapid industrialization and westernization, women began to participate in the workforce with men, although many women still remained in their domestic place at home (Kang & Shin, 2000).

#### *Korean Working Women*

Beginning in the late 1960s, South Korea shifted from a primarily agrarian economy to an industrializing urban society. In contrast to early European industrialization, the process of industrialization in South Korea has been intense and rapid for only three decades, basing this expansion on export-oriented industries that depend on low wage labor (Y. Kim, 2005). This “rush-to-industrialization” (p. 32) necessitated the participation of a greater number of workers, including those who were not traditionally considered as workers—women. Along with economic development, Korea's rapid social and political transition has changed the family structure, weakened the traditional value system, and broadened employment practices, with each of these shifts providing women with new opportunities (Hampson, 2000). At the beginning of industrialization, women were active participants in economic activities “with a large proportion of them working in farms, factories, and family-owned businesses” (Kim-Choe, 2006,

p. 293). South Korea is now recognized as “one of the several countries in East Asia to show increases in women’s labor force participation during a period of extremely rapid industrialization” (Brinton & Choi, 2006, p. 310).

However, Korean women’s choices are still constrained by “the key axioms of Confucian thought: filial piety, family loyalty, [and] conformity to group norms” (Hampson, 2000, p. 171). This ideology continues to manifest itself in many ways in contemporary South Korea (Kim, 1996). As Ro (1998) states, “just as new knowledge cannot be utilized unless people are willing, the old attitudes and ‘codes of behaviour’ already socialized in early childhood, usually contest with the new attitudes and ideas, and require a mental transition” (p. 44). As Korean people have maintained Confucian values for a long time, they have difficulty with “modern conceptual changes about the public role of women [that have occurred] only recently and within a very compressed period of time” (Pae & Lakes, 2004, p. 87). On closer examination of the conflicts faced by women in an industrialized Korean society, we can conclude that “it is not traditional values but the women’s situation that was changed” (Ro, 1998, p. 45) as traditional gender-role practices are still pervasive in the Korean labor structure and organizational culture.

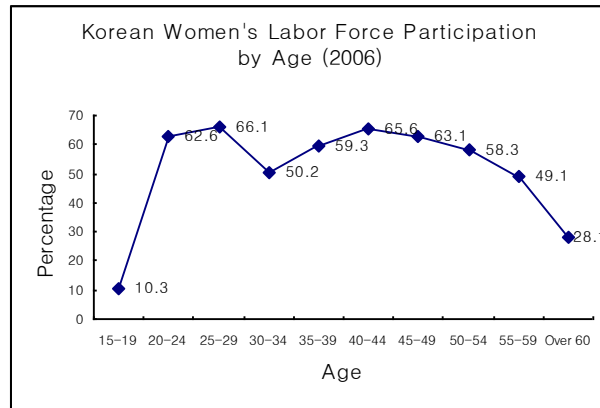
There have been certain official improvements in women’s legal status. Equal opportunity legislation was introduced in 1987 and has since been reformed several times “for the purpose of protecting working mothers and enhancing the quality of both work and family life” (Sung, 2003, p. 349). For example, these laws include one year’s maternity leave for childrearing with subsidies and nurseries provided in the workplace. With this legislation, the traditional practice of forcing women to resign their jobs after marriage was officially ended. Also, the Korean government established the Department of Gender Equality in 2000 “to enable women to participate in making government policy” (p. 346).

However, there is a gap between the ideal legislation and the reality. In regard to maternity leave, an employee needs to be a full-time worker in order to be eligible for maternity leave whereas there is a high proportion of women with only part-time or temporary jobs; 61.9% of employed Korean women have part-time or temporary employment (Korean National Statistical Office, 2006b). Also, the current childcare law *encourages* employers to establish nurseries in the workplace when employers have more than 300 female workers. This is also problematic because this policy is scarcely effective for women working in small firms (less than 300 women workers) and even for large firms, it is not compulsory but *recommended* that they build nurseries for working mothers (Sung, 2003). Furthermore, the fundamental problem with childcare for women is “the traditional perception that childcare is the responsibility of the mother with her personal touch” (Y. Kim, 2005, p. 39). In this respect, the legislation merely reinforces the traditional notion that “responsibility for childcare still rests primarily with women (mothers)” (Sung, 2003, p. 351).

The work and family balance is one of the difficulties reported by working women, especially those with children. According to a national survey, Korean women feel that the barriers to their finding a job are (1) the burden of child rearing; (2) social prejudice and discriminated systems and customs; (3) unequal working conditions (Korean National Statistical Office, 2004). Women who left their jobs after marriage reported their reasons for leaving were the followings: 64.7% of those women said that they left their job because of childrearing and 12.6% said discrimination in the workplace due to their having had children (Korean National Statistical Office, 2005). Thus, the graph on Korean women’s labor force participation rate by age is an M-shaped figure as in *Figure 1*, meaning that women at the age for rearing young children are less likely to have jobs compared to women at other ages.



Figure 1. Korean Women's Labor Force Participation Rate by Age



Adapted from Korean National Statistical Office (2006a)

In instances of women having children and working at the same time, it was reported that their strategies for reconciling paid work and unpaid housework including childrearing were largely based on getting help from family members (Sung, 2003; Won & Pascall, 2004). However, they also reported their conceptualization of childcare as war: “a constant battle to manage the gaps between expectations of employers and family members, to manage the gaps between working hours and childcare hours, a war—though often simmering and suppressed—between husbands and wives, and between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law” (Won & Pascall, 2004, p. 283). For young mothers, the family may be perceived more as “a source of obligation” than as “a source of support” (p. 272). A study indicates that highly educated women respond to potential conflicts between work and family life “by postponing marriage until a very late age or by not marrying at all” (Kim-Choe, 2006, p. 306).

Here I have presented the matter of Korean women's work and family balance in terms of childrearing. However, this is an example of the barriers and difficulties that Korean working women face today—just one example frequently mentioned in literature related to Korean working women. There are other barriers as well, workplace discrimination, social prejudices, male-oriented organization culture, women's responsibility for elder care, unequal opportunity of

education and training in the workplace, and so on. A fundamental barrier behind all these visible problems are the Confucian values embedded in Korean people's lives—men's as well as women's. Even with all the changes in Korean society, “traditional Confucian ideas about the role of women remain in force” (Sung, 2003, p. 346). Korean working women in paid employment today thus encounter a “contradiction between the changes and the traditions” (p. 347). They are involved in paid employment, which is one of the contemporary changes. On the other hand, they are also expected to play the role of primary caregiver and domestic worker in the family, which is congruent with the traditional roles of women in Confucian society. Thus, they experience ambivalence between two powerful, contradictory forces—“the modern philosophy of equality and autonomy, and traditional culture embedded in everyday life” (Y. Kim, 2005, p. 31).

#### *Summary: Korean Working Women*

In this section, I reviewed the Korean historical context and women's status throughout this history in relation to Confucianism in Korea. Also, I presented a brief overview of the influence of the traditional Confucian value system in Korean working women's lives through the example of the childcare problem faced by Korean working mothers. Understanding the influence of Confucianism on Korean history and culture is a starting point to understanding contemporary Korean working women.

#### *Chapter Summary*

In this literature review section, first I reviewed existing literature on understanding success. Three kinds of dualistic understanding of success were presented: objective vs. subjective success, men-identified vs. women-centered success, and success in terms of liberal vs. cultural feminism. Second, as a way of understanding success beyond these dichotomies, I

presented Butler's gender performance theory. Third, theories and concepts related to women's career development were reviewed. Mainstream women's career development theories in the psychological tradition were presented with critiques on those positivist theories. Three kinds of alternative theories and concepts were reviewed: contextual career development theory, culturally relevant career development theories, and the concept of planned happenstance. The fourth section discussed women's learning, with a review of the feminist perspective in adult learning, feminist pedagogy, and women's ways of knowing. In the final section, I examined pertinent literature on Korean working women through a discussion of the broad context of Korean culture and history in regard to women's status throughout this history and the current situation of Korean working women.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to understand the meaning of success in Korean career women's lives. In this feminist research, I interviewed approximately ten Korean career women to discover answers to the research questions: (1) How do Korean career women define success in their lives? (2) How do Korean career women develop their meaning of success? (3) What are Korean career women's strategies for their success in relation to gender expectations and roles in Korean society? In this chapter, I outlined the design of this study using the framework of feminist research methodology. The data collection and data analysis procedures also were introduced along with issues of reliability and validity and followed by a subjectivity statement.

#### Design of the Study

This study is a qualitative research study that aims to “achieve an *understanding* of how people make sense out of their lives, to delineate the process (rather than the outcome or product) of meaning-making, and to describe how people interpret what they experience” (Merriam & Simpson, 2000, p. 98). While quantitative research based on positivist paradigm contends that there is a reality out there to be studied and understood, qualitative research based on a postpositivist paradigm asserts that there are many realities rather than one and that “reality can never be fully apprehended, only approximated” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 11). As the purpose of this study was to understand the meaning of success in Korean career women's lives by “make[ing] sense of personal stories and the ways in which they intersect” (Glesne, 1999, p. 1), qualitative research was an inevitable approach to this study.

### *Feminist Research Methodology within Feminist Epistemology*

Any qualitative research study has epistemology, methodology, and methods (Crotty, 1998). According to Harding (1987), an epistemology is “a theory of knowledge” (p. 3), a methodology is “a theory and analysis of how research does or should proceed” (p. 3), and a method is “a technique for (or way of proceeding in) gathering evidence” (p. 2). This study is a feminist research study adopting a feminist epistemology, feminist research methodology, and feminist interviewing as a method. First, I define this study as feminist research because the focus of this study is women and because I, the researcher of this study, define myself as a feminist (Stanley & Wise, 1990). Also, this study is feminist research because it is “committed to changing women’s lives” (p. 21) by trying to add knowledge on Korean women’s career development experiences and their notion of success to the career development field and thus making voices for them so that their can be understood better and improved by the knowledge.

Feminist epistemology starts with a critique on traditional *masculine* science—the “historically pervasive association between masculine and objective, more specifically between masculine and scientific” (Keller, 1983, p. 187). Feminists critiqued the objectivism of the masculine social science research which insists that “scientific claims can be produced only through dispassionate, disinterested, value-free, point-of-viewless, objective inquiry procedures” (Harding, 1990, p. 87). This characterization of science is the result of being “colored by the biases of patriarchy and sexism” (Keller, 1983, p. 202 ) and is so deeply embedded in our culture that even children have no difficulty internalizing the association between masculinity and rationality. The feminist critique on masculine objectivism also asserts that objectivist discourses place women and feminists “firmly outside a tightly defended barricade” and are used “to devalue and justify calculated ignorance about any thought, research, or scholarship that

begins and proceeds by asking questions from the perspective of women's activities" (Harding, 1990, p. 87).

Thus, feminist epistemology seeks to revive women and their experiences as the center of knowledge. As the historical identification of rationality and objectivism "with the masculine model of detachment, distance, and clarity" (Bordo, 1986, p. 456) has limitations for research on women, feminist epistemology as a new paradigm of doing research on, by, and for women is inevitable. Feminist epistemology starts with the assumption that "*all* knowledge, necessarily, results from the conditions of its production, [and] is contextually located" (Stanley & Wise, 1990, p. 39). It also intends "making the invisible visible, bringing the margin to the center, rendering the trivial important, putting the spotlight on women as competent actors, and understanding women as subjects in their own right rather than objects for men" (Reinharz & Davidman, 1992, p. 248).

Within feminist epistemology, women are not only the center of the research but also can generate knowledge of their own. While masculine science contains a detached view on the knower and the known, feminist scholarship "reveals a different animating assumption: that the knower and the known are of the same universe, that they are *not* separable." (Du Bois, 1983, p. 111). While traditional epistemologies "systematically exclude the possibility that women could be 'knowers' or *agents of knowledge*" (Harding, 1987, p. 3), whether intentionally or unintentionally, feminist epistemology proposed alternative theories of knowledge, considering women as legitimate knowers and knowledge producers.

The contribution of feminist epistemology is summarized by Nielson (1990a):

Feminist work has contributed to the questioning of scientifically based knowledge as absolute by providing numerous examples of work in different disciplines that both

highlight the bias of previous work and provide alternative explanations that are more complete and more comprehensive, albeit from the feminist's own 'biased' perspective. This, indeed, is the strength of the feminist contribution to postempirical philosophy of science. (p. 19)

Based on this feminist epistemology tradition, feminist research methodology stems from the idea that women's ways of conducting research on women should be different from the traditional masculine ways of doing research. When women attempt to focus research on women and women's knowledge, we encounter methodological problems because "the prominent social science research methodology, i.e., mainly the quantitative survey method, is itself not free from androcentric bias" (Mies, 1983, p. 118). To change the gender-biased structure of this society through research so that it can be a better place for women, we need a different methodology from the one that traditional male science has used because "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house" (Lorde, 1981, p. 99). As Lorde (1981) insisted, "[t]hey [the master's tools] may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change" (p. 99).

Although there is no one 'correct' feminist methodology (Cook & Fonow, 1990), certain common characteristics can be identified.

1. Women's lives need to be addressed in their own terms. ... A feminist methodology starts from an examination of women's experiences because 'the personal is political.'
  2. Feminist research should not just be on women but for women.
  3. A feminist methodology involves putting the researcher into the process of production.
- (Edwards, 1990, p. 479)

Feminist methodology is about research that addresses women's lives and experiences in their own terms and creates theories "grounded in the actual experience and language of women" (Du Bois, 1983, p. 108). By so doing, we can reveal women's experiences which were excluded in 'malestream' science. As feminist scholars, it is our responsibility to seek "the knowledge of the genuine conditions of our lives that we must draw our strength to live and our reasons for acting" (Lorde, 1981, p. 101). As the personal is political in feminist agenda, feminist methodology does not end with revealing women's personal experiences. It goes a step further to produce "socially engaged research—that is, research that holds itself ethically and politically accountable for its social consequences" (Harding & Norberg, 2005, p. 2010). It starts with the experiences of women and then moves on to use them "for a revealing disclosure of larger structures," with the effort to "recover the entire social relationship of the research and locate the inquirer in the same critical plane as the subject of the research" (Edwards, 1990, p. 478).

Also, in opposition to the masculine science that detach the researcher from the participants and the research process, feminist methodology consciously puts an emphasis on the researcher's role in generating knowledge. Thus, "the researcher's effect upon the actual process of the research, her class, race, sex, assumptions, and beliefs, should be explicated in terms of its effect upon the research and upon analysis" (Edwards, 1990, p. 479-480). In feminist methodology, the researcher is located as a gendered being by herself "in the web of social relations that simultaneously influences the analytical and interpretive procedures of sociology and shapes the life experiences of the researcher" (Cook & Fonow, 1990, p. 73).

When the principles of feminist methodology were first introduced by feminist scholars, they were new ideas because quantitative research was the dominant paradigm at the time. As a qualitative research paradigm has developed and spread over time, many of the ideas of feminist



methodology have been integrated into general qualitative research. For example, one early feminist methodologist suggested a better relationship between the researcher and the participants, saying that “[t]he vertical relationship between research and ‘research objects’, the *view from above*, must be replaced by the *view from below*” (Mies, 1983, p. 123). Although this was a new idea in research at the time, it can now be commonly found in qualitative research literature (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Glesne, 1999; Patton, 2002).

However, I insist on calling the methodology of this study a feminist methodology because I believe that I can “ask questions that produce different knowledge and produce knowledge differently, thereby producing different ways of living in the world” (St. Pierre & Pillow, 2000, p. 1)” as a feminist through consciously identifying it as feminist methodology. As Du Bois said:

There is no question that feminist scientists and scholars will continue to be charged with bias, advocacy, subjectivity, ideologizing, and so on. We can expect this; we can even welcome it. If our work is not in some way threatening to the established order, we’re on the wrong track. (Du Bois, 1983, p. 112)

To produce knowledge different than that of the masculine science means to “consciously adopt a woman’s perspective” and thus to be able to see things previously unseen and to “see the familiar rather differently” (Nielsen, 1990a, p. 20).

### Data Collection

In this section, I explain the participant selection procedure of my research. I will also discuss the interviewing procedure according to the guidelines of feminist interviewing; this source was chosen as a main method of data collection with an effort to “make explicit the reasoning procedures she [I] utilize[d] in carrying out her [my] research” (Edwards, 1990, p. 480).

### *Participant Selection*

A purposeful sampling strategy for participant selection was used for this study as many “qualitative researchers tend to select each of their cases *purposefully*” (Glesne, 1999, p. 29). Purposeful sampling means selecting the participants who can give rich and in-depth answers to this study’s research questions. As Patton (2002) states, “[i]nformation-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research” (p. 46). Among the different types of purposeful sampling, maximum variation (heterogeneity) sampling is used to “capture the central themes that cut across a great deal of variation” (p. 234).

Participant selection criteria for this study were changed several times between the proposal of this study and the completion of its writing. Also, the participant selection process itself turned out to continue throughout the interviewing and data analysis. Criteria for participant selection were determined based on literature and practice. Career stages suggested by Super (1990) was one structure for participant selection. Although Super’s linear career development model have been criticized in that it does not explain the complexity of the Korean economy and job market, his conception of career stages could still explain a certain aspect of Korean women’s career development. To explore what Korean career women think about success in their lives, women in the *maintenance stage* were selected. Four career stages—exploration (ages 14-24), establishment (ages 25-45), maintenance (ages 45-65), and disengagement (after age 65)—were suggested by Super’s life-span, life-space model (Super, 1990). Among these four stages, *maintenance stage* is the period in which people are “holding on, keeping up, and innovating” their career tasks (Super, Savickas, & Super, 1996, p. 134). This was considered appropriate criterion for this research because the questions for one’s success

require a certain length of time of the person's experiences along with reflections on the experiences.

Based on the literature, I began search for participants by talking with people around me who could introduce me to possible participants. During my stay in Korea, I met Jeehye, a representative director of a women's foundation established by the city of Seoul. In her fifties, she has worked for more than twenty years in the women's movement field. She told me that women usually experience a kind of crisis in the tenth year of their career. She said that many women at that point start to question whether they want to continue their career or not, just as described in Super's establishment stage (Super et al., 1996). Therefore, she suggested interviewing women who have worked for at least fifteen years or more to explore the in-depth meaning of their success. As she is a living example of Korean career women and has become important to my study, I valued her opinion and set criteria for the participants as women who have worked more than fifteen years in their field. This criterion complements Super's classification of age 45 to 65 as *maintenance stage* does not capture the current job market where mobility and flexibility is increasing according to rapidly changing circumstances. Thus, the first criterion for participant selection became the Korean career women who have worked at least fifteen years in their field. It happens that Super's categorization of maintenance stage loosely coincides with my criteria as the age range of the participants was from 45 to 63.

In addition to this first criterion, I decided the occupational categories criterion would be participants who work for a private or a government sector organization having a career ladder characterized by organizational hierarchy. This group is thought appropriate for this study because they might have similar experiences in the workplace. Thus, these two criteria for participant selection were adopted for this study: (a) Korean career women who have worked at

least fifteen years in their field; (b) Korean career women who work for a private or government sector where there is a career ladder. The process of participant selection was not completed in a first trial but rather simultaneous with searching the literature, talking to people, finding participants, and interviewing them.

Snowballing was used as a strategy of participant selection for this study. Snowballing is a strategy of obtaining “knowledge of potential cases from people who know people who meet research interests” (Glesne, 1999, p. 29). There are three important people who contributed to recruiting the participants of this study through snowballing: (a) my husband who worked in a government office and was a journalist; (b) Jeehye, a representative director of a women’s foundation established by the city of Seoul; (c) Jinsoo, who works for a large company in the HRD field. With these three people, I could recruit all the participants of this study by snowballing.

### *Feminist Interviewing*

Situated within feminist epistemology and feminist methodology, this study adopted feminist interviewing as its method for data collection. Feminist researchers found that interviewing was appealing for them because interviewing offers researchers “access to people’s ideas, thoughts, and memories in their own words rather than in the words of the researcher” (Reinharz & Davidman, 1992, p. 19). This strength is particularly important for a study of women because “in this way learning from women is an antidote to centuries of ignoring women’s ideas altogether or having men speak for women” (p. 19).

When Oakley (1981) interviewed women, she found that there is a gap between the traditional theory of interviewing and the practice of the interview. She insists that,

The relative undervaluation of women's models has led to an unreal theoretical characterization of the interview as a means of gathering sociological data which cannot and does not work in practice. This lack of fit between the theory and practice of interviewing is especially likely to come to the fore when a feminist interviewer is interviewing women. (p.31)

She suggests that concepts and practices different from the traditional 'masculine' should be highlighted when women are interviewing women. Based on Oakley's early attempt to differentiate feminist interviewing from traditional, masculine interviewing, many feminist researchers found important themes in feminist interviewing. In the following section, I will present the data collection process of interviewing and gathering documents. Then, I will continue with some of the major issues feminist researchers raised regarding feminist interviewing and how those issues were realized in the actual process of interviewing.

### *Interview Procedures*

Before the primary interviews, a pilot interview for refining interview questions was conducted. After developing interview questions according to the three research questions, I wrote my own answers to the questions to determine whether the interview questions were good and which questions needed to be revised. However, as a full-time graduate student and as a person who has never had a full-time job, I found it difficult to examine the interview questions designed for career women. Thus, I thought that I needed to ask a career woman about the interview questions I had developed. Yoonseon was a full-time career woman who worked at a college instructional technology center. As I worked with her at a research institute and had a close relationship with her, I could ask her to do a pilot interview for refining my interview questions. We met twice to ask, answer, and discuss the interview questions. In the first session,

I asked her the questions I had developed and she answered them as if it were real interview. After we finished asking and answering questions, I asked her how she felt and thought about the questions. She gave me her suggestions, and I added and integrated some interview questions. After this interview, I met her a second time with revised questions; the interview procedure was the same. I felt that the overall structure of my interview questions was settled and the interview questions were personalized to fit Yoonseon. Thus, I could decide that the interview questions were ready, with an expectation that some personalized questions would be added during or after the interviews.

I conducted the interviews in two phases: in phase one, I interviewed regular career women; in phase two, I interviewed famous career women. With the help of the three people each important for recruiting (mentioned in the above section), I interviewed 11 women one time. The profiles of these women are presented in *Table 1*.

I contacted the participants through e-mails and phone calls to introduce my study and to arrange the date, time, and place of the interview. I distributed my invitation letter through e-mails. The invitation letter is attached at the end of this dissertation. I prepared a consent form, explained what it was, and got their signatures on the form. The consent form is attached at the end of this dissertation. The interviews lasted from 60 minutes to 180 minutes. The interviews were conducted in their offices with eight of the 11 women, in a coffee shop with two participants, and at a restaurant with one participant. With the eight women whom I interviewed in their offices, I had lunch or dinner with them before or after the interviews. With the two women I interviewed at a coffee shop, I had coffee with them at the interview site. With the woman I interviewed at a restaurant, I had a lunch with her in the same place and interviewed her after our lunch. Although having a meal or coffee with the participants is also a part of the

interviewing process, I indicate by *interview* the interactions that I recorded. These interviews were conducted from June 2007 to September 2007. I used a digital voice recorder and transcribed the interviews immediately afterwards. While I transcribed, I wrote memos on the transcription file, which became my first analysis. The interview was open-ended and semi-structured. The interview questions were developed according to the research questions. The interview guide is attached at the end of this dissertation.

<Table 1> Profiles of Eleven Women for First Phase Interviewing

Pseudonym	Age	Current job	Final Degree	Marital Status	Child -ren	Total years of working	The year of starting career
<u>Helen</u>	40	General Manager of Professional Development Group (an HRD manager) at a large company	B.A.	Single	0	17	1991
Jieun	44	General manager of a design and outsourcing team at a large company	Ph.D.	Married	1	21	1987
<u>Light</u>	44	Director of a district Healthy Family Support Center	Ph.D.	Married	1	20	1988
Youngee	45	General manager of a computer system department of a large company	B.A.(2-year college)	Single	0	23	1985
<u>Settler</u>	46	General Manager of Operation Planning Department at a foundation for women	M.A.	Married	2	22	1986
Eunjung	46	Department chief of women's policy at a government office	Ph.D.	Married	2	18	1990
Hyesook	46	A researcher at a women's research institute	Ph.D.	Single	0	17	1991
Minjoo	47	Senior police officer of Department of Information at a police station	B.A.	Married	2	29	1979
Gukhee	50	Director of a center for a cultural foundation	M.A.	Single	0	23	1985
<u>Patience</u>	53	Director of a Center for Seoul Women's Development	Ph.D.	Married	2	25	1983
<u>Classic</u>	56	Branch Manager of NK Bank (pseudonym)	M.A.	Single	0	38	1970

At the end of the first interviews of 11 women, my study stagnated for some reason. I came to think about and realized some reasons. A part of the reason was because in the Korean culture, people neither often reflect on themselves or their lives, nor do they talk about themselves. Most of the participants, as ordinary career women, did not have clear goals for their career and/or for their lives. They consistently said that they just kept working and did not think much about success. As they have not thought about success, they could not give me clear answers and stories when I asked them about their success. Instead, they gave me superficial or vague ideas about success. Furthermore, some of the women were not communicative. When I asked to interview them for this study, most told me that they were not successful women and that there are lots of other successful Korean women for me to interview. This demonstrated the influence of Korean culture where modesty and politeness has been regarded as virtues.

Although they finally understood the purpose of my research and agreed to do the interviews, they were sometimes too polite and shy to talk to me about their lives. This was one of the reasons that my study became stagnated. There were other reasons for this. For example, I found that one of my research questions and the interview questions were not matched; therefore, the data from the questions also did not match the research question. Also, I could not always ask all the questions I had prepared because of time constraints. Furthermore, I was so deeply involved in interviewing and transcribing that I did not do anything else except interview and transcribe.

Fortunately, I by chance added two more important people to my study, an event which provided a turning point. Heejoo is a free lance writer and a lecturer with fifteen years of experience as a journalist. Jongho is a veteran journalist who was my husband's senior journalist when he worked for a newspaper. These two people are in their forties. I came to know them when they visited our house as they traveled in the United States in 2005. I happened to meet



them with my husband over lunch one day in September 2007. The conversation at that lunch and its results were true collaboration with these individuals. They complemented my weakness as a young novice researcher with their rich experiences of Korean society. Through our discussion, we reached the conclusion that I could gain rich data on success if I interviewed traditionally successful women—the women regarded as successful in male-identified terms because they had achieved high positions in hierarchical organizations and thus were famous in Korean society. Traditionally successful women were thought to be more appropriate for this study because they might have been accustomed to talking about themselves and their success through interviews with media and would be perhaps more reflective about their careers than ordinary career women. Thus, we compiled a list of famous women in various fields to whom Heejoo, Jongho, and my husband could introduce me. With their help, I recruited five famous women. Two were members of the National Assembly, another was a high-ranking judicial official, the fourth was a high-ranking government official in an education-related field, and the fifth was a woman in a high position at a broadcasting company. Detailed profiles are introduced in the next chapter. I contacted these women or their secretaries by phone calls and e-mails to arrange the interview. The interview procedure was the same as used in the interviews with the 11 women. After the initial interviews, I exchanged e-mails two or three times with three of these five women for further questions and answers.

As the data from the previous 11 women were somewhat redundant, I decided to select five women from the eleven and conduct follow-up interviews with only those five; I included these data in my study. As shown in *Table 1*, the underlined participants were those selected for final participants. When I selected those five women, I started by excluding those I deemed too exceptional to represent typical career women in Korea. I excluded Hyesook because as a

researcher she had a quite different career path from the other participants. I also excluded Gukhee because she had a chronic disease. She also had different thoughts on life in general and success due to her ongoing illness. After excluding these two special people, I read the transcripts and selected women with rich data. Helen, Light, Settler, Patience, and Classic are the women who liked to talk, had much to say about their own success, and were able to express their thoughts logically. I contacted these five again with e-mails and phones and set up follow-up interviews. The procedure of the second interview was the same as the initial interview. I met them in their offices, at a restaurant, and at a coffee shop. I had lunch with Helen and Settler this time. The interviews were recorded with a digital voice recorder and transcribed. When I needed to ask additional questions as I transcribed and wrote, I exchanged e-mails with them. Also, I met Classic for a third time in a casual meeting.

### *Documents*

Documents are often included in data collection because “documents prove valuable not only because of what can be learned directly from them but also as stimulus for paths of inquiry that can be pursued only through direct observation and interviewing” (Patton, 2002, p. 294).

Documents may raise new questions during the course of the interview and “shape new directions for observation and interviews” (Glesne, 1999, p. 58). I was able to collect various documents according to the participants. For the five regular women, I asked them to give me any kinds of documents that they thought were related to their careers and their lives. For the five famous women, I did not need to ask them because I could at times obtain enormous amounts of documents through the Internet, newspaper articles, and books. For these famous women, I could even obtain documents about them from people such as their families, subordinates, or bosses. I present the types of documents that I obtained in *Table 2*.

<Table 2> Documents Collected

Category	Name	Documents
Regular career women	Helen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On-line diaries from 2005 to 2008</li> <li>• Résumé</li> <li>• Three essays related to her career goals</li> </ul>
	Light	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local newspaper articles reporting her receiving an award</li> <li>• Local newspaper columns that she wrote about her work</li> </ul>
	Settler	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Résumé</li> <li>• An alumni newspaper article that she wrote about her work</li> </ul>
	Patience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An alumni newspaper article that she wrote about her work</li> </ul>
	Classic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A workplace newsletter reporting her branch's business achievement</li> <li>• Documents verifying donations of the association of women employees in her company when she was a president</li> <li>• A writing from a bulletin board on her company intranet regarding her branch's achievement in customer services</li> <li>• A column at a newspaper article that she wrote about a leadership program</li> <li>• A picture of her receiving an award within her workplace</li> </ul>
Famous career women	Silver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal information from Internet database</li> <li>• Newspaper articles about her</li> <li>• Books on economics that she wrote</li> </ul>
	Genuine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal information from Internet database</li> <li>• Newspaper articles about her and her sentences as a judge</li> <li>• Magazine articles reporting on her personal life</li> </ul>
	Orchid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal information from Internet database</li> <li>• Newspaper articles about her</li> </ul>
	Elegance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal information from Internet database</li> <li>• Newspaper articles about her</li> <li>• Information and essays from personal website</li> <li>• Video clips of broadcasting interviews</li> </ul>
	Frontier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal information from Internet database</li> <li>• Newspaper articles about her</li> <li>• Information from personal website</li> <li>• Books written about her</li> <li>• Video clips of broadcast interviews</li> </ul>

For the five famous women, personal information from online databases could be purchased at 1,000 won [about 1 dollar] through the Internet. This personal information consists of more than a résumé and includes such information as their current job, workplace, job

position, birth date, hometown, schools, careers, family, and awards. Due to these sources of information databases and newspaper articles about famous women, I saved time in collecting basic background information. Prior the interviews, I also developed personalized questions based on the documents.

The five regular women also had traces of their life and work in various places. Helen has kept a diary on her personal website provided by one of the largest portals in Korea. The personal website provided by the portal website is called a ‘mini-hompi’; Hompi is a newly made word meaning homepage. It is called ‘mini-hompi’ because the personal website appears in a small pop-up window. I read all of her diary, copying and pasting all of the writings into a Word document. Also, Classic brought me various kinds of documents and even a picture. Although I categorized these kinds of data as documents, they are different from the traditional conceptions of documents. These can be data that do not fit in the existing categories that feminist inquiry has generated (Nielsen, 1990b).

Also, I wrote field notes during the interview. As I felt distracted and somewhat bothered by note taking as the participants were talking, field notes made during the interview were mainly used for probing. Instead, I wrote field notes just before and immediately after the interview in which I described the place of the interview and my feelings before and after the interviews. Other than field notes, I kept dissertation journals. I commented on how the interviews went and the progress of my thoughts regarding participant selection, interviewing, and analysis. It became a valuable source when I began to develop ideas from the data into themes and compose this methodology chapter.

### *Researcher's Role and Relationships*

Feminist interviewing suggests a non-hierarchical relationship between the researcher and the participants. According to Oakley (1981), the goal of finding out about people's lives through interviewing can be best achieved "when the relationship of interviewer and the interviewee is non-hierarchical and when the interviewer is prepared to invest his or her own personal identity in the relationship" (p. 41). Feminist interviewing rejects the assumption that "maintaining a strict separation between researcher and research subject produces a more valid, objective account" (Cook & Fonow, 1990, p. 76) and rejects the rigid dichotomy between the researcher and the participants resulting in objectification of women. General interviewing literature also addresses power issues between the researcher and the participant. Whether they are recognized by the researcher and the participant, "power issues are central to relationships between researcher and the researched" (DeMarrais, forthcoming, p. 56). In traditional qualitative research, relationships are described as "generally asymmetrical, with power disproportionately located on the side of the researcher" (Glesne, 1999, p. 122).

