

Predictors of Parental Involvement in Immigrant Chinese American Families

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Abstract

Parental involvement (PI) relates to children's positive outcomes but few studies have examined factors of PI, particularly among immigrant families. The current study examines how contextual characteristics influence PI behaviors within Chinese immigrant families and potential mediating factors. Percentage of Asian students in schools and Parents' report of education, English and Chinese proficiency, employment status, and income were analyzed as predictors of PI behaviors (i.e., parental involvement- home (PIH), parental involvement- School (PIS), parent-teacher contact (PTC)), based on parent and teacher report. Parental beliefs such as parent and teacher roles, perception of impact and ability, and endorsement of school were examined as potential mediators between the predictors and PI behaviors. Based on prior research, the control variables included: child gender, age, and achievement in math and reading. Results indicated negative correlations for PTC to employment; PIH to child math skills, parent English and Chinese proficiency and percentage of Asian school composition; PIS to math, English and reading skills, age, and employment. Future studies need to examine both direct effects of predictors/contextual factors and beliefs as potential mediators, in order to better understand PI behaviors.

Introduction

Parental Involvement (PI) correlates to positive academic achievement outcomes (Barnard, 2004). PI can take form in both school- (e.g. volunteering) and home- (e.g. checking homework) based activities.

Chinese Americans are one of the largest growing immigrant populations in the U.S. (Ji & Koblinsky, 2009). The current study examines potential predictors, parent and family characteristics, for parental behaviors and parental beliefs as potential mediators.

Hypotheses included: (1) language proficiency will positively predict type of PI and parent endorsement of school, (2) employment will negatively predict school based PI, (3) percentage of Asian students will negatively predict school-based PI and positively predict teacher role, (4) parent education will positively predict impact, ability and parent-teacher contact

Methods

- Participants
 - 258 Chinese Immigrant Families
 - Children
 - Age (M = 6.89, SD = .75)
 - Gender (n = 51.9, f = 48.1)
 - Non US born (n = 61) and US born (n = 197)
 - Parents
 - Mother reports (81.8%) and Father reports (18.2%)
 - Per Capita Income (M = \$11,608.68, SD = \$8,309.17)
 - Employment (fulltime = 54.3%, net fulltime = 31.8%)
 - Education (M = 13.28, SD = 2.49)
 - Teacher Reports
- Procedure
 - Both parents and teachers completed the questionnaire during child's 1st or 2nd school year.
- Measures
 - Demographics: Parent education level, English and Chinese proficiency, employment and income.
 - Parent-Teacher Involvement Questionnaire (Kohl, Lengua & Mcmahon, 2000) adapted to include: parent perception of impact and ability, parent and teacher role.
 - Parent Beliefs: Parent Endorsement of School, Impact, Ability, Parent Role and Teacher Role.
 - Parent Behaviors: Home-Based Involvement, School-Based Involvement, and Parent-Teacher Contact

Results

Table 1
Zero-order correlations for parent beliefs and behaviors

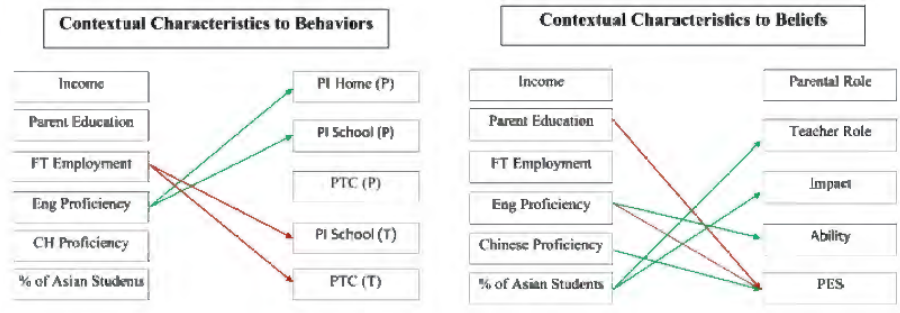
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. PIH										
2. PIS	.16*									
3. PTC	.07	.28*								
4. Income	-.14	-.28*	-.28*							
5. Parent Education	.18*	.14	.14	.21*						
6. FT Employment	-.18*	-.18*	-.18*	-.17*	-.17*					
7. Eng Proficiency	.11	.08*	.08*	.09	.09	.09				
8. CH Proficiency	.09**	.09**	.09**	.10*	.10*	.10*	.21*			
9. % Asian Students	-.14	-.14	-.14	-.14	-.14	-.14	-.14	.02		
10. PIS-PTC	-.18	-.18**	-.18**	-.18**	-.18**	-.18**	-.18**	-.18**	-.18**	

