

## **ABSTRACT**

Title of Dissertation: KOREAN AMERICAN MOTHERS' PERCEPTION:  
INVESTIGATING THE ROLE OF CULTURAL  
CAPITAL THEORY AND PARENT INVOLVEMENT

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The strongest and most consistent predictors of parent involvement at school and at home are the specific school programs and teacher practices that encourage parent involvement at school and guide parents in how to help their children at home (Dauber & Epstein, 1995). Joyce Epstein (2004) developed a framework for defining six different types of parent involvement. This framework assists educators in developing school and family partnership programs. "Schools have a vested interest in becoming true learning communities. They are now accountable for all students' learning," she writes. "To learn at high levels, all students need the guidance and support of their teachers, families, and others in the community." School improvement no longer rests solely on the shoulders of the principal, but rather takes the collaborative effort of the entire school community to increase achievement levels of all students. A major stakeholder of that community is the parents who want what is in the best interest of their children.

This mixed-methods study examined the perceptions of Korean American mothers regarding their own parent involvement practices and investigated the role of Bourdieu's Cultural Capital Theory using the conceptual framework of Epstein's Parent

Involvement Framework. Data for this study were collected by way of survey responses and interview probes with focus groups of six Korean American mothers. In the quantitative phase of the study, 81 mothers from a single school district in the mid-Atlantic United States were identified.

The results from the quantitative phase of the study found that English proficiency had a significant impact on whether Korean American mothers engaged in parent involvement activities. Examination of the focus group responses revealed that the Korean American mothers identified English and time as major factors in determining in what types of parent involvement activities they engaged. Parent involvement is essential for promoting successful school improvement. It plays a pivotal part in school reform. Further research is recommended with larger samples of participants in rural and urban settings. In addition, future research should examine the role of fathers in parent involvement.

**KOREAN AMERICAN MOTHERS' PERCEPTION: INVESTIGATING  
THE ROLE OF CULTURAL CAPITAL THEORY AND  
PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

by

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## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents: my father, Mike Il-Pae Kim, who always valued the importance of an education so much that he would immigrate to an unknown world, oceans away, in order to give his children the education that he always wanted and knew that once achieved it could never be taken away; and my mother, Yong-Ho Choi, who inspires me every day with her dedication to her family and children and who demonstrates on a daily basis that with sacrifice, comes rewards. Last, but not least, this dissertation is dedicated to my best friend and husband, CS Kim and our two boys, Nathan and Noah, whose love has sustained me. For the past six years, the three of you have encouraged me and kept me going. Boys, I always asked you to work hard and not settle for less, and I couldn't do less-I had to walk the talk. And now I have with God's love and grace. I love you! This is for you!

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables .....	viii
List of Figures .....	x
<b>CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
Legislation Encouraging Parent Involvement .....	2
Parental Involvement in Minority Communities .....	3
Korean American Demographic Trends .....	4
Statement of the Problem.....	6
Purpose of the Study.....	9
Conceptual Framework.....	10
Epstein's Six Types of Parent Involvement.....	10
Bourdieu's Cultural Capital Theory.....	11
Research Questions.....	15
Quantitative Questions.....	16
Focus Group Discussion .....	19
Significance of the Study.....	20
Research Design .....	21
Definitions .....	22
Limitations/Delimitation of the Study .....	23
Organization of the Study .....	24
<b>CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW.....</b>	<b>25</b>
Parent Involvement.....	25
Defining Parental Involvement .....	25
Significance of Parental Involvement .....	27
Epstein's Framework for Parent Involvement.....	28
Bourdieu's Cultural Capital Theory.....	31
Parents' Migration Status and Social Capital.....	37
Family Socioeconomic Status and Social Capital.....	38
Parents' English Fluency and Social Capital .....	39
Parents' Education and Social Capital .....	40
Racial and Ethnic Minorities and Parent Involvement .....	41
Asian American Parent Involvement.....	43
Korean American Parent Involvement .....	47
Factors Affecting Korean American Parent Involvement.....	51
Summary .....	51
<b>CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>53</b>
Research Rationale and Approach.....	54
Pilot Parent and School Survey (PASS) Translation.....	56
Pilot Participants .....	58
Pilot Setting.....	59
Pilot Instruments .....	59



Pilot Procedures .....	62
Pilot Research Design and Analysis .....	62
Phase I: Administering the (PASS) to KA Parents.....	64
Participants.....	64
Setting .....	65
Independent Variable .....	67
Dependent Variable.....	68
Instruments.....	68
Survey/Data Collection Procedures .....	69
Research Design and Analysis .....	70
Phase II: Focus Group Interviews with Six Parents .....	70
Focus Group Interview Participants.....	71
Focus Group Interview Procedures.....	71
Qualitative Data Analysis .....	72
Validity and Trustworthiness.....	73
Summary .....	73
CHAPTER 4    FINDINGS .....	75
Introduction.....	75
Translation of PASS to PASS-K and the Pilot Study.....	77
Procedures.....	79
Data Collection .....	81
Survey Reliability .....	85
Correlation Coefficients.....	90
Research Questions and Statistical Hypotheses .....	92
Research Question 1.....	92
Hypothesis 1.....	92
Research Question 2.....	93
Hypothesis 2.....	93
Research Question3.....	94
Hypothesis 3.....	94
Research Question 4.....	95
Hypothesis 4.....	95
Research Question 5.....	96
Hypothesis 5.....	96
Research Question 6.....	97
Hypothesis 6.....	97
Additional Analysis .....	98
Barriers.....	98
Fathers and Mothers.....	99
English and Korean .....	100
Overview of Qualitative Design Selection of Interview	
Participants .....	102
Research Questions .....	104
Focus Group Questions .....	105
Focus Group Coding System .....	106

Qualitative Data Analysis .....	107
Mothers' Background.....	107
Mothers' Perceptions about Their Parent Involvement Practices (Epstein) .....	109
Focus Group Themes .....	111
Mothers' Perception about Barriers to Parent Involvement (Bourdieu).....	122
Additional Themes from the Discussion.....	124
Summary .....	128
 CHAPTER 5      SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	129
Research Questions.....	130
Summary of Quantitative Survey Findings .....	131
Additional Quantitative Analysis .....	138
Analysis of Focus Group Findings .....	140
Conclusions Based on Quantitative and Qualitative Results.....	146
Recommendations for Practice .....	148
Recommendations for Further Research .....	152
Conclusion .....	155
 Appendix A      Institutional Review Board Permission.....	157
Appendix B      MCPS Written Consent (Email from Ms. Loeb) .....	160
Appendix C      Letters to Principals.....	162
Appendix D      Recruitment Letter and Consent Form.....	165
Appendix E      Recruitment Letter and Consent Form in Korean .....	167
Appendix F      PASS Survey .....	169
Appendix G      PASS Survey in Korean.....	173
Appendix H      PASS Survey in Back Translation .....	177
Appendix I      Focus Group Discussion Questions .....	183
Appendix J      FBI Linguist .....	186
Appendix K      The Interagency Language Roundtable Scale .....	189
References .....	193

## List of Tables

Table 1	PASS Items and Their Correspondence to Epstein’s and Bourdieu’s Construct.....	61
Table 2	Student Demographics for CES.....	66
Table 3	Student Demographics for SMES.....	67
Table 4	Student Demographics for WES.....	67
Table 5	Cultural Capital and Parent Involvement Variables .....	69
Table 6	Results of the Pilot Survey of Ten Korean American mothers .....	78
Table 7	Demographic Characteristics of 97 Parents Completing PASS survey .....	83
Table 8	Cronbach Alphas for Epstein’s Six Types of Parent Involvement and Bourdieu’s Cultural Capital Theory (Barriers).....	88
Table 9	Correlational Relationships Between Demographic Variables and Outcome Measures for the Mothers Only.....	90
Table 10	Correlational Relationships Between Demographic Variables and Parenting.....	92
Table 11	Correlational Relationships Between Demographic Variables and Communicating .....	94
Table 12	Correlational Relationships Between Demographic Variables and Volunteering .....	95
Table 13	Correlational Relationships Between Demographic Variables and Learning at Home .....	96
Table 14	Correlational Relationships Between Demographic Variables and Decision-Making .....	97
Table 15	Correlational Relationships Between Demographic Variables and Collaborating with the Community .....	98
Table 16	T-Test Comparison: Mean Differences in Major Outcome Scales Between Mothers and Fathers .....	100

Table 17	T-Test Comparison: Mean Differences in Major Outcome Scales Between PASS and PASS-K.....	102
Table 18	Coding System.....	106
Table 19	Demographic Characteristics of Participating Mothers.....	109
Table 20	Focus Group Themes.....	110

## List of Figures

Figure 1	Bourdieu’s Cultural Capital Theory Model.....	13
Figure 2	Bourdieu’s Cultural Capital Theory Model and Epstein’s Parental Involvement Framework Overlap.....	15
Figure 3	Overlapping Spheres of Influence Model (Epstein 2002) .....	29

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The issue of parental involvement in schools has become an increasingly important topic among professional educators, researchers and politicians with influence in school funding structures (Epstein & Jansorn, 2004a; Fan, 2001). While public schools face a wide range of problems, lack of parent involvement is one that continues to challenge many schools (Bosher, Funk, & Holsworth, 2001). Research on the effects of parental involvement has shown a consistent, positive relationship between parents' engagement in their children's education and student outcomes (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Studies have also shown that parental involvement is associated with academic achievement as well as student outcomes such as lower dropout and truancy rates (Epstein, 2011).

Commitment to parent involvement is supported by 30 years of research, including an analysis of over 100 studies throughout the United States, which found that the ways in which parents are involved do matter (Fan & Chen, 2001; Jeynes, 2003; Kohl et al., 2000; Lee & Bowen, 2006). Successful parental involvement benefits not only students, but also parents and teachers (Pena, 2000). Parents who are involved in their children's schools often develop a better understanding of school curricula, programs, and activities. Schools gain advantages in that parents share valuable human and cultural resources by providing information about their children and volunteering to support school programs and other efforts (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; Lee & Bowen, 2006). In addition, parental involvement helps school personnel to understand parents' viewpoints, and thus, increase their awareness of the needs of students and their families

beyond stereotypical assumptions (Pena, 2000; Sohn, 2007). Finally, students who benefit from a combination of three influences, support from parents, support from teachers, and feeling connected to their school, have higher grades than students who report lower levels of support (Henderson & Mapp, 2007).

### **Legislation Encouraging Parent Involvement**

In the 1960s, federal legislation began to encourage parent involvement in schools. Passage of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965* (Wikipedia.org) was one of the first legislative acts linking parent involvement to education. Recognizing parents as full educational partners, the recent *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB, 2002) emphasized collaboration between schools and families in support of their children's educational success. Specifically, the Title I policy of NCLB (2002) targets schools with large populations of students from low-income families, and presents specific guidelines on how schools can maximize active parental involvement in their students' education. On February 17, 2009, President Barack Obama signed into law the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009* (ARRA), historic legislation designed to stimulate the economy, support job creation, and invest in critical sectors, including education (US DOE, 2009). President Obama stated, "It's time to stop just talking about education reform and start actually doing it. It's time to make education America's national mission."

Parental involvement is a key component of every Title I program, and Title I, Part A ARRA funds were set aside for schools to use for a range of activities designed to build the capacity of parents of Title I students and school staff to work together to improve student academic achievement (US DOE, 2009). With the guidelines set by the

federal government under NCLB and AARA initiatives, the focus has shifted to state and local districts to develop policies that encourage parental involvement. Currently, laws exist at the federal and state level that provide all parents the right to be involved and engaged in their children's schools. Both research and recent laws governing parental involvement have sparked a sense of urgency on the part of many educational practitioners, researchers, and policymakers from around the country to focus on family engagement as a critical component of whole-school systemic reform.

### **Parental Involvement in Minority Communities**

Though there is far less research specific to minority families and the issue of parent involvement, the research that does exist shows that there is a positive relationship between minority parent involvement and children's academic achievement (Hornby, 2011). Differences in social economic status, ethnicity and gender may influence the degree to which parents are involved in schools. Onwughalu (2011) studied the issue of parent involvement among African American populations and reported great gains in minority student academic achievement as a result of parent involvement both at home and at school. Similarly, Zoppi (2006) studied the issue of parent involvement and impact on attendance and achievement in Latino communities. Her research suggests that the role of the family is significant in positively influencing the school performance of children. A key finding within this research indicates that parents who are involved in school activities are more likely to have children who perform well academically.

There is also considerable evidence that parental involvement leads to improvements in student achievement, improved school attendance, and reduced dropout rates. Studies show Latino students have the aspiration and desire to succeed (Zoppi,



2006). Nonetheless, minority parent involvement has been found to be lower than that of European American parents (U.S. DOE, 2001). Past research on minority parent engagement was based upon deficit models which focused on the lack of parent engagement within these communities, rather than identifying and building upon their strengths (Brantlinger, 2003; Lareau, 2003; Lareau & Horvat, 1999). Therefore, it is necessary to investigate parent engagement in a comprehensive way by focusing on models that encourage all groups to be more engaged in schools.

### **Korean American Demographic Trends**

While getting all parents to become involved has been a challenge for many school administrators, engaging Korean American parents has been especially difficult. Studies examining the effects of Korean American parental involvement on school performance report inconsistent results, depending on the types of parental involvement measured (Chao & Tseng, 2002). Studies using the National Educational Longitudinal Study from 1988 to the present indicate that certain types of parental involvement, such as discussions about school, helping with homework, and school participation were unrelated or negatively related with Korean American students' academic achievement (Chao & Tseng, 2002).

Sy (2006) argues that research and practices focusing only on a narrow definition of parent involvement such as volunteering at school or participating in PTA functions may not be culturally sensitive approaches to supporting the home-school connection (Sy, 2006). Turney and Kao (2009) used data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten Cohort (ECLS-K) to examine race and immigrant differences in barriers to parental involvement at school. Their research indicated that parental participation was

associated with higher test scores among elementary school children. In their study, minority immigrant parents, compared to native-born parents, reported more barriers to participation and are subsequently less likely to be involved at school. Among immigrant parents, time spent in the United States and English language ability were positively associated with involvement but these associations differed by race. Cultural barriers to involvement served as a source of disadvantage for immigrant parents and their children (Turney & Kao, 2009). Findings from these studies suggest that Korean American parental involvement needs to be understood within an inclusive model that addresses all aspects of parent engagement: home, school, and the community (Sy et al., 2007).

According to the 2010 Census, there are approximately 1.7 million people of Korean descent residing in the United States, making it the country with the second largest Korean population living outside Korea (after the People's Republic of China). The ten states with the largest estimated Korean American populations are California (452,000; 1.2%), New York (141,000, 0.7%), New Jersey (94,000, 1.1%), Virginia (71,000, 0.9%), Texas (68,000, 0.3%), Washington (62,400, 0.9%), Illinois (61,500, 0.5%), Georgia (52,500, 0.5%), Maryland (49,000, 0.8%), and Pennsylvania (41,000, 0.3%). Hawaii is the state with the highest concentration of Korean Americans, at 1.8%, or 23,200 people. The two metropolitan areas with the highest Korean American populations are the Greater Los Angeles Combined Statistical Area (334,329) and the Greater New York Combined Statistical Area (218,764). The Baltimore-Washington Metropolitan Area ranks third, with approximately 93,000 Korean Americans (U. S Census, 2009).

Korean immigrants made up 2.7% of all documented immigrants in 2007 (Terrazaz, 2009). Many of them have immigrated to the United States seeking better educational opportunities for their children (Abelmann & Lie, 1995). While they come seeking the “American Dream,” many Korean families have experienced the same stressors as other immigrant families, such as discrimination, poverty, mental health issues and the challenges of adjusting to a predominantly Caucasian culture (Li, 2006). With the large influx of families from Korea, and the familial interest in education within this population, it is crucial that schools are able to partner with them in order to provide for the education of the Korean American students that enter the school systems in the United States. To develop a more comprehensive understanding of Korean American parental involvement, it is important to understand their unique social and cultural contexts, including education background, migration status, English proficiency, familiarity with the American educational system, socioeconomic backgrounds, and social networks. It is also important to for policymakers and educators to understand the impact of this cultural context on Korean American parental involvement practices (Sy, 2006; Turney & Kao, 2009).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Despite efforts to encourage parents to be engaged in K-12 schools, educators and researchers continue to note a lack of parent involvement in schools today (Turk, 2008). Getting parents involved in schools has been challenging but engaging Korean American parents has been especially difficult (Chao & Tseng, 2002). Korean-American families express uncertainty about their places in the educational system, and what they can do to help their children succeed (Buttery & Anderson, 1999). Many Korean-American

students' parents have limited educational experiences, making enriching their child's education a daunting task (Turk, 2008). Statistics reveal an urgent need for schools to respond to the changes in the demographics of student populations by finding better ways to encourage parental involvement such as developing more effective ways to work with culturally and linguistically diverse families (Grant & Ray, 2012).

Increasing numbers of culturally and linguistically diverse children are entering U.S. schools and the teachers in the United States are working in far more heterogeneous classrooms than ever before; meanwhile, the teaching workforce has remained relatively homogeneous (Seidl & Friend, 2002). While Korean Americans represent one of the fastest growing Asian groups in American schools, there is very little research focused on the Korean population. Existing studies about Koreans in K-12 education settings focus on the roles of teachers (Lee & Manning, 2001). For example, Yang and McMullen (2003) examined the relationship between Anglo-American teachers and Korean parents and concluded that teachers could communicate more effectively with their Korean students' parents by employing cultural sensitivity in order to provide appropriate education to classrooms of children who are increasingly diverse both linguistically and culturally. While there are several studies on Asian American parent involvement, there is little research on Korean American parental roles in education. Therefore, it is important to study Korean American parents' cultural capital in order to understand their parent engagement behaviors in a comprehensive way: in their homes, schools, and the community.

This study starts with the premise that both Korean American parents and educators need to make a sincere effort to understand the nature of the US school system

as an institution and to recognize the unique cultural capital that Korean American parents apply when supporting students in and out of school. It is important that both school staff and parents employ communicative strategies and acquire fundamental knowledge for building effective relationships. Instead of emphasizing the role of teachers, this study is particularly focused on the mothers' perspectives because in Korean families, mothers are usually responsible for the children's education. Cho (2007) studied the way in which Korean mothers helped their children with homework. Similarly, Farver and her colleagues (Farver and Shin, 2000) studied Korean mothers and the impact that acculturation had on their parent involvement.

Cultural capital for parents is related to the educational system involved (Grenfell & James, 1998), such as attitudes gained from experience, connections to educational objects (i.e., books, computers), connections to education-related institutions (i.e., schools, libraries, universities). Therefore, cultural capital is a function of the family's habitus and the field of the school system in which the family operates (Lee & Bowen, 2006). As stated by Lee and Bowen (2006, p. 198) "...cultural capital is the advantage gained by middle-class, educated European American parents from knowing, preferring, and experiencing a lifestyle congruent with the culture that is dominant in American schools." This study focused on the demographic indicators that commonly serve to differentiate those parents with higher levels of Cultural Capital in the academic setting from those with lower levels. In an effort to understand how demographic constructs such as financial status, education level of the parents, years in the United States and English fluency contribute to parent involvement of Korean American parents, this study attempted to explore Korean American mothers' perceptions about parent involvement and analyze

their experiences through the lens of Epstein's parent involvement model (2001) and Bourdieu's Cultural Capital Theory (1977).

### **Purpose of the Study**

This study was intended to examine Korean American mothers' perceptions about parent involvement and its ramifications within the context of two frameworks commonly used in studies related to parent involvement: Epstein's parent involvement model (2001) and Bourdieu's Cultural Capital Theory (1977). This work explored the Korean American mothers' views and perceptions about their involvement and experiences, as well as the relationship among the Cultural Capital factors, such as level of education, language competence, years in the United States and family income (Lee & Bowen, 2006). Their interaction with the six types of parental engagement constructs as established by Epstein was also explored.

While there are large numbers of studies on parent engagement, there is a lack of literature on immigrant families and in particular Korean American parental roles. Parent involvement in school is beneficial for parents, children and teachers because of the interactions that take place between all three groups (Henderson & Mapp, 2007). Parents can serve as a support system by reinforcing the learning that occurs in the classroom and emphasizing the importance of school (Carlisle et al., 2005). Research has consistently suggested a positive association between parental involvement and students' academic achievement, and emotional development (Fan & Chen, 2001; Jeynes, 2003). This study provides additional insight into Korean American mothers' involvement in their children's education.

## **Conceptual Framework**

This study explored the multidimensional nature of parental involvement and its ramifications within the context of Epstein's conceptual model (1997, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2011) and Bourdieu's Cultural Capital Theory (1973, 1983, 1986) by sharing the Korean American parents' perceptions about their parent involvement through survey data analysis and focus group discussion. Although the utility of Epstein's conceptual model has been widely recognized (Barnard, 2004; McBride et al. 2002), it is not a theoretical model in that it does not explicitly propose the nature of specific relationships among the six constructs, nor between those constructs and other variables. However, Bourdieu's (1983) Cultural Capital Theory (CCT) and Social Capital Theory (SCP), specifically the concepts of *field*, *habitus*, and *cultural capital* (CC), offer a theoretical context as a basis for hypothesizing about those relationships (Ringenberg, 2009).

### **Epstein's Six Types of Parent Involvement**

The framework of six types of involvement grew from research, field studies with practicing educators and families, and emerging policies. The types of involvement first identified in the elementary grades became clearer with data from middle and high schools (Epstein, 2011). Epstein's model outlines the following six types of involvement within a school-family partnership program:

Type 1: Parenting - Help all families establish home environments to support children as students.

Type 2: Communicating - Design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications about school programs.

Type 3: Volunteering - Recruit and organize parent help and support.

Type 4: Learning at Home - Provide information and ideas to families about how to help students at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions, and planning.

Type 5: Decision Making - Include parents in school decisions, developing parent leaders and representatives.

Type 6: Collaborating with the Community - Identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development.

Epstein (2011) focuses on multiple types of involvement rather than just school involvement and although it is assumed, the model does not explain the relationship of these types of involvement to parents' demographic or psychological characteristics, which are important predictors of parent involvement, nor to children's academic outcomes. Epstein's framework identifies six types of parental behaviors, and has evolved from many studies and many years of work by educators and families in elementary, middle, and high schools. The framework allows schools to develop more comprehensive programs of school, family and community partnership.

### **Bourdieu's Cultural Capital Theory**

Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction (1983) has been highly influential in studies about parental involvement, and has generated a great deal of literature, both theoretical and empirical. Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron first used the term in "Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction." He extended the idea of capital to categories such as social capital, cultural capital, financial capital, and symbolic capital. For Bourdieu, each individual occupies a position in a multidimensional *social space*; he



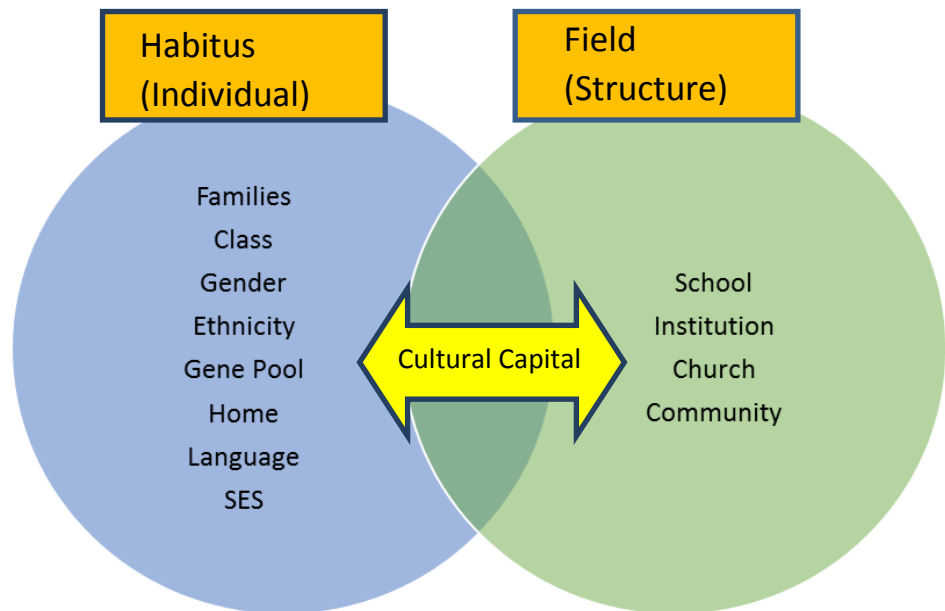
or she is not defined only by social class membership, but by every single kind of capital he or she can articulate through social relations. Such capital includes the value of social networks, which Bourdieu showed could be used to produce or reproduce inequality (Wikipedia, 2014). According to Lee and Bowen (2006), the greater the individual cultural capital, the greater the advantage of obtaining additional capital to benefit the family. In contrast, individuals with less cultural capital experience barriers to institutional resources (Lareau, 2001). Cultural capital represents the power to promote child academic achievement (Grenfell & James, 1998)

According to Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction, children from middle class families are advantaged in gaining educational credentials due to their possession of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1983). In order to assess this theory, Sullivan (2001) has developed a broad operationalization of the concept of cultural capital (CC), and she has surveyed students' and their parents' cultural capital. She contends that Bourdieu's work must be seen in the context both of the debate on class inequalities in educational attainment and of broader questions of class reproduction in advanced capitalist societies. The Cultural Capital Theory is concerned with the link between original class membership and ultimate class membership, and how this link is mediated by the education system (Sullivan, 2012).

Bourdieu (1983) suggests that a lack of cultural capital adversely shapes the attitudes and outlooks of youth who come from disadvantaged backgrounds. This resulting negative disposition towards school, otherwise known as an individual's habitus, ultimately affects educational achievement and attainment. Although habitus plays an

important mediating role in the relationship between cultural capital and academic outcomes, it has been woefully ignored in the literature (Gaddis, 2012).

Bourdieu's (1983) Cultural Capital Theory (CCT), specifically the concepts of field (school), habitus (Home and Community), and cultural capital (CC), offers a theoretical context as a basis for hypothesizing about those relationships (see Figure 1). The field, in this case the school, refers to the environment and the norms that are expected and valued within that environment. Habitus includes the individual's values, the lens through which the individual sees the world, and one's consequent actions. The degree of fit between the field and habitus determines the level of CC the parent has within that particular field (school). The more the habitus differs from the field, the greater chance there is for misunderstanding, suspicion, and a devaluing of the individual. Such individuals will feel less welcome and, consequently, be less involved (Ringenberg, 2009).

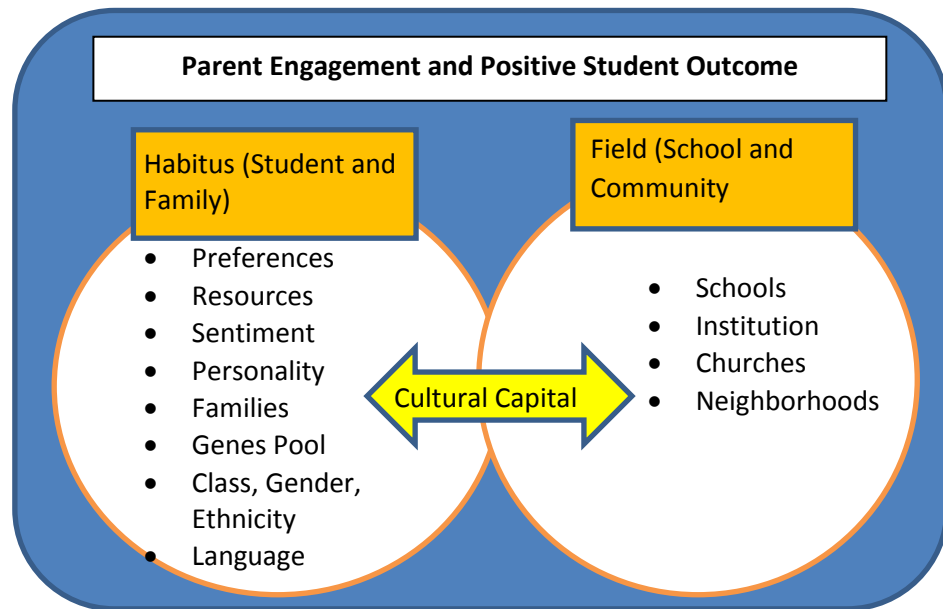


*Figure 1.* Bourdieu's cultural capital theory model

Epstein's parental involvement model and Bourdieu's Cultural Capital Theory offer different conceptual benefits and therefore both will be applied for different purposes in this study. In Figure 2, the researcher attempted to combine Epstein's Overlapping Spheres of Influence Model and Bourdieu's Cultural Capital Theory in order to demonstrate the relationship between the two models and use it as a conceptual model for this study. Epstein's model provides the foundational framework of the structure of parental involvement. It also provides the structure for data collection and analysis in this study. The Parent And School Survey (PASS) (Ringenberg, Funk, Mullen, Wilford, & Kramer, 2005), a 30-item questionnaire that reflects the six-construct structure discovered and developed by Epstein, was selected for this study to gather demographic data and information about mother's level of parental involvement. The PASS generates a score for each parental involvement construct and these scores will be used as dependent variables. Each construct was evaluated for its relationship to various demographics, allowing for the development of profiles of different groups of Korean American parents and how they are involved in helping their children succeed in school.

The relationships between each of these constructs and various demographics were evaluated in light of CCT (Bourdieu, 1983). This theory, as adapted to elementary educational settings by Lee and Bowens (2006) and Ringenberg (2009), makes two broad predictions. First, it is predicted that parents with greater Cultural Capital (CC) are expected to also exhibit higher levels of parental involvement than parents who have less CC. According to Ringenberg (2009), this is expected to be particularly pronounced in parental involvement constructs that require stronger relationships with school personnel such as volunteering. Second, Lee and Bowen's (2006, p. 212) theoretical expectations

and research predict that lower CC groups tend to select parental involvement activities that are “the least beneficial in relation to student outcomes.” Therefore, in this study, CC is operationally defined according to Lee and Bowen’s (2006) criteria as family income, parental education, number of years in the United States and language competence.



*Figure 2.* Bourdieu’s cultural capital theory model and Epstein’s parental involvement framework overlap

### **Research Questions**

Several research questions guided this study. Epstein (2004) designed a survey and interview questions based on the six types of parent involvement. The survey information and interview protocols used for this study were modified from Epstein's work by Ringenberg and translated in Korean to fit the needs of the participants in the study. They are discussed in detail in the instrumentation section of this chapter. A mixed-methods methodology was used to share the Korean American mothers’ views and judgment about parent involvement and its ramifications within the context of Epstein’s

parent involvement model and Bourdieu's Cultural Capital Theory. This approach was fitting for this study because the strategic collection of quantitative and qualitative data provides a more comprehensive picture of the phenomena being studied, emphasizing both outcomes and process (McMillan, 2004). Therefore, there are two sets of research questions. Quantitative data was collected through the use of the survey and qualitative questions will be addressed in the focus group discussion.

