

A Comparative Study on Classroom Management Strategies between Mainland-born Chinese  
Teachers and non-Mainland-born Chinese Teachers in the United States

By

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## Milligan University Dissertation Defense Approval Form

### Milligan University Dissertation Defense Approval Form

Candidate Name: SARAH GILLETTE  
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 MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES BETWEEN MAINLAND-BORN CHINESE  
 TEACHERS AND NON-MAINLAND BORN CHINESE TEACHERS IN  
 UNITED STATES

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## Abstract

The purpose of this quantitative study was to compare the differences in classroom management strategies between Mainland Chinese-born teachers, American-born Chinese teachers, and Taiwanese-born Chinese teachers in the United States. The sample consisted of 188 Chinese teachers from across the United States. Of 188 participants, 110 were born in Mainland China, 57 were born in Taiwan, and 19 were born in the United States. Of the 188 participants, 164 were female, 22 were male, and two were non-binary.

Data were collected from a survey on classroom management, which consisted of a 55-question battery assessing different categories of classroom management strategies, including positive reinforcement techniques, negative reinforcement techniques, parental involvement, teacher-student relationships, and planned ignoring. The results indicated teachers born in the United States made more frequent use of teacher-student relationships and planned ignoring as a classroom management technique and Mainland-born and Taiwanese-born teachers made more use of positive reinforcement and behaviorist techniques in the classroom. This study suggests that Mainland-born and Taiwanese-born Chinese teachers in the United States are more likely to engage in behaviorist techniques to control classroom behavior. In contrast, Chinese teachers born in the United States are more likely to rely on teacher-student relationships to control classroom behavior. Professional development of Mainland-born and Taiwanese-born teachers in the United States should focus on building teacher-student rapport and the use of classroom management techniques, such as planned ignoring.

*Keywords:* classroom management, Confucius Institutes, Chinese as a second language (CSL), comparative study, cultural comparison, Taiwanese Chinese teachers, Mainland Chinese teachers, American-born Chinese teachers

## **Dedication**

To my loving husband, Mark Oliver, who means more to me than he will ever know.

To my beloved son, Silas Tian, who means more to me than he will ever understand.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

American investor Jim Rogers once said of China, “If the 19th century belonged to Britain, and the 20th century to the United States, then the 21st century will surely belong to China. My advice: make sure your kids learn Chinese” (as cited in Mookherjee & Goud, 2015, p. 40). Although the current direction of China on the world stage is dynamic, there is no doubt about its increasing impact and influence on the rest of the world. Indeed, many educational leaders are beginning to recognize the rise of Asia as a major force in the 21st century (Markell & Herbert, 2016). Expanding Chinese language capacity in the United States has been an ongoing priority for the US federal government since the National Defense Education Act of 1958. However, the resurgence of the popularity of the language has increased most significantly since the reforms of Deng Xiaoping in 1979 and the admission of China into the WTO in 2001 (Tan, 2021).

The first reason for the rapid increase in popularity in the language is the quick surge of the Chinese economy. Since 1979, China has been among the world’s fastest-growing economies, with GDP growth averaging 9.5% through 2018 and one of only two countries on the planet which had economic growth during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020. Because of China’s explosion as an economic juggernaut, the World Bank has described the Chinese economy as “the fastest sustained expansion by a major economy in history” (Morrison, 2013).

This growth has allowed the Chinese to double its GDP every eight years and lift an estimated 800 million people out of poverty. Not only has China become the largest economy (based on PPP), but it is also the largest manufacturing economy, the largest merchandise trader,

and the largest holder of foreign exchange reserves. These titles have made China into a major commercial partner of the United States and a major partner of virtually every nation-state on the planet (Morrison, 2013).

Additionally, despite the loosening of the one-child policy and the possible end of the policy altogether, the Chinese population still stands at 1.4 billion as of 2021, with another 50 million overseas Chinese (United Nations, 2019). This means that 1 out of 5 people on the planet is Chinese, a staggering figure contributing to the popularity of Mandarin Chinese in American classrooms.

