



PARENT-TEACHER INVOLVEMENT AND ITS RELATIONS TO ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN IN INTERNATIONAL MARRIAGES IN TAIWAN

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ABSTRACT

This study was intended to describe parent-teacher involvement in elementary schools of foreign-born parents from Southeast Asia and China, and its relations to their children's academic and social development. Participants included 294 children from families with a Southeast Asian or Chinese spouse, their parents, and their homeroom teachers from 15 elementary schools purposefully chosen in central Taiwan. Results indicated that even though teachers rated that parents from Southeast Asia and China valued children's education and shared same goals with schools, in reality, parents and teachers rarely had direct contacts with each other face to face. Indirect contacts (such as notes, phones) were more frequent. Mothers from China (including Hong Kong and Macau) were more involved with children's school than mothers from Southeast Asia. Children whose parents were more involved with school had more popularity votes. School staffs and teachers were advised to take more active roles in engaging foreign-born parents.

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INTRODUCTION

In Taiwan the number of international marriages was increasing until the Ministry of Foreign Affairs administered stricter immigration regulation with interview in 2005 (Yu, 2011). The majority of foreign-born spouses came from China (including Hong Kong and Macau) and Southeast Asian countries such as Vietnam and Indonesia. Many Taiwanese men who married these foreign-born spouses came from lower socio-economic status in countryside, and some even had disabilities. Many of these international marriages were based more on money than on love. Many foreign-born spouses got married at a young age, and gave birth to babies while they were still adjusting to life in Taiwan. These foreign-born spouses (especially from Southeast Asia) encountered adjustment difficulties, such as language, culture, marriage, parenting etc. (Lin, 2004; Ministry of the Interior, 2003). Their children were also considered at risk, most likely because of the lower socio-economic status of these families. In 2003 about 13.37% babies had one foreign-born parent, the number gradually dropped to 7.54% in 2012 (http://www.ris.gov.tw/zh_TW/346). Research indicated that these children had a higher risk of developmental delay and learning difficulties at school (Chao, 2007). How to help foreign-born spouses and their families has attracted increasing attention from policy makers and researchers in Taiwan. Close collaboration between parents and teachers had been advocated (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) because of its presumed positive impacts on children's development. The relations between families and schools were referred to as the mesosystem level of ecological system by Bronfenbrenner (1979). Bronfenbrenner (1979) suggested that the developmental potential of a childrearing setting could be enhanced by supportive links between the setting and other contexts for childrearing. Parent's childrearing roles could be facilitated and be more effective (Smith & Hubbard, 1988).

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Teachers could be facilitated and become more effective and sensitive in teaching when they have the support of the parents. Thao (2009) noted that research has clearly linked parent involvement to positive educational outcomes and academic success, including more positive attitudes towards school, better grades, and higher test scores. Small (2010) also stated that children whose parents are involved with their education tend to perform better in school (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003; Epstein, 2001; Steinberg, 2004). Students demonstrate higher academic and behavior levels, have higher aspirations, and display other positive school behaviors when parents are knowledgeable, encouraging, and involved (Bakker & Denessen, 2007; Epstein, 2001). Hsieh (2007) stated that parents participate in children's learning activities could have positive impacts on children, parents, schools, and teachers. El Nokali, Bachman, and Votruba-Drazal (2010) found that within-child improvements in parent involvement predicted declines in problem behaviors and improvements in social skills. Also, children with highly involved parents had enhanced social functioning and fewer behavior problems. In contrast, Hsieh (2007) noted that parent participation might have negative effects if there are conflicts of attitudes, knowledge, and interactions between parents and teachers.

Hsieh (2007) stated that parent involvement and its relations to children's education and learning outcomes is worth of study, especially in international families in Taiwan. It is less clear about parent participation and involvement in international marriages and its effects. This study was intended to describe parent-teacher involvement of children from families with a Southeast Asian or Chinese spouse, and its relations to children's adjustments. There were three major objectives.

1. To describe parent-teacher involvement of children from families with a Southeast Asian or Chinese spouse.
2. To identify child, family, and school factors associated with parent-teacher involvement.

- To examine the relations between parent-teacher involvement and children's adjustments.

