

Examination of Chinese Immigrant Parents' Beliefs About Children's Social Development Through Play: A Mixed Methods Explanatory Sequential Study

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Project Description.

This dissertation consists of two complementary studies. The purpose of the first study is to extend the validity of measures included in the current study for use with Chinese immigrant children and families. Using the reliable measure validated from the first study, the second study follows the steps of a mixed methods explanatory sequential study. The second study seeks to provide a deeper understanding of Head Start Chinese immigrant parents' beliefs about children's social-emotional development, the value of play, and implications for Chinese children's social competencies.

Research Questions.

Study 1. The Validity of PIPPS¹, PLBS, and VIA Measures.

Research Question 1: Are reliable and valid dimensions of children's peer play competence, parents' play beliefs, and acculturation evident in a Chinese immigrant sample?

Research Question 2: Do Chinese immigrant parents and teachers (serving in the Head Start program) observe Chinese-heritage children congruently or incongruently?

Study 2. The Mixed Methods Explanatory Sequential Study.

Quantitative Phase

Research Question 1: Do parents' beliefs and levels of acculturation combine to form distinct profiles for this specific cultural group of parents?

Research Question 2: Are there significant differences between these profiles with respect to parent and child characteristics?

Research Question 3: What are the relations between these patterns and children's social emotional outcomes?

Research Question 4: Do parental levels of acculturation moderate the relations between parental beliefs and children's social emotional outcomes?

Qualitative Phase

Research Question 1: What are Chinese immigrant parents' perceptions of children's prosocial and antisocial behaviors within the context of play?

Research Question 2: How do Chinese immigrant parents' levels of acculturation relate to their views on children's social behaviors and peer play?

Research Question 3: What are Chinese immigrant parents' views about the preschool learning environment in the US?

Mixed Methods Phase

Research Question 1: What is a more nuanced interpretation of Chinese immigrant parental perceptions of children's social behaviors based on distinctive profiles found in the Quantitative Phase?

Research Question 2: What do the integrated findings of this study suggest to Head Start and early education programs serving Chinese immigrant parents and children?

Sample.

Quantitative Sample: Families of 213 preschool children enrolled in a Head Start and early childhood education programs located in a Northeast urban city participated in this study. Respondents who self-identified as Chinese immigrants and as primary caregivers participated in the study.

¹ PIPPS: Penn Interactive Peer Play Scale
 PPBS: Parent Play Beliefs Scale
 VIA: Vancouver Index of Acculturation

Qualitative Sample: A total of 34 Chinese immigrant parents participated in the study.

Methods.

Study 1: The full sample was randomly split into two mutually exclusive subsamples. One sample was used for exploratory factor analysis, and the other was used for confirmatory factor analysis.

Study 2.

Quantitative Phase

In order to determine profiles of parents' beliefs and acculturation among Chinese immigrant parents, a multistage hierarchical cluster analysis with replications and relocation was conducted. After the most meaningful profiles for each group were determined, parent profiles were inspected with the respect to child gender, parent gender, parent education level, and primary language spoken at home to examine if any significant differences existed among the parent profiles. Then, controlling for demographic factors, path analysis was conducted to determine the relations between parents' play beliefs, parents' level of acculturation, and children's social competencies.

Qualitative Phase

Once focus group discussions were completed and transcribed, the data were imported into NVivo version 12 for coding and analysis. The process was iterative, as each focus group was conducted and transcribed. The qualitative analysis was guided by the ethnographic approach, as well as basic elements of qualitative data analysis.

Mixed Methods Phase

Upon completing the qualitative data analysis guided by multiple ethnographic analysis and representation methods, the quantitative and qualitative data, together, were interpreted and reported.

Progress Update.

Both Study 1 and Study 2 are finished. At the CCEEPRC 2019 Annual meeting, findings from both studies will be presented and discussed. From Study 1, all three measures (PIPPS, PPBS, and VIA) were validated. From Study 2, the person-centered, multi-stage, hierarchical cluster analyses determined the four-profile solution as the best solution based on the multiple criteria.

Five major themes were extracted from the qualitative data. The presentation will also include results from the final stage (Mixed Methods Phase – Integration Stage).

Implications for policy/practice

This study, based on the integration of both quantitative and qualitative approaches, has the potential to: (1) narrow the cultural gaps in understanding that may exist between Head Start programs and teachers and Chinese immigrant parents, (2) promote increased understanding of what Chinese parents believe about their children's social behaviors, (3) provide suggestions for more extensive discussions of children's play into parent education efforts, and (4) provide recommendations that could inform more culturally and contextually relevant interventions for improving Head Start programs that serve Chinese immigrant families. Such information will be useful for educators to support children, especially immigrant children, to develop implicit understandings about the normative cultural practices in their host countries, and to help staff respectfully empower children to navigate the differences across their primary settings.

Implications for research

Future studies will be able to use three measures that have been validated in this study for use with Chinese immigrant preschool children and families. Moreover, as the current study applied a mixed methods approach, it will allow researchers to significantly expand the limited knowledge base related to Chinese immigrant children's social development.

For more information:

Two studies were presented at SRCDC 2019. The first study will be submitted for the publication in May and the second study will be submitted for the publication during summer.

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