Chinese Immigrant Parents' Involvement in Their Children's After-school Education: Behaviors and Perspectives

George Zhou, *University of Windsor*

Lan Zhong, *Chongqing Normal University*

Jie Zheng, *East China Normal University*

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**Chinese Immigrant Parents' Involvement in Their Children's After-School Education:
Behaviours and Perspectives**
**L'engagement des parents immigrants chinois dans l'enseignement postsecondaire de leurs
enfants : comportements et perspectives**

George Zhou, University of Windsor
Lan Zhong, Chongqing Normal University
Jie Zheng, East China Normal University

Abstract

Through listening to participants' own words, this study provides a comprehensive description and analysis of Chinese immigrant parents' perceptions and behaviours of involvement in their children's after-school education. It reveals that Chinese immigrant parents were willing to become involved in their children's after-school education. Although many Chinese immigrant parents faced challenges in the host culture, they sacrificed themselves to support their children's development. They hold high education expectations for their children, view academics as the most important thing and provide help with their children's academics. Yet they also want their children to receive a well-rounded education. This study indicates that the Chinese immigrant parents' behaviours and perspectives of involvement in their children's after-school education were shaped by Chinese traditional cultural values, parents' personal experiences, and their understanding of Canadian culture.

Résumé

En écoutant les paroles des participants, cette étude fournit une description complète et une analyse des perceptions et des comportements des parents immigrants chinois en ce qui concerne l'implication dans l'enseignement postsecondaire de leurs enfants. Elle révèle que les parents immigrants chinois sont prêts à s'investir dans l'enseignement postsecondaire de leurs enfants. Bien que de nombreux parents aient rencontré des défis dans la culture d'accueil, ils ont fait des sacrifices pour soutenir le développement de leurs enfants. Ils ont des attentes très élevées pour leurs enfants, considèrent l'enseignement comme la chose la plus importante et fournissent de l'aide à leurs enfants dans leurs études. Cependant, ils veulent aussi que leurs enfants reçoivent un enseignement complet. Cette étude indique que les comportements des parents immigrants chinois et leurs perspectives d'engagement dans l'enseignement postsecondaire de leurs enfants ont été formés par les valeurs culturelles chinoises traditionnelles, les expériences personnelles des parents, ainsi que leur compréhension de la culture canadienne.

Keywords: parental involvement; Chinese immigrant parents; culture; after-school care

Mots clés : engagement parental; parents immigrants chinois; culture; enseignement postsecondaire

Introduction

Ontario Ministry of Education (2010) acknowledges the importance of school partnerships with parents in support of student achievement in its Parent Engagement Policy for Ontario Schools. The policy also provides a guideline for the implementation of parent engagement at the levels of schools, boards, and the ministry. However, without knowledge of how parents involve themselves in children's education, particularly the involvement behaviour and perspectives of the growing immigrant population that schoolteachers are not familiar with, the application of this policy cannot be effective.

In the past decades, there has been a rapid growth of Chinese immigration in Canada. Statistics Canada (2016) reported that over 129,000 Chinese moved to Canada between 2011 and 2016. Immigrants who were born in China were the second largest immigrant group in Canada, making up 8.6% of the total immigrant population. As a unique group, the involvement of Chinese immigrant parents in their children's education deserves special attention given their different views of education and practice in parenting (Zhong & Zhou, 2011). Howard and Reynolds (2008) noticed that the parental involvement literature fails to fully consider the role of race and class when examining parenting practices within schools. Study of Chinese immigrant parents will help filling this literature gap.

Our research team has been conducting comprehensive studies to examine how Chinese immigrant parents get involved in their children's education. Topics explored have included parental involvement in school-based activities (Zhong & Zhou, 2011), parent-teacher communication (Jiang, Zhou, Zhang, Beckford, & Zhong, 2012), parent-children communication (Liu, 2015), parental involvement in after-school music education (Zhang, 2016), etc. The demographic, social, language, and cultural factors were explored for an understanding of how these factors shape Chinese immigrant parents' involvement. This paper reports the findings regarding their after-school involvement. The central research question for this study was how Chinese immigrant parents engaged themselves in their children's after-school education. The findings about their behaviours and perspectives in parental involvement are significant for schoolteachers and administrators to better understand Chinese immigrant parents and children, and to improve their effort in engaging Chinese immigrant parents in school education.

Theoretical Framework

The term "parental involvement" underscores the shared responsibility of families and schools in promoting student success. Epstein (2018) described children's education as a partnership between school, family, and children. Hand (2013) emphasized that parents should take the responsibility of participating in their children's education. There are many different ways that parents could be involved in their children's education. Abdullah, Seedee, Alzaidiyeen, Al-Shabatat, Alzeydeen, and Al-Awabdeh, (2011) define parental involvement as the activities occurring between a parent and a child or between a parent and teachers at school that may contribute to the child's educational outcomes and development. Walker, Wilkins, Dallaire, Sandler, and Hoover-Dempsey (2005) distinguished two categories of parental involvement: school-based involvement and home-based involvement (Figure 1). They explained parents' decisions of involvement using three psychological factors: parents' motivational beliefs,

perceptions of invitations for involvement from others, and perceived life context. The factor of motivational beliefs consists of parents' self-constructed role and self-efficacy for getting involved in their children's education. Parents who consider education involvement as their responsibility and believe they are capable to do it will actively involve themselves in their children's education. The factor of parents' perceptions of invitations for involvement from others entails their perceptions of invitation for involvement from the school, the teacher, and/or children. Such feeling of being invited for contribution is a catalyst for parental involvement. The factor of parents' perceived life context refers to their beliefs about whether they have time, energy, skills, and knowledge that are required to get involved in children's education.