Definition of Terminology

Parent-teacher involvement

The relations between families and schools were referred to as the mesosystem level of ecological system by Bronfenbrenner (1979). Despite various practices being recommended, there is considerable ambiguity concerning the specific ways parents are to relate to schools. Labels such as parent-teacher collaboration, teacher-parent partnerships, parent involvement, and parent participation are frequently used to portray the family-school connection (Powell, 1989). However, there is no consensus regarding its operational meaning. In this study, it was measured using Parent and Teacher Involvement Questionnaire. The Parent-Teacher Involvement Questionnaire assesses the extent to which parents have contact with the teacher, and the amount of involvement a parent has in a child's schooling, both in terms of quantity of contact and quality of contact (El Nokali, Bachman, & Votruba-Drazal, 2010; Miller-Johnson, Maumary-Gremaud, & The Conduct Disorders Research Group, 1995).

Foreign spouses

Generally it refers to all spouses who come from a foreign country. In this study it mainly refers to spouses who come from Southeast Asian countries, such as Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam, Philippine, Cambodia, but not including more economically prosperous countries such as Singapore, Malaysia, etc.

Chinese spouses

Spouses who come from Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Macau are often called foreign spouses as well, however they are regulated by different laws in Taiwan. Because Chinese spouses share similar language and culture with Taiwanese parents, their situations are quite different from foreign spouses from Southeast Asian countries. In this study, Chinese spouses refer to foreign-born parents from China (including Hong Kong and Macau).

METHOD

This section includes five parts. First, a theoretical framework is provided. Second, participants are described. Third, research instruments are described. Fourth, procedure is described. Finally, statistical analysis methods are described.

Theoretical framework

Theoretical framework suggests that parent-teacher involvement is related to child, family, and school factors, and is related to children's future adjustments.(see Figure 1)

Participants

Participants included children from families with a Southeast Asian or Chinese spouse, their parents, and their homeroom teachers from 15 elementary schools in central Taiwan. These schools were purposely chosen because they had more students with foreign-born parents. Three hundred eighty-seven copies of questionnaires were sent to parents and teachers. Two hundred ninety-four valid parent questionnaires were returned, the return rate was 75%. Two hundred seventy valid teacher questionnaires were returned, the return rate was 69%. Students included 135 (45.9 %) boys and 159 (54.1%) girls. Sequentially, 87 (29.6%) were in Grade 1; 91 (31%) were in Grade 2; 49 (16.7%) were in Grade 3; 40 (13.6%) were in Grade 4; 18 (6.1%) were in Grade 5; and 9(3.1%) were in Grade 6. Table 1 described the distribution of mother country of foreign-born parents. The majority of foreign-born parents came from China, Vietnam, and Indonesia. Table 2 described distribution of paternal education of the children. The majority of the fathers had high school education or below. Compared to the data provided by the National Statistics ROC Taiwan (<http://www1.stat.gov.tw>) about population of 15 Years and Over by Educational Attainment, paternal education of students in this study appeared to be lower.