This growth in popularity has made Chinese one of the most popular languages for American students to learn. As of the most recent American Councils for International Education National K-12 Foreign Language Enrollment Survey Report, published in 2017, 227,086 American K-12 students enrolled in Chinese language programs. This makes it the third most popular language in the United States, trailing behind only French and Spanish.

Chinese language instruction, however, is unique from other languages due to the active involvement and investment of the Chinese government. The Chinese government has created the Confucius Institute. This institution invests in American education programs and sends teachers from China to American schools at low costs to the schools themselves.

These programs have been immensely popular. In 2017, out of 1,144 High School Chinese language programs in the United States (American Councils for International Education, 2017), there were 604 Confucius Classrooms (Peterson, 2017), suggesting that the Confucius Institute directed 53% of US Chinese language programs.

The schools that take advantage of the Confucius Institute's offer do not typically employ American-born teachers. According to the United States Senate Permanent Subcommittee on

Investigations' Staff Report on China's Impact on the United States Education (2019), the Confucius Institute supplies Chinese-born program directors and teachers to the schools that it services. As a result, these schools' teachers and program directors were born and have spent most of their lives and training in China, outside of America's unique cultural context.

The Confucius Institute, rather than the American schools, typically handles the efforts to prepare these teachers for America's unique educational culture. According to the Senate Subcommittee Report, these teachers are tested on their English proficiency alone and not on their teaching proficiency. In addition, American school administrators interviewed by the subcommittee consistently indicated that they were not aware whether or not these teachers had received any educational training.

The majority of America's Chinese teachers, in other words, enter the profession without any experience with America's culture or educational culture. This fact creates unique challenges for Chinese teachers, producing significant frustration for teachers and students alike.

China's educational culture is different from America's educational culture; in fact, a study by Guangwei Hu (2010) concluded that it was "in conflict" with America's educational culture in several respects, particularly regarding the nature of learning, the roles of teachers and students, the learning strategies encouraged, and the qualities valued in teachers and students.

Quotes from Chinese Confucius Institute teachers working in America support Hu's conclusion. A New York Times article entitled "Guest-teaching Chinese and learning America" (Dillon 2010) reported that "several ... Chinese teachers said they had some difficulties adjusting to the informality of American schools". "In China," one teacher was quoted as saying, "if you teach the students and they don't get it, that's their problem" (Dillon, 2010, p. 14).



A qualitative study by Ming-Hsuan Wu (2017) supported the concern and suggested that the challenges of adjusting to the American education style may not entirely be due to unfamiliarity and ignorance but may actually be a conscious choice from some teachers. One Chinese teacher in Wu's study expressed an awareness of American strategies but objected to them, stating that she "did not want to reinforce such a teaching style in her classroom."

There is strong reason to believe that this mismatch of educational styles impacts the educational effectiveness of these teachers. A comparison of scores on the AP Exams for foreign languages shows that, while Asian students perform well on the Chinese AP Exam, White, Black, and Hispanic or Latino students achieve lower average scores on the Chinese AP Exam than on any other foreign language AP Exam (College Board, 2019).

Chinese language instruction in America, then, offers a unique opportunity to investigate two distinct groups with two distinct teaching styles: the mainland-born teachers and the non-Mainland-born Chinese teachers. It offers us a chance to dig into how culture and government inform educational expectations and practices, especially regarding approaches to classroom management.

It allows us to ask: What are Mainland-born and non-Mainland-born Chinese teachers doing that is so different, and what can that teach us that will improve our ability to teach one of the most popular languages in America?

### **Statement of the Problem**

Although the US government hopes to build a K-16 pipeline of highly qualified Chinese teachers through the National Security Education Act of 1991, the supply has not met the demand. As a result, the bulk of the Chinese language programs in the United States consists of a cooperation between American K-12 public schools and American institutions of higher

education and the Confucius Institute. The Confucius Institute (CI) is a soft-power initiative that partners with schools in other countries, arranged and funded in part by *Hanban*, an affiliation of the Chinese Ministry of Education (*Hanban* changed its name as of July 2020 to the Centre for Language Education and Cooperation). There are more than 500 Confucius Institutes worldwide and 96 located at colleges and universities in the United States as of December 2018. Additionally, some researchers, government officials, and others have raised questions about whether the institutes are sources of undue Chinese Communist Party influence (Government Accountability Office, 2019). Because of these contentions, the US State Department has classified the organization as a foreign mission operating in the United States (O’Keefe, 2020).