Figure 1: Walker et al.'s (2005) Model of Parental Involvement

As for the factor of parents' perceived life context, literature has reported that the sociodemographic characteristics such as family income, employment status, and education background influence parents' involvement in children's education. Past studies have documented a correlation between parents' Socioeconomic Status (SES) and their involvement (Benson & Martin, 2003; Inaba, Thoits, Ueno, Gove, Evenson, & Sloan, 2005; Shumow & Harris, 2000). For instance, Benson and Martin (2003) found that parents with low SES participated less in schools than their higher SES counterpart due to their inflexible

work schedules, their need to take more jobs, and their tiredness from work. Lareau (2003) reported that middle-class black parents were more strategic in intervening in their children's schools than working-class black parents. Past studies have also well documented a correlation between parents' education background and their involvement in children's education (Englund, Luckner, Whaley, & Egeland, 2004; Fantuzzo, Tighe, & Childs, 2000; Pan, Rowe, Singer, & Snow, 2005; Turner & Johnson, 2003). Parents with more education benefit from their knowledge and skills for parenting their children. A lack of educational experiences and less familiarity with the school system hinder parental involvement, despite the high value parents may place on education.

As for the factor of parents' motivational beliefs, past studies have suggested that parents from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds may view and interpret the meaning of parental involvement differently and lead to different ways and levels of involvement (Jeynes, 2005 a & b; Juang & Silbereisen, 2002). For cultures such as Hispanic culture (Espinosa, 1995) and Chinese culture (Guo, 2011), it is considered rude that parents intrude into the operation of the school. Parents coming from these cultures prefer to get involved in their children's education at home. In contrast, parents from Western cultures may spend much more time in their children's school because their cultures value a close parent-school relationship (Hill & Taylor, 2004). Li (2005) pointed out that Asian immigrants tend to be more involved in their children's education outside school than in school. Kao and Tienda (1998) found that regardless of socioeconomic level, Chinese-American parents were more likely than European parents to help their children at home. However, due to their views of the different roles that parents and teachers play for children's education and their low efficacy caused by the language barrier and unfamiliarity with Canadian cultural and school system, Chinese immigrant parents had low involvement in school-based activities (Zhong & Zhou, 2011).

Chinese usually see education as the most important means to gain social mobility. Particularly, they place great emphasis on academic achievement as a means to achieve higher social status and wealth (Dyson, 2001; Li, 2001; Wu, 2001; Zhou, 2000). This value about education is carried into their new places of residence. Chinese immigrants not only actively pursue their own continuing education in the host country, but also hold high expectations of their children's education. They often get actively involved in their children's education (Guo, 2006), and in some cases their involvement can take place without their children's consent (Liu, 2015). Past studies have well reported that Chinese parents assign extra homework to their children and register them in many after-school programs (Li, 2001; Louie, 2001). However, most of these reports focused on academic work, and left the whole story of after-school parental involvement untold.

Walker et al. (2005) developed their model of parental involvement largely based on the studies of mainstream parents. Compared with mainstream parents, immigrant parents face significant challenges due to the discontinuity they experience in various areas, including language, culture, employment opportunity, social and education systems, and so on. Their original cultural values, education backgrounds, financial resources, ability to cope with the challenges have great influence on one or more of the three psychological constructs defined by Walker et al. and consequently impact their perception and behaviours of parental involvement. Past studies have actually reported the existence of such impact (Jeynes, 2003;

Jiang, et al., 2012; Li, 2005; Zhong & Zhou, 2011). Therefore, while Walker et al.'s model of parent involvement provided us with a general guidance for the study, we simultaneously examined its feasibility in explaining Chinese immigrant parents' behaviours and perspectives in education involvement.

Methodology

The study was conducted in a city located in southwest Ontario, which is the fourth most ethno-culturally diverse city in Canada. It employed a qualitative design, which attends to an in-depth understanding of study participants and the sociocultural contexts they live with (Creswell & Guetterman, 2018).

Participants

Study participants were recruited through a process of snowball sampling and public invitation. Taking the advantage of being a board member for a local Chinese association, one of the researchers got to know a couple of Chinese immigrant families who were willing and qualified to participate in the study. These two families later invited their friends to join in the study. The researchers also posted a public invitation on the Chinese association website and at its office location to invite Chinese immigrant families to participate in the study.

We set up two criteria for participant recruitment. Participants should come from mainland China and have at least one child attending elementary school at the time of data collection. The rationale for selecting participants from Mainland China was because it has superseded Hong Kong and Taiwan as the largest single source of Chinese immigrants to Canada since 1997 (Statistics Canada, 2016). We targeted parents who had elementary school children because past studies have indicated that parents tend to get less involved in their children's education at high school than at elementary school (Adams & Christenson, 2000; Grolnick, Kurowski, Dunlap, & Hevey, 2000; Simon, 2004). Being parents with elementary students at home, both researchers/authors of this paper observed on a daily basis how busy Chinese immigrant parents could be with younger children.