However, a postmodern critique of the researcher-participant relationship insists that "the asymmetry of power is not a total description of the interaction" (Scheurich, 1995, p. 247). Emphasizing the importance of resistance, Scheurich says that the interviewees are "not just the subjects of researcher dominance, they are also active resisters of such dominance" (p. 247). When interviewees answer the interviewer's question, they might change or resist the interviewer's goals and intentions. When the interviewer asks a question, the interviewee might answer a different question. This is considered a misunderstanding in traditional qualitative research. However, it is possible that the interviewee is "asserting her or his own control over the interview" (p. 247). In this sense, a postmodern critique on interviewing rejects the notion that

the researcher has to “maintain a reasonable degree of control over the [research] process (Patton, 2002, p. 375)” because interviewing is not a process that the researcher can totally control.

Feminist interviewing suggests a similar idea, questioning the power relationship explained in traditional qualitative research literature. Seibold (2000) insists that “the balance of power was with the interview during the making of the data, but I as the interviewer/researcher had the power of analysis afterwards” (p. 149). Also, feminist researchers acknowledge that “other social attributes, such as race and class, can influence the balance of power relationship in interview” (Tang, 2002, p. 704). Questioning the interviewer’s assumed superior position, feminists have commented on “the fluid power dynamics in the research interview” (p. 706).

During the interviews, there were clear hierarchies between the participants and me—the hierarchy of age and social position. In Korean society where there is a tradition of respecting older people, age comes into the fore in deciding power relationships. The oldest participant was sixty three years old, who was even older than my mother. The youngest participant was forty, eight years older than I am. Thus, I was always the younger in relation to them—the younger who has been always in a lower position than the older. Also, their current status as career women holding at least general manager positions made me feel smaller in front of them. Once, I tried to resist this traditional hierarchy in a way that was possible for me. For example, when I went to an interview with a woman who worked for an NGO (Nongovernmental Organization), I brought sushi for our lunch. It was my very first interview except for the pilot interview for refining interview questions. I was supposed to meet her in her office and to have lunch with her before the interview. As her office was located in a town I had never visited, I could not possibly know what and where to eat before our interview. Bringing our lunch was my

gesture of showing her that I could take control over the interview process as much as I could decide our lunch menu. However, I felt sorry for what I did because she was more warm and tender than I expected. In her office, there were approximately ten subordinates and they seemed like a family. When I arrived at her office, I realized that she had her own plan to take me to lunch with her subordinates to introduce me to them. Thus, in front of the person whom I came to respect from the bottom of my heart because of her noble spirit of sacrifice for the community people, I felt ashamed that I was excessively trying to exert control over the interview process by bringing our lunch. In addition, I did not know if she liked sushi or not. After this incident, I decided to not to try to demonstrate my power as a researcher in this way and to accept the pre-set hierarchy between the participant and me—the hierarchy already established by the Korean social and historical context. Thus, I was made to accept the hierarchy and to perform as the younger. During the interviews, I was a good listener, used words cautiously, and behaved courteously. I felt more comfortable when I followed the traditional hierarchy between the participants who are older and have the power from their social positions and myself, a novice young graduate student. When I performed the traditional role of a younger and when the participants could assert a certain degree of control over the interview process (Scheurich, 1995), they opened their mind to me as the older and the senior in careers and in life in Korean society.

### *Rapport and Reciprocity*

Patton (2002) suggests that neutrality, which means “being nonjudgmental,” can actually facilitate rapport (p. 53). Rapport must be established in an interview because people will talk more willingly about their personal lives or sensitive issues “once they know you” (Glesne, 1999, p. 99). The manner by which rapport is established is important because it should not “undermine my neutrality concerning what the person tells me” (Patton, 2002, p. 365). In this

view, when the interviewee asks questions of the researcher or asks advice or confirmation, it is viewed as common “temptations” (p. 405) which the interviewer has to avoid. For example, Patton (2002) describes the time when he dropped off information packets at all the participants’ houses to avoid answering their questions. This is an example of an effort to maintain neutrality in general qualitative research literature.

Oakley (1981) critiqued the masculine social science research paradigm that views the participant as an essentially passive individual who is an “object or data-producing machine which, when handled correctly will function properly” (p. 37). However, feminist interviewers say that “an attitude of refusing to answer questions or offer any kind of personal feedback was not helpful in terms of the traditional goal of promoting ‘rapport’” (p. 49). When the participants ask questions back of the researcher, it is hard and “ultimately unhelpful to avoid” (p. 49) because repeated in-depth interviewing involves the researcher in the intensely personal experiences of the participants. This is especially true when women interviewing women share some common experiences. Thus, feminist researchers view the interview as “a true dialogue,” in which rapport leads to closer relationships rather than “an interrogation” (Reinharz & Davidman, 1992, p. 33). Johnson-Bailey (2001) also talks about the reciprocal nature of the interview, saying that when she interviewed reentry women, they often asked questions, gave advice, and occasionally redirected the course of the interviews.

Thus, feminist interviewing suggests that the interviewer should answer when the participants ask questions. It is the way of building “a relatively intimate and non-hierarchical relationship” (Oakley, 1981, p. 47). Webb (1984) insists,

As I continued to do more interviews after making these decisions I was convinced even more strongly that in fact there had been no choice. Either I could have adopted this kind



of methodology, developed intimacy with the women, and invested my subjectivity in the research and in return learned in great depth and richness about their feelings and experiences. (Reinharz & Davidman, 1992, p.32 recitation; Webb, 1984)

As I processed the interviews with women whom I had never met before the interview, I realized that rapport was very important because rapport decides what kind of data can be obtained from the participants. In the above section, I described the turning point in my study at the moment when it stagnated. The reason the participants gave me superficial answers about their success was that they did not know me well enough to share their private thoughts to me. Rapport is not established just because a woman interviews a woman. When the researcher and the participant are women who are positioned differently, the researcher should try hard to build rapport. However, I felt that there exist a river, a wide and deep river, between the participants and me. Rapport could be built when I frequently interact with them. It could be established upon casual meetings, over light talk during lunch or coffee, talking by frequent phone contacts, or continuous exchange of e-mails. However, the participants in my study are all very busy people with their own careers and families. Especially for the famous five women, it was almost an honor to meet them for an hour or two. How could they have time to know me in private? Sometimes the regular women were as likely as the famous women to be too busy to reply to my e-mails. Orchid told me that she sometimes did not have time to even read her private e-mails in her office because she was very busy everyday. Also, it seemed that I have little in common with the participants except for the fact that I am a woman. Consequently, how could I cross the wide and deep river between the participants and me?

The clue for solving this dilemma was in the second interviews with five regular women. When I met them for this time, I felt more comfortable than the first interviews. My body was

more relaxed, and I could tell them my personal stories more easily than in the first interviews. They asked me questions and I answered them, which led to a “true dialogue” rather than an “interrogation” (Reinharz & Davidman, 1992, p. 33). For example, Settler and I talked at the end of the interview about the present condition of married career women in Korea and in the United States. After sharing hardships as married women with a child, from her experience Settler sincerely advised me to have a second child. This true dialogue was realized outside the interview setting when I became closer to the participants. Helen and I continued to talk about femininity in the workplace after finishing the planned interview when we were on our way to the dining hall. Although I did not record this conversation, I memorized it, wrote it down after our lunch, and used it as data for this study.

The power of rapport was experienced from the third meeting with Classic. I originally planned to meet Classic for twice just as I met the other five regular women. When I met her for the second time and asked her if she could give me documents regarding her career, she told me that she had some papers such as articles in the newsletter and essays that she had written. As she did not have those documents as electronic files, I told her that I would come to get the documents. Then, she suggested meeting for lunch. Thus, I went to meet her to get the documents and had lunch with her without an intention of recording any conversation. She bought me lunch and desserts and told me important things that she had not told me before. At a coffee shop while eating coffee and cakes, she showed me her documents and told me something that she was too proud to tell someone whom she barely knew, which was about the hardship she experienced as a woman who had no powerful network within her company.

Although it seemed at first that building rapport was almost impossible because the participants and I are different, it turned out that building rapport between a researcher and

participants who are very different women is not totally impossible. With an effort to spend more and more time with the participants, I could at least approach the other side of the wide, deep river although I could not reach the other side. When I approach the other side of the river, it shows me its detailed features. Rapport is not just an additional issue in feminist methodology but also a power that can redirect the course of interview and make it possible to obtain in-depth data.

Reciprocity in feminist interviewing means sharing one's feelings and thoughts with the participants to establish rapport and thus to build a non-hierarchical relationship, although reciprocity in qualitative research textbooks is considered a compensation (Patton, 2002). When I went to interview the participants, I brought gifts for them that cost approximately from 10,000 won [about 10 dollars] to 25,000 won [about 25 dollars]. The gifts were usually cookies, small flower pots, cakes, and tea. The gifts were my way of expressing gratitude for them giving me their time and sharing their lives with me. I also expected that the gifts could break the ice between us and build a friendlier atmosphere. Also, when the participants and I had lunch together, they bought lunch for me. The cultural meaning in their insisting on buying lunch for me is that as seniors they should treat their juniors with affection and broad-mindedness.

### *The Importance of Body*

The importance of body in feminist interviewing is in a broader context of the valuation of women's body in feminism. In traditional qualitative research, the importance of bodies can be found only in the importance of the participants' body language (Glesne, 1999). The researcher has to carefully look at the participant's body language "to determine what effects your questions, probes, and comments are having, in order to decide whether you will adjust

your conduct accordingly” (p. 81). For example, if the participant looks tired, that is the signal for a break or an end to the interview.

However, in feminist interviewing, attention to the body has a more significant meaning. In feminist research methodology, reflexivity is important because it “takes into account much more than an acknowledgement of the ways in which we ‘affect’ the data collected and how our own subject positions are implicated in the analyses produced” (Burns, 2003, p. 230). Burns (2003) insists that all research interactions are “the product of ‘physical’ exchanges that occur in a reciprocal manner between the researcher and the participant and that have implications at the ‘physical level’” (p. 230). The activity of listening and talking during the interview occurs with the bodily interaction. We cannot talk without our bodies and cannot listen without our bodies. Our bodies are important in interviewing or in any kind of interactions, although qualitative research literature seemed to almost ignore this fact. Thus, we have to be aware of our body’s message when interviewing. Both the researcher’s and the participant’s embodied subjectivity interact with each other, shaping the course of the interview. It is “the mutual construction of meanings/bodies” (p. 232).

Similarly, St. Pierre (1997) mentions sensual data that was produced by “the very physical act of having lived in the community I [she] studied when I [she] was a child and a young woman” (p. 183). It is an attempt to consciously recognize the effects “on our bodies, in turn, on our mental mapping” (p. 183). The embodied knowledge of our own might impact our ways of thinking and behaving with or without consciousness. She cautioned that a researcher who studies her own growing-up place may find that “sensual data have long since mapped and fashioned in a subtle way her consciousness and extra-consciousness” (p. 183). Thus, a researcher has to pay attention to her own embodied reaction during the interview.

There exists the politics of our bodies that makes a power relationship between the researcher and the participant. Burns (2003) suggests that the researcher examine her own body image and embodiment which are invested in the interviewing. She illustrates her experience when the participant views her body as slim. Her body often caused evaluative commentary and glances from the women she interviewed. This experience caused her “a feeling of power, comfort and relief, followed quickly by a sense of shame and guilt” (p. 233). It seemed that she was regarded as somebody who had what the participants were longing for. This troubled her, so she decided to choose how to “physically present myself at the interview” (p. 233). She decided to wear looser clothing so that her slender body was not so explicit. She says,

These examples show how the construction of meaning shapes experience and constitutes the subjectivities of both the interviewer and interviewee. Reflecting on my own embodied reactions during the interviews illustrates what I take for granted, what I do without critical reflection and how I am produced, at different times, as an embodied subject. (p. 234)

As feminist researchers, we should critically examine our embodied reflexivity which sees interviews as embodied interactions that involve the “construction, deconstruction and reconstruction of our bodies/‘body images’/embodied subjectivities” (Burns, 2003, p. 235). This is the way of “bringing body to theory” (Bordo, 1997, p. 713).

Just as Burns (2003) chose how to present her body at interviews, my bodily presentation during the interviews was to wear a formal suit instead of the casual wear I usually put on. I wore a suit and blouse instead of jeans and a T-shirt because the participants are all career women who typically wear suits in the workplace. First, it was my way of expressing courtesy to them as the younger. Also, it was my effort to reduce the gap between the participants and me and thus to

build a more non-hierarchical relationship. If I wore blue jeans and a T-shirt to meet the participants who have a certain degree of social positions in their fields, it might obviously show the difference between us. I wanted to give the participants an image of a professional researcher rather than a mere young student, especially as I always heard that I look much younger than my age. Wearing a suit was also a way of convincing myself that I am a professional in my field—in a qualitative study—just as my participants are professionals in their fields.

There was only one occasion when I did not wear a suit but wore blue jeans and a pink sweater instead. It was the third time I met Classic for a casual meeting with no intention of recording or conducting a formal interview. We were supposed to meet so that she could give me her documents and we could have lunch together. For this meeting, I deliberately chose to present myself in casual wear. I wanted to relax to get closer to Classic and at the same time, I wanted to observe if our interaction would be different due to my casual wear. This time, there was bodily contact between Classic and me—she folded her arm into mine and we walked arm in arm. This shows that she felt close to me, especially in Korean society where physical contact rarely occurs between people who are not very close. However, my wearing jeans and our closeness must have been possible because of the two meetings with Classic and our resulting rapport. Although I have separated the sections on reciprocity and rapport and the importance of body for the purpose of discussion, these issues in feminist interviewing are not separable but are simultaneously occurring and interacting with each other.

### Data Analysis

An inductive analysis that enables a researcher to find the meaning of what participants said in their perspectives (Ezzy, 2002) was used for data analysis for this study. As a first step to analysis, I transcribed the interview data immediately after the interview. When the interval

between interviews was too brief to transcribe the former interview before the next interview, I tried to transcribe the interviews the same time order as they were conducted. I added consecutive line numbers in the transcription documents. The transcription documents were for the most part single spaced, but occasionally I inserted a double space for convenience of reading when the interview discussion topic changed. I read through the transcription “with our [my] research concerns in mind” (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003, p. 37) and with the theoretical framework in my mind to “situate your [my] study in broader context” (Wolcott, 2001, p. 76). Influenced and guided by Butler’s theory of gender performance, women’s learning theories, and culturally relevant career development theories in particular, I read through the data with the relevance of these theories and research questions in mind.

When I read a transcription, I wrote down keywords of the data chunk and questions which needed to be answered at a later interview. When I prepared for the additional interviews, either face-to-face or by e-mail, the notes were useful in developing additional questions. For some transcriptions, I printed them out, wrote down keywords in the margins, and input the keywords in the transcription computer files. For some of the transcriptions, I worked directly on computer files. I did not categorize everything in the transcriptions but selected important topics regarding my three research questions. Also, I did the same with the documents that I collected. I printed them out and wrote keywords on the documents, marked the pages in books, and printed documents that I obtained from the participants. For convenience of categorizing themes and for seeing the scattered topics of each participant at a glance, I made tables using Microsoft Excel software. When I filled the tables with brief titles of what participants said regarding the three research questions, I could easily grasp what was common across the data. This was my strategy to find common themes across the data, which is important in inductive analysis (LeCompte,

2000). Also, I copied and pasted data chunks from the transcription files to Microsoft Onenote software where I could easily manage the data chunks and possible themes at the same time. This helped me not only to systematically categorize themes but also “to understand the structure” of the data (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000, p. 69).

It is known that data analysis is not a linear process but is a process of going back and forth within and to the data (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003; Patton, 2002). Although I had hoped that if I organized the themes logically, I could write straight through from beginning to the end of the findings chapter without interruption, data analysis and writing were actually dynamic processes. While writing, I added new themes, thought of new sub-themes, and rearranged the existing themes into a different format. The process of writing stimulated or provoked my thoughts about the construction of themes. This was because “writing *is* thinking” and actually “writing is one form that thinking can take” (Wolcott, 2001, p. 22). Thus, the themes developed and changed while writing. Also, I went back to chapters 1 and 2 that I had already written to remind myself of the issues and context of this study, and to get ideas for organizing themes. I also went back to the data, read it again, and coded it differently on the second or third reading. As themes changed, the same chunk of data sometimes was categorized into different themes. Also, as I came up with new questions while rereading the data, I sent e-mails to the participants asking additional questions. This was because qualitative data analysis is not a linear process but a dynamic process that requires “moving back and forth between concrete bits of data and abstract concepts, between inductive and deductive reasoning, between description and interpretation” (Merriam, 1998, p. 178).

Furthermore, there was a translation issue because I conducted and transcribed the interviews in Korean and am writing this dissertation in English. As ensuring the accuracy of



translation is very important, I used the back translation method. For direct quotations in the findings chapter, first I translated the quotations by myself. Then, I selected parts of the translated quotations and asked five Korean women who are fluent in English to translate them back into Korean. Three of the five women finished their bachelor's degrees in Korean universities and received their master's degrees in the U.S. universities. One of the five women finished her bachelor's and master's degree in Korea and received her doctoral degree from a U.S. university. The other of the five women earned her bachelor's and master's degrees in a Korean university and is now doing editing and examining translations from English to Korean at a publishing company. When they completed their translations of the quotations from English to Korean, I showed them to another Korean researcher to compare these back translations with the original data in Korean.

Data analysis does not take place only when reading transcriptions if we think about the question, “when does research begin and end if one gives up a linear concept of time?” (St. Pierre & Pillow, 2000, p. 10) As stated above, data analysis and data collection happened to be conducted at the same time. They also interacted and influenced each other. Data analysis also led me to search literature and to read previous chapters of this dissertation. When does data analysis begin if it is not a linear process? Data analysis and collection are not separate processes but are closely connected and intertwined. My data analysis might begin with the moment when I first met a participant, looked at the participant, assessed her based on a first impression, and noted things that I wanted to include in my field notes because everything in my field notes are reread and analyzed. Or, it might begin at the moment I contacted the participant by phone or e-mail before the interview. If I create an image of the participant and think about her in advance the interview, it is also data analysis because thoughts and feelings about the participant *can* be

data. Actually, I sometimes wrote field notes with the expectation of meeting the participant, absorbing the atmosphere of the place where I was waiting for her, and imagining her appearance. When I analyzed data, I used field notes as data, as well as the transcriptions. Thus, my data analysis had already begun prior to the process that I officially named data analysis. I tried to be aware of this kind of data analysis and to be academically and practically prepared to utilize all kinds of data in the analysis process.

### Reliability and Validity

In qualitative research, reliability means consistency rather than replicability. Because human behavior and experience is never static and because the meanings of the experiences are unique to a person as well as unique to a relational encounter, different data and findings would be obtained if another researcher conducted the same research (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000; Merriam & Simpson, 2000). A more important question for a qualitative researcher is “*whether the results are consistent with the data collected*” rather than if the findings would be the same if the inquiry were replicated (Merriam & Simpson, 2000, p. 102). A triangulation method was used for ensuring reliability of this study as well as validity. Maintaining transparency was also employed for reliability (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). For transparency, describing the “steps by which you [I] arrive at your [my] interpretation” (p. 84) is necessary so that other researchers know how I came to the conclusion. During the interviews and data analysis, I wrote a dissertation journal so that I could keep track of what I had thought and done with the research data. The dissertation journal was used for writing this methodology chapter. Validity or trustworthiness in qualitative research can be obtained in various ways. For the validity of this study, triangulation, member checking, and subjectivity statement are presented in this section.

### *Triangulation*

Triangulation means combining methods to strengthen the trustworthiness of a qualitative study. Triangulation can be achieved by use of “multiple data-collection methods, multiple sources, multiple investigators, and/or multiple theoretical perspectives” (Glesne, 1999, p. 32). In this study, I adopted multiple data collection methods by using interview data and documents for the sources of data collection. There is a common misunderstanding about triangulation that “the point is to demonstrate that different data sources or inquiry approaches yield essentially the same result” (Patton, 2002, p. 248). However, the point of using multiple data collection methods is to “test for” (p. 248) the consistency of the findings and to look at how various data support or conflict with each other. As I have presented and described in *Table 2*, I obtained a variety of documents from many resources such as the participants themselves, newspapers, Internet, and books. Data from these documents were useful for verifying the interview data obtained from the participants. For example, some participants wrote articles regarding their work and life that resonated with what they told me during the interviews. Also, I obtained some newspaper articles reporting how other people evaluate the participants. These documents also provided verifying information for the interview data and the participants themselves.

Other than multiple data collection methods, individuals helped me through the research process by sharing comments on my study. My husband was a good de-briefer during the interpretation process. As a person holding doctorate in adult education who used a postmodern qualitative research method for his dissertation, he listened to my analysis and gave me his opinions. Another significant person was a female university professor with a major in adult education. She received her Ph.D. in lifelong education at Seoul National University with a qualitative study and is one of the leading scholars and practitioners in Korean adult education

field. During our conversations, she gave me valuable ideas for my interview questions and for the interview process.

### *Member Checking*

Feminist interviewing views the process of qualitative research as constructing and interpreting data together with the participants. Member checking, considered a way of increasing validity in qualitative research (Glesne, 1999; Merriam & Simpson, 2000), can be a good way of doing it. Member checking is “sharing interview transcripts, analytical thoughts, and/or drafts of the final report with research participants to make sure you are representing them and their ideas accurately” (Glesne, 1999, p. 32).

Feminist researchers in particular pay attention to verifying what they interpret to the participants because our ways of interpretation might misrepresent or “differ from the original narrator’s intentions” (Borland, 1991, p. 64). When we write about women’s lives, we always have “the danger of mis-labelling” (DeVault, 1990, p. 110). The transcribed texts can be interpreted in various ways according to the researcher’s intention and subjectivity, while the participant may feel ‘that’s not what I said.’ In this circumstance, what should we do when the participants disagree with what we have written about them? How might we present our work in a way that “grants the speaking woman interpretive respect without relinquishing our responsibility to provide our own interpretation of her experience? (Borland, 1991, p. 64).

In this sense, member checking is not merely a way of increasing validity. It is a way of giving the woman the authority of her text, of what she said. If we invited the women we interviewed to the process of interpreting and let them read our paper and talk about any misunderstandings and differences, their sense of having been robbed of textual authority might be diminished. This does not mean that all feminist researchers should work with participants

before the final research product is published, for there are also some moments when we cannot do it because of various ethical issues (Seibold, 2000). Also, it does not mean that every interpretation we make should be validated by our participants. For “when we do interpretation, we bring our own knowledge, experience, and concerns to our material, and the result, we hope, is a richer, more textured understanding of its meaning” (Borland, 1991, p. 73). It means that we have to open the exchange of ideas so that we do not simply gain data on others to fit into our own paradigms. By extending the opportunity of conversation, we might “more sensitively negotiate issues of interpretive authority in our research” (p. 73).

Borland (1991) illustrates her research experience of recognizing the importance of the member checking. When she interpreted her grandmother as a feminist and the grandmother read it after it was published, she got angry with her, saying that “It is entirely YOUR interpretation... The story is no longer MY story at all” (p. 73). After a long discussion, her grandmother finally recognized that “if I meant by feminist a person who believed that a woman has the right to live their life the way she wants to regardless of what society has to say about it, then she suggested she was a feminist” (p. 74). Member checking, an important part of feminist interviewing, is a process of constructing meaning together with the participant. We should be careful about how we represent our participants and how we can embrace their own authority for their texts.

According to this perspective, I showed the participants interview transcriptions as a first step for member checking to get their feedback. However, the reality was different and difficult. I distributed transcriptions to all participants by e-mails or by printed copies. Most of them told me that they were impressed by my ‘effort’ and ‘devotion’ to transcribing the entire interview. However, none of the participants gave me their questions or comments on the transcriptions. For the five regular women with whom I did a second face-to-face interview, I sent transcriptions

of these second interviews by e-mail and asked them if they had anything to say. However, some of the women told me that they did not have time to even look at the file. It seemed that they thought that reading and commenting on the interview transcriptions was not their work but my work as a researcher.

In this limited situation, as a way of having the participants really ‘participating’ in my analysis, I suggested they choose their own pseudonyms. However, only two among the ten participants did so: Helen and Settler. The meaning of these pseudonyms will be explained in the Participant Profile section of this study. Other than these two women, the other eight let me select their pseudonyms according to whatever I liked. After I selected their pseudonyms and contacted them again to find out if they liked the names, they said okay to whatever I chose. Thus, I came to have the authority of deciding on their pseudonyms. I could assign them random, meaningless names. However, I tried not to assign meaningless pseudonyms and to name each participant according to her characteristics as I saw them from my perspective as a female researcher. Thus, I chose names such as the following: Orchid, Light, Silver, Genuine, Patience, Elegance, Classic, and Frontier. The reason for assigning these names will be explained in the Participant Profile section of this study. This was one of my conscious efforts to utilize a feminist methodology by constantly remembering that I am a woman who interviews a woman and thus by attending to the details that I could catch.

As the participants did not respond to my calls for member checking, I sometimes just gave them a rough interpretation of what they said during the interviews. When I asked them to confirm my informal interpretations, they agreed with them and explained further, or they said “no, that’s not what I meant. What I meant was this...”. This kind of face-to-face interaction during the interviews was a strategy to include the participants in member checking in the

situations when they refused to actively do it. Also, I might want to have the authority of analysis after the interviews as a researcher, yet the participants had the hierarchical power during the interviews invested with them because of Korean culture.

### Subjectivity Statement

Attending to the researcher's subjectivity is not only a way to build trustworthiness in qualitative research in general but also is an important element in feminist methodology. Feminist researchers locate themselves as gendered beings to attend to the issue of gender in their research (Cook & Fonow, 1990). We need to reject the objectivist stance that "attempts to make the researcher's cultural beliefs and practices invisible while simultaneously skewering the research objects beliefs and practices to the display board" (Harding, 1987, p. 9). In this section, I will present my own subjectivity statement related to my career history because engaging in this research made me aware of what my own success in life has been.

I was born in Seoul, the capital of South Korea, and lived there for my entire life before I came to the United States for doctoral study in Fall 2003. I have an elder brother two years older than I. My family was a typical middle-class family when I was young. My father worked for a bank and became a bank branch manager. My mother was a typical middle-class full-time housewife who devoted her life to her husband and children. She always bought my brother and me lots of books to read when we were young. My first dream about a career was, as I remember, being a physicist like Madame Curie. As I think about the reason why I wanted to be a physicist when I was young, I suppose it might have been because of the biography of Madame Curie. There was a series of biographies of great people at home and, as I recall, Madame Curie was one of only two women among the biographies. She impressed me because she challenged a traditionally male-dominated field, physics, and achieved enough to receive a Nobel Prize. A

while later, I became interested in being a judge. I do not recall the specific reason, and I guess that it just looked nice. However, I came to think that studying law might be boring and therefore lost interest in becoming a judge. Also, I lost interest in being a physicist when I was in middle school because I hated my physics teacher. More specifically, I hated him asking me questions every class—the questions that I could not solve correctly at the moment.

After that, I have wanted to study English since I was a second grade middle school student. I think that my homeroom teacher at that time was in many ways my role model. She was a smart and good English teacher, and I vaguely thought of her as my role model because I liked her and I therefore wanted to study what she studied. Also, it was surprisingly wonderful to me that I could understand English essays and had thoughts and feelings after reading English essays that were like those I had when I read essays in Korean. At that time, I had a vague notion of being an English professor. However, the reality was cruel to me—the reality of my academic records. To be admitted to the university I wanted to attend, I negotiated with reality. As English literature majors at Seoul National University were only admitted with very high academic records, I lowered my major to French literature, then English education, and then French education. However, I was unexpectedly accepted as an Education major, which was my second major preference on the application form. In fact, my mother had written it almost randomly because there was a very slight chance of being admitted as one's second major preference. Finally, I decided to go with that choice because I did not want to study an additional year to be admitted in the field that I wanted.

After I went to the university, I minored in English education, only to find that what I was interested in was not English literature but English as a language. At that time, I developed an interest in an education major and decided to go to graduate school. Thus, I gave up an



English education minor and focused on this subject as my major. Since then, my dream has been to become a professor teaching college students and especially being a role model for female students. I could not find any role models and actually had not been taught by a female professor at university. Among the twenty professors in the education department, there were no female professors at that time, although they hired two female professors around 2005. As Korean students are doomed to be oriented to preparing for university entrance examination, the period at college is an important time when they seriously think about and reflect on their lives and start to form their worldviews. In this important time and in a situation where there are few female professors, I wanted to become a good model for female students who were looking for female professors to guide them. This is the goal that I have pursued in an education major until now. Since my specialty is women's career development, I also want to be a scholar who is good at researching women's career development and thus can contribute to the theory and practice of women's career development in Korea. This would be my definition of success.

Also, my success should include living a happy life with my husband and daughter who has grown up with her grandparents apart from me, when we are back together after I complete my dissertation. Similar to all the married participants in this study, I have struggled with work and family conflict; I have also, as a married woman, put my own baby in others' hands and I want to have a full-time career after graduation. As my mother was a full-time housewife devoted to her family and as I internalized my mother as a good example of a married woman, I still struggle everyday to relinquish what I could not easily give up. Thus, in my current situation apart from my soon-to-be three years old baby, living a happy life with all my family becomes an important standard for my own success in my life as well as my professional ambitions as stated above.

However, my concept of success is flexible and changeable in the future just as this study's participants' concept of success has changed over time. First, my dream of being a professor seemed to be difficult to realize for various reasons. As the Korean job market is very small and competitive, I am not sure when I can be a professor or if I can become a professor at all. Also, I do not know what kind of job I can get after graduation. Currently, there are no positions open for me to apply to. Just as most of the participants of this study went through a period of transition and confusion while young, I may be in that period of transition and confusion right now. Interviewing the participants, in this sense, was a growth opportunity for me—growth that I could learn from the participants' lives. Now I wonder what I would be able to say if someone asks me ten or twenty years from now what my concept of success is. Then, I would have different concept of success in my life than now, a concept that would have been constructed over time and ripened through time and experiences.

### Chapter Summary

For this chapter, I defined this study as feminist research situated in a feminist epistemology, using feminist interviewing as its method. The data collection method was described including participant selection and interview procedure. Data analysis with a concern for reliability and validity was also presented. The consent form and the interview guide are in Appendix B and Appendix C.

## CHAPTER 4

### PARTICIPANTS PROFILE

The ten participants of this study were selected purposefully. The ages range from forty to sixty three years, as indicated in *Table 3*. The participants each have different occupations except for Elegance and Frontier who are both members of the National Assembly. All of them have at least a bachelor's degree, six have a master's degree or the equivalent, and three have attained their Ph.D. Three are single, one is divorced, and the remaining six are married and have children. They have work experience from seventeen to forty years.

The year they began their careers is different according to their age. However, most of them started their career immediately after university graduation except for Patience and Classic. Although there are variations, they have worked since the 1960s. Frontier started her first job in the 1960s. South Korea in the 1960s was transitioning from an agrarian society to an industrial society. The opportunity for women having jobs outside the home was very limited. The jobs considered appropriate for women were primarily low-status and low-income jobs. Classic, Elegance, and Genuine started their careers in the 1970s. The 1970s in Korean society was the time of economic growth. With that growth, male-dominated jobs other than low-status female jobs began to open their doors to women. President Junghee Park was not only famous for economic growth but also notorious for his military dictatorship. He was president for sixteen years from 1963 to 1979. During his reign, he suppressed the democratization movement in Korea with military force. Silver, Patience, Settler, and Light started their careers in the 1980s. The 1980s was a time of Korea's continuing economic growth and struggle for democratization. Also, more and more companies hired women through an open application process, through open invitation to apply for employment, not from personal connections. Orchid and Helen started

their careers in the 1990s when the number of working women and women's power in society was growing. The 2000s are a time of growth of women's power in Korean society. As women's power has increased, the Ministry of Women and Family was established in 2001. President Moohyun Roh, president from 2003 to 2008, adopted policies regarding socially marginalized groups, including women, and actively appointed women to important positions. The careers of most of the participants have flourished in the 2000s.

