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**TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN
SELECTED GOVERNMENT KINDERGARTENS IN CHINA**

A Thesis in
Curriculum and Instruction

by
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ABSTRACT

Parental involvement can have very positive effects on student success, school and teachers' quality and program design. Meanwhile, during the procedure of actualizing the positive effects of parental involvement in childhood education, the teacher is the key. Teachers' attitudes toward parents and parental involvement are of great importance to the level and quality of parental involvement, which play integral roles in the quality of childhood education.

Currently in China, children's development and childhood education are still new and developing areas. While many western countries are making great progress in the theoretical and practical development in childhood education, research in this area in China is very limited. There is little research that has examined kindergarten teachers' attitudes toward parental involvement in childhood education. In order to address the new issue and to provide implications for the development of quality parental involvement, kindergarten teacher education programs and childhood education in China, this study was initiated to examine teachers' attitudes toward parental involvement in selected government kindergartens in China. A sample of 159 kindergarten teachers from 16 government kindergartens in Nanjing, China was selected in this study. The instrument employed in this study was a self-designed survey questionnaire which contained three parts: (1) demographic information, (2) teachers' attitudes toward school-based parental involvement, and (3) teachers' attitudes toward home-based parental involvement. After data collection, descriptive statistics was first computed to examine the data. Then, paired t-test was conducted to determine if there was any statistically significant difference in

teachers' attitudes toward school-based and home-based parental involvement. Finally, a multiple regression analysis was performed to examine the relationships between teachers' attitudes and their selected demographic characteristics.

The research findings and conclusions are as follows:

(1) Chinese kindergarten teachers had positive attitudes toward both school-based and home-based parental involvement.

(2) There was a statistically significant difference in teachers' attitudes toward school-based and home-based parental involvement. Teachers had more positive attitudes toward home-based parental involvement than school-based parental involvement.

(3) There were statistically significant correlations between teachers' attitudes toward school-based parental involvement and their age, highest degree and membership in professional organizations. Those teachers with younger age, higher degree or more memberships in professional organizations had more positive attitudes toward school-based parental involvement.

(4) There were statistically significant correlations between teachers' attitudes toward home-based parental involvement and their age, highest degree and class size. Those teachers with younger age, higher degree or larger class size had more positive attitudes toward home-based parental involvement.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Currently, parental involvement has already been an important and hot topic in childhood education. Researchers have consistently documented the positive effects of parental involvement on children's school performance, including higher academic achievement (McNeal, 1999; Scribner, Young, & Pedroza, 1999; Yan & Lin, 2002) and greater social and emotional development (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997; Fantuzzo & McWayne, 2002).

Public opinion agrees with the research findings. Reporting on the results of a national poll conducted by the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), Houston (2001), AASA Executive Director, points out that American public believes that "high parental involvement" is the best indicator that a school is providing a high quality education.

Researchers (e.g., Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997) also find that a child's teacher is the key to actualize positive parental involvement in childhood education program and the patterns of teachers' attitudes and invitations are important to many parents' decisions about participation in children's schooling. Teachers' positive attitudes toward parents and parental involvement process, as well as the general invitations presented by teachers are potentially very influential in parents' decisions about involvement in their children's education (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997).

Meanwhile, teachers' negative perceptions about parents and parental involvement, shaped by culture, history, and schooling practices, may inhibit home-school linkages (Lazar & Slostad, 1999).

In China, childhood education is still a new and developing field and kindergarten teachers still have various attitudes toward parental involvement. In order to strengthen the teacher-parent correlation, build a better environment for children's development and improve the quality of childhood education in China, it is crucial for us to examine Chinese kindergarten teachers' attitudes toward parental involvement. Thus, this study attempts to achieve this through examining kindergarten teachers' attitudes toward parental involvement in selected government kindergartens in Nanjing, China.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to find out Chinese kindergarten teachers' attitudes toward parental involvement in school settings and home settings and the factors that might have an influence on their attitudes. By completing a survey questionnaire which includes 35 questions, participating kindergarten teachers show their demographic information (age, highest degree, teaching years, class size and membership in professional organization) and their attitudes toward school-based and home-based parental involvement in children's education. In addition, the study also aims to find out the potential relationships between teachers' attitudes and their demographic characteristics, so that implications for future research and suggestions for educational authorities in China could be provided.

Significance of Study

Researchers have consistently documented the positive results of parental involvement in schools. Raffaele and Knoff (1999) state, “It is a well-established fact that home-school collaboration benefits all children” (p. 448). Meanwhile, teachers’ attitudes toward parents and parental involvement are of great importance to the level and quality of parental involvement, which plays a key role in the quality of childhood education. However, little research has examined the kindergarten teachers’ attitudes in China, where childhood education is still a new and developing area. While many western countries are making great progress in the theoretical and practical development in childhood education, research in this area in China is very limited, given the reality that China has a huge amount of young children and is in great need of childhood education professionals (Xu, 2005). This study is therefore initiated to address this new issue and provide implications for the development of quality parental involvement, kindergarten teacher education programs and childhood education in China.

Research Questions

In order to achieve the main purposes of the study, the following four research questions are addressed:

1. What are teachers’ attitudes toward school-based parental involvement in government kindergartens in Nanjing, China?
2. What are teachers’ attitudes toward home-based parental involvement in government kindergartens in Nanjing, China?

3. Is there any difference in teachers' attitudes toward school-based parental involvement and home-based parental involvement?

4. Is there any relationship between teachers' attitudes toward parental involvement and the following variables?

- (1) Teacher's age
- (2) Teacher's highest degree
- (3) Years of kindergarten teaching experience
- (4) Class size
- (5) Membership in professional organizations

Research Hypotheses

In this study, there are five research hypotheses as following:

Hypothesis 1: Most Chinese kindergarten teachers have positive attitudes toward school-based parental involvement.

Hypothesis 2: Most Chinese kindergarten teachers have positive attitudes toward home-based parental involvement.

Hypothesis 3: Compared to school-based parental involvement, Chinese kindergarten teachers have more positive attitudes toward home-based parental involvement.

Hypothesis 4: There are statistically significant relationships between kindergarten teachers' attitudes toward parental involvement and their characteristics as follows:

- (1) Teacher's age
- (2) Teacher's highest degree
- (3) Membership in professional associations

Hypothesis 5: There is no statistically significant relationship between kindergarten teachers' attitudes toward parental involvement and their characteristics as follows:

- (1) Years of kindergarten teaching experience
- (2) Class size

Definition of Terms

In order to clarify the terminology used most frequently in this study, the following definitions are included:

Attitude

An attitude is a learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favorable or unfavorable manner with respect to a given object (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Attitude has three basic features: it is learned, it predisposes action, and such actions are consistently favorable or unfavorable toward the object. Being inaccessible to direct observation, an attitude is a hypothetical construct that must be inferred from measurable responses which must reflect positive or negative evaluation of the attitude object (Ajzen, 1988). Attitudes help us to define how we perceive and think about others, as well as how we behave toward them.

The definition of attitude in this study is considered to be Chinese kindergarten teachers' predisposition to favorableness or unfavorableness toward school-based and home-based parental involvement.

Parental Involvement

The United States Department of Education (2004) defines parental involvement as the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities. This involvement includes ensuring that parents play an integral role in assisting in their child's learning; that parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school; and that parents are full partners in their child's education and are included, as appropriate, in decision making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child.

School-Based Parental Involvement

School-based parental involvement is parents' participation in children's education within school settings or through interaction with school personnel (Muller & Kerbow, 1993). Parental involvement with the school may take a variety of forms. Parents might become involved to intervene in a problem, or they might be interested in program options which are available, in order to guide their child in making the best decision. They might want to have influence on school policy or may become involved as a way to form social relationship with other parents. School-based parental involvement

could be parent contact with the school about academic matters concerning the child; parent volunteer work at school; or parent participation in a parent-teacher organization (PTO).

Home-Based Parental Involvement

Home-based parental involvement is parents' participation in children's education within home settings (Muller & Kerbow, 1993). It best reflects the nature of the parents' values in education, the way the educational process is incorporated into the interactions of family members, and how parents structure the child's environment to be conducive to learning. Since it is the least subject to external constraints, home-based parental involvement is likely to be the least likely to change.

Kindergarten

In China, kindergarten is the main form of pre-school educational program that serves children from 3-6 years of old. It is considered as a preparatory education elementary school and is not included in the compulsory education system. Most kindergarten programs run for 3 years and they could be full-time, part-time, boarding and hourly-reckoned. There are three types of kindergartens: government kindergarten, locally-run kindergarten and private kindergarten. By the end of 2005, China has more than 111, 800 kindergartens, among which about 70% are government kindergartens (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2005).

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter aims to provide a theoretical base for the study by reviewing current literature about parental involvement and teachers' attitudes toward parental involvement.

The review of literature begins with an overview of parental involvement in a general context, in which models of parent-school relationship, standards of parental involvement, benefits of and barriers to parental involvement and major types of parental involvement in childhood education are identified. Then, since the study focuses on Chinese teachers' attitudes, the background and context of parental involvement in China' childhood education are reviewed. Finally, a brief literature review of teachers' attitudes toward parental involvement in childhood education in a general context is given.

Parental Involvement in Childhood Education

Models of Parent-School Relationship

Swap (1993) addresses four different models for the relationship between parents and schools. The models are: (1) protective model, (2) school to home transmission model, (3) curriculum enrichment model, and (4) partnership model.

Each of the four models is reviewed in the following sections. For each model, the goal, the assumptions on which the model is based, and the model's advantages and disadvantages are discussed.

Protective Model

Goal

The goal of protective model is to reduce conflict between parents and educators, primarily through the separation of parents' and educators' functions, and to protect the school from interference by parents.

Assumptions

The three assumptions for protective model are: (1) Parents delegate to the school the responsibility of educating their children; (2) Parents hold school personnel accountable for the results; and (3) Educators accept this delegation of responsibility.

Advantage

The advantage of protective model is that it is generally effective at achieving its goal of protecting the school against parental intrusion.

Disadvantages

Protective model also has some disadvantages: (1) It exacerbates many conflicts between home and school by failing to create structures or predictable opportunities for

preventive problem solving; (2) It ignores the potential of home-school collaboration for improving school achievement; and (3) It rejects important resources for enrichment and school support that could be available to the school from families and other members of the community.

The protective model eliminates the notion that parents are their child's first and most important teachers and that the parents really know their child better than anyone else does. It also represents an example of situations in which parents are very willing to abdicate this aspect of their parenting duties. Although this model would certainly not be advocated for parents seeking care of their young child, it has been characteristic in some public and private school situations (Springate & Stegelin, 1999).

School to Home Transmission Model

Goal

The goal of school to home transmission model is to enlist parents in supporting objectives of the school.

Assumptions

The three assumptions for school to home transmission model are: (1) Children's achievement is fostered by continuity of expectations and values between home and school; (2) School personnel should identify the values and practices outside the school that contribute to student success; and (3) Parents should endorse the importance of schooling, reinforce school expectations at home, provide conditions at home that nurture

development and support school success, and ensure that the child meets minimum academic and social requirements.

Advantages

The advantages of school to home transmission model are: (1) Programs based on this model have increased children's school success; (2) Parents receive clear direction from the school about the social and academic skills needed for children's success and about the parents' role in supporting the development of those skills; and (3) Parents welcome clear transmission of information, particularly when they have not had access to the social mainstream and seek such access for their children.

Disadvantages

The disadvantages of school to home transmission model are: (1) Programs built on this model often contain components that reflect an unwillingness to consider parents as equal partners with important strengths; (2) Some conditions such as dangerous housing, poor health, or stringent employment demands may limit some parents' ability to devote time and energy to parental involvement activities and (3) Schools may find it difficult to draft clear boundaries between the roles of school and home in formal education.

Under school to home transition model, although parents have access to support school through holding bake sales, building playgrounds, providing class materials and preparing food for school parties, they are still not truly equal partners with school personnel in the care and education of children (Springate & Stegelin, 1999).

Curriculum Enrichment Model

Goal

The goal of school to curriculum enrichment model is to expand school's curriculum by incorporating families' contributions.

Assumptions

The five assumptions for curriculum enrichment model: (1) Continuity of learning between home and school is critically important to children's learning; (2) The values and cultural histories of many children are omitted from the standard curriculum, leading to a discontinuity of culture between home and school, and often to reduced motivation, status, and achievement; (3) The omission of cultural values distorts the curriculum, leading to a less accurate and less comprehensive understanding of events and achievements, and to a perpetuation of damaging beliefs and attitudes about minorities; (4) Parents and educators should work together to enrich curriculum objectives and content; and (5) Relationships between home and school are based on mutual respect, and both parents and teachers are seen as experts and resources in the process of discovery.

Advantages

The advantages of curriculum enrichment model are: (1) This model offers an attractive approach for incorporating parental involvement into children's learning; (2) Drawing on the knowledge and expertise of parents increases the resources available to the school and provides rich opportunities for adults to learn from each other; and (3) The

contributions of minorities who have not traditionally participated in school are especially welcomed.

Disadvantages

The disadvantages of curriculum enrichment model are: (1) Creating continuity between home and school demands a significant investment of parents' and educators' time and resources; (2) The number of different cultures represented in some classrooms may make curriculum adaptation very complex; (3) Debate still rages about that the school's mission should be in educating children from diverse backgrounds; and (4) Differences in class or educational background can make teachers and parents uncomfortable.

The curriculum enrichment model enables parents to participate actively in school issues and get truly involved in children's education. The real, ongoing and two-way communication between parents and school is formed. It is believed that through ongoing communication, parents and teachers will be well informed about each other's activities and, therefore, able to enhance and support each other's efforts. For example, parents who are familiar with their children's school curriculum will have ideas about how to supplement and extend the school topics with lessons at home. Teachers who are aware of how involved parents are can also provide parents with individualized and timely guidance in supplementing their children's learning (Baker, Kessler-Sklar, Piotrkowski, & Parker, 1999).

Partnership Model

Goal

The goal of partnership model is for parents and educators to work together to accomplish a common mission, generally, for all children in school to achieve success.

Assumptions

The two assumptions for partnership model: (1) Accomplishing the joint mission requires a revisioning of the school environment and the discovery of new policies, practices, structures, roles, relationships, and attitudes in order to realize the vision; and (2) Accomplishing the joint mission demands collaboration among parents, community representatives, and educators. Because the task is highly challenging and requires many resources, no single group acting alone can accomplish it.

Advantage

The advantage of partnership model is that a true partnership requires a transforming vision of school culture based on collegiality, experimentation, mutual support, and joint problem solving.

Disadvantages

The disadvantages of partnership model are: (1) This model is difficult to implement; and (2) It requires exchanging the traditional solitary role the educator for a

collaborative role and the development of new patterns of scheduling and interaction to support this new role.

In sum, by examining involvement in terms of the mutuality of interaction between home and school, Swap's four models of parent-school relationships reflect a continuum of increasing parental involvement (Decker & Decker, 2003).

Standards of Parental Involvement

The National PTA (1998) developed the National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs in cooperation with education and parent-involvement professionals through the National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education. Altogether there are six standards. The first five relate to parental involvement; the sixth to collaboration with the community at large. The five standards related to parental involvement are identified in the following sections.

Standard I. Communicating

Communication between home and school is regular, two-way, and meaningful. When families and educators communicate effectively, positive relationships develop, problems are more easily solved.

Standard II. Parenting

Parenting skills are promoted and supported. School staff recognize parent roles and responsibilities, ask families what supports they need, and work to find ways to meet those needs.

Standard III. Student Learning

Parents and families play an integral role in assisting student learning. Enlisting family's involvement provides educators and administrators with a valuable support system, creating a team that is working for each child's success.

Standard IV. Volunteering

Families are welcome in the school, and their support and assistance are sought. In order for parents and family members to feel appreciated and welcome, volunteer work must be meaningful and valuable. Capitalizing on the expertise and skills of parents and family members provides much-needed support to educators and administrators in their attempts to meet academic goals and student needs.

Standard V. School Decision Making and Advocacy

Families are full partners in the decision that affect children and families as individuals and as representatives of others. Families and educators depend on shared

authority in decision-making systems to foster family trust, public confidence, and mutual support of each other's efforts in helping students succeed.