Twelve couples of Chinese immigrants were recruited to participate in the study (Table 1). Six families had one child and the other six had two children. All parents had received university degrees before they came to Canada, except for one mother who moved to Canada with a college diploma. At the time of data collection, four parents obtained a doctoral degree, eight got a master's degree, and two received a bachelor's degree from Canadian universities. One father was completing a master's degree and two mothers were finishing a bachelor's degree from Canadian universities. Seven parents did not pursue a Canadian degree. Seven participating families had lived in Canada longer than 10 years and five families for less than five years. For convenience of reporting, we will use FF1 and MF1 to represent the father and mother respectively from family one. Such abbreviations were used for all 12 participating families.

Table 1: Background Information of the Twelve Families

Participants		Education	Occupation		Years in Canada
			China	Canada	
Family 1	Father	PhD *	Science Researcher	Mechanical Engineer	13
	Mother	BSc	System Engineer	Home-Maker	
	Son	Grade 2			
	Daughter	Sophomore			
Family 2	Father	BSc	Engineer & Manager	Labour Worker	4
	Mother	BSc* (finishing)	Accountant	University Student	
	Son	Grade 1			
Family 3	Father	Master*	Software Engineer	Technician	4
	Mother	BSc* (finishing)	Software Engineer	University Student	
	Daughter	Grade 3			
Family 4	Father	PhD*	Professor	Electrical Engineer	15
	Mother	Master*	Professor	Mechanical Engineer	
	Son	Grade 4			
	Son	Grade 11			
Family 5	Father	MBA*	Department Manager	Labour Worker	3
	Mother	College Diploma	Technician	Labour Worker	
	Daughter	Grade 7			
Family 6	Father	Master*	Science Researcher	Computer Engineer	14
	Mother	Master*	Science Researcher	Accountant	
	First Son	Grade 4			
	Second Son	Grade 11			
Family 7	Father	BA	Businessman	Self-Employed	13
	Mother	Master	Medical Doctor	Massage Therapist	
	Daughter	Grade 7			
Family 8	Father	Master*	Professor	Computer Engineer	4.5
	Mother	Master*	Journalist	Home-Maker	
	Son	Kindergarten			
	Daughter	Grade 5			
Family 9	Father	PhD*	Scientific Researcher	Computer Engineer	14
	Mother	BSc*	Medical Doctor	Public Health Consultant	
	Daughter	Grade 3			
	Son	Freshman			
Family 10	Father	MBA* (finishing)	Marketing Manager	College Student	3
	Mother	BA	Interpreter	Self-Employed	
	Daughter	Grade 6			

Participants		Education	Occupation		Years in Canada
			China	Canada	
Family 11	Father	BSc	Computer Engineer	Mechanist	11
	Mother	BSc*	Librarian	Learning Commons Specialist	
	Daughter	Grade 7			
Family 12	Father	Master*	Editor	Home-Maker	13
	Mother	PhD*	Professor	Professor	
	Son	Grade 3			
	Daughter	Freshman			

Note: * = Degree obtained in Canada

Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect data. As Lune and Berg (2016) stated, interview questions are often geared towards discovering how people behave and feel, what they think, how they account for their experiences and actions, and what opportunities and obstacles they face. In this study, a set of open-ended questions were developed to collect self-reported information about participants' behaviours and perspectives towards their involvement in children's after-school education. These semi-structured interviews provided enough room for participants to interpret the questions asked and to elaborate their responses while allowing the researchers to maintain some control over the flow of the interview topics (Lune & Berg, 2016).

Both parents from the same family were interviewed together at a location that was convenient and comfortable to them. At the request of interviewees, all interviews were conducted in Chinese. Since Chinese was the mother tongue of the participants and the researchers, the use of Chinese helped the researchers build a rapport with participants and assured effective and accurate communication during the interview (Tsang, 1998). It also allowed participants to fully express themselves. Interviews lasted approximately 60 to 90 minutes and were audio recorded. The researchers also took field notes to record the information that the audio recorder could not catch, such as interview time and location, participants' gestures and specific expressions during the interview, information revealed from informal dialogues right before or after the interview, the researchers' quick insights during the interview, etc. These field notes provided additional data beyond tape recording and served as a reminder for the researchers to recall what happened in the interviews when transcribing and analyzing the interview recordings. After each interview, the researchers listened and transcribed the recording. Follow-up phone calls were made within one week of the completion of face-to-face interview to ask participants to clarify and/or elaborate on some points they talked about during the interview. All final interview texts were sent back to the participants for accuracy checking.

Data Analysis

Primary data analysis began immediately after completing the first interview so that the following interviews could be informed by what was learned from previous ones regarding what questions were asked and how they were asked (Maxwell, 2004). In the stage of formal

data analysis, interviews were transcribed and analysed in Chinese. The data analysis was cross-checked by both researchers who were proficient in Chinese and English. The results of data analysis were translated from Chinese to English by one researcher. The translation was checked by the other researcher.

