

Teacher support adaptivity and parental engagement in Chinese kindergartens

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Abstract

This study delves into the dynamics between teacher support adaptivity and parental engagement within the context of Chinese kindergartens. Drawing from Bandura's concept of self-efficacy and recent scholarly contributions from Chinese researchers, this research aims to explore the intricate relationship between teacher support adaptivity and parental engagement in early childhood education. Through meticulous data collection via questionnaire surveys, 285 valid responses were gathered from participants within Chinese kindergartens. Employing rigorous statistical analyses including descriptive analysis, analysis of variance, and regression analysis using SPSS 26.0, the study unearthed significant insights. The study aimed to investigate the relationship between teacher support adaptivity, parental engagement, and work performance in Chinese kindergartens. A total of 305 valid questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS 26.0, employing descriptive, variance, and regression analyses. Results indicated a positive correlation between teacher support adaptivity, parental engagement, and work performance, suggesting that improved teacher traits positively influence organizational climate and subsequently enhance work performance. The study innovatively examined the role of parental engagement as an intermediary variable, contributing to the understanding of leadership dynamics in educational settings. Moreover, it offers insights for the development of training programs tailored for women leaders in Chinese universities, potentially benefiting both female and male leaders in educational leadership roles.

Keywords: teacher support adaptivity, parental engagement, early childhood education

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1. Introduction

In recent years, the landscape of early childhood education has witnessed a significant evolution, characterized by an increasing emphasis on the pivotal roles played by both teachers and parents in shaping the developmental trajectories of young learners. Central to this paradigm shift are the concepts of Teacher Support Adaptivity (TSA) and Parental Engagement (PE), which stand as cornerstones in fostering holistic growth and academic achievement among children in Chinese kindergartens.

Teacher Support Adaptivity (TSA) refers to the dynamic and responsive nature of teachers' support strategies tailored to meet the diverse needs and learning styles of individual students within the classroom setting. The concept underscores the importance of educators' ability to flexibly adapt instructional approaches, provide personalized feedback, and offer scaffolding to facilitate optimal learning outcomes. Studies by Wang and Hallinger (2019) have demonstrated that high levels of teacher adaptivity are positively associated with enhanced student motivation, engagement, and academic performance in early childhood education contexts. Furthermore, research by Li et al. (2021) has highlighted the crucial role of TSA in fostering a supportive and nurturing learning environment conducive to holistic child development. Concomitantly, Parental Engagement (PE) encompasses the active involvement of parents in their children's educational experiences, encompassing various forms of support, communication, and collaboration with teachers and school communities. PE is multifaceted, involving parental participation in school activities, regular communication with teachers, and the provision of a conducive home learning environment. Empirical evidence by Chen and Liu (2020) suggests that high levels of parental engagement are associated with improved academic achievement, socio-emotional development, and overall well-being among young children. Moreover, studies by Zhou and Yin (2018) have underscored the reciprocal relationship between parental involvement and children's educational outcomes, emphasizing the importance of fostering strong partnerships between home and school environments.

Against the backdrop of these theoretical frameworks and empirical findings, the present study aims to investigate the interplay between Teacher Support Adaptivity (TSA) and Parental Engagement (PE) in Chinese kindergartens. By elucidating the reciprocal influences and synergistic effects of these variables, this research endeavors to shed light on effective strategies for enhancing early childhood education practices, promoting positive learning experiences, and fostering holistic development among young learners. Through a comprehensive exploration of TSA and PE within the Chinese kindergarten context, this study seeks to contribute valuable insights to the broader discourse on educational quality and student outcomes in early childhood settings.

In the context of Chinese kindergartens, where educational policies and cultural norms may shape the dynamics of teacher-student and parent-teacher relationships, understanding the interplay between TSA and PE becomes particularly salient. Chinese kindergartens often place a strong emphasis on academic achievement alongside socio-emotional development, reflecting broader societal values regarding education and success. Thus, exploring how teachers' adaptive support strategies intersect with parental engagement practices can provide valuable insights into the mechanisms underlying effective early childhood education in this cultural context. Furthermore, it is essential to consider the potential challenges and barriers that may impede the realization of optimal TSA and PE in Chinese kindergartens. Factors such as limited resources, varying parental expectations, and cultural differences in communication styles may pose obstacles to fostering strong teacher-parent partnerships and implementing adaptive teaching practices. By acknowledging these challenges, educators and policymakers can work towards developing targeted interventions and support systems to enhance TSA and PE initiatives, ultimately benefiting the holistic development of young children in Chinese kindergartens.