In sum, as The National PTA (n.d.) explains, "these standards, together with their corresponding quality indicators, were created to be used in conjunction with other national standards and reform initiatives in support of children's learning and success."

Benefits of Parental Involvement

With a very comprehensive survey of the research on parental involvement in children's education, Henderson and Berla (1994) demonstrate that parental involvement has positive effects on student success, as well as school quality and program design. The three categories of effects are listed in the following sections.

Effects on Student Success

According to Henderson and Berla (1994), parental involvement can have 11 effects on student success. They are: (1) When parents are involved, students achieve more, regardless of socioeconomic status, ethnic/racial background, or parents' education level; (2) The more extensive the family involvement, the higher the student achievement; (3) Students whose families are involved have higher grades and test scores, have better attendance records, and complete their homework more consistently; (4) When parents and families are involved, students display more positive attitudes and behavior; (5) Different involvement levels produce different gains. To produce long-lasting gains for students, the parent and family involvement activities must be well-planned, inclusive,

and comprehensive; (6) Educators have higher expectations of students whose parents and families collaborate with teachers. They also have higher opinions of those parents and families; (7) In programs designed to involve parents and families in full partnerships, the achievement of disadvantaged children improves, sometimes dramatically, with the children farthest behind making the greatest gains; (8) Children from diverse cultural backgrounds tend to do better when families and professionals collaborate to bridge the gap between the home culture and the school culture; (9) Antisocial student behaviors, such as alcohol use and violence, decrease as family involvement increases; (10) The benefits of involving parents and families are significant at all ages and grade levels. Middle and high school students whose parents and families remain involved make better transitions, maintain the quality of their work, develop realistic plans for the future, and are less likely to drop out; and (11) The most accurate predictor of a student's success in school is not income or social status, but the extent to which the student's family is able to create a home environment that encourages learning, communicate high, yet reasonable, expectations for achievement and future careers, and become involved in their children's education at school and in the community.

Effects on School Quality

As Henderson and Berla (1994) indicate, parental involvement can have five effects on school quality. They are: (1) Schools that work well with families have better teacher morale and higher ratings of teachers by parents; (2) Schools in which families are involved have more support from families and better reputations in the community; (3)

School programs that involve parents and families outperform identical programs without such involvement; (4) Schools in which children are failing improve dramatically when parents and families are enabled to become partners with teachers and (5) Schools' efforts to inform and involve parents and families are stronger determinants of whether inner-city parents will be involved in their children's education than are the level of parent education, family size, marital status, or student grade level.

Effects on Program Design

Henderson and Berla (1994) also point out five effects of parental involvement on program design. They are: (1) The more the relationship between parents and educators approaches a comprehensive, well-planned partnership, the higher the student achievement; (2) For low-income families, programs offering home visits are more successful in involving parents and families than programs requiring parents to visit the school; (3) When families receive frequent and effective communication from the school or program, their involvement increases, their overall evaluation of educators is higher, and their attitudes toward the program are more positive; (4) Parents and families are much more likely to become involved when educators encourage and assist them in helping their children with schoolwork; and (5) When parents and families are treated as partners and given relevant information by people with whom they are comfortable, they put into practice the involvement strategies they already know are effective but have been hesitant to use.

Besides the positive effects mentioned above, Moles and D'Angelo (1993) and Wherry (1999) report that parental involvement are also beneficial to other teacher, administrators, and community.

In sum, parental involvement can have benefits in a variety of areas, including student success, school quality, program design, teachers and administrators' quality and community development.

Barriers to Parental Involvement

Although researchers have consistently showed that parental involvement has positive effects on childhood education, many barriers inhibit and discourage school-family partnership, even when school personnel and parents have a genuine desire to partner (Petr, 2003).

The barriers can come from both teacher's side and parents' side. The following two sections show the possible barriers faced by teachers and parents.

Barriers Faced by Teachers

According to Petr (2003), there are seven major barriers which are faced by teachers with regard to effective parental involvement. They are: (1) Fear of loss of control: "I am the one with the professional expertise and the professional responsibility, and I shouldn't need to include anyone."; (2) Not enough time: "There is not enough time in the day to plan and schedule more meeting."; (3) Families are too complex: "I don't know how to respond to the multiple and complex needs of families."; (4) Families are

too demanding: “I can’t possibly respond to all of the things that parents will want me to do.”; (5) Little support/reward from administrators: “Partnering with families is not high on anybody else’s priority list.”; (6) No training in how to partner with families: “I just don’t know how to begin.”; and (7) Cultural/language difference: “It’s really hard to communicate with those folks.”

Barriers Faced by Parents

Petr (2003) also lists seven barriers faced by parents with regard to effective parental involvement: (1) Fear of criticism: “Those teachers will probably just blame me for my child’s problems; (2) Previous negative experience with school: “I had a terrible experience as a child in grade school—I want to stay as far away from a school as possible.”; (3) Not enough time: “With my work responsibilities, I just don’t have time to go to all the meetings and help my child with his homework.”; (4) Inconvenient hours: “I can’t take off work to attend conferences at school—why won’t they meet with me in the evenings?”; (5) Too many life stressors: “I just can’t focus on school now—I’m a single parent with six kids working overtime—I need the school to just do its job so I don’t have to worry about my child’s educational progress.”; (6) Teachers are too demanding: “I’d like to be involved, but I can’t possibly do all the things that the school is going to want me to do.”; and (7) Cultural/language barriers: “It’s really hard to communicate with those folks.”

Despite all the barriers described above, it is important to instill hope that barriers can be overcome. In Table 2.1 below, Petr (2003) depicts some possible solutions to some of the barriers listed above.

Table 2.1 Overcoming Barriers to Parental Involvement in Childhood Education

Barrier	Possible Solution
No time in the day for parent-teacher meetings.	School building designates certain evening for parent-teacher conferences-teacher are compensated for the extra time.
Fear and distrust between parents and teachers.	Classroom/buildings sponsor several “mixers” in which teachers and parents can interact informally and socially to break down the distrust and fear and improve communication.
Families have very complex problems that they need help with.	School employs school social worker to refer families to community resources, so that when families express needs, teachers can listen without feeling overwhelmed by the needs because they can involve social worker.
Little support/reward from administrators.	Principals’ job descriptions and evaluations include developing family-school partnership, so that teachers have support from above.
No training on how to partner with families.	Staff receive in-service training on how to develop family-school partnerships, co-led by parents.
Families distrust schools; don’t see them as interested in the entire family.	School districts establish family resource centers for parent support (including parent-to-parent groups), information, and referral.
Teachers distrust families and think they are too critical.	Families organize teacher appreciation days in which students honor their teachers.
Any and all possible barriers.	School establishes a permanent committee on family-school partnership to systematically address the barriers and find solutions that work.

Source: Petr, C. (2003). *Building family-school partnership to improve student outcomes:*

A primer for educators. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, Inc.

Petr (2003) also identifies three strategies as additional ways to overcome barriers toward successful parental involvement. They are: (1) Schools are opened after hours and on weekends for recreation and community meeting, so that families can see the schools as responsive to more than just the educational needs of the children; (2) Schools offer parent-to-parent networking opportunities, demonstrating their commitment to help families find support; and (3) “Chat and Chew” sessions: School sponsor short workshops on educational topics chosen by parents combined with lunch or snacks.

In sum, although parental involvement has many positive effects on childhood education, there are still some barriers to effectively realizing it in practice. These barriers could be faced by both teachers and parents. However, some solutions still can be carried out to overcome these barriers.

Types of Parental Involvement

There are various types of parental involvement, which can be categorized as school-based parental involvement and home-based parental involvement. Each type is reviewed in the following sections.

School-Based Parental Involvement

School-based parental involvement is parents’ participation in children’s education within school settings or through interactions with school personnel (Muller & Kerbow, 1993). School-based parental involvement can take three different styles:

conferences, home visits and volunteering. Each type is reviewed in the following sections.

Teacher-Parent Conferences

Conferences are a traditional method of involving and informing parents (Seefeldt & Barbour, 1998). A teacher-parent conference is one occasion when the expectations of the teacher and the parents should be the same: each speaking and listening to each other, each asking questions (Decker & Decker, 2003). Conferences can be called either by teacher or parent. Practically, they are more often called by the teacher, who invites the parent to school to meet with the teacher and possibly the principal, depending on the topic to be addressed (Gonzalez, Brusca-Vega, & Yawkey, 1996). Through conferences, parents are informed how their children's progress and performance stand in relation to the school expectations and parents can also share their own ideas and opinions about their children's education (Seefeldt & Barbour, 1998). Teacher-parent conferences are a two-way communication, which focuses on information sharing and gathering (Gonzalez, Brusca-Vega, & Yawkey, 1996).

During teacher-parent conferences, parents' asking questions is encouraged by researchers (Seefeldt & Barbour, 1998; Coleman, 1991). Coleman (1991) suggests that parents be helped to ask questions that include such concerns as: (1) progress that their child is making not only academically but socially and how such progress is assessed; (2) rules for behavior in the classroom, how teachers reinforce these rules, and how their child is responding; (3) different ways that schools keep parents informed of their child's

progress; and (4) parental involvement and available resources at home, in the community, and at school that will assist them in helping their child.

Home Visits

Home visits are a family involvement strategy with several purposes (Decker & Decker, 2003). They may be used to welcome new families to the school community, survey families for their views on school policies and programs, report on student progress, demonstrate home-learning activities, help find solutions to specific problems, and so on. They may be conducted by the principal, teachers, community aides, or trained volunteers.

Home visits are very effective as a strategy to establish good communication links between school and home. Through home visits, teachers and other educational professionals can get a better knowledge of the family background of children's intellectual, cognitive, emotional and physical development, and teachers and parents can interact more readily and genuinely in a less threatening and intimidating environment.

During a home visit, the teacher may discuss the special needs and interests of the child that the teacher needs to be aware of, and the expectations the parents have for the child in the program. Parents may also know about the teacher's background, training, and experience (Brewer, 2001). Through the discussion, the true two-way communication can be established between parents and teachers, which is valuable for the welfare of the child. Thus, the information gained about the child, the parents, and the home environment is well worth the investment of time and energy required to complete home visits (Brewer, 2001).

Home visits can take many forms. They can be regular and systematic, such as weekly or monthly across the academic year. Less beneficial and successful are random home visits (Gonzales, Brusca-Vega, & Yawkey, 1996).

Although home visits are effective for establishing good communication links between school and the home, they still can be threatening for both the teacher and parents. Parents often fear that teachers are snooping; teachers fear a slammed door or cold shoulder when they approach. These fears are usually ungrounded, however, and most home visits are pleasant and appreciated (Seefeldt & Barbour, 1998). Hymes (1974) assures teachers that if they approach the home visit in the same manner they would any new acquaintance, there will be no problem.

Volunteering

Parent volunteers in schools can take many forms (Gonzalez, Brusca-Vega, & Yawkey, 1996). Some provide assistance in the classroom, largely as paraprofessionals. Other volunteers serve in lunch rooms or other areas as monitors and as aids who check equipments in and out of media centers and help with books in the libraries.

Muller and Kerbow (1993) note that, compared with other interaction with the school, volunteering as a form of parental involvement “has a more diffuse character”. It is not child specific in that the parental involvement in the school specifically to help his or her child, and it is not policy oriented in that the parent takes the role of assistance either in the classroom or in school activities. And, by contributing to the school in this manner, the parent is in some way incorporating into the educational process within the school.

Parent volunteers are very important at school, especially as resources continue to shrink and schools cannot afford to hire enough adults to maintain adequate adult-child ratios (Brewer, 2001). By volunteering in schools, parents can not only save teachers' time and energy, but also build their own knowledge about child development and developmentally appropriate practice (Springate & Stegelin, 1999). All of these could be beneficial to children's development.

Home-Based Parental Involvement

Home based parental involvement is parents' participation in children's education within home settings (Muller & Kerbow, 1993). Parental involvement at home best reflects the nature of the parents' values in education, the ways the educational process is incorporated into interactions of family members, and how parents structure the child's environment to be conducive to learning. Home-based parental involvement and school-based parental involvement are not equally important to children's learning (Finn, 1998). Extensive research reviews find that the home environment is among the most important influences on children's academic performance (Wang et al., 1993).

There are four major types of home-based parental involvement: parent-child discussion, parents' helping with homework, parents' reading to children and enrichment extracurricular. Each type is reviewed in the following sections.

Parent-Child Discussion

Parents need to frequently talk with their children about school matters. Although it can be as simple as asking, "How was school today?", the influence could still be

significant. Researchers (e.g., Ho & Willms, 1996) show that children whose parents converse regularly with them about school experiences perform better academically than children who rarely discuss school with their parents. Other research (e.g., Steinberg, 1996) suggests that the nature of parent-child discussion is also important. For example, parents should be willing to hear about difficulties, as well as successes, and play a support role encouraging persistence when schoolwork or relationships at school are problematic (Steinberg, 1996). Another good example of parent-child discussion is joint parent-student decision making when the situation permits, such as choosing what project to undertake or, in later grades, what courses to take (Taylor, 1996). This level of interest is associated with higher student engagement, as well as academic achievement (Finn, 1998).

Parents' Helping with Homework

Involvement with children's homework is an important way for parents to keep informed and updated with what children are learning in schools. Making certain that homework is completed, discussing the specifics of assignments and papers, explaining the assignments, checking accuracy, and actively helping children complete assignments have all been to be related to children's academic performance (Ho & Willms, 1996).

If a parent has enough subject knowledge and teaching strategies, he/she might be an ideal tutor for his/her child. Sometimes, children cannot completely understand what they have learnt in schools, thus parents' tutoring can facilitate children's learning in a less structured and more comfortable setting: home. In a survey of parents of elementary

school children, Epstein (1996) found that more than 85 percent spent at least 15 minutes daily tutoring their children when the teacher requested it.

Parents' Reading to Children

Many researchers (e.g, Nord, Lennon, Liu, & Chandler, 2000; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998) have shown that there is a positive relationship between parents' reading to children and children's school performance. Parents can read storybooks, newspapers, magazines and any materials children are interested in to children and then discuss the readings with children and/or ask the children to repeat some parts of the readings. Reading to children can not only help to increase the parent-child interaction, but also help children's literacy development. Parents who read to their children before they enter school give their children a boost toward reading success. Talking to children about books and stories read to them also supports reading achievement (Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., 1996).

Enrichment Extra Curricular

Many parents send their children to enrichment extracurricular classes, such as sports, drama, music, scouting, dance, various clubs and advanced classes for school subjects. Taking such a class indicates the value the parents place on activities of cultural enrichment and, when the classes cost money, a priority in allocating resources to the activity (Muller & Kerbow, 1993). Research (e.g., Glassman, 2000) shows that enrichment extracurricular classes benefit children in numerous ways, such as broadening horizons, promoting physical development, encouraging team spirit and social skills,

building confidence and providing outlet for stress. Parents may also enroll their child in extra curricular that would more directly, at least more obviously, help their child in school (Muller & Kerbow, 1993). Computer classes may be such an example. Learning to use a computer may help not only with schoolwork but may also be helpful in future employment.

Needlman (2001) suggests that parents could play an active role in children's enrichment extracurricular activities by helping the child to decide the time and frequency of their extracurricular activities and assisting child to identify their options and interests.

In sum, parents have many ways to get involved in children's education, both at school and home. Some presented in this section include teacher-parent conferences, home visits, volunteering, parent-child discussion, parents' helping with homework, parents' reading to children and enrichment extra curricular.

Parental Involvement in China's Childhood Education

Similar to most parents in other countries, Chinese parents pay great attention to their children's education. This means that parental involvement also plays an important role in China's childhood education. However, due to the certain historical, cultural and social background in China, the parental involvement in China's childhood education has its own characteristics (Chen et al., 1998).

Chinese Parents' Attention to Childhood Education

It is safe to say that virtually all Chinese parents believe that schooling is important for their children and want their children to perform as well as possible (Banerian, 1991). Nowadays, Chinese parents pay more and more attention to their children's education, especially after the year 1979, when the one-child policy was implemented by China's central government. According to a report from Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China (2003), in urban areas of China, the proportion of money allocated for education in family's total expenditure has increased from 42% in year 1999 to 75.5% in year 2003. Also, 86.3% parents regard the spending on child's education as their top priority of the family expenditure. For each family, the average monthly expenditure on childhood education is around 500-1000 RMB yuan (around 62.3-124.6 U.S. dollars).