In addition to the national security issues brought about by Confucius Institutes in the United States, issues surrounding the classroom management strategies of these teachers have also come to the forefront. Educators who are teaching in the US who are born in mainland China come from very different backgrounds from US-born Chinese teachers and, as a result, often find teaching in the United States to be challenging in many regards, especially in the domain of classroom management.

Effective classroom management is an absolute necessity in the school systems of the United States and is a critical factor that contributes to the classroom environment and culture. Without a proper understanding of the cultural roots and effects of cultural expectations for classroom management in the United States, many Chinese teachers may be feeling unsupported and disillusioned with their work environments and administrative expectations for them in the classroom. Therefore, it is incumbent on educational leaders of all types, including principals, instructional coaches, and program directors, to emphasize the importance of cultural

training in classroom management before the beginning of a Chinese teacher's tenure in a new school setting.

### **The Purpose of the Study**

As the number of Chinese teachers in the United States has steadily increased, the marked differences in classroom management and teaching styles have emerged as significant challenges for teachers and administrators alike. The classroom management styles of teachers from these two countries differ significantly. Therefore, this study will seek to identify how specific aspects of classroom management differ between the two groups so that strategies can be designed to better train teachers coming from mainland China before they enter American classrooms.

The groups which will be compared in this study consist of 188 teachers of Mandarin Chinese in K-12 schools, both public and private, throughout the United States. Group A will consist of teachers born in Mainland China, and Group B will consist of those Chinese teachers born in the United States and other democratic Mandarin-speaking nation-states and regions, such as Taiwan and Singapore.

### **Research Questions/Hypotheses**

The following research questions guided the analysis of data in this study.

1. Is there a significant difference between Mainland-born Chinese teachers and non-Mainland-born Chinese teachers in their self-reported levels of confidence in managing classroom behavior?

2. Is there a significant difference between Mainland-born Chinese teachers and non-Mainland-born Chinese teachers in their self-reported frequency of use of parental involvement techniques for classroom management?
3. Is there a significant difference between Mainland-born Chinese teachers and non-Mainland-born Chinese teachers in their self-reported frequency of use of positive reinforcement techniques for classroom management?
4. Is there a significant difference between Mainland-born Chinese teachers and non-Mainland-born Chinese teachers in their self-reported frequency of use of negative reinforcement techniques for classroom management?
5. Is there a significant difference between Mainland-born Chinese teachers and non-Mainland-born Chinese teachers in their self-reported frequency of use of social and emotional skill instruction as a classroom management technique?
6. Is there a significant difference between Mainland-born Chinese teachers and non-Mainland-born Chinese teachers in their self-reported frequency of use of teacher-student relationships as a classroom management technique?
7. Is there a significant difference between Mainland-born Chinese teachers and non-Mainland-born Chinese teachers in their self-reported frequency of use of rules and procedures as a classroom management technique?
8. Is there a significant difference between Mainland-born Chinese teachers and non-Mainland-born Chinese teachers in their self-reported frequency of use of planned ignoring as a classroom management technique?

## Significance of the Study

Chinese teachers from Mainland China who teach in the US often come to the classroom without any prior experience in an American setting. Many of these teachers have found it “difficult to teach in a way that Western learners can relate to well.” There are many reasons for these difficulties, including their lack of understanding of how the American educational system works, lack of preparation for international settings, and differences between teacher education programs in China and the United States. However, very little research exists on these differences and how they impact the Chinese learning classrooms in the United States. The lack of research indicates a dire need to examine the various disconnects and cultural influences on both non-Mainland-born and Mainland-born Chinese teachers as it relates to classroom management strategies and skills.