Following Lune and Berg's (2016) suggestion, we conducted both quantitative and qualitative analysis to produce a comprehensive understanding of our data. Quantitative analysis was used to form answers for such questions as how many participants assigned extra homework to their children and how many participants sent their children to Chinese classes. It was simply to tally participants' responses embedded in their interviews. Qualitative analysis was used to answer questions such as why participants requested their children to work on extra homework and why they insisted that their children learn Chinese. Qualitative analysis was much more complex than the quantitative process since it involved a process of coding and recoding. We adopted an inductive approach for qualitative analysis, which begins with the researchers immersing themselves in the data in order to make sense out of them (Lune & Berg, 2016). When we initially read over the data, we noted down any significant items along the documents without limiting our attention to any preset topics. In later stages, initial codes were merged or integrated into significant themes. For each theme, there are a few subthemes to support the main concept.

Findings

Chinese immigrant parents are actively involved in children's education outside of school. Their involvement can be described through the following five aspects: (1) activities focusing on school subjects; (2) rationale behind academic focus; (3) supporting extracurricular activities; (4) fostering basic life skills; and (5) providing moral education.

Activities Focusing on School Subjects

All participating families reported that they helped their children with schoolwork after their children returned home from school. The actual approaches varied depending on the children's ages. The following narratives represent typical ways through which parents were involved in children's homework and how their involvement changes as children grow:

While my daughter was doing homework at her younger age, I always sat with her, watching her silently so that I was able to see whether she was doing work correctly, made sure she had good study habit, and provided her assistance immediately when she needed. Now she is in Grade 6 and has formed some good learning habits and is more independent. I do not need to sit beside her any more, but I remind her to do homework and ensure she finishes it on time. (MF10)

FF5 shared a similar idea:

When my daughter was in Grade 4, she needed to work on projects. I helped her set up schedules for the projects and provided her suggestions when she asked me. Now, she is in Grade 7 and can make the schedule by herself. What I do is to remind her to follow the schedule each day. After she finishes her project, I ask her to present it to her mother and me. We offer her comments and suggestions. She told us that such practice prepared her well for her presentation in class.

In addition to helping their children with the teacher-assigned homework, all participants gave their children extra homework. They purchased and borrowed various books recommended by teachers or other parents for their children to read. Participants believed that reading broadly after school could enhance not only their children's reading and writing abilities, but also their understanding of school subjects, such as math, and their knowledge, thus fostering good habits for lifelong learning. FF7 illustrated his belief in reading during the interview:

My daughter is in Grade 7. I asked her to finish 2000 books before she goes to Grade 10. Over the past three months, she has finished 300 novels. She reads much faster now than one year ago. She can finish two novels with 300 pages within two or three days. To prove her understanding of the books, she wrote summaries or told us about what she read. Her reading topics include animals, history, geography, the universe, and religions. Reading widely broadens her knowledge and enhances her comprehensive ability in language and other subjects. As you know, I learned Russian language in university and my wife majored in Chinese traditional medicine. Unlike many Chinese, both of us are not good at math. But recently, my daughter has become very good at math. I believe reading increased her understanding of math.

Most parents, mainly mothers, reported that they had started to read books frequently to their children before they entered kindergarten. For instance, MF9 revealed:

When my son was one year old, I started to read books to him at bed time. . . . When I had my daughter, I did the same thing. Now, my daughter is in Grade 5 and my son is in university. They both love to read and are very good at writing. I believe that reading is very important for children's brain development, and to love reading is a lifelong rewarding habit.

In addition to fostering children's reading habits, parents used a variety of ways to help their children with math. They purchased workbooks for their children to practice math. They taught their children math by themselves and this usually started before children attended elementary school. For instance, FF1 noted:

When my son was two or three years old, I began to teach him to read and count. When he was five years old, I taught him simple calculation. Later, I taught him more math following books. First, I explained the concepts and principles in the book; then I provided examples to show him how to use that knowledge to solve problems; finally, I asked him to do the problems in the book. I checked it after he finished and gave further explanation when necessary. Each day, we worked through one or two pages of the book.

For the parents who did not have time or were not good at math, they either hired a private math tutor or registered their children in after-school math classes. MF7 commented, "Both my husband and I do not have time and we are not good at math, so we sent our daughter to an after-school math class named Kumon where children work on math problems regularly."

Reasons behind the Academic Focus

When asked about their perspectives of involvement in their children's school subjects, participants provided two major reasons: (1) Chinese culture highly values education, and (2) their minority status. All participants indicated that they wanted their children to have higher education. No participant wanted their children to go to work right after graduation from high school. Actually, the majority of participants expected their children to attend top universities. FF1 said, "We Chinese people emphasize education and view academic achievement as a very important thing because it connects with children's future." Similarly, MF12 remarked,

We Chinese people have valued education since ancient time. When I was young, my parents told my brothers and me to study hard. I always obtained high marks while I was a student . . . I hope my children can go to a top university, so we spend a lot of time helping our children with academics.