Since many Chinese parents theoretically are held to one child, their hopes and dreams are focused on their only child and childhood and education is seen by them as the beginning rung on the education ladder that leads to success, a higher standard of living and a better way of life (Ming & Abbott, 1992). This reality brings some social problems. For example, the one-child policy raises concerns about the possible harmful effects of too much attention and pampering because it is not uncommon for one child to be surrounded by two parents and four grandparents (Vaughan, 1993).

A study of single child families in the Beijing (the capital of China) area found that, "these little emperors and princesses" were more egocentric, less persistent and less cooperative than children with siblings (Jiao, Ji, & Jing, 1996). Another problem is that

as a generation of singletons reach adolescence, Chinese officials are indeed alarmed by suicides and mental illness caused by overwhelming pressure for these singletons to succeed in the education system (Fong, 2004). These phenomena further increase Chinese parents' care about whether the education their children receive can optimally facilitate their healthy development.

Another motive for Chinese parents' attention to and care about childhood education is that, in many Chinese parents' minds, if they assist their children with educational opportunities their children, when adults, will be in good position to care for them in their old age (Ming & Abbott, 1992). This idea originates in traditional Chinese culture which emphasizes a strong relationship between parents and children.

In sum, currently, Chinese parents are paying more and more attention to their children's education. This can be attributed to a combination of traditional Chinese culture and current situation (e.g., the one-child policy).

Major Styles of Parent-School Relationship in China

Although traditional Chinese culture has long valued education and Chinese parents are paying more and more attention to their children's education, as to parental involvement, most Chinese parents are still not as active as American parents (Liu & Chien, 1998). In China, parent-school relationship in general consists of two major styles-no involvement and home-based involvement. Each of the two styles is reviewed in the following sections.

No Involvement

In many Chinese schools, the protective model of parent-school relationship (Swap, 1993) prevails. Under this model, the functions of school and family are separated and parents do not get involved in their children's learning at all. Researches show that there are three reasons for this:

Firstly, the education in China is highly centralized (Wang, Wang, Ming, Lang, & Mayer, 1996). The State Educational Commission (SEdC) determines the educational policy and sets the curriculum for the entire country. All students in the same grade level throughout the country take the same courses, use the same prescribed textbooks and take the same National Entrance Examinations developed by SEdC to enter colleges or universities. This kind of highly centralized, uniform and structured educational system leaves little space or freedom for parents to actively get involved.

Secondly, contrary to the assertion made by mainstream American educators-that the process of education is a cooperative venture involving the home and student as well as the school, Chinese parents lay most of the responsibility for their children's education on the school (Banerian, 1991). They will do so because their self-regard in terms of what they think they know about their child is very low, because this was the way of their own parents, or because they are afraid of to create or deal with possible conflict (Springate & Stegelin, 1999). They expect much from the schools and quick to blame school personnel for any shortcomings they find in their children's education (Banerian, 1991).

Thirdly, in most Chinese parents' minds, the criteria for a "good" school and a "good" student are different from that of American parents. According to Banerian

(1991), many Chinese parents believe that a “good” school gives each child lots of work to do and makes the child understand that this work must be completed. A “good” student behaves properly, shows respect to parents and authorities, obeys laws and rules, and never gets into trouble. As long as a child can follow these “criteria” for being a “good” student, parents rarely receive any communication from their teacher or any other school personnel. The families are also satisfied with this situation.

Home-Based Parental Involvement

Although the level of parental involvement in China’s schools is increasing, in recent years, Chinese parents still prefer to choose home-based involvement, rather than actively and directly participating in school activities. Researches show that there are three major reasons for this.

Firstly, due to the traditional Confucian doctrine which places high value on teaching and the teacher, Chinese parents highly respect teachers and look upon teachers and school administrators as “experts” in their field. There is an ancient Chinese saying, “Even if he has been your teacher for only one day, he will be like your father for your whole life.” In most Chinese parents’ minds, educators, as professionals, must know what is the best way to educate the children and what they themselves only can do is to passively support schools without realizing that active involvement is their right and responsibility (Li, Chen, & Sun, 2002). With this perception, Chinese parents expect school personnel to make appropriate decisions regarding the educational program, decisions which would be beyond the realm of the parents (Banerian, 1991).

Secondly, Chinese parents tend not to have any conflict with teachers and schools. In their minds, the direct school-based parental involvement will more easily produce conflicts between school and parents, which will be very harmful for children's education. Chinese parents are afraid that, by seeing the conflicts between teachers and parents, their children will "learn" to be unruly, disrespectful, aggressive, selfish and overly independent. Thus, although sometimes Chinese parents are also critical of their children's schools, they are far less likely to raise these concerns with teachers and administrators. Instead, they draw on familial and community resources to compensate for what schools lacked (Diamond, Wang, & Gomez, 2004).

Third, many Chinese parents are lacking in the knowledge of the operational procedure of school and the significance of school-based parental involvement. In a survey of 15 Chinese parents of elementary school children, Constantino, Cui and Faltis (1995) found that the parents did not fully understand the significance or the value placed on parent-teacher meetings by the teachers. Many of them said that they were informed of the conferences through teacher notes, but chose not to go to them. When asked why, one parent said, "Yesterday, there was a parent meeting but I did not go because I have two children at home to take care of. I don't think it is that necessary." When asked if they understand the purposes of the meetings, only one parent responded with what the school expects the parents to know, that they are a means to discuss student progress.

In sum, parental participation in school and classroom traditionally has not been a part of Chinese culture. Generally, parents leave the teaching responsibility to teachers and many parents feel that they have neither the training, knowledge nor the expertise to provide appropriate assistance for their children in school settings (Liu & Chien, 1998).

So, even if many Chinese parents are likely to get involved in children's education, they would prefer to achieve this involvement at home.

Distinctive Features of Parental Involvement in China

There are two distinctive features of Chinese parental involvement: authority at home and focus on academic study. Each of them is reviewed as follows.

Authority at Home

In contrast to the reluctance to and withdrawal from school participation, most Chinese parents want to keep their authority at home. Research (e.g., Ekblad, 1996) has reported that Chinese parents are more protective and controlling and less encouraging of independence and exploration than are North American parents. Chinese parents emphasize behavioral control and obedience and often encourage their young children to stay close to and to be dependent on them (Ho, 1996). Confucius (500 B.C./1997) said, "When your parents are alive, do not travel far. If you do travel, be sure to have a regular destination." The reason for Confucius to request people to this is that parents may feel at ease and will be able to summon their children back in the event of an emergency. This saying reveals that children in Chinese families are not as individual or independent and it shows the interdependent nature of Chinese parent-child relationships.

One vivid example of Chinese parents' authority and control at home is from the movie, *The Joy Luck Club*, produced by Tan, Bass and Markey (1994) and directed by Wang (1994). This movie depicts an interesting scenario demonstrating the typical

Chinese parental involvement at home: An America-born Chinese girl, June, does not like to play the piano at all; however, her mother, Anmei, a traditional Chinese lady, wants her daughter to do so and always wishes that June could be a pianist someday. The following is the argument between them:

(June is sitting on the carpet watching TV)

Anmei: "Four O'clock. Turn off TV. Practice piano time!"

(Silence)

Anmei: "What did I say? Four O'clock!"

June: "I am not going to play anymore. Why should I?"

Anmei (surprised): "What did you say?"

June (shouting): "I am not your slave. This isn't China! You can't make me!"

Anmei: "Get up!"

June: "No, no! I won't!"

(Anmei drags June to the piano and forces her to sit on the piano bench)

June (crying): "You want me to be someone I am not! I will never be the kind of daughter you want me to be!"

Anmei: "There are two kinds of daughters: obedient or follow (your) own mind. Only one kind of daughter could live in this house-obedient kind!"

June (crying): "Then I wish I wasn't your daughter! I wish you weren't my mom!"

Anmei: "Too late to change this."

This scenario clearly demonstrates that Chinese parents place great hope on, as well as great control over their children.

Parental behaviors and beliefs are guided by general cultural norms and value system (Chen et al., 1998). This feature of Chinese parental involvement may be rooted in two Chinese cultural and value background. One focuses on collectivism and the other focuses on filial piety. Each of the two features is reviewed in the following two sections.

Collectivism

In Western individualistic cultures, children are encouraged to be assertive and independent in challenging situations. Acquiring self-reliance, autonomy, and assertive social skills are important socialization goals (Chen et al., 1998). In contrast, achieving and maintaining social order and interpersonal harmony are the primary concerns in both traditional and contemporary collectivistic Chinese societies. Individuals are encouraged to restrain personal desires for the benefits and interests of the collective (Chen et al., 1998).

Collectivism is a part of Chinese traditional culture which has been influenced by the philosophies of Confucianism and Taoism. In his philosophy of humanity, Confucius (551-497 B.C.) prescribed a way of living that reflected virtue and wisdom. Being moral, trustworthy, and benevolent to one's fellow human beings was highly valued. Loyalty and obedience to one's parents and reverence for one's ancestors were also taught (Springate & Stegelin, 1993). Taoist philosophies also consider behavioral inhibition and self-restraint as indexes of social maturity, accomplishment, and mastery (Feng, 1962; King & Bond, 1985). The expression of individual's needs or striving for autonomous behaviors is considered selfish and socially unacceptable (Ho, 1996). Consistently, it has

been found that whereas assertive and independent behaviors are valued in Western individualistic cultures, shy and inhibited behaviors are valued and encouraged in Chinese culture (Chen, Rubin, & Sun, 1992). Children who are sensitive, wary, cautious, and behaviorally restrained are called “Guai Hai Zi” in Mandarin, which may be translated as meaning “good” or “well-behaved.” Unlike their Western counterparts, shy and anxious children in China are regarded as socially competent and understanding; they are accepted by peers and adjust well to their social environment (Chen, Rubin, & Li, 1995). Thus, with traditional Chinese value in minds and in order to make their children socially competent, most Chinese parents are controlling and protective in child rearing. They teach their children to value education, respect authority, feel responsible for relatives, and show self-control (Feng, 1994).

Filial Piety

In traditional Chinese culture, filial piety is highly emphasized and the concern for maintaining the interdependence of the family and the individual’s loyalty to the family is seen in child-rearing practice. In Confucian doctrine of filial piety, parent-child relationship is very clearly defined as that “Father is the guide of son” and children must pledge absolute obedience and reverence to parents. Since Chinese children are trained to respect parents and other elders, for most of the time, children listen when their parents talk and they are not allowed to talk back (Liu & Chien, 1998). Arguing with parents, in Confucian doctrines, means being disrespectful and not filial to parents, which is very bad. It is even considered as an evil thing. In *Analects*, Confucius (500 B.C./1998) had a conversation with his students about this issue:

Meng Ziyi asked about filiality. The Master (Confucius) said, Never disobey. Fan Chi was driving, and the Master told him, The descendent of the Meng asked me about filiality, and I replied, Never disobey. Fan Chi said, What does that mean? The Master said, When they are alive, serve them with propriety; when they are dead, inter them with propriety, and sacrifice to them with propriety.

The above conversation shows that traditional Confucian doctrines require children to be obedient to their parents throughout their life.

In turn, parents are responsible for “governing” (i.e., teaching and disciplining) their children and are held accountable for their children’s failure (Chen et al., 1998). The principle of filial piety stipulates: (1) parental authority in using coercive parenting strategies, including power-assertion and physical punishment, and (2) parental responsibility to protect the child and to encourage the child to achieve. In China, a child’s achievement is not just an issue for the individual; rather, it is viewed as a reflection of family reputation.

Focus on Academic Study

The second feature of Chinese parental involvement is that most Chinese parents focus much more on children’s academic progress than their development in other fields, such as physical, emotional and social development. Wang, Bernas and Eberhard (2000) investigated maternal support to children's early literacy development in Chinese and American Indian families. The results showed that although mothers in the two countries both emphasized and tried various ways to support children’s early literacy development,

the Chinese mothers tended to emphasize print-based literacy interactions while the American Indian mothers tended to emphasize literacy interactions that were based on oral narratives of life and personal experiences. That implied that Chinese mothers pay much more attention to children's literacy development than to socialization. This feature also has its cultural and historical origins. In Chinese history, the scholastic written examination concentrated on classical literature used to select government officials (Li & Delisle, 1990). According to the Confucian doctrines, academic success can guarantee a person to be the leading official in the government. Even at present, academic successes often will decide a child's future, because scores decide whether the child can go to college and in turn, opportunities for a better way of life (Lu, 1999). Thus, in Chinese culture, children's successes in academic fields, such as literacy, mathematics and science, is much more important than their development in other fields, such as physical health, emotion and socialization. Nowadays, many Chinese parents still believe that as long as their child can get high scores in academic studies, his or her future will be definitely bright. Thus, at school, the most distinctive feature of Chinese parents' communication with the teacher is their high level expectation for their children's academic achievement. Chinese parents communicate more for the sake of their children's academic progress than for the school's public events, such as fund raising, or sports, which are more the foci of communication for American parents (Dyson, 2001). Constantino, Cui and Faltis (1995) find that although all the teachers saw the culture activities such as preparing food for Chinese New Year as extremely important, almost critical to involvement, no parent saw this as important. Similarly, at home, Chinese parents tend to spend much more time checking children's homework and reading to

children than talking about school issues other than academics or directing children into enrichment extracurricular activities such as music and arts.

In sum, Chinese parents tend to withdraw from direct participation in school activities and they are more willing to get involved in children's education at home. In the home setting, Chinese parents have strong control and authority over their children and spend much more time and energy on their children's academic studies than other fields, such as physical, emotional and social development. These characteristics are greatly influenced by traditional Chinese culture and value systems. Figure 2.1 below illustrates the styles and features of the parental involvement in China and their cultural and historical backgrounds.

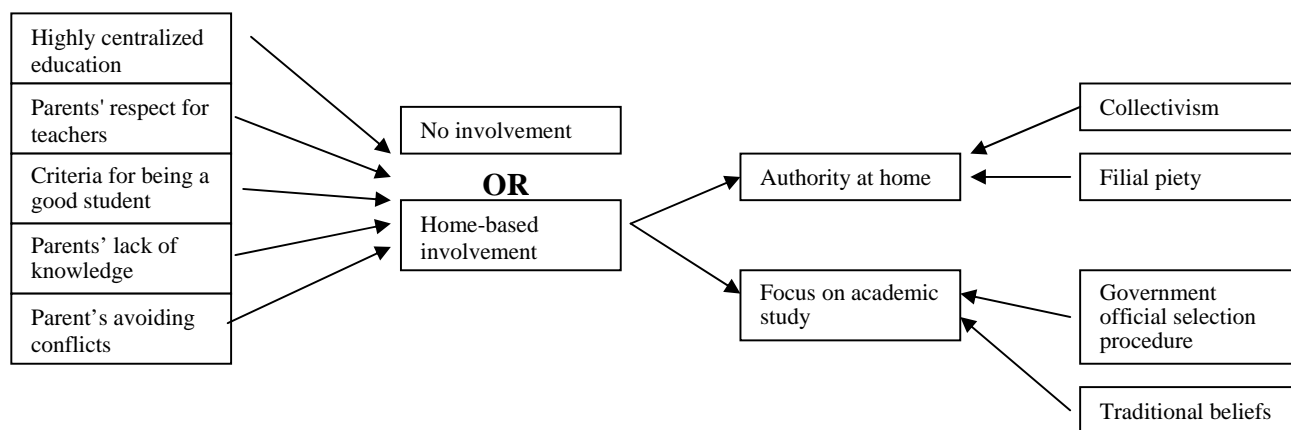


Figure 2.1 Styles, Characteristics and Cultural and Historical Background of Parental Involvement in China

(Note: This figure was designed by the investigator herself to summarize the styles, characteristics and cultural and historical backgrounds of parental involvement in China.)