### **Quantitative Questions**

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between mothers' score on PARENTING and their scores on the: EDUCATION LEVEL, YEARS IN THE US, LEVEL OF FAMILY INCOME, and LEVEL OF ENGLISH COMPETENCE?

- What is the relationship between mothers' score on PARENTING scale and their score on the EDUCATION LEVEL?
- What is the relationship between mothers' score on PARENTING scale and their score on the YEARS IN THE US?
- What is the relationship between mothers' score on PARENTING scale and their score on the LEVEL OF FAMILY INCOME?
- What is the relationship between mothers' score on PARENTING scale and their score on the LEVEL OF ENGLISH COMPETENCE?

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between mothers' score on COMMUNICATING and their scores on the: EDUCATION LEVEL, YEARS IN THE US, LEVEL OF FAMILY INCOME, and LEVEL OF ENGLISH COMPETENCE?

- What is the relationship between mothers' score on COMMUNICATING scale and their score on the EDUCATION LEVEL?

- What is the relationship between mothers' score on COMMUNICATING scale and their score on the YEARS IN THE US?
- What is the relationship between mothers' score on COMMUNICATING scale and their score on the LEVEL OF FAMILY INCOME?
- What is the relationship between mothers' score on COMMUNICATING scale and their score on the LEVEL OF ENGLISH COMPETENCE?

Research Question 3: What is the relationship between mothers' score on VOLUNTEERING and their scores on the: EDUCATION LEVEL, YEARS IN THE US, LEVEL OF FAMILY INCOME, and LEVEL OF ENGLISH COMPETENCE?

- What is the relationship between mothers' score on VOLUNTEERING scale and their score on the EDUCATION LEVEL?
- What is the relationship between mothers' score on VOLUNTEERING scale and their score on the YEARS IN THE US?
- What is the relationship between mothers' score on VOLUNTEERING scale and their score on the LEVEL OF FAMILY INCOME?
- What is the relationship between mothers' score on VOLUNTEERING scale and their score on the LEVEL OF ENGLISH COMPETENCE?

Research Question 4: What is the relationship between mothers' score on LEARNING AT HOME and their scores on the: EDUCATION LEVEL, YEARS IN THE US, LEVEL OF FAMILY INCOME, and LEVEL OF ENGLISH COMPETENCE?

- What is the relationship between mothers' score on LEARNING AT HOME scale and their score on the EDUCATION LEVEL?

- What is the relationship between mothers' score on LEARNING AT HOME scale and their score on the YEARS IN THE US?
- What is the relationship between mothers' score on LEARNING AT HOME scale and their score on the LEVEL OF FAMILY INCOME?
- What is the relationship between mothers' score on LEARNING AT HOME scale and their score on the LEVEL OF ENGLISH COMPETENCE?

Research Question 5: What is the relationship between mothers' score on DECISION-MAKING and their scores on the: EDUCATION LEVEL, YEARS IN THE US, LEVEL OF FAMILY INCOME, and LEVEL OF ENGLISH COMPETENCE?

- What is the relationship between mothers' score on DECISION-MAKING scale and their score on the EDUCATION LEVEL?
- What is the relationship between mothers' score on DECISION-MAKING scale and their score on the YEARS IN THE US?
- What is the relationship between mothers' score on DECISION-MAKING scale and their score on the LEVEL OF FAMILY INCOME?
- What is the relationship between mothers' score on DECISION-MAKING scale and their score on the LEVEL OF ENGLISH COMPETENCE?

Research Question 6: What is the relationship between mothers' score on COLLABORATING WITH THE COMMUNITY and their scores on the: EDUCATION LEVEL, YEARS IN THE US, LEVEL OF FAMILY INCOME, and LEVEL OF ENGLISH COMPETENCE?

- What is the relationship between mothers' score on COLLABORATING WITH THE COMMUNITY scale and their score on the EDUCATION LEVEL?
- What is the relationship between mothers' score on COLLABORATING WITH THE COMMUNITY scale and their score on the YEARS IN THE US?
- What is the relationship between mothers' score on COLLABORATING WITH THE COMMUNITY scale and their score on the LEVEL OF FAMILY INCOME?
- What is the relationship between mothers' score on COLLABORATING WITH THE COMMUNITY scale and their score on the LEVEL OF ENGLISH COMPETENCE?

### **Focus Group Discussion**

Specific questions were asked during the focus group discussion in order to clarify responses mothers provided in the survey and to address any additional questions that were not addressed in the survey. For example, while the PASS survey questions asked parents whether they felt comfortable or uncomfortable coming to visit the principal or teacher, it neglected to ask the parents why they felt that way. In order to get a better sense of the issue, it was necessary to ask the following targeted questions to share the mothers' stories:

- How much effort do you put into helping your child/ren at home
- Do you meet in person with your child's teacher and/or administrator?
- Do you volunteer at your child's school?



- How do you help your child engage in educational activities outside the home?
- How often do you visit your child's school?
- Have you discussed your child's learning/school with other family members, friends, or other parents?
- What are some reasons that make it easier/harder to be involved in your child's education?

By doing so, the researcher was able to delve deeper in order to fully describe Korean American mothers' parent involvement practices.

### **Significance of the Study**

This work was intended to fill a gap in the literature regarding Cultural Capital Theory as it impacts Korean American parent engagement as defined by Epstein's parent involvement constructs. A large body of research demonstrates that parenting and parent involvement play a major role in children's academic achievement and socio-emotional development (Fan & Chen, 2001; Jeynes, 2005). However, a limited amount of literature exists that explores the parent involvement process of Korean American parents. Parents, as major stakeholders in schools, are a resource that is underutilized or untapped. There is currently very little information about the parenting practices of Korean American parents. Few have examined the factors that may contribute to differences in the way that Asian parents are raising their children and becoming involved in children's formal education. However, research continues to support that when schools, parents, and communities work together, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer, and like school more (Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

This study also contributes to the research on Cultural Capital Theory as it relates to Korean American parent engagement and impact on schools and student achievement. This study attempts to provide in-depth insights into Korean American mothers' perceptions of their role in their children's education. This study could inform school leaders and teachers on best ways to engage Korean American parents in order to support student achievement.

### **Research Design**

The researcher utilized Ringenberg's (2009) Parent and School Survey (PASS) on parent involvement translated into Korean to gather quantitative data about Korean American mothers' personal data and data regarding their parent involvement practices. The research questions established accurate measures in Korean that determine parental involvement, and identified the relationship among the Cultural Capital factors, such as years in the US, level of education, language competence, and family income (Lee & Bowen, 2006) The survey also enabled the researcher to link parents' responses to the six types of parental engagement constructs as established by Epstein. Through focus group discussions, the researcher gathered qualitative data to share the stories of Korean American mothers and elaborate on their responses that were noted on the survey responses. The PASS survey and a followup focus group discussion were used to address the research questions. In this way, the researcher aimed to generate a rich understanding of the Korean American mothers' participation in schools and in their children's education. The focus group discussions were conducted in both English and Korean as appropriate and recorded so that the researcher could revisit the conversation as needed.

The recording was transcribed in English for the purposes of this study and will be destroyed at a later date.

### **Definitions**

*Collaborating with Community:* Identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student (Epstein, 2011).

*Communicating:* Design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to school communications about school programs (Epstein, 2011).

*Cultural Capital:* Knowledge, habits, and tastes learned by individuals in an early age and connected with their social class.

*Cultural Capital Theory:* Concept of cultural capital refers to the collection of symbolic elements such as skills, tastes, posture, clothing, mannerisms, material belongings, credentials, etc. that one acquires through being part of a particular social class (Bourdieu, 1983).

*Culture:* The values, traditions, social and political relationships, and worldview created, shared and transformed by a group of people bound together by a common history, geography, location, language, social class, and/or religion.

*Decision-Making:* Reflects how much parents advocate for their children's interests and influence the school environment (Epstein, 2011).

*Ethnic Identity:* Linked to a sense of belonging to the ethnic groups and culture and connected to the beliefs, language, and religious practices from the native culture (Zea et al, 2003).

*Field:* Refers to the environment and the norms that are expected and valued within that environment (Ringenberg, 2009)

*Habitus:* Includes the individual's values, the lens through which the individual sees the world, and one's consequent actions (Ringenberg, 2009)

*Learning at Home:* Provide information and ideas to families about how to help students at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions, and planning (Epstein, 2011).

*Parent Involvement:* The participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities (NCLB, 2004).

*Parenting:* Refers to parents' actions that foster the children's learning and cognitive development, not necessarily tied to school (Epstein, 2011).

*Volunteering:* Includes parental attendance in a variety of school events ranging in scope from classroom activities to school-wide events (Epstein, 2011).

### **Limitations**

According to Heppner and Heppner (2004), "all research methods have limitations" (p.341); therefore the researcher in this study was interested in the particular context and population of this study. In order to address the limitations, the researcher used a mixed-methods approach to gain insight into not just what but how and why Korean American mothers are engaged in parent involvement practices.

1. The findings of this study are limited to one county in a mid-Atlantic state.
2. The findings of this study are limited to conditions in the elementary schools where the study was conducted.

3. The findings of the study are limited to the Korean American parents who participated in the study.
4. The findings are limited to parents who identified themselves as being involved in their child's school and participated in the focus group interview.
5. The study is bound only to those parent engagement practices detailed in the conceptual framework. Therefore, this study offers only Korean American parents' perspective on Epstein's six parent constructs and Bourdieu's cultural capital factors.

### **Organization of the Study**

The first chapter presents an introduction to the study, its significance, and the statement of the problem. The definition of important terms, and research methods with limitation and delimitations are also included in this chapter. The second chapter is devoted to a discussion of the major themes associated with the literature relevant to this study. The third chapter explains the methodology used in this study. In the fourth chapter, the researcher presents the results of the data analysis. In the fifth chapter, the conclusions and recommendation for further study are presented.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter reviewed the literature pertaining to parental involvement in general, Asian American parental involvement and, more specifically, Korean American parental involvement. Korean American parental involvement was studied using the conceptual framework of Bourdieu's Cultural Capital Theory and in the context of Joyce Epstein's framework for parental involvement. First, parental involvement was defined based on the review of previous research. In addition, research findings on dimensions of parental involvement, as well as relationships between parental involvement and students' educational outcomes, were introduced. Second, Bourdieu's Cultural Capital Theory as well as Epstein's definition of parent involvement were introduced as a guiding conceptual framework for the current research. Next, the experiences of minority families in U.S. education were discussed, along with research findings pertaining to Asian American parental involvement. Finally, factors contributing to Korean American parental involvement were also examined.

#### **Parent Involvement**

##### **Defining Parental Involvement**

The term parental involvement has been defined in various ways. Most definitions include a wide range of activities that describe parents' investment of resources to facilitate their child's positive development (Fan & Chen, 2001; Jeynes, 2003; Kohl et al., 2000; Lee & Bowen, 2006). In general, parental involvement refers to parents' participation in their children's school education by communicating with school

personnel, attending school activities, and cultivating behaviors that promote educational success (Hill & Tyson, 2009).

While earlier research has primarily defined parental involvement as parents' participation in school-based activities (Morrow, 1989), more recent studies (Epstein, 2011; Sohn, 2007; Sy, 2007) have extended its focus to outside of school, embracing a variety of parental involvement practices in the home and the community. For example, Epstein (2002) defines parental involvement as a variety of ways through which parents can support their children's educational success in collaboration with school and community.

Parental involvement is a multidimensional concept (Epstein & Sanders, 2002; Jeynes, 2007; Kohl et al., 2000). The literature review suggests that there are three major approaches to conceptualize different aspects of parental involvement. Grolnick and Slowiaczek (1994) grouped parental involvement into three categories according to how parents activate their resources to promote children's schooling and motivation: behavioral involvement, cognitive/intellectual involvement, and personal involvement. According to Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995, 1997), the forms of parental involvement are greatly influenced by (a) parents' construction of parenting roles in their child's life, (b) parents' sense of efficacy to facilitate a child's educational success, and (c) general expectations and occasions for parental involvement that are ensured by the child and the child's school (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997). Lastly, Epstein (1995, 2000, 2011) developed six types of involvement across schools, home, and community. The typology includes parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, collaboration with the community, and decision-making. Epstein's taxonomy is

unique in that it emphasizes the overlapping scopes of school, home, and community (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001).

### **Significance of Parental Involvement**

For the last two decades, research evidence has consistently suggested that parents' involvement in education makes important contributions to a child's academic achievement, as well as social and emotional development (Fan & Chen, 2001; Jeynes, 2003). Greater parental involvement is associated with students' improved academic achievement, higher self-esteem, and positive attitudes toward learning, better peer relations, and lower drop-out rates (Fan & Chen, 2001; Greenwood & Hickman, 1991; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Hill et al., 2004; Jeynes, 2005).

In particular, several studies using meta-analysis confirmed that parental involvement has overall positive effects on students' academic achievement (Fan & Chen, 2001; Jeynes, 2005). After examining 25 studies, Fan and Chen (2001) found the weak correlation coefficient of .25 between academic achievement and parental involvement, which was defined as parent-child communication, parental home supervision, educational expectations for children, and school contact and participation. The results indicate a weak effect but positive relations between parental involvement and students' academic achievement. The parents' academic aspirations had the strongest relationship with students' academic achievements ( $r = .40$ ). In addition, students' general grade point average (GPA) was most highly correlated with parental involvement when compared to other achievement indicators, such as test scores on reading or math (Fan & Chen, 2001).



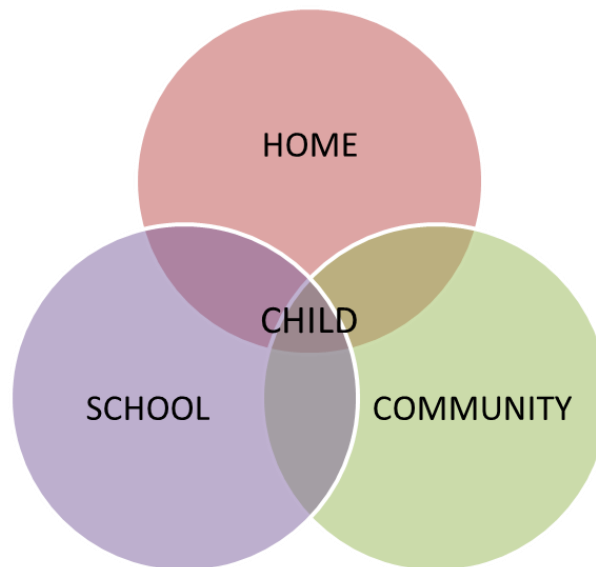
Jeynes (2005) conducted a meta-analysis, reviewing 41 qualitative studies on parental involvement in urban elementary school settings. In this study, parental involvement was assessed at both the general and specific levels. Specific dimensions of parental involvement include parental assistance with homework, parental academic expectations, attending school meetings, and supportive parenting styles. The results suggested that, on the whole, parental involvement has positive relationships with urban elementary school students' academic achievement.

Researchers have also pointed out that parental involvement is beneficial not only for students, but also for parents and teachers (Desimone, Finn-Stevenson, & Henrich, 2000; Epstein, 2002; Pena, 2000). Increased involvement in education provides parents with greater opportunities to develop understanding of their children's schooling as well as how to collaborate with school personnel (Desimone et al., 2000; Mapp, 2003). Parental involvement can be an important means for fostering home-school collaboration. When parents become more engaged in their children's education, home and school are more likely to increase mutual communications (Pena, 2001). Moreover, with increased parental involvement, teachers tend to feel more comfortable asking parents to participate in a variety of school-related programs (Desimone et al., 2000).

### **Epstein's Framework for Parent Involvement**

Perhaps the most comprehensive definition of parent involvement is Epstein's (1995) construct of parental involvement. Epstein's framework is described as a social organization construct that includes three major spheres of overlapping influence; these are the family, school, and community (Jordan, Orozco, & Averett, 2002). The degree that each sphere overlaps affects the overall development and learning of the child. The

framework proposes that children occupy a center place among these three spheres and are affected by the connections between them as noted in Figure 3.



*Figure 3: Overlapping Spheres of Influence Model (Epstein, 2002)*

The relationship among these spheres is dynamic and their interaction can be either positive or negative, depending on the commonalities among each of these three components (Epstein, 2001). Thus, if the backgrounds and cultural practices within Korean families and the community are significantly different from the school, then tensions will hinder any type of collaboration (Epstein & Sanders, 2002).

As a result of her extensive work on the effects of family and school partnerships , Epstein (2001) found that optimal collaboration takes place when all three areas collaborate by overlapping all spheres that indicate that "schools and families operate as true partners" (p. 27). However, if the overlaps between the three systems only take place unevenly or sporadically, such as once-a-year parent conferences, then the partnerships will be superficial and meaningless (Epstein, 2001).

Epstein lists six types of involvement; they are comprehensive in their scope and measure complex interactions between schools, families, and communities (Epstein & Sanders, 2002): Parenting, Volunteering, Communicating, Learning at Home, Decision-Making, and Collaborating with the Community.

As involvement moves from Type 1 to Type 6, the emphasis begins to shift away from a one-way communication towards multifaceted partnerships among parents, schools, and others in the community (Barge & Loges, 2003). Parents and teachers become involved as partners rather than two entities competing for influence in the lives of students. Each type of involvement includes many differing practices of partnership and presents particular challenges that must be met to involve all families and need redefinitions of some basic principles of involvement (Epstein, 2011). The types also lead to differing results for students, parents, teaching practices, and school climate. Therefore, it is incumbent on schools to select which practices will help achieve the goals they set for students' success and for creating a climate of partnership.

While others have offered varying models of parental involvement, Epstein's is the only one that has undergone extensive review by the research community (Jordan, Orozco, & Averett, 2001). Her involvement model is based on an organizational method where influence overlaps between school and home. With the focus on the partnership between the community, parents, and the school, Epstein's model provides well defined and useful guidelines for this research and is discussed in detail below.

To summarize, Epstein (2011) states that it is important for schools to understand how the six types of involvement can be used to develop comprehensive programs for school, family, and community partnerships. It is necessary to redefine parent

involvement with new designs for school, family and community partnerships that address student learning. It is imperative that we meet the challenges that have prevented many families from becoming involved in their children's educations.

Although the utility of Epstein's conceptual model has been widely recognized (Barnard, 2004; McBride et al., 2002), it is not a theoretical model in that it does not explicitly propose the nature of specific relationships among the six constructs, nor between those constructs and other variables. However, Bourdieu's (1983) Cultural Capital Theory (CCT) and Social Capital Theory (SCT), specifically the concepts of *field*, *habitus*, and *cultural capital* (CC), offer a theoretical context as a basis for hypothesizing about those relationships.

### **Bourdieu's Cultural Capital Theory**

Bourdieu's (1983) Cultural Capital Theory (CCT), notably the concepts of *field*, *habitus*, and *cultural capital* (CC), offers a theoretical context as a basis for hypothesizing about the relationships between student, parent, and the school. The *field*, in this case the school, refers to the environment and the norms that are expected and valued within that environment. *Habitus* includes the individual's values, the lens through which the individual sees the world, and one's consequent actions. The degree of fit between the *field* and *habitus* determines the level of CC the parent has within that particular *field* (school). The more the *habitus* differs from the *field*, the greater chance there is for misunderstanding, suspicion, and a devaluing of the individual. Such individuals will feel less welcome and, consequently, be less involved (Ringenberg, 2009). The majority of educational research on social capital has been guided by the pioneering works of Bourdieu (1983) and Coleman (1988). Many scholars since have used Bourdieu's

conceptual model as a basis of their study (Grenfell & James, 1998; Lareau & Horvat, 1999; Ringenber, 2009).

Bourdieu emphasizes inequalities in the amounts of capital individuals have or are able to obtain. One source of inequality in access to relationships and resources of interest to Bourdieu is the fit between an individual's culture and the culture of the larger society or the institutions in that society. He uses the terms habitus and field to describe this fit. "Habitus" is "a system of dispositions" that results from social training and past experience (Brubaker, 2004; Lareau, 2001). It is "the disposition to act in a certain way; to grasp experience in a certain way, to think in a certain way" (Grenfell & James, 1998, p. 15). A "field" is a "structured system of social relations at a micro and macro level" (Grenfell & James, 1998; Lareau & Horvat, 1999). When an individual's habitus is consistent with the field in which he or she is operating, that is, when the field is familiar to and understood by the individual, he or she enjoys a social advantage or greater cultural capital (Grenfell & James, 1998; Lareau & Horvat, 1999).

Cultural capital for parents related to the educational system exists in three forms: personal dispositions, attitudes, and knowledge gained from the experience; connections to education-related objects (e.g., books, computers, academic credentials), and connections to education-related institutions (e.g., schools, universities, libraries) (Grenfell & James, 1998). Because cultural capital involves a collection of "cultural dispositions" (Brubaker, 2004, p. 41), it may be difficult to distinguish it from habitus (Robbins, 2000). However, habitus can be thought of as a characteristic (or set of characteristics) pertaining to an individual. Although cultural capital is possessed by an individual or a family, it is more a function of the concordance of the educational aspects

of the family's habitus with the values and practices of the educational system with which the family interacts.

The greater an individual's cultural capital, the greater his or her advantage in procuring additional capital that will benefit family members. Some individuals have inherited cultural capital in the process of "habitus" formation in their families, which makes them more successful players than others in the education system (Grenfell & James, 1998). In contrast, individuals with less cultural capital encounter constraints that result in unequal access to institutional resources (Lareau, 2001). Just as economic capital represents the power to purchase products, cultural capital for parents in terms of their children's education represents the power to promote their children's academic enhancement (Grenfell & James, 1998).

Parents with different backgrounds may display different types of involvement because they differ in regard to habitus (i.e., predispositions toward certain types of behaviors, attitudes, or perceptions). Variations in habitus in relation to parent involvement may derive from differences in financial resources, educational knowledge, and experiences with and confidence in the educational system (Grenfell & James, 1998). On the basis of their habitus, parents from non-dominant groups may exhibit less parent involvement at school. Parents with low levels of education, for example, may be less involved at school because they feel less confident about communicating with school staff owing to a lack of knowledge of the school system, a lack of familiarity with educational jargon, or their own negative educational experiences. Parents from different cultures may value home educational involvement more than involvement at school. While these variations in habitus may result in some parents having less cultural capital

vis-a-vis the school, the same parents may still be actively involved at home in one or more ways consistent with the values and practices of the school system. According to Grenfell and James (1998), parents across social classes highly value education. For example, one study showed that working-class mothers valued education for their children in spite of their own negative experiences and misgivings about the educational system (Grenfell & James, 1998). Finding variations in the types of involvement exhibited by parents from different social backgrounds would lend support to Bourdieu's claim that families vary in terms of educational habitus (Ringenberg, 2009).

In relation to the parent involvement meso-system, cultural capital is the advantage gained by middle-class, educated European American parents from knowing, preferring, and experiencing a lifestyle congruent with the culture that is dominant in most American schools. Advantage accrues from enacting the types of involvement most valued by the school or most strongly associated with achievement. Advantage also accrues from having family and work situations that permit involvement at the school at the times and in the ways most valued by the school. In contrast, some working-class or low-income parents may be less able to visit the school for conferences, volunteering, or other activities as a result of inflexible work schedules, lack of child care, or lack of transportation. Hispanic/Latina parents may face the additional barrier of unavailability of translation services (Hill & Taylor, 2004; Pena, 2000).

The disadvantages that may accrue to parents whose culture or lifestyle differs from that of the dominant culture take a number of forms. For example, parents who are less able to visit the school are less likely to gain the social, informational, and material rewards gained by parents who enact the school involvement roles valued and delineated

by school staff. In addition, parents who are not able to be present at the school may be viewed as uncaring, an attitude that may have negative ramifications for their children. According to Hill and Craft (2003), for example, teachers perceive that parents involved at the school value education, and this perception is associated with higher teacher ratings of students' academic achievement. It is likely that the opposite conclusion is drawn for some parents who are unable to volunteer or attend events at the school. Finding that the types of involvement exhibited by parents from dominant groups are more strongly associated with children's academic achievement than those preferred by or accessible to other parents would indicate that the former possess more cultural capital as a result of congruence between the educational "field" and their own "habitus" (Ringenberg, 2009).

Differences in cultural capital may reduce the ability of parents to obtain social capital from the school even when they are able to come to the school. According to Lareau (2001): "When the habitus of the individual meshes with the habitus of the broader culture, it is often invisible" (p. 84). In contrast, when the habitus of parents visiting the school differs from that of the broader culture, or field in Bourdieu's terminology, they may feel less comfortable and welcome than other parents, perceive prejudicial treatment or attitudes on the part of school staff, or feel less able to tap the potential of the school's social and cultural material resources. In addition, the effects of parents' educational involvement at home may differ among groups. First, restricted access to the educational and social capital in schools may ultimately reduce the quality, or impact on achievement, of parents' home educational involvement. Parents who are unable to visit the school for events and activities, for example, may not obtain information about how best to help with homework, what school-related topics to discuss



with children, and the importance and methods of conveying high educational expectations. Second, factors associated with lower socioeconomic status may also reduce the effects of home involvement strategies. Reduced financial resources may limit families' ability to provide educational materials and opportunities and may influence parents' educational expectations for their children (De Civita et al., 2004). Low educational attainment may limit parents' ability to help their children with homework and their familiarity with educational resources available in the community.

Because parents from non-dominant groups possess less cultural capital, they may need to make more extensive efforts to ensure their children's academic success. Cultural capital "should be understood in terms of its practical consequences" (Grenfell & James, 1998, p. 22) and thus finding that involvement among parents from non-dominant groups has a reduced impact on their children's academic achievement would support Bourdieu's theory that non-dominant groups possess less cultural capital.

On the basis of Bourdieu's theory suggesting that different social groups differ in terms of educational habitus and cultural/social capital (Lareau, 2001), the researcher sought to determine whether the levels and effects on achievement of six types of parent involvement differed among Korean American families of different social status. Socioeconomic status, years in the United States and parental educational attainment were proxies for social status. Different levels of parent involvement may reflect differences in parents' habitus for educational involvement, while different effects of parent involvement may reflect differences in levels of cultural capital. Lareau (2001) hypothesized that parents from different social backgrounds would exhibit different types of parent involvement and that the types of parent involvement exhibited by European

American parents, parents not living in poverty, and more educated parents who were fluent in English would be more strongly associated with children's academic achievement. She also expected that low-income, working and less educated parents would benefit less from their involvement efforts than more highly educated parents, English-speaking parents and parents not living in poverty.

Many researchers have built their study on the Cultural Capital Theory because of Bourdieu's suggesting that different social groups differ in terms of educational habitus and cultural capital (Lareau, 2001). No matter their background, Grenfell and James (1998) found that working class mothers valued education for their children in spite of their own experiences in education. According to McNeal (1999), the cultural capital possessed by affluent European American families magnifies the effects of parents' involvement on their children's achievement at school. Jeynes (2003) presented evidence that parent involvement benefited African Americans and Hispanic/Latinos more than it did Asian Americans.

### **Parents' Migration Status and Cultural Capital**

Kao and Rutherford (2007) examined the relationship between parents' ethnic minority and migration status and their social capital, measured by the size of parents' social ties to other parents in schools and the levels of parental school involvement. Research findings suggest that Asian and Hispanic first-generation immigrant parents showed lower levels in both forms of social capital, as compared to native-born White parents. Kao and Rutherford (2007) argued that ethnic minority immigrant parents are more likely to have difficulties in forming relationships with other parents and engaging themselves in school due to their limited English proficiency and unfamiliarity with the

American mainstream culture. This may disadvantage first-generation Asian and Hispanic immigrant parents in their access to education-related social capital (Kao & Rutherford, 2007).

### **Family Socioeconomic Status and Cultural Capital**

Researchers have also suggested that racial and class differences influence the construction of parental social networks, and thus, may reproduce “inequality” in parental social capital and parental involvement (Bourdieu, 1983; Lin, 2001; Stanton-Salazar, 1997). Hovart, Weninger, and Lareau (2003), in their ethnographic research, compared the nature of social networks across parents from different social classes. The authors found that middle-class parents had larger social networks in their children’s schools, and used their social ties far more often to intervene in schools than did their working-class counterparts. In addition, middle-class parents were able to actively include key professionals such as teachers in their social networks, whereas working-class parents’ social ties were primarily limited to their extended families. With greater access to professionals, middle-class parents were more likely to become effectively involved in their children’s schooling and to serve as successful advocates for their children (Hovart, Weninger & Lareau, 2003).

Family background can also result in contextual differences that may affect achievement and motivation. For example, “middle class families are more likely to raise their children to participate in structured activities that develop talents, and, unlike working class and poor children, these children become much better at interacting with and negotiating societal institutions” (Williams, Shanks, & Destin, 2009, p. 29). Low-income families instead had high expectations and performance beliefs that did not

correlate well with their children's actual school performance. Alexander et al. (1994) suggested that the parents' abilities to form accurate beliefs and expectations regarding their children's performance are essential in structuring the home and educational environment so that they can excel in post-schooling endeavors.

### **Parents' English Fluency and Cultural Capital**

Schools with a high English Language Learner (ELL) population face the challenge of communicating with parents, many of whom have comparatively low levels of literacy in their native language, in addition to not speaking or reading English (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008). The majority of Asian American students are from first- and second-generation immigrant families, and they are influenced greatly by the ethnic culture of origin of their communities and parents (Lee & Zhou, 2004). In fact, 88% of all Asian American school-age children have a foreign-born parent. Additionally, almost 70% of Asian Americans live in households where family members speak a language other than English (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2003). When a parent's habitus is inconsistent with the field of education, he or she is more likely to confront barriers to becoming a competent player in that field (Lee & Bowen, 2006; Wang, 2008). For instance, immigrant parents are more likely to have difficulties communicating with schools or assisting with their children's schoolwork due to their habitus such as limited English proficiency, which is divergent from mainstream school culture (Wang, 2008).

According to Wanke (2008), language barrier happens when a lack of English proficiency prevents communication between immigrant families and the school system. Ascher's (1988) work discussed the language barrier that affects Asian/Pacific American parents. Since English is not the native language of this group, parents think their

language skills are so poor that they cannot be useful as participants in assisting their child in school. “Involving parents from any background is no easy task and in light of cultural and language differences, linguistic minority parents present a special challenge” (Constantino et al., 1995, p.19). In a study by Zelazo (1995), it was found that more English- than Spanish-speaking parents are involved at the school site as volunteers and in attending school meetings. “Parents whose English proficiency is limited may find it difficult or intimidating to communicate with school staff or to help in school activities without bilingual support in the school or community” (Violand-Sanchez, 1993, p.20). Lack of language skills became an intimidating factor when parents and schools could not communicate effectively (Wanke, 2008).

### **Parents’ Education and Social Capital**

Even though the majority of the literature on parents’ education pertains to the direct, positive influence on achievement (Jimerson, Egeland, & Teo, 1999), the literature also suggests that it influences the beliefs and behaviors of the parent, leading to positive outcomes for children and youth (Eccles et al., 1996). For example, Alexander, Entwisle, and Bedinger (1994) found that parents of moderate to high income and educational background held beliefs and expectations that were closer than those of low-income families to the actual performance of their children.