While research on Teacher Support Adaptivity (TSA) and Parental Engagement (PE) in early childhood

education has seen considerable growth, there exists a notable research gap in understanding these constructs within the specific context of Chinese kindergartens. Existing studies often focus on Western educational settings, overlooking the unique cultural, societal, and educational dynamics that characterize Chinese kindergarten environments. This gap underscores the need for research that delves into the interplay between TSA and PE within the Chinese context.

For instance, a study by Li et al. (2020) examined the relationship between parental involvement and children's academic achievement in Chinese primary schools. While the findings shed light on the positive impact of PE on student outcomes, the study predominantly focused on older children, leaving a gap in understanding how parental engagement operates within the early childhood education landscape, particularly in kindergartens. Furthermore, while research in Western contexts has highlighted the importance of teacher adaptivity in supporting diverse learners, there is a paucity of studies exploring the adaptive practices of teachers in Chinese kindergartens. For example, a study by Wang and Hallinger (2019) investigated teacher adaptivity in American elementary classrooms and its association with student motivation and academic performance. While the findings are insightful, they may not fully capture the cultural nuances and pedagogical practices prevalent in Chinese kindergartens. Moreover, existing research often treats TSA and PE as independent factors, overlooking their potential synergistic effects on child development and academic achievement.

A study by Chen and Liu (2020) explored parental engagement practices in Chinese kindergartens but did not consider how teacher adaptivity intersects with parental involvement to influence student outcomes. This gap highlights the need for research that examines the collaborative efforts of teachers and parents in supporting children's learning experiences within Chinese kindergarten settings. Therefore, bridging this research gap is essential for advancing our understanding of effective early childhood education practices in China. By investigating the interplay between TSA and PE and their combined effects on student outcomes, future research can inform the development of tailored interventions and policies to enhance the quality of education provided in Chinese kindergartens.

Objectives of the Study - The objective of this study is to investigate the interplay between Teacher Support Adaptivity (TSA) and Parental Engagement (PE) in Chinese kindergartens. Specifically, the study investigate the relationship between TSA and PE, and propose action plans for enhancing both variables to improve the quality of early childhood education in Chinese kindergartens and promote positive learning experiences for young learners

2. Methods

Research Methods - This study employed a quantitative descriptive research design to explore the cause-and-effect relationship between sports motivation, attitude, and success. The rationale behind selecting a quantitative approach lies in the suitability of the questionnaire as the data collection instrument. Additionally, quantitative research proves advantageous as it facilitates the collection of objective and numerical data, allowing for the application of statistical tools to establish relationships and causation between variables.

Participants of the Study - A sample of 310 students was selected from a total population of approximately 2000 students across various kindergartens in the target area. The sample size was determined using G*Power 3.1.9, with an effect size of 0.26, a power probability of 0.95, and an alpha level of 0.05. Stratified random sampling was employed to ensure representation from different kindergartens, including TY Kindergarten, HK Blue Kindergarten, and New Oriental Kindergarten. Inclusion criteria encompassed students enrolled in kindergarten programs within the specified kindergartens, while exclusion criteria involved students with special educational needs or those not meeting the age requirements for kindergarten enrollment. Random selection of participants from each kindergarten was conducted to mitigate selection bias and enhance the generalizability of the study findings.

Data Gathering Instrument - Two questionnaires were used in this study, and they were work engagement

questionnaire and work performance questionnaire. The questionnaires were scored using a 4-point Likert scale. The "On teachers support adaptability" comes from the questionnaire The Questionnaire on Teacher Support Adaptivity (QTSA): Reliability and Validity of Student Perceptions Janneke van de Pol, Nicky de Vries, Astrid M.G. Poorthuis and Tim Mainhard (771) There are 20 items in the scale, including four dimensions: Adaptive with much regulation, Adaptive with little regulation, Non-adaptive with much regulation and Non-adaptive with little regulation.

The "Parental School Involvement" comes from the survey compiled by Hill, N. E., & Taylor, L. C. (2004). Parental School Involvement and Children's Academic Achievement: Pragmatics and Issues.). There are 20 items in the scale, which has four subscales: Communication and Collaboration, Parental Involvement in Learning, learning performance, and Supportive Home Environment. The content of the instrument used in this study was subjected to rigorous verification and validation processes to ensure its reliability. The instrument was first examined and validated by a panel of experts in the field to ensure that it adequately measures the intended constructs. Subsequently, the instrument underwent reliability testing using Cronbach's alpha, a widely recognized measure of internal consistency. The higher the coefficient, the higher the degree of internal consistency, and thus the better the reliability of the scale.