Teachers' Attitudes toward Parental Involvement

A review of research confirms the importance of parental involvement (Epstein, 2001; Hiatt-Michael, 2001). Greater parent involvement in children's learning affects positively the child's school performance, including higher academic achievement (McNeal, 1999; Scribner, Young, & Pedroza, 1999; Yan & Lin, 2002) and greater social and emotional development (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997; Fantuzzo & McWayne, 2002). It is now widely accepted by policy makers and educators that when parents are involved in their children's education, children are more likely to succeed (Baker & Soden, 1998). In addition, researches (Henderson & Berla, 1994; Moles & D'Angelo, 1993; Wherry, 1999) demonstrated that parental involvement also has positive effects on administrators and community.

Due to the great influence of parental involvement on children, teachers and schools, this issue is also one important topic that school teachers are caring about. Researchers (e.g., Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997) show that the child's teacher is the key to actualize positive parental involvement in childhood education programs and the patterns of teachers' attitudes and invitations are important to many parents' decisions about participation in children's schooling.

Teachers' Positive Attitudes

Due to the positive connection between parental involvement and student achievement, inviting parent involvement is now one of the expectations for teachers (Lazar, Broderick, Mastrilli, & Slostad, 1999). Researchers (e.g., Rosenthal & Sawyer,

1996) find that teachers recently named greater parental involvement as their number one priority for improving education. Also, a nationwide poll demonstrated that 96% of teachers believe it is very important to encourage parents to take a more active part in educating their children (Phi Delta Kappa, 1993). There are sound reasons for teachers to want parents to be involved in the education of their children. Faust-Horn (2003) finds that encouraging parental involvement aids teachers in improving student's grades, behaviors within the classroom, attendance and self-esteem. Similarly, Wilson (2002) reports that, from their own experiences, many teachers find that their most successful students come from a home where the parents provide structure, support and guidance. Students who have parents who really care about their education are usually more successful than students who do not.

In sum, abundant academic researches and empirical experiences about the positive relationships between parental involvement and children's achievement make many teachers have positive attitudes toward parental involvement.

Teachers' Negative Attitudes

Negative attitudes among teachers toward parental involvement also exist. Although parental involvement has been clearly linked to student success, many teachers and administrators are still negligent at establishing meaningful connections between home and school (Molnar, 1999). Currently, although parental involvement has become a buzzword in most school districts, too many principals and teachers still expect to see parents only at superficial back-to-school nights and call on parents only when extra

funds are needed (Richardson, 2000). The research-based and narrative literature show that there are five reasons for this phenomenon.

Firstly, teachers might want to keep their power and autonomy in classroom. Gareau and Sawatsky (1995) point out that parents often feel powerless when they communicate with educators and educators are reluctant to share their power with parents. A study of power struggle of parents in the Chicago school system found that “many parents were chided by teachers for their arrogance in thinking they could run the schools” (Marchesani, 1993).

Secondly, teachers might believe that the separation of home and school will wean the child from self-oriented atmosphere of the home to the other-oriented outside world. For example, some Japanese teachers believe that “children need to establish independence from the close, indulgent parent-child relationship” and “parents, with their diverse ways of relating to children, may be a threat to the classroom culture so carefully created by teachers” (Lewis, 1995).

Thirdly, teachers have not been provided with adequate educational support to invite and maintain partnership with parents. Despite considerable theoretical and empirical work supporting the critical role of parents in students’ school success, pre-service teachers generally receive little preparation for involving parents (Hoover-Dempsey, Walker, Jones, & Reed, 2002). In her study, Gaffuri (1999) addresses the issue that teachers are often not adequately trained to work with parents. The school system she researched assumed that all teachers had mastered information distribution to parents; however in reality, very few were prepared. According to Epstein (1995), in most teacher education and education administration programs, parents are discussed in mainly

negative terms as problems to “deal with,” not as partners with shared interests and responsibilities for education. Teachers and administrators are rarely given information on issues that they must address every day about diversity in family structures, cultures, and strengths or about the theory, research, and practical programs for making successful connections with families across the grades. As a consequence, as Epstein (1997) notes, most educators enter schools without an understanding of family background, concepts of caring, or the framework of partnerships. In fact, involving parents is largely dependent on teacher initiative and experience (Lazar, Broderick, Mastrilli, & Slostad, 1999). However, the gap in teacher education has left teachers in need of knowledge and support to carry out involvement initiatives. Due to the lack of pre-service training in working with parents, a significant portion of teachers reported limited knowledge of parental involvement in their children’s education. In a survey of 190 kindergarten and first-grade teachers, Baker, Kessler-Sklar, Piotrkowski and Parker (1999) report that teachers have less knowledge of involvement that takes place outside the school than of involvement at school. They also report that teachers have less knowledge about at-home involvement of African-American parents than of White or Hispanic parents and less knowledge about the at-home involvement of parents who do not have a high school education. Given the lack of preparation for working with parents, teachers cannot help but feel uneasy about parents and unprepared to invite parent collaboration (Lazar & Slostad, 1999).

Fourthly, teachers have lack of time and/or energy to get parents involved in children’s education. Malaspina (1993) and Butler (1992) find that teachers have little time available for meeting with parents due to the rigid structure of school days and since

they have families, they do not have the flexibility to meet at the parents' convenience, particularly when so many teachers are women. Also, many teachers of young children are too tired to meet parents after work because during the daytime, they need to lift children and bend over frequently and sit on child-size chair.

Fifthly, teachers' encouragement for parental involvement is not rewarded or supported by school administrators. Researchers (e.g., Cooper, 1999) show that the attitude of administrators toward parental involvement is a key element in the success or failure of a parental involvement program. According to Cooper (1999), if administrators say that it is important to have parental involvement but do not lay out a vision for what that mean, typically that style of leadership affects the way teachers respond. When administrators do not put a strong emphasis on parental involvement and do not have an attitude that parental involvement is an important part of what they are doing in the school, it does not become important to the teachers either.

In sum, although parental involvement can have a very positive influence on children's development, a variety of reasons make some teachers still reluctant to fully get parents involved in education.

Influence of Teachers' Attitudes toward Parental Involvement

Researchers (e.g., Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997) show that the child's teacher is the key to actualize positive parental involvement in early childhood education program and the patterns of teacher attitudes and invitations are important to many parents' decisions about participation in children's schooling. Positive attitudes toward

parents and parental involvement process, as well as the general invitations presented by teachers are potentially very influential in parents' decisions about involvement in their children's education. The climate of invitation to involvement influences parents' understanding of teachers' interest in parental help and support, parents' feelings of being needed and wanted in the educational process, and parents' knowledge about their children's school work. Shick (1997) points out that teachers are more likely to forge partnerships with parents if they see families as important resources of support and when they welcome parents as equal partners. Similarly, Flood, Lapp, Tinajero and Nagel (1995) also note that parents' interests and involvement in school experiences are promoted by teachers who recognize parents' significant roles in children's development.

Researchers (e.g., Lazar & Slostad, 1999) also show that teacher's negative perceptions about parents and parental involvement, shaped by culture, history and schooling practices, may inhibit home-school linkages. LaBahn (1995) points out that the lack of participation by parents does not necessarily mean they are neglecting their responsibility and one important reason is that parents often do not feel welcomed at school and they feel that what they may have to offer is unimportant and unappreciated.

In sum, teachers' attitudes toward parents and parental involvement play a very important role in the level of parental involvement. Teachers need to adjust their attitudes to more effectively get parents involved in children's education.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

This purpose of this study is to find out Chinese kindergarten teachers' attitudes toward parental involvement in school settings and home settings and the factors that might have an influence on their attitudes. To be more specific, four research questions are examined:

1. What are teachers' attitudes toward school-based parental involvement in government kindergartens in Nanjing, China?
2. What are teachers' attitudes toward home-based parental involvement in government kindergartens in Nanjing, China?
3. Is there any difference in teachers' attitudes toward school-based parental involvement and home-based parental involvement?
4. Is there any relationship between teachers' attitudes toward parental involvement and the following variables?
 - (1) Teacher's age
 - (2) Teacher's highest degree
 - (3) Years of kindergarten teaching experience
 - (4) Class size
 - (5) Membership in professional organizations

In order to understand Chinese kindergarten teachers' attitudes toward parental involvement in school and home settings, a survey method was employed for conducting the study and an instrument was developed to obtain responses from the participants.

This chapter provides an overview of the methods and procedures that are employed in this study. In the subsequent sections, the following topics will be discussed: (1) participants; (2) instrument; (3) data collection; and (4) data treatment.

Participants

159 kindergarten teachers from 16 selected government kindergartens in Nanjing, China participated in this study. Statistics show that in Nanjing, there are about 165 government kindergartens, which are located in 11 different districts. In order to sample a wide range of teachers' attitudes, the investigator surveyed teachers from kindergartens within all the 11 districts. Table 3.1 below shows the distribution of selected kindergartens from the different districts in Nanjing.

Table 3.1 Distribution of Participating Kindergartens in 11 Districts in Nanjing

District	Qinhuai District	Yuhua District	Gulou District	Pukou District	Xuanwu District	Xiaguan District	Qixia District	Jianye District	Jiangning District	Luhe District	Baixia District
Number of Kindergartens	2	1	3	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	2

(Note: This table was designed by the investigator herself to summarize the distribution of the participating kindergartens in this study.)

Prior to the participant selection, the investigator contacted the principals of the 16 kindergartens and demonstrated the purposes and procedures of the study. With the

permission of the principals, a total number of 186 surveys were sent out to the principals of the 16 kindergartens and they distributed these surveys to kindergarten teachers. Of the 186 teachers, 172 returned the questionnaires; however, 8 did not complete the surveys and 5 completed the surveys with certain patterns which obviously showed that they did not treat the questions seriously. Therefore, the investigator got 159 completed and valid survey questionnaires. The return rate was 85.5%. According to Rea and Parker (1997), for surveys, a response rate of 50 to 60 percent can be considered satisfactory for purposes of analysis and reporting of findings.

Instrument

With a comprehensive review of literature, the investigator designed by herself a questionnaire entitled “Survey of Kindergarten Teachers’ Attitudes Toward Parental Involvement (SKTAP) (Appendix A)”, which was used as the instrument to measure the responses of selected kindergarten teachers’ attitudes toward parental involvement. The questionnaire has 35 question items, which are divided into three parts: demographic information, teachers’ attitudes toward school-based parental involvement and teachers’ attitudes toward home-based parental involvement. For the demographic information, five open-ended questions are included. For each of the two parts about teachers’ attitudes, 15 questions with Likert-type response scale are included.

Demographic Information

The Demographic Information part used in this survey is developed to obtain teachers' demographic characteristics related to the research questions. The part consists of five questions which cover teachers' age, highest degree, teaching years, class size and membership in professional organizations.

Teachers' Attitudes toward School-Based Parental Involvement

This part comprises 15 questions and they are designed to examine kindergarten teachers' attitudes toward school-based parental involvement in childhood education. A four-point Likert-type scale is used to measure teachers' attitudes and it is arranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). Originally, the investigator used a five-point Likert-type scale, which contained a "neutral" attitude option. To avoid most participants circling the neutral attitude and to encourage them to demonstrate their true attitudes more straightforward, the neutral attitude option was deleted. Therefore, in this study, the four-point Likert-type scale ranges from 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (agree) to 4 (strongly agree). To run statistics on computer, each option was coded as follows: strongly disagree=1; disagree=2; agree=3; and strongly agree=4.

The 15 questions items reflect the literature about school-based parental involvement. Questions 1 to 5 deal with teacher-parent conferences; 6-10 deal with home visits and 11-15 deal with parents' volunteering at school.

Teachers' Attitudes toward Home-Based Parental Involvement

This part comprises 15 questions and they are designed to examine kindergarten teachers' attitudes toward home-based parental involvement. Similar to the previous part, in this part, the original five-point Likert-type scale was changed to a four-point one, which ranges from 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (agree) to 4 (strongly agree). To run statistics on computer, each option was coded as follows: strongly disagree=1; disagree=2; agree=3; and strongly agree=4.

The 15 question items reflect the literature about home-based parental involvement. Questions 1 to 2 deal with parents' responsibilities in childhood education; 3 to 4 deal with parent-child discussion; 5 to 7 deal with parents' helping with homework; 8 to 11 deal with parents' reading to children and 12 to 15 deal with parents' participation in children's enrichment extra curricular.

Chang (1995) recommends that the basic construct under investigation is measured similarly by both connotatively consistent items (i.e., positively worded items) and inconsistent items (i.e., negatively worded items) that need to be reverse scored prior to all data analysis. Ponterotto et al. (1998) also notes that using both positively and negatively worded items can control potential response bias when measuring social topics. Therefore, the question items on teachers' attitudes were written in both a positive and negative direction to help control a possible participant response bias. When running statistics on computer, the answers of participants on negatively worded question items were recoded to a positively oriented score for the consistency of data analysis. In this

study, all the question items with odd item numbers are positively worded and all the question items with even item numbers are negatively worded.

Translation

Since the participants of this study were Chinese teachers, a translation of the survey questionnaire was necessary for better understanding of the survey questions. The questionnaire was first written in English and then translated into simplified Chinese in two steps. First, the translation was verified by an experienced Chinese ESL teacher, who was a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at The Pennsylvania State University. Her approval letter (Appendix E) demonstrated that the translation is accurate. Second, since Prieto (1992) indicated that the pretest procedures are important to produce a useable and precise translation, two Chinese kindergarten teachers were interviewed face-to-face and asked to identify any confusing wording or incomprehensive items on the questionnaire. Based on their responses and comments, the Chinese version of the SKTAP (Appendix B) was revised to produce the study instrument.

Both of the English and Chinese versions of survey questionnaires were submitted to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Office for Research Protections at The Pennsylvania State University to determine whether the study had been appropriately and clearly planned. The research study was approved by IRB on March 1, 2005 and the approval number is #20408.

Pilot Study

The purpose of the pilot study was to examine the participants' understanding of the survey items, as well as the validity and internal reliability of the summated scores. With these criteria, a small number of Chinese kindergarten teachers (n=30) from five kindergartens in Nanjing were solicited to complete the survey and provide their comments and recommendations on the questionnaires. The 30 teachers were not part of the final study participants.

Out of the 30 teachers participating in the pilot study, 26 completed their surveys. The return rate was 86.7%. After analyzing the data and gathering the comments from the teachers, poorly designed and incomprehensible questions were modified to increase the validity of the instrument.

Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was computed to assess the internal reliability of the instrument. The coefficients for pilot and final studies were 0.89 and 0.885, respectively. According to Nunnally (1978), both the reliability coefficients were considered acceptable because both of them were greater than 0.70.

The final version of the questionnaire was developed after the completion of the pilot study.

Data Collection

The data collection was conducted between May and June of the year 2005 and it was composed of three phases: (1) phone contact; (2) initial on-site visit; and (3) on-site

revisit and phone reminder. Each of the three phases is discussed in the following sections.

Phase 1: Phone Contact

In this phase, principals of the 16 kindergartens in Nanjing were contacted via phone call by the investigator. The purpose and procedures of the study were explained to them and their consents to participate were obtained.

Phase 2: Initial On-Site Visit

After contacting the principals, an initial on-site visit was made to each of the 16 kindergartens to deliver the survey packets and to provide verbal instructions on how to complete them. Each individual survey packet included: (1) an invitation letter for kindergarten teachers (Appendix C) to explain the purpose and basic procedures of the study; (2) an informed consent form to identify the rights of participants and statements of confidentiality (Appendix D); and (3) a copy of survey questionnaire. All the items included in the survey packet were in Chinese and were approved by IRB of Office for Research Protections at The Pennsylvania State University.

The teachers were asked to anonymously complete the survey and to bring it to kindergarten one week later for the investigator's pickup.

Phase 3: On-Site Revisit and Phone Reminder

One week after the initial on-site visit, the investigator revisited each of the 16 kindergartens to collect the completed survey questionnaires. For those kindergarten teachers who did not show up on the revisit day or did not bring the questionnaire, the investigator made phone call reminder to reschedule a pickup time.

Of the 186 packets sent out to the 16 kindergartens, 172 were returned to the investigator. Eight out of the 172 packets were not completed and the other five were completed with certain patterns which obviously showed that the participants did not treat the questions seriously. Therefore, finally there were 159 completed and valid questionnaires. The return rate was 85.5%.