Note: PIH = parental involvement at home, PIS = parental involvement at school, PTC = parent-teacher contact, FT = full-time employment, ** p < .01, * p < .05, ** p < .001

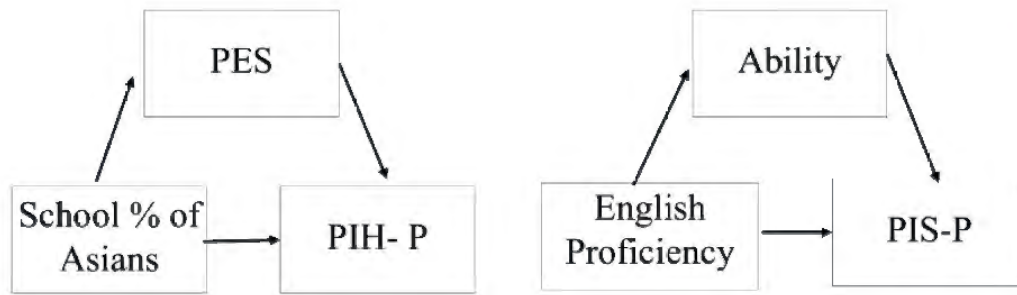
Table 2
Correlations for contextual characteristics to behaviors and beliefs

	Age	Math Skills	Math Beliefs	Eng Prof	Chinese Proficiency	Suburban	Employment	Income	% of AS
PIH	-.07	.19	-.11	.02	-.09	.15	-.09	.09*	.06
PIS	.07	.13	.04	.09	-.09	.16	-.09**	.09*	.07
PTC	-.01	.02	.03	.02	.03	.04	-.09**	.02	.01
Income	-.11	-.02	.04	.08	.01	-.11	.04	.06	.04
Parent Education	.15*	.05	.04	-.03	.06	.04	.01	.03*	.04
FT Employment	-.02	-.19	-.19	-.17	-.17	-.17	.03*	.03	.03**
Eng Proficiency	.01	.09**	.08	.08*	.07	-.02	.04	.06*	.06
CH Proficiency	.02	.02*	.02	.02	.04	.04	.04	.02**	.02
% Asian Students	-.02	-.02	-.02	-.02	-.02	.01	.01	.01*	.01
PIS-PTC	-.02	.01	.01	.01	.01	.01	.01	.01	.01

Note: PIS = school-based involvement, PTC = parent-teacher contact, FT = full-time employment, Eng Prof = English proficiency, CH Prof = Chinese proficiency, % of AS = percentage of Asian students, * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001



Mediations



Discussion

Several parent and school characteristics predicted parental involvement behaviors. When parents had full time employment, teachers reported them as having less involvement at school and parent-teacher contact. This most likely is due to time constraints. English proficiency positively predicted parental reports of home- and school-based involvement.

Several parent and school characteristics predicted parental beliefs. Parents with higher education were more likely to have lower parent endorsement of school. When parents had higher English proficiency, they were more likely to believe they were able to help their children and had higher levels parent endorsement of school. Chinese proficient parents had higher parent endorsement of school. Higher levels of percentage of Asian students positively predicted teacher role and parental perception of impact.

Findings are consistent with Chinese cultural beliefs of education. The U.S. will continue to have an increasing population of immigrant families. Identifying PI predictors for home- and school-based participation will afford interventions for assisting immigrant parents in their efforts to support their children's education.

Future research needs to examine language proficiency as an important factor for which guides parental involvement and should also include parental expectation of success as a potential belief mediator. Previous research shows parent expectations of child academic success to have positive correlations to PI (Feuerstein, 2000).

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