Procedure of the Study - At the initial stage of the study, we will extensively collect relevant theoretical and empirical research results at home and abroad on the adaptability of teacher support, parent participation, and home co-education in the field of preschool education. Through the current research progress, existing problems and future trends, to provide a solid foundation for the framework construction, variable setting and hypothesis proposal of this study. Information will be obtained from academic journals, dissertations, policy documents, conference papers and other channels, and content analysis will be used to deeply interpret the literature. Two sets of targeted questionnaires are designed: one for kindergarten teachers, including teacher education philosophy, flexibility of teaching strategies, and home communication ability, to quantify the adaptability of teacher support; the other for parents, focusing on the form, frequency, motivation, satisfaction of parents' participation in kindergarten activities, to evaluate the parents' participation and its impact on children's learning and development. One-to-one or group interviews were conducted with kindergarten teachers and parents, and a semi-structured interview outline was designed to cover how teachers support adaptive teaching, specific ways parents participate in kindergarten teaching, challenges encountered and improvement measures.

3. Results and discussion

Table 1

Summary Table on Teachers Support Adaptability

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
Adaptive with much regulation	3.37	Agree	1
Adaptive with little regulation	3.22	Agree	2
Non-adaptive with much regulation	3.13	Agree	3
Non-adaptive with little regulation	2.79	Agree	4
Composite Mean	3.13	Agree	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree; 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree; 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree; 1.00 - 1.49 = Strongly Disagree

Table 1 provides a summary of respondents' perceptions regarding teachers' support adaptability across different regulatory styles. The composite mean score of 3.13 indicates a general agreement among respondents regarding overall teacher support adaptability. The highest mean score was observed in the category of "Adaptive with much regulation," with a mean score of 3.37. This suggests that teachers are generally perceived as being adaptable in their support strategies while also adhering to established regulations and guidelines. This finding highlights the importance of striking a balance between flexibility and structure in supporting students' learning needs, ensuring both responsiveness to individual differences and consistency in instructional approaches. Following closely behind was the category of "Adaptive with little regulation," with a mean score of 3.22. This indicates a slightly lower level of perceived adaptability compared to the previous category, suggesting that

teachers may exhibit greater flexibility in their support strategies when regulations are less stringent. However, it also implies that there is still a degree of regulatory influence on teachers' adaptability, albeit to a lesser extent.

The category of "Non-adaptive with much regulation" received a mean score of 3.13, indicating a moderate level of agreement among respondents. This suggests that while teachers may demonstrate some adaptability in their support strategies, there is also a notable degree of adherence to regulations that may limit their ability to adjust their approaches based on individual student needs. Lastly, the lowest mean score was observed in the category of "Non-adaptive with little regulation," with a mean score of 2.79. This suggests that teachers may exhibit less adaptability in their support strategies when regulations are less stringent, potentially resulting in a more rigid and less responsive approach to addressing students' learning needs. These findings underscore the complex interplay between regulatory frameworks and teachers' support adaptability in educational settings. Existing literature on teacher professionalism emphasizes the importance of autonomy and discretion in decision-making, while also recognizing the need for accountability and adherence to standards (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). Additionally, research on teacher efficacy highlights the significance of teachers' beliefs in their ability to positively impact student learning outcomes, which may influence their approach to supporting students' diverse needs (Bandura, 2017).

In summary, while respondents generally agreed on the overall level of teacher support adaptability, the findings suggest variations in adaptability across different regulatory contexts. By incorporating insights from both empirical data and existing literature, educators and policymakers can work towards fostering a supportive and responsive learning environment that prioritizes students' individual needs and promotes their academic success and well-being.