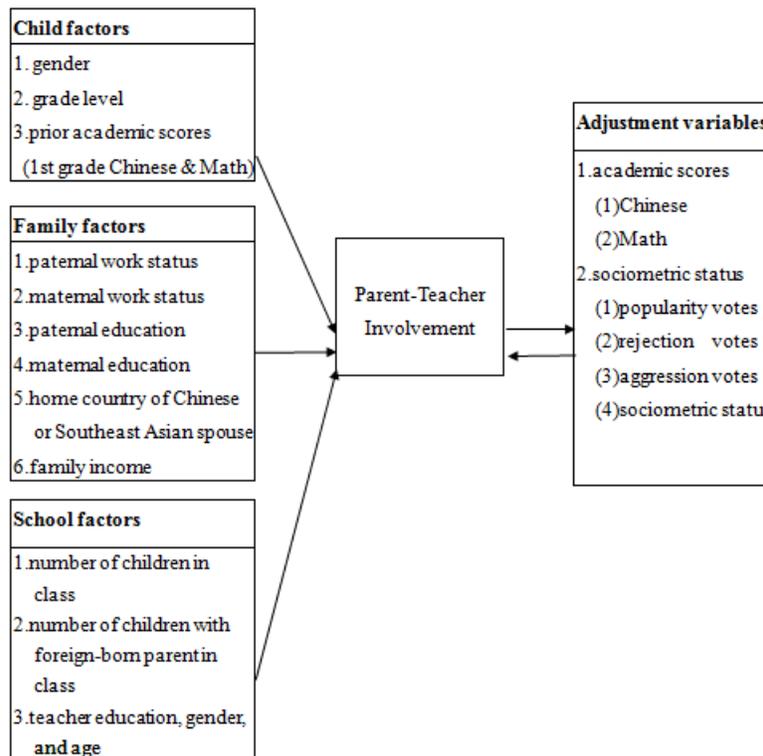


Figure 1. Theoretical framework

Table 1. Mother Country of Foreign-Born Parents in This Study

	Frequency	Percentage
Mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau	100	34.0
Vietnam	94	32.0
Indonesia	50	17.0
Thailand	8	2.7
Philippine	10	3.4
Cambodia	27	9.2
Others	4	1.4
Subtotal	293	99.7
Missing data	1	.3
Total	294	100.0

2. Teacher questionnaire: Homeroom teachers were requested to answer questions about Parent and Teacher involvement, Socio metric status: Teacher ratings, teacher and classroom characteristics. In addition, they provided children's concurrent scores in Chinese and Math and prior academic performance in the first grade.

Parent and Teacher Involvement Questionnaire

The Parent-Teacher Involvement Questionnaire assesses the extent to which parents have contact with the homeroom teacher, and the amount of involvement a parent has in a child's schooling, both in terms of frequency and quality of parents' involvement in children's educational progress in school and at home (Miller-Johnson,

Table 2. Paternal Education

	Frequency	Percentage	Educational Attainment in Taiwan (Male) 2011
Elementary school and below	33	11.2%	11.97%
Junior high school	104	35.4%	14.18%
High school	123	41.8%	33.56%
Junior college	18	6.1%	12.53%
University and college	7	2.4%	21.29%
Graduate and above	2	.7%	6.47%
Subtotal	287	97.6%	
Missing data	7	2.4%	
Total	294	100.0	100%

Table 3. Maternal Education

	Frequency	Percentage	Educational Attainment in Taiwan (Female) 2011
Elementary school and below	66	22.4%	20.1%
Junior high school	94	32.0%	12.70%
High school	89	30.3%	30.07%
Junior college	6	2.0%	12.06%
University and college	11	3.7%	21.25%
Graduate school and above	1	.3%	3.82%
Subtotal	267	90.8%	
Missing data	27	9.2%	
Total	294	100.0%	100%

Table 3 described the distribution of maternal education. The majority of the mothers had high school education or below. Compared to the data provided by the National Statistics ROC Taiwan (<http://www1.stat.gov.tw>) about population of 15 Years and Over by Educational Attainment, maternal education of students in this study appeared to be lower. Table 4 described the distribution of family incomes of students. According to the The Survey of Family Income and Expenditure, 2011 the annual family income in Taichung was 1,100,346 NT dollars (<http://win.dgbas.gov.tw/fies/quick100.asp>) the majority of family incomes in this study appeared to be below average.

Table 4. Family Incomes (per month)

	Frequency	percentage
10,000 or below	23	7.8
10,001-20,000	34	11.6
20,001-30,000	47	16.0
30,001-40,000	56	19.0
40,001-50,000	50	17.0
50,001-60,000	34	11.6
60,001-70,000	22	7.5
70,001-80,000	3	1.0
90,001-100,000	4	1.4
100,000 and above	5	1.7
Subtotal	278	94.6
Missing data	16	5.4
Total	294	100.0

Instruments

Two questionnaires were used to collect data

1. Parent questionnaire: Parents were requested to answer questions about work status, education, family income, mother country of foreign-born spouse, etc.

Maumary-Gremaud, & The Conduct Disorders Research Group, 1995). Twenty-one items of teacher's perceptions regarding parent and teacher involvement are described. For the first 11 items, teachers were asked to rate the frequency of involvement from never to more than once per week on a 5-point Likert scale. For the rest 10 items, teachers were asked to rate quality of parent-teacher involvement from (1) not at all to (5) a great deal on a 5-point scale. Cronbach's α for parent and teacher involvement was .87 for 21 items (n=265). Higher scores indicated more parent-teacher involvement.