Data Treatment

The statistical software SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Science) version 13.0 for Windows was used to analyze data in this study. Although some people treat Likert-type scale data as ordinal data, the investigator treated the Likert-type scale data in this study as interval, based on the writing of Kerlinger and Lee (1999), who noted that Likert-type scale data can be treated as interval data when they are reviewed from a more liberal perspective.

Descriptive statistics, such as mean, standard deviation and frequencies were computed to examine that data. Paired t-test was conducted to determine if there was any statistically significant difference between teachers' attitudes toward school-based parental involvement and their attitudes toward home-based parental involvement.

Finally, a multiple regression was performed to examine the relationship between teachers' demographic characteristics (i.e., age, highest degree, teaching years, class size and membership in professional organizations) and teachers' attitudes toward school-based and home-based parental involvement.

Table 3.2 below shows a brief summary of research questions, related variables, scale of measurement and analysis techniques in this study.

Table 3.2 Research Questions, Related Variables, Scale of Measurement and Analysis Techniques

Research Questions	Related Variables	Scale of Measurement	Analysis Techniques
1. What are teachers' attitudes toward school-based parental involvement in government kindergartens in Nanjing, China?	Attitudes	Interval	Descriptive statistics
2. What are teachers' attitudes toward home-based parental involvement in government kindergartens in Nanjing, China?	Attitudes	Interval	Descriptive statistics
3. Is there any difference between teachers' attitudes toward school-based parental involvement and their attitudes toward home-based parental involvement?	<u>Independent Variable:</u> Type of parental involvement	Nominal	Paired t-test
	<u>Dependent Variables</u> Attitudes	Interval	
4. (1) Is there any relationship between teachers' attitudes toward parental involvement and their age, highest degree, teaching years, class size and membership in professional organizations?	<u>Independent Variables:</u> Age	Interval	Multiple regression
	Highest degree	Nominal	
	Teaching years	Interval	
	Class size	Interval	
	Membership in professional organization	Interval	
<u>Dependent Variables:</u> Attitudes	Interval		

Chapter 4

RESULTS

The purpose of this study is to find out Chinese kindergarten teachers' attitudes toward parental involvement in school settings and home settings and the factors that might have an influence on their attitudes. In this chapter, the results of the study are presented to address the four research questions listed in Chapter 1. This chapter is composed of the following sections: (1) demographic information of participants; (2) teachers' attitudes toward school-based parental involvement (SBPI); (3) teacher's attitudes toward home-based parental involvement (HBPI); (4) difference in teachers' attitudes toward SBPI and HBPI; and (5) relationships between teachers' attitudes toward parental involvement and their demographic characteristics. Descriptive statistics, paired t-test and multiple regression were used to present the study results.

Demographic Information of Participants

One hundred and eighty-six teachers in 16 government kindergartens in Nanjing, China were originally recruited to participate in this study. At the end of the survey phase, 172 teachers returned their questionnaires. However, out of the 172 teachers, eight teachers did not complete the questionnaires, and the other five teachers used certain patterns when rating their attitudes, which showed that they did not treat the question items seriously. Thus, the 13 teachers' questionnaires were removed and there were 159 questionnaires included in the final data analyses. The survey return rate was 85.5%.

In this section, participants' demographic information is presented. Table 4.1 below shows age, teaching years, highest degree, class size and membership in professional organizations of the participants. Frequency and percentage were used.

Table 4.1 Demographic Information of Participants (n=159)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Age	20 to 30 years	82	51.6	51.6	51.6
	31 to 40 years	59	37.1	37.1	88.7
	41 to 50 years	15	9.4	9.4	98.1
	51 to 60 years	3	1.9	1.9	100.0
	Total	159	100.0	100.0	
Highest degree	Bachelor	48	30.2	30.2	30.2
	community college	95	59.7	59.7	89.9
	technical school	16	10.1	10.1	100.0
	Total	159	100.0	100.0	
Teaching years	0 to 10 years	79	49.7	49.7	49.7
	11 to 20 years	59	37.1	37.1	86.8
	21 to 30 years	16	10.0	10.0	96.9
	31 to 40 years	5	3.1	3.1	100.0
	Total	159	100.0	100.0	
Class size	11 to 20	5	3.2	3.2	3.2
	21 to 30	65	40.9	40.9	44.1
	31 to 40	89	56.0	56.0	100.0
	Total	159	100.0	100.0	
Membership in professional organizations	0	95	59.7	59.7	59.7
	1	49	30.8	30.8	90.6
	2	13	8.2	8.2	98.7
	3	2	1.3	1.3	100.0
	Total	159	100.0	100.0	

For age, teachers' ages ranged from 21 to 52. Table 4.1 shows that most kindergarten teachers were between the ages 20 to 40. The mean age of participating teachers was 31.23 years with a standard deviation of 7.35 years. Among the 159 teachers, 51.6% (n=82) were between 20-30 years of old and 37.1% (n=59) were between 31-40 years of old.

For the highest degree, Table 4.1 shows that the majority of teachers held community college diplomas (59.7%, n=95) or bachelor's degrees (30.2%, n=48). There were also 10.1% (n=16) of the teachers who had technical school certificates. None of the 159 participating teachers earned a Master's or higher degree. In China, it usually takes 4 years to obtain a bachelor's degree; while community colleges and technical schools usually run for 3 years and 2 years, respectively. Thus, the data indicate that most kindergarten teachers had 3-4 years of professional training.

For teaching years, most teachers had less than 20 years' kindergarten teaching experience. As Table 4.1 indicates, 49.7% (n=79) of the teachers have been in kindergarten teaching for less than 10 years, 37.1% (n=59) of the teachers had 11-20 years' teaching experience and another 13.1% (n=21) had more than 21 years' teaching experience. The mean teaching experience was 11.76 years with a standard deviation of 7.96 years.

For class size, most teachers had a fairly large class size. 56% (n=89) of the teachers responded that they had 31-40 children in their classes and another 40.9% (n=65) had 21-30 children in their classes. Only 3.14% (n=5) of the teachers had classes with less than 20 children. The mean class size of participating teachers was 32 children with a standard deviation of 4.27.

For membership in professional organizations, Table 4.1 indicates that most Chinese teachers did not have any membership (59.7%, n=95) or had only one membership (30.8%, n=49). Only 9.5% (n=15) of the participating teachers had 2 or 3 memberships in professional organizations.

In sum, this section profiles the demographical characteristics of the participating teachers in terms of age, highest degree, teaching years, class size and membership in professional organizations. Frequency, percentage and means were computed.

Teachers' Attitudes toward School-Based Parental Involvement

The second part of SKTAP was designed to examine kindergarten teachers' attitudes toward school-based parental involvement. This part contained 15 items, with a four-point Likert-type response scale. It ranged from strongly disagree to strongly agree (i.e., 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=agree, 4=strongly agree) for rating teachers' attitudes. Among the 15 items, 8 statements (items 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13 and 15) were positively worded and 7 statements (items 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14) were negatively worded.

For data analysis, percentage, mean and standard deviation were used to summarize teachers' attitudes. Results of kindergarten teachers' attitudes toward school-based parental involvement are presented in the following section to address the first research question in this study.

Research Question 1

As stated in Chapter 1, the first research question is, “What are teachers’ attitudes toward school-based parental involvement in government kindergartens in Nanjing, China?”

Table 4.2 below summarizes the kindergarten teacher’s attitudes toward school-based parental involvement.

Table 4.2 Teachers' Attitudes Toward School-Based Parental Involvement (n=159)

Item	Response Category				Mean	Standard Deviation
	Strongly Disagree --%--	Disagree --%--	Agree --%--	Strongly Agree --%--		
1. Teacher-parent conference is a necessary way.	.6	5.7	59.1	34.6	3.277	.594
2. It is adequate that teacher-parent conference is held once a year.	14.5	58.5	25.2	1.9	2.145	.674
3. Through conference, teachers can know child's developmental status.	1.3	6.9	69.2	22.6	3.132	.575
4. During conference, teacher should speak more.	18.2	51.6	27.7	2.5	2.145	.735
5. I am disappointed if parents have no questions during conference.	0.0	10.1	71.1	18.9	3.088	.532
6. Home visits should be made only to children with behavior problems.	25.8	66.7	6.3	1.3	1.830	.587
7. Regular home visits are essential.	1.9	8.2	67.3	22.6	3.107	.612
8. Interaction with parents at school is adequate for teachers to know children.	12.6	77.4	10.1	0.0	1.975	.477
9. Home visits are necessary for two-way communication.	0.0	18.9	71.1	10.1	2.912	.532
10. Teachers can skip home visits due to limited time and energy.	9.4	66.7	23.3	.6	2.151	.576
11. Parents should be encouraged to more volunteer in our kindergarten.	1.3	6.9	78.6	13.2	3.038	.501
12. Parents' volunteering does not help much for quality education.	12.6	74.8	11.9	.6	2.006	.522
13. Volunteering can help parents build their knowledge about child development.	0.0	7.5	77.4	15.1	3.075	.471
14. Parents' volunteering will interfere with kindergarten activities.	6.9	82.4	10.7	0.0	2.038	.419
15. Volunteering helps to improve teacher-parent relationships.	0.0	8.8	83.0	8.2	2.994	.413

In order to verify the distribution of these attitude items, the skewness values were computed, as shown in Table 4.3. All of the 15 skewness values were between -1.0 to +1.0. Thus, the teachers' attitudes for these 15 items were approximately normally distributed.

Table 4.3 The Skewness of the Attitude Items for School-Based Parental Involvement

Item Number	Skewness
Item 1	-.36
Item 2	.20
Item 3	-.41
Item 4	.15
Item 5	.09
Item 6	.43
Item 7	-.56
Item 8	-.08
Item 9	-.09
Item 10	.19
Item 11	-.53
Item 12	.28
Item 13	.24
Item 14	.25
Item 15	-.05

As mentioned before, among the 15 items, for odd number items, the higher number a teacher chose, the more positive attitude the teacher held toward school-based parental involvement. For even number items, the higher number a teacher chose, the more negative attitude the teacher held toward school-based parental involvement. Thus, teachers' answers for even number items were reversely recoded.

After recoding, the mean of teachers' attitudes for each item ranged from 2.85 to 3.28, with an overall mean of 3.02 for all of the 15 items. Thus, most kindergarten teachers' attitudes toward school-based parental involvement were positive.

Based on the summated overall mean of teachers' attitudes for the 15 items concerning school-based parental involvement, the items were divided into 3 groups. The 3 groups of attitude scores were (1) 1.01-2.00 (strongly negative toward items); (2) 2.01-3.00 (slightly negative toward items); and (3) 3.01-4.00 (positive toward items).

Table 4.4 below demonstrates the two items of which means of teachers attitudes fell between 1.01 to 2.00 in group 1. These items indicated teachers had strongly negative attitudes toward these items. The two items were related to home visits and both of them were negatively worded. Thus, the two scores indicated that participating teachers had strongly positive attitudes toward home visits.

Table 4.4 Group 1: Items with Means of Teachers' Attitudes Between 1.01-2.00 (n=159) (SBPI)

Item	Mean
6. Home visits should be made only to those children who do not behave satisfactorily at kindergarten.	1.83
8. Interaction with parents at school is adequate for teachers to get full knowledge of the family background of a child's development.	1.975

Table 4.5 below lists the seven items where the summated overall means fell between 2.01 to 3.00 in group 2. These mean scores indicated that teachers' attitudes on these items were slightly negative. The seven items covered teacher-parent conference, home visits and parents' volunteering work at school. Out of the seven items, five items were negatively worded. For positively-stated items 9 and 15, the mean scores were 2.91 and 2.994, respectively, which were close to 3 (positive attitude). Thus, these seven

scores indicated that participating teachers had slightly positive attitudes toward teacher-parent conference, home visits and parents' volunteering work at school.

Table 4.5 Group 2: Items with Means of Teachers' Attitudes Between 2.01-3.00 (n=159) (SBPI)

Item	Mean
2. It is adequate that teacher-parent conference is held once per year.	2.145
4. During teacher-parent conference, the teacher should speak more to submit the kindergarten information to parents.	2.145
9. Home visits are necessary to establish two-way communication between teacher and parents.	2.912
10. Due to the limited time and energy, kindergarten teachers can only meet parents at kindergarten and skip home visits.	2.151
12. Since most parents are lacking professional knowledge, their volunteering in the kindergarten will not help much for quality kindergarten education.	2.006
14. Parents' volunteering will interfere with kindergarten activities.	2.038
15. Parents' volunteering will provide a good opportunity for improving healthy teacher-parent relationships.	2.994

Table 4.6 below shows the 6 items where the summated overall means fell between 3.01 to 4.00 in group 3. These mean scores indicated teachers had positive attitudes on these items. The 6 items covered teacher-parent conference, home visits and parents' volunteering work at school and all of them are positively stated. Thus, these 6 items indicated again that participating teachers had positive attitudes toward teacher-parent conference, home visits and parents' volunteering work at school.

Table 4.6 Group 3: Items with Means of Teachers' Attitudes Between 3.01-4.00 (n=159) (SBPI)

Item	Mean
1. Teacher-parent conference is a necessary way to improve quality education for kindergarten children.	3.277
3. Through teacher-parent conference, kindergarten teachers can know more about each individual child's developmental status.	3.132
5. I feel disappointed when parents do not ask me questions during teacher-parent conference.	3.088
7. In order to establish good communication between school and home, regular home visits are essential.	3.107
11. Parents should be encouraged to more volunteer in our kindergarten.	3.038
13. Parents' volunteering at the kindergarten can help parents build their own knowledge about child development.	3.075

In summary, this section uses frequency, mean and standard deviation to describe participating kindergarten teachers' attitudes toward school-based parental involvement. Out of the eight positively worded items, the means of six items were higher than 3.01, and the means of all of the seven negatively worded items were lower than 3.00. This indicated that teachers' attitudes toward school-based parental involvement tended to be positive.

Teachers' Attitudes toward Home-Based Parental Involvement

This section reports the analysis results of teachers' attitudes toward home-based parental involvement, which was items in the third part of SKTAP. Similar as part two, part three also contained 15 items which used a four-point Likert-type scale. It ranged

from strongly disagree to strongly agree (i.e., 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=agree, 4=strongly agree) for rating teachers' attitudes. Among the 15 items, 8 statements (items 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13 and 15) were positively worded and 7 statements (items 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14) were negatively worded.

For data analysis, percentage, mean and standard deviation were used to summarize teachers' attitudes. Results of kindergarten teachers' attitudes toward home-based parental involvement are presented in the following section to address the second research question in this study.

Research Question 2

As stated in Chapter 1, the second research question is, "What are teachers' attitudes toward home-based parental involvement in government kindergartens in Nanjing, China?"

Table 4.7 below summarizes the kindergarten teacher's attitudes toward home-based parental involvement.

Table 4.7 Teachers' Attitudes Toward Home-Based Parental Involvement (n=159)

Item	Response Category				Mean	Standard Deviation
	Strongly Disagree --%--	Disagree --%--	Agree --%--	Strongly Agree --%--		
1. Parents are children's first teachers.	.6	1.3	43.4	54.7	3.522	.561
2. Parents should leave educational responsibilities to teachers.	7.5	44.0	46.5	1.9	2.428	.660
3. Parent-child discussion about school issues is supportive.	0.0	6.3	79.9	13.8	3.075	.444
4. There is no need for parents to talk about school life if the child did nothing wrong at kindergarten.	21.4	72.3	6.3	0.0	1.849	.506
5. Involvement with children's homework is important.	.6	11.3	66.0	22.0	3.094	.593
6. Learning at kindergarten is enough and parents do not need tutoring at home.	39.6	54.7	5.7	0.0	1.660	.583
7. More space should be left in homework for parental involvement.	.6	11.3	71.3	17.0	3.044	.555
8. Most parents do not know what reading materials are appropriate for children.	30.8	59.1	8.8	1.3	1.805	.641
9. The importance of parents' reading should be often emphasized.	0.0	5.0	67.9	27.0	3.220	.524
10. What parents read to children is inconsistent with what I read to children.	17.6	54.1	27.7	0.6	2.113	.684
11. Children should report what their parents read to them.	.6	11.3	70.4	17.6	3.050	.560
12. Enrichment curricular should be limited.	41.5	51.6	6.3	.6	1.660	.625
13. Parents should actively help children choose enrichment curricular.	0.0	8.8	68.6	22.6	3.138	.545
14. The teacher should decide whether a child needs enrichment curricular or not.	21.4	74.8	3.8	0.0	1.824	.471
15. Without discussion with parents, teachers cannot find out appropriate extracurricular for children.	0.0	23.3	56.6	20.1	2.969	.660

In order to verify the distribution of these attitude items, the skewness values were computed, as shown in Table 4.8 below. All of the 15 skewness values were between -1.0 to +1.0. Thus, the teachers' attitudes for these 15 items were approximately normally distributed.