Table 2

Summary Table on Parental School Involvement

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. Communication and Collaboration	3.31	Agree	2.5
2. Home-School Connection	3.34	Agree	1
3. Parental Involvement in Learning	3.26	Agree	4
4. Supportive Home Environment	3.31	Agree	2.5
Composite Mean	3.04	Agree	

Legend: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree; 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree; 1.50 – 2.49 = Disagree; 1.00 - 1.49 = Strongly Disagree

Table 2 presents a summary of parental school involvement, focusing on various indicators. The composite mean score of 3.04 indicates agreement among respondents. The indicators are analyzed below, with the highest and lowest scoring indicators symbolized:

- Indicator 2: "Home-School Connection." This indicator scored the highest with a weighted mean of 3.34, symbolizing strong agreement. A strong connection between home and school enhances students' academic success and well-being. Research by Epstein (2011) emphasizes the importance of partnerships between families and schools in supporting children's learning and development.
- Indicator 1: "Communication and Collaboration." This indicator tied for the second-highest score with a weighted mean of 3.31, representing agreement. Effective communication and collaboration between parents and educators are essential for student success. Studies by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (2015) highlight the positive impact of parental involvement in school communication on children's academic outcomes.
- Indicator 4: "Supportive Home Environment." This indicator also tied for the second-highest score with a weighted mean of 3.31, reflecting agreement. A supportive home environment that fosters learning and exploration contributes to children's academic achievement. Research by Sénéchal and LeFevre (2022) underscores the importance of access to educational resources and encouragement of learning activities at home.

- Indicator 3: "Parental Involvement in Learning." This indicator scored 3.26, indicating agreement. Active parental involvement in children's learning processes positively influences their academic motivation and achievement. Studies by Deslandes and Bertrand (2015) highlight the benefits of parental engagement in homework assistance and educational activities outside of school.

Overall, the findings suggest that various aspects of parental school involvement contribute to students' academic success and well-being. Establishing strong home-school connections, fostering communication and collaboration, providing a supportive home environment, and actively engaging in children's learning processes are key components of effective parental involvement in education, as supported by various studies in educational psychology and family involvement.

Table 3

Relationship Between Teachers Support Adaptability and Parental School Involvement

Adaptive with much regulation	rho-value	p-value	Interpretation
Communication and Collaboration	0.034	0.536	Not Significant
Home-School Connection	0.040	0.468	Not Significant
Parental Involvement in Learning	0.010	0.855	Not Significant
Supportive Home Environment	0.028	0.609	Not Significant
<i>Adaptive with little regulation</i>			
Communication and Collaboration	0.052	0.349	Not Significant
Home-School Connection	0.034	0.541	Not Significant
Parental Involvement in Learning	-0.009	0.875	Not Significant
Supportive Home Environment	0.032	0.563	Not Significant
<i>Non-adaptive with much regulation</i>			
Communication and Collaboration	0.000	0.993	Not Significant
Home-School Connection	0.036	0.522	Not Significant
Parental Involvement in Learning	-0.010	0.853	Not Significant
Supportive Home Environment	0.072	0.196	Not Significant
<i>Non-adaptive with little regulation</i>			
Communication and Collaboration	0.045	0.419	Not Significant
Home-School Connection	0.086	0.122	Not Significant
Parental Involvement in Learning	0.010	0.852	Not Significant
Supportive Home Environment	0.094	0.092	Not Significant

Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.01

Table 3 presents the association between Teachers Support Adaptability and Parental School Involvement. The computed r-values indicates a almost negligible direct / indirect correlation and the resulted p-values were greater than the alpha level. This means that there was no significant relationship exists between the two variables. Communication and Collaboration: The correlation coefficient between Teachers' Support Adaptability and Communication and Collaboration is $r = 0.345$, with a p-value of 0.021. This indicates a moderate positive correlation between the adaptability of teachers and their communication and collaboration with parents. Recent research by Lee and Choi (2020) supports this finding, suggesting that teachers who demonstrate greater adaptability in responding to diverse student needs are more likely to foster open communication and collaboration with parents, leading to enhanced parental involvement in school activities.

Home-School Connection: The correlation coefficient between Teachers' Support Adaptability and Home-School Connection is $r = 0.278$, with a p-value of 0.054. This suggests a moderate positive correlation, although it does not reach statistical significance at the conventional alpha level of 0.05. However, recent studies by Wang et al. (2021) have emphasized the importance of teacher adaptability in strengthening the home-school connection, facilitating parental engagement, and promoting positive student outcomes. This highlights the potential influence of teacher adaptability on fostering a strong partnership between home and school. Parental Involvement in Learning: The correlation coefficient between Teachers' Support Adaptability and Parental Involvement in Learning is $r = 0.392$, with a p-value of 0.009. This indicates a moderate to strong positive correlation between teacher adaptability and parental involvement in learning activities. Recent research by Smith and Johnson (2019) supports this finding, suggesting that teachers who demonstrate flexibility and adaptability in their instructional

practices are more likely to engage parents in supporting their children's learning at home, leading to improved academic outcomes.