<Table 3> A Brief Summary of Participant Profiles

Pseudonym	Age	Current job	Final Degree	Marital Status	Child-ren	Total years of working	The year of starting career
Helen	40	General Manager of Professional Development Group (an HRD manager) at a large company	B.A.	Single	0	17	1991
Orchid	43	A government official in education-related field	LLM	Unknown	1	18	1990
Light	44	Director of a district Healthy Family Support Center	Ph.D	Married	1	20	1988
Settler	46	General Manager of Operation Planning Department at a foundation for women	M.A.	Married	2	22	1986
Silver	50	An editorial/commentarial chief at a media organization	Ph.D.	Single	0	27	1981
Genuine	52	A high-ranking judicial official	M.A.	Married	2	29	1979
Patience	53	Director of a women's development center	Ph.D.	Married	2	25	1983
Elegance	55	A member of the National Assembly	J.D.	Married	2	32	1976
Classic	56	Branch Manager of a bank	M.A.	Single	0	38	1970
Frontier	63	A member of the National Assembly	M.A.	Married	1	40	1968

#### Helen

Helen is forty years old, born in 1968, and the youngest among the ten participants. She is a general manager of Professional Development Group at a management development institute

of a large company. The company is one of the largest in South Korea. It was founded in 1947 and has thirty two subsidiaries. The total number of employees, both in Korea and internationally, is approximately one hundred and sixty thousand. The Management Development Institute where Helen works is taking part in human resources development in the company. Her major task as general manager is to develop and implement professional development education programs.

From a traditional view of success, she is not very successful yet but only on the path to success. It is quite an achievement, however, as she is the only female general manager in her company. Since she first began working there in 1991 immediately after graduation, she has been promoted to her current position. Currently, there is only one female executive above her, a managing director, who was brought in from outside the company. Helen has been a general manager for five years since 2004.

She lived in Japan when she was five until she was ten years old because her father, an English teacher, was sent to a Korean school in Tokyo to teach English. She entered a university in 1987. When she went to university, she selected Japanese as her major because she was accustomed to the language from her childhood experiences. She said, “I chose Japanese major because it was easy for me.....I did not have a special standard for my major at that time. And I did not have any specific idea of what to do with a Japanese major after graduation.” Helen graduated from the Korean Foreign Language University, the only Korean university focusing on foreign language education.

As soon as she graduated, she entered her current company in 1991. Although she had choices of two other companies and jobs, she selected the one where she now works. When I asked her why, she said, “I think my *destiny*, which I don’t know, has led me to my current status

including my job, major, and schools, although it seems that *I* selected those.” Since then, she has worked there for seventeen years. When she first began, she took part in teaching Japanese to the people in her company. From teaching Japanese, she moved to customer services education. Since then, she has taken part in developing and implementing educational programs and does not teach Japanese anymore.

I was introduced to Helen by Jinsoo, one of my college friends. When I accidentally met him in a personal meeting and casually talked about my dissertation, he told me that he knew some people whom he could introduce to me. Helen was his team boss a few years ago although now he is on a different team. When I contacted her through e-mails, she immediately replied. She wrote that she had a problem with her vocal chords and that she always communicated through e-mails. To meet her, I took a company shuttle from Seoul to Eicheon with Jinsoo, who also takes the shuttle everyday to go to work. He guided me to the library where I was supposed to meet her. The company consisted of several buildings, lots of trees, and a pond, and is located in a rural district where rice paddies, dry fields, and mountains are. It has an atmosphere similar to Athens, Georgia, where I lived for four years during my doctoral study; it felt like my hometown. Looking around the company, I felt the peaceful atmosphere and looked forward to meeting her with quiet excitement. It was a beautiful day in June 2007.

I noticed Helen as she entered the library and bowed to me. She was thin and of average height with wavy hair. She wore a bright colored blouse with a collar and a fluttering skirt. She looked feminine because of the skirt and her wavy hair. When I met her again five months later for the second interview, she wore a neat black H-line skirt and a white blouse with a collar. During the second interview, she told me that a man who was her superior at the company

advised her to wear blouses with collars. This advice was intended, she thought, to help her appear more appropriately dressed for her heightened position.

Her voice was sharp and husky. She said that it was because she had had surgery on her vocal chords. She had tuberculosis three years ago when she worked very hard on an important project that she was in charge of. After she recovered from tuberculosis, she developed a stricture of the vocal chords due to after effects of tuberculosis. Due to this disease, she lost her original beautiful voice and now has a small, sharp, and husky voice instead. She usually does not communicate by telephone because it has a negative effect on the recovery of her vocal chords. She has had surgery twice and is still in the recovery process. However, she is proud of the result of the project that she was in charge at that time. The project was a significant change and challenge, not only within her company but also within the thirty one subsidiaries of her company. Due to her efforts with the team, the culture toward educational programs of the whole organization has changed. She said that she once told people, “I threw away my voice to get the educational programs just as a mermaid princess threw away her voice to get the prince.” I had no problem in communicating with her in person. She talked in a quiet tone, but it was not a problem as I sat close to her. When I met her five months later for the second interview, I noticed that her voice was much softer due to medical treatment and speech therapy.

She is forty years old but looks like she is in her mid thirties. When I mentioned this, she told me that she might look young because she has neither married nor given birth. I knew that she was single, as Jinsoo had told me in advance. She lives with her parents in Seoul. About the reason why she is still single at the age of forty, she says:

Well, I'd like to marry if I meet the right person. And when I look back on the reason I did not marry by now, I think it was a matter of choice. Well, there were not many

married working women in this company when I was a chief or a head of a section. Most of the women in this company did not marry or resigned when they married. Well...I was not confident that I can do two things [work and marriage] at the same time. Furthermore, I was not lucky enough to meet the person to marry. Well..... I was really not confident that I can do both things, furthermore, I did not meet the right person. So, it seems like I naturally chose the career.

Helen is unique among the ten participants in that she frequently thinks about and reflects on her life. She is the only person who keeps writing an on-line diary. She has a clear future plan to live a life like Helen Nearing, who is famous for her simple life. Helen's future dream is to become a freelance business coach, living in a suburban countryside, cultivating her own garden for vegetables, and focusing on her own meditation. She said that she has changed since she read Helen Nearing's book, *Simple Food for the Good Life*. It is a book stating why we need to eat only vegetables, introducing some of her vegetarian recipes. After reading the book, Helen, the participant, was deeply impressed and influenced, so once she ate only vegetables. After that, she read other books of Helen and Scott Nearing who was Helen Nearing's husband. As Helen, the participant, was deeply influenced by Helen and Scott Nearing's thoughts, she went to a school for return-to-the farm, dreaming of returning to the farm after her retirement. Return-to-the farm means that people who live and work in a city resign their work and move to a rural area for farming.

She talked about her private life very frankly. Actually, Helen and I have almost nothing in common except for the fact that we are women. She is eight years older than I am. We did not graduate from the same university. She has worked for a large company for sixteen years while I have never worked full-time. She is single while I married and have a child. She never went to a



graduate school after she completed her bachelor degree eighteen years ago, while I have been in graduate study for seven and half years including completing a master's degree. She does not have a religion while I am a Christian. However, despite all these differences, she treated me like her close junior. She did not hesitate to talk about herself with my every question. I guess that this is because of her candid personality, our close relationships with Jinsoo, and her attitude toward students. When I asked for a second interview, she wrote to me, "Although I don't like to study, I'd like to help people who study hard". After the interviews, she asked me if her story was helpful to me. From this conversation I could feel that, to her, I am a hard-studying junior whom she wants to help. When I met her five months later for the second interview, I felt like we had grown closer since the first time. She is humorous and witty, which made me relax during the interviews.

After the interview, we had lunch together in the company dining hall. There were other people there during our lunch. For the first interview, she arranged lunch with two more people—one was Jinsoo and the other was my senior at my university. For the second interview, we met Jinsoo and his two other colleagues in the dining hall. The conversation during lunch was casual.

She chose the pseudonym Helen when I asked her if she has a name she would like to be used in my dissertation. The English name Helen sounds similar with her real Korean name. It is also the name of Helen Nearing, who she wants to be like. Later, I found that she already uses Helen for her English name when she meets foreign business people.

#### Orchid

Orchid is forty three years old and was born in 1965. She is a government official in an education-related field and currently works at a university located in the southern part of Korea.

She has worked for eighteen years since she first entered the field in 1990. As a government official, she takes part in advising the president of the university and is in charge of managing university administrative affairs. She has worked for this institution since August 2007, when she was appointed to her current position.

From the viewpoint of a traditional meaning of success, she is a very successful woman. Currently, she is the first female at her level in the government office. She is famous for receiving most rapid promotion within the ministry of education. I could easily find newspaper articles about her through the internet. The first newspaper article about her appeared in 2004, reporting her competency as a chief who took charge of the reformation of the government office. Since then, there have been articles about her each time she was promoted, three times before August 2007. The articles focused on her rapid promotion record and her competency in the workplace. She was called a woman who achieved ‘superhigh speed promotion.’ Her promotion was called the most reformist promotion in the history of that office.

She graduated with a law degree from one of the most prestigious universities in South Korea. She originally wanted to study geography but found that in Korea, the focus of the field was different from what she expected. Then, she was told that there would be many more career choices if she specialized in law. So, she chose a law major without a clear dream in the legal profession. She entered the university in 1984. During her college years, she was not happy and had low self-esteem, although she was at the core of an elite course in South Korea. She was confused because she could not find a value that she could live by although she wanted to search for truth. During this time of confusion, she thought that she should do something about educational change in Korea. She felt that the reason she was unhappy and confused was because of the failure of Korean education. She thought that education should focus on cultivating a good

personality rather than educating for university entrance examinations so that people would come to value themselves and feel happy regardless of their academic achievement. This is the reason she entered the education field and took the national examination for education government officials instead of taking the national examination to become a lawyer. After she passed the examination and entered a government office related to education in 1990, she has been working in that office for eighteen years.

I came to know her through the help of my husband, Dae Joong, who worked in a related field at the time I was recruiting participants. He told me that Orchid was the first female promoted in that office and that she was known as a very competent woman within her workplace. I communicated with her by telephone and e-mails to set up the interview. I took a high speed train from Seoul to her workplace, located in a city far from Seoul. It took one hour and ten minutes by the high speed train. The university is five minutes from the train station by taxi. The campus of the university seemed quite large and the road was well shaded with trees. It was October 2007. The university administrative building was located in the very center of the campus in a quiet area and looked old and grand. When I arrived at her office, I was led in by her secretary even though I was already accustomed to her face through photos and videos. She was of average height with short hair and glasses and was dressed in what seemed standard attire for a government official—dark grey pants and a white blouse. She smiled radiantly at me, but I felt that her first impression was sharp. She was candid and talked very fast. As she was usually ‘the first’ in her workplace since 1990 when there were few women, she had a hard time adjusting to the highly male-dominated workplace. She said:

Well, walking a road as the first woman is.... many people didn’t know how to treat me. I was young, among a lot of old people, and I was a woman, you know... So people didn’t

know how to treat me, what kind of role to give me, what kind of tasks I could do best, and so on, you know. So, the situation was like that when I entered to the ministry of education, and it was like a laboratory, you know, I was thought of as an experiment. The atmosphere was like, ‘Well, let’s see how that woman is doing.’ So, it was a burden for me.

It was not the work so much as the organizational culture that gave her difficulty as a woman. When I asked how she overcame that kind of challenge, she said, “I just worked.” She did her very best at work until she was satisfied by her own standard and until the result was approved of. She seemed to have been lonely among all the men and a few of the women, who kept a jealous eye on her and tried to restrain her fast promotion.

I felt that she is upright at heart and has a straightforward personality. I know this from what she said and how she said it. I was also impressed because she talked a lot about her faith in God. She treated me sincerely, canceling a meeting to extend the interview time and walking me to the taxi stop outside the building. One of her subordinates even called a taxi for me. I was glad to hear her candid story through the interview, but felt sorry for her as if I had taken too much of her precious time.

I chose Orchid as her pseudonym because the word is related to her real name. Another reason for selecting Orchid can be seen in the image of Western orchids. While Eastern orchids have thin leaves with small flowers, Western orchids have thicker stems and leaves with large and colorful flowers. The image of a Western orchid seemed proud and solitary while producing a blossom; just like Orchid has worked proudly and alone as the first female in a male-dominated organization, finally blossoming as the first female high-ranking government officials in her office.

## Light

Light is forty four years old, was born in 1964, and is director of a district Healthy Family Support Center, a part of a social welfare center. In the promotion system of a social welfare center, she is at the same level as a general manager in private commerce. She has worked in the field of social work for twenty years. In Seoul, South Korea, there is a social welfare center in every district. This district Healthy Family Support Center is one of the twenty two centers in Seoul and does social welfare work especially for low-income and marginalized families. Light has worked for the social welfare center for six years and became director of this center in 2006. She calls herself the ‘CEO’ (Chief Executive Officer) of this center, managing various kinds of education, counseling, and other caring programs for families including children, parents, and the older adults in the district.

From the viewpoint of a traditional meaning of success, she is not very successful yet, but is on the way to traditional success. Within the promotion system in this field, the next step for her is to become a director. She already has twenty years of career in social work, including clinical and administrative experience. Although she has not been promoted as rapidly as Orchid, she now has the possibility of becoming the director of a social welfare center. She recently received a social work award from a large foundation and has been written about in the regional newspapers.

She is a social worker, majoring in social work in the university. A high school teacher recommended the field to her and she chose it as her major. She entered the university in 1983 and found that she enjoyed her major. Light told me that during her years at the university she learned the spirit of sacrifice and service and became a social worker with a sense of calling. She joined the largest association of social workers in 1988, after a one year period of internship, and

has worked there for ten years. The association manages the social work certificate systems and educates social workers in South Korea. Working for the administrative part of the association, she learned the comprehensive system of social work network in South Korea. After ten years in the association, she transferred to a regional social welfare center in 1998 because she thought that she should know about the clinical reality to be better able to supervise when she becomes a CEO of a social welfare center. After working for a social welfare center for five years, she transferred to her current center in 2002. She earned her master's degree for social work seven years ago because she felt the need for a systematic and in-depth knowledge of social work. She also received her Ph.D. in social work last year.

I was introduced to her by Jeehye, a representative director of a women's foundation established by the city of Seoul. I communicated with Light by e-mails and telephone to set the first interview. I went by subway to the social welfare center to meet her in July 2007. I was guided by a staff member to the office of the director where Light was waiting for me while she was talking with the director. She was thin, as tall as I, and was wearing a casual yellow dress with a white cardigan. I formed a friendly impression especially because of her bright facial expression and round, cute face. At first, I was a little embarrassed because I did not expect to meet the director at all. The director was an elderly man in his middle sixties. Later I found that it was a natural situation for them. Light described the director as her mentor, and she had already told him that I was coming to see her for an interview. We all three had lunch together in the center's dining hall. The district Healthy Family Support Center, where her own office is, is in a different building, so Light and I went to her office. The district Healthy Family Support Center's office is small, with six to eight employees. Light's office is inside the Center so all the staff saw us as we entered her office. She gave me a cup of coffee in a pretty cup.

Light is married and has a daughter aged seventeen. She married while she was working for the Association of Social Workers. Her husband was a college friend working in the same workplace when they married. After she had her daughter, she had a crisis in her career because there was no one to take care of her baby while she worked. The day care system in South Korea at that time was poor and she could not find quality childcare for her three month old baby. It was a crisis because she thought that she should give up her work and take care of her baby at home full time if she could not find quality care. Fortunately, her mother found a reliable woman who took care of babies in her home. This emotional crisis made her realize that she loved her work and that she felt a calling as a social worker that she had not recognized before this. This sense of calling, love, and passion for her work has become a driving force motivating her hard work.

During the two hour interview, she talked to me very frankly without hesitation like a model student answering a teacher's questions. She did not miss a word of my questioning and always gave me exact and clear answers. After the interview, she said that it had been a good experience for her because she could reflect on her life. From the first interview, I had a good impression of her. However, after the second interview I began to admire her as a woman.

I visited her again in December 2007, and this time went directly to her office. During the second interview, I perceived her bright personality and positive attitude more deeply. I also felt that her career and life were united. She lived with her mother-in-law for ten years until she passed away three years ago. When I, as a woman who struggles with the relationship with my mother-in-law, asked her how it was for her, she said that she liked and respected her mother-in-law. Furthermore, she said that her life with her family—her husband, her daughter, and her mother-in-law—directly related to her career as a director of the Healthy Family Support Center.

She recognizes the importance of a healthy and supporting relationship between family members and applied the philosophy to her life. Through the relationship with her own family, she felt that she understood her clients better and did her job better based on that understanding. She also showed her positive and optimistic attitude toward difficulties. When I asked her what the greatest crisis or difficulty in her life was, including her career, she said:

I don't think of crisis as a crisis although other people think of it as a crisis. I think that's my strong point. Although there is a difficulty, I think... I can grow through that difficult situation. I can widen the scope of my thought, well... or whatever, the more I am involved in the crisis, the more I can learn.

After interviewing her for the second time, I came to question myself: When I reach the age of forty four, or after twenty years of my career, will I be able to speak with someone just as Light has done with me today? Can I live like her, loving my family including my family-in-law from the bottom of my heart, melding that love into my career life, melding my career philosophy into my family life, not thinking of difficulty as difficulty, and expecting to learn from that difficulty with pleasure? I came to deeply respect her in this sense. When I saw Light again for the second time, she still had brightness in her face. I realized then that her brightness is not just on a surface level for her clients or guests but one that comes out of the deepness of her heart. This is the reason I gave her the pseudonym Light.

#### Settler

Settler is forty six years old and was born in 1962. She is general manager of an operation planning department at a foundation for women. The foundation is a city-funded lifelong education institute for women. It has a large building with lecture rooms, banquet halls, a dining hall, a swimming pool, a gallery, and guest rooms with many lifelong learning programs for



women. As the general manager of the operation planning department, Settler takes part in managing all kinds of facilities for making profits. She has worked as the general manager for this organization for one year. From a view of the traditional meaning of success, she is not very successful. Also, she does not think that she is on the track of traditional success. The reason will be revealed when I explain the process of her career building.

Unlike Helen and Orchid, who have worked for the same organization throughout their careers, Settler changed her career a total of eight times over a period of twenty years. Originally, she was a social worker majoring in social work and, like Light, she selected her major of social work because of a recommendation of a high school teacher. Originally she entered a women's university in 1981 but was expelled from school because of the graduation quota system. It is a system that admits 130 percent of the target number of students as freshmen and expels 30 percent after two years. After having been expelled from the university, she entered to Social Welfare School, currently a four-year university, majoring in social work. At the time of her graduation in 1986, she did not have a job and did not even think about having a job. However, she accidentally met a director of the social welfare center in front of her house, and he recommended she volunteer in the center. After volunteering for telephone counseling for six months, she became an official social worker in another center on the recommendation of her boss. Then she resigned in 1990 after four years for complex reasons: the working hours were too long as she had to supervise a reading room; she also became skeptical of her effectiveness as a social worker in really helping poor people because of the limited services in the social welfare center. Then, she married her college friend whose major was also social work, lived as a full-time housewife with her family-in-law, and gave birth to her first child. After several years, more and more social welfare centers were established due to the national policy at that time.

Finally, a new social welfare center was opened in front of her house, and she got a job there in 1992.

While working in the Center, Settler had a second baby and received her master's degree in social work. After working for five years in that center, she transferred to a different center and was promoted to chief in 1996. At the age of thirty eight, she became director of that center when the former director resigned to transfer to another institute, recommending her as a director in 1999. While working in this position, she was involved in a political struggle between the chairperson of the board of the directors and the founders of the foundation. When this political trouble ended with the chairperson of the board of directors being fired in February 2002, she resigned and transferred to a regional cultural foundation where her former director worked as a representative. After working there for ten months, in December 2002, she transferred to a center for women's development in Seoul on the recommendation of Jeehye, whom she already knew. After working there for two years, she resigned in 2004 because she had a conflict with the new director and wanted to transfer to a social welfare center. Then, she got a job in a district social welfare foundation as a chief of the secretariat. After working there for one year and eight months, in 2006 she transferred to her current workplace because her former boss, Jeehye, asked her and she had become skeptical of her work as a social worker.

I was introduced to Settler by Jeehye, who also introduced me to Light. After several phone calls and e-mails, I went to visit her office. The foundation was in a nice, large, newly established building, and she met me in the lobby. It was in June 2007. Settler is of average height and when we met she wore a feminine-looking fluttering skirt which is in fashion this year in South Korea. My first impression of her was that she was friendly. With a youthful appearance, she smiled at me. She took me to a Korean restaurant near the building and bought

me lunch to cheer me up as a student. When I started to introduce myself and talk with her during lunch, I found that we had a lot in common as working mothers. We could share the difficulties of work-home conflict, and I began to feel closer to her as the conversation progressed. Our interview grew on this sense of closeness which increased as we met for the second interview scheduled five months later.

During our first interview, I was also moved by her description of her own success. She said, “If our life is a play, I think a true professional is the person who can perform any role, no matter what script is provided to her.” When she resigned the director position and transferred to a lower position, she said she could reflect on herself as a leader and learn what her mistake had been when she was a director. So, she said she could do anything as long as she is healthy enough to do it. Although she said that she wanted to direct a social welfare center again, she also said that she could perform any job in a social welfare center, although she could not be a director. When I met her for the second time, she talked about this in detail.

Well, my job needs networks in the higher position. But, I don’t have networks. So, if I want to be promoted to a higher position, it is very difficult for me. For example, the representative director of this foundation has endless networks, so nobody knows the width and depth of her networks. But, I don’t have networks like that. Well, maybe that’s my fault. I set my priority on work so I was devoted to working so did not meet many people.

She had recently had a difficult time due to a conflict with her mother. She has two children, and her mother had lived with her to take care of them. But, one week before we met for the second interview, her mother left her house after a serious fight. Her husband is a man who does not like to share the housework willingly. Because of the hardship we face as working

mothers, we spoke of stress, the fact that I was thinking about whether to have a second baby or not, and her ideas about social policy helping working mothers. At the end of the second interview, she seemed to be in the midst of confusion or unclearness about her life as a whole. She said, “I think I don’t have a goal, thought, or conflict.”

She walked me to the elevator after the second interview and advised me to have a second baby. Although her second child was unplanned, she now thinks that having two children is much better than having just one. Due to this kind of personal conversation, I felt very close to her. When I asked her if she wanted to choose her pseudonym, she gave me two options, saying that those names are the ones she has used as her ids for websites—Settler and Orchid. Settler was a name for people who volunteered to work with the poor in settlement houses in the United Kingdom, which was the first of social work in the world. Orchid was a word partly related to her real name. When she gave me these two options for her pseudonym, I selected Settler because it was more meaningful in relation to her than Orchid.

### Silver

Silver is fifty years old, born in 1958. She works for one of the presses in South Korea. She is an editorial/commentarial chief and she writes an editorial. She analyzes various kinds of media, including newspapers and internet newspapers, discusses topics with the other commentators through seminars or forums, summarizes the important issues from a neutral perspective, and delivers commentary. She has been a commentarial chief since 2005, working for the same company for twenty seven years since being hired in 1981.

From the viewpoint of a traditional meaning of success, she is a successful woman. She is one of the first female editorial/commentarial chiefs among the Korean press. When she was designated as the commentarial chief, there were several newspaper articles about this event, just

as there had been when Orchid was promoted as the first female in the government office. Silver first appeared in newspaper articles in 2001 when she was a head of the department of international affairs. This article states that she was a reporter active in the press where there were extremely few females in executive positions. Another article in 2004 appeared when she was a commentator. Two of her eight books were also reviewed. Thus, I knew that she has become a famous and traditionally successful woman in the media world.

She graduated from a university majoring in food sciences. When she was young, she liked to read books and wanted to be a novelist. However, a high school teacher told her that she would be very poor if she became a novelist, so she gave up this idea. Her teacher recommended a food science major because she could be a teacher or nutritionist, a very stable job for women at that time. She entered the university in 1977, majoring in food science. However, she realized that she did not like food science or being a teacher. She said, “The four years of college life only confirmed my notion that food science does not match with my aptitude.”

After graduating in 1981, she wanted to enter a trading company. However, in the early eighties in South Korea, few companies were hiring women. She could not enter any trading company because they only hired men at that time. She worked with the press because it was the only job that she could apply for as a woman. She was the first female journalist officially hired by the company in 1981 and the first female journalist reporting on the economy in the South Korean press, breaking the prejudice that women could only report on feminine issues like culture, art, or childrearing.

I was introduced to her through a complex process. Heejoo is a colleague of my husband’s senior journalist, and I met her in Athens, Georgia, when she was a visiting scholar and came to Georgia for travel. She originally introduced me to another woman who was a chief

editor at a major newspaper. When I called this woman, however, she said that she would not be suitable for my study because she was retired. Instead, she recommended Silver and gave me Silver's phone number. When I called Silver to ask for the interview, she at first rejected the idea saying that she was not a successful woman. Later, she gave reluctant consent as I earnestly asked her and explained that I was not going to interview successful women but would ask her what she thought about success. When I met her in a restaurant near her company, she was dressed like an ordinary career woman in a black suit and white shirt with blue stripes. She suggested doing the interview while having lunch to use time effectively. I hesitated because when I had lunch with the other participants, the interview had been conducted before or after lunch. Thus the recorder was off during the lunch. However, she did not hesitate. She skillfully hung my digital recorder around her neck, did a microphone test worthy of a veteran reporter with twenty seven years of experience, and talked while eating lunch.

The interview with Silver was so impressive and strong because she talked about the background story of her magnificent success from the very beginning of the interview. Her record-breaking career was not established naturally or smoothly. She was overlooked for promoted three times because the company preferred to promote men although she was more qualified than they. Also, when she was involved in a political problem within her company, she was almost fired. She also said that she did not think of herself as successful. She explained,

There are approximately twenty five executive directors in the company, but I am the only woman. Maybe people speak of me as having the longest life as an editorial/commentarial chief for three years... But I think that the only reason is that the company takes advantage of this situation of having no female executive director in the whole organization... When the definition of success is thought of as getting social

compensation according to my competency and my best efforts, I don't think of myself as successful because my current position is due to the company's political consideration...

And this position of editorial/commentarial chief is of course a very honorable position.

But, it's not a core or powerful position in this company.

After this, she talked at length about various disadvantages she had to overcome as a woman. During the eighties the soil was sterile for a career woman. She is not married and lives with her mother. She said,

Before I entered this company, there was the rule that women should resign when they got married. And I knew that women were disadvantaged when they got married even though the official rule had been abolished. That is one of the reasons I did not get married. I delayed the matter of marriage because I did not want to be disadvantaged when I was young. Then you know it becomes harder to get married in Korean society when a woman is over thirty years old.

Although she was somewhat embarrassed that my questions were about private matter and she seemed to want to protect her personal life, she talked more frankly than any other participants, saying that she wanted to help me. The second interview was conducted through e-mails. She was the only person who did not accept my gift for her. When I gave her cheesecake as a gift, she rejected it saying that she was on a diet and asked me to buy her lunch when I earned my Ph.D and found a good job. She did not forget to smile at me when we finished the interview. I gave her the pseudonym Silver because it is a word partly related to her real name and also because the cold and calm image of silver is like her self-possessed attitude.

## Genuine

Genuine is fifty two years old and was born in 1956. She is a high-ranking judicial official. In this position, she was appointed by high government officials. She has been a judicial official for twenty nine years. From a view of the traditional meaning of success, she is a highly successful woman. The first newspaper article about her appeared in 2001, reporting that she had been nominated as the first female chairperson of an important election management committee. In 2003, another article described “a trio of female judges” with two other judges. She has been spotlighted by the press more frequently since she was appointed to her current position in 2004. It is a highly influential position within Korean society, and her nomination created a great sensation with symbolic meaning. It was a momentous triumph especially for feminists. It was described as a remarkable accomplishment that she had overcome barriers in a famously conservative sector of public service. An article stated that Genuine’s nomination was particularly significant because she was not only a woman but was much younger than any males in her workplace. It was also reported that the judiciary, which has traditionally been dominated by men in the top echelon despite a remarkable increase in the number of women among young judges as well as public prosecutors, was not only removing the gender barrier but also the diehard rules of seniority. The Korean press was busy interviewing her and competitively reporting this news as an exceptional change in the history of Korea. Newspapers and a variety of magazines interviewed her about her official and private life.

Genuine’s husband is a famous lawyer who has appeared on television programs and hosted radio programs. Just as she followed the best elite course to prepare Korean women for elite positions, he also went through the best elite course for Korean men. He resigned his position as a representative of a law firm and as a radio program host when she was appointed to



her current position. It was because he thought that her duty, which should be politically neutral and fair, might be biased by his existence as a lawyer and a host dealing with current events. The press also reported extensively about her having a famous husband and his active support of her.

She followed the typical elite career course in Korea. She graduated from one of the best girls' high school, established in the 1970s when a high school entrance examination system existed. In 1975, she entered one of the best universities in South Korea. Furthermore, a law major has been recognized as only for the highest achieving students. Genuine has all of these qualifications for typical elite career course. The national examination for legal professions in Korea is still very competitive, and she was admitted on her first trial in 1978. After she completed the education and training program for newly accepted judiciary, she has worked as a judge since 1981. She was appointed to her current position in 2004.

She originally liked literature when she was a high school student and wanted to go into the humanities department at a university. However, she entered the social science department because of her parents' and teachers' expectations of her majoring in law as it was the most prestigious major that a girl could choose. After she entered the social science department, she had a desire to go abroad to study sociology. However, she majored in law in the social science department according to her parents' recommendation. She talked about the reason,

Well... at that time, there was no role model for a woman to go abroad alone for study or a career woman who was married... So, I had only a vague idea of my future, and I couldn't plan my life according to my own will.

She did not like a law major for some time, but later changed her mind and took the law examination required for a legal profession. She passed the first examination on her first trial, so she took the final examination, which she also passed. Considering that the law examination is

very competitive, she must be very intelligent as can be assumed from her academic career. Fortunately, having abilities for logical thinking and writing, she said she could continue legal profession. However, she still has her dream of literature with a plan for writing a book or giving lectures after retirement, in other words, doing something different from her current duties.

She has two daughters and sent them to alternative schools. Her first daughter studies psychology in the United States at a college. She said that she and her husband wanted to send their daughters to free schools to develop their individuality because she and her husband went through the typical elite education course. She lived with her parents-in-law until recently. Her father-in-law had dementia for nine years and her mother-in-law was sick for two and half years before she died.

I was one of the many people who came to know her through the media when she was appointed to her current position in 2004. Although I was busy with my doctoral studies coursework in Athens, Georgia, and did not read Korean newspapers, I heard the news as it was the most sensational story in Korea at that time. I had the honor of being introduced to her through several people. As my husband once worked for a newspaper company, he knew a senior journalist who knew Genuine's husband. I arranged the interview by contacting Genuine's secretary. I went to the Supreme Court to meet her in October 2007. I had to leave my identification card with a staff in the lobby who called Genuine's office to announce my visit. The office was the nicest and most luxurious of the ones that I visited for the interviews. She wore a navy blue skirt suit. She had more gray hair than I expected from the images of her in the media. I read from the newspaper that she was so busy that she usually works till eleven or twelve o'clock at night. However, she did not act as though she was very busy and we spent

seventy minutes in the interview. She looked modest. She talked with a low tone of voice from the start to the end of the interview.

Once she had a difficult time because of work-home conflict. She was very busy as a judge, but had a lot of housework at home including caring for her father-in-law with dementia and two children who needed their mother. She even thought about giving up her career or running away from her situation. However, she said that one day she suddenly felt that she hit the bottom, meaning there might not be anything more difficult than this. Since then, she has changed her mind to a more positive outlook, her children grew up, and it became better for her. Also, her husband's awareness and transformation helped her. She is a judicial official who has intentionally made an effort to be on the side of those who are marginalized in Korean society like women. She said that she could understand people better than men because she has the sensibility of a female.

After the interview, I felt attracted to her as a human being. My trip home after the interview was most pleasant as I was in a good mood for some unknown reason. I had to think about why I was especially attracted to Genuine among all the other participants because every participant was kind to me and most of them were candid during the interviews. After a long time of reflection, I realized that she and I had a lot in common as working mothers and that I was experiencing a difficult time from the utmost stress of a working mother when I interviewed her. Also, she and I have gentle personalities with similar backgrounds. We also graduated from one of the leading private girls' high schools with a long history and tradition, and we graduated from the same university. These things in common made me feel very close to her as a woman. I gave her the pseudonym Genuine as it has the most similar meaning with the word 'Jinjeongsung' that she often mentioned during the interview. She said that she has wanted to

seek what she truly wants in her life, which means that she wants to live a truthful, sincere, and genuine life.

### Patience

Patience is fifty three years old and was born in 1954. She is director of a women's development center. There are several of these centers in Seoul. The women's development center is a lifelong education institute for women, established and funded by the city of Seoul. As director of one of the centers, Patience takes part in the total management of the center. There are one hundred and fifty educational programs and various kinds of festivals and exhibitions for women in this center. She has worked as a director of this center for the last five years since 2004.