A great deal of highly impactful research has been conducted on classroom management (see Marzano, 2003; Kounin, 1970; Brophy, 1986). Moreover, the amount of research conducted on the subject of classroom management is increasing significantly year after year. According to a Systematic Review of Studies on Classroom Management from 1980 to 2019, the number of studies on the subject has more than doubled since 2005 (Bozkuş, 2021). The same research, however, points out that the vast majority of classroom management articles are published in the United States by a wide margin. The sheer number of articles, a list of the most productive authors, and a list of the most commonly used keywords within the literature alone demonstrate the dire need for a more international focus of the research.

From the Chinese teacher’s perspective, a small number of qualitative and case studies have been conducted to document the attitudes and perceptions of Chinese teachers living and working in international contexts (see Ding et al., 2008; Shen et al., 2009; Liu & Babchuk,

2018). While these studies contribute to the wealth of knowledge by recording the existence of this important issue, they do little to provide understanding about how Chinese teachers are taught about classroom management, what techniques they use, and how they differ from American teacher training. Perhaps even more importantly, they do little to provide implications and recommendations based on empirical evidence surrounding actual classroom practices.

### **Definition of Terms**

The following terms were used in this study. The researcher has defined terms that are not cited.

Classroom Management- "... the ability to establish, maintain, and (when necessary) restore the classroom as an effective environment for teaching and learning, is basic to general effectiveness as a teacher" (Brophy, 1986).

People's Republic of China (PRC)- The official name of China as established by the Chinese Communist Party in 1949.

The Republic of China- Taiwan (ROC) -The official name of Taiwan as established by the Guomindang in 1912 on the mainland and in 1949 on the island of Taiwan.

Chinese Communist Party (CCP)- Officially, the Communist Party of China (CPC) has been the ruling party of the People's Republic of China since 1949.

Native Language- The first or primary language of a person (also known as L1)

Target Language- The language that a student is acquiring (also called L2 or L3)

Language One (L1)- A person's native language (can interfere with target language processing)

Language Two (L2)-A target or second language

Code-Switching- A type of interference between languages displayed in bilingual or multi-lingual people.

Interference - the transference of elements of one language to another at various levels, including phonological, grammatical, lexical, and orthographical (Berthold, Mangubhai & Batorowicz, 1997)

Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS)- A multi-tiered intervention and support program used most often in school settings that encourages positive behavior from students.

Hanban- Officially, the Office of Chinese Language Council International. It is a public department associated with the Ministry of Education in the PRC.

United Front Work Department- A department directly overseen by the Central Committee of the CCP. This department directs “overseas Chinese work” (Alexander Bowe, 2018).

Confucius Institutes (CI)- public educational programs which promote Chinese teaching around the world. Previously funded and arranged by Hanban, which changed its name to Center for Language Education and Cooperation in 2020.

### **Assumptions**

The following assumptions were made during this study:

1. This study assumes that all participants have given clear and honest answers to survey questions.
2. This study assumes that teachers are aware of their own pedagogical practices relating to classroom management in the Chinese as a foreign language classroom.
3. The study assumes that all participants are selected according to appropriate criteria.

### **Limitations**

The following limitations were encountered during this study:

1. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, certain parent engagement behaviors and strategies may have been altered.
2. Data gathered from the Teacher Classroom Management Questionnaire is considered teacher-reported data, which has inherent limitations on validity.
3. The lack of American-born Chinese teachers makes it difficult to obtain enough data to achieve statistical significance; as such, the study will only be able to identify the most profound differences between American-born and Chinese-born Chinese teachers in the United States.

### **Organization of the Study**

This research study is comprised of five chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the study, including the statement of the problem, the purpose and justification of the study, nine research questions, an explanation of the study's assumptions and limitations, a definition of terms used in the study, and an overview of the study. Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature and research related to classroom management in general, followed by classroom management from a cultural lens. Additional information will be provided about the history and political context of education in the People's Republic of China. Finally, research related to classroom management and Chinese national teachers specifically will be presented. Chapter 3 presents and outlines the methodology and procedures used to conduct the research and gather data for the study. Chapter 4 contains the results of analyses and findings that emerged from the study. Chapter 5 summarizes conclusions drawn from the findings, a discussion of the findings that may be considered for adaptation within the current programming for Chinese national teachers in the United States, and recommendations for further study.



## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review**

Classroom management, as established earlier in this paper, can be defined as "... the ability to establish, maintain, and (when necessary) restore the classroom as an effective environment for teaching and learning" (Brophy, 1986, p.182). Learning does not happen on its own. Effective teaching and learning require a number of elements working in unison to facilitate the process of learning, especially in the classroom setting. What those specific elements are has been studied by many prominent educational researchers over the years (see Hattie, 2008; Marzano, 2003; & Kounin, 1970).

However, the elements of successful classroom management do not exist in a vacuum. They are influenced contextually by long-seated and deeply-rooted philosophies of what constitutes education, the relationships in society between the teacher, the student, the family, and the political and historical events which influence educational reform.

### **Theoretical Frameworks for Classroom Management**

#### **European and American Educational Frameworks**

In order to compare Western and Eastern frameworks for education, it is essential to look at the basic theoretical structures that have historically supported each educational system. First, we will look at Western ideas of the purpose of education, how children learn, and the methods teachers use in the United States, especially as it relates to classroom management.

Many different theoretical frameworks in the Western world have been formed over the years, stretching as far back as the arguments between the optimistic humanism of philosophers

such as Rousseau and the harsh realism of philosophers like Hobbes. In much the same way, classroom management can also be subdivided into theoretical camps depending on worldviews, views of human nature, and even politics. In fact, some recent research on classroom management (Postholm, 2013 & Tauber, 2007) has argued that most views on managing classrooms should reside within one of two main camps, the teacher-centered, or authoritarian style classroom management, or the student-centered, democratic style of classroom management.

According to Tauber, it boils down to two political and philosophical questions. “Do you believe in democracy and a democratic classroom?” and “Do you believe students, including those in your classroom, are citizens?”

Tauber argues that because students in the United States are afforded the same rights as adults (except those involving the right to vote or drink, for example), the classroom tends to mirror this reality. Therefore, the purpose of the educational system and the classroom is to promote the ideals of democracy and prepare students to engage in their democratic duties as citizens of the nation. With these ideological underpinnings, it is easy to see how the political processes unique to each nation-state may affect how students are educated. Tauber separates classroom teachers into two camps: the behaviorists and the humanists. The former with a more teacher-centered and authoritarian approach, and the latter a more student-centered or democratic approach.

### **The Behaviorists**

The Behaviorist conceptual framework is based on the famous work of B. F. Skinner, whose work on “operant conditioning” heralded the way for behaviorist methods and programs.

The Behaviorist camp of discipline and classroom management theory is for those educators who act based on what they believe is “best for the child.”

Many of the programs and strategies we use today in the classroom are based on this philosophy (think Positive Behavior Intervention Systems or PBIS or other incentive-based programs like Accelerated Reading, AR) (Cason-Clemons, 2020). Skinner’s leading theory is that one does not learn by doing alone but learns based on consequences, or what comes after learning. For him, to teach is to arrange consequences. Furthermore, this contriving of consequences is what leads students to knowledge. Teachers are designers in much the same way programmers of video games lead the player from one level to the next by offering rewards for accomplishing tasks. In this way, the teacher is an interventionist between the student and their natural environment. If a teacher fails to intervene with these educational “consequences” in a conscious way, then the natural environment (including their friends, family, the media, and their home environment) will control them naturally (Skinner, 1974).

### **The Humanists**

The Humanist conceptual framework was initiated by the work of Carl Rogers and his focus on client-centered therapy in psychology. This approach has been used by many in the counseling profession to help others “help themselves.” Carl Roger’s work on what he called “Reflective Counseling” is a valuable technique for mirroring back messages we hear from others so that we can facilitate self-direction (Rogers, 1966).

In this camp, teachers are facilitators of self-motivation, an internal locus of control, and intrinsic motivation. In other words, the ability to motivate and control ourselves is within each of us and does not require any external consequences or environmental conditioning to produce results.