Despite much evidence that links mothers' educational attainment to children's academic outcomes, studies have not established whether increases in mothers' education will improve their children's academic achievement (Magnuson, 2007). Using data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth on children between the ages of 6 and 12, Magnuson examined whether increases in mothers' educational attainment are associated

with changes in children's academic achievement and the quality of their home environments. Across 50 studies, parental involvement was positively associated with achievement, with the exception of parental help with homework. Involvement that reflected academic socialization had the strongest positive association with achievement. In conclusion, Magnuson noted that although much has been written about ethnic differences in levels and types of involvement, it is unclear whether to expect the relation between involvement and achievement to vary across ethnicity (Magnuson, 2007).

According to the 2000 Census report, many ELL parents have not completed a high school education and have little formal education compared with native-born parents. The 2000 Census reports that almost half of ELL children in elementary school had parents with less than a high school education, and a quarter had parents with less than a 9th grade education. In comparison, only 11% of English-proficient children had parents without high school degrees and just 2% had parents who had not completed the 9th grade. In secondary school, a lower share of ELL students had parents without high school degrees (35%), but this was still several times the share for children of native-born parents (4%). Lastly, parents' own educational and skill levels seem to be a factor in children's development; studies have documented a link between parental education and cognitive development in children as young as three months old (Duncan & Magnuson, 2005).

### **Racial and Ethnic Minorities and Parental Involvement**

Despite the increasing emphasis on the importance of parental involvement, low-income, ethnic minority and immigrant parents are disengaged in their children's educational experiences (Chavkin, 1989; Moles, 1993; Vazquez-Nuttal, Li, & Kaplan,

2006). In particular, Moles (1993) pointed out that parents from non-dominant backgrounds, including low-income, less educated, immigrant, limited-English proficient, and ethnic minority parents are more likely to encounter obstacles to their educational involvement due to “the limited skills and knowledge, restricted opportunities for interaction, and psychological and cultural barriers (Moles, pp. 32-33).” For example, immigrant parents’ lack of English proficiency and little information about American school culture impede their effective educational involvement (Fuligni & Fuligni, 2007; Moles, 1993; Pena, 2000). Similarly, Li (2006), in her qualitative research on the involvement of 26 middle-class Chinese immigrant parents, found that most participating parents reported their desire to learn more about school materials and instructions. Further, Chinese immigrant parents who were unfamiliar with the school’s reading instructions were less able to implement home-literacy practice consistent with reading education in school (Li, 2006).

In addition, time constraints and lack of transportation often make it difficult for low-income immigrant parents to attend school events or to provide their children intensive home supervision (Moles, 1993; Pena, 2000; Turney & Kao, 2009). Many ethnic minority immigrant parents work long hours at low wages because of their limited English and little formal education in the United States (Moles, 1993).

Differences in cultural beliefs about education and parenting roles lead immigrant parents to hesitate to actively interact with school personnel (Fuligni & Fuligni, 2006; García-Coll & Patcher, 2002; Moles, 1993; Pena, 2000; Sy, 2006). For instance, many Mexican American parents believe that they should not interfere with the school’s agenda and instructions (Chavkin & Gonzales, 1995). Asian immigrant parents often readily

agree with school personnel out of respect for authority rather than in collaboration as equal partners (Lee & Manning, 2001; Moles, 1993; Sy, 2006). In particular, low-income, ethnic minority immigrant parents often feel unwelcome in the educational settings, re-experiencing isolation and discrimination that they experienced in the larger society (García-Coll & Patcher, 2002; Moles, 1993; Lopez et al., 2001).

Despite the increasing number of culturally and linguistically diverse and economically disadvantaged students in the U.S. schools, there is limited information about the needs and challenges that the parents of these students experience in their educational involvement (Hidalgo et al., 2005; Vazquez-Nuttall et al., 2006). Similarly, Asian American and Asian immigrant students and their parents are one of the fastest growing ethnic minority groups in U.S. schools, yet few studies have examined the types of Asian American parental involvement (Nguyen, You, & Ho, 2009), as well as what socio-cultural factors may affect the development of Asian American parents' strategies to support their children's educational success (Sy, 2006). The following section introduces a literature review on Asian American families in educational settings and Asian American parental involvement.

### **Asian American Parent Involvement**

Broadly defined, Asian Americans refer to people who originated from a variety of countries in Asia, regardless of their immigration or citizenship status (Reeves & Bennett, 2004). In 2000, Asian Americans numbered 11.9 million, comprising 4.2 % of the U.S. population (Reeves & Bennett, 2004). Compared to other racial groups, Asian Americans have a higher proportion of recent immigrants. Sixty-nine percent of Asians were foreign-born, according to the 2000 U.S. Census Bureau. Among these, 43%



entered the United States between 1990 and 2000 (Reeves & Bennett, 2004). The majority of Asian Americans live in urban or metropolitan areas, including California and New York. Five subgroups of Chinese, Filipino, Asian Indian, Vietnamese, and Korean make up 80% of the Asian American population (Reeves & Bennett, 2004).

Geographically, Asia encompasses regions of East Asia (China, Japan, and Korea), South Asia (India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka), and Southeast Asia (Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia) (Chao & Tseng, 2002). Individuals with Asian ancestry often identify themselves with their country of origin or ethnic classifications (e.g., Chinese American) (Ho, Rasheed, & Rasheed, 2004). Consequently, there is vast diversity within this group as to language, ethnicity, religion, history, socioeconomic status, acculturation levels, and educational attainment (Ho, Rasheed, & Rasheed; Lew, 2004). For example, at least 32 different languages are spoken across Asian American groups (Reeves & Bennett, 2004). The median income of Asian families is higher (\$59,324) than the overall population, yet those of Hmong and Cambodian families are much lower than average (\$32,400 and \$35,600). Almost 44% of total Asian Americans hold at least a college degree, while 60% of Hmong and half of Cambodians and Laotians have a less than high school education (Reeves & Bennett, 2004).

According to the collectivistic Asian familialism, children's academic achievement and upward mobility are considered a major family matter, which is often equated to successful parenting (Chou & Leonard, 2006; Nguyen, You, & Ho, 2009). Keenly recognizing their parents' sacrifice, Asian American students experience a great deal of pressure to succeed in school. With little knowledge of English and the American mainstream culture, Asian immigrant parents also tend to adapt to the dominant

American culture at a slower rate in comparison to their children (Buki, Ma, & Strom 2003; Farver & Lee-Shin, 2000; Nah, 1993; Yagi & Oh, 1995). It is not unusual for Asian American high school and college students to report feelings of confusion, alienation, and frustration stemming from relationship difficulties with their more traditional parents (Kao & Thompson, 2003). Ironically, Asian American parents tend to apply dual cultural standards in disciplining their children: be successful in the United States without becoming too Americanized (Uba, 1994). For instance, immigrant Asian parents tend to emphasize obedience with parental expectations, but, at the same time, encourage their children to master English and American ways such as self-assertion that will increase the possibility of success in the host society (Yang & Rettig, 2003).

In school, Asian American students experience a sense of isolation and racial discrimination (Tseng, Chao, & Padmawidjaja, 2007). For example, Kao (1999), in her analyses of the National Educational Longitudinal Study (NELS: 88), found that students from Asian immigrant families felt more alienated from their peers in school than their White counterparts. Similarly, Portes and Rumbaut (2001) examined experiences of students from multiple ethnic groups in San Diego schools and found that Laotian and Cambodian refugee students tended to view their schools as less safe, as well as reported more fights around racial issues than their Mexican and Central American peers.

The “model minority” myth has contributed to educators’ perception that Asian-American children, in general, are more academically achieving and emotionally stable (Yeh, 2001). However, researchers (Kim, 2006; Lew, 2006; Sodowsky & Lai, 1997) suggest that such stereotypes mislead school personnel and other helping professionals to overlook Asian American students who need support. Furthermore, it negatively affects

overall peer relationships of Asian American students, especially in public schools, where students with diverse racial and/or ethnic backgrounds are mixed (Rosenbloom & Way, 2004; Tseng et al., 2007; Yeh, 2001). Teachers' preferences and high academic expectations for Asian American students in the classroom often lead students from other ethnic groups to feel resentment, resulting in bullying and harassment toward Asian American students outside the classroom (Rosenbloom & Way, 2004).

In a recent study examining urban high school climate, Rosenbloom and Way (2004) conducted two-year in-depth interviews with 20 Asian American, 20 Latino/a, and 20 African American ninth-graders from mainstream English classes. The school was characterized as one of the least academically achieving, predominantly attended by immigrants, and located in a poor, urban neighborhood. The results from interviews suggest that Asian American students reported more discrimination by peers than their African American and Latino/a counterparts, whereas African American and Latino/a students reported more discrimination by adults in schools, including school personnel and police. In particular, Asian American students experienced verbal and physical harassment and typically portrayed themselves as "weaker" and "smaller" than their peers from different ethnic groups (Rosenbloom & Way, 2004).

In addition, researchers point out that Asian American students, especially from recent immigrant and/or refugee families, encounter unique challenges in their school adjustment. Many of these students attend large inner city schools that are often characterized as having a great number of ethnic minority students from low-income families, overcrowded classrooms, and unqualified instruction (Portes & Rumbaut, 2000; Tseng et al, 2007). These students are often left to deal with English acquisition tasks and

unfamiliar U.S. school expectations without proper support either from their parents or school personnel. For instance, Lew (2006) found, in her interview with Korean American high school drop-out students, that the participants were marginalized both from their parents and the schools. Further, the interviewees described their relationship with teachers and school counselors with words such as “mistrust” (Lew, 2006).

Lack of parental involvement often hinders the positive development of Asian American students (Lew, 2006; Louie, 2004). School-family partnership is a foreign concept for many Asian American parents (Sy, 2006). Researchers have found that traditional Asian American parents tend to view school personnel as authority figures whose instructional and educational decisions should not be challenged. Limited English proficiency and unfamiliarity with American mainstream school culture also have been found as significant barriers to Asian immigrant and refugee parents’ school involvement (Lew, 2006; Ochoa & Rhodes, 2005; Tarver, Behring, & Gelinas, 1996).

### **Korean American Parent Involvement**

Korean American parents’ involvement practices have been a particular challenge for educators and researchers (Sy et al., 2007). Despite the high academic achievement of Korean American students overall, Korean American parents are often seen as “inactive” in traditional parental activities. For example, Korean American parents typically show low rates of direct school involvement, such as participating in parent-teacher conferences and volunteering activities (Li, 2006; Siu, 1996; Sy et al., 2007). It has been suggested that the traditional definition of parental involvement mainly focuses on the parents’ participation in school-related events and activities, which may not exactly describe the multiple ways in which Korean American parents become engaged in their

child's education (Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Hidalgo, Epstein & Siu, 2005; McKay & Stone, 2000; Nguyen et al., 2009; Sy, 2007).

Research findings report that parents from Korea like other Asian cultures tend to show higher rates in indirect parent involvement than in direct home-school partnerships (Sy, 2006). A recent study on Vietnamese American immigrant parents, for example, indicated that they believe their primary roles in their children's school success are to schedule after-school time and to ensure homework completion. Furthermore, participating parents reported that they are unfamiliar with the concept of the school-family partnership (Hwa-Froelich & Westby, 2003). Similarly, Davis and McDaid (1992), in their survey with more than 300 Vietnamese students, found that while students perceived that their parents hold high academic aspirations, almost 72% of the participating students' parents had never contacted their teachers. Ho and Williams (1996), using data from the National Educational Longitudinal Study (NELS: 88), examined the relationships between academic achievement of multi-ethnic eighth graders and their parental involvement. The authors found that Korean American parents, like other Asian American parents, tended to provide more home-based supervision compared to White parents, yet became less engaged in school-based activities such as communicating with school personnel, volunteering, and attending school meetings (Ho & Williams, 1996).

However, Korean American parents' lower levels of participation at school activities do not indicate the parents' lack of interest in their child's education. Numerous studies pointed out that Korean American parents, in general, greatly emphasize the importance of education for their children's future success (Chen & Stevenson, 1995;

Steinberg, Dornbusch, & Brown, 1992) and attempt to enhance their child's learning by providing monitoring, reducing household chores, and arranging additional academic opportunities, such as private tutoring (Schneider & Lee, 1990; Siu, 1996; Sy, 2006).

Findings from quantitative research examining the effects of Korean American parental involvement on children's academic achievement are inconsistent, particularly depending on the types of parental involvement measured (Chao & Tseng, 2002). Studies using National Educational Longitudinal Study from 1988 (NELS: 88) have found that the relationship between parental involvement and Asian American children's academic achievement has overall weak or negative effects (Chao & Tseng, 2002; Kao, 1995; Peng & Wright, 1994). For example, Kao (1995) found that specific types of parental involvement such as discussions about school, helping with homework, and enrolling children in outside classes were unrelated or negatively related to Asian American students' academic achievement, contrary to the cases of their European American counterparts. However, Korean American parents tended to hold higher academic expectations than parents from other ethnic groups and to ensure education-related material resources, such as a study room and a computer (Kao, 1995). Similarly, Peng and Wright (1994), in their research on nationally representative eighth grade students, found that Korean American parents, like most Asian American parents, set higher educational expectations for their children, as compared to Hispanic, African American, and White American parents, which was a strong predictor of students' academic achievement. In contrast, Asian American parents spent less time discussing schooling and directly helping with homework than both African American and White American parents. In particular, parent-child discussion about schooling was unrelated to students'

academic achievement in Asian American students, whereas it had positive associations in White American counterparts (Peng & Wright, 1994).

Mau (1998) examined how parental involvement has differing influences on Asian immigrant, Asian American and White American tenth graders' academic achievement. Using student responses from NELS: 88, Mau (1998) clustered four types of parental involvement, including helping (e.g., helping with homework), controlling (e.g., limit time watching TV), supporting (e.g., selecting courses), and participating (e.g., attending school meetings). Results show that while Asian American parents were less likely to attend school activities than White American parents, Asian American parents had higher educational expectations, and their children spent more time on homework. In particular, parents' participation in volunteering and school events was negatively related to Asian American students' academic achievement, whereas it was positively associated with White Americans' academic performance (Mau, 1998). In addition, both Asian immigrant and Asian American students perceived a greater controlling type of parental involvement than their White American counterparts (Mau, 1998). On the contrary, helping, supporting, and participating types of parental involvement were most frequently reported in White American students (Mau, 1998).

Similarly, Jeynes (2003), in his meta-analysis investigating the effects of parental involvement on ethnic minority students' academic achievement, found that the relations in Asian American students are complex. Parental involvement clearly contributes to the academic success of Asian American students, yet when examining specific dimensions, including parent-child discussion about schooling, parental expectations for their children's academic achievement, parental participation at school meetings, and

parenting style, the effects of most parental involvement were no more statistically significant (Jeyne, 2003).

### **Factors Affecting Korean American Parent Involvement**

In addition to the lack of consensus in structures of Asian American parental involvement, much less is known about factors affecting Korean American parental involvement. In particular, the literature identifies levels of acculturation, language proficiency, and socioeconomic status as contributors to variations in Asian American parental involvement (Chao & Tseng, 2002; Lew, 2006; Sy, 2006). These factors have also been seen as barriers, especially when parental involvement is narrowly defined as parents' participation in school events (Sy, 2006; Turney and Kao, 2009). However, given that many non-dominant groups of parents have become involved in their children's education in ways consistent with their cultural beliefs and socio-cultural resources (García Coll & Patcher, 2002; Hidalgo, Epstein & Siu, 2005), factors such as immigration status, English proficiency, and socioeconomic status should be examined as important indicators for developing a greater understanding of Asian American parental involvement (Sy, 2006).

### **Summary**

This chapter provided a literature review of parental involvement in general and Asian American parental involvement, along with cultural and social capital theory in particular. Research on Epstein's framework for parental involvement and findings regarding the parents' socio-cultural factors that may affect Korean American parental involvement were examined. The factors include parents' social capital as social networks, length of residence in the United States, English proficiency, and social class.



In addition, cultural capital theory was introduced as a guiding conceptual framework for the current research.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This study was intended to share the Korean American mothers' perceptions about parent involvement and its ramifications within the context of Epstein's parent involvement model (2011) and Bourdieu's cultural capital theory (1983). The study began with the assumption that parents with greater cultural capital would be more likely to be involved in their children's education and that their involvement would support their children's academic achievement. This study applied Epstein's six-construct configuration of parent involvement and Bourdieu's cultural capital theory to parent involvement in order to explain mothers' perceptions about their own parent engagement. Ringenberg's Parent and School Survey (2005) was used as the framework and instrument for understanding and measuring parental involvement.

While getting all parents to become involved has been a challenge for many school administrators, engaging Korean American parents in schools has been especially challenging. Studies examining the effects of Korean American parental involvement on school performance report inconsistent results, depending on the types of parental involvement measured (Chao & Tseng, 2002). Studies suggest that Korean American parental involvement needs to be understood within an inclusive model (McNeal, 2001; Sy, 2007) that takes into account their cultural identity. Due to the lack of surveys available in Korean that measure parent engagement, it was necessary to translate an existing survey in English into Korean to collect information from Korean American parents about their perceptions regarding school engagement.

Joyce Epstein (1995) developed one of the most comprehensive definitions of parent involvement. She categorized or organized the parental involvement into six types. The Parent Involvement framework by Epstein (2001) guided this research project. Epstein lists six types of involvement: Parenting, Communicating, Volunteering, Learning at Home, Decision-Making and Collaborating with the Community. Epstein (2001) designed a survey and interview questions based on the six types of parent involvement. The survey information and interview protocols used for this study have been modified from Epstein's work by Ringenberg and translated into Korean to fit the needs of the participants in the study. They are discussed in detail in the instrumentation section of this chapter.

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the procedures of inquiry used to investigate the Korean American mothers' perceptions about parent involvement. The methodology of the study is also presented, including the research questions, overview of the research design, a description of the study population, a discussion of the instrumentation, and the methods and procedures used for collecting and analyzing the data.

### **Research Rationale and Approach**

A mixed-methods approach was used in this study to achieve a complete and comprehensive understanding of data collected. As Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) stated, "the central premise of mixed method research is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches, in combination, provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone" (p. 5). Over the past decade, more researchers in the social sciences are employing a mixed-methods approach in conducting their research

(Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). A mixed-methods approach is most appropriate for this study because the strategic collection of quantitative and qualitative data provides the best opportunity to reach a deep understanding of the research problem (McMillan, 2004).

As a specific mixed-methods research strategy, the researcher employed what Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) refer to as a “participant-selection variant” of the “explanatory sequential design” (p. 86). Creswell and Plano Clark described the explanatory sequential design as a two-phase strategy in which the researcher first collects quantitative data to explore a topic before moving on to a second phase, which is qualitative in nature. In most explanatory sequential design studies, the quantitative strand is the highest priority and the qualitative strand is implemented to explain the initial quantitative results. The researcher then follows up on this quantitative finding by conducting a focus group interview (qualitative data) in an attempt to explain this relationship.

In this mixed-methods study of the Korean American mothers, the first phase of the research was quantitative in nature. In the first phase of the study, the translated Parent and School Survey in Korean (PASS+K) survey was piloted with a small group of Korean American mothers. Once the survey was checked for face and construct validity, 100 Korean American mothers whose children attend Korean Language Schools were asked to complete the PASS+K survey instrument regarding their parent engagement practices. In addition, the participating Korean American mothers were asked to provide demographic information regarding their cultural capital constructs. The survey results

were examined to identify differences between cultural capital constructs and parent engagement practices.

In the second phase of the study, the survey results were reviewed for the purpose of identifying a smaller sample of parents to participate in the next phase of the study. The third phase of the study was qualitative in nature, and featured a focus group interview. Parents who completed the survey were invited to participate in followup interviews, and six parents volunteered to participate in the interview phase of the study. All of the interview participants are parents of students in WES Korean School. A detailed description of the participants, settings, independent variables, dependent variables, instruments, and procedures is provided in the sections that follow.

#### **Pilot Parent and School Survey (PASS) Translation**

Survey research has become a popular method of collecting data for non-experimental designs. In a survey, the investigator selects a group of respondents, collects information, and then analyzes the information to answer the research questions. The group of subjects is usually selected from a larger population through some type of probability sampling, which allows accurate inferences about a large population from a small sample (McMillan, 2004). Surveys describe the incidences, frequency, and distribution of characteristics of the population, such as demographic facts.

Epstein's parental involvement model provides the foundational understanding of the structure of parental involvement and structure for data collection and analysis in this study. According to McMillan (2004), "surveys are versatile in being able to address a wide range of problems or questions, especially when the purpose is to describe the attitudes, perspectives, and beliefs of the respondents." For this study, the survey was

used to collect data on Korean American parents and their perceptions about parent involvement.

This study began with the process of identifying a survey that has the six parent types of school engagement components. The Parent and School Survey (Ringenberg et al., 2005), a 30-item questionnaire that reflects the six-construct structure discovered and developed by Epstein, was selected for this study. Before surveying the participants, the researcher worked with a team of bilingual Korean educators and a certified FBI translator to translate the survey document (PASS) into Korean (PASS-K). The PASS-K was then back translated (PASS-BT) to check for accuracy of the translation. The survey was then piloted to make sure that the translated survey communicates the intended message as it was written in the English version. The purpose of the translation for this study was to produce a valid, reliable, complete, and culturally appropriate parent involvement survey designed to measure Korean American parent involvement. The goal of translating this survey was to convey the intended meaning from the original English text, then translate it into Korean.

In the past, most surveys assessing parent engagement have only captured limited home-school engagement activities such as attending back-to-school events or volunteerism, and were not comprehensive in nature. Current parent engagement survey measures are beginning to expand the scope of what specific parental outcomes are needed in order to assist children in schools. Whether parent engagement is defined as the limited activities strictly sanctioned by schools or includes participation of parents as equal partners, surveys need to have specific indicators that measure parental engagement (Cabassa et al, 2007). In 1995, Epstein proposed a set of six tangible constructs and

developed discreet sub-measures that provided specific responsibilities for parents regarding their relationship between the home, school, and community (Ringenberg et al., 2005). Exploring Epstein's constructs has helped researchers, educators, parents, and policymakers understand the complexity of parental involvement (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). This research addresses parental engagement with a wider range of parental outcomes that impact student achievement. This study attempted to identify how the parents' cultural capital construct predicts immigrant Korean American mothers' engagement in schools.

### **Pilot Participants**

Translation Team -The panel of experts responsible for the translation included a Korean linguist employed with the FBI as a translator, a translator employed with the school system, and three Korean American Parent Coordinators with the school system. They were selected using the following criteria: (1) fluent in both Korean and English; (2) hold advanced degrees, certified as a linguist with the FBI or the school system; and (3) have experience in working directly with the Korean-speaking populations. The main responsibility of the reviewers was to ensure that questions from the source language (English) to the target language (Korean) were translated clearly, have correct grammar and reflect the questions as they were intended in English.

Parent Pilot Participants - A group of ten Korean American mothers were selected from a local church, whose children attended the local Korean School in the mid-Atlantic state. These parents participated in the pilot study of the survey in Korean. The following criteria were used to select the participants: (a) born in Korea; (b) had a third grade reading ability and did not have a cognitive impairment; and (c) had children enrolled in

an elementary school. The participants are parents of children in the mid-Atlantic area, 18 years or older, and live in predominantly middle-income neighborhoods.

### **Pilot Setting**

This study was conducted at a church with a Korean Language Program located in a mid-Atlantic state. The Korean school serves students from the local school system and provides instruction in Korean history, language and culture to students in the area. Most of the students who attend this particular Korean language school also attend schools in the area with large minority populations. Although the church is separate from the school system, students and parents who attend are also enrolled in the public school system in the mid-Atlantic area. Prior to beginning the pilot study, the researcher provided a detailed written summary of the study, including the purpose, surveys and procedures of the research to the parents.

### **Pilot Instruments**

Ringenberg et al. (2005) first administered the PASS in English to 40 parents from a convenience sample, predominantly female (82.5%) and white (75%) from middle-class background. The PASS was administered twice with a week or two in between administration of the two surveys. Retests were completed from 4 to 14 days after the initial test. The test-retest reliability followed the conventions for ordinal data of the Likert scale, which was treated as interval data.

- Nine items (1,2,3,4,9,11,13,19, and 23) had excellent test-retest reliabilities, in the interval 0.75 to 1.00;
- Nine items (10,12,14,16,17,18,21,22, and 24) had moderate reliabilities, in the interval 0.60 to 0.74;



- Two items (18 and 20) had fail reliabilities, in the interval 0.40 to 0.59; and
- Four items (5, 6, 7, and 15) had poor reliabilities.

After the initial piloting of the survey, Ringenberg et al. (2005) reviewed and revised the items that demonstrated low reliability. All 24 items were scored via a five-point Likert-type scale; the response choices were:

- 5=strongly agree,
- 4=agree,
- 3=partially agree/partially disagree,
- 2=disagree,
- 1=strongly disagree.

The extensive testing of the PASS instrument made it a viable option for gauging perceptions of parent involvement. However, the instrument has not been tested with groups primarily comprised of Korean or other ethnic minority populations.

The literature on immigrant Korean American parent engagement is limited, and very few studies utilize instruments that are linguistically and culturally sensitive or measure Epstein's six types of parent engagement. However, a survey that matched Epstein's construct was identified as the Parent and School Survey (PASS) in English (Ringenberg et al., 2005). PASS (Table 1) was selected based on two criteria: (1) the survey used Epstein's constructs that described six types of parent behaviors, and (2) the survey in English had good test-retest reliability results (Harkness, 2003). PASS in Korean does not exist and therefore, it was necessary to translate the English version into Korean for the purposes of this study.

Table 1

*PASS Items and Their Correspondence to Epstein's and Bourdieu's Construct*

Epstein's Construct	Item N	Statement
Type I-Parenting	4	I explain difficult ideas to my child when she/he doesn't understand
	14	There are many books in our house
	16	My child misses school several days each semester
	19	Reading books is a regular activity in our home
Type II-Communicating	3	If my child misbehaved at school, I would know about it soon
	6	Talking with my child's principal makes me uncomfortable
	7	I always know how my child is doing academically in school
	17	Talking with my child's current teacher makes me uncomfortable
Type III-Volunteering	1	I feel comfortable visiting child's school
	12	I have visited my child's classroom several times in the past year
	15	I attend activities at my child's school several times each semester
	23	I regularly volunteer at my child's school
Type IV-Learning at Home	2	I display y child's schoolwork in our house
	5	I compliment my child for doing well in school
	9	I read to my child everyday
	18	I don't understand the assignments my child brings home
Type V-Decision Making	8	I am confused about my legal rights as a parent of a student
	13	I made suggestions to my child's teacher about how to help my child
	21	I know the laws governing schools well
	22	I attend school board meetings regularly
Type VI-Collaborating with Community	10	I talk with other parents frequently about educational issues
	11	My child attends community programs
	20	If my child was having trouble in school I would not know how to get extra help
	24	I know about many programs for youth in my community

Table 1 (continued)

*PASS Items and Their Correspondence to Epstein's and Bourdieu's Construct*

Bourdieu-Issues Impacting Parent Involvement	25	I believe my "Level of English Proficiency" makes parent involvement in my child's school difficult.
	26	I believe my "Level of Education" makes parent involvement in my child's school difficult.
	27	I believe my "Family's Level of Income" makes parent involvement in my child's school difficult.
	28	I believe my "Family's Years in the United States" makes parent involvement in my child's school difficult.
	29	I believe "lack of time" makes parent involvement in my child's school difficult.
	30	I believe "Other: (Specify) _____" makes parent involvement in my child's school difficult.

(Adapted from Ringenberg et al., 2005)

**Pilot Procedures**

The student researcher coordinated communication with the translation team and organized the translation review process. The purpose of the pilot was designed to translate and obtain feedback from experts and parents regarding the PASS in Korean.

The initial communication among reviewers was conducted electronically via email to publish and share comments about the proposed changes of PASS in Korean (PASS-K). The reviewers provided feedback and made suggestions for changes and edits as needed. The student researcher evaluated the final draft of PASS+K. Before the final draft was adopted, the survey was sent again to the reviewers for additional feedback. The result of the feedback provided by the interpretation team was incorporated into a final form before the piloting of the survey. The reviewers ensured that the survey was clear, grammatically and linguistically correct, and reflected Epstein's constructs before the survey was approved and adopted. In order to check for the accuracy of the

translation, a backward translation was also conducted on the PASS-K. The back-translation was then compared with the original PASS in English to ensure reliability of the translation.

### **Pilot Research Design and Analysis**

The purpose of the pilot study was to review the translation of PASS in Korean and validate it using four data points:

1. Translation feedback from the translation team,
2. Back-translation from bi-lingual educator to check for accuracy of the translation as compared with the original PASS,
3. Construct a face and validity information, and
4. Gather feedback from the parents' pretest piloting.

An explanation of the survey was provided to pilot participants in a mini session describing the study. During the introductory session, the purpose and the expected benefits of the study were discussed. The PASS+K survey was then administered to the pilot study group. All surveys were collected at the end of the sessions for analysis.

In order to demonstrate acceptable construct validity with Korean American parent respondents, the establishment of cultural validity was a critical step taken prior to distributing the survey in Phase I. Therefore, a face and construct validity phase was used to identify accurately whether Epstein's domains were represented in each of the Korean translated items. Pilot parents' feedback was used to re-edit the survey for Phase I.

The following factors were considered in creating the final PASS+K survey instrument:

1. Questions between English and Korean are accurately translated so they have a one-to-one correspondence;
2. Vocabulary used in Korean is specific in the target language as it was in the source language; and
3. Changes to the revised translation meet validity and reliability requirements.

Statistical data conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) from Phase I determined the structural item validity for PASS in Korean.

To ensure that the question paths developed by this researcher for the interview portion of this study had face validity, the researcher piloted the questions through a series of focus group interviews on a sample group of participants. Merriam (1998) recommended that pilot testing is crucial for trying out questions, thus allowing for refinement. The results were compared for accuracy in obtaining desired information and for consistency of responses.

### **Phase I: Administering the Surveys to Korean American Parents**

The purpose of Phase I was to administer the PASS and the PASS+K, to determine how Korean mothers' background and perceived barriers impact their parent engagement in schools.

#### ***Participants***

In Phase I, 100 Korean American mothers whose children attended the Korean Language Programs \*(pseudonym) in three of the local schools in a mid-Atlantic state participated in the study. The following criteria for participant selection were used in this portion of the study:

1. Born in Korea;
2. Speak Korean as their native language;
3. Must be 18 years old or older; and
4. Have children enrolled in the Washington Public School System.

### **Setting**

Washington Public School System (WPSS) has a population of 942,000 and a landmass of 497 square miles. It is a diverse, but affluent, mid-Atlantic county. The minority and immigrant population grew from 19% of the total population in 1910 to more than 40% in 2001. The Black or African American community represents the largest minority population in Washington County, comprising 15% of the county's population. Between 1910 and 2000, the African American population grew by 43%.