She is not very successful from the perspective of the traditional meaning of success. Although she holds the highest position in the Center, her position is equivalent to the fifth level in the promotion system of government officials. There are nine levels, according to the promotion system of government officials in Korea. Compared with Orchid, who is equivalent to second level, Patience does not hold a very high position. Furthermore, she had been promoted to second level when she was in a different workplace.

She graduated Ewha Women's University, majoring in history. She entered the university in 1972. Ewha Women's University is the first women's university established in Korea. When she graduated in 1976, only banks and newspaper companies hired women with bachelor's degree for the official career path. She tried to get a job in some of the newspaper companies but failed as the competition was too intense. So she said she went to graduate school because she could not find a job. After she finished her master's degree in history, the situation was no better, and she still could not find a job. Fortunately, one of her relatives was an assistant principal in a

middle school and he hired her as a part-time teacher. Two years later, a government-funded institution for the study and research for women was established and she entered there through the official route in 1982.

While working at the research institution, she married and had two children. She worked hard as a researcher and was promoted up to the second level. However, with the economic crisis in 1997, there was a reorganization of the institution mainly around researchers with doctoral degrees. As she was in the process of a doctoral program and had not finished her degree, she thought that she would not be promoted to first level and so in 1999 moved to a bureau of women's policy in a local government. Originally she was rejected when she applied for director of the bureau, a second-level government official. Later, she had an opportunity to work there as head of a department, a fourth-level government official. The local government was a difficult place for her to work as it was very political. She was regarded with jealousy and treated with restraint by the other women in the bureau who had worked there for a long time. After five years, when she expected to be promoted to the third level, she was rejected and received a stand-by announcement meaning she was almost laid off. She did not have a political background or support group within the local government and felt that she would not be normally promoted in this organization. Therefore, she resigned. After her resignation, one of her former colleagues suggested that she apply for the position of the director of the current Center, so she transferred to her current job. While working in this post, she completed her doctoral degree in 2004.

I met Patience briefly twice before our first interview. When I asked Jeehye for help recruiting participants for my study, she took me to a celebration of the third anniversary for the private trust of this center. She introduced me to Patience at the ceremony, and Patience

welcomed me with warm hands. When Jeehye mentioned that I was a doctoral student doing a dissertation, Patience told me with a smile to come to her office whenever I needed her help. As she was very busy, I could only meet her for short periods. I arranged a pre-meeting to explain my study. After thirty minutes of pre-interview, she agreed to participate in my research and we set our first official interview for June 2007. I met her again for the second interview in December 2007. My overall impression of her was warm and friendly as if she were my neighbor. She was the only participant who used *ban-mal* to me. In the Korean language system, we use two kinds of expression, *ban-mal* and *jon-dae-mal*. We use *jon-dae-mal* to someone who is older, in a higher position, or of a distant relationship. It implies respect for the person. On the other hand, we use *ban-mal* to someone when the person is younger, or in a lower position, or in a close relationship. All the participants used *jon-dae-mal* with me and, of course, I used *jon-dae-mal*, too. Although I was younger than they, they used *jon-dae-mal* because we were not in a close relationship. However, Patience used *ban-mal*, which made me comfortable because it meant that she thought of me as somewhat closer than the other participants did.

She talked very frankly, especially about her salary. We both laughed loudly when she said, “Well, being here [the Women’s Center] as a director is good, except for the salary.” She wants to be traditionally successful, although she thinks that having a higher position and salary is not everything to her success. She values her family life, her two daughters who are growing up well, and her good relationship with her husband and her family-in-law. However, she also wants to hold a higher position than her current one. As she now realizes the importance of social networks from her experience in local government, she is intentionally trying to extend her networks. In the past, she did not have extra time for networking because she was busy with her professional work, housework, and caring for her two children, although she lived with her

mother-in-law who helped her a great deal. Now she is dreaming and preparing for the next leap to a better position. I chose the pseudonym Patience because I was impressed that she said she was patient. In the past, she had to focus on taking care of her family including her husband, two children, and parents-in-law, while she worked. She said, “It was a time of patience.” As the result of her patience, her family trusted her. Now she does not focus on taking care of her family. Instead, she usually goes home late after attending various kinds of formal and informal meetings networking for her next career leap.

### Elegance

Elegance is fifty five years old and was born in 1953. She is a member of the National Assembly as a member of a political party. She has been a member of the National Assembly since 2005, according to the system of proportional representation. She was also a spokesperson for her party for six months in 2007. As a member of the National Assembly, she participates in legislation and inspection of the administration of government offices.

From a view of the traditional meaning of success, she is quite successful. Although she is not as famous as Silver or Genuine, it was also reported in the media when she became a member of the National Assembly after seventeen years of working as a lawyer. It was news because she had been quite a successful lawyer, yet she changed her career. As a member of the National Assembly, in 2006 citizen group selected her as the best member of National Assembly at inspection of government administration.

She graduated from Ehwa Women’s University, majoring in English Literature. She entered the university in 1972. She chose English Literature, not because of her desire but because of her parents’ advice. They said majoring in English Literature would help her find a better job and meet a man from a higher socio-economic class. As her parents’ wish, she was

recruited by a company after graduation in 1976. Her work as a secretary in the company ended after three years with her marriage. She went to graduate school and received a master's degree in English Literature in 1981. She then began to teach at a university and gave birth to her first daughter. When her husband's workplace was transferred to the United States, she accompanied him and gave birth to her second son. Her husband suggested and actively supported her study for law school. After having her second baby, she entered a law school in the United States in 1985. She graduated from the law school in 1987 and worked for one of the largest law firms in the United States. for three years. When her husband was again transferred to Korea, she returned with her husband and two children and was hired in 1990 by one of the largest law firms in Korea. She worked hard for eleven years, established her own law firm in 2001, and set her career on its way. She was spotlighted by the media when she achieved large scale contracts in heavy industries between Korea and the Middle East. She first appeared in the newspaper for this accomplishment in 2004.

When it was suggested that she become a member of the National Assembly, she had two motivations to change. First, she thought that she had achieved to a certain extent as a lawyer and that it was alright if she worked in a different field. Second, she wanted to extend the scope of her work from working from engagement with a small community to one with the larger population. She wanted to serve the greater public when she became a lawyer. This time, it was natural for her because she could extend her service to larger population, the whole nation. The number of female members of the National Assembly was forty when she became a member.

I was introduced to her by Heejoo. Although she was very busy, I was given her direct cell phone number. I went to the hall of the National Assembly to meet her in September 2007. I had to leave my identification card with a staff in the lobby who called her office to announce



my visit. The office of a member of the National Assembly is not large but simple. She was much thinner than I had pictured her from the images in the media. She was thin and tall but not large. Her face was round and small. She was elegant and had refined manners. I was impressed by her dress which was so white that it seemed shiny. She wore a white skirt suit, white lace top and white shoes. I was wondering how she managed that pure white color all day long. Now as I reflect on it, I think that her dress might have been ivory rather than white because Korean people usually do not wear white clothes very often except for funerals. Her impression was neat and tidy just like her dress.

Elegance looked busy even during the interview. When she got a phone call while we were talking, she spoke for quite some time and asked me to confirm that the content of her phone call was not recorded. She originally told me that she was available for forty minutes, but our interview turned out to last eighty minutes. Although she said that she was busy, she extended the interview time little by little. I was nervous when I met her because she was the first famous woman that I met. Although she smiled a lot at me during the interview, I could not smile. I relaxed a little at the end of the interview when she kindly told me that she was glad to meet me and thought of me as her junior.

Her husband is secretary-general in a research foundation. He is her reliable supporter and gives her advice and encouragement when she has a hard time. He was the person who suggested that she complete her master study and enter a law school. He also directly supports her activity as a member of National Assembly by writing for her website. It seems that her life began to shine after she met her husband. There were only a few Korean people who had transferred to the United States in the early eighties. Also, there was an even smaller number of people who had studied in Europe at that time. Her husband had studied in Germany so he had

more liberal attitudes towards working women. He was the person who encouraged her to prepare for and continue with her career at the proper time. If it were not him, she might be just a full-time housewife, as it was the most widely accepted path of a woman within the general atmosphere in the mid-seventies.

She thought she owed her current success to her family and, moreover, to society in general. As she felt she has achieved much in her career and was happy with her family, she also felt sorry for the larger society. She said that she could not boast of what she had because she felt sorry for the other people who have not achieved like her. This thought was the basis of her motivation to work for the larger society through her sincere efforts. I gave her the pseudonym Elegance because her graceful, refined manner and appearance left such a strong image after the interview.

#### Classic

Classic is fifty six years old and was born in 1952. She is general manager in a bank's headquarters. She is at the same level as a bank branch manager. The bank is one of the largest and oldest in South Korea. Her job is researching financial information for referred clients, examining defects of all the branches of the bank, and urging correction of the defects.

From the viewpoint of a traditional meaning of success, she is not very successful. She worked as a branch manager for eight years from 1998 to 2005. Those were her best days as a career woman. Her branch once received first rank for its business performance and for customer services among all branches from all over the country. The bank magazine reported on her for this reason. However, she was transferred to the headquarters in 2006 because she reached the age of fifty five. The retirement age at the bank is sixty years old. However, branch managers who reach the age of fifty-five are required to retreat from working in the branch offices. They

could choose to retire at that time or to stay at the bank. If they retire at that time, they could receive a much higher retirement allowance so that, for example, they can start their own business. If they decide to stay at the bank until sixty, they receive their retirement allowance divided by that period instead of their monthly salary. This is called the system of peak salary. Of course, there are few people who are promoted to executive director other than she.

She has worked for the bank since 1970. She began working there after immediately graduating from high school. At that time, in South Korea there was little opportunity for women to have jobs. Working in banks was one of the best jobs that women could have. In the early 1970s, banks did not hire women college graduates but only high school graduates. Before she entered the bank, all women were hired based on recommendations from bankers. All women were employed through personal connections. When she began working at the bank in 1970, banks started to hire women from high schools through public advertisements instead of personal connections.

She originally wanted to go to college but had to earn money because of her family's financial situation. Her father was too old to work and already retired. Her brothers and sisters were busy with their own lives. So, she was the only breadwinner for her parents at that time. Therefore, she went to work at the bank instead of going to college. At first she was ashamed of not going to college. For this reason, she was pessimistic about herself, her family, and the world for several years. She felt that she was inferior to her friends who had gone to college. However, when she was transformed through Bible study, she became a new person. She came to appreciate what she had. After that, she always had a positive and bright perspective about herself, her family, and the world. After saving some money for college tuition for several years, she went to a night college and majored in education while she was still working for the bank.

After that, she completed her master's degree in education and is now working on her doctorate in management while still working at the bank full-time.

I was introduced to Classic by Jeehye. When I first called her asking for the interview, she rejected the idea because she said that she was not a successful woman. Although I told her that the purpose of my interview was to ask what she thought about success and I was not looking for traditionally successful women, she still said that she could not do the interview but would introduce me to other people. She said that there were many married women who had both their careers and families; they were really successful women, but she was not successful as she had not married. As she was so strong willed, I had to say yes and asked her to introduce me to other women if she sincerely did not want to do the interview. Several days later when I called her again, she said she would prefer to do the interview because she could not find other women who agreed to be interviewed.

In July 2007 I went to the headquarters of the bank near my home. When I met her in the lobby, I recognized at first glance that she was a very sensitive, kind, and warm-hearted person. She held my hands as soon as she saw me and sincerely told me, "Thank you for coming here for me." She linked her arm in mine, took me to a staff lounge on fourth floor of the building, and bought me a cup of tea. Later, when I went there for the second interview, I learned that she especially asked the clerk to serve the tea in a beautiful cup as she was treating me as a precious guest. The interview went smoothly but strongly as she talked a lot as soon as she sat down. Her eyes moistened when she talked about difficulties in the past. She looked like a sensitive girl with a pure heart, despite her age and wrinkled face. After the interview, she bought me a hot pot for lunch. The hot pot was a Korean style one in which we dip beef into beef broth with vegetables. It was the best meal that I had with any participant. Also, she gave me a souvenir of

the bank, a travel kit, and a souvenir of the restaurant, a large umbrella. I felt that she treated me as a first level guest.

For the second interview, I met her in December 2007 at the same place. In the second interview, I came to know that she had other resources such as bank magazine articles. When I asked her to give me the resources and told her that I would come to get them after a short time, she suggested going to lunch together, this time to another good restaurant for hot pot. I met her a total of three times. At the third meeting, I did not record our conversation because it was casual but as she told me important things during the meeting, I made notes. When I met her for the third time, she bought me lunch and coffee and dessert, too. When I asked her to let me buy coffee and dessert for her, she told me to buy those for her when I got my Ph.D.

She is single and she says that she is still trying to marry. She said that when she had low self-esteem, she could not even dream of marriage because she thought she was too humble to marry. After she overcame the low self-esteem, there was no chance for her to marry. She lives with her mother. She asked me to introduce her to a man for her marriage, and I promised her to try to find one for her. I gave her the pseudonym Classic because she said that she likes classical music and her attitude toward marriage is quite conservative.

#### Frontier

Frontier is sixty three years old and was born in 1944. She is currently a member of the National Assembly. She has the most splendid achievement among the ten participants. She was a high-ranking government official for three times in different positions; from 2001 to 2003; from 2003 to 2004; and from 2006 to 2007. She has been a member of the National Assembly since 2000. She participated in various kinds of legislation and, like Elegance, she was selected as the best member of the National Assembly committee for the inspection of the government

offices in 2000. She established a firm stand on the policy toward women when she was a high-ranking government official in a women-related field. When she was a government official in an environment-related field, her office was selected as providing the best service among the government offices, and she was selected as the highest rated leader at her level. She resigned as a high-ranking government official in March 2007. She is still actively participating in politics as a member of the National Assembly.

She graduated from Ewha Women's University, majoring in French literature. She had entered the university in 1963. She originally wanted to major in Korean literature; however, her high school teacher recommended French literature, so she followed the suggestion. She participated in a club studying social studies. There, she was awakened to the social problems of the 1960s and came to have a critical mind toward the political, social, and economic problems that South Korea faced at that time. She married when she graduated from the university in 1967 to her senior whom she met in that study club. Her husband was confined in prison, charged with being involved in a political movement and sentenced to fifteen years. Since then, she has supported him for thirteen years. She supplied him with clothes, food, and money from outside the prison and exchanged letters with him. She herself was responsible for supporting her family, including her six younger brothers and sisters. She worked for a living in places such as a pastor's office and a college dormitory.

While working hard for a living, she was transformed due to her participation in women's education program at the Korean Christian Academy. She then devoted herself to the democratization and women's movement, working as a secretary in the Academy since 1974. From that time, her goal has been the democratization of Korea and establishment of an equal society where women and minorities are not discriminated against. In 1979, she was imprisoned

and charged with involvement in the democratization movement and sentenced to two years. After she was released in 1981, she made her utmost effort to beg for mercy to end her husband's imprisonment, and as a result of her efforts, her husband was released in 1982, after thirteen years of imprisonment. The newly-weds reunited after thirteen years. She had a son and tried to make his last be a combination of her and her husband's last names. After that, she was in the forefront of the first generation of the feminist movement in Korea. She led several feminist associations and devoted herself to the Korean feminist movement during the eighties and nineties. During this same time period, she received her master's degree.

She became a member of the National Assembly in 2000 with the encouragement of the President. It seemed that she had changed her career, but it was a natural choice for she was able to contribute to the continuation of the feminist movement. As she thought that the contents of the feminist movement should be reflected in the national policy, she entered the political world with the consent of the other feminists she worked with. She also wanted to open up an avenue for the extension of women's political power. She was elected as a member of the National Assembly by the public in competition with a former male member of the National Assembly who had already been elected five times.

When she and her husband were separated because of his imprisonment, they exchanged approximately five hundred letters. There are also five books about her, focusing on her life history and her leadership style as a female leader. While I was collecting information before the interview, I wondered how she could look so gentle, elegant, and even noble, despite having suffered many obstacles and difficulties including being tortured and imprisoned for two years. She always used refined and restrained language and had bright and mild facial expressions, that also showed her strength. From these facts, I came to admire her even before the interview.

I was introduced to her by my husband, Dae Joong. He knew the current president of the Academy where she worked so I was able to arrange an interview. I contacted her assistant to schedule a day and time. I went to the hall of the National Assembly and left my identification card in the lobby to go in the building. I arrived there thirty minutes before the interview time as I hoped to see her a little earlier. But she was not in her office because she was in the middle of the inspection of government administration; I waited in her office. When I met her, she appeared the same as I had seen in the media—the same gentle and noble impression. She wore a black H-line skirt and red jacket, with a white lace top. She seemed to think while talking as she talked very slowly. Mentally, I was in a hurry because her secretary had repeatedly asked me to finish the interview within thirty or forty minutes. Actually, her secretary intruded twice during the interview, asking that this interview end as soon as possible because she has another important meeting with a major broadcasting company. In front of her, I felt like a little girl who could not dare to understand her life although she kindly answered all of my questions. I gave her the pseudonym Frontier because I thought that her life is itself that of a frontier in her field and in the history of Korean career women.

### Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I presented the brief background information of each participant in this study to help understand their lives better. I reviewed the profile of each participant from the youngest to the oldest. Their current jobs and important issues in their career histories were presented, with my experiences of interviewing them.



## CHAPTER 5

### FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to understand the meaning of success in Korean career women's lives. The research questions guiding this study were,

1. How do Korean career women define success in their lives?
2. How do Korean career women develop their meaning of success?
3. What are Korean career women's strategies for their success in relation to gender expectations and roles in Korean society?

This chapter consists of my efforts to search for answers from the data for the three research questions. The data are represented in three categories: defining success, constructing the meaning of success, and performing success. Detailed categories of the themes are presented in *Table 4*.

<Table 4> Categories of the Themes

Themes	Sub-categories		
Defining Success	Promotion in the Workplace		
	Content Family Life		
	Contributions for Societal Improvement		
	Summary: Definitions Combined		
Constructing the Meaning of Success	Once upon a Time		
	Along the Way		
	Summary		
Performing Success	Using Femininity	Traditional Femininity	
		Situational Femininity	
	Bounding out of Traditional Marriage Relations	Creating Cooperating Systems with Family	Support from Husbands
			Childcare Support from Mothers
		Being Single	
	Dealing with the Glass Ceiling	Just Working Hard	
		Networking	
	Summary		

## Defining Success

Participants talked about their success in their lives, not the success indicated by other people's typical standards. The success they discussed can be categorized largely in three areas: promotion in the workplace, content family life, and contributions to societal improvement.

### *Promotion in the Workplace*

When the participants talk about success, they mostly began with promotion in their workplace. Seven participants talked about promotion as an important condition of their success. Three of them explicitly stated that promotion was about achieving a higher position in the hierarchical system of their fields. Four of them somewhat indirectly mentioned the importance of promotion. They considered promotion as a way of expanding their influence and gaining recognition.

The participant, Patience, refuses to accept a definition of success as self-fulfillment or self-satisfaction. She thinks of promotion as receiving proper treatment according to her career and age:

I don't think that success is self-satisfaction. Well, it rather means to rise in the position corresponding to my career ... and age, because age is usually in proportion to career in our society ... Well, I think I should have a position corresponding to my age and career.

In Korean society where patriarchal order still dominates social consciousness, age is one of the important factors to consider. There are 'three principles and five moralities' which are the basis of Confucian morality, called *Sam-gang-oh-ryun* (三綱五倫). They have been the principles of political reign and the foundation in the everyday lives of people since the *Joseon* dynasty in Korea. *Jang-yu-yu-suh* (長幼有序) is one of these principles; it means that there is social order and regularity between older people and younger people. According to this principle,

younger people should sincerely respect and cordially treat older people. Thus, age and years of working in an organization are the major elements considered in promotion. There are usually rules for promotion in Korean organizations according to the number of years of one's career as well as one's accomplishments. If there is no severe flaw in one's achievement, that person usually is promoted only after a certain period of time. What Patience said about getting a position proper for her age and career can be understood in this context, especially in her situation since her career curve is on a decline. Patience was promoted to the second level position within the promotion system of government officials or quasi-government-officials when she was working in a research institute. However, she was moved to the fourth level when she left the institute for a provincial government office and now is the fifth level. Thus, Patience has the strong goal of being promoted to a higher position sometime in the future. Through promotion, she wants to expand her competency and power. She says, "Well, when the position gets higher, the power becomes greater. Also, my competency and the scope of my work expand".

Elegance, another participant, also has the concept of rising to the best on the career ladder:

I think that success is to rise up to the top of what I wanted to achieve, whatever one's field is, well, that doesn't necessarily mean politics, right? For example, if one is a hairdresser, and if she works hard, does her best in her field, and gets to the top, it is satisfaction and success, isn't it?

She thinks that she is successful because she achieved the highest honor when she was a lawyer before she became a member of the National Assembly. She worked for the largest law firms, established her own law firm with the people who followed her, and also became well-

known fame as a lawyer in her specific area. One of the reasons she entered the political world was that she thought she had achieved as much as she could in the law field.

Light, a third participant, also talked about climbing a career ladder as high as she could. As a social worker, her success in the workplace is to become director of a social welfare center. She said,

Well, let's say I am very satisfied with being an ordinary social worker for my whole life. So, is it success to work as an ordinary social worker for all my life? No, I don't think so. If I can say I am successful, I would be a general manager to contribute to a larger field. When I get recognized, I would have the title of CEO as well. Then, I could have a broader perspective, do more things, do things better, and contribute more than I did as a general manager. That is success, in my view.

For Light, however, promotion in the workplace does not have meaning in itself. Promotion has its meaning when it exists within other factors of success in her life. Specifically, she has a sense of calling in social work and has a larger goal of contributing to the field. Also, she wants to live a continuously challenging life in a broader perspective. She recently received a Ph.D in social work, which was a challenge in her life. Having a goal of becoming a CEO is also a challenge to her. In this sense, promotion has meaning when other things in her life are considered. Also, she talks about the meaning of promotion in that her influence becomes wider:

Well, it is reasonable that one generally gets promoted according to age and career. Well, getting promoted is very meaningful in that I can widen the scope of my thought and expand my influence a little more. So, I think that promotion in this sense is very good for me ... Also, I'd like to say that getting promoted is meaningful because I could get the influential power corresponding to the position, the scope of my work gets wider, the

more people I could meet, the more business I could expand, and I could get the capability to embrace variety.

For Light, being promoted has importance because it means that she is going to be able to participate in the decision making process to expand the scope of social work business, which she could not do in a lower position.

While the majority of women in the study expressed similar ideas about success, the other participants were more indirect. For Classic, success means to survive in the workplace to the top level and have her own family at the same time. She was a branch manager at a bank, and being a female branch manager meant a lot to her because she first entered the bank in 1970 and went through the harsh environment for women. Currently in 2008, there is no female president of all the banks in Korea and no female vice president of a major Korean bank (Go, 2008.01.14.). The number of female executives of four major Korean banks is seven among 164 executives (Go, 2008.01.14.). Considering this context, Classic considers herself successful in relation to her workplace, although she does not consider herself as wholly successful because she is not married. Her pride comes from the fact that she was once a branch manager, and her branch received awards for business performance and customer services. Although she was too humble to explicitly say that being raised to the position of a branch manager was success, she indirectly talked about it. “When a woman gets married, raises her children, and is a branch manager, that woman is a successful woman. I am not successful in this sense, though.”

Classic also values recognition of her business achievement within her company. When I asked her if she could give me other sources such as diary or essays, she gave me copies of articles from a monthly magazine published within her company. When she was a branch manager of the bank three years ago, hers was at the top of all the branches over the country for

customer services and for business performance. She kept the photograph of her receiving an award for business performance and the newsletter article about her branch at the top of customer services. From the fact that Classic is so humble that she does not talk too much about her own achievement, I could tell that she is very proud of this recognition that she received in her company.

Silver talks about promotion in relation to the social compensation that she deserves. “The definition of success is, I think, to do my best according to my ability and to get social compensation proper to my efforts.” Although Silver did her best in her job, she failed to be promoted three times when she was supposed to, according to the years of her career and achievement, because her male juniors were given the promotion instead of her. She thinks that she deserved that promotion solely considering her competency. Thus, her understanding of her current status as not successful can be understood in this context. Although she is in a position regarded as traditionally successful, she does not think that it is a fair result of social compensation for her efforts. She thinks that she should be in a higher and more powerful position according to her ability. Also, she thinks that her company takes advantage of the situation of having no female executives in the entire organization, which is the reason she has stayed at her current position for a long time, four years.

For Helen, the meaning of promotion is rather complicated. She does not work to get promoted. However, she would be depressed if she were not promoted at the right time, according to her. Promotion for her has its meaning in relation to acquiring influential power within and outside her company:

The reason I think promotion is necessary is that I can get *position power* within the organizational culture and the general society. Promotion is very nice in this sense...

Well, it is advantageous in outside relationships when it is a level of the position such as a director, a vice-chief, and a general manager, because I meet people with the same level as I such as decision-makers. And yet, I get inside power when it is a duty of the position such as group leader and team leader. Now there is a male subordinate who is the same age in my department. And he is courteous to me. If I don't have this *position power*, he might be just a colleague. Promotion in this company is empowering rather than being a recognition of achievement. [Italics originally said in English]

As competition for promotion is not severe in her company, just being promoted does not mean much to the employees. Thus, Helen seeks promotion not because she wants social compensation or recognition corresponding to her efforts but because she knows the importance of the position power which is necessary in the process of decision making within the organization. For her, getting recognized for her work is achieved through people's evaluation and praise. Helen talked about recognition from her boss:

When a task was given to me, the motivation for me to work is responsibility and recognition around me. Expectation and recognition ... Within this organization, getting recognition from the vice president would indicate success for me. If my organization and the vice president who represents the organization expect something about my current work and if I achieve it and receive praise, that is success for me.

Helen's desire for recognition is connected to her pride of receiving recognition for the project she was in charge of for three years that contributed to a change in the organization's cultural perspective toward educational programs. Although she had tuberculosis and lost her original voice, probably as a result of working too hard when she was in charge of the project,

she is very proud of the fact that she, as the person in charge, was recognized by people within her company. She said:

When they did monitoring of the educational programs from the affiliates, they said it was good. Especially they said that the people in charge were very passionate and sacrificing, which was very impressive ... The seniors told me that they appreciated what I had done and that I did a good job and filled my glass with liquor ... I felt good when the seniors acknowledged me like that ... And till now the vice president and the managing director said that the educational programs have no problem at all.

Orchid also talked about being recognized for her work, similar to Helen. She said that she does not work for promotion only, but at the same time said that she would be depressed if she were not promoted at the proper times. Promotion has meaning for her because in that way she is recognized through her work in her organization. For every task she completes, she always does her best so that she can be satisfied with the result and also be recognized by other people:

I don't want to look like a fool. Well, I don't want to hear that I am not capable of working very well. Although I don't have ambition for getting promoted fast, I will be satisfied when I hear from people that I do my work perfectly.

Her standpoint about promotion from the meaning of being recognized is similar to that of Light. Light recalls,

I think that I have the desire inside me, the desire of not making my name ashamed of. Um.. so, the reason I work hard is, after all, that I want to be recognized that Light works very well and that when Light takes a certain task, it goes up to a certain level. So, I give all my effort for the work, and then the achievement comes naturally with my efforts.



Both of them give priority to completing their tasks in the workplace with all their best efforts. With the outcome of their work, they expect promotion as the sign of recognition for their work achievement.

As stated above, participants' comments revealed that promotion occupies a basic part of their concept of success. Most of them consider it natural and reasonable compared to the efforts they have given. The reason they value promotion is largely to be recognized and expand their influence within their organizations. Promotion cannot be the sole standard of success because participants include other things in their definition of success in a broader perspective. However, promotion constitutes a sufficient condition of success in Korean career women's lives because the participants know and accept that they would feel unpleasant if they were not promoted. Thus, they build up other standards of success based on promotion in their workplace. Thus, promotion becomes a sufficient condition of success.

#### *Content Family Life*

Most of the participants also talk about their families when they talk about success in their lives. Living a content life with their family members is another important standard of success. As shown in *Table 3* in the previous chapter, there are six married and three single women among the participants. The six women who are married talked a lot about their family life as it related to success. Although they all stated that work-home conflict was the most difficult barrier in their career, they also stated the happiness and satisfaction they received from their families beyond the work-home conflict.

Three of the six married women, Light, Patience, and Classic, directly stated that happiness with family was part of their success. The happiness of each family member and their

own happiness with family constitute a part of their success. Light especially talked about the importance of her daughter's happiness. She said,

Although social recognition is very important for me, a child's life cannot be replaced with it. And, um, my child is a high school student now. But, if she is insecure because of lack of parents' love and attention and does not adapt to her school life, I think it is my responsibility. If I decide to do social responsibility, I should keep my responsibility for my children and my family, too ... The social responsibility ... can be delayed or be performed at a different angle ... But, my child.. I think she can grow up well when I fill up her needs first and then step back ... As she is my child, I think that I should raise her until she can independently think, behave, and be responsible for her behavior ... Then, I think I should take good care of her first. So, if she needs me right now and wants me stay at home for her, I'd rather say I could delay my career than giving that up.

It was quite surprising to hear that Light could resign her job if her daughter had an emergency situation that needed her immediately. I was surprised especially because Light has accumulated a solid career and has a dream of being director of a social welfare center. However, as she explained further, she meant that she would not give up her career but only delay it and that she could carry out her social responsibility in a way other than rising up the career ladder without interruption. She values her daughter's stable development and her harmonious relationship with her family as well as her own career. Related to her daughter, Light also talked about the recognition she gained from her daughter. Her daughter is a high school student and wants to specialize in social work just like her mother. She revealed,

Well, I am glad that I was influential with her [Light's daughter] from the fact that she decided to do a social work major. And I guess that my influence was positive for her.

Um, so, it is very worthwhile that I must be a good model enough to be positively reflected on my daughter. Rather than that, she has good academic records and has grown up well, I am glad that I was acknowledged by my daughter who is closest to me as she thought like that. I think that is success, too.

Although Light also received social recognition through an award, she values her daughter's recognition of her as a good role model as a social worker and a mother more than the award, directly stating that recognition from her daughter is success for her. Furthermore, she talked about the importance of family as related to work. In particular, she directly relates what she has gained and learned from each family member to her work as director of a healthy family support center. From the experience of living with her mother-in-law, she could understand her clients who are the same age as her mother-in-law from their perspectives. From the experience of raising a child as a working mother, she could share her experience with her client mothers who came to the parents' education program at her center. Light recalled,

Family itself is a place where I could rest anytime and with those who make me warm. So, I am really happy with that ... While I lived with my mother-in-law, I could try to guess what she thought. There are my clients, the elderly, whom I work for ... I could understand them and accept their situation with affection. And while I was raising my child ... sometimes there might be difficulties for a career woman ... I could sympathize with other parents during parents education or parents meeting ... Everything I can share, tell, and serve for my clients is within the family.

She has a rather integrated perspective about the relationship between her family and her work. Patience's success includes a good and solid relationship with her family members

including her husband, two daughters, parents-in-law, brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law, and her mother. According to Patience,

Well, um, I married my husband late, but I like him, and we live well together ... And the children are so precious and I am satisfied with them, two daughters ... I think they have grown up well ... And I am quite healthy ... so, I am satisfied personally ... I and my husband lived with my parents-in-law and they passed away during their stay with us ... So, the brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law appreciate us as we had their parents with us ... So, I am acknowledged from my family-in-law. And my mom ... she was severely sick ... and I try to understand her and to do my best for her. So, I think that this is quite a success personally.

She finds the meaning of success in a happy life with her family and relatives. It is because her family gives her a sense of security. Although she has also had a hard time with child rearing while she continued to work, she loves the stable and secure feeling that her family gives her. Patience went on to explain:

If I had not married, my life would be dreary and I would have a hard time. I think I would not have any place for rest. I was not happy at all when I did not get married ... I love my kids and I love my husband ... I talk to my children whether I have hard time or good time, and, I am really happy whenever I think of my children.

However, she also says that she thinks like this because she also has her own job. From my perspective as a married woman in Korean society, she had a difficult life in the past although she has talked about it with a very positive attitude. She lived her parents-in-law until they passed away, except for one year when they lived apart. Living with parents-in-law was hard and visiting them every weekend was hard, too, she said. Even during the one year when

they lived apart, she visited her parents-in-law every weekend with her husband and two children, and they spent the whole weekend together. When she came home late at night on Sunday, she still had to do housework such as ironing her husband's shirts without enough sleep. However, she felt happy because she had her own career and her own achievement that she could feel happy about, too, except for other family members' happiness. If she had not had a career, she might not have felt happy now because of the stress from all these complex relationships. In this sense, her feelings of a content family life are closely related to her career. Patience continues,

Well, if I did not have a career and lived as just a fulltime housewife, I would not think like this. I think I am satisfied myself because I could get rid of stress while working and, you know, studied for my degree although it was hard for me, and earned money.