Sociometric status

Teachers were requested to answer questions about the child's sociometric status. This measure has four items regarding how well the child is liked or disliked by peers, the child's aggressive behavior (starts fights, picks on other kids, and teases them), and the child's social position among peers (Cillessen, Terry, Coie, & Lochman, 1992; Gazelle & Spanger, 2007). Reliability and validity data were provided by Cillessen *et al.* (1992). The first three questions were on 7-point scale, including 1 Almost no votes; 2 Well below average; 3 Below average; 4 Average; 5 Above average; 6 Well above average; 7 Unusually large amount. The fourth question rated the child's membership in one of the five standard sociometric status groups (1. popular, 2. rejected, 3. neglected, 4. controversial, 5. average).

Procedure

Researchers visited each elementary school and explained the research purposes of the study to the principal or chairperson of academic affairs. Then researchers sought for homeroom teachers' help to complete a teacher questionnaire, and distribute parent questionnaires to children from families with a Southeast Asian or Chinese spouse. Children who brought back the parent questionnaire received a present. Each teacher also received a small present.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1.To describe parent-teacher involvement of children from families with a Southeast Asian or Chinese spouse.

The mean frequency of parent-teacher involvement for the first 11 items was 2.18 (SD=.45), close to once or twice a year. Three items with lowest scores were “11. How often has this child’s parent been to PTA meetings this school year?” (M=1.18, SD=.55)”, “10. How often has this child’s parent been invited to attend PTA meetings this school year?” (M=1.56, SD=.70)”, and “9. How often has this child’s parent attended a parent-teacher conference this school year?”(M=1.86, SD=.74). Results suggested that these parents were rarely invited and almost never attended PTA meeting. Three items with highest scores were “4. How often have you written a note to this child’s parent this school year?” (M=3.12, SD=.84)”, “6. How often has this child’s parent been invited to visit your school for a special event?” (M=2.56, SD=.63)”, and “2. How often have you called this child’s parent this school year?” (M=2.51, SD=.83)”. Results suggested that teachers wrote notes to parents almost every month [3], and invited or called parents at least once or twice a year [2]. The mean quality of parent-teacher involvement for items 12-21 was 3.22, slightly above average (SD=.628, n=270). Three items with the lowest scores were “19. How often does this parent volunteer at school?” (M=1.91, SD=.92)”, “17. How often does this parent send things to class like story books or objects?” (M=2.07, SD=.98), and “20. How involved is this parent in his/her child’s education and school life?” (M=2.91, SD=1.01). Results suggested that these parents only volunteer at school or send things to class a little [2] and had some [3] involvement with child’s education and school life.

Three items with highest scores were “13. How well do you feel you can talk to and be heard by this parent?” (M=3.95, SD=.74)”; “14. If you had a problem with this child, how comfortable would you feel talking to his/her parent about it?” (M=3.91, SD=.83)”; “16. How much do you feel this parent has the same goals for his/her child that the school does?”(M=3.67, SD=.81) . Results suggested that teachers felt a lot [4] comfortable talking to parents and felt that parents shared the same goals. The overall (21 items) parent-teacher involvement was 2.68, slightly below average (SD=.45). Results suggested that even though in general teachers had positive attitudes toward parent-teacher involvement, in reality, parents and teachers rarely had direct contacts with each other face to face (frequency ranking from never to once or twice a year). Indirect contacts (such as notes, phones) were more frequent, still less than once per month. Teachers appeared to be only slightly more active than parents. This finding is consistent with Hsieh’s (2007) findings that foreign parents were not actively involved in school. In this study, teachers rated that Chinese and Southeast Asian spouses in Taiwan valued children’s education a lot (M=3.52, SD=.96) and shared same goals with schools (M=3.67, SD=.81), however, in reality, they were not actively involved with schools; i.e., direct involvement and contact with the school and teachers. These findings were consistent with Thao’s (2009) findings in the U.S. Thao (2009) stated that in the U.S. though immigrant parents highly value education, they are less likely to be involved in their child’s education and school than parents born in the United States. Compared to U.S.-born parents, foreign-born parents are less likely to visit their children’s school, participate or attend school activities and events, help with homework, and talk to teachers and school staff. Chen (2004) found that new immigrants in Taiwan have strong motivation for children’s academic achievement, and were involved in supervising children’s home works (Chiang, 2005). Chiang (2005) found that many new immigrants also participated in educational activities such as field trips, and considered these activities were good opportunities for children’s happy learning and parent-teacher communication (as cited in Yu, 2011). Hsieh (2007) studied parent participation in children’s learning activities, and found that 60% of parents were not able to participate in children’s learning activities because of work; 26% indicated they were not invited or they did not know the information, 12% needed to care for children or other people; the rest were not interested or had special problems.