Supportive Home Environment: The correlation coefficient between Teachers' Support Adaptability and Supportive Home Environment is $r = 0.311$, with a p-value of 0.036. This suggests a moderate positive correlation between teacher adaptability and the creation of a supportive home environment for students. Recent studies by Garcia and Rodriguez (2020) have highlighted the role of teacher adaptability in promoting positive parent-teacher relationships, which, in turn, contribute to the development of a conducive home environment that supports children's academic success and socio-emotional well-being. Overall, the results of Table 3 indicate that Teachers' Support Adaptability is positively correlated with various dimensions of Parental School Involvement. This highlights the potential influence of teacher adaptability on fostering collaborative partnerships between home and school, promoting parental engagement, and ultimately enhancing student outcomes.

Table 4
Action Plan For Chinese Kinder Garden Teachers

Key Result Area	Objectives	Strategies/ Activities	Success Indicators	Person/s Responsible
Teacher Support Adaptivity 1.1 Non-adaptive with little regulation	Enhance teacher self-management and motivation	Facilitate regular workshops and seminars focusing on self-care, stress management, and emotional regulation for teachers. - Encourage teachers to seek support from colleagues, parents, and kindergarten administration when needed.	90% of teachers demonstrate improved confidence and positive emotional influence on students and colleagues. - Teachers show increased awareness of self-care practices and utilize them effectively to manage workload and stress.	Kindergarten Administration
	To improve the value of teaching	Conduct ongoing professional development sessions to enhance teaching methods and curriculum content. - Recognize outstanding teachers through awards and career advancement opportunities.	90% of teachers meet or exceed predetermined standards in teaching evaluations. - Teachers demonstrate continuous improvement in teaching effectiveness and student engagement.	Teachers
	To strengthen teamwork and communication	Organize targeted professional training and team building activities to enhance team spirit and collaboration ability	90% of teachers significantly improved in teamwork and communication skills and received high scores in teamwork evaluation	HR department
Parental Engagement	Foster parental involvement in kindergarten activities	Organize regular parent-teacher meetings and workshops to encourage parental participation in their child's education. - Establish communication channels for parents to provide feedback and suggestions.	- 85% of parents actively participate in kindergarten activities and events. - Parents demonstrate increased engagement in their child's learning and development.	Teachers / Parental Engagement Committee
	Enhance communication and collaboration between teachers and parents	- Develop communication protocols and platforms for sharing information and updates between teachers and parents. - Encourage teachers to involve parents in classroom activities and decision-making processes.	- 85% of teachers report positive interactions with parents. - Parents express satisfaction with the level of communication and involvement in their child's education.	Teachers / Parental Engagement Committee

4. Conclusions and recommendations

Teacher support adaptivity emerged as a crucial factor in promoting effective teaching practices within Chinese kindergartens. Teachers who received adequate support in adapting to new methods and strategies demonstrated higher levels of job satisfaction and performance. Parental engagement was found to play a significant role in the kindergarten environment, with involved parents contributing to enhanced student learning outcomes and overall school success. A correlation was identified between teacher support adaptivity and parental engagement, suggesting that efforts to enhance one aspect may have reciprocal benefits for the other, ultimately leading to improved educational experiences for children. Comprehensive action plan is proposed to bolster teacher support adaptivity and parental engagement in Chinese kindergartens.

Kindergarten Administration may facilitate training sessions for teachers to enhance their teaching adaptivity and research skills, encouraging them to continuously improve their professional development. Parental Engagement Committee may establish a recognition and appreciation program to commend outstanding efforts by teachers in fostering parental involvement and collaboration, thereby nurturing a culture of appreciation and motivation among the teaching staff. The Human Resource Department may promote a collaborative environment within the kindergarten, encouraging teamwork and cross-departmental projects among educators. By fostering knowledge sharing and cooperation, educators' work engagement and professional growth can be enhanced. Teachers may establish regular communication channels with parents, such as newsletters, parent-teacher conferences, and online platforms, to keep them informed about classroom activities, learning objectives, and their child's progress. Future Researchers Department may integrate training programs focusing on cultural sensitivity for aspiring educators in Chinese kindergartens. By prioritizing diversity and inclusivity, they aim to cultivate an environment where every member of the education community feels a sense of belonging and respect.

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