Although Classic is not married, she has similar attitude with Patience about family.

Rather conservatively, Classic thinks that her success will become whole when she marries and has children:

If a woman is a banker while she gets married and raises one or two children, she is a successful woman. But, in a sense, I did not sufficiently complete a life as a woman, you know, a life as a woman ... So, if a woman is a branch manager and at the same time she gets married and raises children, she is a successful woman. And I am not a successful woman at all.

She is still trying to find her future spouse and even asked me to find someone to introduce to her. Although she was once at the zenith of her career as a female branch manager, she does not think of herself as successful because establishing her own family is so important to her and she has not established one.

Orchid, Settler, Elegance, Frontier, and Genuine, five of the ten participants, rather indirectly accept the importance of happiness with family when they define success. Orchid talked about recognition from her daughter, just as Light did. When I asked her what the proudest moment in her career was, she talked about her daughter's attention:

I made the policy of reducing household expenditure on private tutoring ... my daughter understood what it was, what the household expenditure on private tutoring was. That was the only thing that my daughter knows about my work ... So, then, she read all the comments and replies on the internet after the policy was announced and gave me her opinion. And when the policy was reported in the newspaper, she thought about it like her own work ... So, I think that was impressive for me.

Orchid's pride comes from the recognition she receives from her daughter, who is seventeen years old. Her achievement has been recognized within her organization, as we know from the fact that she was quickly promoted. However, sharing her work with her daughter and receiving recognition from her constitutes an important part of her success.

While Settler emphasized the importance of family in her concept of success, her concept of work and family is more complicated. For her, success means happiness, as she talked about happiness when I asked her about success in her life. She does not feel happy because she regrets that she did not do her best for her family and instead worked hard. She explains,

Career success does not necessarily mean life success. And I don't think I'm very happy ... Well, um, I don't know. Although I am doing all that I wanted in my career, career is not everything, you know. There are family, friends, leisure, and so on, but I gave up such things. Yes, I threw them away ... There's this advertisement, um, it's an apartment advertisement, saying that the way of living a meaningful life is, well, memorizing three

names of my child's friends and living in a certain apartment ... And, well, I really don't know the names and faces of three friends of my children ... When I ask myself if I am happy, I doubt if I am really happy as I gave up those things.

When asked the reason she felt like this, she talked about the importance of growing together with family. For her, family is the best and ultimate place for rest and refreshment. Although she also went through a difficult time because of a work and home conflict, she also recognized the value of her family who is always on her side. Settler said the following about the importance of family in her life:

Family is growing, I mean, each family member ... Although family could hurt each other, but, finally, they stand by me. Well, I could have hard time or even be betrayed in the workplace, but, family is unconditionally at my side whether I am right or wrong. So, the fact that I have family encourages me a lot while I work.

Elegance also recognized the importance of family in her life, although she did not explicitly include her family within her concept of success. She is too humble to proudly state that she is successful with her family. She said,

Well, the small group that I belong to, the closest group is family, you know. Family... I am satisfied that we depend on each other and are comfortable. I don't know if I should say it is success, if I should say my family life is successful ... I think people might be jealous if they think of me as having it all ... I can't say this because other people might be jealous of my family.

It seems that she is conscious of how other people talk about her as a person exposed to the public through media. Although she refuses to directly include her family life within her

definition of success, she said that her family has always been the source of her strength through the course of her career. Elegance recalled,

I think I became successful because of my family ... When I had difficulty [at law school], my husband ... trusted me, which gave me big consolation ... even when I could not trust myself ... I am who I am because I have a person who supported me whenever I faced a critical situation ... And my daughter, too ... So, I am blessed to have this great family.

For Elegance, her family includes the people closest to her who encouraged her in a critical time so that she could become the person she is. She achieved a lot as a lawyer—worked for large law firms, started her own law firm, and became famous in her field as a lawyer. According to her, her success was mainly because of her family, with ninety percent attributed to her family's support and ten percent to her efforts.

Genuine also talked about how her family, especially her husband, had helpful relationships with each other. Once, when she was a judge, she was so desperate that she thought of working in a part-time job for a law firm because she was very tired of the burden of childcare, housework, and eldercare—caring for her parents-in-law. However, with the help of her husband and the independent children, she was able to get back on the track of continuing her career:

There were times when it was difficult to tell whether having a family was a strength or a burden. But, generally, I would say that family was helpful to me because I learned about life with my family. The important thing is that each family member should be able to live an independent life with their own individuality. The relationship of depending and relying on is not desirable because it is a one-way burden.



In 2001, Frontier wrote a newspaper article, in the form of a letter to her husband, about the meaning of family in her life. She began the letter with this question. “Is family a strength [*Him* in Korean] or a burden [*Jim* in Korean] to a career woman?” Her family is unique because she and her husband were apart for thirteen years while he was in prison. During those years, she could only meet her husband occasionally in prison, while she had to work hard for a living. Some people even told her to divorce. However, she kept her family together with what she explained as “the help of faith in God.” After he was released from prison with her efforts at lifesaving, they reunited as an ordinary couple and had a son. That is when they started to have a problem because of housework and child rearing because Frontier continued to work. Frontier wrote,

Is family strength or burden to a career woman? You know better the answer for this question than I, don’t you? Although, in my lifetime, I have run harder for the society than for my family, family is always at the center of my life. I am sure that you know this more than anyone else ... We had a son after we were forty years old ... And that is when trouble has arisen between us because of our son. Your interests and my interests on housework and child rearing started to be appeared opposite. We had to pass a long tunnel of tense relationship while we hurt each other and hurt ourselves at the same time ... It was you, your love and trust which raised me up and supported me to step forward ... Now we can openly tell the people that we became a ‘good couple’ who respect each other’s work, naturally share the housework, and encourage and help each other.

Although the question, ‘Is family a strength or a burden to a career woman?’ still remains in a corner of my mind, the clear thing is that I am sure that our family is still the most encouraging strength to me.

To become the ‘good couple’ like they are, she and her husband went through a long period of trial and error. Especially as she worked during the times there were few childcare systems for working mothers, she had a hard time finding someone to take care of her son. She had to struggle to keep her career and her family at the same time. Thus, it is much more significance when Frontier says that family is her strength more than anyone else because she was the person who kept her family in spite of all the hardships that she went through.

As described in this section, content family life, which means that all the family members are happy and satisfied with and together, is an important criterion of success. All six married women with children consistently stated that they all had a hard time with the work home conflict. For example, Frontier, Genuine, and Light even thought about giving up their careers because of the burden of childrearing and housework. However, family, which was the starting point of their difficulty, also became a source of support and strength in their lives. When they have difficulty or hardships related to their career, they get strength from their family as family offer unconditional love and encouragement. Support from family becomes the driving force of overcoming hardships in their careers and move forward. Thus, the participants cannot help think of their success separated from their family.

#### *Contributions for Societal Improvement*

Other than the boundary of the workplace and family, half of the participants talked about success as their contributions for societal improvement from a broader perspective. These participants have goals of making the larger society a better place in their own areas. Frontier is at the front of these participants. Success for her is clear: democratization of South Korea and building social equality for women and minority:

Um, I think that people have directions and principles of their life. Um, and it seems that they can be called successful when they achieve their goals ... My goal that I established while studying social sciences was to democratize our country because at that time the democracy in our country was very underdeveloped. Another goal was to get rid of discrimination in this bipolar society where there is gender discrimination and where the poor get poorer and the rich get richer. So, I went into the women's movement to get rid of gender discrimination. Yes, so, I can say that I continue to devote myself.

Frontier has this clear goal for societal change in a broader perspective. She does not talk about promotion because her career path is quite different from that of a person who is expected to climb the career ladder in a hierarchical organization. As she has these great goals in her mind and has made significant efforts, she might be able to reach a high position. Orchid also has a goal for societal change, especially in education, which is her field. She explains her dilemma:

I was confused in my sense of values ... I had a severe lack of positive self-esteem ... although I possessed a lot from a third perspective ... So, I thought that we should learn what is true and how to live from secondary school education. So, I thought that there must be something wrong in education of our country when I reflect on myself. So, I thought that I should set it right ... What I hoped was to realize the education which value each people for themselves ... So, what I wanted was that schools in this country should educate students who have self-confidence and positive self-esteem and who could love themselves.

She had this goal of educational change in Korea when she first entered the field. She did not have a goal of being promoted to a high position. Success for her was to achieve this social goal. Thus, she says that she is not successful because she thinks that Korean education has not

reached the improvement goals she had hoped for. Both Frontier and Orchid had their goals for societal change from the very start of their career.

Genuine and Light also have societal goals. However, their goals were formed during their several years of career development. Genuine feels a social responsibility especially because she is a high ranking judicial official. Her goal is to speak for marginalized groups in society, especially for women. She called it ‘women’s sensitivity’ and said that she wanted to “change the solid frame of men’s sensibility little by little which dominates our society.” As a high ranking judicial official, she says that her responsibility for and duty to our society is to expand women’s sensitivity when she makes a judgment so that she can contribute to building a society where women and men work in equal positions. This is her goal and, at the same time, the expectation of feminists in Korea. She says that women’s associations send her judicial cases with problems, expecting her to correct those problematic cases. Thus, her goal is developed through these social expectations as well as recognition of her role in the society.

Light also talked about her own sense of calling as a social worker. Like Genuine, it has been formed through the experiences of her career development. Four years after starting her career, she had a crisis situation when she had no one to take care of her three-month-old baby while she worked. Then she thought about resigning if she could not find proper day care person for her baby. This was the time when she found the sense of calling within herself to contribute to society as a social worker. Light recalls,

When I looked back on my life, I realized that I already had the sense of calling during the first two or three years of my career—the sense of calling that I have a certain philosophy as a social worker, the social work field is very good workplace, I should do social work, and I should do the social work with expertise.

Thus, her job as a social worker became a challenging and worthwhile job when she could solve the problems of people who came to the social welfare center. This sense of calling and of being worthwhile impels her to do her best in her career. Similarly with the above four participants, Elegance talked about her sense of debt to society as a person who has achieved quite a lot in her life and who possesses a lot:

In fact, I think that I owe this society a lot. I have a nice family—good husband, hard-working children, and good parents. I'm blessed to perfection from an outside perspective ... So, I think that I should give this society ... Well, I don't think that I am who I am only with my efforts ... I think I cannot help returning something to this society ... Especially this job of a member of National Assembly is a position for serving for country.

Elegance also talked about how she was able to continue her study at a law school while raising two children. Her mother and her mother-in-law lived with her family in the United States by turns only to take care of her children while she was studying. She also got help from a Korean female babysitter. She turned her gratitude to these people into a sense of debt to a larger society.

As explained in this section, these participants have goals for making society a better place, although there are variations in their specific goals. Frontier and Orchid talked explicitly about social change as their goal from the beginning of their careers while Genuine and Light developed a sense of responsibility for society as a result of an accumulation of their career experiences. Elegance's notion is similar to noblesse oblige. However, all these participants have in common a view of themselves as becoming successful when they can achieve this goal for a

larger society. The extent to which they contribute to societal advancement and development is their standard for success.

*Summary: Definitions Combined*

To the participants, success is revealed largely in three areas of their lives: workplace, family, and society. In reality, these three kinds of success combine and interact with each other constructing diverse meanings of success in the participants' lives. Some people seek all three kinds of success at the same time while others seek only two kinds of success. Also, some people sacrifice one kind of success to achieve other success.

Orchid, Frontier, and Settler sacrificed their family lives to achieve success in the workplace and the larger society. Orchid has worked late at night, and her daughter has been taken care of by her mother. Currently, she lives in a city where her workplace is far from the city where her mother and daughter live. She visits them every weekend. Frontier also focused on achieving societal change to make Korean society a more democratized and equal society for women. Due to her ambition, her husband took care of their son while she was busy with her work. She did not give up her goal for Korean society and achieved her goal as a high-ranking government official. Settler also focused more on work, but now she regrets those days as she was not with her family very often. She does not feel happy. Helen also sacrificed her personal life for her work. She worked too hard and lost her health, especially her vocal chords. She also does not talk much at home because she saves her vocal chords for work.

Some participants value family as the most important success in their lives or at least value family and their careers simultaneously. Light thinks that family is the most important thing in her life, but she has still built her career. Patience initially focused on family more than success in the workplace as she thought it was critical at that time. Now that she has gained the

trust of her family and her children are grown, she focuses more on networking for her career. Classic also sought after career and family at the same time, although she is single. She thinks that her success in the workplace is a half-success and still tries to get married and have her own family. Elegance also recognized the power of her family's support in relation to her career. Family life appeared critical to these participants' success in varied ways.

Some of the participants made strenuous efforts to maintain a balance between work and personal life. Silver has her own discipline of doing her work without harming others to maintain her inner peace. She continues to make certain that she has enough time for reading books about meditation and traveling. She tries to draw a suitable line between her work and her personal life. Genuine sets a priority of self-actualization while she still works hard. She is thinking of how she can pursue her dream of self-expression and seeking answers to some philosophical matters, although she works hard everyday as a judicial official.

Sometimes, the boundaries and balance of success between workplace, family, and society become vague as they are closely related and interact. Patience is satisfied with her family, also, because she has established her own career. To Light, family, workplace, and society is connected as she relates what she has learned from her family to her clients and to a larger society. She does not separate her family life from her work. Instead, she talks about the coherent relationship between the three kinds of success in her life. For Orchid, her success in the workplace comes as a result of her best efforts for making a contribution to the educational improvement of Korea. Those two kinds of success are rather integrated together. Also, for Elegance, working as a member of the National Assembly is working for Korean society and the larger public simultaneously. Helen has her own plan for retirement: returning to a farm and

making minimum money as a freelance business coach. For her, success in her workplace and personal life is not separated but integrated.

The participants surely have in common a definition of success that applies for the most part in the workplace, in family, and in a larger society. However, the three kinds of success are meaningful when each is connected to the others. The participants come to put priority on one kind of success and sacrifice other kinds of success for their priority. Some participants seek to integrate all three kinds of success while other participants tend to separate them. The boundaries between success in the workplace, family, and society become loose in this sense. This is how they define success in their real lives.

### Constructing the Meaning of Success

In this section, I will present the process through which the participants have constructed the meaning of success in their lives. The participants have constructed their own concept of success largely in two ways. One way was to set their goal for success a long time ago—when they started to work or even before that—and to follow it throughout their lives. The other way is to accumulate what they learn through the workplace, people, and society when their concept of success was not clear from the start of their career.

### *Once upon a Time*

Frontier and Orchid had a clear concept of what success was for them for a long time. They also have in common their initial concept of success, which was about contributing to societal improvement. Since they set their goals for success, they have not changed them and have extended all efforts to achieve their goals.

Frontier said that she had an eye-opening experience when she participated in an education program at the Korean Christian Academy. As she was a dormitory superintendent of



a Christian women's university, she was invited to the education program as one of her job requirements. There she heard a feminist lecture and then set her goal for Korean women. She said,

I was shocked by the lecture. Before that, I think I did not have an identity as a woman.

But then I realized how oppressed women are. The lecture posed the fundamental problem and how to overcome that oppression. So, I was very shocked like receiving a blow on the top of my head. And I devoted myself to the Christian Academy movement. I became one of the staff who supervise the lectures and naturally entered into the women's movement.

Before listening to this lecture, she was already aware of the social problems in Korea as she actively participated in a students' club studying social, political, and economic matters in Korean society when she was a university student. Also, there was the social atmosphere in the late sixties when she was a university student, an atmosphere in which intellectuals such as university students participated in a social movement for the improvement of Korean society. She balanced the study club and even was a vice president. When she incorporated this previous experience and knowledge with the ideas from the lecture she heard, she decided to devote herself to democratization and to the establishment of gender equity in Korean society. Since that lecture in the early seventies, she has become a staff member of a Christian academy and worked on developing and implementing various kinds of educational programs for women aimed at consciousness raising. She continuously devoted herself to Korean women's movement, served as a co-president of two kinds of women's associations, and is now referred to as the first generation of the Korean women's movement. Now she considers herself as successful because she has done a lot of work throughout her life to build a more equal society.

Orchid has the goal of changing Korean education as the standard for her own success. She set the goal quite early when she was a university student. She was a good student who studied hard during her high school days, hard enough to enter the most competitive university and major in Korea. The university's law students are acknowledged for their excellence in academic achievement. Becoming a law student in the university was one of the most prestigious things that one could do. However, she did not feel happy although she had achieved a great deal by entering the university. She was confused about absolute truth she could depend on throughout her life. She did not have positive self-esteem and was just confused. She did not know why, but realized that it might be a failure of Korean education. When she looked back on her life, she came to think that there was something wrong in the Korean school system. She explained,

Above all, I think that through our school education, we should learn how to discern what is right and wrong and what the absolute truth is in our lives. I thought that there might be something wrong in Korean education when I looked back on my life. So, I thought that I should correct it in this sense ... What I originally wanted was to raise students according to their qualities and to raise students who have self-confidence and positive self-esteem through our secondary school education.

It was the mid-eighties when she set her goal for success as contributing to the improvement of Korean education. As her goal was clear, she did not take the judicial examination although she was a law student. Instead, she prepared for the examination for educational administration. She also thought about being a secondary school teacher. However, there was an administrative limitation because she was a law student. There was no way for her at that time to be a teacher unless she entered a university again as a different major. Thus, she

chose to enter the educational administration field, which she could do at that time. Since she passed the examination in 1989, she has worked in educational administration field. Although she has felt some realistic limitations in her current position, which is far from the actual scene of secondary education, she still tries to change the direction and culture of Korean education with her best efforts.

These are strong stories of the participants who set their goals a long time ago and have sought after that one kind of success throughout their lives. These initial goals motivated them to enter their current fields of work and sustained them.

### *Along the Way*

The most common way of constructing the meaning of personal success is growing up with a gradual accumulation of thoughts about the changes occurring in the outside world. Six participants went through this process and arrived at their current notions of success. They did not have any idea of success when they went to college or started their careers. At most, some of them wanted to have a job because they wanted to earn money for themselves or their family. Without much thought or clear goals, they just started their careers. However, they came to realize what the important things in their life were while they worked. They met people, talked with people, learned from people, and learned from the way society around them has changed. They think about their own roles and places within their society. They have accumulated their meaning of success along the way throughout their careers.

Genuine talked about how her thinking has changed according to the development of the society around her. At the beginning of her career, her goal was just to be economically independent from her parents. She just wanted to have a job where she could earn money; the job happened to be that of a judge because she was law student and had passed the judicial

examination. However, as time passed, her thoughts changed. She came to think that self-actualization was the most important thing that she should seek in her life. She also realized that she still had something that she wanted to do other than writing sentences as a judge, something she had dreamt of a long time ago when she was a high school student. She is still interested in studying literature or social sciences like sociology or feminism. Genuine said,

I thought that having a job and living as myself was success for me in the past. But, you know, the society has been changed and my viewpoint has been changed, too. So, nowadays, I think that success is not only obtaining economic independence but also includes the extent of self-actualization. And the current society is pretty much opened to women, too ... Well, the society has been changed, the political situation has been changed, family law has been changed, and the social perspective on women has been changed too ... When I graduated university, got married, and worked in this society, women were not happy at all and did not have basic human rights although I learned at school that every human being had the right for seeking happiness and the basic human rights. I felt that there is quite a gap between the knowledge I learned at school and the reality, the social status of women ... And I have seen that the gap has been narrowed down according to the social change ... So, I'd rather say that I have grown up along with the outside world as the outside world has been changed. A new era has come.

Her definition of success has changed because her thoughts have changed and accumulated as she reflected on herself and the society to which she belonged. It was not solely her personal experiences that made her construct her notion of success but also the social change she experienced with her career development.

Light also learned and constructed her notion of success along with her experiences within the workplace and society. When she first started her career, she did not have any clear goal about her future. However, as she met many unhappy people as a social worker and gave birth and raised her child, her thoughts changed. Currently, success for her includes being promoted as director of a social welfare center and raising her daughter to be a well-developed and good person. Light said,

Um.. it was not like that I originally had this idea when I got married. I came to think like this while I gave birth to a child, raised that child, and worked. When I saw the families who went through troubles, I came to think that I didn't want to hurt my child like that. I also thought that my child could use her ability in the society later when she grew up well ... I realized this while I studied, too. When I studied child development, I study what the children think and the necessary tasks according to developmental stages. Also, I experienced that what I studied was right while I raised my child. So, I came to think like this more strongly.

Light has a master's and a doctoral degree in social work. When she said that she studied child development, it means that as the discipline she studied in graduate schools for her degrees. As shown in the above quotation, various experiences contributed to the construction of her definition of success—meeting troubled families in her work, raising her child, and studying about child development. Through these experiences, she has developed her current notion of success.

Patience also talked about a similar experience of developing a meaning of success. For her, success means being promoted to a higher position, as well as happiness with her family. Just like Genuine, her original goal when she started her career was to earn money. As her family

relations were complicated, she did not think about other things and just wanted to have a job to be independent. However, as her career developed through the years, she came to think that promotion was important. When she worked in a research institute, she was promoted to the second level in the promotion system of government employees, a level equivalent to Orchid's current position. However, Patience's position became lower and lower when she transferred to different jobs. When she first changed, she was assigned the fourth level position, although she had first applied for a third level position. After that, she happened to transfer to a fifth level position, which is her current position. Through this experience, she realized the importance of promotion. She observed and experienced that the scope and range of her work and influence expanded when she was promoted to higher positions. Also, she observed that younger people were given higher positions during the presidency of Moohyun Roh:

At first, I did not have a goal of what I want to be or being in a high position ... I came to start my career as I wanted to have a job. Then, we get promoted while we work, you know. And I was not quite promoted when I transferred first. And then, I was kind of tied up since then ... So, I came to think that promotion is important as long as I continued my career ... And the other thing is, well, my institution is like a government office or a public institution. So, I saw that people who went to the Blue House were very young during the presidency of Roh ... Those who were in their early forties got the first level positions ... So, well, it might be connected to this societal change.

The societal change of government employees becoming younger stimulated her to dream of being promoted to a higher position when she was in her fifties. She also reflects on her status in the larger context of a fifties generation in Korean society:

Well, many people got laid off since the economic crisis. Although I was not laid off, I think I am in the intermediate generation. I am neither a young generation nor an old generation. And it is said that our generation was skipped in the middle. The elder generation was famous from the start when they were young as they were frontiers. And, it is my generation's turn to get promoted up to higher position after we have learned following them, but the society has changed and our generation was skipped, and the younger generation in their early forties got promoted ... So, this also made me think like that.

As she observed this societal change and compared this changed situation to the past she was used to, she felt the need to be ambitious. She became confident that she could achieve a higher position as an experienced elder in her fifties. She learned to be ambitious from observing other people in the workplace and the society.

Classic also mentioned the social change that was friendlier to career women compared to the past when she first started her career in 1970. For her, success means establishing her own family through marriage and childbirth and to have a career as a branch manager. Because she is not married, she does not think of herself as a successful woman:

Well, nowadays, there are many married career women in this society ... In the past, just working in a bank could be success for me, but, it's not like that nowadays ... There are more and more women who have their career and raise children at the same time, as the society gets developed into more industrialized society. There are many colleagues or juniors who go to work at a bank while playing the role of a mother and a daughter-in-law. Compared to those women, I consider myself as fifty percent successful. It is those

women who can join the queue of successful women. I'd like to say that this is my standard.

In the 1970s and 1980s in Korean society, the workplace situation was harsh for career women. In that situation, survival itself was success for her. Furthermore, she did not have any idea of success when she started her career. At that time, she was too pessimistic because she had to get a job instead of going to college because she had to earn money for her family, for her aged parents. However, when she came to have an optimistic attitude about her life due to her religion, she developed a positive self-esteem, and was able to go to college; then, she started to think about getting married. Also, as she observed more and more married women in her workplace, she came to think differently because she witnessed many married career women surviving in the workplace as times have changed and gender discrimination in the workplace is reduced little by little. As time went on and society changed, she also grew up along with the society.

Settler also said that she set her definition for success by thinking about her experiences in the workplace. In particular, she mentioned her experience of working in a lower position after resigning the position of director of a social welfare center. For her, success is not related to the level of positions. Her success is that she has the opportunity of doing what she can do every day regardless of position. She reflects on the example of her experience. Settler said,

Once I was a director [of a social welfare center] but became a team leader after that.

People gossiped about me saying that I must have made a critical mistake to be degraded in this position. But, I could reflect on myself and make better of myself. I think that is growth, and development, and I think it is success. When I became a team leader after resigning the director position, there was an event. And I set the tables and chairs with



my best efforts as there was a lack of manpower. It was an event inviting the other directors of social welfare centers, and one of my classmates at the college came to the event as a director. Well, I was a director like him some time before that. And he helped me as he saw me setting the tables and chairs. And, he asked me, “Do you have to do even this kind of work?” So I answered, “Yes, of course” and did the work. After the event of that day, my boss who asked me to work with her called me and said thank you to me. Yeah, I think this is an aspect of success, too. Yeah, if the work is successfully completed when I do the work of carrying tables, I think it is an aspect of an expert and it is success.

Through this kind of experience, she could have the opportunity of learning the meaning of her work that she was doing in a lower position. As she thought and developed her ideas further, she came to realize that being able to do any kind of work was success. Also, she came to think just establishing her career was happiness and success for her when she observed other people around her. Settler explained further:

Well, I did not think about and even was not interested in the concept of happiness or success before that. I came to think that my life here is happiness and success because there are other people who gave up their career or who were not able to work. When most women have children, even two children, and get older, they come to give up their work although they wanted to continue their work. But, I realized that I have built up my career continuously, so, I felt that, aha, this is success and happiness. Yeah, I think I came up with the concept of success and happiness then.

Experiences in her workplace and observations of other people around her made her realize what success meant for her. She has developed her concept of success along with her personal experiences and learning from other people's experiences.

Helen also did not have any specific idea of success when she started her career. She came to understand her goal while she worked and especially when she heard other people's conversations. Helen said:

Um... once, I happened to hear conversation between an executive and a department manager of the electronics company in an executive room ... They were talking about a former department manager of the electronics company and said that the person is the one who marked a new era in the personnel management field in this company. When I heard that, I ambiguously thought that I wanted to be a person like that regardless of positions. I don't remember it was when I was a section chief or a vice-chief.

She told me that it might be because of her personality. She has a tendency to accept and use what she has learned from other people or from lectures. It might be because of her personality that she is thought to be a person whom her bosses talked about. She came to think of being a person who marked a new era in her field due to that conversation. Also, various kinds of experiences in her workplace shaped her notion of success for being a business coach and returning to a farm after retirement. She encountered the field of business coach through her bosses and the educational programs she planned and implemented. She also happened to read a book, *Simple Food for the Good Life*, and wanted to live like Helen Nearing, the author of the book, by returning to a farm and gardening her own vegetables. Although she did not seriously think of success at the beginning of her career, her notion of success has been shaped and acquired through various channels in her life.

Elegance also did not have any clear idea of success at first. However, she met a husband who had studied abroad and had a mind open to career women. Her husband was the person who gave a suggestion for continuing and developing her career in a timely manner. She came to go to graduate school majoring in English and to law school initially motivated by her husband's advice. During the process of studying and working, however, she also developed and found her own rationale for studying and working through experiences in the workplace, school, and family.

### *Summary*

In this section, two ways of making meaning of success have been presented. Most of the participants went through a learning process, which means that they constructed their meaning of success through various kinds of experiences in their lives. They did not have a clear idea of success at the beginnings of their careers but gradually accumulated their thoughts and experiences and came to create unique meanings of success in their own lives. This learning happened regardless of place whether it was their workplace, their family, or the larger society. The learning process was used in all three kinds of success described in the previous section. As their notions of success within the workplace, family, and society is integrated, this learning process is also taking place throughout their whole lives. Also, two participants revealed that they set their goals for success at the beginning of their careers and devoted all their efforts through their whole lives toward achieving the kind of success they decided on a long time ago.

### *Performing Success*

During their career development, the participants have had their own strategies for achieving success as women in Korean society. They have survived in their jobs, some for seventeen and others up to forty years. If they had not developed their own strategies of success

according to various expectations from the workplace and the society, they might not have been able to survive in the workplace thus far. In this section, their strategies for success will be introduced in three categories: using femininity, bounding out of marriage tradition, and dealing with the glass ceiling.

### *Using Femininity*

The participants talked about how they use their femininity as a success strategy. Femininity here means the traits which are traditionally considered and agreed upon commonly to be feminine such as delicacy, meticulousness, caring, and relationship-oriented. Participants agreed that they consider these traits as comprising femininity. Five participants have made the best use of their femininity for success. The other five participants have created different versions of femininity, which I have called situational femininity.

### *Traditional Femininity*

Five of the ten participants have used or have tried to use femininity as their strategy for success. Four participants agreed that they have the traditional femininity within themselves. One participant said that she is not very feminine but tries to be more feminine for success.

Frontier is one of the typical women who practices a mother-like form of leadership in Korea. During the public hearing for her nomination as a high-ranking government official, she said that “Feminine leadership is the leadership in which understanding and communication, gentleness and strength, caring and respect are harmonized.” Also, she mentioned,

While the leadership in twentieth century was male oriented leadership which orders and commands in a vertical perspective, twenty-first century should be different with female-oriented leadership. Thus, I want to be the government official who realizes social unification beyond conflicts with the new leadership in a horizontal perspective

She also said the same thing about her feminine leadership which emphasizes gentleness, delicacy, and caring for people like a mother. A mother-like leadership has been her political slogan:

What I felt while I was a government official is that women generally have fear because they have not reached responsible positions. Women have the fear that they are afraid of doing a good job as women. But, with my experience, I gained confidence that women can do much better than men. Especially women's leadership is delicate, and, um, horizontal, meticulous, and devoted.

She has also evaluated herself to realize her feminine leadership when she worked for government. It was reported that she always talks with a gentle facial expression and soft tone and does not express her anger in either official or private times. She also put her horizontal leadership into practice in many ways. She has actively used her femininity in her career.

Genuine used the term 'feminine sensitivity' when she talks about the importance of a feminine trait to her work and the society. According to her, she can understand marginalized people better than male judges because she has grown up in Korean society where women are expected to listen to other people, be not authoritative, and have a horizontal perspective, while men have grown up with expectations that they will be authoritative and power-oriented.

Genuine reasons,

Well, it's good for me that I'm not authoritative as a woman. I guess that women can think horizontally more instinctively than men. That is very helpful for my work ... As my job is to judge other people, solving problems and making peace between people is more important. And I think I have benefited in this sense more than men because I am a woman ... Feminine sensitivity in our country means, well.. you know, women have been

treated a little inferior [to men] and a little oppressed. So, well, women have formed the sensitivity of minorities such as the mind to understand the feelings of social minorities because women have been educated and socialized like that.

With or without intention, Korean women come to have an understanding of the feelings of marginalized groups, as women have been marginalized in Korean society. According to her, while men were educated and socialized to be oriented to the powerful and the strong, they lack the attitude to try to understand things from a different angle, from the perspective of the marginalized. Through the interview with me and other interviews with mass media, she revealed that she will try to demonstrate feminine sensitivity in making judgment. Based on this discipline, she consciously tries to be more understanding of other people. Genuine explains,

So, I've got the feedback that I proceed a little kinder than male judges. And I try to be kinder, too. I proceeded in a way that people could feel that I am listening to them. Well, it was not always successful. But, I tried to give the people in a courtroom the feeling that I understand what they are talking about. And I told the associate judges to let the people know that they understand what the people talk about.

She also gave a specific example of how she demonstrated her feminine sensitivity in a judicial decision. It came out of her naturally although she was not consciously trying to be sensitive at that moment, stating,

When it comes to a case especially related to women or adolescent... There's this recent case. A taxi driver raped a female college student in a taxi. It was reported that he said he did not rape her. He said that the girl said, "I don't have money, so, how about playing with me?" The moment I heard this, I was sure that he lied because 'play with me because I don't have money' is the term of a prostitute, not of a freshmen female college

student. I could feel that the moment I heard that, so, I wonder how the judges at the first trial did not catch that. The taxi driver was acquitted at the first trial. Of course he was convicted at the second trial for various reasons. So, men's expression and women's expression is different, and, if all the judges in this world are men, they could not understand at all women's expression and the problems with that.

Somehow she consciously tries to practice feminine sensitivity, but also she sometimes acts out her feminine sensitivity without much effort. In both cases, she says that the femininity she has is necessary in her job as a judicial official to build a better place for women.