This humanist perspective views control as a taboo element of discipline and classroom management. Instead, it is much more interested in a “Rousseau-like commitment to natural inner-forces of creativity and self-determination” (Bourdin, 1981, p.30). Educators who subscribe to this philosophy of classroom management are much more likely to encourage students to self-reflect and express free will in the classroom. These humanist-style educators create an open and honest environment where students are pressured by their own inner forces rather than the dangling carrot of the behaviorists.

### *The Constructivists*

Within the category of humanism, one may also find components of the constructivist framework for learning championed by both John Dewey and Lev Vygotsky. Vygotsky supported the notion of cognitive functioning being the result of social interactions, and John Dewey focused on the “hands-on” approach to learning.

Both Dewey and Vygotsky believed that knowledge is actively built during the learning process, either socially or pragmatically, through project-based learning activities. In the constructivist camp, the culture and context wherein a learner resides play an essential role in the development of the learner. The sociocultural theory to which Vygotsky subscribes emphasizes the importance of the “other” and the influence of social learning with competent teachers or classmates who push the learner into what he refers to as the “zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). Here, the social, historical, and cultural contexts of the learner change how the individual learns from the external to the internal.

Similarly, John Dewey describes the mind as not an individual possession but the product of the environment, which is molded and shaped by experience and society (Dewey, 1938). According to these constructivist theorists, in the process of constructing our knowledge, our

societal, political, and historical contexts play an immense role in how learning takes place. This approach, along with the humanist approaches, is child-centered and focused on allowing children the freedom they need to explore their environments, learning through natural curiosity and inquiry of their choosing. Many of the famous educational theorists we are familiar with in the West are housed in this humanist category of learning theory. In addition to John Dewey and Lev Vygotsky, other famous theorists and practitioners, such as Maria Montessori, Jerome Bruner, and Howard Gardner, could all be described as proponents of the child-centered and democratic approaches to education.

### **Eastern Philosophies of Education**

Understanding a brief history of Chinese education will be essential to unearth the reasons for the cultural disconnects between Chinese and American teaching strategies and philosophies of classroom management. Eastern philosophy of education, though it has transformed dramatically through the millennia, has a more deeply rooted and longer history than Western Europe and the United States. The nearly 5,000-year historical record for China includes many of the most famous educators in world history. Teachers such as Confucius, Mencius, and Laozi are all ubiquitously recognized as educators and philosophers whose influences have shaped virtually every crevice of Chinese society, especially as it relates to the institution of education.

Chinese philosophies of education are less focused on the democratic interaction and participation between teachers and students and more focused on personal cultivation and hierarchical roles. Understanding the dynamics of interpersonal communication and China and the roles Chinese people assume in the classroom will help us better understand the issues Chinese teachers and their American students face when interacting.

Other historical educational concepts, including using the imperial examinations as a form of meritocracy, (the modern version of this arguably being the Chinese college entrance exam, also known as the *Gao Kao* 高考), and the Marxist-Leninist thought surrounding the role of education also play an important part in modern Chinese educational reforms and changes (Ye, 2013).

It should also be noted that, although many of the deeply-seated, broad-based and less contentious educational philosophies the Chinese ascribe to have their roots founded in Confucianism, modern Chinese society, under the more Marxist-Leninist authoritarian regime, have other, newer forces of contention, such as Soviet-style bureaucratization and tighter controls on industry (Mitter & Johnson, 2021). Therefore, it is crucial to understand each of these influences and their current impact on Chinese society.

## **Confucianism**

Throughout the millennia, Confucianism, in particular, stands firmly as the most basic foundation of all modern Chinese philosophy, political thought, and interpersonal communication. Confucianism emerged during the Spring and Autumn period (770-221BCE) after the fall of the Zhou Dynasty (a period of feudalism where the distribution of power and land to the nobility left the Zhou Kings with little respect and much less control over the country). During this time, a class of people emerged in China, known as the *Shi* (士). It is from this group of scholars and political advisors that the likes of Confucius, Mencius, and Laozi begin to appear on the historical record (Wang, 2013).

