

ABSTRACT

This research examines Chinese spouses' narratives regarding their participation in a Taiwanese organization and their experience and adaptation to a new life. Fourteen spouses, members of a Taiwanese organization called Chinese Association for Relief and Ensuing Service (CARES), completed in-depth interviews. Qualitative analysis identified prominent themes in participants' responses in relation to three main subjects: community communications, participation and empowerment. Analysis revealed that the organization communication techniques can be included in the category of community communications. Nevertheless semi-horizontal and bottom-up approaches were identified. This condition is reflected also in the process of spouses' participation and empowerment. The participation of women in community communications was reached only partially. The same can be said about empowerment, which was achieved mainly at the psychological level. The debate offered a list of possible factors which could be related to the partial development of empowerment and participation. They could be traced back to cultural, social, political, personal and gender factors. Suggestions which are based upon these findings of empowerment and participation are proposed to the organization and to Chinese spouses.