The 200 public schools of WPSS include 131 elementary schools, 38 middle schools, 25 high schools, 5 special education centers, and 1 career technology center. The kindergarten to 12<sup>th</sup> grade student enrollment is more than 146,000. During the 2011 and 2012 school year, the total minority student population was 66.3%. It included 21.2% African-American, 14.3% Asian American, 26% Hispanic, .1% Native Hawaiian and/or Pacific Islander, .2% American Indian and/or Alaskan Native and 4.4% reported two or more races. In Washington Public Schools, 32.3% of the student body participates in the Free and Reduced-price Meals System (FARMS), 11.9% receive special education services, and 13.1% participate in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). Of the 131 elementary schools, the mothers surveyed were drawn from three schools that provide Korean programs.

Parents from the following three schools took part in the first phase of the study. A copy of the explanation letter in Korean and English, the consent form in English and Korean, the PASS and the PASS-K survey and the self-addressed stamped envelope were distributed to the parents.

School 1: On the Central Elementary School’s (pseudonym) website, school staff, students, and parents are described as “capable,” “diverse,” and “devoted.” They are committed to supporting their students and community by providing a safe, nurturing, and challenging environment for all. They teach and develop creative, motivated, responsible, life-long learners. They achieve their goals by promoting good character, encouraging one another, setting high expectations, and utilizing the talents and resources of their school community. Central Elementary School is one of the smaller schools located in a rural part of the Washington Public School System. Currently, there are a total of 264 students attending Central Elementary School (Table 2).

Table 2

*Student Demographics for Central Elementary School*

% female	% male	% AM	% AS	% BL	% HI	% PI	% WH	% MU	% ESOL	% FARMS	% SPED
47.3	52.7	≤5.0	39.4	14	<u>14</u>	≤5.0	26.5	5.7	20.5	22.0	12.5

School 2: South Elementary School (pseudonym) opened in 2001. They are a member of Washington Public School System. Teaching grades K-5, South Elementary School is part of the consortium of schools in the northern area of the school system. According to the school website, the school is made up of a diverse community of learners where students, staff and parents value education and knowledge. South

Elementary School is the largest elementary school in Washington Public School System. There are a total of 1,009 students attending South Elementary School (Table 3).

Table 3

*Student Demographics for South Elementary School*

%female	%male	%AM	%AS	%BL	%HI	%PI	%WH	%MU	% ESOL	% FARMS	% SPED
48.6	51.4	≤5.0	37.5	15.5	11.0	≤5.0	30.3	5.6	14.6	15.7	5.7

School 3: West Elementary School opened in 1969. West Elementary School is part of a cluster in the Washington Public School System. According to the school website, West Elementary School promotes academic excellence through effective communication, rigorous instruction, and collaborative teaming in a safe, nurturing environment. West Elementary School is located in one of the most affluent communities in the Washington Public School System. There are 535 students currently attending West Elementary School (Table 4).

Table 4

*Student Demographics for West Elementary School*

%fem ale	%male	%AM	%AS	%BL	%HI	%PI	%WH	%MU	% ESOL	% FARMS	% SPED
53.1	46.9	≤5.0	30.5	5.8	≤5.0	≤5.0	52.5	6.2	9.2	≤5.0	7.9

**Independent Variable**

The independent variable for this study is the mothers’ cultural capital construct as noted on the parent’s demographic information and information provided on the survey: (1) English competence; (2) financial status; (3) years of formal education; and (4) years in the United States. The relationship between the parents’ cultural capital construct and parent involvement may have a wide range of variation because both are



embedded within the context of culture. The purpose of this study was to share the Korean American mothers' perception about parent involvement and its ramifications within the context of Epstein's parent involvement model and Bourdieu's cultural capital theory.

### **Dependent Variable**

The dependent variable for this study was parents' perceptions of their school engagement in the United States as measured by Parent Engagement Type (PET) scores. The domains of school engagement that were identified by Epstein include the six Parent Engagement Types with specific outcomes. These include: parenting (Type I); communicating (Type II); volunteering (Type III); learning at home (Type IV); decision-making (Type V); and collaborating with community (Type VI). Past studies demonstrated that parent engagement in schools improves the academic performance of children (Wentworth, 2006). Since parent engagement is critical to school success, this study aimed to capture the perceptions of Korean American mothers and their views and judgment of what attitudes, expectations and behaviors are related to parents' participation.

### **Instruments**

The Parent and School Survey in Korean (PASS+K) instrument was piloted in Phase I and administered to 100 participants. This instrument measured the independent variable which was the Korean American mother's cultural capital identified as: English proficiency, SES, years in the US, and education level and the dependent variable of immigrant Korean American parent-school engagement as identified by Epstein (2001).

Table 5 illustrates the cultural capital constructs highlighted in this study and PASS+K (Korean version).

Table 5

*Cultural Capital and Parent Involvement Variables*

Cultural Capital Construct	PASS SCALE
(1) English Competence	Type 1-Parenting
(2) Financial Status	Type 2-Communicating
(3) Years of Formal Education	Type 3-Volunteering
(4) Years in the United States	Type 4-Learning at Home
	Type 5-Decision Making
	Type 6-Coollaborating with Community

**Survey/Data Collection Procedures**

The student researcher met with the principals from each of the identified schools to gain permission to conduct the study with participants from their respective school sites. Having received the principals’ consent, a list of parents that met the criteria for participation was selected and the packet of survey materials, including the English and Korean version of the consent form and the PASS survey were mailed to the school to be distributed via students, inviting parents to take part in the study.

The researcher explained that participation in this research was voluntary and that all information would be kept confidential. Hard copies of the consent form and surveys along with a return envelope were provided to each participant. Parents then signed the consent form, completed the demographic information form and completed the PASS or the PASS-K survey at home. It was estimated that the survey would take 5-15 minutes to complete. The completed consent forms and surveys were returned in the sealed envelopes provided by the researcher and were collected and stored in a locked box.

## **Research Design and Analysis**

In Phase I of the study, quantitative methods were used by the researcher to answer research questions 1 through 6. The information gathered from the PASS and the PASS-K survey was analyzed to conduct the descriptive statistics and to compute the Cronbach alphas to establish inter-item reliability. The data were further analyzed to assess if there were statistically significant relationships between Korean mothers' PET scores based on their cultural capital construct, as noted on their demographic data. Correlations were computed for responses of the subjects across the six domains of parent involvement in the PASS survey. Finally, independent t-test of analysis of variance of the subjects' responses was computed to look for the significant mean differences between mothers and fathers and those taking the English versus Korean version of the survey.

### **Phase II: Focus Group Interviews with Six Parents**

The second phase of this research utilized qualitative methods in the form of a focus group interview with six Korean American parents. Interviews were conducted to explore the nuances of participants' own perceptions of parent involvement. The use of qualitative analysis is warranted when a researcher aims to describe people's stories, behavior, organizational functioning, or interactional relationships (Creswell, 2003).

Compared to other forms of qualitative research, focus group interviews allowed for (a) the opportunity to collect data through group interaction, (b) the ability to explore topics and generate hypotheses, (c) ease of data collection, and (d) the researcher's moderate control of the focus groups (Livesey, 2002; Morgan, 1988). McMillan (2004) stated two other advantages to focus groups —high face validity and speedy results.

According to McMillan (2004), focus group technique is most useful for encouraging subjects, through their interaction with one another, to offer insights and opinions about a concept, idea, value, or other aspects of their lives about which they are knowledgeable. Recently, the procedure has gained renewed popularity among social scientists, evaluators, planners, and educators.

### **Focus Group Interview Participants**

Six Korean American mothers whose children attend the West Elementary School, who signed the consent form, were invited to participate in the focus group interviews based on a convenient sample. Mothers with varying levels of parent engagement per their survey responses were chosen to participate in the focus group discussion. Three mothers who scored high and three mothers who scored low on the Epstein's portion of the PASS were chosen for the focus group. To protect their anonymity, each mother was assigned a pseudonym. As each of these mothers participated in the focus group discussion with the researcher, each shared their perceptions as it pertained to Epstein's parent involvement construct and their perceptions about the barriers and how it impacted their parent involvement.

### **Focus Group Interview Procedures**

Following the approval of the dissertation proposal by the research committee and the university's Human Subjects Review Board, the researcher sought permission from the school system's research division to conduct Phase II of the study. This research took place in the WPSS within a mid-Atlantic state. Korean American parents whose children attend one of the four identified schools in WPSS were interviewed. Six Korean parents

were selected to participate in this study, based on purposeful sampling using their PASS/PASS-K scores.

The focus group interview was conducted in the conference room at the researcher's school. Prior to participating in the focus group, the mothers were asked to review and sign the informed consent form, and to agree to respond to the focus group questions.

Questions for the focus group interview portion of the study were created based on the survey questions and the responses provided by the mothers. The interviews lasted approximately 60 minutes, and clarified the Korean American mothers' perceptions about their own cultural capital level and their experiences with the six types of parent involvement as noted by Epstein. Each question was open-ended, with no predetermined responses. The interview was recorded to capture the conversation for analysis. The researcher transcribed the interview responses, translated in English as needed and prepared the transcripts for coding and analysis.

### **Qualitative Data Analysis**

The responses were coded for themes in the survey instrument and theoretical frameworks. During this process, the researcher examined the data to identify any themes or patterns that emerged from the interviews. In analyzing, coding, and interpreting the data, the researcher implemented strategies recommended by Creswell and Plano Clark (2007). The researcher developed and employed a coding system to help identify themes and patterns in the interview responses. Special attention was given to responses as they related to Epstein's six types of parent involvement and barriers to parent involvement as noted by Bourdieu and Ringenberg.

## **Validity and Trustworthiness**

For purposes of this study, several measures were taken to ensure the validity of the focus group procedures. While validity can be assessed several ways, this researcher chose face validity, which is described by Krueger (1988) as follows: Typically, focus groups have high face validity, which is due in part to the believability of comments from participants. People open up in focus groups and share insights that may not be available from individual interviews, questionnaires, or other data sources (p.42). Face validity will have been achieved in this study if the research questions have been answered by the data obtained through the chosen procedures. The context of this study lends itself to one of the research designs for focus group interviews suggested by Krueger (1988). He states: Focus groups can be used alone, independent of other procedures. They are helpful when insights, perceptions, and explanations are more important than actual numbers (p.40).

## **Summary**

Epstein (2001) developed a conceptual framework for types of parent involvement, based on the review of literature and her case study findings. According to Bourdieu, applying the concept of social and cultural barrier to the home-school relationship may promote a greater understanding of the persistent achievement gap and therefore allow schools to address this concern (Lee & Bowen, 2006). Ringenberg's survey instrument was designed to measure the extent to which parents participated in school activities as noted by Epstein (parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community) in contrast to parents' cultural capital. The demographic information provided by the mothers regarding their cultural capital construct allowed the researcher to gain insight into the cultural

background of the participants. Through surveys and interviews, the researcher hoped to gain a depth of understanding regarding Korean American mothers' involvement and how it is impacted by cultural factors.

This chapter outlined the procedures of inquiry used to investigate the Korean American mothers' perceptions about parent involvement. It described the research design, and the methods and procedures used for collecting and analyzing the data. The results of the data were used to draw conclusions about Korean American mothers' perceptions about parent involvement.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **FINDINGS**

#### **Introduction**

The issue of parental involvement in schools has become an increasingly important topic among professional educators, researchers and politicians involved in the distribution of school funding (Epstein & Jansorn, 2004a; Fan, 2001; Fege, 2000; Teicher, 2007). While public schools face a wide range of problems, lack of parent involvement is one that continues to challenge many schools (Bosher, Funk, & Holsworth, 2001). Research on the effects of parental involvement has shown a consistent, positive relationship between parents' engagement in their children's education and student outcomes (Epstein, 2001). Studies have also shown that parental involvement is associated with academic achievement as well as student outcomes such as lower dropout and truancy rates (Epstein, 2011). Finally, students who have all three influences—support from parents, support from teachers, and feeling connected to their school—had higher grades than students who reported low support (Henderson & Mapp, 2007).

Though there is far less research specific to Korean American families and the issue of parent involvement, the research that does exist shows that there is a positive relationship between minority parent involvement and children's academic achievement (Hornby, 2011). Differences in class, ethnicity and gender may influence the degree to which parents are involved in schools. Onwughalu (2011) studied the issue of parent involvement among African American populations and reported great gains in minority student academic achievement as a result of parent involvement both at home and at



school. Similarly, Zoppi (2006) studied the issue of parent involvement and impact on attendance and achievement in Latino communities. Her research suggests that the role of the family is significant in positively influencing the school performance of children. A key finding within this research indicates that parents who are involved in school activities are more likely to have children who perform well academically.

This study attempted to explore the Korean American mothers' perception about parent involvement and its ramifications within the context of Epstein's parent involvement model and Bourdieu's Cultural Capital Theory. This chapter presents the quantitative and qualitative data analysis and findings for this mixed-methods study in six sections: (a) introduction; (b) description of the procedures used to design and implement the quantitative phase of the study, which involved distribution of a survey; (c) presentation of the quantitative data and statistical analysis of survey results; (d) description of the qualitative phase of the study, which involved conducting interviews with parents; (e) presentation of the qualitative data analysis, including themes that emerged during the interviews; and (f) a summary of the chapter.

The guiding conceptual framework described in chapter two of the study was used in this chapter to analyze the data collected in both phases of the study. This study explored the multidimensional nature of parental involvement and its ramifications within the context of Epstein's conceptual model and Bourdieu's Cultural Capital Theory by sharing the Korean American parents' perceptions about their parent involvement through survey data analysis and focus group discussion. Although the utility of Epstein's conceptual model has been widely recognized (Barnard, 2004; McBride et al. 2002), it is not a theoretical model in that it does not

explicitly propose the nature of specific relationships among the six constructs, nor between those constructs and other variables. However, Bourdieu's (1983) Cultural Capital Theory (CCT) specifically identifies the concepts of field, habitus, and cultural capital (CC) and offers a theoretical context as a basis for hypothesizing about those relationships (Ringenberg, 2009).

### **Translation of PASS to PASS-K and the Pilot Study**

The English version of the Parent and School Survey (PASS) was translated into Korean by an experienced translator, interpreter, and educators in order to survey non-English speaking Korean mothers for the purposes of this study. In order to check for the accuracy of the translation, a backward translation was conducted of the PASS-K by a bilingual educator. The back-translation of the Parent and School Survey (PASS-BT) was compared with the original PASS in English to ensure accuracy of the translation. In order to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the translated survey instrument and to identify problems in doing the survey, the researcher conducted a pilot study of the survey with a small group of Korean American mothers. The survey was piloted with 10 Korean-American mothers at a church Korean Language Program to double check for accuracy and to ensure that the Korean translated version and the English version were both asking the same question. Of the ten mothers who took the survey, eight of them answered the survey using the Korean version and two of the mothers used the English version of the survey. The results of the pilot are found in Table 6.

Table 6

*Results of the Pilot Survey of Ten Korean American Mothers*

<b>Categories</b>	<b>Range</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Parenting (Items 4, 14, 16, & 19)	Range = 13-19	2.58	X = 15.4
Communicating (Items 3, 6, 7, & 1)	Range = 7-18	2.76	X = 11.7
Volunteering (Items 1, 12, 15, 23)	Range = 4-19	4.86	X = 8.4
Learning at Home (2, 5, 9, & 18)	Range = 8-16	2.47	X = 13.9
Decision Making (Items 8, 13, 21, & 22)	Range = 5-13	3.50	X = 8.2
Collaborating (Items 10, 11, 20, & 24)	Range = 10-15	1.58	X = 12.9
Barriers (Items 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30)	Range = 8-30	7.01	X = 18.2
Total Scale	Range = 52-93	7.26	X = 70.5

As noted in Table 6, the Korean American mothers in the pilot study rated the highest mean score in the PARENTING, LEARNING AT HOME and COLLABORATING but as a group scored low in the VOLUNTEERING, COMMUNICATING AND DECISION-MAKING type. Also, Korean American mothers in the pilot study indicated high scores in BARRIERS, indicating that many of them experienced cultural capital deficits and felt challenged when it came to being more involved in their children's education. The participants asked the researchers for clarification regarding DECISION-MAKING. This construct was reviewed with the participants before completing the survey. In the post-survey conversation with the pilot study mothers, they shared that while they make many decisions about their children's education on a daily basis, they don't necessarily make these decisions at PTA meeting or in any other meetings at school. During the followup discussion, the topic of English

proficiency was discussed. Generally, the group as a whole felt that they regarded their child's education as their primary responsibility and held high expectation for their children to do well in school; they also expressed that their lack of English impacted their overall parent involvement.

### **Procedures**

After receiving approval of the dissertation proposal by the research committee and the University's Human Subjects Review Board (Appendix A), the researcher requested permission from the school system's research division to conduct the study. After written consent to conduct the study (Appendix B) was obtained from the school system, a letter (Appendix C) was sent to the principals of the three elementary schools with the after school Korean Language Program asking for permission to conduct the study at their school. After the principals responded positively to the request, each participant was provided with a packet of materials. One hundred participants were provided with the English and Korean version of the following: letter explaining the purpose of the study, the consent forms and the survey instruments. Each participant chose to complete the survey in Korean or English depending on their comfort level. The letter/consent form (Appendix D) were given to 100 Korean-American parents whose children attended the Korean Language Program. Subjects were asked to sign the informed consent document prior to responding to the PASS and PASS-K survey (Appendix E and F). The researcher's intent in the survey was to examine the Korean-American mother's perception about their parent involvement practices (Ringenberg, 2009).

This study was conducted in two phases. In Phase I, The Parent and School Survey by Ringenberg (2009) was used to survey Korean-American mothers. The PASS items have been previously tested for test-retest reliability, sufficient variance, and accurate qualitative interpretation by subjects (Ringenberg et al., 2005). The majority of the items passed all three criteria. Those items that did not initially meet all three criteria were altered to specifically address those shortcomings.

Also included in the PASS were five specific questions about barriers to parental involvement. These included lack of time, English proficiency, level of parent's education, family's years in the United States, and family's economic status. A sixth item, asking parents to identify any other barriers, resulted in such a small and diverse set of responses that it was not used in further analyses.

Having checked for accuracy, face validity, construct validity via the back-translation and pilot testing, the researcher asked 100 Korean American mothers whose children attend Korean Language Programs to complete the Parent and School Survey in English (PASS) or Korean (PASS+K) survey instrument regarding their parent engagement practices. In addition, the participating Korean American mothers were asked to provide demographic information regarding their cultural capital constructs. The survey results were examined to look for relationships between Korean American mothers' cultural capital constructs and mothers' parent engagement practices.

In Phase II, the survey results were reviewed for the purpose of identifying a smaller sample of parents to participate in the next phase of the study. The second phase of the study was qualitative in nature and featured a focus group interview. Six parents were selected for the interview phase of the study based on their scores on the

PASS/PASS-K. The selected mothers are parents of students in WES Korean Language Program. The interviews were intended to examine the mothers' perceptions about their own parent involvement experiences and the barriers or supports that might have contributed to their engagement.

### **Data Collection**

Descriptive analysis was conducted to summarize key demographic characteristics of all participants in the study sample. Descriptive statistics were also reported for all measures in the current study, including means, standard deviations, and score ranges. In addition, Cronbach alpha coefficients were calculated to estimate internal consistency of each of the multi-item scale. In order to answer the quantitative research questions, the researcher conducted bivariate correlation analysis to evaluate the strength of the relationships between Epstein's parent engagement types and Bourdieu's cultural capital. Finally, additional data analysis was conducted to analyze the significant mean differences between mothers and fathers and survey results taken in Korean in comparison with the responses in the English version.

Data collection activities included the administration of the PASS and PASS-K survey with the 100 Korean American parents whose children attended the schools offering the Korean Language Program; this was followed by one focus group discussion with six Korean American mothers from one of the local schools. Three mothers whose scores indicated high level parent involvement and three mothers whose scores indicated low level of parent involvement were chosen for the focus group interviews.

In conducting the study, the researcher utilized a participant selection variant of the sequential explanatory design. This type of design is used when the researcher

employs a quantitative strategy (survey) to identify appropriate candidates for the qualitative phase of the study (interviews). Accordingly, the consent form asked each respondent to enter his or her first and last names and contact information. It was necessary to collect this information to analyze survey responses and then select participants for the second phase of the study. The cover letter and consent form (Appendix D and Appendix E) sent to parents ensured participants that their identities and the names of their schools would be kept confidential and protected through implementation of data security procedures.

The first section of the survey asked respondents to share information about themselves and their perceptions about their own parent involvement behaviors. Data regarding the personal characteristics and school demographics of the 97 survey respondents are displayed in Table 7.

As targeted, the respondents were all of Korean descent. Originally 100 Korean American mothers of elementary school children in Washington School System were surveyed. Three schools offering Korean Language Programs were chosen as the site for the surveys. While the schools housing the Korean Language Programs are typical of the area, they draw students from the school's student body and students from other local schools who are interested in learning Korean. The survey was available to all Korean American mothers whose children attended the school and/or attended the Korean Language Program.

Table 7

*Demographic Characteristics of 97 Parents Completing PASS survey*

Descriptive Variables	Characteristics	Number	Percentages
PASS Versions	Korean	78	(80.4%)
	English	19	(19.6%)
Parent's Gender	Female	79	(81.4%)
	Male	16	(16.5%)
	Missing	2	(2.1%)
Marital Status	Married	96	(99%)
	Divorced	1	(1%)
Education Level	High School	5	(5.2%)
	Bachelors	51	(52.5%)
	Graduate	36	(37.1%)
	Missing	5	(5.2%)
Age	30-39	25	(25.8%)
	40-49	63	(64.9%)
	50+	9	(9.3%)
US Residency	1-10 years	20	(20.6%)
	10-20 years	46	(47.4%)
	20+ years	29	(29.9%)
	Missing	2	(2.1%)
English Proficiency	Limited	24	(24.7%)
	Some	46	(47.5%)
	Fluent	24	(24.7%)
	Missing	3	(3.1%)
Family Income	0-25,000	1	(1%)
	25,001-75,000	29	(30.0%)
	75,001+	59	(60.8%)
	Missing	8	(8.2%)
Child's Overall Grade	A	60	(61.8%)
	B	32	(33.0%)
	C	3	(3.1%)
	Missing	2	(2.1%)

There was a strong return rate of surveys. Of the 100 parents surveyed, 97 returned the survey completed. This positive result was attributed to aggressive campaigning of the researcher and the teachers at the Korean Language Programs. Furthermore, there was a great outpouring of support from the Korean community in support of the researcher and the outcome of the study. The researcher analyzed the



demographic information provided by the parents in order to describe the group as a whole. There were more surveys in Korean than English. This is supported by the other information shared by the parents, as most (64.9%) of the participants were older (40-49); having been in the United States less than 20 years (68%), their responses regarded their English fluency as not being strong. Less than 25% of the participants indicated that they were fluent in English. It was also interesting to note that the sample as a whole were highly educated and had high social economic status. This data is also representative of the schools in the area and the county in which this survey is conducted. The majority of the respondents were female, 79 (81.4%); 16 (16.5%) were male; and two (2.1%) did not indicate their gender on the survey. Ninety-nine percent of the participants indicated that they were married and 1% was divorced. While divorce is frowned upon in the Korean American community, the researcher believes that the data is not representative of the current state of the Korean American families. Finally, the participants as a whole shared that their students performed well in school and many of them received high marks on their report cards. For the purposes of this study, only those data sets pertaining to the mothers (79) were analyzed to calculate reliability and to address the research questions. While the targeted population was mothers of children currently attending elementary schools, several fathers also completed the survey. Because the purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of Korean American mothers, only those surveys completed by mothers were analyzed to answer the research questions pertaining to correlations between parent involvement and cultural capital. Additional data analysis will be conducted to discern if there were statistically significant mean differences between the mothers and

fathers and the responses given by participants using the English and Korean versions of the survey.

### **Survey Reliability**

For this study of Korean-American mothers' perceptions about their own parent involvement practices, the researcher analyzed mothers' scores on the total scale and on each of the subscales on the PASS and the PASS-K. SPSS version 21.0 was used to calculate inferential and descriptive statistics.

Cronbach alpha was computed to check for the reliability estimates for the sample of 79 Korean American mothers in this study. Cronbach alphas measure inter-item reliability and consistency of the survey instrument. They are used when no pretest-posttest reliability measures are available. Cronbach alphas were computed on all six types of parent involvement and were checked for internal consistency. According to Salkind (2007), a measure is considered to have acceptable reliability and internal consistency if the alpha score is higher than .70 and lower than .90. Despite the weak reliability on the LEARNING AT HOME, DECISION-MAKING and COLLABORATING WITH THE COMMUNITY scale, Cronbach alphas were consistent whether in English or Korea, suggesting the original scale may need further revision when working with the Korean American population. Ringberg et al (2009) even suggested that some items on this scale yielded lower intra-class correlation (similarity between items in the same subscale) for items 5, 6, 7, 8, 15, and 20. This may account for the low Cronbach alphas on the LEARNING AT HOME subscale (due to item 5), DECISION-MAKING (due to item 8) and COLLABORATING WITH THE COMMUNITY (due to item 20) in the current study. Furthermore, Cronbach alpha results suggest the removal of some items from the subscale. However, most scales had

moderate to strong reliability in English and Korean (PARENTING, COMMUNICATING and BARRIERS). Alpha coefficient analysis for this study sample indicated that the reliability of the total scale ranged from “moderate” to “strong” (Ringenberg, 2004) for the total scale. The following are the Alpha coefficients for the total scale:

- Korean American mothers only= .79
- English Survey Returns= .78
- Korean Survey Returns= .80
- Total Survey (Korean mothers/fathers and English/Korean)= .79

Following the demographic questions, the 30 items of the PASS (Appendix F) and PASS-K (Appendix G), which was developed by Ringenberg (2009), were presented to the participants. Each item asked the parents to consider their past parent involvement experiences in reviewing statements describing tasks associated with the Epstein’s parent involvement model and Bourdieu’s cultural capital theory. For example, the first item stated, “I feel very comfortable visiting my child’s school.” Respondents indicated their respective opinions about each of the 30 items by circling one of five responses on a Likert scale: *Strongly Disagree* (1), *Disagree* (2), *Neutral* (3) representing the midpoint, *Agree* (4) and *Strongly Agree* (5).

For the Parent Involvement Scale Parenting is represented by items four, 14, 16, and 19; Communicating by three, six, seven, and 17; Volunteering by one, 12, 15, and 23; Learning at Home by two, five, nine, and 18; Decision-Making by eight, 13, 21, and 22; and Collaborating with the Community by 10, 11, 20, and 24. The PASS items were calculated by assigning numbers to the response categories according to “strongly agree” = 5 through “strongly disagree” = 1. Items six, eight, 16, 17, 18, and 20 are reverse ordered. Therefore, when calculating the parental involvement scales for Table 1, those

items were reverse scored. Each of the items on the Parent and School Survey was designed to explore one of six areas of Epstein's parent involvement model: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with the community, and Bourdieu's Cultural Capital and possible barriers to parent involvement: English proficiency, level of education, income level, years in the US and lack of time. Each of the Epstein's areas is addressed by four survey items and impact of Bourdieu's theory is addressed by five survey items (see survey in Appendix F). The descriptive data displayed below in Table 8 show that most of the Cronbach alpha-coefficients computed for this study are well above .60 for the total scale (.79 for mothers, .81 for English version and .80 for Korean version), indicating that the overall survey (.81) showed strong relationship between the different variables. The exception to that statement for mothers is for the LEARNING AT HOME, and DECISION-MAKING construct.

According to the descriptive information provided by the parents, the following were noted:

*Parenting (Items 4, 14, 16, & 19).* Overall, the participants reported high scores on this scale. The reliability of this scale was Strong overall for all groups and the reliability of the scale in Korean and English were almost the same. The alpha coefficient for the parenting scale with item 16 (My child misses school several days each semester.) was .59, which was not as strong as the researcher would have liked. However, this was substantially improved by the removal of that item and all subsequent analysis was run without item 16.

Table 8

*Cronbach Alphas for Epstein's Six Types of Parent Involvement and Bourdieu's Cultural Capital Theory (Barriers)*

<b>Construct</b>	<b>Range</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Alpha-Coefficients</b>
Parenting (Items 4, 14, 16, & 19) <i>Removal of item 16</i>	7-20	$X = 16.36$	2.34	$\alpha$ (Mothers) = .73 $\alpha$ (English) = .88 $\alpha$ (Korean) = .71 $\alpha$ (Total) = .77
Communicating (Items 3, 6, 7, & 17)	9-20	$X = 15.95$	2.519	$\alpha$ (Mothers) = .71 $\alpha$ (English) = .81 $\alpha$ (Korean) = .63 $\alpha$ (Total) = .67
Volunteering (Items 1, 12, 15, 23)	5-15	$X = 10.33$	2.87	$\alpha$ (Mothers) = .69 $\alpha$ (English) = .70 $\alpha$ (Korean) = .67 $\alpha$ (Total) = .69
Learning at Home (2, 5, 9, & 18)	5-18	$X = 13.26$	2.147	$\alpha$ (Mothers) = .39 $\alpha$ (English) = .34 $\alpha$ (Korean) = .42 $\alpha$ (Total) = .38
Decision Making (Items 8, 13, 21, & 22)	5-18	$X = 12.27$	2.564	$\alpha$ (Mothers) = .55 $\alpha$ (English) = .66 $\alpha$ (Korean) = .53 $\alpha$ (Total) = .55
Collaborating (Items 10, 11, 20, & 24) <i>Removal of item 20</i>	3-15	$X = 9.833$	2.13	$\alpha$ (Mothers) = .62 $\alpha$ (English) = .65 $\alpha$ (Korean) = .62 $\alpha$ (Total) = .61
Barriers (Items 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30)	5-25	$X = 13.25$	4.486	$\alpha$ (Mothers) = .85 $\alpha$ (English) = .78 $\alpha$ (Korean) = .83 $\alpha$ (Total) = .83
Total Scale	69-126	$X = 100.54$	11.33	$\alpha$ (Mothers) = .79 $\alpha$ (English) = .81 $\alpha$ (Korean) = .80 $\alpha$ (Total) = .79

*Communicating (Items 3, 6, 7, & 17)*. Participants reported high scores on this scale. The reliability of this scale was strong for the English version and for the mothers, moderate for the Korean version, and minimally acceptable for the total sample.

*Volunteering (Items 1, 12, 15, 23).* Participants reported moderate scores on this scale. The reliability of this scale was strong for the English version and moderate for the remaining scales.

*Learning at Home (2, 5, 9, & 18).* Participants reported high scores on this scale. The reliability of this scale was weak for the English and Korean version, as well as the total sample.

*Decision Making (Items 8, 13, 21, & 22).* Participants reported moderate scores on this scale. The reliability of this scale was weak for the Korean version and total sample, but was minimally acceptable for the English version.

*Collaborating (Items 10, 11, 20, & 24).* Participants reported low scores on this scale. The total mean average for collaborating (9.833) was the lowest in comparison to the other types. The reliability of this scale was weak. All analyses with this variable were run without item 20 (If my child was having trouble in school, I would not know how to get extra help for him/her); due to the significant improvement in the internal consistency; the reliability for this scale with item 20 was .552.