FF7 has been in Canada for 13 years. He said,

We are minority. We have to work very hard and do better than the mainstream people. Our target university is Harvard University. In Canada, everyone can go to university if he or she really wants to. However, one can more easily find a good job with a degree from a prestigious university than a degree from an ordinary university. To ensure my child can go to a top university, academic achievement is most important.

Family 5 has been in Canada for three years. Neither the father nor the mother could find a decent job. They expected their daughter to go to a top university. The father said,

For new immigrants, it is very difficult to find a job and live a stable life. Although I obtained an MBA from a Canadian university, I have to do labour work. We hope she (his daughter) can go to a top university so that she can find a good job and have a stable life in the future. I tell our daughter to study hard in academics and we do our best to help her.

Supporting Extracurricular Activities

All participants reported that they sent their children to extracurricular activities in a wide range of areas including arts, drama, music, dance, chess, swimming, skating classes, etc. For instance, F1 family engaged their son in drawing, piano, and swimming classes at the time of interview. F9 family registered their daughter in drawing, piano, and dancing.

Whatever their financial conditions might be, all participating parents were willing to spend money for their children's extracurricular activities. MF2 said, "I am a university student; my husband is doing labour work. We do not have much money, but we spend as much as we can afford on extracurricular activities for our son without hesitation." The father added, "I will make an effort to make money to hire a private sport coach for my son to learn hockey, golf, and so on." Both parents from F6 family earned good salaries. They registered their sons in various sports activities. Their sons received a small group training each week and as well private lessons in tennis. The mother said, "Besides paying the small group training fee, my sons received private tennis training three times each week. It costs \$52 each hour. It is expensive but worthwhile. In the last eight months, he has made great progress."

Besides money, participants spent a great amount of time and energy on their children's

extracurricular activities. They selected and registered extracurricular activities for their children, transported them to different locations, and monitored their practice at home. MF10 commented, “We spend almost all our break time, both on weekdays and weekends, on our children’s academic and extracurricular activities. It is worthwhile for our children’s development. Chinese parents would like to do almost anything for their children’s development. That’s our Chinese culture.”

Although participants registered their children in different classes such as music, dancing, and painting, they did not want their children to choose these areas as their future careers. MF12 said, “I register my son in piano class. I do not have the intention to encourage him to become a pianist. I just hope he can learn a music instrument and get some sense of music.” MF3 said, “I do not want my daughter to choose art as her study major. It will not be easy for minority people to find a stable job in art.” In fact, participants tended to guide their children to seek professional degrees that have a clear link to future “safe” jobs, such as engineering, medicine, and law.

When asked about why they sent children to extracurricular activities, participants remarked that extracurricular activities were an important part of children’s education. FF1 said, “Attending various extracurricular activities can help him (son) find out what he really loves and what he is good at.” Others stated that these activities might foster children’s confidence and various interests. MF11 said, “There’s nothing more pleasing to a child than accomplishing something and doing well at a particular activity. My daughter likes to draw. When she finishes drawing, she likes to show us. We tell her she ‘did a great job.’ I posted her drawing on the wall. When my friends looked at and commented on her work, she was very proud of herself.”

In addition to sending children to various after-school programs, participants helped their children to learn from the community resources. They took children to visit libraries and museums, attend community concerts, and go to church on weekends. MF4 said, “During the weekend, I like to take my son to the public library. . . . He could read there the whole day. He enjoys reading very much.” Some parents mentioned that church was an educational resource for their children, which compensated for the limitation of school education in faith. It also helped them build family networks and share information and experience about parenting.

Participants reported that they took their children to travel on weekends and holidays. They remarked that travelling was important for children to learn what they couldn’t learn from school. For instance, FF4 took his children to different places during holidays. He remarked,

During the holidays, we took our children to travel each year. We tried to take them to different places, to experience different cultures and customs, and to meet different people. We have been to Boston, New York, Florida, California, Hawaii, Vancouver, and Montréal... My daughter wrote diary each day to record and reflect on what she experienced during the trip.

On weekends, participants took their children to a nearby farm visit, apple picking, or picnic. FF11 elaborated on a BBQ activity with several families:

During weekends or holidays, we usually encourage our daughter to go outside. In this

early May, we gathered with several Chinese families at a local park for a BBQ. It was a windy day, a great day to fly a kite. I brought a big kite and taught children about how to fly it. I educated them about the movement of air.

For those participants who still struggled with their finance, they could not afford to travel far away. However, they tried different ways to broaden their children's knowledge. MF5 noted,

Both my husband and I are doing labour work. We do not have much money to travel to other cities or countries, but we try our best to have our children to learn from the nature. We take our daughter to the countries. It is an excellent way for a child to learn about the world. Sometimes, we walk to the park for my daughter to listen to and observe the nature. She can smell the grass, listen to the birds, observe the falling leaves, and see new plants grow. Also, a duck pond with lots of different kinds of birds is a great opportunity for her to enjoy the outdoor and learn new things.

It is worth noting that while supporting children's participation in extracurricular activities, participants remarked that they tried to balance learning school subjects and extracurricular activities. FF12 said, "Extracurricular activity is necessary for children's interests and fun. However, there should be a balance between schoolwork and nonacademic activities. After all, academic achievement is the first important thing for school-age children." This participant's assertion represents the majority of Chinese parents' views on academic and nonacademic activities. Although they wanted their children to have balanced lives, academic achievement was prioritized over entertainment.