However, 75% of parents expressed willingness to participate in children’s education; 60 % expressed that they lacked of abilities to help with children’s school works, and only 30% expressed they got help from teachers. Eighty percent of parents further expressed that if teachers told them specifically how to help children’s school works, they were willing to help. In this study school teachers did not seem to actively engage foreign-born parents. Studies indicate that most parents are willing to participate in children’s education, especially if they know specifically what is expected and how to do. Thus, school staffs and teachers in Taiwan should take more active roles in engaging parents.

2.To identify child, family, and school factors associated with parent-teacher involvement.

Child factors

Child characteristics (child gender and grade level) were not significantly related to parent-teacher involvement. Children’s prior academic achievement in the first grade (Chinese: $r=.155^{***}$, $p=.012$, $n=259$; Math: $r=.187^{***}$, $p=.003$, $n=259$) were positively related to parent-teacher involvement. Children who performed better in the first grade, parent-teacher involvement score was higher later on.

Family factors

Family characteristics (paternal education, maternal education, paternal employment, maternal employment, number of children, family incomes) were not related to parent-teacher involvement. Mother’s home country was related to parent-teacher involvement ($t[268]=2.390$, $p=.018$). Scores of parent-teacher involvement of parents from China, Hong Kong, and Macau (M=2.77, SD=.47, n=89) were significantly higher than scores of parents from other Southeast Asian countries (M=2.63, SD=.43, n=181).

School Factors

Teacher gender, education, age, number of children in class, and number of children with foreign-born parents were not significantly related to teacher-reported parent-teacher involvement.

Thao (2009) stated that common barriers immigrant parents face to actively being involved in their children’s education include lack of formal education, low English language proficiency, lack of knowledge of the mainstream U.S. culture and school systems, and time constraints due to work and family responsibilities. Turney and Kao’s (2009) study “Barriers to School Involvement: Are Immigrant Parents Disadvantaged?” found that lower English language proficiency was linked to lower parental involvement among immigrant parents. Immigrant parents may also be unfamiliar with how the U.S. school system works and the concept of parental involvement. School systems are different around the world, and in many countries parent involvement is not expected. Teachers are responsible for monitoring students’ education, and parent involvement would be considered an interference and disrespectful. Thus, immigrant parents may not know they have the opportunity to be involved. They may also have limited knowledge of how to support their children’s education and navigate the educational system. Furthermore, immigrant parents may struggle with fulfilling basic living needs and adjusting to the U.S., limiting their time for active involvement at their children’s school. This study found that the scores of parent-teacher involvement of parents from China, Hong Kong, and Macau who share similar culture and language with Taiwanese parents were significantly higher than scores of parents from other Southeast Asian countries. This might indicate that lack of Chinese language skills is a prominent barrier to being involved at their children’s school and communicating with teachers and school staff. Parents from Southeast Asian countries may feel embarrassed with their Chinese language skills, and uncomfortable participating in school and talking to teachers. Siao (2008) studied new immigrant parents at elementary schools and found that new immigrant mothers did not participate in school activities because they did not fit into

their schedule, in addition, they were concerned about their limited Chinese language abilities, and worried that they could not communicate with teachers, thus they were less involved with school activities. Yu (2011) noted that new immigrants rarely participated in school activities because of limited language abilities, busy working, and discrimination. In this study, work status was not significantly related to parent-teacher involvement, it was likely because of little variation in work status among participants. Future studies could further explore parents' perceptions towards parent involvement between Taiwanese parents and foreign-born parents, and how work affects parent-teacher involvement. Annette (2000) noted that teachers were usually from middle or higher socio-economic classes, they might be less able to understand thoughts and behaviors of people from lower socio-economic class. Social class differences might affect parent-teacher relations (as cited in Hsieh, 2007). This study did not find teacher factors to be related to this issue probably because of little variation among teachers. However, studies did show that some new immigrant parents were afraid of being despised or discriminated because their status as a foreign spouse (Yu, 2011). Future studies might investigate whether social class differences affect parent-teacher relations or parent-parent relations.