*Barriers (Items 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30).* Participants reported relatively high scores on this scale. The reliability of this scale was strong for the Korean version and the overall sample, and good for the English version. The data seem to indicate that while Korean American mothers experienced barriers, they continued to participate in parenting, communicating, and learning at home.

*Total Scale.* Overall, the participants reported moderate scores on this scale. The reliability of this scale was strong.

## Correlation Coefficients

The researcher next computed Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficients to describe the magnitude of the relationship between the six parenting types and the cultural capital factors. A correlation coefficient can range from -1.00 to +1.00. The results are displayed in Table 9.

Table 9

*Correlational Relationships Between Demographic Variables and Outcome Measures for the Mothers Only*

Parent Involvement Types/Barriers	Education Level	Length of U.S. Residency	English Proficiency	Family Income (SES)
Parenting	.354**	.112	.378**	.316*
Communicating	.237*	.204	.430**	.241*
Volunteering (without item1)	.325**	.157	.436**	.146
Learning at Home	.238*	.127	.283*	.085
Decision Making	.267*	.234*	.324**	.184
Collaborating (without item 20)	.285*	.271*	.444**	.127
Barriers to Involvement	.012	-.098	-.193	.053

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$

In interpreting these data, the researcher used an established set of criteria to make judgments about the significance of the correlations (Gliner & Morgan, 2000). If a correlation was between 0.0 and .30, it was considered to be weak; if it were between .31 and .70 it was considered modest; and if it were .71 or above, it was considered to be

strong (Gliner & Morgan, 2000). The .05 alpha level was used to identify those correlations that were statistically significant.

Of the four cultural capitals: Education Level, Length of U.S. Residency, English Proficiency and Socioeconomic Status, the data as shown in Table 9 indicate that Korean American mothers' English skills were most impactful in whether they participated in parent involvement activities or not. English skills were most strongly related to higher parenting scores ( $r = .378, p < .05$ ), greater learning at home ( $r = .430, p < .05$ ), higher learning at home scores ( $r = .283, p < .05$ ), more empowerment in terms of decision making ( $r = .324, p < .05$ ), greater likelihood to volunteer ( $r = .436, p < .05$ ) and more collaboration with the school ( $r = .444, p < .05$ ). Additionally, better English skills were associated with lower barriers to involvement scores.

Overall, the data indicated that Korean American mothers with higher education were more involved in multiple ways. Their education was significantly related to higher parenting scores,  $r = .354, p < .05$ , higher communication scores,  $r = .256, p < .05$ , higher learning at home scores,  $r = .238, p < .05$ , more empowerment in terms of making decisions,  $r = .267, p < .05$ , greater volunteer work,  $r = .325, p < .05$ , and more collaboration with the school,  $r = .285, p < .05$ . Also, mothers who were educated were less impacted by the cultural barriers that they experienced.

While less impacting, higher SES was significantly related to higher parenting scores,  $r = .316, p < .05$ , and higher communication scores,  $r = .241, p < .05$ . Length of residence in the US was significantly correlated with decision making,  $r = .234, p < .05$ , and collaboration scores,  $r = .271, p < .05$ . It is important to note that regardless of their significance, the cultural capital or the lack of it did not impede Korean American



mothers from supporting their children in their education as noted by the score on the barriers. The four cultural capitals—Education Level, Length of U.S. Residency, English Proficiency and Socioeconomic Status—were not significantly related to barriers suggesting that parent involvement was not impacted by mother’s Education Level or English Fluency for these Korean American mothers.

### **Research Questions and Statistical Hypotheses**

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 21.0) was used to calculate inferential and descriptive statistics to answer the research questions for the study. The qualitative and quantitative phases of the study were conducted to examine the following research questions.

#### **Research Question 1**

What is the relationship between mother’s score on PARENTING scale and her score on Education Level, Years in the United States, Level of Family Income, and Mother’s Level of English Competence?

#### **Statistical Hypothesis 1**

From the perspective of the Korean-American parents, there are no statistically significant correlations between parents’ score on PARENTING type as identified by Epstein’s (2001) Parent Involvement Types and the parents’ score on Education Level, Years in the United States, Level of Family Income, and Mother’s Level of English Competence.

Table 10

*Correlational Relationships Between Demographic Variables and Parenting*

	Education Level	Length of U.S. Residency	English Proficiency	Family Income
Parenting	.354**	.112	.378**	.316*

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$

It was expected that there would be no statistically significant relationship between parents' score on PARENTING type as identified by Epstein's (2001) Parent Involvement Types and the parents' score on Education Level, Years in the United States, Level of Family Income, and Mother's Level of English Competence. The hypothesis was partly supported by the data. Parenting was significantly related to Korean American mothers' education level, English proficiency and family income.

**Research Question 2**

What is the relationship between mother's score on COMMUNICATING scale and her score on Education Level, Years in the United States, Level of Family Income, and Mother's Level of English Competence?

**Statistical Hypothesis 2**

From the perspective of the Korean-American parents, there are no statistically significant correlations between parents' score on COMMUNICATING type as identified by Epstein's (2001) Parent Involvement Types and the parents' score on Education Level, Years in the United States, Level of Family Income, and Mother's Level of English Competence.

Table 11

*Correlational Relationships Between Demographic Variables and Communicating*

	Education Level	Length of U.S. Residency	English Proficiency	Family Income
Communicating	.237*	.204	.430**	.241*

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$

It was expected that there would be no statistically significant correlations between parents' score on COMMUNICATING type as identified by Epstein's (2003) Parent Involvement Types and the parents' score on: Education Level, Years in the United States, Level of Family Income, and Mother's Level of English Competence. The hypothesis was partly supported by the data. Parenting was significantly related to Korean American mothers' English proficiency, education level and family income.

**Research Question 3**

What is the relationship between mothers' score on VOLUNTEERING scale and her score on: Education Level, Years in the United States, Level of Family Income, and Mother's Level of English Competence?

**Statistical Hypothesis 3**

From the perspective of the Korean-American parents, there are no statistically significant correlations between parents' score on VOLUNTEERING type as identified by Epstein's (2001) Parent Involvement Types and the parents' score on: Education Level, Years in the United States, Level of Family Income, and Mother's Level of English Competence.

Table 12

*Correlational Relationships Between Demographic Variables and Volunteering*

	Education Level	Length of U.S. Residency	English Proficiency	Family Income
Volunteering (without item1)	.325**	.157	.436**	.146

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$

It was expected that there would be no statistically significant correlations between parents' score on VOLUNTEERING type as identified by Epstein's (2001) Parent Involvement Types and the parents' score on: Education Level, Years in the United States, Level of Family Income, and Mother's Level of English Competence. The hypothesis was partly supported by the data. Volunteering was significantly related to Korean American mothers' education level and English proficiency.

**Research Question 4**

What is the relationship between mothers' score on LEARNING AT HOME scale and her score on: Education Level, Years in the United States, Level of Family Income, and Mother's Level of English Competence?

**Statistical Hypothesis 4**

From the perspective of the Korean-American parents, there are no statistically significant correlations between parents' score on LEARNING AT HOME type as identified by Epstein's (2001) Parent Involvement Types and the parents' score on Education Level, Years in the United States, Level of Family Income, and Mother's Level of English Competence.

Table 13

*Correlational Relationships Between Demographic Variables and Learning at Home*

	Education Level	Length of U.S. Residency	English Proficiency	Family Income
Learning at Home	.238*	.127	.283*	.085

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$

It was expected that there would be no statistically significant correlation between parents' score on LEARNING AT HOME type as identified by Epstein's (2001) Parent Involvement Types and the parents' score on: Education Level, Years in the United States, Level of Family Income, and Mother's Level of English Competence. The hypothesis was partly supported by the data. Learning at Home was significantly related to Korean American mothers' education level and English proficiency.

**Research Question 5**

What is the relationship between mothers' score on DECISION-MAKING scale and her score on: Education Level, Years in the United States, Level of Family Income, and Mother's Level of English Competence?

**Statistical Hypothesis 5**

From the perspective of the Korean-American parents, there are no statistically significant correlations between parents' score on DECISION-MAKING type as identified by Epstein's (2001) Parent Involvement Types and the parents' score on Education Level, Years in the United States, Level of Family Income, and Mother's Level of English Competence.

Table 14

*Correlational Relationships Between Demographic Variables and Decision-Making*

	Education Level	Length of U.S. Residency	English Proficiency	Family Income
Decision Making	.267*	.234*	.324**	.184

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$

It was expected that there would be no statistically significant correlation between parents' score on DECISION-MAKING type as identified by Epstein's (2001) Parent Involvement Types and the parents' score on Education Level, Years in the United States, Level of Family Income, and Mother's Level of English Competence. The hypothesis was partly supported by the data. Decision-making was significantly related to Korean American mothers' English proficiency, educational level and length of US residency.

**Research Question 6**

What is the relationship between mothers' score on COLLABORATING WITH THE COMMUNITY scale and her score on: Education Level, Years in the United States, Level of Family Income, and Mother's Level of English Competence?

**Statistical Hypothesis 6**

From the perspective of the Korean-American parents, there are no statistically significant correlations between parents' score on COLLABORATING WITH THE COMMUNITY type as identified by Epstein's (2001) Parent Involvement Types and the parents' score on Education Level, Years in the United States, Level of Family Income, and Mother's Level of English Competence

Table 15

*Correlational Relationships Between Demographic Variables and Collaborating with the Community*

	Education Level	Length of U.S. Residency	English Proficiency	Family Income
Collaborating (without item 20)	.285*	.271*	.444**	.127

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$

It was expected that there would be no statistically significant correlation between parents' score on COLLABORATING WITH THE COMMUNITY type as identified by Epstein's (2001) Parent Involvement Types and the parents' score on Education Level, Years in the United States, Level of Family Income, and Mother's Level of English Competence. The hypothesis was partly supported by the data. Collaborating with the community was significantly related to Korean American mothers' English proficiency, education level and length of US residency.

### **Additional Analysis**

#### **Barriers**

Several of the cultural capitals were strong predictors of parental involvement. Not surprisingly these were all inverse relationships; as barriers decreased, involvement increased. Participants reported moderate scores on this scale. The total mean score for BARRIER was 13.25. The reliability of this scale is excellent for the Korean version and the overall sample, and good for the English version. The total alpha coefficient for BARRIERS was .83. Better English skills were associated with lower barriers to involvement scores.

## **Fathers and Mothers**

For the purposes of this study, Korean American mothers were identified as the targeted participants for this study. It was assumed on the part of the researcher and supported by literature cited in Chapter Two that mothers tend to be the caregiver and therefore are usually the ones that are involved in parent engagement activities. While most of the survey participants were women (79), some of the returned surveys were completed by fathers (16). When the researcher noted the anomaly, she called some of the participants to inquire as to why fathers completed the survey, and to ensure that the explanations and/or the directions were clear. The researcher found out that some of the fathers completed the survey on behalf of their wives. As some of the fathers act as “cultural attache” or “liaison” for their wives, they tend to co-participate in school-related activities, especially when they involved communicating in English. As they completed other school-related paperwork, the fathers reported that they felt comfortable and knowledgeable about completing the surveys themselves. Independent t-Test was conducted to determine the significance of the difference between the means of mothers and fathers who completed the surveys. The data in Table 16 below compared the results from the mothers’ survey with those completed by fathers.

Due to missing responses on some of the questions, only those with completed subscale scores were used to compare the significance of the mean differences. Overall, mothers reported higher collaboration scores than the fathers. Furthermore, while barriers ( $X=13.65$ ) do exist as noted in Table 16, the data indicate that mothers continue to persist in supporting their children’s schooling as noted by the higher overall mean score ( $X=100.77$ ) of the mothers that took the survey.



Table 16

*T-Test Comparison: Mean Differences in Major Outcome Scales Between Mothers and Fathers*

Parent Involvement Types/Barriers	Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t Value	p Value
Parenting	Mother	72	12.25	1.92	t(86) = .66	p=.51
	Father	16	11.88	2.66		
Communicating	Mother	78	15.77	2.60	t(92) = -1.23	p=.22
	Father	16	16.63	2.16		
Volunteering	Mother	79	14.53	3.31	t(93) = 1.76	p =.08
	Father	16	13.00	2.37		
Learning at Home	Mother	79	13.28	1.87	t(93) = .58	p=.56
	Father	16	12.94	3.19		
Decision-Making	Mother	79	12.19	2.55	t(93) = -.09	p=.93
	Father	16	12.25	2.62		
Collaboration	Mother	77	13.57	2.62	t(93) = 2.63	p=.01
	Father	16	12.44	2.66		
Total Barriers	Mother	77	3.65	4.66	t(91) = 1.97	p = .05
	Father	16	11.25	2.93		
Total	Mother	64	100.77	11.19	t(78) = .92	p = .36
	Father	16	97.88	11.50		

### **English and Korean**

A great deal of effort was devoted to translating and back-translating the survey in this study. The participants were provided two versions of the consent form and the Parent and School Survey; one was written in English (PASS) and one was translated into Korean (PASS-K). In order to ensure the reliability of the translations, a backward translation was conducted in order to check for accuracy. When given a choice, most (78)

parents chose to complete the survey in Korean while some (19) chose to do so in English. Independent t-Test was conducted to determine the significance of the difference between the means of English version and Korean version of the completed surveys. In analyzing the data, the researcher noted some clear differences between the scale scores between those who responded in English versus Korean (Table 17). Due to missing responses on some of the questions, only those with completed subscale scores were used to compare the significance of the mean differences.

Among the Korean American mothers, those responding via the Korean form reported significantly higher barrier scores, and significantly lower parenting, communicating, volunteering, and collaborating scores than those who used the English version. The quantitative data produced some interesting findings. In addition, the quantitative data in this study served the important purpose of informing the qualitative phase of the study.

Table 17

*T-Test Comparison: Mean Differences in Major Outcome Scales Between PASS and PASS-K*

Parent Involvement Types/Barriers	Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	tValue	pValue
Parenting	Korean	58	11.98	1.83	t(70) = -2.49	p=.02
	English	14	13.36	1.95		
Communicating	Korean	63	15.48	2.51	t(76) = -2.09	p=.04
	English	15	17.00	2.65		
Volunteering	Korean	64	14.02	3.30	t(77) = -3.01	p =.004
	English	15	16.73	2.37		
Learning at Home	Korean	64	13.25	1.82	t(77) = -.28	p=.78
	English	15	13.40	2.17		
Decision-Making	Korean	64	11.97	2.52	t(77) = -1.61	p=.11
	English	15	13.13	2.53		
Collaboration	Korean	62	13.08	2.50	t(76) = -3.41	p=.001
	English	15	15.60	2.17		
Total Barriers	Korean	62	14.73	4.17	t(75) = 4.64	p <.001
	English	15	9.20	4.00		
Total	Korean	50	99.62	11.77	t(62) = -1.57	p = .12
	English	14	104.86	7.84		

### **Overview of Qualitative Design Selection of Interview Participants**

For this mixed-method study, the researcher employed a participant selection variant of the sequential explanatory design (Creswell, 2009). In this type of design, the quantitative phase of the study, in this case the use of a survey, is implemented to identify a high-quality sample of participants for the qualitative portion of the study. The second phase of this study involved conducting focus group interviews with a smaller sampling of mothers. The researcher reviewed the quantitative results to identify three mothers

who reported a high degree of parent involvement and three mothers who reported less degree of parent involvement in comparison to the other mothers who had returned the survey. In addition, the researcher sought to identify a sample of mothers who would reflect diversity in terms of age, English proficiency, family income level, number of years in the United States, and education background. For the 97 Parent and School Survey returned by parents, the total score on the Epstein's parent engagement score scale ranged from 69-126. The three respondents in this study scored above the mean (100.54) on the scale and the other three selected for this study scored below the mean.

The researcher contacted each of the mothers selected for the qualitative phase of the study and requested her consent to participate in a single focus group interview that would last between 60 and 75 minutes. Prospective participants were informed that they were being requested for this part of the study because they had reported either high or low levels on the PASS. They were also told that the interview would include questions about their parent involvement practices and questions about the impact of their decision to be involved in their children's education. All six candidates that were contacted agreed to participate in the interview. The focus group discussion was scheduled and conducted and the followup emails and phone calls were conducted within a three-week timeframe. Interviews were conducted in a private meeting room at a location convenient to all participants. The researcher employed a written interview protocol to conduct the interviews (Appendix I). Interviews were audio recorded using a computer tablet application. The researcher also recorded written notes during the interviews and transcribed the audio recording.

## **Research Questions**

The focus group discussion was conducted to gain insight about the following research questions:

*Research Question 1:* What is the relationship between mothers' score on PARENTING scale and her score on Education Level, Years in the United States, Level of Family Income, and Mother's Level of English Competence?

*Research Question 2:* What is the relationship between mothers' score on COMMUNICATING scale and her score on Education Level, Years in the United States, Level of Family Income, and Mother's Level of English Competence?

*Research Question 3:* What is the relationship between mothers' score on VOLUNTEERING scale and her score on Education Level, Years in the United States, Level of Family Income, and Mother's Level of English Competence?

*Research Question 4:* What is the relationship between mothers' score on LEARNING AT HOME scale and her score on Education Level, Years in the United States, Level of Family Income, and Mother's Level of English Competence?

*Research Question 5:* What is the relationship between mothers' score on DECISION-MAKING scale and her score on Education Level, Years in the United States, Level of Family Income, and Mother's Level of English Competence?

*Research Question 6:* What is the relationship between mothers' score on COLLABORATING WITH THE COMMUNITY scale and her score on Education Level, Years in the United States, Level of Family Income, and Mother's Level of English Competence?

## **Focus Group Questions**

In order to answer the research questions, the researcher developed additional probing questions (Appendix I) that prompted focus group participants to give detailed feedback about their own parent involvement practices. The following are some overarching questions asked during the focus group discussion:

- How much effort do you put into helping your child learn at home?
- Do you meet in person with teachers and/or administrators at your child's school?
- Do you volunteer at your child's school Have you helped out at your child's school?
- How often do you help your child engage in activities which are educational outside the home?
- How often do you visit your child's school?
- Have you discussed your child's school with other family member, friends, or other parents?
- What are some reasons that make it easier or harder to be involved in your child's education?

The researcher conducted a thorough review of the audio recordings and the transcripts from the interviews. During this process, the researcher examined the data to identify any themes or patterns that emerged from the interviews. In analyzing, coding, and interpreting the data, the researcher implemented strategies recommended by Creswell and Plano Clark (2007).

## Focus Group Coding System

The researcher developed and employed a coding system to help identify themes and patterns in the interview responses. After noting the participants' responses using Microsoft word program, the researcher used the search feature to highlight the responses as appropriate. Special attention was given to responses as they related to Epstein's six types of parent involvement and barriers to parent involvement as noted by Bourdieu and Ringenberg. The coding system is depicted in Table 18.

Table 18

### *Coding System*

Joyce Epstein's Parenting Types		Bourdieu's Cultural Capital		Barriers to Parent Involvement	
Source	Code	Experience	Code	Type	Code
Parenting	P	English Language Competency	EC	Lack of Resources	R
Volunteering	V	Parent's Education Level	PE	Family	F
Communicating	C	Years in the US	US	Church	Ch
Decision-Making	DM	Family Income	FI	Welcome	W
Learning at Home	LH	Time	T	Knowledge	K
Collaborating with Community	CC	Other	O	Age	A

By employing this coding system with the transcribed focus group discussion, the researcher was able to identify patterns and themes in the responses provided by the focus group participants. These themes and patterns provide some insights into why Korean-American mothers were involved in their child's education, the impact of their parent involvement experiences on their children, and ways in which mothers' perceptions can

be supported and even enhanced through carefully constructed parent engagement experiences.

The next section of this chapter provides a review of Korean-American mothers' responses during the focus group interviews. Responses are analyzed in terms of how they provided information to answer the research questions. Discussion of the mothers' comments is presented in four parts: (a) brief background information about each of the interview participants, (b) how the responses reflect mothers' perceptions of their parent involvement in relation to Epstein's parent involvement types, (c) how the responses reflect mothers' perceptions of their cultural capital and how those barriers affected their parent involvement, and (d) description and discussion of additional themes that emerged from review of the mothers' responses.

### **Qualitative Data Analysis**

#### **Mothers' Background**

The researcher used the results of the Parent and School Survey Scale to identify a group of three mothers who reported a high degree of parent involvement and three mothers who reported a low degree of parent involvement. The following is a listing of pseudonyms as well as brief background information about each of the mothers:

- (Sue), age 30-39, is a mother of two children. Her son is a kindergartener and she has another child in pre-school. She indicated that her son is an A average student. She is somewhat proficient in English and has lived in the US between 0-10 years. She has a Bachelor's degree and indicated that the family income is between \$25,000-75,000.
- (Wilma), age 50-59, is a mother of a son who is in third grade. She indicated that he is a B student. She is not fluent and is limited in English and has lived in the US



between 10-20 years. She has a Bachelor's degree and indicated that the family income is \$25,000-75,000.

- (Kate), age 40-49, is a mother of two children. Her older daughter is in middle school and her son is in elementary school. She indicated that her son is a B average student. She is not fluent and is limited in English and has lived in the US between 10-20 years. She has a Bachelor's degree and indicated that the family income is over \$75,000.
- (Jane), age 40-49, is a mother of two children in elementary school. Her older daughter is a B average student. She is fluent in English and has lived in the US for 10-20 years. She has a Graduate degree and indicated that the family income is over \$75,000. Jane is an ESOL teacher who works in the WPSS school system.
- (Yvonne), age 40-49, is a mother of two boys. Her older son is in middle school and her younger son is in elementary school and is a B average student. She is somewhat proficient in English and has lived in the US for 10-20 years. She has a Graduate degree and indicated that the family income is over \$75,000.
- (Mary), age 30-39, is a mother of twin girls in elementary school. Her daughters are both A average students. She is fluent in English and has lived in the US for 20+ years. She has a Graduate degree and indicated that the family income is between \$25,000-75,000.

As each of these mothers participated in the focus group discussion with the researcher, each shared their perceptions as they pertained to Epstein's parent involvement construct and their perceptions about the barriers and how they impacted their parent involvement. Table 19 displays the characteristics of the mothers selected for

the qualitative phase of the study. Mothers are identified by pseudonym, rather than name, to protect their confidentiality.

Table 19

*Demographic Characteristics of Participating Mothers*

Pseudonym	Age	English Proficiency	Years in the US	Education	Family' Income	Epstein Score	Bourdieu Score
Wilma	50-59	No/Limited	10-20	High School	\$25,000-75,000	68	18
Sue	30-39	Some/Proficient	0-10	High School	\$25,000-75,000	74	10
Yvonne	40-49	Some/Proficient	10-20	Graduate	\$75,000+	74	14
Jane	40-49	Fluent/Native Speaker	10-20	Graduate	\$75,000+	86	11
Kate	40-49	No/Limited	10-20	Bachelor's	\$75,000+	90	18
Mary	30-39	Fluent/Native Speaker	20+	Graduate	\$25,000-75,000	97	7

**Mothers' Perceptions about Their Parent Involvement Practices (Epstein)**

Focus group questions were developed using Lambert's (2000) framework to elicit detailed descriptions regarding mothers, parent involvement behaviors and barriers to parent involvement. Lambert's moderator's guide encouraged the use of probes to increase clarification regarding parent involvement practices perceived by Korean American mothers. The focus group questions were field tested first with subjects who are members of the researcher's church group.

The researcher conducted the focus group with the six Korean American mothers with students in elementary schools in the Washington Public School System. All focus

group discussions were audio recorded and transcribed. The data were categorized using the conceptual framework outlined in Chapter 1 into the domains associated with Epstein’s parent involvement construct and Bourdieu’s cultural capital theory. Codes were developed to capture the data. The transcripts were reviewed using a data analysis template and key information was highlighted per descriptors. The descriptors were then categorized into themes (Table 20). Before finalizing the analysis of the data, the researcher emailed each participant to confirm what was discussed at the focus group and what was noted in the researcher’s log. All six mothers confirmed what was shared at the focus group discussion was what was captured by the researcher.

Table 20

*Focus Group Themes*

Epstein’s Themes	Bourdieu’s Themes	Other Themes
Theme 1 Parenting	Theme 7 English Language	Theme 11 Family
Theme 2 Volunteering	Competency	Theme 12 Church
Theme 3 Communicating	Theme 8 Parent’s Education	Theme 13 Welcome
Theme 4 Decision-Making	Level	Theme 14 Knowledge
Theme 5 Learning at Home	Theme 9 Years in the US	Theme 15 Age
Theme 6 Collaborating with Community	Theme 10 Family Income	

The results of the data analysis are described for each focus group area. Abridged forms of the interview questions serve as subheadings. In response to the questions and probes, the following quotes were shared by the participants of the focus group discussion.

## Focus Group Themes

Theme 1 (PARENTING). When asked about their parenting type behaviors, mothers felt strongly about making education a priority for their family. In response to “How much effort do you put into helping your child learn at home?” mothers readily gave multiple examples of what they do once their children get home from school.

Kate-“When he gets home from school, I usually help him get started on his homework by sitting next to him and get him going. Usually he is okay and does it on his own but every once in a while, I help him. I try to foster his independence so that he develops a habit of doing things for himself and solving his own problems.”

Wilma-“When he comes home, we help him get settled and get him started on his homework. We tell him it’s important to try his best. Because we are worried about him and can’t help him, we found a tutor who comes and helps him twice a week. We can’t read to him so we have asked our tutor to help him with his homework and read to him. He is a good boy and he does try hard.”

Mary-“I try to help my kids with their homework most weeknights. Oftentimes, they are confused about the instructions/directions. My kids know that school is a priority and that I put heavy emphasis on them trying to do their best and to learn a lot. I always make sure that they complete their homework assignments and that they read as often as they can. A specific example of helping them: they have weekly spelling tests and since we have a 25 minute ride to school every day, during the daily morning drive I quiz them on their list of spelling words for the week. This is extremely helpful to them. I am not shy about speaking up to the teacher/school concerning my child's learning needs.”

Jane-“I read with my children (I used to do it a lot more but as they grow older, I find myself reading less. Instead, I let them tell me what they read – I pretend that I really am interested in the characters and plot so that they want to share more). I pick an educational video clip, watch it together, and discuss it afterward. I listen to what they have to say about school, teachers, and their friends. I check their folders and monitor their academic progress. I establish a reward system at home to motivate them to do extra work & reading (for example, we have a 100 chart and once they earn 100 starts on the chart, they can get a new toy from Target.)”

A mother who is an educator herself and fluent in English shared that she often has conversation with her children about the importance of school and making it their priority.

Jane-“I help my child understand the content whenever they need any sort of clarification or help. Sometimes, it could be every day for 5 minutes. Other times, it could be once a week for 20 minutes. My children know that school is important. We frequently talk about their future – what they want to be when they grow up. I tell them that although they do not have to decide what they want to be yet, they do need to prepare themselves for the future. I also tell them that the school is one of the very important BASIC factors that will decide what they could be in the future.”

Another mother stressed the importance of positive friendship and how she focuses on developing positive behavior and discipline when supporting her son.

Kate-“The other thing I try to instill in him is to find friends who are a positive influence and help him foster friendships and show him ways to get along with others. I also try to support the school’s discipline policy so that he can monitor his own learning of subject matters. While I am not entirely confident and not sure if I am totally successful in his learning, I do feel I am making some progress.”

When asked, “how confident are you in your ability to make sure that your child’s school meets your child’s learning needs?”, the mothers were self-reflective when answering the question. Sue, a young mother whose first child is in kindergarten, spoke about her worries in getting her son ready for his first year in school and what she did in order to prepare him for school.

Sue-“My older child is in kindergarten. This is my first year as a parent of an elementary school child. There is a lot to learn and school is very confusing. Before he started kindergarten, I made sure that he knew his numbers and the ABCs. He practiced writing his name too. At first, when I talked to my friends and other parents, I got nervous because they told me how well their child is doing in school. This made me worried because my son couldn’t read and write by himself but he is getting better every day. He can read now.”

Yvonne who is concerned about not having all the answers turns to online resources and feels successful when her children come home with good grades and when they receive positive comments from their teachers.

Yvonne-“I let the kids do their homework first every night. I try to answer any questions from my kids and I don’t have right answers sometimes. We search the answers on line most of times together and discuss about it and we go to the library to find books we need. I register science program my kids can attend after we talk about it because they are so curious about science factors and try to do science experiments. We talk about the day at school during the dinner time. It is also include what was the best and anything they need to be helped. I try to do my best to meet my kid’s learning needs, but I don’t have any confident. Just I can feel like successful when they get good grade and teacher’s positive comment on their level.”

Jane exuded confidence and made strategic moves in order to have the best education accessible to her children. She was even purposeful in where the family resided in order to ensure that her children had every opportunity to be successful in school.

Jane-“ Most of the time, I feel successful in helping my children in general although like any other parents, I do sometimes doubt myself and ask “Is this the best I could do?” and “I am very confident. The school my children attend is the one I chose and moved into. I wouldn’t have moved into this area we live in if it didn’t have the schools (elementary, middle, high) it has.”

## Theme 2 (COMMUNICATING)

Participants were asked about the ways in which they communicated with their child’s teacher and/or administrators and whether they felt connected with their child’s school. Not only did they visit the school often, many of them communicated with their child’s teachers via the email. After meeting with her child’s teacher, a behavior chart was created to communicate back and forth regarding her son’s behavior.

Kate- “Yes, I met with teachers and the principal of my child’s school. If I have a question or issues related to my son, I contact the school. I received an email

from my son's teacher about his behavior and so I responded. After the discussion with the teacher, a behavior chart was started. If I need to communicate with the school, I prefer to email them. I feel that it helps me stay connected to the school. I do not have any issues communicating with my child's school."

Wilma was invited to an Educational Management Team (EMT) meeting at her son's school after they noticed he was having difficulty focusing. As a result, she communicates regularly with the school through her husband.

Wilma-"I went to my son's parent conferences every year. When he was in second grade, they asked me to come to the school to have a special meeting with a team of people. They told me that my son needed to focus more and needs help with writing. Since then, I have met with his teachers and if I have a question, I go with my husband or I ask my friend to go with me to school since I don't speak English very well. If I need to I can communicate a little bit."

Wilma and Sue who do not speak English make sure to stay informed about their sons' schooling by having their husbands there to support them. And when they need to, they seek the support of their friends and family to communicate with the school.

Wilma-"I can tell my son is doing better because of the grades he is bringing home on his work. When I ask him how he did, he is always saying "good" and is positive about school. If I have a question about something, I ask other mothers or ask my son."

Sue-"My husband and I went to the kindergarten orientation and conference. I don't feel confident about my English so I need him to go with me. I haven't really gone to the school or contacted them. I make sure to read all the letters and flyers that come home in his backpack. When I have questions, I ask my sister who also has a son in the same school. She has gone through it before so she knows. And if she doesn't know, I ask my friend who has a daughter in first grade."

For many parents, their children serve as a liaison between home and school. Because their children are fluent in English while they are not, they keep up with what is

going on at school through their own children. In the case of Yvonne, her son was an advocate for his own education and he prompted her to seek help from the school.