Silver also talks about her feminine trait of valuing relationship with people. For her, focusing on relationships means that she does not make distinct enemies and maintains a good relationship with people generally. She puts this trait in a societal context:

In our country, effort is not everything because there is a very subtle barrier. Relationship is very important in any decision ... I have a tendency for avoiding complications unintentionally ... When an unfair situation happens, I have the pattern of solving the problems quietly behind the scene without striking or something like that ... I am relationship-oriented. I have the pattern of always making good relationships. So, I don't have any distinct enemies. But, men make distinct enemies while fighting about a certain result.

She says that having no distinct enemies is one of the necessary conditions for success in the workplace. In this sense, she has established her position within her company with her tendency for developing generally good relationships with everyone. Managing relationships in this manner is the femininity she is using as her strategy for surviving in a male-oriented workplace.

Classic also has the same opinion about leadership as Frontier, which means that the new leadership in Korean society should be feminine leadership. She took a leadership program for women at a university in 2004 and learned about feminine leadership through the program.

Classic explained,

The conclusion of all the professors [in the leadership program] was that the authoritative leadership was the leadership of the past and the new leadership in this era is feminine leadership. When I heard that, I thought that it was right. And I came to want to be a leader like that and to give my best effort to being a leader like that. And I realized that I have feminine trait within myself.

She continued with an example of what she thinks about feminine leadership and how she presented her femininity when she was a branch manager.

I think of process as important, so I do not just scold staffs. For example, when there are customer complaints, most branch managers or bosses first scold the staffs. I don't do that ... There are some cases when it's the customer's fault ... So, I usually close the door and listened to all the details. If it was the customer's fault, I call the customers ... , explain the situation to them, and try to clear up the misunderstanding ... And I listened to the subordinate's stories and tell them this is right or this is your mistake as a banker to a customer. In that case, I tell the banker to apologize to the customer. And I get feedback later and ask them if they visited the customer with a small gift like cakes ... I guess this is the leadership required in these days, the feminine, meticulous, and reasonable leadership.

These women recognize that they have the traditionally feminine-considered traits and actively advocate for their femininity in their workplace. Orchid also agrees with the necessity of



femininity in the workplace although she does not have many feminine traits. She said that Korean society refuses to accept aggressive or tough women in public positions. Orchid reasons,

Up to now, people do not easily accept aggressive women. Although a woman achieved a lot in the workplace, if she is too tough or rough in her talking or behavior, people still reject the woman ... Well, I am, um.. I don't say something is right when it is wrong. I talk my opinion very frankly, so, maybe there is this kind of rejection toward me in this sense ... So, I think that I should be changed and refined in a way although I communicate my intention enough ... I think I should learn how to talk in a pleasant manner so that people are not upset.

Orchid had heard from other people that she was too rigid and always strongly asserted her opinions. She is currently in a high position in her organization and is famous for a super high speed promotion as reported in the newspaper. Although she has achieved a lot in the workplace, she is concerned about her overly strong and honest personality, which is considered rather masculine and not welcomed by other people in the workplace. Thus, she tries to develop femininity by speaking in a more gentle way so that people will feel that she is less aggressive. These five participants all agreed that femininity is accepted and welcomed in their workplace and in Korean society. Thus, they have actively used or at least tried to use their femininity as a strategy for success.

### *Situational Femininity*

The other five participants tell different stories about femininity. They refuse to accept the widely recognized concept of femininity as natural. While the former five women think of femininity as positive and helpful for their work, the latter five do not agree. They think that both women and men have feminine potential and that both should demonstrate their femininity when

it is needed to achieve a certain task in the workplace. However, they do not use femininity in situations where femininity would hinder their work achievement.

Helen says that she rather becomes neutral, neither feminine nor masculine. Here is an excerpt from her on-line diary.

Title: Neutrality

Since some day, I came to lose my interest in women's talk.

The talk of buying clothes,

The talk of changing cosmetics,

The talk of new hair,

The talk of other people's love scandal,

The talk of celebrities,

The talk of drama ...

Sometimes I miss the talkative atmosphere

Of doing this light conversation with women,

But, when I am in the middle of that atmosphere,

It feels boring, uninteresting, and worthless,

So, I want to escape from there.

Why... I asked myself.

...

When I think about it,

Although I am sometimes uncomfortable with myself for not being into women's everyday talk,

I do not hate myself.

That is what I should accept!!

(Helen, on-line diary, 2007.05.14.)

Helen further elaborated on her being neutral during the interview:

I felt that I became neutralized when I felt irritated to listen to a woman in my team talking about cosmetics and something like that ... But, I watch drama too and have a favorite actor and singer. And I think that it is the same with men, in fact. It might just be a difference in how much they express those in the workplace. One day, I realized that although I like buying clothes and having a new hair cut, talking about that is like taboo in the workplace. So, maybe I unconsciously became like this, not to act like a woman in front of men.

According to her, feminine traits are in everyone, both women and men. While women express their femininity, men simply do not express their feminine traits in the workplace. In the above quotation, the example of femininity was talking about watching dramas. Helen presented another example of meticulousness as femininity:

For example, let's say that I manage my work meticulously. Then, people might easily say that it is because I am a woman. But, I am not sure if it is so. I think that nobody knows. There must be a man who is much more meticulous than me ... Currently, my team, um, there are three new employees in my team this year, so they are not good at details. So, I have no choice but to use my meticulousness. But, if my team subordinates

are experienced enough to take care of the details, I would not take care of the details like now ... I think that now is the time I should use that part of me. If the situation is different, I would not be interested in details. It is not because I am born meticulous but because I adjust myself to my circumstances.

When I walked with her after recording the interview, she told me that everyone is meticulousness regarding work, and it is just that men do not express their meticulousness in the same way women do. She has an open perspective toward meticulousness, which is considered one of the typical feminine traits in Korean society. Settler says something similar to Helen in that both men and women are meticulous and that it is a matter of expression. She explains,

It depends on the characteristics of a given task ... When working, men might be more meticulous and more sensitive. Women straightforwardly express it [meticulousness] while men hide it very well ... So, women and men are the same in that both of them are meticulous and sensitive. But, there is a difference of expression, as I think ... Yeah, it is said that women are born to be sensitive and to care for details. But, both women and men couldn't do their work responsibly if they are not meticulous. It is a result of training according to the social requirement.

Like Helen, Settler thinks that meticulousness is within both women and men. Also, she reveals a negative opinion about women's meticulousness, saying that women tend to pester their subordinates. Settler's sentiments echo those made by Helen.

Well, male leaders usually do not pester their subordinates and make a good atmosphere for working. And female leaders ... usually pester people, the team members, relatively, compared to male leaders. Yes, well, women are said kind, warm, and sensitive, from a

positive perspective, but, it is eventually nagging and pestering people. Well, I am one of them, too.

For Settler, the typical feminine traits such as meticulousness, kindness, and sensitivity are like heads and tails of a coin. From a positive viewpoint, meticulousness can be good trait. However, from Settler's experience, she thinks that women tend to bother people with meticulousness. She moves back and forth across the boundaries between femininity and masculinity:

I got higher scores on masculinity than femininity when I took a test ... I thought of myself as very feminine in the past. I did not talk too much and was courteous and obedient. But, I think that I was not like that from deep in my heart ... Well, in what aspect do I have masculinity?.. I talk straight, am reckless, and am not patient ... My husband says that I am broad-minded and brave ... Well, um..... I speak as I see and judge ... People don't like that. In the past, I talked very little and people liked me. But, now, as I speak frankly, people don't like it. My staff asked me to speak indirectly. But, I don't like it. If I speak indirectly and later comes misunderstanding, that is not right. If I meet someone for private relationship, it might be okay. But, if I meet someone for work, I think I should communicate with the person clearly ... But, I don't think that it is either femininity or masculinity. Rather, men sometimes do not talk much. So, I think that it is a kind of strategy, not a matter of masculinity or femininity.

Settler and Orchid have in common that they both speak straight. Being quiet, being courteous, not speaking out for oneself, and not directly expressing their opinions fit the traditional Korean female stereotype, which was considered virtuous in the Confucian tradition. Thus, it seems that Settler and Orchid agree that speaking frankly and straight is relatively

masculine while speaking indirectly and beating around the bush is relatively feminine. However, there is a difference between Settler and Orchid's opinion. Orchid thinks it is a workplace expectation that she, as a woman, should speak indirectly and in a more pleasing manner and try to play her expected role according to the socially accepted notion of women. In contrast, Settler just maintains her straightforwardness when she speaks to other people, although people do not like her because of it. She focuses on her work and thinks that clarity is best in communicating at work.

Light talked about meticulousness in a rather worried tone. For her, meticulousness is not always good because there are tasks that require more than meticulousness:

I am a little meticulous. When I work with men, I sometimes see the men who are not meticulous. In a positive way, it can be said as magnanimous, but, um.. in a way, it can also be understood as not being thorough. Then, where there is a conflict, I doubt myself if I am too meticulous because I am a woman although I need to be magnanimous.

Light elaborates more about being meticulous in her work and how her meticulousness is revealed in the workplace:

Being meticulous means that I tend to plan ahead very well and to do things perfectly. I do my best for every detail and I am satisfied with the every detail. So, when I work with my staffs, I ask them to proceed according to the plan thoroughly from one to ten ... When I see their plans, I tend to pay meticulous attention to whether they plan thoroughly, are prepared well, understand the overall structure, and use the necessary resources. Then, the staff might feel that I put on the brakes when they want to proceed fast ... because I am too meticulous and thorough ... So, I think this is a little negative side.

She reflects on her own practice as director of the center and how her meticulousness impacts her subordinates. She also mentions another example of femininity, caring. She showed her considered opinion about caring when she stated,

Caring as a woman is a merit. But, um, caring should go with work within an organization ... I think that caring or supporting along with work achievement is very effective. But, I also think that only caring without work achievement can be a mistake which reinforces the emotional aspects. When caring does not make or support synergy and is used in a wrong way, it could hinder efficiency in the workplace. Caring itself is sensitive and feminine, so, sometimes, it is, well, a little.. weak. Caring could mean being lack of charisma, being weak, or being lack of competency ... So, caring itself cannot be prioritized until it is engaged with work achievement.

Like most of the women, Patience also talked about caring. She has a tendency to care for people and consider others first. She had a caring attitude when she was a mid-level manager, but it was a difficult time for her between her boss and her subordinates. Now as a director, she realizes the necessity for charismatic leadership and tries to restrain her caring nature:

Well, I care for people, trying to read people's faces ... Before I came to this center, I was concerned about people and read people's faces so much. So, I did not express my opinion and listened to other people first and then adjusted my opinion to theirs. So, I was damaged a lot ... I think I did so in the research institute. So, my bosses and subordinates liked me as I was of a gentle character, so to speak. But, when I came here as a director, there were many things that I couldn't do like that. I need to lead with my principles, so, I came to do things according to my will here ... Well, caring for people is very hard, and I don't think I can do it now ... Women are basically caring. I am also strong in caring for

people and reading people's faces ... But, it could be an obstacle to set self-identity while it might be good. So, I am thinking that I might need to restrain caring for people and to lead in a certain direction when it comes to leadership.

She also talked about the characteristics of organizations to which she used to belong. Traits necessary for jobs differed according to the workplace. Patience's example draws on the context of her workplace:

In the research institute, I just needed to work of my own and nobody touched my realm. So, for example, if a person had a fight because of an ugly relationship with somebody, that person is evaluated with her research work. So, relationship is not very important there. But, in the government field like this Center, harmony and unity between people is considered very important ... So, I learned a lot. I learned that I should do like this in this situation.

Her femininity is situational in that she takes a different perspective according to what kind of workplace she is in. Elegance tries to balance between femininity and masculinity. She rationalizes,

It seems that the political world in our country wants very feminine women ... So, I am thinking about it, what a professional in this field should do ... But, [being too feminine] is not good, too. So, I am trying to learn how to [show myself] ... I look very feminine in appearance. But, people whom I know well know that I am not feminine at all ... But, people who are not close to me do not catch it. And, um, politicians are very busy, as you know ... So, it is not easy for me to show myself as who I am to the two hundred and ninety nine members of National Assembly.



It appears that Elegance is struggling between social expectations of femininity for women in the political world and her unfeminine side.

In this section, I described five women who have actively advocated and used, or tried to use, their feminine traits such as being sensitive, delicate, using horizontal leadership, valuing relationships, focusing on process rather than results, and talking in a gentler manner. They chose to perform the social expectations assigned to them as women to survive in the workplace and to achieve their goals for success. In this sense, using traditional femininity is their strategy for success. I also described the other five women who emphasized a balance between femininity and masculinity as their success strategy. These women choose to demonstrate the trait they should use according to contextual circumstances. They accept that being feminine is not always an advantage in their work. Thus, they selectively chose when to perform their femininity and when to hide it. These women think that men also have feminine traits and that women have both feminine and masculine traits. They use their femininity such as meticulousness, caring for people, and taking care of details according to appropriate situations when those traits are needed. They refuse to uncritically accept the given meaning of femininity and think of femininity as flexible.

#### *Bounding out of Traditional Marriage Relations*

The participants have lived within social expectations of them as women in Korean society. Some stayed within the traditional boundary by getting married and having children. At the same time, they created different kinds of marriage relations by sharing the heavy burden of housework and child care with their families. That kind of relationship was not found in Korean traditional marriage customs. Another aspect of bounding out of traditional marriage relations is living as single career women instead of marrying according to social expectations. These two

kinds of strategies will be reviewed in the following two sections: creating cooperative systems with family and being single.

### *Creating Cooperative Systems with Family*

From the traditional viewpoint of marriage inherited from the Confucian Korean culture, housework in a family is transmitted from woman to woman. When a woman gets married and enters into her in-law's family, she takes over the housework previously done by her mother-in-law. The mother-in-law exerts her power over the newly married woman and also can rest somewhat and enjoy her aging life. This is the traditional family life of a married woman handed down from Confucian society from the *Joseon* dynasty to the present day. Although it seems that this tradition began to collapse with industrialization and the advent of the nuclear family in Korea, in various ways this tradition still dominates the real life of a married woman in Korean society. However, the participants of this study live in ways different from maintaining this tradition of housework transmission. In special circumstances where they need to keep a balance between family and work, they draw on the support and active help of their family including husbands, mothers-in-law, and their mothers. They have stepped out of the traditional marriage relationships and created new ones.

*Support from Husbands.* For all the six married participants, the husbands behind the women in this study helped their wives through the hard process of becoming married career women. The participants established cooperative life styles with their husbands, which was not easy for some. They experienced conflicts, fights, and discussions with their husbands and finally they developed support for each other. The support that the participants get from their husbands is largely emotional—like being a mentor and providing housework support. Although there are some variations in extent, most husbands of the participants have shown these kinds of

support. For four among six married participants, their husbands work in the same or similar field and understand their work very well. Both Light's and Settler's husbands specialized in the same major at the same university as their wives. Their husbands both work at hospitals as social workers. Light talked about the importance of a husband's understanding especially because social workers do hard work with low pay compared to the pay they would earn in profit-making companies. She explains it in this way:

My husband could understand social work very well because he specialized in the same major. Also, as we worked in the same building, he could understand when I had a lot of work and had a hard time in social work field ... Social work is not about the logic of capitalism ... And social workers have respect, love, concern, and the spirit of service to people. Thus, they do hard work and regard it as their mission ... So, if the spouse criticizes it from the perspective of economics ... they cannot understand our work ... So, the marriage life becomes smoother when the spouse can understand social work very well.

She seems very satisfied that her husband understands her work very well as he is in the same field. When I asked Light if she has a female mentor, she said that her husband is her only mentor. She stated,

Well, a mentor.. Well, I only have my husband. He is my mentor ... Well, first, he listens to me, and, um, he listens to me very well although I must talk from my perspective. And he gives me advice so that I can decide for myself. Generally, he could make mistakes by being only on my side because he is my husband. But, he advises and helps me to think from an objective perspective. I am very happy with that.

Although Frontier's husband does not work in the same field as she, they have in common that they studied the social, political, and economic problems in Korean society in the same study circle. Both of them devoted themselves to democratization of Korea. Thus, they have the same values and worldviews in a broader perspective. Frontier explains their relationship:

I met my husband in the process of pro-democracy movement, so my husband is my comrade, friend, and the husband ... In my case, my husband encourages me as we went in the same direction in our values.

Frontier said that she and her husband went through hard times on the matter of housework and child rearing. Although they had the same opinions in their thoughts, they had conflicts because her husband had not learned equal sharing of housework through experience. As they went through the hard time and solved the conflict together, they became the 'good couple' as mentioned above. Now, according to Frontier, her husband "does the housework more skillfully than" she does. There was even a newspaper article reporting her husband's support for her within the family. It stated that her husband stayed at home for several years and performed the role of a full-time househusband to take care of their only son and the household. It was also reported that this role-changing was possible because he was a freelance writer who could work at home while she was very busy with the women's movement. Instead of busy Frontier, her husband prepared a lunch box for their son and set the breakfast table. On the day of her appointment as a high-ranking government official, she left home after eating the breakfast that her husband had made for her as usual. He usually does the other housework such as cleaning, grocery shopping, washing dishes, and paying utility bills.

Genuine talked about experiencing the hardship of housework and child rearing. She had to take care of two children while living with her parents-in-law who had dementia. At the same time, she had to work very hard to catch up with her male colleagues in the workplace. She even wanted to escape because the family situation was hard to manage alone. Then, her husband noticed this difficult situation and tried to help her with the housework. Genuine said,

I think that the husband and wife should try to solve the problem together. In my case, my husband felt that the situation was hard to manage by myself and changed to try to help me, which was very encouraging for me ... He told me that he assumed that women usually do the housework easily ... The situation became easier for me when he changed in this sense.

She also felt lucky in that her husband, as a lawyer, understands her work as a judge because they work in similar fields. Just like Light, Genuine said that her husband is her mentor while she does not have any female mentor. Her husband is her mentor in that he listens to her and they “help each other to grow together.”

Although Elegance did not explicitly use the word ‘mentor’ when she described her husband, she talked much about the critical role of her husband in two important transitions in her career. It was her husband who recommended that she go to graduate school for a master’s degree when she was working as a stenography secretary. It was also her husband who suggested she go to law school when she was a full-time housewife with two young children. In fact, it is not too much to say that she built her current career because of her husband. Her husband had studied in Germany and had a liberal perspective about women’s work that had been influenced by his time in Germany: “My husband told me that women in Germany work outside home as he saw during his study abroad and that women in Korea should do like that, too.”

Elegance went to the United States following her husband who was transferred to the United States for a brief period by his company. It was in the early eighties when few people had the privilege of going to the United States in the continuum of their career. Also, it was a time when few Korean people studied in Germany. Her husband, in a sense, belonged to a privileged group as did she. As mentioned in the previous section, she attributed ninety percent of her current success to her family. In particular, she told me that her husband always supported her and helped her through every difficult process.

She gave an example of her law school study. When Elegance first entered law school in the United States as a mother of two children, it was very hard for her to study law as she did not know anything about the subject because she had been an English major. She could not understand the difficult concepts very well. In that situation, her strategy was to read all the cases to understand the judicial system in the United States instead of reading a commercial outline to get better grades. After she finished her first semester, one of her professors suggested that she reduce the number of courses she took per semester so that she could catch up with the course contents better. Although she told the professor that she did not have the luxury of studying for a longer period and could manage the work, she was very depressed after this meeting with her professor. When she told her husband, he encouraged her to continue to study. She looked back on the situation and recalls,

My husband told me, “Who do you think knows you better? The professor or I? I’ve seen you by now and the professor does not know your full ability.” ... He [Elegance’ husband] trusted me, you know, trusted me. As he trusted me, I was encouraged very much. So, I continued to study with his words in my mind.

With her husband's encouragement, Elegance could focus on law school study in her own way. Actually, she graduated with honor and was invited to the Dean's reception. After graduation, she entered one of the best and largest law firms in the United States. She was the only one who was hired by that law firm among the students who graduated the same year as she. It is no wonder she says that she is who she is now thanks to her husband.

Similarly, Settler's husband specialized in the same major as she—social work—and understands what she does for her work very well. This is the same with the other participants whose husbands are in the same field. However, she had a hard time doing the housework by herself as her husband did not help her at all. After coming home from work, she had to prepare the dinner all by herself and care for two young children while her husband was watching television. She understands her husband from his family background where he was the only son with three sisters. He was raised to be indifferent to helping with housework as he was so important and the housework was the duty of women in his family. Also, as her mother lived with them, doing the housework was usually her mother's role. She says, however, her husband is changing especially now that her mother currently does not live with them. He says that he could prepare dinner for himself and their children even if she came home late from work. This kind of change took a long time with her efforts.

Just like Settler's husband, Patience's husband also has changed over time. She says that this change might be because she did her best perform the traditional role of a married woman as a mother, a wife, and a daughter-in-law. She lived with her parents-in-law and served them very well. She also came home right after work to take care of the children and to spend time with her parents-in-law. As time passed, her husband naturally changed due to her devotion. Now he helps with the housework by preparing dinner by himself, washing dishes, and emptying the

garbage cans. She does not worry about her family's dinner anymore as her husband and her grown-up children can prepare dinner for themselves without her. Due to this support, she can meet people to expand networks for her career.

As mentioned in this section, the husbands of the married participants have supported their wives in various ways. They emotionally supported their wives by encouraging them through the hard times and being their mentors. They also supported their wives by sharing the housework although there were variations in extent. Because of the husbands' support within the home and for their relationships, the participants could continue to build and develop their careers and could become who they are now.

*Childcare Support from Mothers.* For all seven participants who have children, the most compelling barrier to their careers was childrearing. Most of them stated that they had a hard time or even had a crisis because of the matter of childrearing especially when the children were young. In this situation, the way they solved this problem was to rely on personal solutions—the help of mothers or mothers-in-law. Considering that the childcare system in Korea was not very good during the time when the participants' children were young, this personal solution was considered best.

Frontier talked about her past days when she had a hard time taking care of her son while she was working outside the home. There were not many childcare centers, so she used to put her son in different persons' hands every day. Her three-year-old son at that time used to ask her where she would put him today. This unstable situation was settled when she moved near her mother's house and put him in her mother's hands. She looked back on that time, saying that it was a crisis. She remembers,



Well, it was very difficult to raise the child and to work at the same time. There were not many childcare centers like nowadays. So, I had hard time thinking about if I should continue to work or not while I raised the child ... I put my child to this place or that place, was worried about his growth, and suffered from the guilty feeling that I am not doing my job as a mother ... And I had lots of fights with my husband about the matter of child care. Um, it was an overall crisis ... The biggest help came from my mother. It was also difficult for her to take care of my child because she also worked, too. Well.. I moved to the next door to my mother's house, got her help, and became more stable.

Elegance received help from her mother and her mother-in-law. She gave birth to her first child in Korea and her second child in the United States. As she went to law school after her second child was born, she was a law student when her children were young. She sent her first child to pre-school and hired a babysitter for her second. But, she realized that it was still too hard for her. After one month, her mother came to the United States and stayed with her family for one year. After that, her mother had to return to Korea because Elegance's father passed away. She visited Korea to go to her father's funeral and returned to the United States alone, leaving her children in her mother-in-law's hands. Her mother-in-law took care of the grandchildren for one year in Korea and then moved to the United States to live with the children and her for one year. As they grew older, she sent her mother-in-law back to Korea and hired a Korean babysitter while the children were at home.

Light, Patience, and Genuine lived with their parents-in-law. Their mothers-in-law took care of their children while they lived together. Just like Frontier, Light had a crisis in her career because of her baby. When she had used up her three-month maternity leave, she still could not find a babysitter. Her mother was not available because her father was sick. Her mother-in-law

lived far away from the city where she was. However, she did not want to put her three-month old baby into a center that she did not trust. She searched for a reliable person or a childcare center for her baby both day and night for three days. Most of the childcare centers would not even accept her baby because the child was too young. Finally, her mother introduced her to a trustworthy babysitter, so she solved the problem. After one year as her father got better, her mother could care for her baby part-time. Until her mother-in-law came to live with her family when her child was five years old, after the death of her father-in-law, she got help from her mother. While she lived with her mother-in-law, the help came from her mother-in-law. Light also looked back on that hard time and recalled,

Well, you know, I had to take the responsibility of child rearing. I thought that I might resign my job to do that ... When I thought about resigning and reflected on my life, I realized that I had devotion as a social worker, a so-called calling.

Patience specifically talked about the support that she received from her parents-in-law. She lived with her parents-in-law when her two children were young. According to her,

We lived with my mother-in-law, so I had less burden of preparing meals ... And she did the laundry, too ... Well, it was comfortable for me in a sense because my father-in-law took my kids to the kindergarten.

Orchid got help raising her child from her mother. Now she sees her daughter only on the weekends because her workplace is far from her mother's home and there is too much work for her to raise her daughter alone. She lives in the city of her workplace during the week and visits her mother and her daughter every weekend. Genuine and Settler hire housework helpers who regularly come to their houses to do the housework. As the burden of child rearing and housework is too heavy for the career women of this study, they have created supporting systems

around them from any and all possible sources. These include their husbands, mothers, and mother-in-laws; in addition, some have hired housework helpers.

As described in this section, the participants had to build a cooperative system within their families to continue to work and to survive in the workplace. The husbands were their solid support in that they understand the participants and support them emotionally and physically by helping with housework. The participants also acted to share the burden of child rearing with their mothers-in-law or mothers. One of the mothers lived with them primarily to take care of the children especially when they were young. Without their mother's help, the participants might not be in their current place. For their success, they found their own way through getting the necessary support from their family. This was their strategy for surviving the conflicts between the social expectations of women and their own expectation of having a career.

### *Being Single*

There are three single women among the ten participants of this study: Helen, Silver, and Classic. As mentioned in the former chapter, Helen is forty, Silver is fifty, and Classic is fifty six years old. All of them did not think about living alone without getting married when they were young. In some aspects, it seems that now they have chosen to be single so they could focus more on their work. However, at the same time, it seems that they have not chosen to be single but their circumstances have dictated they remain single.

When Helen started her career immediately after university graduation in 1991, she wanted to get married. She even thought that she would resign her job if she got married. She explains,

Since I became thirty years old, the president of this company whom I respect has worried about my marriage. Then, I told him that I could not do the two things at the

same time and that I resign this job if I get married. In a certain aspect, I came to continue work by far because I did not get married. If I had gotten married during the early stages of my career, I dreamed of resigning and living as a *hyeonmoyangchuh* [wise mother, good wife]... I just wanted to do that ... I thought that I couldn't do the two things at the same time and wanted to do just one, then it would be good if I lived as a full-time housewife.

*Hyeonmoyangchuh* is translated into 'wise mother, good wife.' This is the word that originated from the Confucian teaching of the *Joseon* dynasty, meaning that the highest and best virtue for a woman is being a wise mother for her children and a good wife for her husband, and that a woman should make every effort to be a *hyeonmoyangchuh* for their entire lives. This is a typical example of the Confucian tradition still alive in the value systems of modern Korean society. As Helen grew up in this context when this virtue was still vividly alive in society in general, she was not freed from this kind of expectation. If she had met a person whom she really wanted to marry, she would have gotten married and might have lived a different life. However, she did not meet the right person. Currently, it seems that she chose to be single, but she says that it is complicated and tells how she feels about being alone and a working woman in Korean society:

So, I am still kind of willing to get married. When I look back on the reason I did not get married, maybe it's a matter of choice. Well, there were not many women who were married and who worked when I was a section chief or at the lower level. Most of the women resigned after getting married or they did not get married. And.. I was not confident of doing both things at the same time, although I was not lucky enough to get married ... So, it seems natural that I came to choose this career. But, there are some

tough juniors in chief positions who strive hard while getting married and having two children. When I look at them, I really don't feel like getting married. They look like they are having very hard time ... Rather men mention that their children are sick while they are working in the company, but, women make an effort not to talk about that kind of thing while talking about it only between women. Women strive to be perfect ... When I watch them, it doesn't feel really good.

While she continued to work as a single woman and watched married women in the workplace, she came to realize how hard it might be for a married woman to keep her job especially after she has children. This realization gradually made her lose her eagerness for getting married and has made less effort to find a husband. As a single female, she has to endure the prejudice toward her. Once, her boss told her that she was unusual enough to be researched. She also had to be very careful about relationships with men when she works with them as partners. As she was single, a false scandal with men could sometimes spread.

Although she observes the hardships of married people in the workplace and does not feel good about it, it does not necessarily mean that she has given up on getting married. She still thinks about getting married, however, under certain conditions. Achieving success is first and marriage comes after that only when it is needed for achieving her success. Once, she was engaged to a man whose goal was similar to hers although their engagement was broken off. She explained it in the following e-mail correspondence:

Frankly speaking, I want to get married when I think that marriage is helpful in the path I want to go.

The path I want to go.. is..

For example, if I want to do farming in a rural area as a free lance..

And, a woman alone is not strong enough to live in a rural area..

So, if a farmhand is needed.., then I should get married.. Haha. (This is not a joke. A strong farmhand is needed.)

...

Actually, the man I was engaged to but broke up with was similar with this case..

I was interested in meditation, and we have shared vision when we first agreed to get married.

We were going to live in Jincheon, I was going to do farming while I worked and he was going to build a practice center for Kookseondo and to manage the center.. How beautiful this is! Hahahahaha

The reason I was rapidly attracted to him was maybe that my dream and his dream could be combined together.

Anyway, this is what I think about marriage now.

Jincheon is a small province almost like the countryside that might be good for people who want to return to the farm. It seems that Helen and her ex-boyfriend had found a place to live together that was a good match with their dreams. Her ex-boyfriend was a teacher and a practitioner of Kookseondo which is a kind of Asian meditation. Now that she has a solid career as a result of focusing on her career for seventeen years without getting married and being distracted, she is concerning on achieving her goal, which is returning to a farm and being a free lance business coach. Marriage has meaning for her when it is needed to achieve her success.

Silver intentionally delayed her marriage because she wanted to focus on work during the early stage of her career. She saw how unfairly her company treated married women and did not want to go through that kind of treatment. Silver stated,

I was the first generation woman who was employed through an open application process. Before I entered this company, there was a company rule that women should resign when they got married. And one of the reasons I did not get married was because women were one hundred percent disadvantaged. I delayed marriage not to be disadvantaged while young. Then, you know, it is not actually easy to get married in Korea when a woman is over thirty years old and maybe that makes me like this. If there was an atmosphere where marriage and childbirth were welcomed, I would think about my marriage a little more actively.

She talked about the discrimination and prejudice that married women had to go through in her company. Basically, women could not get good scores on their evaluation records because men who were the evaluators did not score women high enough for them to have the opportunity of promotion. Furthermore, if a woman married, she could not cover major topics like politics and economics but had to cover light topics such as child care and art. Also, each department openly refused to hire a pregnant woman. Men sometimes made cynical remarks such as, “Your husband must not make good money, right?” Within this harsh atmosphere, she came to refuse to yield to this male-dominated culture. Also, she says that she has not met the right person to marry. Silver continued,

If I have the only two *choices*, if I had a really lovable person to marry, if I thought about it *either way* to get married or to continue to work, maybe I would have resigned. But, marriage is not a refuge from the workplace. So, I did not resign .. And, I had a kind of an unyielding spirit of improving the unfair situation to survive. If I stopped working at that point, I would feel like I had surrendered to the unfair system. If I did that, I would feel like shit. So, I didn’t resign ... At that time, if I had gotten married, I would not have

been able to even have the opportunity ... If there was no opportunity given to me, there might be no *career building*. The barrier is very high at the *entry level*. [Italics originally said in English]

At first she did not want to get married while young so that she would not be discriminated against when it was a critical time to build her career while the entry level. Just like Helen, Silver mentioned that she also had not met the right person to marry. However, it might have been because they poured their every effort into their careers, so no energy and time was left for them for actively seeking for the right person.

Classic said that she did not plan to be single from the start. However, she explains:

I did not intend to be single at all. Well, I just idled my time away, and, um, I still try to get married. But, men usually do not go after me, as it sounds strange. Also, people say that I must be too picky, but, I am not ... When I was young, people thought of me as having a boyfriend, so nobody approached me. Now, well, they think too high of me as I am a branch manager, so, nobody approaches me, while I am trying to get married.

Please introduce me to a man.

Actually, Classic spent her twenties in depression and agony and did not even think of seeing somebody. As mentioned, she had too a low self-esteem because she was not able to go to a university right after her high school graduation. She was very pessimistic about her family's economic situation that required her to go to work instead of going to college. After a long period of agony, she changed with the help of her faith and came to have a positive and optimistic attitude about herself, her life, and the world. This happened in her thirties. Thus, she might have missed the critical time for marriage. As Silver said, it was very hard for a woman in Korea to get married over the age of thirty at that time. Also, it might be because she was



immersed in work too much. As previously mentioned, she had a habit of completing her tasks carefully and even perfectly so that she used to work late to finish her work. The desire to finish her tasks completely and show her competency in a harsh atmosphere at the bank might have led to her current status.