3. To examine the relations between parent-teacher involvement and children's adjustments

Preliminary analyses

Parent-teacher involvement was significantly related to children's concurrent academic achievement (Chinese: $r=.123^{***}$, $p=.004$, $n=269$; Math: $r=.159^{***}$, $p=.009$, $n=269$), and sociometric status. While the parent-teacher involvement score was higher, the child was better liked by peers ($r=.260^{***}$, $p=.000$, $n=268$), was less disliked by peers ($r=-.164^{**}$, $p=.007$, $n=268$). In addition, Anova and LSD post hoc tests were conducted, parent-teacher involvement scores of popular children were significantly higher than those of rejected, neglected, and average children. Parent-Teacher involvement scores of controversial children were significantly higher than those of neglected children (see Table 5).

Table 5. Parent-teacher involvement and children's sociometric status

	n	M (SD)	95% CI	LSD post hoc tests
1 These children are well-liked by many children and disliked by very few.	106	2.82(.36)	[2.75,2.89]	1>2 1>3 1>5
2 These children are disliked by many children and well-liked by very few.	19	2.52(.39)	[2.33,2.71]	1>2
3 These children are not noticed by very many children.(They receive very few, if any, votes for well-liked or disliked question.)	36	2.47(.53)	[2.29,2.65]	1>3 4>3
4 These children are controversial, in that they receive a large number of both liked and disliked votes.	10	2.85(.51)	[2.48,3.22]	4>3
5 These children fit none of the other four categories and are "just average."	97	2.60(.46)	[2.51,2.69]	1>5

$F(4, 263)=6.914^{***}$, $p=.000$

* $p<.05$. ** $p<.01$. *** $p<.001$.

Table 6. Prediction of Child, Family, and Parent-Teacher Involvement to Children's Popularity Votes

predictors	Popularity Votes (N=255)	
	Model 1	Model 2
F and P	13.094 .000	13.019 .000
Child and Family factors R^2	.094	
Chinese scores in first grade (Beta and p)	.308*** .000	.278*** .000
Mother's home country (Beta and p)	.050 .404	.075 .210
Parent-Teacher Involvement R^2 change		.040
Parent-Teacher Involvement (Beta and p)		.205*** .001
Adjusted R^2	.087	.124

Multiple regression analyses

Multiple regression analyses were conducted to examine whether parent-teacher involvement predicted child adjustment, controlling for child and family factors. Child (prior Chinese scores in first grade) and family factor (mother's home country) were entered as the first equation. Next, parent-teacher involvement was added as a block to child and family factors in a second equation. The increment to R^2 made by the addition of parent-teacher involvement was then tested. The criterion variables in the regression analysis models included 2 academic achievement scores (Chinese and Math) and 4 teacher-reported sociometric ratings.

Chinese scores

Overall tests were significant. Prior Chinese academic scores in the first grade significantly predicted Chinese scores. Children who had better prior Chinese scores in the first grade had better Chinese scores later on. However, parent-teacher involvement did not predict children's concurrent Chinese scores.

Math scores

Overall tests were significant. Prior Math academic scores in the first grade significantly predicted Math scores. Children who had better prior Math scores in the first grade had better Math scores later on. However, parent-teacher involvement did not significantly predict children's concurrent Math scores.

Popularity

Overall tests were significant (see Table 6). Prior Chinese academic scores in the first grade significantly predicted popularity. Children who had better prior Chinese scores in the first grade had more popularity votes later on. After controlling for children's prior academic achievement and mother's home country, parent-teacher involvement significantly predicted children's popularity among peers ($\beta=.205^{***}$, $p=.001$, $F(3, 252)=13.019$, $p=.000$, $\Delta R^2=.04$).

Children with higher parent-teacher involvement scores had more popularity votes.

Rejection Votes

Overall tests were significant. Prior academic Chinese scores in the first grade significantly predicted Rejection Votes. Children who had poorer prior Chinese scores in the first grade had more rejection votes later on. However, parent-teacher involvement did not significantly predict children's concurrent Rejection Votes.