Table 4.8 The Skewness of the Attitude Items for Home-Based Parental Involvement

Item Number	Skewness
Item 1	-.851
Item 2	-.331
Item 3	.359
Item 4	-.256
Item 5	-.211
Item 6	.224
Item 7	-.204
Item 8	.490
Item 9	.211
Item 10	-.027
Item 11	-.201
Item 12	.553
Item 13	.083
Item 14	-.527
Item 15	.033

As mentioned before, among the 15 items, for odd number items, a higher number reflects a more positive attitude the teacher held toward home-based parental involvement. For even number items, a higher number reflects a more negative attitude the teacher held toward home-based parental involvement. Thus, teachers' answers in even number items were reversely recoded.

After recoding, the mean of teachers' attitudes for each item ranged from 2.572 to 3.522, with an overall summated mean of 3.118 for all 15 items. Thus, most kindergarten teachers' attitudes toward home-based parental involvement were positive.

Based on the summated overall means of teachers' attitudes for the 15 items concerning home-based parental involvement, the items were divided into 3 groups. The three groups of attitude scores were (1) 1.01-2.00 (strongly negative toward items); (2) 2.01-3.00 (slightly negative toward items); and (3) 3.01-4.00 (positive toward items).

Table 4.9 below demonstrates the five items of which means of teachers attitudes fell between 1.01 to 2.00 in group one. These items indicated teachers' strongly negative attitudes toward these five items. The five items were related to parent-child discussion, parents' helping with homework, parents' reading to children and enrichment extracurricular and all of them were negatively worded. Thus, the five scores indicated that participating teachers had strongly positive attitudes toward these subcategories of home-based parental involvement.

Table 4.9 Group 1: Items with Means of Teachers' Attitudes Between 1.01-2.00 (n=159) (HBPI)

Item	Mean
4. If the child did not do anything wrong at the kindergarten, there is no need for parents to talk about kindergarten life with the child.	1.849
6. Children learn enough at the kindergarten and parents do not need to tutor them at home.	1.660
8. Most parents do not know what reading materials are appropriate for their children.	1.805
12. Enrichment curricular decrease the time for academic instruction, so they should be limited for kindergarten children.	1.660
14. It should be the kindergarten teacher who decides whether a child needs enrichment curricular or not.	1.824

Table 4.10 below lists the three items of which means of teachers attitudes fell between 2.01 to 3.00 in group two. These mean scores indicated that teachers' attitudes on these items were slightly negative. Out of the three items, two items were negatively stated. For positively stated item 15, the mean score was 2.969, which was very close to 3 (positive attitude). Thus, these three scores indicated that participating teachers had slightly positive attitudes toward home-based parental involvement.

**Table 4.10 Group 2: Items with Means of Teachers' Attitudes Between 2.01-3.00 (n=159)
(HBPI)**

Item	Mean
2. After children's enrollment into the kindergarten, parents should leave the major educational responsibility to teachers since only teachers are professional educators.	2.428
10. What parents read to their children at home is often inconsistent with what I read to children at the kindergarten.	2.113
15. Without thorough discussion with parents, kindergarten teachers cannot find the appropriate extracurricular for children.	2.969

Table 4.11 below shows the seven items of which means of teachers attitudes fell between 3.01 to 4.00 in group 3. These mean scores indicated teachers' positive attitudes on these items. The seven items covered parent-child discussion, parents' helping with homework, parents' reading to children and enrichment extracurricular and all of them were positively stated. Thus, these seven items indicated again that participating teachers had positive attitudes toward home-based parental involvement.

Table 4.11 Group 3: Items with Means of Teachers' Attitudes Between 3.01-4.00 (n=159) (HBPI)

Item	Mean
1. Parents are children's first teachers.	3.522
3. Parent-child discussion about kindergarten matters can strongly support teachers' work in the kindergarten.	3.075
5. Involvement with children's homework is an important way for parents to keep informed and updated with what children are learning in kindergartens.	3.094
7. Kindergarten teachers need to leave more space in children's homework in which parents can be involved.	3.044
9. The importance of parents' reading should be often emphasized by kindergarten teachers to parents.	3.220
11. Reporting what parents have read to them should be incorporated into children's kindergarten activities.	3.050
13. Parents should play an active role in children's enrichment curricular activities by helping the child to decide the length and frequency of their extracurricular activities.	3.138

In sum, this section uses frequency, mean and standard deviation to describe participating kindergarten teachers' attitudes toward home-based parental involvement. Out of the eight positively worded items, the means of seven items were higher than 3.01 and the means of all of the seven negatively worded items were lower than 3.00. This indicated that teachers' attitudes toward home-based parental involvement tended to be positive.

Difference in Teachers' Attitudes toward SBPI and HBPI

The purpose of this section was to examine the difference in kindergarten teachers' attitudes toward school-based parental involvement and home-based parental involvement. For data analysis, research question 3 was formulated as follows.

Research Question 3

Is there any difference in teachers' attitudes toward school-based parental involvement and home-based parental involvement?

The Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for teachers' attitudes toward school-based parental involvement and home-based parental involvement were .815 and .793, respectively. Since both of them were greater than .7, teachers' attitude scores toward the 15 items in part two of SKTAP and the 15 items in part three of SKTAP could be both regarded as internally consistent. Thus, teachers' attitudes toward the 15 items concerning school-based parental involvement and their attitudes toward the 15 items concerning home-based parental involvement were summated respectively and the overall means of the two sums were compared.

In order to examine whether there is a difference in kindergarten teachers' attitudes toward school-based parental involvement and home-based parental involvement, paired t-test was conducted in this study. The independent variable was the type of parental involvement: school-based parental involvement and home-based parental involvement. The dependent variables were teachers' attitudes.

In order to verify the distribution of teachers' attitudes toward the two different types of parental involvement, the skewness values were computed by SPSS. The results

showed that the skewness value for teachers' attitudes toward school-based parental involvement was $-.865$ and the skewness value for teachers' attitudes toward home-based parental involvement was $.006$. Since both of two values were between -1.0 and $+1.0$, teachers' attitudes for both of school-based and home-based parental involvement were considered to be approximately normally distributed.

Table 4.12 summarizes the SPSS results for the paired t-test for difference in teachers' attitudes toward school-based and home-based parental involvement. Since $p=.000$ (<0.05) and the mean of the paired difference is -1.44 , Table 4.12 below indicates that there was a statistically significant difference in teachers' attitudes toward school-based and home-based parental involvement. Teachers tended to have more positive attitudes toward home-based parental involvement than school-based parental involvement. Table 4.12 also shows that there was a statistically significant correlation between teachers' attitudes toward school-based parental involvement and their attitudes toward home-based parental involvement.

Table 4.12 Paired t-test for Teachers' Attitudes toward School-Based and Home-Based Parental Involvement (n=159)

Attitude Type	n	Corr	Sig.	M	SD	SE of Mean
School-Based Parental Involvement	159			45.333	4.390	.348
Home-Based Parental Involvement	159	.724	.000	46.774	4.389	.348
Paired Difference				t	df	Sig.
M	SD	SE of Mean				
-1.440	3.260	.259		-5.571	158	0.000

Relationships between Teachers' Attitudes and Their Demographic Characteristics

The purpose of this section is to determine the relationships between teachers' attitudes toward school-based parental involvement and home-based parental involvement and teachers' demographic characteristics, including age, highest degree, teaching years, class size and membership in professional organizations. The fourth research question was addressed in this section as follows.

Research Question 4

The fourth research question was, "Is there any relationships between teachers' attitudes toward parental involvement and the following variables?"

- (1) Teacher's age
- (2) Teacher's highest degree
- (3) Years of kindergarten teaching experience
- (4) Class size
- (5) Membership in professional organizations

Since parental involvement was categorized into school-based parental involvement and home-based parental involvement in this study, relationships between teachers' demographic characteristics and their attitudes toward the two types of parental involvement were examined respectively.

Attitudes toward School-Based Parental Involvement and Demographic Characteristics

In this subcategory, the dependent variable was the summated teachers' attitudes toward the 15 survey items concerning school-based parental involvement, which were

treated as interval data. The independent variables included five items as follows: (1) age, (2) highest degree, (3) teaching years, (4) class size, and (5) membership in professional organizations. Among the five variables, age, teaching years, class size and membership in professional organizations were interval variables and highest degree was nominal variable. Thus, before a regression analysis was performed, the variable highest degree was recoded into a “dummy variable format”. The three levels of the variable highest degree, bachelor’s degree, community college diploma and technical school certificate, were recoded into two dichotomous response levels as follows:

0= technical school certificate and community college diploma

1= bachelor’s degree

In order to verify the distribution of the dependent variable and independent variables, the skewness values were computed, as shown in Table 4.13 below.

Table 4.13 The Skewness of the Independent and Dependent Variables for Multiple Regression Analysis (Characteristics and Attitudes toward SBPI)

Variable	Skewness
Age	.736
Teaching years	.752
Class size	-.857
Membership in professional organizations	1.248
Attitudes toward school-based parental involvement	-.865

The skewness values of age, teaching years, class size and attitudes toward school-based parental involvement were within the range of -1.0 to +1.0. Thus, these four variables were considered to be normally distributed. For the variable membership in professional organizations, although its skewness value was outside of the range of -1.0

to +1.0, due to the large sample size ($n=159$) and the small number of outliers (1 outlier), it was still regarded as approximately normally distributed.

A multiple regression analysis was performed to determine which independent variables significantly explained teachers' attitudes toward school-based parental involvement. It also provided estimates on the magnitude and statistical significance of the relationships among various variables.

When examining the correlations among the independent variables, the collinearity statistics shows that the VIF values for age and teaching years were 9.946 and 9.848, which mean that there was a strong correlation between the two independent variables. At the same time, the Pearson correlation showed that there was a statistically significant positive correlation of .945 between age and teaching years, which indicated those who had higher ages also had longer teaching experience. Based on the writings of Neter et al (1996), the investigator considered to remove one of them from the model. When taking out the variable age, the R^2 value for the overall regression model was .329 and when taking out the variable teaching years, the R^2 value for the overall regression model was .334. Thus, age was selected as the independent variable used to analyze the relationship with the attitude items while teaching year was excluded in the final regression data analysis.

Table 4.14 below summarizes the results of the regression analysis as follows.

Table 4.14 Multiple Regression Analysis Results: Teachers' Characteristics and Attitudes toward SBPI (n=159)

<u>Variance Explained</u>							
R	R Square	Adjusted R Square		Std. Error of the Estimate			
.578	.334	.316		3.63031			
<u>ANOVA Results</u>							
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig		
Regression	1015.747	4	253.937	19.268	.000		
Residual	2029.587	154	13.179				
Total	3045.333	158					
<u>Regression Coefficients</u>							
	b	Std. Error	Beta	t Value	p Value	Collinearity Statistics	
						Tolerance	VIF
Age	-.085	.040	-.142	-2.134	.034	.979	1.021
Highest degree	4.717	.657	.657	7.178	.000	.911	1.098
Class size	.038	.069	.037	.547	.585	.965	1.036
Membership in Professional organizations	.910	.427	.145	2.133	.034	.932	1.073

The first section of Table 4.14, "Variance Explained", shows there was an R value of .578, and an R^2 value of .334, which indicate that the four independent variables, combined explained 33.4% of the variance in teachers' attitudes. The "ANOVA Results" section shows an F value of 19.268 and a corresponding p value of .000, which mean that as a group, the four independent variables explained a statistically significant portion of the variance in teachers' attitudes. In other words, the overall regression model was statistically significant.

In the third section “Regression Coefficients” in Table 4.14, the b values show that age was negatively related to teachers’ attitudes whereas highest degree, class size and membership in professional organizations were positively related to teachers’ attitudes. The p values show that there were statistically significant correlations between teachers’ attitudes and their age, highest degree and membership in professional organizations. There was no significant correlation between class size and teachers’ attitudes.

Attitudes toward Home-Based Parental Involvement and Demographic Characteristics

In this subcategory, the dependent variable was the summated teachers’ attitudes toward the 15 survey items concerning home-based parental involvement, which were treated as interval data. As in the previous subcategory, the independent variables included 5 items as follows: (1) age, (2) highest degree, (3) teaching years, (4) class size, and (5) membership in professional organizations. Before a regression analysis was performed, the highest degree variable was recoded into a “dummy variable format”. The three levels of the highest degree variable, bachelor’s degree, community college diploma and technical school certificate, were recoded into two dichotomous response levels as follows:

0= technical school certificate and community college diploma

1= bachelor’s degree

In order to verify the distribution of the dependent variable and independent variables, the skewness values were computed, as shown in Table 4.15.

Table 4.15 The Skewness of the Dependent Variable and Independent Variables for Multiple Regression Analysis (Characteristics and Attitudes toward HBPI)

Variable	Skewness
Age	.736
Teaching years	.752
Class size	-.857
Membership in professional organizations	1.248
Attitudes toward home-based parental involvement	-.006

The skewness values of age, highest degree, teaching years, class size and attitudes toward home-based parental involvement were within the range of -1.0 to +1.0. Thus, these four variables were considered to be normally distributed. For the variable membership in professional organizations, although its skewness value was outside of the range of -1.0 to +1.0, due to the large sample size (n=159) and the small number of outlier (1 outlier), it was still regarded as approximately normally distributed.

A multiple regression analysis was performed to determine which independent variables significantly explained teachers' attitudes toward home-based parental involvement. It also provided estimates on the magnitude and statistical significance of the relationships among various variables.

As in the previous subcategory, age was selected as one of the independent variables used to analyze the relationship with the attitude items while teaching year was excluded in the final data analysis.

Table 4.16 below summarizes the results of the regression analysis as follows.

Table 4.16 Multiple Regression Analysis Results: Teachers' Characteristics and Attitudes toward HBPI (n=159)

<u>Variance Explained</u>							
R	R Square	Adjusted R Square		Std. Error of the Estimate			
.689	.474	.461		3.22336			
<u>ANOVA Results</u>							
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig		
Regression	1443.786	4	360.946	34.740	.000		
Residual	1600.063	154	10.390				
Total	3043.849	158					
<u>Regression Coefficients</u>							
	b	Std. Error	Beta	t Value	p Value	Collinearity Statistics	
						Tolerance	VIF
Age	-.086	.035	-.144	-2.445	.016	.979	1.021
Highest degree	5.808	.583	.609	9.954	.000	.911	1.098
Class size	.127	.061	.124	2.079	.039	.965	1.036
Membership in Professional organizations	.577	.379	.092	1.525	.129	.932	1.073

The first section of Table 4.16, "Variance Explained", shows there was an R value of .689, and an R^2 value of .474, which indicate that the four independent variables, combined explained 47.4% of the variance in teachers' attitudes. The "ANOVA Results" section shows an F value of 34.740 and a corresponding p value of .000, which mean that as a group, the four independent variables explained a statistically significant portion of the variance in teachers' attitudes. In other words, the overall regression model was statistically significant.

In the third section “Regression Coefficients” in Table 4.16, the b values show that age was negatively related to teachers’ attitudes whereas highest degree, class size and membership in professional organizations were positively related to teachers’ attitudes. The p values show that there were statistically significant correlations between teachers’ attitudes and their age, highest degree and class size. There was no significant correlation between teachers’ attitudes and their membership in professional organizations.

In sum, in this study, 159 valid questionnaire surveys were completed, returned and included in the final data analyses. The detailed results of statistical analyses, including descriptive statistics, paired t-test, and multiple regression were presented in this chapter.

The overall results indicate that participating Chinese kindergarten teachers tended to have positive attitudes toward both school-based and home-based parental involvement. For the 15 items related to school-based parental involvement, the means of 13 items indicated positive attitudes while for the 15 items related to home-based parental involvement, the means of 14 items indicated positive attitudes.