For her, success means having a job as a branch manager and having her own family at the same time. As she saw an increasing number of women in the workplace who had jobs and families at the same time, she came to think that they were really successful because they had both. According to her,

There are lots of my junior women who raise one or two children, who are housewives and mothers and got to work. But, I think I may have too exhausting a life as I work at a bank just by myself. There are some female branch managers who raise two children, or, one child, and strive very hard. Compared to those people, I think that I live too an easy and lazy life ... So, I thought, this is not it. I will do that just as people take care of their families and their children. While other women go home, prepare meals, iron their husbands' shirts, and take care of their children's homework, I should take care of something, too. While they take care of families, husbands, and children, I will take care of my study.

Thus, she started her Ph.D in economics based on this thought and also because of her professor's suggestion. She is outside the boundary of Korean social expectations for traditional marriage although she did not plan to be.

In this small section, bounding out of traditional marriage relations was presented as one of the strategies for success. The married women followed the social norms about marriage and completed the traditional tasks assigned to women. However, they could not maintain the

traditional roles of married women and survive and succeed in the workplace. Instead, they created new kinds of relationships by actively seeking cooperation with their family members. Also, some women refused to follow the traditional social norms about marriage and remained single. However, being single was not totally their choice. Somehow they did not make every effort to get married as their career was important to them. In the circumstance where catching the two rabbits of career and marriage at the same time was very hard, they came to choose their careers over marriage.

### *Dealing with Glass Ceiling*

In this section, the participant's strategies for dealing with the glass ceiling in the workplace will be presented. The participants have faced various aspects of the glass ceiling that kept them from working with men in the same circumstances while they have built their careers over periods of seventeen to forty years. The participants talked about mainly two types of glass ceiling: the informal and the formal. Examples of the informal and subtle glass ceilings are prejudice toward women and exclusion of women from men's networks such as drinking, golfing, smoking, going to saunas, and gathering at funerals. Also, they experienced the glass ceiling which is formal and distinct such as wage differences, lack of doing important tasks, and discrimination in promotion. They have adopted mainly two strategies to survive and to make certain of their position in this harsh situation. One is just working hard regardless of any kind of difficulty, and the other is about networking which is very important in Korean society.

### *Just Working Hard*

The participants have made their own ways through simply working hard against the glass ceiling. They have always worked so hard with their best efforts that some of them are called workaholics. They said that all they could do in the circumstances where prejudices

toward women were widely spread and women were excluded from men's networks was just working hard. They got rid of stress, felt the sense of achievement, were recognized, and survived in the workplace by working hard.

Frontier said that she faced social prejudice and bias through harsh media reports and had to work hard to break the prejudice and bias toward her as a high-ranking female government official. She set her goal to be evaluated by her achievement, not by her gender. She recalls,

When I became a high-ranking government official, the press used the term *manageress* or *proxy* for two or three months. So, I faced the press culture of denouncing women without any reason ... So, I fought it out with working. My goal was to be called an expert. So, they never called me like that [*manageress* or *proxy*] after a few months.

The term “*manageress*” is a translation of ‘*Ulgulmadam*’ which is literally translated as “face madam.” The word *manageress* has two kinds of lexical meaning: first, “a madam who is representative of a bar or a coffee shop”; second, “a person who is typical or a model enough to be representative of a field” (Gukripuk-uh-won, 2004). As can be assumed from the first meaning, it was not used as a positive connotation when the word was used to describe Frontier. The word *manageress* in this context means that she became a high-ranking government official only because the government of President Roh needed a female for its ministry and that she might be incapable and incompetent. Thus, she worked hard to break this prejudice toward her. Just as she said, the media did not use the term “*manageress*” anymore after she showed her competency and ability by working hard, achieving, and getting recognized by the public and the experts.

Orchid was the only woman at her workplace when she began working there in 1990. There were other women who had passed the examination of educational administration.

However, all of them were working in different public institutions. The men in her workplace at that time did not even know how to treat her in the male-dominated workplace. She said there was an invisible barrier between her and the men that prevented her from building and maintaining close relationships. She felt alienated in the sense that they had something that they did not want to share her. Because of this barrier, all that she could do and had to do was just working hard. Orchid reasoned,

Well, I don't know if I overcame it [the barrier] or not now. I don't know ... Well, afterward, I came to forget about it as I focused on working. And I couldn't care about it as I was buried with work. And, the other thing is, I think I live in my own way, according to my thoughts and beliefs. I think that other people would appreciate me if I lived honestly and truthfully although there might be some misunderstandings at first. So, I just work quietly. Because I would not gather people to get their friendly feeling toward me, yeah, because my circumstances won't let me do that. And I don't have time and wealth to manage that ... So, I think that people will acknowledge me after a long period if I work honestly, do my best, and live truthfully.

For her, working hard with all her efforts seemed the best strategy for success in a male-dominated workplace. She was recognized for her work achievement, promoted very fast, and regarded with jealousy and restraint because of her rapid promotion. She has achieved success by working hard in that she is recognized and evaluated by her work, despite the circumstances that isolated her.

Genuine also said that she always worked anytime and anywhere. When she got married, had two children, and had parents-in-law with her, she realized that she could not work the same

as men. She found that she could only do as well as ordinary men if she really worked hard. So, she admitted,

I had a hard time as I had to work and to take care of family at the same time. Well, I had to take care of children and parents-in-law. Also, I couldn't complete the tasks in the workplace. And I couldn't bear that I couldn't complete the tasks. So, finally, family was sacrificed. My goal was to achieve as well as other people, at least, although I could not do it excellently. So, my goal was to achieve as well as ordinary, average men. Well, men have only to just do it, and excellent men could do it better. But, I could do it only when I do my utmost.

Thus, she set a realistic goal of doing as well as ordinary men and had to put her every effort into work. In a magazine interview, her husband said that she always worked even at home. He said that people would be surprised if they knew that the sentences of judgment in our country are made on the dining table at his home. He also said that his wife always worked there before she went to work and after she came home. He continued that she said that she could not complete the excessive amount of work if she worked only during office hours. She examined case records at her dining table from five o'clock in the morning on weekends, too. By taking work home, reading, thinking, and writing sentences for the cases, she blurs the boundary between the workplace and home. Genuine realized that it had become a problem and explained: "I don't feel refreshed in my head when I come home after work because I have to read books at home and to think about a certain issue." Her judgments as a high-ranking judicial official are very influential in Korean society so that the judgments are usually reported in the media. Thus, for her, the boundary between the workplace and society is also flexible. The reason she works

so hard is that her efforts must be double that of men if she is to complete her work as well as men because she has additional obligations as a woman in Korean society.

Classic went through various kinds of official and informal difficulties when she first went to work at a bank in 1970. When she was hired through the first open application for employment for high school graduates, women bankers did not have the opportunity of applying for an examination for promotion. The banks in Korea at that time had an exclusive promotion and salary system too. Men formed their own networks by drinking and going to the sauna after drinking, and they excluded women. Also, women had to sign a written promise saying that they were going to resign after getting married. There were people who gossiped behind her back and talked badly about her to her face. Her strategy was just working hard without paying attention to these kinds of hardships. According to Classic,

At that time, people were hard on me, hurt my pride, and ignored me ... There were lots of times when I got hurt my pride ... I did not let it bother me at all and just did what I had to do ... Although somebody spoke ill of me behind my back, I thought that sometime people would know the truth as time went by although it might be slow ...

Instead, I have this one thing, I have worked at this bank just as I did my homework very hard to get praised from my teacher at school ... Most women just leave the office right after the business hour even though they did not finish their tasks. But, it would hurt my pride if I did that. I finished the task and then went home although it was late like ten or eleven o'clock in the evening. That sense of responsibility, sincerity, and patience ... that has kept me up until now ... I just work as Classic of NK Bank, so, this is my attitude for work.

Although she is too shy to say the word “success,” she proudly said that she always worked hard. Elegance also went through difficulty as a woman in the law field which was her former job. She said that she studied and worked hard so that she could show her competency to people who disregarded her as a woman. She even heard of “bitch” as a more indirect term in the workplace because she completed her tasks perfectly and worked very hard. According to Elegance,

What I tell my junior lawyers or any junior who wants to be an expert is that you should not be afraid of being called a bitch, in English, if you want to succeed in your field ... And my junior lawyers in the law firm used to call me bitch, although they did not explicitly said that in front of my face. You cannot succeed if you are not called a bitch professionally ... Women could not succeed in their careers if they say yes to everything. So, you should be confident with your best efforts.

Settler also said that she had to work hard not to be told that she was incompetent because she was a woman. She shared the following:

Well, I told you that I was compared to men when I first started to work in a social welfare center. I received two thirds of men’s wages. So, I worked hard because I did not want to hear that I was not as good as men ... When I was employed as a section chief, I got the job after two years of being a full-time housewife. So I made more efforts then because I thought that if I did not make all my efforts, I would hear that I am not capable of working.

She continued to talk about specific examples. When she first started to work in a social welfare center in 1986, she found that she was receiving approximately seventy percent of the

salary of men with the same career. Then, Settler chose to work the same as men because she did not want to be evaluated by her salary but by her work. She said,

I was given 190,000 won [about 190 dollars] when men got 270,000 or 280,000 won [270 or 280 dollars]. Then, I thought that I am as much as I am if I work as much as I received [the salary] ... Well, I thought, “I would be just as much as I am if I work as much as I receive, but, if I do more work than now, I would be evaluated by work.” That is, I thought that I wanted to be evaluated by work not by my salary ... So, I went to the director and told him that I would work just same as men ... So, I worked for night shift and managed the library just the same as men.

The social welfare center was operating a reading room so that any local resident could come there for study. As the reading room was open until ten o'clock in the evening, one of the social workers had to stay there to manage it. As the local area was almost a slum, gangsters in the area sometimes came to the reading room. Thus, she was originally excluded from the task of managing the reading room until ten o'clock because it was regarded as dangerous for women. However, she took the dangerous work because she wanted to work the same as the men. Some time after that, the college graduate female employees had their salaries raised.

Settler also mentioned an example of facing prejudice from a woman after she got a job in a social welfare center again after two years of being a full-time housewife and caring for her baby. According to her,

Well, one day, a client came in and I did counseling with the person. I was employed as a section chief at that time because I had a former career. Then, a junior social worker said, “Hm, you counsel quite well.” Well, it means that she might think that I was not that good as I was an *azumma* who stayed at home. And I remember she said that I was better



than she expected. Well, so, I said that I could do anything that was given to me. If I was confident, I would distinguish the tasks that I could do and couldn't do, but, everybody seemed to test me.. At first, I was given the task of organizing the charity sale. I did not do the charity sale before, but I said that I could do it, so I did it. And the charity sale went well ... I did anything, any task, with my best efforts.

*Azumma* is a degrading term usually used for married women in Korea. In this context, the word means that Settler's junior social workers disregarded and underestimated her because for two years she had been a full time housewife with a child. She chose to work hard to protect her pride and show the people who disregarded her that she was competent, just like Elegance. Her strategy for survival and success was to work hard with her best efforts against prejudice toward women, especially married women. With her best and sincere efforts, she was recognized by her boss and became director of a social welfare center at the young age of 38 with the strong recommendation of her former boss who was a director and who transferred to another institute. When she became director, she still worked hard and even went to work before eight o'clock in the morning. She worked hard with the staff in the social welfare center and received the fifth ranking among the ninety social welfare centers for evaluation.

Helen also talked about how she just worked hard regardless of prejudices and gossip about her in the workplace. There was prejudice toward her as a woman. For example, one of her male subordinates wrote on an anonymous evaluation that he was not comfortable with his female boss. For this kind of prejudice, she said that speaking out for women, as a woman, is not a good strategy because men do not welcome that kind of behavior. Thus, her strategy for herself as a woman was just to work hard and be recognized and evaluated by her work not by her gender. Helen related: "In this sense, it is not good for me to ask them not to think of me as a

woman. It is better for me to just work hard and be evaluated as better than men.” She also said that the reason she just works hard is partly because she had the culture of the Japanese—the culture of working hard in every situation. She lived in Japan when she was young, from five to ten years old, because her father was transferred there. Although she was very young at that time, she knows Japanese culture and thinks that the culture of being loyal like a samurai is within her.

In this section, the participants’ strategy of simply working hard against the glass ceiling was described. They have made their best efforts on every task given them. It might be said that it is not only women who work hard but men work hard, too. However, working hard for the female participants in this study is different from working hard for the men. The participants chose to work hard, two or three times harder than the men, as a strategy against the glass ceiling above them. Perhaps this is because their male-dominated workplace and society drove them to the situation where there was no choice other than to work hard for survival. At any rate, they have worked hard, showed their competency, and been evaluated by their work achievement, not by their gender. This has been one of their strategies against the glass ceiling.

### *Networking*

The participants talked about how they created, took advantage of, and sometimes had to give up networks to break the glass ceiling in Korean society where men’s networks are mainstream. Networking is very important in Korean society where community-oriented culture has dominated. It is called *yeonjul*, which means a connection. The most typical of these connections are blood relations, region relations, school relations, and sometimes, workplace relations. This means that Korean people tend to support those who are bonded with blood relations, who used to live in the same region, who went to the same school, or who used to work at the same place in many aspects of their lives, including their careers. When people want to be

recognized and promoted in their workplace, the kind of relationships they have built with powerful people is important, as well as their competency. All of the participants of this study agreed with the importance of networks in Korean society. However, they showed different and various ways of dealing with networks.

Frontier has her networks as a first generation feminist in the women's movement. As she has built her career in the women's movement, she knows many people from whom she can get help and support. She also got their help in an election in her party in 2007. Frontier recalled,

As I have a network of the feminists who did the women's movement, I got help from them whenever there was an important thing for me, for example, this election, although I cannot meet them very frequently.

Her network also began with her school networks which were initiated at Ewha Women's University. The university is the first women's university established in Korea in 1886. It is still considered the best women's university in Korea. With its long history, graduates of the university have their own networks. As Frontier is a graduate of this institution, she also has a basis of her school relations, which are also connected to the feminist networks. Although she had this strong network, she did not have a female role model or a mentor as she was always at the forefront of the women's movement field in Korea. Now she has a sense of responsibility to be a role model and mentor for the next generation. Frontier said,

I have the sense of responsibility which means that I think I should be a role model, a mentor, and a step-stone for our young women, juniors ... Although I went through the hardships by myself, I think I should make an effort for the young generation when they want to use their quality for this society.

Just like Frontier, Genuine is called the first female in her field and she did not have a female role model or a mentor. Instead, she has a small number of friends who are connected by school relations. She explained,

Ah, I have some friends... who are famous enough to be reported in the newspaper. They are the alumni of the same girls' high school, 63rd, and they are excellent and people with high spirit whom I can discuss and think together... So, they are helpful to me ... They are not just, just friend, but the friends who can tell me what the other people cannot tell. I have a couple of that kind of friends. That was helpful to me.

The girls' high school was established in 1908 and is one of the best four women's schools throughout Korean history. Until the 1980's when there was a high school entrance examination in Korea, that girls' high school was considered the best that most excellent female students could enter after working hard. Even now when the high school entrance examination does not exist, that school is considered as one of the best with its long history. Genuine went to this school when the high school entrance examination existed. She also went to Seoul National University with a law major, which is also the most prestigious. She had a few female friends when she was at the university and continued to have good relationships with them. They are also now famous people in their fields in Korean society. She had a good academic record, so she had to follow her parents' and her high schools' expectations of her. This made her naturally have a network of school relationships which have given her support during her career development.

Also, she talks about another kind of network to which she could not totally commit. She gave an example of the culture of drinking alcohol in Korean society. Drinking alcohol after work with colleagues, bosses, or subordinates in the workplace usually happens in Korean

occupations. People go to a restaurant for dinner first, then move to a bar for drinking, and sometimes move to end the evening. Genuine mentions what this culture of drinking alcohol means to her, how her husband helped her with this, and how he had to help her. She explained the situation,

In my opinion, drinking alcohol should be relaxing ... In old times, we used to go out to dinner together in my workplace when there was a trial. They drink without any problem, but I couldn't be relaxed when drinking alcohol ... I enjoyed a cup relaxed with my friends as I could get rid of stress .. But, I couldn't enjoy with them [male colleagues] in the workplace ... Also, men don't want me to do that. They think that women should be careful with their behavior although they could do anything drunken. So, they let me go home and call my husband to come. Yes, they did. Then, my husband did not hesitate and was willing to join with them as they all knew each other.

She continued to talk about other examples of men's network such as golfing, going to a sauna, and smoking. She even calls the barrier of golfing for women as a "green ceiling" as the golf field is green. In this society where male-oriented networks are pervasive, her way of participating in the network is getting help from her lawyer husband. She is also willing to do what she can do for her female juniors in the court and tries to do her best as she might be a role model for her female juniors. She insists on the necessity of selecting and training females in court. Also, she initiated holding the conference of International Association of Women Judges in 2010 in Korea. These are her ways of expanding networks for her female juniors in law field.

In addition to golfing and drinking, Silver talks about men's gathering at funerals as their way of maintaining and expanding networks. She says that as much as golfing and drinking,

gathering at funerals is a way of exchanging important information and how she manages the balance between the funeral culture and her own private space. According to Silver,

Men are relationship-oriented, too, but their relationship is like golf, drinking alcohol, and a funeral, which is a unique place for men's relationship. They stayed at the funeral home and drink alcohol all night long ... So, I should make a choice. For example, my first principle is to go to funerals as much as possible while not go to every wedding ... But, if I go to funerals for everyone that I know, sometimes I should go to funeral home five times a week ... So, *you have to draw the line somewhere between reality and to keep the inner peace*. So, my second principle is to go to the people who are pitiful ... If I don't set my principles like this, it would be very hard for me because the culture of funeral in Korea is so much complicated and because I should know many people due to my job. And it takes much money, too.. But, in Korea, the channel for exchanging information is a funeral ... Well, it would be an opportunity cost. There are *pros and cons*. I mean, I should calculate the pros when I go to the funeral, the pros when I don't go to the funeral, my private space where I can keep being myself, and the necessity of the core information management. You know, I should draw a line somewhere. [Italics originally said in English]

She mentioned private space as keeping her health and spending a certain time alone at home for reading and meditation as contents of "being myself." Although she comes home from work very late, she spares a certain time for reading books such as books on travel or meditation which are not related to her work and help her recover her inner peace. She thinks about this kind of private time and space as being very important and says that it is her nature. She also has two networks related to her inner peace, which are a gathering for mountain climbing and one for

studying art. She came to know people who like mountain climbing because of her job, organized a gathering for mountain climbing with those people, and goes to a mountain every weekend. She also came to know people who are interested in studying art, a person who is able to teach art, and a person who can provide a place for studying art. She also organized a gathering for studying art. She says that these networks are not for work but for enjoying and sharing hobbies with pleasant people. Her way of making relations is balancing between the demands of work relationships and her private relationships.

Patience also recognizes the importance of network in Korean society especially for her further promotion. For creating, maintaining, and expanding networks, she needs time to spend with people after work. However, she had to go home right after work with her two children whom she put in a day care center at her former workplace, a research institute. Although she did not care much about networking, she had no problem because her former workplace was where she could be recognized and promoted if she did her own work by herself. However, now that she is in a different workplace, she needs the networks to be promoted further. As she made her efforts for her family when the children were young, now she has no problem when she comes home late after gathering with people related to her work. Her family helps and supports her in this sense.

Well, you can say that I chose family over networking ... Now, my family does not blame me and accepts my excuse when I come home late for networking ... This kind of change, I think, is because I made my efforts during the past ... So, now, also as my children grew up, so, my family does the housework a little. For example, if I came home late and did not prepare dinner, they would do it. She said,

Now she belongs to several networks directly or indirectly related to her job as director of a women's development center. Although she did not actively manage her networks during the past, according to her, her career itself reveals the importance of networks such as blood relations, school relations, and workplace relations. Just as Frontier who graduated from Ewha Women's University, Patience also graduated from the same university and is in the core of networks of Ewha Women's University women connected to women's studies field. When she finished her master's degree majoring in history, she got a job at a women's research institute within the university. That was because her major professor was a director of the institute. She also was a part-time middle school teacher on a temporary basis for two years, which was due to a relative who was vice-principal of a middle school. After that, she moved to a research institute for women's development where she worked for a long time, also her major professor became the director of the institute.

However, when she moved from the research institute to a province office, she did not rely on any network she had. She applied for open positions and got a job although it was at a lower level than the one she originally applied for. There, she said, she could realize the importance of people who supported her in her career development. There were people who were jealous of her position especially because they had worked in the office for a long time and she just arrived there from outside. In the province office where a kind of politics was needed, she could not have power over people and could not build a group of people who were favorable and supportive. After a few years, she was placed on a waiting list instead of being promoted. Being on the waiting list usually implies that the organization does not want her anymore in any position. Thus, she had to leave the office. This episode shows how she failed when she did not have people who were on her side. She originally planned to go back to school and to write a



doctoral dissertation after she resigned from the office. Then, a woman whom she knew at a former research institute suggested that they work together on applying for her current center. This is how she got her current position. She realized the importance of networks especially when she experienced being on the waiting list in a province office. Thus, she is working hard on networks for her next leap.

Settler says that she realized the importance of networks only a long time after she started her career. Currently, her success does not include being promoted to a higher position. She rather prefers a salary peak system, which guarantees employment until retirement age and reduces salary when a person reaches a certain age. Part of the reason she thinks like this is because she does not have the networks necessary for getting promoted to a higher position than her current one. Settler said,

And, the works we do needs management competency after a certain point. But, when a person reaches up to a higher position, it is difficult to maintain without networks. Yeah. And, I don't have networks very much. So, it is difficult for me to get promoted to a higher position than this. For example, our representative director has infinite networks, so I sometimes wonder what the width and depth of her networks are. I don't have that kind of network. Yeah. I think that it is because I have not managed the networks well. I thought that I should do my work first, so, I was always immersed in my work, and did not meet many people.

She was aware of her realistic limitations as she thinks that it is difficult for her to now build a network which she has not had so far. She wants to go back to a social welfare center, and feels sorry about her current situation out in a social welfare center without any networks in social welfare centers. Instead, her way of adapting to her reality and creating a different kind of

network is building good relationships with her bosses. She has two female bosses who helped and supported her career change in important times. When she worked at a social welfare center as general manger, she had a good relationship with her boss who was director of the center. She always made her best effort to complete the tasks given her at work. Thus, her boss thought well of her. When her boss resigned the director position to transfer to another job, she strongly recommended Settler as the next director of the center. This is how she became a director at the very young age of 38. When Settler wanted to transfer to another workplace, her former boss asked her to work with her in a women's cultural foundation. She also transferred her job twice as her current boss asked her to come and work with her. She continued,

It seems that my bosses who worked with me like me. So, I think I can be an advising staff although I cannot be a leader. And a leader has networks ... Well, I worked with my former boss two times ... And my current boss worked with me once and then she asked me to help her again later. So, I think that I can succeed when they succeed.

Thus, working hard for her boss instead of making networks with lots of people is her strategy for surviving in Korean society where networks are important. She also said that a husband's position is very important for a career woman in Korean society. Settler adds,

The [social] status of a husband is very important to a career women in our society ...

There come synergy when a career woman has her husband. Yes. More and more up to a higher position. When a woman says that my husband is this kind of person, people quickly change their attitude. Yes, this is true. My networks and my husbands' networks get together, which support me ... Well, the graduates of Ewha Women's University keep a firm grip on our society, which is because of their networks and their husbands' networks, too.

As she realized how powerful Ewha Women's University's networks were in her field and in our society in general, she went to a graduate school for her master's degree at Ewha Women's University. She also takes advantage of her husband's networks as he maintains solid relationships with his seniors and juniors in the social work field. Although Settler does not have a major network which is helpful for her career, she uses different ways of building networks.

Eight of the ten participants said that they did not know the importance of networks when they started their careers and found out the importance recently or through the course of their career development. Light also was not interested in networking as she did not feel the necessity for them. She just worked hard with her clients in her office rather than meeting people outside her office. She also mentioned that she did not like the image of rough feminists in Korean society. She explained,

The image of career women is connected to feminists in the women's movement. So, when I think about a female CEO, the image that I have is tough, strong, and self-assertive. When we think of it in a positive aspect, it can be charismatic, competent, and passionate. But, in a different angle, it would not be like that. In fact, I want to meet a female CEO who is warm and has soft charisma at the same time. But, when I look around some feminists, they seem to be very strong, which was a little too much for me. I was afraid that I would appear as strong, too, if I build a network with those women. Well, I didn't like the image of winning in competition where a woman's wisdom or softness could embrace. So, although I did not have a chance to meet those people, I hesitated to meet them, if any.

However, when she reached higher positions and had the opportunity of going to various kinds of meetings, she came to think that it would be better if she had those kinds of networks with other women in the social work field. Light explained,

I think that we can share such things as women's own strength. Also, they [female CEOs] are the people who overcome difficulty as women, I might share the difficulty as women. In this sense, I think that it would be good because we can share our commonality and exchange information.

As she has come to realize the importance of networks, she now tries to participate in women's networks. It is difficult for her because there is a network of women who are directors of social welfare centers or are in an equivalent level as directors and she is a general manager. However, she still tries to participate in and even organize networks for the next generation, especially her female subordinates in the workplace. Just as Light, Helen recently became aware of the significance of networks, especially women's networks. Helen stated,

But, sometimes, it [women's network] is needed. I recently feel that. As I told you before, the executive director Lee sometimes buys meals for female staff members who get promoted to manager position ... There comes female vice chiefs in this year. I was always the only woman when I get promoted to a vice chief and a general manager. But, now, there are four female vice chiefs. Well, we gathered together also with section chiefs, too ... I began to talk about, um, to ask them what is undesirable when they get promoted. When we talk about this, they brought forward their worries and their positions as women. The worries which only female managers have. So, we talked about that together and I gave them advice. So, I felt that this kind of meeting is meaningful.

The reason Helen did not recognize the importance of women's networks during the past was that she did not like it that people thought of all women as the same. She hated that she was a role model for other female juniors in the workplace although she had not wanted to become one. Also, she did not like women's networks when she was in a lower position. There was a women's study group within her workplace where most of the members were married women and talked about their children when they gathered to study human resources development. As she is not married, she could not enjoy this group. Also, she mentioned golfing as one of the men's networks. Although she said that usually men go out for golfing together, she did not consciously think about that as a woman's problem. She rather thought that it is a problem of any kind of minority group. Helen rationalizes,

But, it is not a problem of women but of minority groups that exist everywhere ... Well, I don't play golf. I get so much pressure to play golf. The deputy director always asks me why I don't start golfing. At least, there are many people who play golf among my subordinates. In the other companies, people usually start to play golf when they reach a general manager position, but, there is a golf practice range in our company. So, they ask me to play golf with them. Most of the general managers also play golf. But, I am one of the minority groups who do not play golf. The reason I don't play golf is not because I am a woman. The reason I don't play golf is, as you can guess from what I told you before, that it is a kind of environmental disruption. And I hate that playing golf is not a sports but a business ... I hate that playing golf has this deteriorating meaning ... But, the general managers go out for golfing together. Then, they must talk about lots of things there because golfing is business for them, not sports. Then, I am excluded from them. I put up with that and still do not play golf ... There are certainly some things that only

they know and I don't know ... Of course, if I change my mind later because of that, I may play golf. But, now, I don't want to do that.

Orchid also talked about men's networks and how she was excluded from them.

Although she was ready to open herself to other people, men refused to involve her with their networks. As the only woman in her workplace in the past, she felt that there was an invisible wall between most of the men in the workplace and her. Actually, the male superiors acknowledge her competency and trust her enough to give her important and difficult tasks. It seems that they have good relationships regarding those specific tasks. However, Orchid says that her male superiors and colleagues keep a certain distance. She took the example of sauna to explain her reasoning:

For example, there was once this episode in the past that gives me a sense of alienation till now. That was the time when people went to sauna after they drank alcohol, ten something years ago. One day, I was working and the others sneaked out. I didn't know where they went, but, later I found that they went to a sauna together, without telling me. I don't know if they went there after drinking, anyway, they went there. When I heard about that, I felt alienated very much. If they told me, 'Hey, we go out for sauna. You can't come, right? We are sorry, but, you should work', and then went there, I must have felt less alienated. But, they sneaked out ... I know that he [the boss] thinks much of me as a subordinate, a person who works. But, I wonder if he opens his mind to me as person to person ... In this sense, I felt like there was an invisible wall.

She does not have a female mentor or a role model as she was always the first woman. In addition, although a women's network was recently formed in the workplace, it is no use for her as most of the women, as well as the men, are jealous and restrained around her. As her

competency was recognized and she was promoted very fast, there are women and men who are jealous of her. Thus, even in women's gatherings, she does not feel comfortable. Orchid explained,

Of course, I can share a part of my private life ... But, in general, it is difficult to talk about the hardships in the workplace because I am still in the highest position ... Rather, a very private issues can be shared. But, I can't talk about the hardships in the workplace or consult about my future plans or something like that.

Although she graduated from a privileged university with a distinguished major, she could not continue to maintain and build school relations networks because she was in education field where an education major was dominant. Still now, she focuses on working hard rather than spending time and energy for networking that she could not be wholly involved with.

Classic talked about the disadvantage that she had to go through because she does not have any network or supportive group of people within the workplace. She entered the bank through the official application route as a high school graduate when most women were hired based on their connections within the bank. She was one of the minorities who entered the bank through an open application process. Through her way, she made her own achievement and became a branch manager. She also led her branch to top awards in business achievement and customer services. Her branch was one of the core branches in Seoul as its location was good. However, she was transferred to a branch located in a secluded region the next year and given the reason as a failure to achieve one of the year's goals. Now she can guess that her transfer might have been because she had no network with powerful people within the bank.

According to Classic, the bank openly reveals the importance of one's acquaintances as a key factor in getting promoted. On an online personnel record, there is a field where she should

write if she has relatives or people who are close to her within the bank, the political world, or the financial world. She has no one for her in this sense. There is also a field where she should type in a branch where she hoped to work. She said that she repeatedly typed a certain place, but it was no use. Also, she did not know whom to go to and ask a favor of to be transferred to where she wanted to work.

Classic has a negative attitude also about other networks. She was a president of a female bankers association at the bank from the late eighties to the early nineties. The women's association held a charity concert, published a seasonal magazine within the bank, held a workshop for female employees, and was recognized in a magazine for its active participation. When the bank was merged into another bank in 1997, the women's association disappeared. Then, a vice president of the bank suggested that she revive the women's association again. However, she refused his suggestion because she thought that she was busy enough being devoted to her work. Now she has a women's network which is a leadership program of Ewha Women's University. However, she felt the difference between some liberal women in the program and her own conservativeness. She also used to participate in an association of Christian business people for the purpose of attracting people to open a bank account in her bank. But, it did not happen and participating in the association is almost meaningless for her.

For Elegance, her husband is a good and solid part of her support network. She has her own website as a member of the National Assembly. Her website is an important place to let the public know about her work of legislation and to communicate with the people whom she thinks of as her clients. There is a sub-section titled 'My wife is a member of the National Assembly' in the introduction section to her website. This sub-section consists of eight essays written by her husband. In those essays, he starts by describing how his wife, who did not know politics,



became a member of the National Assembly. Then, he moves on to describe the world of the National Assembly which he now could view with a more positive regard because of his wife's activities in that group. He wrote in a way of demystifying his prejudices about members of National Assembly one by one which he had before his wife became one of them. As his former prejudices were not different from those of the Korean public, his essays help people see members of the National Assembly from a more positive perspective and also play a role of notifying how his wife acts as a member of the National Assembly. He wrote about his motivation for writing these essays at the beginning of the first one. According to Elegance's husband,

People usually look into the room of politics through the keyhole of mass media. Thus, there might be prejudices and misunderstandings. As my wife became a politician, I could get the opportunity of looking into the room of politics with doors half-opened. It was quite different from what I saw through the keyhole. I decided to write this essay with the good reason of informing people around me of the actual circumstances of politics.

Through these essays, Elegance's husband contributed to letting the people know about her more personally and about the lives of members of the National Assembly in a more positive way. This is a good example of the synergy between her and her husband which was mentioned by Settler. However, she failed to create networks and supportive groups within the party she has belonged to for only a short time of four years. During the process of writing this dissertation, she finished her four-year term of office as a member of the National Assembly. The next step she could take is to run for the National Assembly for local constituencies and to compete with the other candidates for election. She has never done the election because she became a member

of the National Assembly for proportional representation. She may not have established good and solid networks that she can work with for election within her party. Thus, she applied for the proportional representation for the second time and was not nominated by her party because of various reasons regarding party politics. Just as in the case of Patience, this shows the importance of networks in government offices and in the political world.