Yvonne-“I met the teacher again after I went to school for the open house because my kid kept telling me that his math class was so easy and I observed he finish his work early and start to chat with his friend. I talked to about that with teacher and she were aware of that and she knew how to handle. My concern was his behavior to interrupt his friend during the class. I know my kid is so social to stick with his friend. His teacher has kept him busy after he finishes his work in the class that she gave him extra work or let him review one more time to find a mistake, or give him a chance to help her that made my son happy. He feels that he is such a great helper for his teacher.”

For the most part, many of the Korean American mothers used the traditional methods for communicating with the school.

Yvonne-“I usually send an e-mail to my kid’s teacher first whenever I need to talk to them such as question or concern. They reply back to me in a few days or give me a call when they are available.

Sometime, I write a note that my kid bring to school when I need to let the teacher know on that day regarding homework due on the day, or my kids feeling or tiredness due to sport game my kids had the day before . I think e-mail is the easiest way to communicate with teachers.”

Jane-“I tend to like communicating via emails since you can read and respond whenever you are available instead of being held on it when busy. Communicating is not difficult for me but I do not usually initiate it unless there is a clear issue.”

While some used emails and wrote notes, others used the report card and the Friday folders to keep informed about how their children were doing in school.

Yvonne-“I know how my child is doing academically at school is when I get the report card from school or teacher’s comment, and from my child. I recognize by reading my child face after school every day and ask what happened at school. He usually has happy face, but not always. One day he had really sad face when I pick him up at bus stop, I asked him what happened at school or on the bus. He complained about his friend teasing him about his last name. He asked me to change his last name.”



Jane-“I am connected to what is going on at school.

I check their folders every day and I do read county guideline for the new curriculum so yes, I do know what they’re learning each quarter and how they’re doing before the actual report card gets released. No surprises!! I find out through their graded work sent home and quarterly report cards. To stay connected, I read everything that sent home – whether it is a work done at school or emails from PTA or admin. I ask questions if I need more information or if I do not understand. I also talk to other parents.”

While not always comfortable in doing so, the mothers did not keep barriers such as their English proficiency or background keep them from being involved in their child’s education. As mothers became more familiar with the American school system, their confidence in being involved increased.

Mary-“Yes, I always meet with teachers for the parent/teacher conferences. I think it's important for the teachers to personally meet and know the parents of their students, and vice versa. We met for one of these conferences and it was pretty typical. The teacher went over my child's progress and answered any questions I had. In the past year, I did email my child's teacher to clarify some homework procedures and to make a suggestion. Email is the easiest form of communication. I think I'm pretty aware of my child's academic and social progress at school. I talk to my child every day and ask about their interactions with friends/other students, and what she learned at school. Also by helping her with her homework, I am able to see how she is doing academically.”

Jane-“I have met with my children’s teachers. I have gone to conferences to find out the academic progress as well as social and behavior growth. We discussed my child in depth. I have also spoken with them in casual conversations at different school events-we had small talks when the teacher was available to talk. Sometimes during afterschool pick-up time, I got a chance to have small talks and ask questions that I had.”

### Theme 3 (VOLUNTEERING)

Regardless of their comfort level, for the three mothers in the focus group, volunteering is a regular practice. While Kate and Yvonne have indicated that they

were not confident about their English proficiency, they haven't let it stop them from helping out at their child's school. They have shared that doing it together has helped them be more confident.

Kate-“Yes, I volunteer at my son's school. By volunteering, I get to help my son's school and I get to know the climate and be familiar with what is going on at school and feel connected to what is going on there. Once a week, I volunteer in the library and I also make copies for teachers.”

Yvonne-“I volunteer for helping put the books back on the shelves at media center once a week. I also help kids as teacher's direction in the classroom as teacher's direction when the teacher schedules it for approximately twice a month. I do help to make costumes and props for the play at school. I copy the teaching materials for cut the papers for teacher, help to display kids work on the board in the classroom. It makes me keep in touch with teachers easily. More often I see the teachers, I feel comfortable to contact the teachers and I quickly recognize what is going on with my kid at school.”

Mary grew up in the United States. She does not have any qualms about going to the school to help her twin girls and feels confident about the impact it has on her daughters.

Mary-“Yes, I do volunteer. I have volunteered in the past for lunch room duty, their annual Outdoor Sports Day, and for various classroom holiday parties throughout the year. I volunteer because I have the time (since I work only part time) and because my kids love to see me in their school. I also volunteer specifically so that I can meet their friends, as well as some of the other parents.”

Still, Korean American mothers experience some discomfort when it comes to coming to school and interacting with others due to their lack of English fluency.

Wilma-“Usually, I send my husband. I went on a field trip once but I prefer to send my husband, he is better at it. I went to help out at a class party but because I didn't speak English it was hard. I didn't do it again.”

Sue-“No, not yet. I don't know how I could help. There isn't much I can do since my English isn't too great. What could I do?”

For Jane, who is a teacher, it's a matter of time. Since she is at her own school teaching when her children are at school, she is unable to take off and volunteer as much as she would like.

Jane-"I don't volunteer much because it is hard to take off from work to volunteer. But, I attend school events (mainly the ones that my children performed or participated), purchased books at the school book fair, joined PTA and donating and purchasing things for it, volunteered at last year's field day, etc."

#### Theme 4 (LEARNING AT HOME)

Managing their children's education in and out of the home is an essential role of the Korean American mothers in the focus group. They go to all lengths in order to help their children learn. For Kate, she enrolled her son in church programs, after school programs, and got him a tutor. Her children are very busy outside of the school.

Kate-"My son is very involved in outside learning. He has a tutor that comes and helps him with school work. He is enrolled in AWANA, a bible memory verse program at our church. Through the Sunday school program, he has bible lessons and he has the opportunity to get with his friends to play games and learn in the process. My children also play the piano and the cello and is on the MCYO orchestra. They go to Taekwondo and go to Korean school too."

Many of the Korean American mothers in the focus group mentioned church as their gathering place and a place of learning for their children.

Wilma-"Because unlike her (referring to Mary), I can't really help with reading, I got my son a tutor. His tutor comes twice a week to help with reading and writing and math too. My son looks forward to his visits. When he was younger, he attended Kumon. It helped him with basic facts. He attends the Korean language program and is also busy at church. They have math and reading lessons in the morning and then bible study and then Korean school there too. He has friends there and he gets lots of help there."

Sue-"He is in Sunday school and is in their learning program. We also go to church school on Saturdays too. They learn bible, Korean, and play sports. I am considering having him in Kumon but he is still young and he is reading on his own. He likes to learn."

Like Kate, Yvonne has her children enrolled in outside school activities such as Korean Language Program, TaeKwonDo and instrumental music.

Yvonne-“My son plays trumpet and drums, so he takes lessons for them. He also attends Korean school at WES and he takes TaeKwonDo class. He has a tutor for his English. He doesn’t like to read and especially he needs help in his writing. He writes many words running on that has a lot of grammar mistakes, but it is hard for me to help him because I speak English as second language. He goes Sunday school every Sunday and attend VBS and event in church.”

Mary and Jane, who are able to help at home, do not have tutors for their children unlike the other parents in the focus group. But the role of the church continues to have a prominent place in their child’s education.

Mary-“My kids do not attend any learning centers or receive any private tutoring services. My kids do attend a weekly church Sunday school where they learn about the Christian faith and the bible. They also attend an afterschool Korean culture & language program twice a week. They take weekly swimming lessons and piano lessons.”

Jane-“No, my children are not involved in tutoring or learning centers. They attend Korean school on Saturdays at the church and Sunday school on Sundays. My 4th grade daughter does ice-skating lesson, horseback riding lesson, private flute lesson, Taekwondo lesson, and Korean school. My 1st grade son does horseback riding lesson, private piano lesson, Taekwondo lesson, and Korean school.”

#### Theme 5 (DECISION-MAKING)

The topic of decision-making and the definition of it was a discussion that had prelude to answering the question. Like the Korean American mothers on the pilot study, the mothers in the focus group had similar concerns about what constituted decision-making. While they felt welcomed at their child’s school, and did participate in schoolwide activities, the mothers for the most part, except for Kate, did not necessarily attend PTA meetings and did not feel that it was their priority.

Kate-“While I do not go to PTA meetings, I am on a committee. I visit my child’s school often and I feel welcomed and feel comfortable being there.”

Sue-“I went to the orientation but haven’t attended any other large meetings. I haven’t joined the PTA yet either. The teachers are nice and the office people are nice too but just haven’t gone there-especially without my husband.”

Yvonne-“I visit my child’s school every week because I volunteer at school. I am a PTA member, but I don’t attend the PTA meeting at school. I attend most of school events that the PTA hosts at school during the school year.”

Jane-“I do not attend the PTA meetings and am not involved in school related committees. While I feel comfortable visiting my child’s school, I also feel guilty for not being involved as much as I should.”

Wilma-“No, I don’t go to PTA meetings either. No committees. I don’t feel comfortable going to visit school-they are welcoming- but I don’t feel at ease there. I have to talk and if they ask questions-I won’t know what to say. I would need my husband to go with me and he can’t because he is working”

Mary was the lone exception. While she did go to the PTA meetings and other functions that the school and the PTA put together, she did not participate on the decision-making PTA board.

Mary- “I visit several times a year. Any time my child is in a program, presentation, show, etc. where they invite the parents to, I always go. I have also been to a few PTA meetings.”

## Theme 6 (COLLABORATING WITH THE COMMUNITY)

Many of the mothers in the focus group collaborated with various people in and outside of their family. As previously stated, the church continues to play a role in their network and the greater community.

Jane-“I usually connect with others at home, at school hallways, at church, & at playdates. While the church does not have a huge influence for me, I do find out that there’s a huge difference in parenting styles and kids’ abilities when observing people at the church. During the social time after the mass. Our church has a big cafeteria that we eat lunch at after the 10:30 mass on Sunday. We eat lunch, drink coffee, and of course, we talk. School and kids are one of our main topics with no doubts. It could be me or someone else who brings up the topic (school, teacher, testing, kids’ behavior, academics, etc) and we all casually

talk about it. We share our own experience and give advice to people who initiated the discussion.”

Sue-“I would have to say that English is the main problem. That and being new to American school system. There is so much to know and I don’t know what to do first. I am overwhelmed. If it wasn’t for my husband, sister and the teacher at our church, I wouldn’t know what to do.”

Kate shares that when Korean American mothers get together, often the topic of discussion is about their children and their education.

Kate-“I have talked about my child’s schooling with my friends and family. The other parents are curious about what our school is doing. WPS has a great reputation and they often want to compare programs. This usually take place on the phone or when we go out for lunch.”

With the state adopting the new Common Core Curriculum, the discussion for the mothers has turned to curriculum.

Yvonne-“I have discussed my child’s school with friends by phone and other parents usually at school bus stop in the morning or afternoon. The topic was about reading and math level, choosing instrument, registering after school program at school, etc.”

By networking with other parents and seeking advice from their family and friends, Korean American mothers navigate the school system and support their children through their parent involvement practices.

Jane-“Yes, I talk about my children with my family because they’re invested in their wellbeing just like me. They’re interested to find out and want to be involved. I also talk about my children with my friends or other parents to get their inputs and to find out how other people are dealing with similar issues. There are things that I might share only with my family but not with friends.”

## **Mothers' Perception about Barriers to Parent Involvement (Bourdieu)**

### Theme 7 (ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPETENCY)

English competency is a consistent theme that ran throughout the discussion. Even for those who demonstrated fluency, the ability to communicate in English negatively impacted their parent involvement practices.

Kate-“Even though I am active, I do think English is a problem for me. I am afraid of engaging in a conversation with staff due to my lack of English. It is a barrier to more involvement because of my limited English and dealing with different cultures. I manage but it’s a huge problem.”

Wilma-“English is the main problem.”

Yvonne-“... and also my English skill was not good to communicate with teachers.” I am not comfortable with other parents at school because of my personality and English skill.”

The mothers generally shared equated their lack of confidence in parent involvement with their lack of English fluency.

### Theme 8 (PARENT’S EDUCATION LEVEL)

Yvonne, Kate, Mary, and Jane are all highly educated women. Two of the four are/were teachers themselves. Mary is an English ministry pastor and as such is a teacher in her own right. While they have not commented on their education (politeness), the tone and the manner in which they speak to their parent involvement indicate that education continues to be a factor in their ability to be involved in their child’s education.

### Theme 9 (YEARS IN THE US)

While Sue shared her lack of experience with the US school system, Jane found strength in her cultural heritage and its benefit in raising her children to value education.

Sue-“That and being new to American school system. There is so much to know and I don’t know what to do first. I am overwhelmed.”

Jane-“As much as I think the cultural difference could be a barrier, I also believe it could be a great advantage in their lives. In other words, I know it all depends on one’s perspective and I am charged to provide my children with the “right” kind of perspective.”

#### Theme 10 (SOCIAL ECONOMIC STATUS)

Three of the six Korean American mothers in the focus group shared that their family’s income was over \$75,000 and the other three noted that their family income was between \$25,000-\$75,000. Of the six mothers, Wilma and Sue shared that their income fluctuated because their husbands ran their own businesses while the other four mothers indicated that their husbands or they had careers. Wilma was the only one to share concerns when it came to the impact that family’s social economic status had on her parent involvement activity.

Wilma-“Because our business is not doing well, he has to work all the time and run the store so he can’t really help too much anymore. So money is tight but we make sure our son gets what he needs. He has to come first.”

#### Theme 11 (TIME/LACK OF TIME)

For mothers like Wilma, who has a business to run, time is not in abundance. She is often having to juggle her time at the store with the time she spends with her son.

Wilma-“I would need my husband to go with me and he can’t because he is working”

Yvonne-“... Now, I don’t have much time to involve at school.”

For Mary, who works part time, time is not an issue. She is able to be flexible with her time to volunteer and be more hands-on at her daughter’s school.

Mary-“I think what would make it really difficult for me to be more involved directly in my child’s education would be if I had a full time job/career. The only reason I am able to visit the school, volunteer and interact as much as I do is because I do not work full time.”



But for Jane, it's time away at her own school as a teacher that keeps her from children's school. Their conflicting schedule keeps her from being more involved than she would like.

Jane-“While English, money, US residency, resources, your knowledge and/or skill level are the factors that play into parent involvement, but none of them is something that one can't overcome. I feel fortunate that I do not have much obstacles other than not having enough time to volunteer during their school day.”

### **Additional Themes from the Discussion**

#### Theme 12 (FAMILY)

When needed, the Korean American mothers turn to their husbands and family for support. For Wilma and Sue, their husbands take on the role of “cultural attaches” in helping them navigate American schools.

Wilma-“I had my son late. Both my husband and I are older and we try really hard to help him. It is hard to help him because we don't know a lot about American schools and he is our only child and he doesn't have older brothers or sisters who can help him. . .if I have a question, I go with my husband or I ask my friend to go with me to school since I don't speak English very well. If I need to I can communicate a little bit.”

Sue-“I go with my husband or I ask my friend to go with me to school since I don't speak English very well. . .My husband and I went to the kindergarten orientation and conference. I don't feel confident about my English so I need him to go with me.”

Sue also turns to her sister and other mothers for support.

Sue-“. When I have questions, I ask my sister who also has a son in the same school. She has gone through it before so she knows. And if she doesn't know, I ask my friend who has a daughter in first grade.”

But for Mary, whose mother baby-sits for her, it's all about keeping all of her family members updated on how her twins are doing in school.

Mary-“Yes, I tell my child's grandparents, aunts and uncles about how my child is doing in school.”

### Theme 13 (CHURCH)

As noted in the prior discussion, the church plays a large role in the way Korean American mothers collaborate and network with other parents. The church is not only a place of worship, but it's also a clearinghouse of information and programs.

Kate-“Often, I meet with other parents at church whose children are the same age. We end up talking about our own kids and the issues they are having and then we listen to each other's thoughts and opinions and advices. We often share stories and ideas.”

Mary-“I also talk to my close friends, many of whom are professional public school teachers themselves, as well as other parents at my church. Since our kids are not all in the same school district/county, we talk about the differences in curriculum and grading system.”

Korean churches provide instructional support to students through bible lessons. It's the place where they interface with other Korean American children and develop life-long friendships. Furthermore, it is also the place that allows them to reconnect with their cultural background.

Kate-“Through the Sunday school program, he has bible lessons and he has the opportunity to get with his friends to play games and learn in the process.”

Wilma-“He attends the Korean language program and is also busy at church. They have math and reading lessons in the morning and then bible study and then Korean school there too. He has friends there and he gets lots of help there.”

Like many mainstream American parents, Yvonne feels the conflict that religion plays on how her children interact at school with others.

Yvonne-“I don't think the church influenced my child's learning, but some issues I faced. For example, Halloween day, doctrine of Creation vs. Evolution, Christmas, and Easter  
The church has influenced my decision not let my child go out for trick or treat on Halloween day because I'm a Christian. My child asked me to go out for trick or treat, so we have discussed a lot and find the answer in the bible. The school makes my child confuse about religious event.”

#### Theme 14 (WELCOME)

Overall, the mothers felt very welcomed at WES and mentioned it several times throughout the focus group interview.

Mary-“I feel pretty comfortable visiting the school, especially after the first few times when you begin to know the other parents and school staff. The school is always very welcoming.”

Sue-“The staff and teachers at my child’s school are nice and they are very welcoming.”

Jane-“I do feel welcome because staff smiles and there has not been a single incident that made me think otherwise.”

The WPSS county focus on building a partnership with the parents as their key stakeholders has made an impact on the way school personnel interact with the parents.

The following key ideas from the WPSS’ Climate Compact have gone a long way in making schools a place for everyone:

- Climate is everyone’s responsibility
- We live in stressful times
- People make the difference
- Relationships matter

#### Theme 15 (KNOWLEDGE)

For the two mothers, Yvonne and Wilma, their late arrival to the United States plays a role in their ability to become involved.

Yvonne-“It was not easy for me to involve at school right after I moved to USA because I didn’t have enough information about school here...”

Wilma-“It’s hard to be confident and feel like you can help when you don’t know yourself. There is a lot my husband and I don’t know.”

Even Jane, who is a teacher, is not always confident about her ability to help her children. She is worried about the gap that is present when she compares herself and other mainstream American parents.

Jane-“For now I’m confident that I’m providing what they need, but as they grow older, I’m afraid there might be a gap between us since I didn’t grow up here in this county and I might not know how to help them as much as I want to whether it is on their academic subjects or on their social issues.”

#### Theme 16 (AGE)

As noted in the demographic discussion, a large percentage (64.9%) of the parents surveyed were between ages 40-49. The age factor has come up several times in the focus group discussion. The older parents were less fluent in English and as a result experienced more difficulty being involved in parent involvement activities, especially for Wilma. It impacted the way in which they collaborated with others.

Wilma-“Age wasn’t really brought up too much but I think it’s a problem for me. Everyone here seems to know friends and people to go to but I don’t feel like that. Like I said, most of my friends have high school children and some even have kids in college. I think it’s harder for me and my husband.”

Younger mothers expressed the positive impact their parent involvement had on their children and the impact it has on their own parent involvement.

Yvonne-“I think more parent involvement at school has positive factors for younger age kids especially communicating with teachers.”

Mary-“Because my kids are still relatively young (2nd grade), I try to be more actively involved; but as they get older I’m not sure that I will be as active. I don’t think any of the things mentioned above play a large role in why I choose to be involved in my child’s education/school.”

Wilma, who is in her 50s, lamented on her inability to have children earlier and its impact on her energy level and her desire to help her children.

Wilma-“We are not young anymore and all our friends with older children with different problems.”

## **Summary**

This chapter presented the findings associated with the study. Quantitative methods were used to address the six research questions. A number of recommendations for practice and for further research were drawn from these findings and are presented in Chapter V, as are conclusions reached as an outcome of this study.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter consists of four sections: research summary, analysis of findings of the study, conclusions, and recommendations. The research summary includes the purpose of the study, the problem statement, research questions, and methodology. The following section is an analysis of the data findings presented in chapter 4. The final section of this chapter includes recommendations for practice, future research based on findings from this study and conclusions from the study. Specifically, the recommendations are centered on further leadership capacity development for school leaders in promoting parent involvement.

This study examined the Korean American mothers' perceptions about their own parent involvement practices. This research focused on mothers in particular, because Korean American mothers play a fundamental part in their child's academic achievement. Two frameworks commonly used in studies related to parent involvement guided this study: Epstein's parent involvement model (2001) and Bourdieu's cultural capital theory (1983). This work explored the Korean American mothers' views and perceptions about their involvement in their children's education, and explored the relationships between parental involvement and Cultural Capital factors, such as level of education, language competence, years in the United States, and family income (Lee & Bowen, 2006). The interactions between the aforementioned factors and the six types of parental engagement constructs as established by Epstein were also explored.

This mixed method study used both quantitative and qualitative research methods to obtain pertinent insights related to the research questions. The population for this study

included 100 Korean American mothers whose children attended the Korean Language and Culture School from three elementary schools in one county in a mid-Atlantic state. A total of 97 parents responded to the survey, of which 79 were mothers.

The researcher used Ringenberg's (2006) Parent and School Survey (PASS), which has seven critical domains. The domains are consistent with themes in Epstein's parent involvement construct and Bourdieu's (1983) cultural capital theory. The six domains reflecting Epstein's parent involvement types are: Parenting, Communicating, Learning at Home, Volunteering, Decision-Making and Collaborating with the Community. The four domains reflecting Bourdieu's cultural capital theory are English proficiency, family's income level, family's years in the US, and mother's education level. Qualitative methods (focus group interview) were also utilized to supplement the survey findings. Qualitative methodology is a non-directive method for obtaining information about parent involvement behavior and practices not available through general quantitative research methods. Using a moderator's guide as a model, the researcher prepared a series of questions to guide the focus group discussion. The researcher audio recorded, transcribed, and analyzed the focus group interview, looking for themes and patterns in the qualitative data.

### **Research Questions**

Prior to beginning the research, the following research questions were developed to provide the structure for data collection and analysis.

*Research Question 1:* What is the relationship between mothers' score on PARENTING and their scores on the EDUCATION LEVEL, YEARS IN THE US, LEVEL OF FAMILY INCOME, and LEVEL OF ENGLISH COMPETENCE?

*Research Question 2:* What is the relationship between mothers' score on COMMUNICATING and their scores on the EDUCATION LEVEL, YEARS IN THE US, LEVEL OF FAMILY INCOME, and LEVEL OF ENGLISH COMPETENCE?

*Research Question 3:* What is the relationship between mothers' score on VOLUNTEERING and their scores on the EDUCATION LEVEL, YEARS IN THE US, LEVEL OF FAMILY INCOME, and LEVEL OF ENGLISH COMPETENCE?

*Research Question 4:* What is the relationship between mothers' score on LEARNING AT HOME and their scores on the EDUCATION LEVEL, YEARS IN THE US, LEVEL OF FAMILY INCOME, and LEVEL OF ENGLISH COMPETENCE?

*Research Question 5:* What is the relationship between mothers' score on DECISION-MAKING and their scores on the: EDUCATION LEVEL, YEARS IN THE US, LEVEL OF FAMILY INCOME, and LEVEL OF ENGLISH COMPETENCE?

*Research Question 6:* What is the relationship between mothers' score on COLLABORATING WITH THE COMMUNITY and their scores on the: EDUCATION LEVEL, YEARS IN THE US, LEVEL OF FAMILY INCOME, and LEVEL OF ENGLISH COMPETENCE?

### **Summary of Quantitative Survey Findings**

The current research findings suggest that multiple dimensions exist in Korean American mothers' educational involvement practices. Cronbach alphas measured inter-item reliability and the consistency of the survey instrument. The reliability of this scale was strong for both Korean and English versions of the PASS (English=.81 and Korean=.80). The survey results confirm that Asian American immigrant parents are involved in their children's education across home, school and community settings.



*Finding #1: PARENTING.* The questions referring to Epstein's PARENTING type and thus included in the Parent and School Survey asked mothers to reflect on whether they could explain difficult ideas to their children and if they had access to books and whether they read them to their children. Also, it included a question about whether their child was absent from school. Participants reported high scores on this scale. The mean score for this scale was 16.36, indicating that the Korean American mothers were highly engaged in parenting practices. The reliability of this scale was strong for all samples: English, Korean, mothers and total sample. The Cronbach alpha for the parenting scale with item 16 was .59 was modest. However, this was substantially improved by the removal of that item and all subsequent analysis was run without item 16. The result indicates that mothers' education level ( $r = .354, p < .01$ ), mother's English proficiency ( $r = .378, p < .01$ ), mother's social economic status ( $r = .316, p < .05$ ), significantly contributed to their parenting score. The data above indicate that Korean American mothers' level of education, English proficiency and financial state did have a modest impact on whether they engaged in parenting practices while the mothers' years in the United States were not related to their parenting skills. While the results indicate that the Korean American mothers were engaged in parenting practices, the quantitative data does not indicate what parenting looks like in and outside of the home. Therefore it was necessary to ask targeted questions to get at parenting practices during the focus group interview.

*Finding #2: COMMUNICATING.* Many parents who come to the United States from other countries, especially those who do not speak English comfortably or fluently (typically, parents who have moved to the United States recently), have difficulty in

communicating with their children's teachers (Yang & McCullen, 2003). While this may be true, the Korean American mothers in this study reported that regardless of their English proficiency, they communicated with their children's school. When the data were analyzed to look for relationships between Korean American mothers and their cultural capital, the results below indicate that the mothers in this study, regardless of weak English skills, reached out to their children's school. Participants in this study reported high scores on this scale. The mean score for this scale was 15.95, indicating that the Korean American parents stayed informed about their children's education. The Cronbach alpha of this scale was strong for the English version and for mothers, but modest for the Korean version, and minimally acceptable for the total sample. The result indicates that mothers' education level ( $r = .237, p < .05$ ), mother's English proficiency ( $r = .430, p < .01$ ), and mother's social economic status ( $r = .241, p < .05$ ) significantly contributed to their communicating score.

The family's years in the United States were not statistically significant to communication scores. While the data are positive, they do not demonstrate to what extent the mothers are involved nor do they describe to what length they go in order to be informed about their children's progress.

*Finding #3: VOLUNTEERING.* The act of volunteering indicates parents' support and assistance of school programs through volunteering in classrooms and attending school events. Parents' participation in school activities not only enhances school programs, but also promotes communications between parents and school personnel, as to students' progress and schooling information (Epstein, 1995, 2001, 2011). The researcher found that Korean American mothers practiced this type of involvement

more frequently than direct school contact, yet less frequently than monitoring and parent-child engagement in social activities. Participants in this study reported moderate scores on the volunteering scale. The mean for this scale was 10.33, indicating that the participants were somewhat active in volunteering at school. The Cronbach alpha for this scale was modest except for the English sample, which was strong. The result of this study indicated that mothers' education level ( $r = .325, p < .01$ ) and mother's English proficiency ( $r = .436, p < .01$ ) significantly related to their volunteering score. This finding provides support for the previous study's results that Asian American immigrant parents are less familiar with the concept of school-family partnership and perceive their primary roles in children's school success are to schedule after-school time and to ensure homework completion (Hwa-Froelich & Westby, 2003).

*Finding #4: LEARNING AT HOME.* The fourth type, learning at home, involves parents providing supervision and helping with their child's schoolwork in the home environment. For instance, parents stimulate children's academic achievement at home by assisting with their homework, having conversations about their school learning, and giving reinforcement on their school performance (Epstein, 2001). Participants in this study reported high scores on this scale ( $X=13.26$ ). The Cronbach alpha for this scale was weak for the English and Korean version, as well as the total sample. The mean score for this scale was 13.26, indicating that the Korean American parents were engaged in their child's education and that they provided the resources needed to continue learning at home. The result of this study indicates that mothers' education level ( $r = .238, p < .05$ ) and mother's English proficiency ( $r = .283, p < .05$ ) were statistically significant to increased learning at home. During the pilot study group discussion, the Korean

American mothers shared that when they were not able to help their children themselves, they enlisted the help of tutors and learning centers to support their children. The results of the data analysis did not show the relationship between the family's income level as being correlated to their ability to support learning at home. This use of outside resources is further discussed in the qualitative section of this chapter.

*Finding #5: DECISION-MAKING.* According to Epstein (2001), the fifth type, decision-making, refers to a collaborative process where parents share their views and ideas about school programs with school personnel by joining various school governing organizations, such as parent advisory councils and the Parent Teacher Association (PTA). Parents' involvement in these organizations encourages parents to learn about school policies and programs. It is important that Korean American parents develop their skills as advocates by voicing their opinions and making joint decisions with school personnel. To ensure that every student benefits from parental involvement, schools are also required to incorporate "voices of all parents" in the decision-making process. Participants reported moderate scores on this scale. The mean score for this scale was 12.27, indicating that the participants in this study were less engaged in the decision-making process in comparison to the overall parent involvement practices. The Cronbach alpha for this scale was weak for the Korean version and total sample, but was minimally acceptable for the English version. The result of this study indicates that mothers' education level ( $r = .267, p < .05$ ), family's length of residence in the US ( $r = .234, p < .05$ ), and mother's English proficiency ( $r = .324, p < .01$ ) were significantly related to Korean American mothers' empowerment and being involved in the decision-making process. Literature suggests that many Asian American parents tend to be more active in

providing a nurturing home environment rather than frequently participating in school activities (Siu, 1996).

*Finding #6: COLLABORATING WITH THE COMMUNITY.* This researcher found that the Korean American mothers, especially those from recent immigrant families, have difficulty collaborating with or working with schools and school personnel. Consistent with previous research, Asian American immigrant mothers in the current study were much less engaged in school contact than in other types of parental involvement (e.g., parental monitoring and learning at home activities). Participants in this study reported low scores on this scale. The mean score for this scale was 9.833, indicating the lowest score on the parent engagement survey overall. Of all the parent engagement type behaviors, the participants in this study were least active in collaborating with the community. The Cronbach alphas for this scale were modest. The reliability for this scale with item 20 was .552. All analyses with this variable were run without item 20 because it significantly improved in the internal consistency (.61) of the items on the survey. The result of this study indicates that mothers' education level ( $r = .285, p < .05$ ), family's length of residence in the US ( $r = .271, p < .05$ ), and mother's English proficiency ( $r = .444, p < .01$ ) were statistically related to Korean American mothers' willingness to collaborate with the school community. The researcher found this result is consistent with the prior research findings that indicate Asian American immigrant parents often seek important educational information and support outside of school rather than directly contacting or collaborating with schools. When they did collaborate, it was within the context of the family and church.

*Finding #7: BARRIERS.* When a parent's habitus is inconsistent with the field of education, he or she is more likely to confront barriers to becoming a competent player in that field (Lee & Bowen, 2006; Wang, 2008). For instance, immigrant parents are more likely to have difficulties communicating with schools or assisting with their children's schoolwork due to their habitus such as limited English proficiency, which is divergent from mainstream school culture (Wang, 2008). While some research has found that the migration status of Asian American parents leads them to experience greater cultural and linguistic barriers with school personnel and schools, in general (Lew, 2006), this study revealed that several of the barriers were strong predictors of parental involvement. Not surprisingly these were all inverse relationships; as barriers decreased, involvement increased. Participants in this study reported moderate scores on this scale. The mean score for barriers was 13.25, indicating that there were barriers to the participant's parent involvement. The Cronbach alpha for this scale was strong for the Korean version, strong for the English version and strong for the overall sample. The results seem to indicate that better English skills were associated with lower barriers to involvement scores. As previous research has found that becoming involved in their children's education is often very different for Asian American parents (Li, 2006; Nguyen, You, & Ho, 2009), the definition of parent involvement for Korean American mothers was just as different. As literature suggests, the Korean American parents tend to be more active in providing a nurturing home environment rather than frequently participating in school activities (Siu, 1996).