In regard to the difference in teachers’ attitudes toward school-based and home-based parental involvement, results show that there was a statistically significant difference between their attitudes toward the two types of parental involvement.

In terms of the relationships between teachers’ demographic characteristics and their attitudes toward school-based parental involvement, the results of multiple regression analysis show that teachers’ attitudes were statistically significantly correlated to age, highest degree and membership in professional organizations. When examining

the relationships between teachers' demographic characteristics and their attitudes toward home-based parental involvement, the results show that teachers' attitudes were significantly correlated to age, highest degree and class size.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATION

Parental involvement can have very positive effects on student success, school and teachers' quality and program design. Meanwhile, during the procedure of actualizing the positive effects of parental involvement in childhood education, the teacher is the key. Teachers' attitudes toward parents and parental involvement are of great importance to the level and quality of parental involvement, which play integral roles in the quality of childhood education. As stated in Chapter 2, teachers' positive attitudes toward parents and parental involvement process are potentially very influential in parents' decisions about involvement in their children's education (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). At the same time, teachers' negative perceptions about parents and parental involvement, shaped by culture, history, and schooling practice, may inhibit home-school linkage (Lazar & Slostad, 1999).

Currently in China, children's development and childhood education are still new and developing areas. While many western countries are making great progress in the theoretical and practical development in childhood education, research in this area in China is very limited. There is little research that has examined kindergarten teachers' attitudes toward parental involvement in childhood education.

In order to address the new issue and to provide implications for the development of quality parental involvement, kindergarten teacher education programs and childhood education in China, this study was initiated to examine teachers' attitudes toward parental

involvement in selected government kindergartens in China. Specifically, the research foci of this study were: (1) to examine kindergarten teachers' attitudes toward school-based parental involvement; (2) to examine kindergarten teachers' attitudes toward home-based parental involvement; (3) to examine the difference in kindergarten teachers' attitudes toward school-based and home-based parental involvement and (4) to examine the relationships between kindergarten teachers' attitudes toward parental involvement and selected demographic characteristics of teachers.

In the following sections in this chapter, the study procedures were firstly summarized. Then, the discussion about the results with regard to each of the four research questions is presented. Next, the conclusions of this study are stated. Finally, the limitations and recommendations for future research are addressed.

Summary of Study Procedures

One hundred and eighty-six teachers in government kindergarten teachers in Nanjing, China were originally recruited to participate in this study and they were required to complete a survey questionnaire regarding to their demographic information and attitudes toward school-based and home-based parental involvement. At the end of this survey phase, 159 completed and valid questionnaires were returned to the investigator and were included in the final data analyses. The return rate was 85.5%.

The instrument used in this study was a self-designed survey questionnaire including 35 items which were divided into three parts: (1) demographic information, (2) teachers' attitudes toward school-based parental involvement, and (3) teachers' attitudes toward home-based parental involvement. The first part was composed of five open-

ended questions and each of the second and the third parts contained 15 Likert-type items respectively.

Collected data were analyzed using the statistical software SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Science) version 13.0 for Windows. Descriptive statistics was firstly performed to examine teachers' major attitudes toward parental involvement in childhood education. Next, paired t-test was conducted to find out the difference in teachers' attitudes toward school-based and home-based parental involvement. Finally, a multiple regression was computed to determine if there was any statistically significant relationship between teachers' attitudes and their demographic characteristics, including age, highest degree, teaching years, class size and membership in professional organizations.

Discussion

This section discusses the findings based on data obtained from survey questionnaires. Discussion for each of the four research questions is presented as follows.

Research Question 1

What are teachers' attitudes toward school-based parental involvement in government kindergartens in Nanjing, China?

The study results imply that kindergarten teachers' attitudes toward school-based parental involvement were positive. For this research question, the recoded mean of kindergarten teachers' attitudes for each item ranged from 2.85 to 3.28, with an overall mean of 3.02 for all of the 15 items. When the original attitude mean scores were grouped

into three groups, group one: 1.01-2.00, strongly negative; group two: 2.01-3.00, slightly negative; and group three: 3.01-4.00, positive, the means of 13 items indicated positive attitudes toward school-based parental involvement and only two items indicated negative attitudes.

For the two items which indicated teachers' negative attitudes, item 9, "Home visits are necessary to establish two-way communication between teacher and parents," reflected that some teachers still did not fully realize the important role home could play in establishing a two-way communication with parents. Teachers' negative attitudes on item 12, "Parents' volunteering will provide a good opportunity for improving healthy teacher-parent relationships," showed that some teachers were still not so comfortable with parents' volunteering work at school.

The study results above imply that Chinese kindergarten teachers' attitudes toward school-based parental involvement were correspondent with the School to Home Transmission Model in the four types of parent-school relationships described by Swap (1993), which enlists parents in supporting objectives of the school.

On one hand, Chinese kindergarten teachers had realized that children's achievement was fostered by continuity of expectations and values between home and school and school personnel should identify the values and practices outside the school that contributed to student success. With the development of childhood education in China in recently years, Chinese kindergarten teachers had more and more noticed the importance of parental involvement within school settings or through interactions with school personnel. Also, as Faust-Horn (2003) indicates, there are sound reasons for teachers to want parental involvement. For example, teachers can see that parental

involvement can aid them in improving students' grades, behaviors within classroom, attendance and self-esteem.

On the other hand, Chinese kindergarten teachers still were not very willing to establish a true partnership with parents to work together to accomplish a common mission. As National PTA (1998) indicates, two of the five standards for true and effective parental involvement are "communicating" and "volunteering"; however, the study results show that Chinese kindergarten teachers still did not have very positive attitudes toward two-way communication through home visits and parents' volunteering work at school. This could be explained by the following three reasons.

Firstly, as Li, Chen and Sun (2002) indicate, Chinese cultural and historical traditions and Confucian doctrine in education place high value on teaching and teachers. Thus, many teachers still believed that they were the only experts in childhood education who should be highly respected and looked upon and parents should just educate their child at home, rather than actively and directly participating in school activities.

Secondly, as Gaffuri (1999) finds, teachers had not been provided with adequate educational support to invite and maintain partnership with parents. Since parental involvement in childhood education is still a new and developing area in China, many pre-service teachers generally received little preparation for involving parents (Hoover-Dempsey, Walker, Jones, & Reed, 2002).

Thirdly, similar to the findings of Malaspina (1993) and Butler (1992), Chinese kindergarten teachers had lack of time to conduct home visits or get parents volunteering at school. As stated in Chapter 4, most Chinese kindergarten teachers had a fairly large class size. In this study, the mean of class size of participating teachers was 32 children.

With so many children in the same class, it was hard for teachers to conduct regular home visits for each individual child and arranging and organizing parents' volunteering work at school.

Research Question 2

What are teachers' attitudes toward home-based parental involvement in government kindergartens in Nanjing, China?

The study results imply that kindergarten teachers' attitudes toward home-based parental involvement were positive. For this research question, the recoded mean of kindergarten teachers' attitudes for each item ranged from 2.5723 to 3.522, with an overall mean of 3.118 for all of the 15 items. When the original attitude mean scores were grouped into three groups, group one: 1.01-2.00, strongly negative; group two: 2.01-3.00, slightly negative; and group three: 3.01-4.00, positive, the means of 14 items indicated positive attitudes toward home-based parental involvement and only one item indicated negative attitudes.

The item which indicated teachers' negative attitudes, item 15, "Without thorough discussion with parents, kindergarten teachers cannot find the appropriate extracurricular for children," reflected that some teachers still tended to be controlling in children's extracurricular choices. This result is similar to the finding of Li, Chen and Sun (2002) that in many Chinese people's minds, teachers, as professionals, must know what is the best way to educate the children. With this perception, some Chinese teachers believed that only school personnel could make appropriate decisions regarding the educational program, decisions which would be beyond the realm of the parents (Banerian, 1991).

Research Question 3

Is there any difference in teachers' attitudes toward school-based parental involvement and home-based parental involvement?

Study results show that there was a statistically significant difference in teachers' attitudes toward school-based and home-based parental involvement. Chinese kindergarten teachers had more positive attitudes toward home-based parental involvement than school-based parental involvement. This result is similar to the research findings that due to the Chinese cultural tradition in education, many Chinese people feel that parents have neither the training, knowledge nor the expertise to provide appropriate assistance for their children in school settings (Liu & Chien, 1998) and direct school-based parental involvement will more easily produce conflicts between school and parents, which will be very harmful for children's education (Diamond, Wang, & Gomez, 2004).

Research Question 4

Is there any relationship between teachers' attitudes toward parental involvement and the following variables?

- (1) **Teacher's age**
- (2) **Teacher's highest degree**
- (3) **Years of kindergarten teaching experience**
- (4) **Class size**
- (5) **Membership in professional organizations**

When examining the relationships between selected teachers' demographic characteristics and their attitudes toward school-based parental involvement, the multiple regression analysis results indicate that teachers' attitudes were significantly correlated to age, highest degree and membership in professional organizations. When examining the relationships between selected teachers' demographic characteristics and their attitudes toward home-based parental involvement, the multiple regression analysis results indicate that teachers' attitudes were significantly correlated to age, highest degree and class size. The two multiple regression analyses show that there were significantly significant correlations between teachers' attitudes toward parental involvement and their age and highest degree. The results imply that younger kindergarten teachers and teachers with higher educational degree had more positive attitudes toward parental involvement. In addition, results show that membership in professional organizations and class size also had slight influence on teachers' attitudes toward parental involvement.

Although childhood education is a comparatively new area in China, it has been developing very fast in recent years. Many educational theories from developed countries, such as Montessorism and the "whole child" concept have been introduced to China and attracted great attention of educational professionals. Kindergarten teacher education programs, especially those in four-year colleges and universities, have incorporated many of these new theories into their curriculum and practice. Thus, younger teachers and teachers with higher degrees tend to have much more opportunities to access these new concepts and theories in childhood education. Therefore, in order to improve the quality of parental involvement and childhood education, Chinese kindergartens should include more young teachers and teachers with higher educational backgrounds. Also,

kindergarten principals should encourage and assist teachers to join more professional organizations and participate in more professional activities to have access to advanced educational theories and practice in childhood education.

Conclusions

This study was initiated to examine Chinese kindergarten teachers' attitudes toward parental involvement and the relationships between their attitudes and the selected demographic characteristics. Based on the study results and within the limitations of this study, the following conclusions are drawn.

First, the study results indicate that the kindergarten teachers had positive attitudes toward both school-based and home-based parental involvement. The overall mean of teachers' attitudes toward school-based parental involvement was 3.02 and the overall mean of teachers' attitudes toward home-based parental involvement was 3.118. Both of the two means were higher than 3.0 which represented positive attitudes.

Second, results show that there was statistically significant difference in teachers' attitudes toward school-based and home-based parental involvement. Teachers had more positive attitudes toward home-based parental involvement than school-based parental involvement. The results are consistent with the certain cultural and historical backgrounds of childhood education in China.

Third, when examining the relationships between teachers' attitudes toward school-based parental involvement and their selected demographic characteristics, the multiple regression analyses show that there were statistically significant correlations between teachers' attitudes and their age, highest degree and membership in professional

organizations. The younger the teacher was, the higher degree the teacher had, or the more memberships the teacher had in professional organizations, the more positive attitudes the teacher had toward school-based parental involvement. When examining the relationships between teachers' attitudes toward home-based parental involvement and their selected demographic characteristics, the multiple regression analyses show that there were statistically significant correlations between teachers' attitudes and their age, highest and class size. The younger the teacher was, the higher degree the teacher had, or the larger the class size of the teacher was, the more positive attitudes the teacher had toward home-based parental involvement. Thus, the results imply that age and highest degree play important roles in teachers' attitudes toward parental involvement in childhood education. Chinese kindergartens should include more young teachers and teachers with higher educational backgrounds and the principals should encourage and assist teachers' participation in professional organizations.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

This study provides some significant findings about Chinese kindergarten teachers' attitudes toward parental involvement in school and home settings; however, it also has two limitations which could be implications for future research on related topics.

First, at the time of study, the participants were limited to the kindergarten teachers in Nanjing, China. Due to the limited time and financial resources available to the investigator, all of the participating teachers were selected from the investigator's home city, Nanjing, for convenience. Since China is a very large country, where great diversity exists among kindergarten teachers all cross the country, this selection of participants

may not be appropriate to generalize the results in this exploratory study to the broadly defined population of teachers in Chinese government kindergartens.

Second, the survey questionnaire is the only research method employed in this study. Due to the wide distribution of the locations of participating teachers and investigator's limited time and financial resources, submitting survey questionnaires was the most feasible and economical way to obtain information from participants. However, as Belson (1986) indicates, one weakness of survey questionnaire is the uncertainty that the questions being asked are the same as those their respondents being answered as well as that all respondents being answered the same question. Also, participating teachers might not give their honest answers, because they might respond according to what they perceive to be more appropriate to match the common sense. In addition, the rating format in the survey questionnaire does not provide the investigator full access to participants' opinions like other qualitative methods, such as face-to-face interview, etc. Thus, follow-up interviews with some selected participants might help to verify the findings and support with a qualitative perspective on teachers' attitudes toward parental involvement in childhood education.

Based on this exploratory research, recommendations for future research are as following: (1) a larger scale of research continuing this work should be conducted on kindergarten teachers' attitudes toward parental involvement to solidify the findings in this study; and (2) qualitative research methods, such as face-to-face interviews should be included to verify the conjecture obtained in this study.

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Appendix A

Survey of Kindergarten Teachers' Attitudes Toward Parental Involvement

Survey of Kindergarten Teachers' Attitudes Toward Parental Involvement

The questionnaire is composed of three parts.

Part 1: Demographic Information

Instruction: For the following 5 questions, please write down your answer besides the question.

- (1) My age is _____
- (2) My highest academic degree is _____
- (3) I have been involved in kindergarten teaching for _____ years.
- (4) In a typical kindergarten day, the number of children I am in charge of at the same time is _____
- (5) The number of professional educational organization membership(s) I hold is _____

Part 2: Attitudes toward School-Based Parental Involvement

Instruction: For each of the following 15 statements, please indicate your attitudes by circling one of the correspondent numbers. Note: Please choose only one answer.

- (1) Teacher-parent conference is a necessary way to improve quality education for kindergarten children.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4

- (2) It is adequate that teacher-parent conference is held once per academic year.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4

- (3) Through the teacher-parent conference, kindergarten teachers can know more about each individual child's developmental status.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4

- (4) During teacher-parent conference, the teacher should speak more to submit the kindergarten information to parents.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4

- (5) I feel disappointed when parents do not ask me questions during teacher-parent conference.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4

- (6) Home visits should be made only to those children who do not behave satisfactorily at kindergarten.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4

- (7). In order to establish good communication between school and home, regular home visits are essential.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4

- (8) Interacting with parents at school is adequate for a kindergarten teacher to get full knowledge of the family background of a child's development.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4

- (9) Home visits are necessary to establish two-way communication between teacher and parents.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4

- (10) Due the limited time and energy, kindergarten teachers can only meet parents at the kindergarten and skip home visits.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4

(11) Parents should be encouraged to more actively volunteer in our kindergarten.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4

(12) Since most parents are lacking professional knowledge, their volunteering in the kindergarten will not help much for quality kindergarten education.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4

(13) Parents' volunteering at the kindergarten can help parents to build their own knowledge about child development.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4

(14) Parents' volunteering will interfere with regular kindergarten activities.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4

(15) Parents' volunteering will provide a good opportunity for improving healthy teacher-parent relationships.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4

Part 3: Attitudes toward Home-Based Parental Involvement

Instruction: For each of the following 15 statements, please indicate your attitudes by circling one of the correspondent numbers. Note: Please choose only one answer.

(1) Parents are children's first teachers.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4

(2) After children's enrollment into the kindergarten, parents should leave the major educational responsibilities to teachers since only teachers are professional educators.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4

- (3) Parent-child discussion about kindergarten matters can strongly support teachers' work in the kindergarten.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4

- (4) If the child did not do anything wrong at the kindergarten, there is no need for parents to talk about kindergarten life with the child.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4

- (5) Involvement with children's homework is an important way for parents to keep informed and updated with what children are learning in kindergartens.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4

- (6) Children learn enough at the kindergarten and parents do not need to tutor them at home..