Aggression Votes

Overall tests were significant. Prior academic Chinese scores in the first grade significantly predicted Aggression Votes. Children who had poorer prior Chinese scores in the first grade had more Aggression votes later on. Mother's home country significantly predicted aggression. Children with Southeast Asian parents had more aggression votes than children with parents from China, Hong Kong, and Macau. However, parent-teacher involvement did not significantly predict children's concurrent Rejection Votes. Research has clearly linked parent involvement to positive educational outcomes and academic success, including more positive attitudes towards school, better grades, and higher test scores (Thao, 2009). Studies indicated that if parents are actively involved in children's learning activities at school, there are positive effects on children. For example, studies indicated parent participation can improve children's academic achievements (Becher, 1984; Benson, Buckley, & Medrich, 1980; Epstein, 1992; Gonzalez, Holbein, & Quilter, 2002; Greenwood & Hickman, 1991; Hallinger & Murphy, 1986; Henderson, 1987; Hester, 1989; Lynn, 1994; Ramirez, 2001; Rothstein, 2000; Moles, 1982; as cited in Hsieh, 2007); positive attitudes toward school, better behaviors, and better emotional adjustment (Cai, Moyer, & Wang, 1997; Greenwood & Hickman, 1991; Lynn, 1994; Moles, 1982, as cited in Hsieh, 2007). In this study, preliminary analyses did indicate that parent-teacher involvement was significantly related to children's concurrent academic achievement, and sociometric status. However, after controlling for child and family factors, parent-teacher involvement only significantly predicted children's popularity votes. Because this is a correlational study, it is impossible to determine the directions of causality. An alternative interpretation could be that teachers are likely to have more positive parent-teacher involvement opinions toward popular children. Further studies can also be conducted to explore which aspects of parent-teacher involvements have more effects on child development.

Conclusion

1. Even though teachers rated that Chinese and Southeast Asian spouses in Taiwan valued children's education and shared same goals with schools, in reality, parents and teachers rarely had direct contacts with each other face to face. Indirect contacts (such as notes, phones) were more frequent.
2. Children's prior academic achievement and mother's home country were related parent-teacher involvement, parents whose children had better academic performance or from China, Hong Kong, or Macau were more involved with children's school.
3. After controlling for child and family factors, parent-teacher involvement significantly predicted children's popularity votes. Children whose parents were more involved with school had more popularity votes.

Suggestions for teachers and schools

1. Even though parents were not actively involved with schools, teachers were only slightly more active in engaging parents. Studies suggested that foreign-born parents were less involved with children's school not because they did not care about their children's education, but because of their limited language abilities, busy work, or not knowing what they were expected to do. Teachers and school staff should play more proactive roles in engaging parents and creating a

welcoming school environment for diverse families. Teachers could show interests in the diverse experiences of students and their families. Inviting these parents to share their personal experiences might also give teachers and school staff an opportunity to build their awareness and understand the diverse backgrounds of their student population (Thao, 2009). However, school staffs and teachers should be sensitive in engaging parents, and not to create extra stresses for parents who were not able to participate because of work or family situations.

2. Even though more and more children from foreign-born parents entered schools, school staffs and teachers also encounter language barriers in parent-teacher communication. Many teachers prefer to communicate with Taiwanese parent, and might ignore the needs of foreign-born parents, especially from Southeast Asia. Schools should provide bilingual interpreters or family liaisons in parent-teacher communication if needed. Immigrant parents feel more comfortable talking to someone who knows their language and understands their background. Several studies have found that bilingual school staffs who actively engage immigrant parents have been successful in inviting and engaging immigrant parents to attend school activities and events (Thao, 2009). Information and guidance needs to be provided in a way that immigrant parents understand, such as translating letters and other school information into multiple languages.

3. Studies showed that many parents could not participate in school activities because of busy work and schedule conflicts (Lin, 2008; Chiu, 2008; Siao, 2008; as cited in Yu, 2011). When planning school activities, school staffs and teachers should take these factors into consideration.

Suggestions for future studies

1. This study only explores parent-teacher involvement of children of international marriages in central Taiwan. In the future, other areas of Taiwan can be sampled and studied. In addition, parent-teacher involvement between Taiwanese parents and foreign-born parents and its effect can be explored.
2. This study had tried to control the impacts of child and family factor (prior academic achievement and mother's home country), in the future, factors such as parenting skills and attitudes, social supports, etc can also be explored.
3. In this study, only questionnaire survey was conducted, in the future, in-depth interviews might be conducted with participants to better understand their thoughts regarding parent-teacher involvement.

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