Fostering Basic Life Skills

Participants stated that they had begun to foster their children's social communication skills after living in Canada for a while. For instance, MF8 said,

Parents in China do not emphasize communication skills. When my sister and I were at school, like many Chinese parents, my parents viewed academics and honest character as most important. They did not foster our social communication skills. That is why I am still a shy person and feel uncomfortable to talk to new people today. I am very nervous when I have to talk in public, like doing a presentation in class. Since I came to Canada, I found that Canadian people are very good at communication. It is very important to communicate with friends, colleagues, and boss, and know how to express your idea to others. So, I pay attention to foster my daughter's social communication skills.

Participants remarked that they either hosted parties at home or took children to parties at friends' houses so that their children were able to meet and communicate with other children. For instance, FF1 remarked, "We often go to parties or hold parties during the weekend. In this way, our son can have a chance to meet people and talk and play with his friends."

Some participants encouraged their children to volunteer in the community. For instance, MF10 mentioned their daughter played piano for the church as a volunteer. MF11 stated that her daughter volunteered to help the librarian to set up chairs and tables and shelve books. MF5 brought their daughter to church on Sunday as a voluntary babysitter. These participants believed that volunteering in the community provided opportunity for children to

meet people, learn how to resolve conflicts, and understand social boundaries. Children could also gain appreciation of others and develop sensitivity to people's needs. MF5 said,

On Sunday, we bring our daughter to church where she can meet people of different ages and from different parts of China. She volunteers to look after younger children aged between two and three at church. My daughter is very shy. Through these activities, she has the chance to learn how to communicate with people.

In addition to fostering children's communication skills, participants also helped their children to develop their sense of responsibility through asking them to do some household work such as cooking, organizing their bedrooms, and mowing the lawn. For instance, FF9 said, "I ask my son to mow the lawn with me in summer and shovel snow in winter. It is important to foster a child's daily life skills." MF12, a university professor, taught her daughter how to cook. She remarked that it was necessary for a child to at least have some conception of doing housework. She commented,

Chinese parents focus too much on academic learning. Parents do not ask their children to do any housework. Recently there are many Chinese international students come to study in North America. These students are smart, but lack independence and self-management abilities. A large number of them do not know how to cook. . . . Their dormitory rooms are very messy. I know that their mothers looked after everything for them in China.

Providing Moral Education

Participating parents emphasized the importance of morality. When asked what kind of people they wanted their children to be, many parents stated that they expected their children to be successful persons so that they could honour the family and contribute to society. They explained that a successful person was imbued with elements of morality, academic achievement, good health, and broad knowledge and interests. Most participants viewed morality, such as honesty, respect for parents and teachers, and helpfulness to others as important as academic achievement. For instance, FF3 stated, "I hope each of my children will become a useful person who is independent, honest, nice, well-rounded, and valuable to the society." MF6 stated she often told her son that when others needed help, he should do his best to help.

Participants taught their children that family members should love each other. They believed that their children should love family members, respect parents and seniors, and take care of the seniors and the young. Later, they would extend the love to others outside of the home. Participants believed that morality does not come with birth, but rather it is acquired through education. FF3 stated, "Children need to be disciplined at an early age. Nobody is born with moral values and knowledge about how to behave." MF3 echoed her husband's view by telling a story about how she educated their son to be considerate for others:

Last summer, my family went to strawberry picking. At noon, we had a picnic. I prepared some fruits, bread, and three pieces of chicken. My son finished all three pieces of chicken without asking either of us [parents] for permission. I was not happy . . . [because] my son considered only himself. I told him that while parents have the responsibility to take care of him, he should love his parents and consider parents' needs

as well. He changed after that picnic. When his grandma came to visit us from China, he often served food to his grandma, his father, and me before himself.

Participants also educated their children to work hard. FF5 said, "I always told my daughter to work hard at school so that she can gain academic excellence. I told her that success comes through effort. I asked her to post the sign 'No sweat, no gain' on her bedroom wall as a daily reminder."

All participants required their children to learn Chinese. Some of them sent their children to take Chinese classes run by local Chinese churches or Chinese associations on weekend. Three families reported they organized a Chinese school themselves at home by working together with four other Chinese families. These seven families took turns to host the school and act as teachers. They often got in touch through phone calls or face-to-face meetings to "exchange ideas on running this Chinese school and educating children in the Canadian context" (MF4). Participants provided various reasons for having their children learn Chinese language such as developing children's brains as well as having more opportunities to find a good job, as China is becoming a big market. However, the common reason offered by all parents was to maintain their Chinese heritage. FF4 explained, "As a Chinese, my son should know and learn Chinese language and culture. His parents, grandparents, and relatives are Chinese. His root is in China. He should learn the essences of the Chinese cultural values, such as respecting parents and teachers, being honest and gaining academic achievement." MF12 expressed a similar view: "Being Chinese, I want my child to carry on Chinese cultural values. Besides, I want my child to learn Chinese language so that he can communicate with Chinese relatives and friends in China."