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4

- (7) Kindergarten teachers need to leave more space in children's homework in which parents can be involved.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4

- (8) Most parents do not know what reading materials are appropriate for their children.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4

- (9) The importance of parents' reading should be often emphasized by kindergarten teachers to parents.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4

- (10) What parents read to their children at home is often inconsistent with what I read to children at the kindergarten.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4

- (11) Reporting what parents have read to them should be incorporated into children's kindergarten activities.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4

- (12) Enrichment curricular decrease the time for academic instruction, so they should be limited for kindergarten children.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4

- (13) Parents should play an active role in children's enrichment curricular activities by helping the child to decide the length and frequency of their extracurricular activities.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4

- (14) It should be the kindergarten teacher who decides whether a child needs enrichment curricular or not.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4

- (15) Without thorough discussion with parents, kindergarten teachers cannot find out the appropriate extracurricular for children.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4

Thank you for your participation!

Appendix B

Survey of Kindergarten Teachers' Attitudes Toward Parental Involvement

(Chinese Version)

幼儿园教师关于家长参与幼儿教育态度的问卷调查

本调查分为三个部分。

第一部分：个人信息

说明：请根据您的个人情况回答下列5个问题。

- (1) 我的年龄是____岁。
- (2) 我的最高学历是_____。
- (3) 我已经从事幼儿园教学工作____年。
- (4) 一般来说，我需要同时管理____名幼儿。
- (5) 我拥有____个专业教育机构的会员身份。

第二部分：您对以学校为基础的家长参与的看法

说明：针对下列15种说法，请在最能代表您意见的数字上划圈。注意：请您只选择一个答案。

- (1) 家长会是一种提高幼儿教育质量的必要的途径。

强烈反对	反对	赞同	强烈赞同
1	2	3	4

- (2) 家长会在一学期内至少应该召开两次。

强烈反对	反对	赞同	强烈赞同
1	2	3	4

- (3) 通过家长会，幼儿园教师可以了解更多每个幼儿的具体成长状况。

强烈反对	反对	赞同	强烈赞同
1	2	3	4

(4) 家长会的主要内容应当是由老师向家长介绍幼儿园的情况和信息。

强 烈 反 对	反 对	赞 同	强 烈 赞 同
1	2	3	4

(5) 在家长会上，如果没有家长向我提问，我会感到失望。

强 烈 反 对	反 对	赞 同	强 烈 赞 同
1	2	3	4

(6) 家访只需针对那些在幼儿园表现不好的孩子即可。

强 烈 反 对	反 对	赞 同	强 烈 赞 同
1	2	3	4

(7) 为了在学校和家庭之间建立良好的沟通关系，定期的家访是必需的。

强 烈 反 对	反 对	赞 同	强 烈 赞 同
1	2	3	4

(8) 和家长在学校沟通就能够使幼儿园教师充分了解幼儿成长的家庭背景。

强 烈 反 对	反 对	赞 同	强 烈 赞 同
1	2	3	4

(9) 家访是实现教师和家长之间双向交流的必要方式。

强 烈 反 对	反 对	赞 同	强 烈 赞 同
1	2	3	4

(10) 由于时间和精力有限，教师可以只在幼儿园和家长交流，而不一定进行家访。

强 烈 反 对	反 对	赞 同	强 烈 赞 同
1	2	3	4

(11) 幼儿园应该鼓励家长更积极的参与幼儿园事务。

强 烈 反 对	反 对	赞 同	强 烈 赞 同
1	2	3	4

(12) 由于大部分家长缺乏教育专业知识，他们的志愿活动并不会对提高幼儿园教育质量有多大帮助。

强烈反对 反对 赞同 强烈赞同
1 2 3 4

(13) 家长的志愿活动能够提高家长自己对幼儿成长的认识。

强烈反对 反对 赞同 强烈赞同
1 2 3 4

(14) 家长的志愿活动会干扰正常的幼儿园活动。

强烈反对 反对 赞同 强烈赞同
1 2 3 4

(15) 家长的志愿服务是一个培养健康的教师与家长关系的好机会。

强烈反对 反对 赞同 强烈赞同
1 2 3 4

第三部分：您对以家庭为基础的家长参与的看法

说明：针对下列15种说法，请在最能代表您意见的数字上划圈。注意：请您只选择一个答案。

(1) 家长是孩子的第一任老师。

强烈反对 反对 赞同 强烈赞同
1 2 3 4

(2) 孩子进入幼儿园以后，家长应该把主要教育权责交给教师，因为只有教师才是专业的教育者。

强烈反对 反对 赞同 强烈赞同
1 2 3 4

(3) 家长和幼儿关于幼儿园活动的对话能够强有力地支持幼儿园教师的工作。

强烈反对 反对 赞同 强烈赞同
1 2 3 4

(4) 如果孩子在幼儿园没有犯错误，家长就没有必要和孩子谈论幼儿园的生活。

强烈反对	反对	赞同	强烈赞同
1	2	3	4

(5) 参与家庭作业的完成是家长了解幼儿学习状况的重要途径。

强烈反对	反对	赞同	强烈赞同
1	2	3	4

(6) 孩子已经在幼儿园学到的足够多的东西，因此家长没有必要再对他们进行家庭辅导。

强烈反对	反对	赞同	强烈赞同
1	2	3	4

(7) 幼儿园教师应该在幼儿的家庭作业中留有更多空间让家长参与。

强烈反对	反对	赞同	强烈赞同
1	2	3	4

(8) 大多数家长不知道什么样的阅读材料适合孩子。

强烈反对	反对	赞同	强烈赞同
1	2	3	4

(9) 幼儿园教师应该向家长强调读书给幼儿听的重要性。

强烈反对	反对	赞同	强烈赞同
1	2	3	4

(10) 家长在家里给孩子读的东西经常和我在幼儿园给孩子读的不一致。

强烈反对	反对	赞同	强烈赞同
1	2	3	4

(11) 在幼儿园活动中，应该让幼儿自己介绍家长向他们读了什么。

强烈反对	反对	赞同	强烈赞同
1	2	3	4

(12) 校外活动会减少孩子学习课本知识的时间，因此应该被压缩。

强烈反对	反对	赞同	强烈赞同
1	2	3	4

(13) 家长应该积极参与幼儿的校外活动，比如帮助他们决定课外活动的时间和频率。

强烈反对	反对	赞同	强烈赞同
1	2	3	4

(14) 孩子是不是需要参与校外活动应该由教师来决定。

强烈反对	反对	赞同	强烈赞同
1	2	3	4

(15) 不经过与家长的仔细讨论，幼儿园教师就无法找到真正适合孩子的校外活动。

强烈反对	反对	赞同	强烈赞同
1	2	3	4

非常感谢您的参与!

Appendix C

Invitation Letter for Kindergarten Teachers

To: Kindergarten Teachers in Government Kindergartens in Nanjing, China
Fr: Ms. Wei Gu, Ph.D. Candidate, The Pennsylvania State University
Re: Invitation for A Kindergarten Teacher Survey
Da: March 7, 2005

Dear kindergarten teachers,

I am Wei Gu, a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at The Pennsylvania State University, USA. I am now doing research about teachers' attitudes toward parental involvement in government kindergartens in China. You are cordially invited to participate in this study.

In this study, you will be requested to use around 30 minutes to finish a kindergarten teacher questionnaire, which aims to study your attitudes toward school-based and home-based parental involvement in kindergarten children's education.

Prior to completing the survey, you will need to read and sign two copies of an Informed Consent Form, one of which will be retained for your personal record, and the second to be given to me.

Your assistance will be highly appreciated!

Sincerely,

Wei Gu

致南京公立幼儿园教师的邀请信

2005年3月

亲爱的老师们：

我叫顾炜，是美国宾西法尼亚大学课程与教学专业的博士生。目前，我正在做一项关于中国公立幼儿园教师对家长参与幼儿教育的态度的调查。我热情邀请您参与本项调查。

在本调查中，您将需要利用大约30分钟的时间完成一份教师调查问卷。这份问卷主要测评您在学校和家庭两种环境中家长参与幼儿教育的态度和看法。

在正式参与本调查之前，您需要阅读并签署两份知情同意书。一份留给您自己保存，另一份请连同完成的问卷交还给我。

十分感谢您的参与！

此致

顾炜

Appendix D

Informed Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH
The Pennsylvania State University

ORP USE ONLY: IRB# 20408 The Pennsylvania State University Office for Research Protections Approval Date: 03-01-2005 DWM Expiration Date: 02-20-2006 DWM
--

Title of Project: Teachers' Attitudes Towards Parental Involvement in
Selected Government Kindergartens in China

Principal

Investigator: Wei Gu, Graduate Student
107 Chambers Building
University Park, PA 16802
(814) 880-3820; wxg129@psu.edu

Advisor: Dr. Thomas Yawkey
165 Chambers Building
University Park, PA 16802
(814) 865-2937; tdy1@psu.edu

- Purpose of the Study:** The purpose of this study is to find out Chinese kindergarten teachers' attitudes towards parental involvement in school and home settings and the factors that might have influence on their attitudes
- Procedures to be followed:** You will be requested to use around 30 minutes to finish a questionnaire which contains 35 questions. You can keep the questionnaire for one week and after that the principal investigator will come to your kindergarten to pick it up.
- Discomforts and Risks:** There are no risks in participating in this research beyond those experienced in everyday life.
- Benefits:** You might learn more about parental involvement in childhood education by participating in this study. You might have a better understanding of how your attitudes will influence parental involvement in early childhood education and what factors might potentially contribute to their attitudes.
- Duration:** This study will take about 30 minutes of you to complete the questions. You have one week to finish the questionnaire.
- Statement of Confidentiality:** Only the principal investigator and her advisor will know your identity. The data will be stored and secured at The Pennsylvania State University in a locked file. The Office for Research Protections may review records related to this project. In the event of a publication or presentation resulting from the research, no personally identifiable information will be shared.
- Right to Ask Questions:** You can ask questions about this research. Contact Wei Gu at (001)814-880-3820 with questions. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, contact The Pennsylvania State University's Office for Research Protections at (001)814-865-1775.
- Compensation:** None.
- Voluntary Participation:** Your decision to be in this research is voluntary. You can stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer.

You must be 18 years of age or older to take part in this research study. If you agree to take part in this research study and the information outlined above, please sign your name and indicate the date below.

After reading the above, please sign and date both copies of the consent forms. Next, retain one copy for your record, and submit the second copy along with your completed questionnaire to the principal investigator.

Participant Signature

Date

Person Obtaining Consent

Date

参与社会科学调查知情同意书
宾西法尼亚州立大学

ORP USE ONLY: IRB# 20408
The Pennsylvania State University
Office for Research Protections
Approval Date: 03-01-2005 DWM
Expiration Date: 02-20-2006 DWM

研究课题: 中国公立幼儿园教师对家长参与幼儿教育的态度

主要调查人: 顾炜, 美国宾西法尼亚州立大学博士研究生
电话: (001) 814-880-3820
电子邮件: wxg129@psu.edu

导师: Thomas D. Yawkey 博士, 美国宾西法尼亚州立大学教授
电话: (001)814-865-2937
电子邮件: tdy1@psu.edu

- 1. 调查目的:** 本调查的目的在于研究中国公立幼儿园教师对家长在学校和家庭中参与幼儿教育的态度和看法, 以及影响他们态度的可能因素。
- 2. 调查程序:** 在本调查中, 您将利用大约 30 分钟的时间完成一份包括 35 道问题的问卷。您可以保留这份问卷一个星期。一个星期以后, 主要研究人将来您的幼儿园收回完成的问卷。
- 3. 不适与风险:** 本调查不会给您带来任何不适或风险。
- 4. 获益:** 通过参与本调查, 您可以了解更多关于家长参与幼儿教育的专业知识, 并能更清楚地理解您对家长参与的态度将会如何影响幼儿教育的质量, 以及影响您的态度的潜在因素。
- 5. 调查时长:** 本调查需要您利用约 30 分钟时间完成一份问卷。您可以有一个星期的时间来完成这份问卷。
- 6. 隐私保护声明:** 仅有主要研究人及她的导师知道您的身份。您的信息将被储存在美国宾西法尼亚州立大学安全的文件柜里。美国宾西法尼亚州立大学研究保护办公室可能会查看与本调查相关的资料。如果本调查的研究成果今后发表, 您的个人信息将不会被公开。
- 7. 提问权:** 您有权对本调查提出疑问。如果您有问题, 请通过电话或者电子邮件联系主要调查人。如果您对调查参与人的权利有疑问, 请致电宾西法尼亚州立大学社会研究保护办公室(001-814-865-1775)。
- 8. 报酬:** 无。
- 9. 自愿参与:** 您可以自愿决定是否参与本调查。在参与的过程中, 您可以在任何时候提出中止。对您不愿意回答的问题, 您可以拒绝回答。

参与本调查，您必须年满 18 周岁。如果您同意上述条款并愿意参加本调查，请在下面签字并且注明日期。

请您在两份知情同意书上签字并且注明日期。一份留给您个人保存，另一份请您连同你完成的问卷交给主要研究人。谢谢！

参与人签名

日期

同意书获取人签名

日期

Appendix E
Translator's Approval Letter

IRB# 20408

To Whom It May Concern:

This is to certify that I have verified the Chinese translation of Ms. Wei Gu's "Kindergarten Teacher Questionnaire", "Informed Consent Form for Social Science Research", and "Invitation for a Kindergarten Teacher Survey." The translation is accurate and precise.

Sincerely,

Huei-ling Chen, Ph.D. Candidate
Curriculum and Instruction
The Pennsylvania State University

Huei-ling Chen
E-mail: hic106@psu.edu.

VITA

Wei Gu

EDUCATION

The Pennsylvania State University, University Park

Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction, August 2006

M.Ed. in Educational Leadership, May 2006

Nanjing University, Nanjing, P.R. China

B.A. in English Language and Literature, June 2001

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Cohort Supervisor, Introductory Field Experience for Teacher Education at Penn State, Sept 2003 – May 2006

Research Assistant, ADELANTE! Program (ESL Teacher Certification Program), Dr. Thomas Yawkey, Aug 2002 – June 2003

Teaching Assistant, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Sept 2002-May 2003

CONVENTION PRESENTATIONS

Chen, C-S., Gu, W., & Yawkey, T. D. (November, 2005). *Understanding Teacher Beliefs and Characteristics of Current English Pre-Service Teachers About ESL/EFL Teaching Methodologies: Improving English Teacher Education Programs*. The Second Cross-Straits Conference on Foreign Language Teaching and Learning. Shanghai International Studies University. Shanghai, P.R. China.

Ulker, R., Perez, R. R., Stuchul, D. & Gu, W. (January, 2005). *Understanding ESL Pre-service Teachers' Perceptions of Needs: Building Responsive Teacher Education Programs*. The College Teaching & Learning (TLC) Conference. Orlando, Florida.

Ulker, R., & Gu, W. (February, 2004). *Traditional Play: Chinese and Turkish Examples*. The 29th Annual Meeting of The Association for the Study of Play (TASP). Atlanta, Georgia.

Liu, C., Lin, H-F., & Gu, W. (February, 2004). *Bring Internet to Education: An Empirical Study of Different Policy Initiatives*. Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) Midwinter Conference, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey.

Yawkey, T. D., Liu, W-R., Gu, W., Chuang, T-Y., Tseng, H-Y., & Chen, C-S. (October, 2003). *The Attitudes of In-Service Teachers towards ESL Programs*. Mid-Western Educational Research Association (MWERA) 2003 Conference. Columbus, Ohio.

Yawkey, T. D., Liu, W-R., & Gu, W. (December, 2002). *Comparison of Attitudes and Needs toward ESL Teacher Training Programs among Teachers with Different ESL Experiences*. The Fifth Association for the Advancement of Educational Research (AAER) Annual Conference. Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida.

PUBLICATION

Gu, W., Liu, C., & Lin, H-F. (2005). Confucianism in making educational policies: Lessons from Mainland of China and Taiwan. *International Journal of Educational Policy, Research and Practice*, 5(4), 97-120.