### **Additional Quantitative Analysis**

*Finding #8: Korean Fathers and Korean Mothers.* Korean fathers have an image as hardworking breadwinners who are directive toward their children and yet have lost their traditional authority because they are absent from family life due to long hours at work (Lamb, 2010). With this in mind, the researcher focused on mothers for the purposes of this research. In their study, Park et al. (2003) made several comparisons between father-child relations in Korea and the United States. In their analysis, Korean fathers scored higher on control and pressure to succeed, and the depth of their love was associated with children's achievement motivation. Moon (2005) wrote that in contrast with Western father-child relations, Korean culture emphasizes mutuality, dependence, and that the ideal image of Korean fathering is one of self-sacrifice. In addition to the 79 mothers who completed the survey instrument, 16 Korean American fathers completed the survey, and two omitted their relationship to the student. In order to investigate the role of the fathers, the researcher sought to determine through additional analysis if there were statistically significant differences among mothers vs. fathers. An independent t-test of differences in perceptions of the seven domains surveyed indicated mothers reported significantly higher collaboration scores than the fathers. Overall, fathers who took the survey reported higher overall mean for communicating and decision-making than mothers. Mothers on the other hand scored higher overall mean for Parenting, Learning at Home, Volunteering and Collaborating with the Community. While both fathers and mothers reported that they experienced barriers to parent involvement, mothers continued to stay engaged in parent involvement practices.

*Finding #9: English Surveys Returned vs. Korean Surveys Returned.* Many parents do not have the ability to speak English and they try to help their child with homework, but their limited English skills often prevent them (Colombo, 2006). This information also shows that there is a large number of students and parents who speak English as a second language. As the research suggests, one of the most common barriers that prevents effective partnerships between teachers and parents is language.

Language problems are the most important reason for low levels of ethnic minority parental involvement (Denessen et al., 2007). According to a study by Sohn and Wang (2006) regarding six Korean-speaking immigrant families, the language barrier has a significant effect on immigrants' parental involvement. All parents emphasized difficulties communicating with teachers in English (Sohn & Wang, 2006). For this study, in order to collect information from both Korean and English speaking mothers, Ringenberg's Parent and School Survey (PASS) was translated into Korean PASS-K). Of the 97 parents surveyed, 19 completed in English while 78 chose to complete the survey in Korean. Among the mothers, those responding via the Korean form reported significantly higher barrier scores, and significantly lower parenting, communicating, volunteering, and collaborating scores than those who used the English version. The quantitative data support the previous research regarding the impact of English proficiency on Korean American mothers. The impact that lack of English has on Korean American mothers' ability to stay engaged in their child's education is further described in the following focus group findings.



## **Analysis of Focus Group Findings**

*Finding #10: PARENTING.* Korean American mothers' educational values focus on high achievement, afterschool programs, test scores, and homework. While the survey questions related to parenting asked mothers whether they provided books for their children and if reading was a regular activity in the home, it did not ask parents to describe specific parenting practices. Per the survey and the follow up discussion, the Korean American mothers in the focus group shared many strategies for parenting. Mothers in the focus group shared that afterschool time was highly structured and that education continued to be highlighted in the home as well as in school. When they themselves were unable to help their children, the mothers went to great length to get the support their children needed. They sought the support of the afterschool tutoring programs and tutors themselves. Mary shared how she used the time she had with her twins in the car on their way home as a time to recap what happened at school and answered their questions and concerns. Korean-American parents typically push their children to achieve, relying on tutors and other supplemental education to eventually win highly competitive college placements. The mothers who participated in the focus group discussion similarly expected their child to do well on tests, classwork and homework. Even though many of them were not highly fluent in English, they used the resources available to them to support their children's learning. While they complimented their children when they did well in school, the compliment was often paired with establishing even higher expectations in the future. When given an opportunity, the mothers communicated the importance of education and emphasized working hard with their children.

*Finding #11: COMMUNICATING.* One of the most common barriers that prevents effective partnerships between teachers and parents is language. Language problems was the most important reason for low levels of parent involvement. According to a study by Sohn and Wang (2006) regarding six Korean speaking immigrant families, the language barrier has a significant effect on immigrants' parental involvement. This study supported their findings and found that the Korean American mothers in the current study emphasized difficulties communicating with teachers and other staff in English. For these reasons, those Korean parents do not prefer to contact the teacher directly, they prefer other routes such as e-mail and school letters because they are able to understand written English better than spoken English. Likewise, the participants in this study shared that they communicate with teachers by written document such as a notice they prepared at home, email by internet, or letter.

When a parent's primary language is not English, they generally report problems such as meeting times are unsuitable, they do not feel welcome in the school, and the teacher or school administrator speaks only English (Turney & Kao, 2009). The mothers in this study who did not speak English at home were less comfortable at their children's school. Most of the Korean immigrant parents in this study tried to visit and talk with their teachers individually and avoided large group discussions where the conversation often happened too quickly. Limited knowledge about educational notions is another difficulty for communication for parents. Although the mothers in the current research shared that they really want to communicate with teachers and school administrators, they felt hesitant about doing so due to their lack of fluency. Korean American mothers in this study have also shared that they have difficulty communicating about their child's

schooling because of their language skills, lack of school information, and limited time. When necessary, the mothers in this study sought support from their husbands, friends, and other family members. Often fathers in this study acted as “translators” or “cultural attaches” for the mothers.

*Findings #12: VOLUNTEERING.* Asian families have often been labeled as “non-participating” or “less involved” by school personnel and White parents (Lim, 2012). In school contexts, the middle-class definition of parent involvement emphasizes parent participation over other forms of involvement, such as home-based learning. Although schools continue to promote parent involvement by planning and implementing various programs in and outside of schools, these practices are likely to focus on what parents do to engage with their children’s education in the school (Barton et al., 2004). The researcher noted that successful parent participation was challenging for the Korean parents in this study, as in similar findings reported in Korean immigrant studies. Although most of the parents were highly educated and willing to be involved in their children’s education, traditional American forms of participation such as attending parent–teacher conferences, volunteering in the classroom, and fundraising for the school tended to be difficult for the Korean American mothers in the focus group. One Korean mother, who had her son late in life, spoke of the difficulties that resulted from her age, her inability to speak English and the limited knowledge about educational activities in the school. Even for Jane, who is a teacher in WPSS, shared that she didn’t volunteer much because of lack of time. This study found that most Korean American mothers did not feel confident and/or were busy working or running a family business to fully participate in school activities such as volunteering work and attending PTA meeting.

Even so, for Kate and Yvonne who are friends, they leaned on one another for support and volunteered at the school together.

*Finding #13: LEARNING AT HOME.* Despite the high value Korean families placed on education, their cultural assumptions about proper family–school relationships differed from the perspective held by mainstream schools rooted in individualistic cultures. Culture-based beliefs about the appropriate role of parents also likely influenced their choices about how to be involved in their children’s schooling (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). When their children needed help, the mothers in the focus group used the financial resources available to them to hire tutors or send them to centers such as Kumon for additional help. Korean parents have high educational aspirations and school achievement. They engaged their children in many after-school programs such as music, swimming, and Korean Language Programs in and out of the school. Many of the Korean American mothers used the resources available to them at their church to support their children’s learning.

*Findings #14: DECISION-MAKING.* Despite the high value Korean families placed on education, their cultural assumptions about proper family–school relationships differed from the perspective held by mainstream schools rooted in individualistic cultures (Lim, 2012). In the collectivistic East Asian culture from which the parents came, a school tends to represent an authoritative, separate space demarcated from home by a clear boundary (Walsh, 2002). The researcher found that the Korean American mothers in the study tended to engage in a variety of educational activities in and outside of the home in order to promote their children’s learning but were less involved in volunteering or decision-making at schools. The mothers in this study did not participate in the

decision making process in their children's school through formal PTA, committees, and other parent organization. Korean immigrant mothers in the study mentioned that while some of them belonged to the PTA, they rarely go to PTA meeting because of late time meetings, lack of English and/or general disinterest. Presumably, limited English proficiency and uncertainty about the school system also might have contributed to Asian families' low levels of participation. While they were not active on the PTA, the Korean mothers in the focus group shared that outside of the school, they often make decisions about their children's education.

Findings #15: COLLABORATING WITH THE COMMUNITY. Immigrant studies show that a close-knit community in which members maintain strong intragroup relationships and preserve cultural values can provide community-driven benefits conducive to better social adjustment and academic achievement (Portes, 1998; Zhou & Bankston, 1998; Zhou & Kim, 2006). Korean immigrant parents in this study described having homogeneous ethnic group networks such as friendship groups, other parents, and church members. Several of the focus group participants spoke very limited English. Their lack of English language skills made it difficult for them to develop relationships with other parents. While the English fluency was an issue for four of the mothers, for Mary and Jane, it was the lack of time that impacted them the most. Collective intragroup networks within the Korean parent meeting unveil the complex negotiations the members constructed while engaging in the school. Strong ethnic solidarity and cultural bonds among this group activated community forces that influenced the members' relationships with the school both positively and negatively (Lim, 2012). For

Yvonne and Kate, their personal relationship with one another allowed each of them to participate more in their child's school.

Findings #16: BARRIERS. The results from this focus group discussion supported other immigrant studies (Lee, 2005) that have identified structural barriers (e.g., the language barrier, time constraints, and lack of knowledge about school culture) to improved parent involvement. Most minority families who lack knowledge about the “culture of power” (Delpit, 1988) within the mainstream schools encounter more obstacles in their access to institutional resources compared with native-born parents (Turney & Kao, 2009). As Isik-Ercan (2010) found, the findings from the focus group interview noted that even Korean American mothers without language barriers reported challenges in understanding school culture and routines due to their lack of cultural knowledge and school-specific language. The researcher identified both structural and cultural barriers to participation among the Korean American mothers in a Korean Language Program: structural barriers included communicative competence issues such as lack of linguistic knowledge, confidence, time conflicts, and age; cultural barriers involved different norms and values related to parental participation and respect for authority. Results show that the biggest barrier for Korean American mothers to participate in their child's education was a sense of cultural deficit or cultural difference, most notably their ability to speak English. Like many multicultural immigrant parents, the Korean American mothers are working outside the home and just do not have the freedom to go to the school and become involved in their child's education on a regular basis. Unlike Mary, Jane who worked with the school system, was not able to volunteer at her daughter's school as she would have liked. For Wilma, her store's late hours

restricted her involvement at her son's school. For Yvonne and Kate, their cultural understanding of American schools and the language skills limited their ability to communicate with teachers and school officials. Because immigrant families are adjusting to new cultures and because they usually have inadequate resources, they feel overwhelmed (Hwang, 2007).

### **Conclusions Based on Quantitative and Qualitative Results**

Parents' English proficiency was significantly related to parent involvement practice in Korean American mothers per the survey results and supported via the focus group discussion. The researcher found that Korean American immigrant mothers' self-perceived English proficiency had a significantly positive relationship with her ability to be engaged in school-related activities. These results are consistent with the previous studies, which indicate that parents with higher levels of English proficiency are more likely to have confidence in supervising a child's homework and sharing school experiences with children (Sy, 2006). The findings in this study are also consistent with several qualitative studies indicating that Asian American immigrant mothers experience difficulties in discussing and assisting their secondary-school-age children's homework due to their lack of English proficiency (Lew, 2007; Li, 2007; Yang & Rettig, 2003). Better English skills were significantly related to higher parenting scores, greater learning at home, higher learning at home scores, more empowerment in terms of decision making, greater likelihood to volunteer and more collaboration with the school. Additionally, better English skills were associated with lower barriers to involvement scores.

Parent's social class (measured by level of education, occupation, and family income) was positively related to the Korean American mothers' parent involvement

practices. Thus, Korean American mothers with greater financial resources, higher levels of education, and professional occupations were more likely to participate in parent engagement experiences with their children's school, and to supervise their children's schoolwork and daily schedule. Findings in this study were consistent with other findings from comparative research on educational involvement between middle-class and working-class Asian American immigrant parents. With greater financial resources, middle-class mothers were able to compensate for their cultural and linguistic barriers and to provide more educational opportunities and guidance than their working-class counterparts. The mothers in the focus group shared that their children were enrolled in many afterschool enrichment and learning programs. Higher SES was significantly related to higher parenting scores and higher communication scores. The current finding regarding the Korean American mother's education level also confirmed past research findings that Asian American immigrant and refugee parents with lower levels of education are less able to assist their children with schooling. The researcher found that higher education was significantly related to higher parenting scores, higher communication scores, higher learning at home scores, more empowerment in terms of making decisions, greater volunteer work, and more collaboration with the school. For two of the six women in the focus group, while it impacted their level of involvement, it did not stop them from seeking support from friends and family to find resources to help their children with learning.

While mother's length of residence in the United States was considered as a proxy for her familiarity with the U.S. educational system, only two out of the six dimensions of parental involvement were statistically significant to the years Korean American



immigrant mothers lived in the United States. Length of residence in the US was significantly correlated with decision making and collaboration scores. This result was contrary to the previous finding of Turney and Kao (2009), where the length of parents' residence in the United States was positively related to Asian American immigrant parents' participation at their children's school (Turney & Kao, 2009). It seems that longer duration of residence in the United States does not ensure that Asian American immigrant mothers become better equipped to interact with schools. It is also possible that the length of residence in the United States variable failed to capture the extent to which Asian American immigrant mothers are familiar with the U.S. educational system. Further studies are needed to better understand changes in Korean American mothers' knowledge about the U.S. Educational system and impact on their parent involvement practices.

### **Recommendations for Practice**

According to the 2010 Census, there are approximately 1.7 million people of Korean descent residing in the United States, making it the country with the second largest Korean population living outside Korea (after the People's Republic of China). Despite efforts to encourage parents to be engaged in K-12 schools, educators and researchers continue to note a lack of parent involvement in schools today (Turk, 2008). Getting parents to be involved in schools has been challenging but engaging Korean American parents has been especially difficult (Chao & Tseng, 2002). Korean-American families express uncertainty about their places in the educational system, and what they can do to help their children succeed (Buttery & Anderson, 1999). Many Korean-American students' parents have limited educational experiences, making enriching their

child's education a daunting task (Turk, 2008). This research revealed an urgent need for schools to respond to the changes in the demographics of student populations by finding better ways to encourage parental involvement and develop more effective ways to work with culturally and linguistically diverse families.

To develop a more comprehensive understanding of Korean American parental involvement, it is important to understand their unique social and cultural contexts, including education background, migration status, English proficiency, familiarity with the American educational system, socioeconomic backgrounds, and social networks. It is also important for policymakers and educators to understand the impact of this cultural context on Korean American parental involvement practices. The results of this study would be beneficial to school districts, principals, teachers, parents and schools of education in their efforts to improve student achievement and further state accountability efforts. Specifically, the implications for practice from this study include:

*Recommendation #1: Recognize the Patterns of Korean American Mothers'*

*Parent Involvement*

Practitioners and school counselors need to understand the patterns of Korean American mothers' parent involvement. Consistent with prior studies, Korean American mothers were less likely to practice school-based involvement than home-based involvement. The result suggests that Korean American mothers may feel more comfortable and competent with home-based involvement than school-based involvement. However, an in-depth examination indicated that the rates differed even among the dimensions of school-based involvement. For example, Korean American mothers in this study tended to participate in school functions, such as volunteering and parent-teacher

conferences, more frequently than to participate in PTA functions. Having knowledge of these patterns, practitioners and school counselors may challenge the prevalent assumption that Korean American parents are simply inactive in their participation at their children's school. Further, school personnel, particularly school counselors, may use opportunities for volunteering and attendance at school functions to promote greater school-level involvement of Korean American mothers.

*Recommendation #2: Support Networking Opportunities for Korean American Mothers*

This study suggests the importance of parents' social capital in promoting Korean American mothers' parent involvement across home and school. As noted in the focus group discussion, the Korean American mothers shared how social networks with other parents of their children's friends and parents from their children's schools helped them become more informed and facilitated their parent involvement in the school. For the mothers, parent's social capital was a factor in encouraging them to attend school functions and to volunteer in the school. These findings indicate that enhancing parent peer networks fosters Korean American mothers' overall interactions with their children's schools regardless of their English proficiency, length of residence in the United States, and social class. Thus, there is a great need for school-wide policies and programs that connect Korean American mothers, especially those who are isolated and disadvantaged, to other parents. School administrators and counselors may organize phone-trees, support groups, and mentoring programs among parents to build these networks among various ethnic parent groups. These networking opportunities can provide Korean American mothers with emotional, informational, and instrumental

support essential to their educational involvement.

*Recommendation #3: Collaborate with Churches and other Community*

*Organization*

Partnerships and resource sharing between schools and ethnic community organizations, such as the local churches, can alleviate cultural and linguistic barriers that Korean American mothers experience in their educational involvement. Collaboration with ethnic community organizations is crucial in successful involvement of Korean American mothers. It is known that Asian American families are more likely to develop trust toward ethnic community organizations (Shin, 2009). Korean American churches, in particular, provide valuable resources that can bridge cultural gaps between schools and Korean American mothers. These include bilingual translation, ethnic community networks, and skills working with Korean American families. It is important for practitioners and school counselors to reach out to these organizations to support their families. For example, school counselors, in collaboration with members of ethnic community organizations, may conduct workshops introducing how to navigate the U.S. school system and interact with school personnel. Such programs would allow Korean American mothers not only the opportunity to learn about American school culture but also to share their own educational beliefs and expectations. As a result, Korean American mothers would become more connected and confident with their parent involvement practices.

*Recommendation #4: Provide Opportunity for Korean American Mothers to*

*Learn at School*

The literature suggests that when immigrant parents and their children have

different language preferences, they are more likely to experience emotional distances and intergenerational conflicts (Buki & Ma, 2003; Tseng & Fuligni, 2000). It is known that children generally have greater opportunities to learn about English and dominant culture through school experiences than their immigrant parents (Buki & Ma, 2003; Ying, 1999). The researcher found that the Korean American mothers' English proficiency significantly impacted their ability to engage in parent involvement activities. Parents' English proficiency was also positively related to monitoring practice in Korean American mothers. School administrators and counselors should consider developing parent involvement programs that address the needs of Korean American mothers. Parent-centered programs such as English language programs are empowering by helping parents eliminate their barriers to involvement. For instance, school counselors may design programs to improve social capital and English proficiency among isolated, low-income Korean American mothers. One example is offering ESL classes or curriculum-related information meetings with Korean-English interpreters, where mothers can meet other parents and learn about the school system. With enhanced English skills and knowledge about school education, disadvantaged Korean American mothers can build their capacity as active advocates for their children's educational success.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

The results of this study provided extensive, detailed descriptions of parent involvement practices and Korean American mothers' perception about their own school engagement activities. Though the data provided some details and answers regarding Korean American mothers only, it raised recommendations for further research. Recommendations for further study are as follows:

*Recommendation #1: Other Asian Ethnic Communities*

In many studies, the Asian Americans are lumped together. This researcher focused on only Korean Americans. This study should be replicated with other Asian ethnic communities. Not all Asian parents raise their children the same way and many display different expectations and parent engagement behaviors. The comparison of different ethnic communities would shed light on culture and its impact on parent involvement.

*Recommendations 2: Fathers in the Study*

This study should be replicated to include more fathers. While the focus of the mothers was purposeful in this study, the survey results and the subsequent conversation with the mothers indicate that the fathers are more involved in their child's education. In many ways, they serve as the cultural representative or "liaison" for the family.

*Recommendation #3: Variation in SES*

This study should be replicated to include parents from different social economic status. A large percentage of the mothers in this study were financially well off. It would be interesting to compare mother of high SES with mothers with low SES to determine if income is a factor in their child's education as some of the discussion alluded to in the focus group portion of the study.

*Recommendation 4: Larger Korean Populations*

Washington Public School System is situated in a wealthy suburban county in the Mid-Atlantic region, and is not totally representative of the United States as a whole. While there is a large enclave of Korean population in the area, there are larger Korean communities in New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles. Yet, more and more Korean

families are opting to move to suburban and rural areas to start new businesses and in search of better education for their children. The study should be replicated in different settings such as rural and metropolitan. The mothers as a group is part and partial to the whole of Washington Public School System. They are not representative of the whole school system or the Korean American population within the metropolitan area.

*Recommendation #5: Teachers and Administrators*

In order to implement and sustain teacher, school, and system capacity to improve parent involvement, this study should be conducted with various sub-groups. It is important to capture the perspective of all stakeholders involved in the child's education. While the role of the parent is an important one, the majority of the teaching and learning happens at school in the classroom.

*Recommendation #6: Middle and High School Parents*

A case study should be conducted with secondary parents. Some of the parents who took the survey and took part in the focus group have older children. While parents start out being active in their child's early years, many mothers and fathers are less involved when their children reach middle school and even less so in high school. It is important to capture the different types of behaviors of parents throughout the child's schooling.

*Recommendation #7: Impact of Parent Involvement on Student Grades*

A follow-up study should be conducted to investigate the role of parent involvement on student grades. While parents were asked to share their student's overall academic standing, the survey did not ask for specific grades. It is important to capture the impact of parent involvement on student success.

*Recommendation #8: Impact of Parent Involvement with Various Ethnic Groups*

A case study should be conducted with diverse groups. As this study has shown, one's cultural background impacts the way in which he/she is engaged in parent involvement activities. Parents of all races and ethnicities want their children to succeed but might go about communicating their expectation in various ways. It is important for school officials to value the cultural gifts that students and parents bring to school. To that end, it is important to understand the impact that cultural capital and parent involvement have on diverse population.

**Conclusion**

Family and school, two primary sources of child development, can positively influence children's learning by offering a synergistic partnership (Epstein, 2001). Lee and Bowen (2006) reported a high level of association between parent involvement at school and their children's academic achievement, but noted significant group differences in levels of parent involvement at school. Parent involvement at school occurred most frequently among middle-class European Americans and those who had attained higher levels of education. In a research synthesis of 51 studies, Henderson and Mapp (2002) concluded that parent involvement at home more consistently promotes children's academic achievement than does parent involvement at school. In this study, the researcher identified the Korean American mothers' limited English proficiency and education level were the two factors that most impacted their parent involvement. Both the quantitative and qualitative data in the current study demonstrate that these factors have a significant role in the way Korean American mothers are engaged in parent involvement practices and the barriers they experience. Teachers and school



administrators should find appropriate ways to contact families that are culturally and linguistically diverse to get them involved and to support student learning. While this study was conducted with a Korean American population, the impact of culture on parent involvement extends beyond racial and ethnic boundaries. The researcher recognizes the importance of valuing a family's cultural capital when building a positive relationship with parents of all race and nationalities. Achieving a true partnership with parents begins with recognizing and accepting the "cultural gifts" they bring to school.

APPENDIX A

Institutional Review Board Permission



# UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

DATE: October 23, 2013

TO: Yong-Mi Kim

FROM: University of Maryland College Park (UMCP) IRB

1204 Marie Mount Hall  
College Park, MD 20742-5125  
TEL 301.405.4212  
FAX 301.314.1475 irb@umd.edu www.umresearch.umd.edu/IRB

PROJECT TITLE: [479745-1] Korean American Mothers' Perceptions: Investigating the Role of Cultural Capital Theory and Parent Involvement

REFERENCE #:  
SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION:  
APPROVED APPROVAL DATE:  
October 23, 2013  
EXPIRATION DATE: October 22, 2014  
REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

REVIEW CATEGORY: Expedited review category # 6 & 7

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this project. The University of Maryland College Park (UMCP) IRB has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

This submission has received Expedited Review based on the applicable federal regulation.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the project and insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require each participant receive a copy of the signed consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this committee prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure which are found on the IRBNet Forms and Templates Page.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others (UPIRSOs) and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office. Please use the appropriate reporting forms for this procedure. All FDA and sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed.

All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must be reported promptly to this office.

This project has been determined to be a Minimal Risk project. Based on the risks, this project requires continuing review by this committee on an annual basis. Please use the appropriate forms for this procedure. Your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date of October 22, 2014.

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years after the completion of the project.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRB Office at 301-405-4212 or [irb@umd.edu](mailto:irb@umd.edu). Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within University of Maryland College Park (UMCP) IRB's records.

- 1 -  
Generated on IRBNet

APPENDIX B  
MCPS Written Consent

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "Loeb, Cynthia" <[Cynthia\\_Loeb@mcpsmd.org](mailto:Cynthia_Loeb@mcpsmd.org)>

**Date:** November 12, 2013 3:40:13 PM EST

**To:** "Kim, Yong M" <[Yong\\_M\\_Kim@mcpsmd.org](mailto:Yong_M_Kim@mcpsmd.org)>

**Subject:** research request approved!

GOOD NEWS!!

Your request to conduct research has been approved. Would you like me to send a copy of the approval memorandum to your home address or Herbert Hoover MS?

I also will send copies of the approval memorandum to the principals who have agreed to participate.

Just as a note: Please do not use Herbert Hoover Middle School letterhead paper when you send out the parent packets. It would be best to use your own personal letterhead or the University of Maryland letterhead.

Should you have any questions, please contact me.

Best of luck in your data collections.

Cindy

APPENDIX C  
Letters to Principals

October 8, 2013

Yong-Mi Kim  
Hoover Middle School  
8810 Postoak Road . Rockville, Maryland 20854

Donna Michela  
Wayside Elementary School  
10011 Glen Road . Potomac, Maryland 20854

Dear Principal

As a doctoral student at the University of Maryland, I am currently involved in the dissertation segment of my program. I have designed a quantitative and qualitative research study. The purpose of this dissertation is to study Korean American mother's understanding and perceptions about parent involvement. The method of collecting data will be a survey and a follow up focus group interview.

I am writing to request your permission to distribute the Parent and School Survey (PASS) to Korean American parents whose children are enrolled in your afterschool Korean Language and Culture School. Parents will be asked to respond to the Parent and School Survey (PASS) that asks about their background and experience with parent involvement. Participation in the survey should take approximately fifteen (15) minutes. The follow up focus group interviews will be for a few select participants and is entirely optional. The researcher will select six (6) participants to participate in a focus group interview of approximately one (1) hour in length. These interviews will be scheduled at a time and location convenient to the participants.

Data collection for the study will include the survey, audio recording and scripting of the dialogue of all participants. Upon completion of the study, all survey documents, recordings, and notes related to the study will be destroyed. Copies of all the related documents are attached for your convenience.

The participant's responses are confidential. All identifying information will be removed and survey data will be maintained in secure files and will be accessible only to me. Reports and other communications related to the study will not identify respondents by name, nor will they identify any schools.

Participation in this study is strictly voluntary. If you are willing to grant permission for me to conduct the study in your school, please email me directly at [yong\\_m\\_kim@mcpsmd.org](mailto:yong_m_kim@mcpsmd.org). If you have any questions or concerns about this study, you may contact me by calling 301-526-1085 (cell). You may also contact Dr. Carol Parham, chairperson of my committee, by directly calling the university at 301-405-3580.

Sincerely,  
Kim, Yong M  
Principal  
Hoover Middle School



APPENDIX D

Recruitment Letter and Consent Form

Recruitment Letter and Consent Form-Mothers

July 7, 2013

Dear Parents,

As a doctoral student at the University of Maryland, I am currently involved in the dissertation segment of my program. I have designed a quantitative and qualitative research study. The purpose of this dissertation is to study Korean American mother's understanding and perceptions about parent involvement. The method of collecting data will be a survey and a follow up focus group interview.

I am writing to invite you to participate in a research dissertation regarding your perceptions of parent involvement. You will be asked to respond to the Parent and School Survey (PASS) in English or Korean, whichever is more convenient to you. The survey also asks about your background and experience with parent involvement. Participation in the survey should take approximately fifteen minutes. Copies of both documents are attached for your convenience.

Your responses are confidential. All identifying information will be removed and survey data will be maintained in secure files and will be accessible only to me. Reports and other communications related to the study will not identify respondents by name, nor will they identify any schools. Study results will be available in a summary report, which will be given to Montgomery County Public Schools.

Your participation is strictly voluntary. If you are willing to complete the survey and background information, please sign the survey consent form below and complete the survey instrument. Please mail the survey and consent form in a self-addressed stamped envelope by Tuesday, October 15, 2013. If you have any questions or concerns about this study, you may contact me by calling 301-526-1085 (cell) or you may send me an email at [yong\\_m\\_kim@mcpsmd.org](mailto:yong_m_kim@mcpsmd.org). You may also contact Dr. Carol Parham, chairperson of my committee, by directly calling the university at 301-405-3580.

Thank you for your participation,

Yong-Mi Kim

Yes, I would like to participate in the survey and the follow up focus group interview. I am attaching my contact information below.

\_\_\_\_\_ Name/Signature

\_\_\_\_\_ Child's Name of School

\_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number or Email

APPENDIX E

Recruitment Letter and Consent Form in Korean

## 설문 지원자 모집편지와 동의서 - 어머니들

2013년 7월 7일

학부모님께,

메릴랜드 주립대학 박사과정중인 제가 학위논문 부분의 프로그램을 준비중에 있습니다. 이를 위해 저는 양적 및 질적의 연구조사를 디자인했습니다. 이 논문의 취지는 재미한국 어머니들의 학부모 참여의 이해도와 인식도를 이해하기위해서 입니다. 논문자료 수집방법은 설문과 뒤따르는 토의 그룹 인터뷰가 있겠습니다.

이번 학부모 참여 인식에 관한 연구논문에 여러분의 참여를 초대합니다. 편의상, 학부모 및 학교 설문은 영어나 한국어로 작성하실수 있습니다. 설문은 약 15분의 시간이 걸리며, 또한 설문작성자의 경력과 경험을 물어봅니다.

작성된 내용은 비밀이 지켜집니다. 각자의 고유정보는 삭제되며, 설문자료는 저만 열수있는 통제 서류파일로 유지됩니다. 연구보고와 다른 어떤 연구발표도 작성자의 이름이나, 학교를 밝히지 않습니다. 연구 결과는 요약된 보고서로 이용할수 있고, 몽고메리 카운티 공립학교에 제출됩니다.

이번 설문과 배경정보 작성참여를 원하시면, 아래의 동의서에 서명하시고 설문지를 작성하세요. 우표가 붙어있는 봉투에 작성하신 설문지와 동의서를 우편으로 2013년 9월 \_\_일 금요일까지 부쳐주시면 됩니다. 혹시 이 연구설문에 관하여 질문이나 염려되는 부분이 있으시면, 저에게 301-526-1085 (휴대전화)로 전화를 주시고, [yong\\_m\\_kim@mcpsmd.org](mailto:yong_m_kim@mcpsmd.org) 이메일로 연락주시면 됩니다. 또한 대학의 위원회 위원장 케를 과햄박사에게 직접 301-405-3580 으로 연락하셔도 됩니다.