Conclusion and Discussion

All participants in this study held high educational expectations for their children. They all expected their children to attend universities. No family wanted their children to work right after finishing high school. Indeed, participants expected their children to attend top universities in North America. As a result, academic achievement was highly valued by participants. This is consistent with our finding from a previous study on the communication of Chinese immigrant parents with teachers (Jiang, et al., 2012). In that study, we found that children's academic achievement was the number one topic that all participants always asked about during parent-teacher conferences.

Outside school, participants spent a great amount of time helping their children in academics. Not only did they help their children with their school homework, but they also provided extra homework in subjects such as language art and math. They began to read books to their children at a young age and required them to read broadly in order to broaden their knowledge and enhance their comprehension ability. They tutored their children by themselves or hired private tutors to help them with math. These findings are in the agreement with Li's (2006) finding that Chinese immigrant parents especially attempted to foster their children's reading and math abilities. Huntsinger, Jose, Larson, Krieg, & Shaligram (2000) also noticed Chinese parents' intensive involvement in their children's math learning and suggested that such involvement might have significantly contributed to Chinese-American students' outstanding academic achievement in math.

Dyson (2001) and Zhou (2000) stated that Chinese parents place great emphasis on academic achievement as a means of acquiring personal advancement, high social status, wealth, and respect in the Chinese society and as a means of overcoming discrimination and gaining opportunities in North America. Such value on academics had its long historical origin and was reinforced by their immigrant status. Confucius stated, *Xue Er You Ze Shi*, which means that people who are good at study should become government officials. The long history of civil service examination for selecting candidates for government jobs in old China leads to Chinese people's valorization of academic achievements which promise social mobility and a better life. The situation remains the same in China today. Parents and schools share a common goal: to prepare children to pass a number of examinations from elementary to high schools, and finally to prepare them for the university entrance exam. If children could not pass the university entrance exam and missed the opportunity for higher education, they would have great difficulty finding a good job, thus making the whole family lose face. Such values were embedded in Chinese mentalities through generations. For Chinese parents who moved to Canada, these values still influence their ways of parenting (Chao, 2000).

As reflected in their interviews, participants considered themselves vulnerable minority in Canada and viewed education as the best way to overcome potential discrimination in the job market. Chao (2000) argued that as voluntary minorities who chose to come to this country, Asian-Americans are more willing to play by the rules of the host society and view education as a respected avenue to success. Kao (1995) indicated that Asian parents promote high levels of educational attainment for their children to compensate for the anticipated discrimination in the job market. Due to cultural differences, Asian-Americans see limitation in their career opportunities especially in politics and entertainments. Such perception, coupling with their existing value on education, lead to their over-reliance on education as a means for social mobility (Jiang et al., 2012).

Chinese immigrant parents often attach great importance to their cultural heritage and consider their mother tongue as a family cohesion and part of their identity (Slaughter-Defoe & Zhang, 2009). They want their children to maintain Chinese culture and value those characteristics featured in Chinese culture (Park & Chi, 1999). In our study, all participants remarked that they provided moral education to their children. They taught their children to love their family members, respect teachers, and help others. They wanted their children to remember their Chinese roots and carry on the essence of Chinese cultural values, such as respecting parents and teachers, being honest, and working hard to gain academic achievement. They sent their children to Chinese classes or teach their children Chinese by themselves.

This study reveals that instead of asking children to focus only on academic achievement as most parents do in China, participants also encouraged and supported their children's involvement in various extracurricular activities to foster children's basic life skills such as social communication and sense of responsibility. Participants attempted to broaden their children's knowledge through community involvement and travel. These parental behaviours are similar to what mainstream parents do. Gutman and McLoyd (2000) and Epstein (2001) reported that mainstream parents encourage their children to take part in extracurricular activities and utilize community resources such as libraries, museums, concerts, and plays to enhance their children's educational experiences. This finding

highlights the changes Chinese immigrant parents made in their parenting after moving from China to Canada. This type of adjustment was also reported by Hung (2017) who found that some Chinese immigrant families tried to filter traditional education concepts into a more flexible way of involvement.

The socioeconomic status of parents has influence on their involvement in their children's education (Benson & Martin, 2003; Inaba et al., 2005). In our study, although all participants had intention to provide their children with opportunity for extracurricular activities, the participants with a better financial situation were able to take their children to travel. In contrast, the participants who were struggling with their budgets could only bring their children to local communities. Not all participants reported to be able to offer their children with private lessons in sports on top of group lessons except for those parents with good salaries.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

This study, together with our previous study on parent involvement in school-based activities (Zhong & Zhou, 2011), demonstrates that Chinese immigrant parents shared the belief that their involvement would benefit their children's education. In other words, they did see their roles as beneficial and were motivated to get involved in their children's education. Although their involvement in school-based education were rare and passive (Zhong & Zhou, 2011), their home involvement was quite active and intense. They registered their children in extracurricular activities and required them to do extra homework. During the interviews, we rarely heard any description from our participants about what their children liked. Participants reported what they planned for their children without mentioning their children's consent at all. While their involvement in school-based activities usually took place with invitation from the teacher and school (Zhong & Zhou, 2011), their after-school involvement was much authoritative. Therefore, our findings portray a much more complex picture about the significance of invitation from others described in Walker et al.'s (2005) model.