As known so far in this section, most participants share a commonality in that they recognize the importance of networks in Korean society, typically revealed as *yeonjul* such as blood, school, region, and workplace relations. Frontier, Genuine, Silver, Patience, and Settler are strongly aware of the significance and the role of networks in overcoming hardships in the workplace. They endeavor to create, maintain, and expand their networks to keep balance with the success they seek, although the kinds of networks they have are different according to their circumstances. Light and Helen recently realized that it would be better if they had some networks. They have not set up strong networks so far and try to participate in and furthermore organize networks. Orchid and Classic are different from the other participants in that they do not think seriously of networks seriously. Orchid is in a lonely situation as the only female in the highest position in the workplace. Classic feels that networks are not really helpful for her career and that she is different from the other women who are feminists.

There are two ways of making efforts to break the glass ceiling within the societal boundary that keeps women in a certain place: working hard and networking. Most participants recognized the importance of networking when they tried for their success. However, they also faced the limitations of the kind of networks they could create and how much they could be involved in them especially when there is a glass ceiling because of men's networks. Some participants overcame their limitations regarding networks by working hard. Typical examples of

this are Orchid and Classic who do not have significant networks and just work hard. Some participants could cope with both working hard and networking. Frontier and Genuine are typical examples of this. The other participants struggle to keep track of networking while they work hard. Thus, the kinds of networks and the ways of using the two kinds of performing strategies against glass ceiling are varied.

### *Summary*

In this section, three kinds of strategies for success were described: using femininity, bounding out of traditional marriage relations, and dealing with glass ceiling. Some participants take advantage of their femininity which is represented as meticulousness and caring relationships for achieving their success while the other participants selectively use femininity according to the proper circumstances. For marriage relations, married women try to achieve their success by creating a cooperative system within their families, especially with their husbands and mothers—mothers-in-law and mothers. Single women have their reasons for being single where getting married is considered normal. For dealing with the glass ceiling, most participants just worked hard against the harsh atmosphere toward women. Some participants create their own networks to survive in the workplace and achieve their own success. All these are strategies for seeking their own success. It is their performance of gender because they actively chose to do that as well as because society forced them to behave like that. All these strategies are their conscious or sometimes unconscious efforts to survive in a society where clear and traditional gender roles are still expected of career women. To a certain degree, they are forced to choose a certain strategy. However, they also actively use the strategy for surviving and for their own success beyond surviving.

## Chapter Summary

The purpose of this study was to understand the meaning of success in Korean career women's lives. The data revealed how they define, learn, and perform their success. First, for the definition of success, it is described that the participants' success is constituted of largely three parts. Promotion in the workplace is a sufficient condition of their success. Although promotion does not mean everything to their success, it is a basic and important part. Participants' success also includes a content family life. Family also constitutes an important part in their success. They want to live a happy life with their family members. Also, their success includes contributions to societal improvement. The participants have their own goals for achieving some kinds of societal changes. These three aspects of the definitions of success are not separate but closely connected and combined. Sometimes, the boundaries between those three areas are blurred.

Secondly, for the question of how they learn success, it was revealed that they learned through two ways. Some participants set their goals for success, defined their success from an early stage of their career, a long time ago, and just went for it after once making sure of their definition. Other participants have learned their success along the way through their career development process. As time passed, they came to have various experiences in their workplace and in their personal lives. Also, they went through societal change regarding working women. With these personal experiences and societal changes, they came to gradually think about success in their lives, reached a certain definition of their own success, and again redefined their success as their experiences accumulated and changed.

Finally, for the question of how they perform success, it was explained that the participants use three kinds of strategies for their success. They use their femininity in two

different ways. Some participants actively insist and use the traditional femininity for their success while some participants selectively use femininity according to the circumstances. Also, the participants come out of the traditional boundary of marriage relations by creating cooperative systems with their family members and by being single. They also use the strategy of dealing with the glass ceiling: just working hard and networking. These three kinds of success strategies are used for the three kinds of success described above.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to understand the meaning of success in Korean career women's lives. The research questions were as follows: 1) How do Korean career women define success in their lives? 2) How do Korean career women develop their meaning of success? 3) What are Korean career women's strategies for their success in relation to gender expectations and roles in Korean society? This final chapter presented a summary of this study, conclusions, and implications for theory, practice, and research.

#### Summary of the Study

The background of this study was based on the major literature reviewed in chapter two. First, I reviewed literature on success. The existing literature on success was based on the dichotomies of objective/subjective and men-identified/women-centered definitions of success, based on liberal and cultural feminism. Second, I presented Butler's gender performance theory as a way of providing a key to understanding the definition of success beyond the dichotomy. Then, women's career development literature was explored, which provides the background for understanding how women developed their career related to success. Also, I reviewed literature on women's learning within feminist pedagogy and women's ways of knowing. Finally, I presented the historical and cultural background of Korean career women to understand the socio-cultural-historical context of the participants of this study.

I used a qualitative research design for this study and collected data through interviews, documents, and notes during the interview process, and I kept an interview journal. A total of ten participants who had worked at least fifteen years in their fields were purposefully selected and interviewed. The interviews were conducted face-to-face, through e-mails, and through phone

calls. The ten participants ranged in age from 40 to 63 at the time of the initial interview in 2007. The participants had careers that ranged from 17 to 40 years.

For research question one, three areas of the participants' success are revealed. They regard promotion in the workplace, a content family life, and contributions for societal improvement as their success. Regarding research question two, the participants were described as having learned their notions of success in two ways. They set their goals for success at the early stage of their careers and went for that goal. Or, they have created and gradually modified their notion of success throughout their process of career development. For research question number three, the participants were described as performing their success in three ways. They use their femininity according to their beliefs and the circumstances. They also created new relationships different from the traditional marriage relations. The women in this study had developed their own way of dealing with the glass ceiling for their success.

### Conclusions

Two major conclusions were derived from the findings of this study. First, Korean career women's notion of success is an integrative concept that connects workplace, family, and society and it is culturally constructed concept. Second, Korean career women's strategies for success are formed through their gender performance.

#### *Culturally Constructed Notion of Success Connecting Workplace, Family, and Society*

It is concluded from this study that the notion of Korean women's success is an integrative concept which connects the workplace, the family, and the society to which they belong. The participants commonly agreed that promotion in the workplace is a sufficient condition of success while simultaneously valuing content family life. Also, contributing to societal improvement in a larger sense was considered as a marker of success in their lives.

This finding resonates with the existing literature on subjective success and women's success in that the participants' idea of success includes a content family life and contributions for societal improvement. While objective success is defined as an evaluation of one's career position and status from an external perspective, subjective success is defined as "the individual's internal apprehension and evaluation of his or her career, across any dimensions that are important to that individual" (Arthur et al., 2005, p. 179). As the empirical studies of how women define success indicate that women value so-called subjective success, women's success is connected to subjective success in this sense. The empirical studies have shown that women define success more in terms of relationships around them, including the workplace relationship, family relationship, and relationship within a larger society (Ballard, 1998; Dann, 1995; Dyke & Murphy, 2006; Fenwick, 2002; Halcomb, 1982; Lirio et al., 2007; O'Brien, 1998; O'Donovan-Polten, 2001). The Korean career women of this study also define their success in terms of whether or not they live a happy life and have a healthy relationship with their family and they further define success in terms of whether they contribute positively to the larger society. In particular, the participants' success is similar to the one found in a study of women library managers because they all value the "balanced and fulfilling lives, both in the public and private spheres" (Simon, 1996, p. 12).

Furthermore, the findings of this study are also related to the existing literature which stated the interdependence between objective and subjective success in that the participants of this study talked about the connection between the three kinds of success. From the traditional perspective of career success revealed in the literature, promotion in the workplace is in the category of objective success while a content family life and contributions to societal improvement are in the category of subjective success (Dann, 1995; Heslin, 2005; Northcutt,



1991). There have been efforts to reveal the relationship between objective and subjective success. Mostly rooted in a psychological tradition, these efforts categorized three kinds of relationships: First, objective success influences subjective success, second, subjective success influences objective success, and finally, the two kinds of success are interdependent (Arthur et al., 2005).

In Korean career women's lives, the relationship between the three kinds of success is dynamic. That relationship cannot be described in terms of a linear influential relationship. When the participants think of success, they set priorities among the two or three kinds of success they seek. Their stories show that they have sacrificed one kind of success to achieve other kinds, as there are limitations in reality in terms of time, energy, and possible resources. Also, it was revealed that their priorities could change over time. For example, some participants sacrificed taking care of their family in order to focus on their career when it was a critical time for building it. Other participants sacrificed working hard and gave up getting promoted quickly in order to be with their family, especially when their children were young. Later, when their children grew up, some of these participants focused more on their career.

The patriarchal Korean culture originated in Confucianism comes into play in the ways Korean career women conceptualize their meaning of success. Because of the Confucius values that emphasize the importance of filial piety, family loyalty, and women's roles within the family (Hampson, 2000), Korean career women of this study—married women in particular—negotiate the priorities between the three areas of success in a way that please themselves and their family at the same time. The way they set their priorities between the three kinds of success shows that they still try to value the Confucian lessons to avoid friction and conflict within the family and to create harmony and reconciliation (Ko, 2003).

Also, the close and complicated relationships between these three kinds of success are revealed from the participants' notion of success. Although they talked about success dividing their lives into three areas of workplace, family, and the society, success in the workplace and the society is closely related in their lives. The participants worked hard in their workplace in order to achieve their societal goals and achieve success in the workplace by getting promoted when they made their effort for the societal goals. In this sense, the distinction between the society and the workplace is sometimes not meaningful in their lives. Thus, it can be concluded that the relationships between the three kinds of Korean career women's success is not fixed but flexible, dynamic, and changing throughout the course of their career development over time.

In this sense, it can be said that Korean career women do not conform to the male-identified notion of success but create their own meaning of success. Just as Fenwick (2002) revealed in her study with Canadian women entrepreneurs, Korean career women also "confront, reject, and create alternates for dominant meanings of success" (Fenwick, 2002, p. 167) by engaging in three kinds of success, setting their priority according to their own beliefs and circumstances, and finding ways to achieve success within their given societal context. At first glance, it might be guessed that the participants of this study have the concept of success traditionally considered in the literature as male-identified and objective because they value promotion in the workplace as part of their standard of success. However, the women do not accept the male-oriented notion of success but vest their unique meaning in promotion. The phenomenon that women do not consider financial rewards as their success is already known from the existing literature on women's success (Dann, 1995; Northcutt, 1991; O'Brien, 1998). The Korean career women of this study are also not interested in the financial rewards that promotion provides them. They value promotion in the workplace because they could achieve

success that would allow them to contribute to societal improvement better with an expanded scope of work and the enhanced influential power that promotion provide them.

Thus, the notion of success held by the Korean career women of this study is complex. Their definition includes three areas of their lives—workplace, family, and the society. The relationship between these three kinds of success is dynamic as their priority has changed over time. The women seek balance among the three element of success based on their priority of success and the possible resources that they could take advantage of.

The question of how Korean career women construct their understanding of success can be answered by exploring the ways they have developed their knowledge regarding success. The way the notion of success is constructed in Korean career women's lives shows that success is culturally shaped concept. Most of the Korean career women of this study have developed their thoughts on success by engaging in their life experiences. Although they did not have clear concept of success at the early age, they came to develop their own definition of success throughout their lives.

As it was known from the fact that most of the participants chose their major according to their parents' or teachers' advice, the Korean career women of this study started to have vague concept of their goals from the outside sources. This is also related to the specific situation in Korea where high school students had to rely on their teachers or parents for information about majors at college and the related career opportunities. It might be also because of the Korean culture where the elders were respected by younger people. There was even a strict order between the elder and the younger due to the Confucian culture that still dominates Korean's beliefs and customs (M. Kim, 2004).

However, the Korean career women of this study have created their own meaning of success through the experiences within the workplace, family, and the society. They developed their meaning of success by meeting and talking to their colleagues, subordinates, bosses, and sometimes clients in the workplace. For the women with children, motherhood itself became the source of learning, too. They also learned from the societal changes in Korea by watching the changes and by thinking about their roles as women in the changing Korean society. Just as Hayes (2001) stated that women's learning takes place within the context of the workplace, home and family, and the community, the Korean career women of this study developed their notion of success within the context of the workplace, family, and the Korean society. When they came to have various experiences through the years of their career development, they developed their concept of success through attending to their feelings, reflecting on their lives and taking on analytical approach towards their career field and the systems in their workplace. Through this process, they came to set their goals and make meaning of their success out of promotion in the workplace, content family life, and contributions for societal improvement.

#### *Performing Gender as Success Strategy*

The Korean career women of this study performed their success according to their gender as it occurred in their cultural context. Three ways of performing success were presented in the previous chapter: using femininity, bounding out of marriage tradition, and dealing with the glass ceiling. When the half of the participants of this study accept and take advantage of the traditionally feminine trait which is socially expected of them, it becomes their performance for cultural survival (Butler, 1990). Through their experiences related to their careers, they realized that Korean society required them, as women, to conform to traditional femininity. In order to survive in the culture and to achieve success, the Korean career women of this study actively

took advantage of their femininity and made femininity a strategy for success. In other words, their femininity performance resonates with Butler's definition when she mentions that in a culture where "those who fail to do their gender right are regularly punished" (Butler, 2003, p. 417). One participant even said that she consciously tried to be more feminine since she had heard gossip in the workplace that she was unfeminine in her strictness and straightforward manner. In a world where soft and tender attitudes are expected of her, she chose to perform the femininity according to the norm in the culture where she belongs.

The other half of the participants of this study who used situational femininity also do it because it is required. Rather more in step with the younger generation, these participants have created a unique meaning of femininity when they said that femininity is within everybody including women and men and that they reveal their femininity only when it is required. In this sense, they already knew that gender is "an identity tenuously constituted in time—an identity instituted through a stylized repetition of acts" (Butler, 2003, p. 415) especially when they said that women were given the tasks that required feminine meticulousness while men were given the tasks that required masculine broad-mindedness and leadership. For these women, their strategy of using traditional femininity and situational femininity according to the social requirement is "a practice of improvisation within a scene of constraint" (Butler, 2004, p. 1). It is an improvisation because these women selected which kind of femininity to perform in given situations. In the circumstances where the work required traditional femininity such as sensitivity, they switched to use the traditional femininity. In the situations where perceived masculine traits such as broad-minded leadership and charisma were required, they also switch themselves to their masculine side. In this scene, the nature of femininity and masculinity becomes "a set of dynamic interrelations" (Butler, 1993, p. 4) rather than fixed and stable as the

use of femininity depends on the relations in Korean career women's workplace and the society. Here is the actual scene where the very attribution of femininity to female as if it were a natural or necessary property turns out to be arbitrary and just a norm of the given society. This is where the meanings of femininity and masculinity "change radically depending upon geopolitical boundaries and cultural constraints on who is imagining whom, and for what purpose" (Butler, 2004, p. 10). While the former half of the participants of this study who accepted the socially expected femininity perform their gender by repetition of acts appropriate to the given social norm, the latter half who use situational femininity instead show the possibility of breaking the given norm and doing subversive repetition of the given gender (Butler, 2003).

As gender performance "always and variously occurs" (Butler, 1990, p. 178), the Korean career women's gender performance as success strategy can be found also when the married Korean career women of this study showed different kinds of relationship with their mothers-in-law and mothers regarding childcare. They created a common scene where the mother's support on childcare is definitely needed to achieve their success. The relationship between them and their mothers are different from the relationships in the past. The patriarchal tradition from *Joseon* dynasty imposes on married women the burden of childcare and housework. In this culture where they should be mainly responsible for childcare and housework, actively getting support from their mothers is their strategy to survive as women with careers and as women who seek their own success. This is the survival strategy which is "a reenactment and reexperiencing of a set of meanings already socially established" (Butler, 2003, p. 421) as they strive to meet the social expectations for mothers. However, this strategy is a subversive act which creates different meaning for the traditional ideal of married women.

Another type of variation can be found in the lives of single women in this study. As stated in the previous chapter, the single women of this study did not intend to be single when they were young. On a surface level, it can be said that they consciously chose to remain single in order to focus on their work. However, on a deeper level, it is the societal structure that produced their current status. They turned out to be single while they have their career and work hard. As time went on and they became older, it became much harder to get married. Two of the three single women are in their fifties now. The times when they were at the socially appropriate age for getting married, which was their twenties, were the times when women older than thirty years old were classified as old maids and were considered odd and deviant. While culture shapes their current images, they also take advantage of being single as part of their strategies for survival in the harsh workplace and eventually used this as a strategy for their own success. Living as a single career woman is a performative act in this sense because “a certain gender mime be [was] already underway” (Butler, 1997, p. 308). They did not choose to live as single career women. Their being single was shaped and constructed not only by their own desire but also by society’s expectations.

The variations of gender performance as success strategy can be found in the ways the Korean career women of this study deal with glass ceiling. When the Korean career women of this study faced either official discrimination or informal prejudices which hindered their promotions and their ability to work as an equal human being with their male colleagues, their strategy to overcome this glass ceiling was just working hard. Another strategy used was confronting the men’s networks in Korean society by trying to maintain and expand their women’s networks. Other women of this study accepted their limitations and gave up networking. In this situation, their strategy of working hard shows how the given cultural context

shapes and limits their strategy. Working hard is an inevitable choice where the other strategies, such as networking, were limited in the male-dominated workplace. Just as Butler said that, “[t]here is no volitional subject behind the mime who decides, as it were, which gender it will be today” (Butler, 1997, p. 308), there was no choice for the Korean women of this study other than working hard. They had to work hard to survive in the harsh environment where there was no little other way to deal with glass ceiling. When they said they worked hard, thus, there might be “the illusion of a prior and volitional subject” (p. 308) which is the effect of their gender performance.

The quest for answering the question of the Korean career women’s success strategy leads to the exploration of their gender performance as a success strategy. Their success strategies show the variations of Korean career women’s gender performance. They somehow adjusted to the given cultural norms and sometimes create their own strategy other than just accepting the given norms. As gender, as a strategy of survival, is “a performance with clearly punitive consequences” (Butler, 2003, p. 417) when those who fail to do their gender right are punished, the Korean career women of this study also have to endure the punitive consequences and thus to produce various kinds of performance.

#### Implications for Theory, Practice, and Research

In this section, implications of this study for theory, practice, and research will be presented. The findings of this study offer implications for success literature in women’s career development field, women’s learning theories, and gender performance theory. For practice, this study suggests some implications for adult educators working with career women and career counselors.



### *Implications for Theory*

This study expands the meaning of success in women's careers by adding the experiences of Korean women. In addition, this study adds the qualitative dimension to the existing research as the majority of success literature has been conducted through quantitative research methodology mainly in the psychological tradition. There is a relatively small number of qualitative research studies on women's success. As Arthur (2005) indicated, "[h]ow can subjective careers be adequately researched when the subjective interpretations of the career actors themselves—apart from their non-verbal responses to a limited set of questionnaire items—are not allowed expression?" (p. 196). Women's success needs to be understood beyond the dichotomy of objective and subjective success. By revealing women's stories in their own perspectives, this study contributed to understanding more deeply what women value regarding success, how the various aspects of success are connected, and in what sense they are meaningful in women's lives.

The findings of this study largely supports the women's success literature in that the Korean career women's success includes promotion in the workplace, content family life, and contributions toward societal improvement. As explained in the previous section, women's definition of success were presented to include contributing to society and happiness in their personal or family lives (Ballard, 1998; Fenwick, 2002; Halcomb, 1982; O'Brien, 1998; O'Donovan-Polten, 2001). However, a different finding is that the Korean career women of this study also valued promotion in the workplace which is considered traditionally male-identified success. As revealed in this study, women vested a unique meaning in promotion that is different from the blind acceptance of male-identified success. This study contributed to the women's

success literature by expanding the exploration of the meaning of success in women's own terms.

This study also shows evidence of Butler's gender performance theory in that Korean career women's success strategy shows the performative character of gender in Korean society. A typical example is found in the women of this study who insist on their femininity and take advantage of their femininity for their success. This is the typical example of performing gender as repeated acts for cultural survival, a performance according to the given norm of the society (Butler, 1990). A rather special example is found in the other women of this study who recognize the arbitrary definition of femininity which both women and men might have. In this sense, the findings of this study are also open to the possibility of the variations of subversive acts. While Butler used an example of dressing in drag as a kind of subversive bodily act (Butler, 1990), this study suggests a new kind of subversive act when the women participants selected the scene and decided if they need to show their feminine side or masculine side to the people in the workplace.

### *Implications for Practice*

The findings of this study have implications for practice for adult educators working with career women and working as career counselors. Through this study, it was revealed that women's definition of success is unique and different from men's definitions of career success. In a world where there are more and more guidelines on how to succeed in the workplace, the adult educators need to know how career women define success. Instead of following the widely held definition of success and going for vague goals, career women should be able to pause their forward movement and reflect on what they really want in their lives. Adult educators can stimulate this process by showing various women's various definitions of success.

Especially in human resources development settings in the workplace, the HRD managers who take part in the development and implementation of programs for women can incorporate the findings of this study into their programs. For example, when they develop a leadership program for women, they could suggest various ways of women's leadership such as using the situational femininity revealed in this study. Also, the success strategies revealed in this study could be utilized in women's career development programs.

The findings of this study also have implications for career counselors working with women, especially in Korean situations where career development centers at colleges are expanding. Career counselors or advisors working with young women can guide them to thinking about their own success and exploring possible opportunities while they were in college. As female students have more varied experiences on college campuses, they can be guided to explore the various opportunities when they are in safer environments.

#### *Implications for Research*

The process of answering the research questions for this study leads me to other questions which need further exploration. One of the questions is related to the concept of aptitude. Based on the career development literature, there is a widely accepted belief that people could be successful in the proper job if their aptitude and their job match. However, I came to wonder if there is such thing as aptitude at all. Although the participants of this study cherish their work, they did not feel that their jobs were really a good match with their aptitude. Some women worked in a field not directly related to their college majors. Some women even regretted that they studied the wrong major at colleges. Then, I also came to wonder what the meaning of work or career was for them. Related to aptitude, would the concept of aptitude also be a false construction of something that is not real, just as there is no real gender but construction of

gender according to Butler (1990)? Also, what is the meaning of work at all if there is no real match between one's aptitude and one's job? Further research on the concept of aptitude and the meaning of work itself to women might contribute a body of knowledge in women's career development in a different perspective from this study but in a valuable way.

Also, the findings of this study suggested that Krumboltz's planned happenstance theory needs to be reshaped considering women's experiences. What kind of happenstance is related to women's career development in what sense? Considering the Korean career women's experiences, the concept of planned happenstance leaves no room for explaining how women could prepare and create opportunities when they have limited resources in a male-dominated workplace. A more detailed research on the process of how women meet important transitional points in their career development would elaborate the concept of happenstance so that it can be revised according to women's experiences. Similarly, the contextual career development theory which was reviewed prior to this chapter also needs to be reshaped and refined in terms of women's experiences in their workplace, family, and the larger society. Although the contextual career development theory considers the role of emotion, gender, and culture as important (Young et al., 2002), it needs to be reshaped around the experiences that women have faced through their career development process.

The final thought on further research is related to the situational femininity suggested in the findings of this study. While I was writing the findings and conclusions section, I came to wonder if those women who used traditional femininity for their success strategy might have used situational femininity also. Although those women said they have a feminine side and use it for their work, they also might have a masculine side and sometimes show it for their success at the proper times just as the other women did. If I had elaborated on this question and directly

asked them the details about their use of femininity, I might have been able to get more in-depth data regarding this question. Future research needs to be done in this area.

### Chapter Summary

This chapter presented three conclusions based on findings from the data. First, the notion of Korean career women's success is an integrative one in that it includes and connects to their workplace, family, and society and is culturally constructed. Second, the Korean career women's strategies for success are formed through gender performance. Implications for theory, practice, and research were also presented.

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## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

### Invitation Letter

#### 초대의 글

안녕하세요. 저는 서울대학교 교육학과에서 학부와 석사를 마치고 현재는 미국 조지아 대학교 (University of Georgia) 성인교육 전공 박사과정에 재학중인 김동진입니다. 저는 현재 지도교수인 존슨베일리 교수 (Juanita Johnson-Bailey)의 지도 하에 박사논문을 위한 연구 “한국 여성에게 있어서 성공의 의미”를 진행하고 있습니다. 본 연구의 목적은 한국의 성공한 여성들이 성공이 무엇이라고 생각하는지, 왜 그렇게 생각하는지, 또한 여성으로써 한국사회에서 일하면서 겪은 경험들은 어떠한 것인지 등을 탐구하는 것입니다.

약 2년 전, 제가 처음으로 논문 구상을 할 때에는 성공한 여성분들을 만나서 어떻게 성공했는지, 어떻게 하면 성공할 수 있는지 알아보자는 것이 논문의 주된 목표였습니다. 그러나 생각과 고민을 거듭하면서, 성공의 의미가 천편일률적인 것이 아니라 사람마다 다를 수 있으며, 그 각각의 의미가 그 자체로 소중한 것이라는 견해를 갖게 되었습니다. 그래서 성공한 여성들이 어떻게 성공했는지를 알아보다기 보다는, 성공이라는 것에 대해 어떤 가치관과 생각을 갖고 계신지, 그 생각이 어떻게 변화해 왔는지, 어떤 계기로 변화해 왔는지 등등 성공에 대한 의미를 알아보고 싶어서 현재의 연구를 시작하게 되었습니다.

자신의 분야에서 활동하시느라 매우 바쁘시겠지만, 조금씩만 시간을 내주셔서 이 연구에 참여해주신다면 감사하겠습니다. 저 개인적으로 논문을 쓸 수 있다는 점 뿐만 아니라 학문적으로는 여성학적 관점의 연구가 미약한 한국 성인교육학계에 여성의 관점으로 시도한 연구를 더할 수 있으며 미국 성인교육학계에도 한국의 여성에 관한 연구를 알릴 수 있다는 의의가 있을 것입니다. 또한 실질적으로는, 성공하고 싶어하는 여성들과 삶의 목표 및 지향점에 대해 고민하고 갈등하는 직장여성들에게 의미있는 내용을 담은 연구물로 다가갈 수 있을 것입니다.

인터뷰 절차는 한 시간 가량의 인터뷰를 최소 두 번 정도 하게 될 것으로 예상됩니다. 그러나 각 분의 상황에 따라 언제 얼마만큼의 시간을 내주실수 있는지가 다를 것이므로, 인터뷰 시간과 방법은 참여해주시는 분의 시간에 맞추어 최대한 융통성있게 진행할 것입니다. 예를 들면 삼십분씩 두 번, 혹은 이십분씩 세 번과 같이 여러번에 나누어 인터뷰를 진행할 수도 있습니다. 또한 제가 수집할 수 있는 2차자료 외에 보유하고 계신 본인에 관한 자료들을 제공해주신다면 더욱 효과적이고 깊이있는 인터뷰를 진행하는 데에 큰 도움이 될 것입니다. 바쁘신 시간 내주시는 것에 진심으로 감사드리며, 인터뷰가 부담되지거나 일에 방해가 되지 않는 범위 내에서 잘 진행될 수 있도록 최대한 노력하겠습니다.

인터뷰 내용은 디지털 녹음기로 녹음할 것이며, 박사논문을 위한 자료로써 비밀이 보장될 것입니다. 법적으로 요구되는 아주 특이한 경우 이외에는 본인의 동의 없이 개인정보가 알려질 수 있는 형식으로는 절대로 출판되지 않을 것입니다. 실제 이름과 그밖에 개인신상 유출의 우려가 있는 정보는 모두 변경 혹은 삭제되어서 논문에 쓰여질 것이니, 비밀보장에 대한 걱정이 혹시 있으시다면 안심하셔도 좋습니다.

제가 묻게 될 질문들은 본인의 삶과 직결되는 아주 개인적인 이야기를 요하는 것이 있을 것입니다. 성공에 대한 가치관 뿐 아니라 그동안 일해오신 경험, 살아오신 경험 등 개인적인 이야기를 해주실 것에 미리 감사를 드립니다. 이야기해주신 것들은 소중한 자료로써 뿐 아니라 소중한 인연으로 여기고 감사히 배움에 임하겠습니다.

바쁘신 시간 내주셔서 저의 연구에 참여해주시는 것에 다시 한 번 감사드립니다. 실제 인터뷰에 앞서서 서명해주시게 될 ‘인터뷰 동의서’를 첨부하니 참고로 읽어주시기 바랍니다. 궁금한 점 있으시면 언제든지 연락 주십시오. 감사합니다.

[연락처]

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<http://www.coe.uga.edu/leap/gradassist/index.html>

지도교수 Juanita Johnson-Bailey: (미국 연락처)706-542-6600, [jjb@uga.edu](mailto:jjb@uga.edu)

## APPENDIX B

### Consent Form

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to take part in a research study titled “The meaning of success in women's lives: Korean women in their thirties and early forties”, which is being conducted by DongJin Kim, a graduate student, Program of Adult Education, Department of Lifelong Education, Administration, and Policy, at University of Georgia, (706) 389-6294, [dongjin@uga.edu](mailto:dongjin@uga.edu), under the direction of Dr. Juanita Johnson-Bailey, Program of Adult Education, Department of Lifelong Education, Administration, and Policy, at University of Georgia, (706) 542-6600. My participation is entirely voluntary; I can refuse to participate or stop taking part at any time without giving any reason, and without penalty. I can ask to have information related to me returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed.

The following points have been explained to me:

1. The purpose of this study is to explore career development and the meaning of success in Korean women's lives.
2. The benefit that I may expect from this research is to reflect on my career development and my value on life-career success as a Korean woman.
3. The procedures are as follows: The researcher and I will agree on a time and place that is convenient for me for an interview lasting from one to two hours. The interview questions will be about what my career development process is and what I think about my own life-career success. The researcher will use semi-structured interview structure and write notes during the interview. The interview will be recorded with a digital voice recorder. The researcher may request a follow-up interview and may also telephone or e-mail me. My participation of this study will be one year duration (from February 2007 to January 2008).
4. The discomforts or stresses that may be faced during this research are talking about the experiences related to the obstacles in my career development and unhappy experiences in my life related to career development. If needed, information about an official help like counseling will be provided.
5. No risks are expected.
6. The results of this participation will be confidential and will not be released in any individually identifiable form without my prior consent, unless otherwise required by law. My name and any details that might identify me will be changed in any written reports in order to protect confidentiality. All individually identifying information will be removed from transcriptions. The audio files of the interview will be destroyed with the completion of this study.

The researcher, Dongjin Kim, will answer any further questions about the research, now and during the course of the project, and can be reached by e-mail at [dongjin@uga.edu](mailto:dongjin@uga.edu) or by phone at (706) 389-6294. I can also ask any questions to Dr. Juanita Johnson-Bailey by e-mail at [jjb@coe.uga.edu](mailto:jjb@coe.uga.edu) or by phone at (706) 542-6600.

I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction and I agree to participate in this research. I have been given a copy of this form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of the Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of the Researcher  
(TEL) 706-389-6294  
(E-Mail) [dongjin@uga.edu](mailto:dongjin@uga.edu)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Please sign both copies of this form. Keep one and return the other to the researcher.

Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to The Chairperson, Institutional Review Board, University of Georgia, 612 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia, 30602-7411; Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail [IRB@uga.edu](mailto:IRB@uga.edu)

## APPENDIX C

### Interview Guide

Personalized questions: Questions on the person's career development history

1. If you can define what success is in your life, what would it be?
2. How do you think you are successful in terms of the definition you just told me?
3. Why do you think about success like that? Is there any turning points or events that make you think like that? If you have different opinion about success in the past, what was it and why has it changed?
4. Does your current state accord with your vision about yourself during your 20s? What was your vision about yourself when you were 20s? If it is same with your current status, why did you wanted that? If it is not same with your current status, why do you think it is different?
5. What is the biggest crisis in your life? (related to your career) What was it and how did you overcome it?
6. What was the moment when you felt you are proud of? Why?
7. What are the difficulties and barriers in your life as a career woman? How did you overcome those barriers?
8. What is the advantage in your career as a woman?
9. What is a role of your femininity in your career? (Do you think you are feminine? Why?)
10. (If you are married) Have you thought that you would be more successful if you did not get married? If so, why?
11. (If you are married) Related to your career, is there any benefit or advantage because you are married?
12. Related to your career, do you have a female role model or a mentor? If so, would you describe her and the relationship between her and you?
13. Do you have any network with women regarding your career or personal life? If so, what is the role of the network in your life?
14. What is your future career goal?