참여해주셔서 감사합니다.

김영미

네, 저는 연구설문과 뒤따르는 토의 그룹 인터뷰에 참여하겠습니다. 저의 연락정보를 아래에 기재합니다.

\_\_\_\_\_ 이름/서명

\_\_\_\_\_ 자녀의 학교이름

\_\_\_\_\_ 전화번호 나 이메일

APPENDIX F

PASS Survey

**Parent and School Survey (PASS)**

**"TELL US ABOUT YOU AND YOUR EXPERIENCES WITH YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL. A strong home-school partnership is important for improving student learning and healthy development. Please take a few minutes to complete this short survey. The information you provide will help us better understand your experiences with your child's school. Your individual answers are confidential and are reported together with the answers from other parents in your child's school."**

Parent Demographic Information:

**Marital Status:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Married \_\_\_\_\_ Remarried \_\_\_\_\_ Divorced \_\_\_\_\_ Widowed \_\_\_\_\_ Never Married

**Relationship to (oldest) Child:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Mother \_\_\_\_\_ Father \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_ (specify)

**Number of Children in Elementary School:** \_\_\_\_\_ 1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_ 5+

**Gender of Children (Number of Each):** \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female

**Gender of Parent Surveyed:** \_\_\_\_\_ Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female

**Your Age:** \_\_\_\_\_ 16-19 \_\_\_\_\_ 20-29 \_\_\_\_\_ 30-39 \_\_\_\_\_ 40-49 \_\_\_\_\_ 50+

**Education Level:**

\_\_\_\_\_ High School Graduate \_\_\_\_\_ Bachelor's Degree \_\_\_\_\_ Graduate Degree

**Years in the United States:** \_\_\_\_\_ 0-10 years \_\_\_\_\_ 10-20 years \_\_\_\_\_ 20+ years

**Level of English:**

\_\_\_\_\_ No/ Limited English \_\_\_\_\_ Some/Proficient English \_\_\_\_\_ Fluent in English/Native Speaker

**Annual Household Income Level:**

\_\_\_\_\_ \$0-\$25,000 \_\_\_\_\_ \$25,000-\$75,000 \_\_\_\_\_ \$75,000+

**How would you rate your oldest child's overall academic progress in school? Please check one.**

- \_\_\_\_\_ He/she is an A student (High Ability)
- \_\_\_\_\_ He/she is a B average student (High-Average Ability)
- \_\_\_\_\_ He/she is a C student (Average Ability)
- \_\_\_\_\_ He/she is a D student (Low Average)
- \_\_\_\_\_ He/she is an F student (Low ability or has failed 1 more classes in school.)

**Please fill in the blank. Please think about your child's school. When answering this survey, If you have more than one child in your school, please answer for your oldest child in elementary school. Mark whether you "Strongly Agree", "Agree", "Neutral", "Disagree", or "Strongly Disagree" with the statements.**

EPSTEIN	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I feel very comfortable visiting my child's school.	1	2	3	4	5
2. My child's schoolwork is always displayed in our home. (e.g. hang papers on the refrigerator).	1	2	3	4	5
3. If my child misbehaved at school, I would know about it soon afterward.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I frequently explain difficult ideas to my child when she/he doesn't understand.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Every time my child does something well at school, I compliment him/their.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Talking with my child's principal makes me uncomfortable.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I always know how well my child is doing in school.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I am confused about my legal rights as a parent of a student.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I read to my child every day.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I talk with other parents frequently about educational issues.	1	2	3	4	5
11. My child attends community programs (e.g. YMCA, park/rec., community theatre, etc.) regularly.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I have visited my child's classroom several times in the past year.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I have made suggestions to my child's teachers about how to help my child learn.	1	2	3	4	5
14. There are many children's books in our house.	1	2	3	4	5
15. In the past 12 months, I have attended activities at my child's school several times (e.g. fun nights performances, awards nights, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
16. My child misses school several days each semester.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Talking with my child's current teacher makes me somewhat uncomfortable.	1	2	3	4	5
18. I don't understand the assignments my child brings home.	1	2	3	4	5
19. Reading books is a regular activity in our home.	1	2	3	4	5
20. If my child was having trouble in school, I would not know how to get extra help for him/her.	1	2	3	4	5
21. I know the laws governing schools well.	1	2	3	4	5
22. In the past 12 months, I attended several school board meetings.	1	2	3	4	5
23. In the past 12 months, I volunteered at my child's school at least 3 times.	1	2	3	4	5
24. I know many programs for youth in my community.	1	2	3	4	5

<b>BOURDIEU</b>					
<b>I believe the following issues make parent involvement in my child's school challenging for me.</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
25. My English proficiency	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
26. My level of education	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
27. My family's level of income	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
28. The number of years my family has been in the United States	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
29. Lack of time	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
30. Other (Specify: _____ )	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>



APPENDIX G  
PASS Survey in Korean

## 부모 및 학교 설문 조사 (PASS)

"귀하, 그리고 귀하 자녀의 학교에 대해 귀하가 경험하신 바를 말씀해 주십시오. 학생의 학업 향상과 건전한 발전을 위해 성공적인 가정-학교 파트너십 관계를 유지하는 것이 중요합니다. 잠시 시간을 내 주셔서 아래 몇 가지 질문에 답하여 주십시오. 제공하여 주시는 정보가 귀하의 자녀가 다니는 학교에 관한 귀하의 경험을 저희가 이해하는데 도움이 될 것입니다. 각 응답내용은 비밀이 지켜지며 귀 자녀 학교의 다른 학부모의 응답과 함께 보고됩니다."

부모 인구통계 정보:

결혼 관계: \_\_\_\_\_ 결혼 \_\_\_\_\_ 재혼 \_\_\_\_\_ 이혼 \_\_\_\_\_ 배우자사망 \_\_\_\_\_ 미혼

최연장 자녀와의 관계: \_\_\_\_\_ 어머니 \_\_\_\_\_ 아버지 \_\_\_\_\_ 기타: \_\_\_\_\_ (자세히 기입)

초등학교 재학 아동수: \_\_\_\_\_ 1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_ 5+

아동 성별 인원수: \_\_\_\_\_ 남아 \_\_\_\_\_ 여아

설문 응답자의 성: \_\_\_\_\_ 남성 \_\_\_\_\_ 여성

연령: \_\_\_\_\_ 16-19 \_\_\_\_\_ 20-29 \_\_\_\_\_ 30-39 \_\_\_\_\_ 40-49 \_\_\_\_\_ 50+

학력 수준: \_\_\_\_\_ 고등학교 졸업 \_\_\_\_\_ 학사 학위 \_\_\_\_\_ 대학원 학위

미국 거주 연수: \_\_\_\_\_ 0-10 년 \_\_\_\_\_ 10-20 년 \_\_\_\_\_ 20+ 년

영어 수준: \_\_\_\_\_ 영어 실력 무/약간 \_\_\_\_\_ 숙달한 영어 \_\_\_\_\_ 유창한 영어/영어 모국어로 \_\_\_\_\_ 구사

가구 연 수입: \_\_\_\_\_ \$0-\$25,000 \_\_\_\_\_ \$25,000-\$75,000 \_\_\_\_\_ \$75,000+

귀하의 최연장 자녀의 학교 학업 종합 성적은 어느 수준이라고 생각하십니까? 아래 한 칸에 기입해 주십시오

\_\_\_\_\_ 우리 아이는 A 학점 학생입니다 (높은 실력)

\_\_\_\_\_ 우리 아이는 평균 B 학점 학생입니다 (높은-평균 실력)

\_\_\_\_\_ 우리 아이는 C 학점 학생입니다 (평균 실력)

\_\_\_\_\_ 우리 아이는 D 학점 학생입니다 (낮은 평균 실력)

\_\_\_\_\_ 우리 아이는 F 학점 학생입니다 (낮은 실력, 또는 학교에서 한 학급 이상 낙제)

자녀 학교를 염두에 두고 아래 공간에 기입하여 주십시오. 이 설문에 응답할때 학교에 다니는 자녀가 하나 이상일 경우 최연장 자녀가 다니는 초등학교에 관해 답변하여 주십시오. 아래 기재 내용에 "전혀 아니다", "아니다", "반 반이다", "그렇다", "전적으로 동의한다" 의 각 해당 란에 기입하여 주십시오.

학부모로서	전혀 아니다	아니다	반 반이다	그렇다	전적으로 동의한다
1. 나는 내 자녀의 학교를 방문할때 아주 마음이 편하다.	1	2	3	4	5
2. 내 자녀의 학업 활동물은 항상 내 집 안에 게시되어 있다. (예: 작문등을 냉장고에 붙여 놓는다.)	1	2	3	4	5
3. 내 자녀가 학교에서 나쁜 행실을 하면 나는 그것을 곧 알게 될 것이다.	1	2	3	4	5
4. 내 자녀가 어려운 생각을 이해하지 못 할때 나는 자주 설명을 하여 준다.	1	2	3	4	5
5. 내 자녀가 학교에서 잘 할때 마다 나는 칭찬을 하여 준다.	1	2	3	4	5
6. 내 자녀 학교 교장과 대화할때는 마음이 불편해 진다.	1	2	3	4	5
7. 나는 항상 내 자녀가 학교에서 얼마나 잘 하고 있는지 알고 있다.	1	2	3	4	5
8. 학교 아동 부모로서의 법적 권리에 대해 나는 혼란을 느끼고 있다.	1	2	3	4	5
9. 나는 내 자녀에게 매일 책을 읽어 준다.	1	2	3	4	5
10. 나는 교육관련 문제를 다른 학부모와 자주 대화를 나눈다.	1	2	3	4	5
11. 내 자녀는 지역 커뮤니티 프로그램에 정기적으로 참여한다. (예: YMCA, 공원/오락 행사, 커뮤니티 극장, 등등)	1	2	3	4	5
12. 지난해 나는 내 자녀 학급 교실을 여러 차례 방문하였다.	1	2	3	4	5
13. 내 자녀 학습을 돕는 일에 관해 나는 내 자녀 담임선생에게 조언을 하였다.	1	2	3	4	5
14. 우리집에는 많은 어린이책이 있다.	1	2	3	4	5
15. 지난 12개월 동안, 나는 여러 차례 자녀학교행사에 참석했다. (예: 야간 놀이 공연, 시상식 밤 행사, 등등)	1	2	3	4	5
16. 내 자녀는 매 학기마다 며칠씩 결석한다.	1	2	3	4	5
17. 내 자녀의 현 담임선생님과 이야기할 때 나는 어느정도 불편하게 느껴진다.	1	2	3	4	5
18. 나는 내 자녀가 집에 갖고 오는 숙제를 이해하지 못한다.	1	2	3	4	5
19. 우리 가정에서 독서는 일상생활 활동의 하나다.	1	2	3	4	5

20. 내 자녀가 학교에서 문제가 있어도 나는 그 아이를 위해 어떻게 더 많은 도움을 받을 수 있는지 모른다.	1	2	3	4	5
21. 나는 학교 운영에 적용되는 법률에 대해 잘 알고 있다.	1	2	3	4	5
22. 지난 12 개월 동안에 나는 교육위원회 회의에 여러 차례 참석했다.	1	2	3	4	5
23. 지난 12 개월 동안에 나는 내 자녀 학교에서 최소한 3 번이상 자원봉사를 하였다.	1	2	3	4	5
24. 나는 우리 커뮤니티의 청소년들을 위한 많은 프로그램에 대해 알고 있다.	1	2	3	4	5
아래 문제들이 학부모의 자녀 학교 참여에 방해가 된다고 생각한다.	전혀 아니다	아니다	반 반이다	그렇다	전적으로 동의한다
25. 학부모의 영어실력	1	2	3	4	5
26. 학부모의 교육수준	1	2	3	4	5
27. 가족의 수입	1	2	3	4	5
28. 가족의 미국 거주 연수	1	2	3	4	5
29. 시간의 부족	1	2	3	4	5
30. 다른 것: _____	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX H  
PASS Survey in Back Translation

## BACK TRANSLATION OF PASS-K

### 부모 및 학교 설문 조사 (PASS-K) Parent and School Survey (PASS)

"귀하, 그리고 귀하 자녀의 학교에 대해 귀하가 경험하신 바를 말씀해 주십시오. 학생의 학업 향상과 건전한 발전을 위해 성공적인 가정-학교 파트너십 관계를 유지하는 것이 중요합니다. 잠시 시간을 내 주셔서 아래 몇 가지 질문에 답하여 주십시오. 제공하여 주시는 정보가 귀하의 자녀가 다니는 학교에 관한 귀하의 경험을 저희가 이해하는데 도움이 될 것입니다. 각 응답내용은 비밀이 지켜지며 귀 자녀 학교의 다른 학부모의 응답과 함께 보고됩니다."

"Please tell us about you and describe your experience with your child's school. As you know, maintaining a strong relationship with your child's school helps improve your student's academic success and healthy development. Please take a moment to provide the important information below about you and your experience in your child's school experience with us. Your information will be kept in confidence and will not be shared with anyone.

#### 부모 인구통계 정보: Parent demographic information:

##### 결혼 관계: Marital Relationship

\_\_\_\_\_ 결혼 \_\_\_\_\_ 재혼 \_\_\_\_\_ 이혼 \_\_\_\_\_ 배우자사망 \_\_\_\_\_ 미혼  
\_\_\_\_\_ married \_\_\_\_\_ remarriage \_\_\_\_\_ divorce \_\_\_\_\_ widow \_\_\_\_\_ single

##### 최연장 자녀와의 관계: Relationship with your child:

\_\_\_\_\_ 어머니 \_\_\_\_\_ 아버지 \_\_\_\_\_ 기타: \_\_\_\_\_ (자세히  
기입)  
---- mother ----father ----other ----- explain

##### 초등학교 재학 아동수: Number of children attending primary school:

\_\_\_\_\_ 1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_ 5+

##### 아동 성별 인원수: Child's Sex

\_\_\_\_\_ 남아 \_\_\_\_\_ 여아  
--- Boy --- Girl

##### 설문 응답자의 성: Participant's Sex

\_\_\_\_\_ 남성 \_\_\_\_\_ 여성  
--- Male --- Female

##### 연령: Age

\_\_\_\_\_ 16-19 \_\_\_\_\_ 20-29 \_\_\_\_\_ 30-39 \_\_\_\_\_ 40-49 \_\_\_\_\_ 50+

##### 학력 수준: Education Level

\_\_\_\_\_ 고등학교 졸업 \_\_\_\_\_ 학사 학위 \_\_\_\_\_ 대학원 학위  
---- High School ---- Bachelor's degree ---- graduate degree

##### 미국 거주 연수: USA -Years in Residence

\_\_\_\_\_ 0-10 년 \_\_\_\_\_ 10-20 년 \_\_\_\_\_ 20+ 년  
\_\_\_\_\_ 0-10 years \_\_\_\_\_ 10-20 years \_\_\_\_\_ 20+ years

##### 영어 수준: English Level

\_\_\_\_\_ 영어 실력 무/약간 \_\_\_\_\_ 숙달한 영어 \_\_\_\_\_ 유창한 영어/영어 모국어로 구사  
\_\_\_\_\_ Non-English / some \_\_\_\_\_ Mastery of English \_\_\_\_\_ Fluent English / English speaking native

##### 가구 연 수입: Household Annual Income

\_\_\_\_\_ \$0-\$25,000 \_\_\_\_\_ \$25,000-\$75,000 \_\_\_\_\_ \$75,000+

귀하의 최연장 자녀의 학교 학업 종합 성적은 어느 수준이라고 생각하십니까? 아래 한 칸에 기입해 주십시오 **What is your child's school academic status? Please fill in the spaces below:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 우리 아이는 A 학점 학생입니다 (높은 실력)
- \_\_\_\_\_ My child is an A grade student. (high ability).
- \_\_\_\_\_ 우리 아이는 평균 B 학점 학생입니다 (높은-평균 실력)
- \_\_\_\_\_ My child is a student with B average. (high-average skills)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 우리 아이는 C 학점 학생입니다 (평균 실력)
- \_\_\_\_\_ My child is a student with a C average. (average ability)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 우리 아이는 D 학점 학생입니다 (낮은 평균 실력)
- \_\_\_\_\_ My child is a student of grade D. (low average skills)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 우리 아이는 F 학점 학생입니다 (낮은 실력, 또는 학교에서 한 학급 이상 낙제)
- \_\_\_\_\_ My child is a student with an F. (low skills, failing more than one class)

자녀 학교를 염두에 두고 아래 공간에 기입하여 주십시오. 이 설문에 응답할때 학교에 다니는 자녀가 하나 이상일 경우 최연장 자녀가 다니는 초등학교에 관해 답변하여 주십시오. 아래 기재 내용에 "전혀 아니다", "아니다", "반 반이다", "그렇다", "전적으로 동의한다" 의 각 해당 란에 기입하여 주십시오.

With your child's school in mind, please fill in the space below. If you have more than one child in school, when responding to the survey, please answer for the oldest student in elementary school. Please circle one of the answers: "not at all", "not really", "half and half", "Yes", "totally agree" in response to each statements.

1. 나는 내 자녀의 학교를 방문할때 아주 마음이 편하다. When I visit my child's school, I feel relaxed.	1	2	3	4	5
2. 내 자녀의 학업 활동물은 항상 내 집 안에 게시되어 있다. (예: 작문등을 냉장고에 붙여 놓는다.) My child's work is posted around the house. (i.e. Work is placed on the refrigerator door.)	1	2	3	4	5
3. 내 자녀가 학교에서 나쁜 행실을 하면 나는 그것을 곧 알게 될 것이다. I know right away when my child is not behaving in school.	1	2	3	4	5
4. 내 자녀가 어려운 생각을 이해하지 못 할때 나는 자주 설명을 하여 준다. When my child has difficulty understanding, I can explain it to my child.	1	2	3	4	5
5. 내 자녀가 학교에서 잘 할때 마다 나는 칭찬을 하여 준다. When my children do well in school I give praise.	1	2	3	4	5
6. 내 자녀 학교 교장과 대화할때는 마음이 불편해 진다. I feel worried when I talk with the school principal.	1	2	3	4	5
7. 나는 항상 내 자녀가 학교에서 얼마나 잘 하고 있는지 알고 있다. I always know how my child is doing in school.	1	2	3	4	5
8. 학교 아동 부모로서의 법적 권리에 대해 나는 혼란을 느끼고 있다. I am confused about my legal rights as a parent in school.	1	2	3	4	5
9. 나는 내 자녀에게 매일 책을 읽어 준다. I give my child a book to read every day.	1	2	3	4	5
10. 나는 교육관련 문제를 다른 학부모와 자주 대화를 나눈다. I often talk to other parents about education-related issues.	1	2	3	4	5
11. 내 자녀는 지역 커뮤니티 프로그램에 정기적으로 참여한다. (예: YMCA, 공원/오락 행사, 커뮤니티 극장, 등등) My children participate regularly in local	1	2	3	4	5



community program. (For example: YMCA, park / recreational events, community theater, etc.)					
12. 지난해 나는 내 자녀 학급 교실을 여러 차례 방문하였다. This past year, I visited the classroom several times.	1	2	3	4	5
13. 내 자녀 학습을 돕는 일에 관해 나는 내 자녀 담임선생에게 조언을 하였다. I asked my child's homeroom teacher for advice about how to better help my child at home.	1	2	3	4	5
14. 우리집에는 많은 어린이책이 있다. We have lots of books at home.	1	2	3	4	5
15. 지난 12개월 동안, 나는 여러 차례 자녀학교 행사에 참석했다. (예: 야간 놀이 공연, 시상식 밤 행사, 등등) In the last 12 months, I have attended several children attend school events. (For example, nightly game show, award night celebrations, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
16. 내 자녀는 매 학기마다 며칠씩 결석한다. My child is absent several days each semester.	1	2	3	4	5
17. 내 자녀의 현 담임선생님과 이야기할 때 나는 어느정도 불편하게 느껴진다. I feel somewhat uncomfortable when talking with my child's current teacher.	1	2	3	4	5
18. 나는 내 자녀가 집에 갖고 오는 숙제를 이해하지 못한다. I do not understand the homework my child brings home.	1	2	3	4	5
19. 우리 가정에서 독서는 일상생활 활동의 하나다. We read a lot at home.	1	2	3	4	5
20. 내 자녀가 학교에서 문제가 있어도 나는 그 아이를 위해 어떻게 더 많은 도움을 받을 수 있는지 모른다. If my child has a problem in school, I do not know how to better help him.	1	2	3	4	5
21. 나는 학교 운영에 적용되는 법률에 대해 잘 알고 있다. I really know a lot about school laws.	1	2	3	4	5

22. 지난 12개월 동안에 나는 교육위원회 회의에 여러 차례 참석했다. During the past 12 months, I often attended the Board of Education meetings.	1	2	3	4	5
23. 지난 12개월 동안에 나는 내 자녀 학교에서 최소한 3번이상 자원봉사를 하였다. During the past 12 months, I volunteered at least three times in my child's school.	1	2	3	4	5
24. 나는 우리 커뮤니티의 청소년들을 위한 많은 프로그램에 대해 알고 있다. I know about a lot of programs for the youth in my community.	1	2	3	4	5
아래 문제들이 학부모의 자녀 학교 참여에 방해가 된다고 생각한다. The following issues prevent a parent from being involved in schools.	전혀 아니다 Not at all	아니다 Not Really	반반이다 Half and Half	그렇다 Yes	전적으로 동의한다 Totally Agree
25. 학부모의 영어실력 Parent's English Ability	1	2	3	4	5
26. 학부모의 교육수준 Parent's Education Level	1	2	3	4	5
27. 가족의 수입 Family Income	1	2	3	4	5
28. 가족의 미국 거주 연수 Family's Year in US	1	2	3	4	5
29. 시간의 부족 Lack of Time	1	2	3	4	5
30. 다른 것: _____ Other: _____	1	2	3	4	5

## APPENDIX I

### Focus Group Discussion Questions

## Focus Group Questions

Focus Area	Questions
PARENTING	<p>1. How much effort do you put into helping your child learn at home?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ How often do you help your child understand the content he or she is learning in school?</li> <li>○ How do you communicate to you child that school is important? Give details.</li> <li>○ What are some things you do to help your child at home? Give an example.</li> <li>○ Do you feel like you successful in helping your child with learning?</li> <li>○ How confident are you in your ability to make sure your child's school meets your child's learning needs?</li> </ul>
COMMUNICATING	<p>2. Do you meet in person with teachers and/or administrators at your child's school?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Why or why not?</li> <li>○ Give an example of when you met with your child's teacher and what happened.</li> <li>○ In the past year, have you communicated with the school about ways that you can help your child's learning at home? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How do you communicate with your child's school (phone call, email, etc)?</li> <li>● What's the easiest?</li> <li>● What's difficult about communicating with your child's school?</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Do you feel connected to your child's school? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● To what extent do you know how your child is doing academically and socially at school?</li> <li>● How do you find out?</li> <li>● What are some things you do to stay connected</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
VOLUNTEERING	<p>3. Do you volunteer at your child's school Have you helped out at your child's school?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Why or why not?</li> <li>○ What are some things you have done at the school?</li> <li>○ Give examples</li> </ul>

LEARNING AT HOME	<p>4. How often do you help your child engage in activities which are educational outside the home?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Do you have your child involved in outside learning?</li> <li>○ Tutoring?</li> <li>○ Learning centers?</li> <li>○ Church? How has the church influenced your child's learning and/or your parent involvement?</li> <li>○ What activity is your child involved in outside of the school (i.e. play instrument, Korean School, etc)?</li> </ul>
DECISION-MAKING	<p>5. How often do you visit your child's school?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Do you go to PTA meetings?</li> <li>○ Are you involved in school related committees</li> <li>○ Do you feel comfortable when visiting your child's school? Why or why not?</li> <li>○ Do you feel welcome? Why or why not?</li> </ul>
COLLABORATING WITH THE COMMUNITY	<p>6. Have you discussed your child's school with other family member, friends, or other parents?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Why or why not?</li> <li>○ If so where does it take place?</li> <li>○ Church? How has the church influenced your child's learning and/or your parent involvement?</li> <li>○ Give an example of when this occurs?</li> <li>○ What do you generally discuss?</li> </ul>
BARRIERS	<p>7. What are some reasons that make it easier or harder to be involved in your child's education?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What challenges do you face when you try to become involved in your child's education?</li> <li>○ What is the biggest factor that encourages you or is a barrier to parent involvement?</li> <li>○ Do the following (i.e. English, money, US residency, resources, your knowledge and/or skill level) play a role in why you do or don't become involved at school? In what way?</li> </ul>
COMMENTS	<p>8. Do you have any other comments about your parent involvement?</p>

APPENDIX J

FBI Linguist

## **FBI Linguist**

Since September 11, 2001, the FBI has significantly ramped up its linguistics division so that almost 77 percent of the world's languages may be immediately translated. In the past, the FBI relied on private firms or interpreters to contract services, but in the years following 9/11, the bureau has placed a greater emphasis on in-house linguistic services. This is primarily a result of the bureau's unwillingness to share sensitive information with outside personnel as well as the time-sensitive nature of many translation operations.

### **Degree Requirements for FBI Linguists**

A bachelor's degree is required for any linguist in the Federal Bureau of Investigations. A college degree does not have to be in the foreign language, unless the applicant is not a native speaker in the language, in which case it is highly recommended. If the applicant is a native speaker, it is often helpful to show superior academic achievement in English or other majors that emphasize English language skills.

The applicant should possess outstanding proficiency in the areas of writing, reading, aural comprehension and speaking of the foreign language as well as English. Most linguists first join the Bureau as a contract linguist, in which case, various areas may be de-emphasized.

### **Application and Examination Process**

Applicants must first provide an application package that includes a resume, college transcripts and documents related to military veteran, law enforcement or federal employee status. Applicants will also provide a self-assessment of language skills which will help determine viability.

If the application is approved, the applicant must take three exams in foreign language proficiency.

- Listening and reading—This exam will be in the form of a multiple choice test, in which the candidate will be provided written samples or hear conversations. Some portions may require the applicant to synopsize the audio or written sample.
- Translation—This test will provide written samples in a foreign language that must be translated into English. The informational content must be preserved and points are added for stylistic expression. The second portion follows a similar format but provides English samples that must be translated.
- Speaking—The applicant must conduct a structured interview with native speakers over a telephone.

### **FBI Linguist Designations**

Depending on the results in various examinations, the applicant may be designated as

1.Contract Linguist—This is an introductory position that requires successful completion of all three exams.

2.Contract Language Monitor—This job requires successful completion of the listening test, English composition, and speaking tests.

3.Contract Tester—This job requires only passage of the English and foreign language speaking test.

4.Special Agent Linguist—This requires success in all linguistic exams as well as the Special Agent qualifications and exams



APPENDIX K

The Interagency Language Roundtable Scale

## ILR scale

The Interagency Language Roundtable scale is a set of descriptions of abilities to communicate in a language. It is the standard grading scale for language proficiency in the Federal service. It was originally developed by the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR), which included representation by United States Foreign Service Institute, the predecessor of the National Foreign Affairs Training Center (NFATC). It grades people's language proficiency on a scale of 0-5. The designation 0+, 1+, 2+, 3+, or 4+ is assigned when proficiency substantially exceeds one skill level and does not fully meet the criteria for the next level. This totals 11 possible grades. Grades may be assigned separately for different skills such as reading, speaking, listening, writing, translation, audio translation, interpretation, and intercultural communication. For some of these skills, the level may be seen abbreviated, for example S-1 for Speaking Level 1.

### Contents

- 1 ILR Level 0 – No proficiency
- 2 ILR Level 1 – Elementary proficiency
- 3 ILR Level 2 – Limited working proficiency
- 4 ILR Level 3 – Professional working proficiency
- 5 ILR Level 4 – Full professional proficiency
- 6 ILR Level 5 – Native or bilingual proficiency

### ILR Level 0 – No proficiency

The baseline level of the scale is no proficiency, rated 0. The following describes the traits of an ILR Level 0 individual:

- oral production limited to occasional, isolated words
- may be able to ask questions or make statements with reasonable accuracy only with memorized utterances or formulae
- unable to read connected prose but may be able to read numbers, isolated words and phrases, personal and place names, street signs, office and shop designations
- understanding limited to occasional isolated words or memorized utterances in areas of immediate needs.
- may be able to produce symbols in an alphabetic or syllabic writing system or 50 of the most common characters

### ILR Level 1 – Elementary proficiency

Elementary proficiency is rated 1 on the scale. The following describes the traits of an ILR Level 1 individual:

- can fulfill travelling needs and conduct themselves in a polite manner
- able to use questions and answers for simple topics within a limited level of experience
- able to understand basic questions and speech, which allows for guides, such as slower speech or repetition, to aid understanding
- has only a vocabulary large enough to communicate the most basic of needs; also makes frequent punctuation and grammatical mistakes in writing of the language

The majority of individuals classified as Level 1 are able to perform most basic functions using the language. This includes buying goods, reading the time, ordering simple meals and asking for minimal directions.

#### ILR Level 2 – Limited working proficiency

Limited working proficiency is rated 2 on the scale. A person at this level is described as follows:

- able to satisfy routine social demands and limited work requirements
- can handle with confidence most basic social situations including introductions and casual conversations about current events, work, family, and autobiographical information
- can handle limited work requirements, needing help in handling any complications or difficulties; can get the gist of most conversations on non-technical subjects (i.e. topics which require no specialized knowledge), and has a speaking vocabulary sufficient to respond simply with some circumlocutions
- has an accent which, though often quite faulty, is intelligible
- can usually handle elementary constructions quite accurately but does not have thorough or confident control of the grammar.

#### ILR Level 3 – Professional working proficiency

Professional working proficiency is rated 3 on the scale. Level 3 is what is usually used to measure how many people in the world know a given language. A person at this level is described as follows:

- able to speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most conversations on practical, social, and professional topics
- can discuss particular interests and special fields of competence with reasonable ease
- has comprehension which is quite complete for a normal rate of speech
- has a general vocabulary which is broad enough that he or she rarely has to grope for a word

- has an accent which may be obviously foreign; has a good control of grammar; and whose errors virtually never interfere with understanding and rarely disturb the native speaker.

#### ILR Level 4 – Full professional proficiency

Full professional proficiency is rated 4 on the scale. A person at this level is described as follows:

- able to use the language fluently and accurately on all levels and as normally pertinent to professional needs.
- can understand and participate in any conversations within the range of own personal and professional experience with a high degree of fluency and precision of vocabulary
- would rarely be taken for a native speaker, but can respond appropriately even in unfamiliar grounds or situations
- makes only quite rare and minute errors of pronunciation and grammar
- can handle informal interpreting of the language.

#### ILR Level 5 – Native or bilingual proficiency

Native or bilingual proficiency is rated 5 on the scale. A person at this level is described as follows:

- has a speaking proficiency equivalent to that of an educated native speaker
- has complete fluency in the language, such that speech on all levels is fully accepted by educated native speakers in all of its features, including breadth of vocabulary and idiom, colloquialisms, and pertinent cultural references.

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