As far as the factor of parent's perceived life context is concerned, their inadequate knowledge on English language and Canadian culture and their lack of time and energy due to labour work impeded involvement in their children's school-based education (Zhong & Zhou, 2011), as predicted in Walker et al.'s model (2005). However, these barriers did not stop parents from being actively involved in after-school education. Be they rich or poor, knowledgeable or not, busy or free, participants made great efforts to support their children's education after school even though their involvement formats may differ.

Our study demonstrates that in addition to the three factors portrayed in Walker et al.'s (2005) model, participants' Chinese cultural values and immigrant status play important roles in encouraging or discouraging parents' involvement in their children's education. We have reported how cultural values contributed to Chinese immigrant parents' low level of involvement in school-based education (Zhong & Zhou, 2011). Similarly, Cheung and Pomerantz (2011) stressed that most Chinese immigrant parents are accustomed to the traditional Chinese model of values, education, and involvement, which are contrary to the model found in Western education. Guo (2014) added that no matter which country Chinese immigrants choose to live in, Chinese parents would try their best to participate in children's education with the traditional Confucius education mode. Costigan and Koryzma (2011)

explained that absolute discipline, authority, morality, and harmonious family relationships are subtle influences of Confucianism on Chinese parents. Confucius stated, *Shi Tu Ru Fu Zi*, that is, the relationship of a master to his pupil is similar to that of a father to his son. This statement defines the authoritarian role of teachers in school. Therefore, Chinese immigrant parents tend to believe that it is not appropriate to question teachers and voice their concerns without teachers' invitations. In contrast, their after-school involvement was much more intensive even without children's invitation. *Zi Bu Jiao, Fu Zhi Guo* (It is father's fault if his son is not well disciplined). This statement represents Confucius philosophy in parenting. Chinese immigrants believed they had the right and responsibility to monitor their children's growth and help them plan for their future; they insisted that children should do what parents believe to be good for their children's future. They believed that attending a top university with excellent academic records was the best way for their children to obtain a good job. Thus, they were willing to spend time and money to help their children with after-school academic practices.

In the process of their adaption to the Canadian society, Chinese immigrant parents constantly learned the host culture and reflected upon their Chinese culture. They gradually realized that Canadian schools and society promote well-rounded education instead of focusing only on academics. The blended cultural values provide an interpretation for Chinese immigrant parents' involvement behaviours: providing extra homework to their children and as well taking them to nonacademic activities, such as sports, music, and dancing programs.

Therefore, a sociocultural dimension would be a great extension to Walker et al's psychological model of parental involvement when applied to Chinese immigrant parents' behaviours and perspectives towards their involvement in children's education. As previous researchers (Berry, 1997; Ward Bochner, & Furnham, 2001) indicated, Chinese immigrants' involvement in their children's after-school education is a result of the integration of their original cultural values with the host cultural values in parenting during the process of transition and adjustment to the new land. On one hand, they maintained their own traditional cultural values; on the other hand, they gradually adapted to the host culture.

Hands (2013) suggested that parents could be a good resource for schools to get feedback on students' academic and behavioral performance. This study draws a clear picture on Chinese immigrant parents' perspectives and behaviours towards parental involvement in their children's after-school education. Such information should be valuable for enhancing communication between schoolteachers and Chinese parents. Since Chinese parents highly value education and emphasize particularly on academic marks, teachers should prepare themselves to discuss students' academic performances with Chinese parents at the teacher-parent meetings. For the same reason, schoolteachers should anticipate that it is easier to engage Chinese parents in academic-oriented activities such as science clubs, academic competitions, and enriched subject programs rather than in nonacademic-focused events. Teachers can also prepare their classroom teaching accordingly since most Chinese children have extra curriculum in school subjects such as math and music. Further, in order to better engage Chinese immigrant parents as required by Ontario Ministry of Education, schools may consider hosting orientations for Chinese immigrant parents to understand Canadian

education systems and relevant values so that they can learn some background knowledge that is essential for dealing with children's education matters.

Of course, the conclusion and implication we drew from this study can't be generalized without caution since the study was conducted with a limited number of Chinese immigrant parents who have good education background in general. Further study about other Chinese parents with a variety of education background can add more information to the topic. In this study, we did not look into immigrant children's perspectives on their parents' demands for after-school activities. How do immigrant children think about their parents' involvement behaviours? What are the potential conflicts between Chinese immigrant parents and their children? These are some topics future research can investigate.

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Dr. George Zhou (gzhou@uwindsor.ca) is a full professor at the Faculty of Education, University of Windsor. He taught at the City University of New York before moving to Windsor. His research interests cover science education, teacher education, educational technology, parental involvement, comparative and international education.

Dr. Lan Zhong is an associate professor in Chongqing Normal University. Her research areas include teaching English as a second language, cultural context of education, and parental involvement.

Dr. Jie Zheng is a faculty member at East China Normal University. She received her PhD from McGill University and completed her postdoctoral research at the Faculty of Education, East China Normal University. Her research interests include the sociology of education, international education and development, youth, culture and education, and parental involvement in public education.