The weakness of the Zhou kings during the Spring and Autumn period led to the disarray and bloodiness of The Warring States Period, where local fiefdoms morphed into larger,

competing states. It was during this contentious era that the philosophies of Confucius, Laozi, Mencius, and Zhuangzi all shared their disdain for the chaos by working towards a better, more peaceful society based on the ideas and conceptions explored below. The tenets of Confucianism contain many elements which have significant impacts on modern Chinese education, including notions of self-cultivation, social harmony, the Five Relationships, and filial piety.

### **Self-Cultivation**

The Chinese philosophy of *Xiū shēn yang xìng* (修身养性), or the process of self-cultivation, can be found throughout ancient Chinese writings. The Confucian Canon is known collectively as the Four Books and Five Classics (四书五经). From within this canon, The Book of Rites (礼记) contains the most important texts on education known as the Record on the Subject of Education (学记). According to Yang et al. 2012, as cited in Tan (2015), The Records on the Subject of Education are believed to have been written during the Warring States period (475 BCE) or the Han Dynasty (202 BCE-220 CE), making it one of the oldest educational documents in the world.

The Records on the Subject of Education are essential to the field of Chinese education because they illustrate the importance of self-cultivation in Chinese educational philosophy. Passage IX, in particular, discusses the specific importance of self-cultivation. As translated by Tan 2015, Passage IX states that a true gentleman is one who “cultivates himself” and emphasizes the importance of being “reverentially committed to and constantly diligent in [learning]; only then will [successful] cultivation come.”

In other words, the importance of education does not rest on the shoulders of the teacher who prepares students and imparts knowledge. Instead, the responsibility of learning rests on the students' internal thirst for knowledge and this continual process of personal cultivation. In this way, students should constantly be asking themselves, "Am I learning?" "How can I learn more?" and "How can I learn in a better way?" Tan (2013), as cited in Tan (2015), put it this way:

The process of moral cultivation involves much time and effort spent in self-reflection, self-correction, and interactions with other human beings – a lifelong endeavour that necessitates active learning on the part of the learner. The learner is expected to cultivate oneself by practising Confucian virtues such as *li* (normative behaviours), *ren* (humanity), *zhi* (wisdom), and *yi* (appropriateness), as well as taking the sequent commitment to one's family, community, and the world. (Tan, 2013)

This constant striving for the attainment of perfection through self-cultivation is central to Confucian and subsequently Chinese thought, and it is well known to the rest of the world that this emphasis on education has become one of the great hallmarks of Chinese society and culture. Li Chenyang describes Confucian philosophy as a "person making" or (做人) philosophy where personal cultivation is seen as the foundation of a good society. He states:

A meaningful life, with all its accomplishments, begins with the making of the good person. Understanding the importance of cultivating the self is called 'knowing the fundamental' (*zhi ben*); it is regarded as the highest form of knowledge. In Confucianism, self-cultivation is not merely a personal matter. It is from the very beginning a matter of great importance for the good of the entire world (Li, 2008).



Therefore, the importance of self-cultivation is not only to create a better person internally but to create a better and more orderly society externally. To this day, the concept of self-cultivation has been correlated with the economic rise of China as its tenets support many economic principles of human resource development. Chen, Guoming and Chung, Jensen as cited in Tai (1989), have argued that the rise of China is due in no small part to Confucian values, arguing that they are a “substantial facilitator to the process of economic modernization, which underlines a rudimentary economic principle. ... Human resource development is a slow, long-term, and costly process, but the benefit is great, cumulative, and nearly always outweighs the cost” (Chen & Chung, 1994, p. 25).

Self-cultivation, despite the nomenclature, is not inherently focused on the self alone. It is also a major component of a broader Confucian notion concerning how the individual fits into the larger society. This leads quite naturally to the concepts of Chinese social harmony and filial piety.

### **The Five Relationships and Filial Piety**

Part of how the individual interacts with others around him is a crucial component for understanding modern Chinese society and education. In addition to the striving for personal perfection through self-cultivation, Chinese society is also based on hierarchical systems of interaction. From a Confucian perspective, relationships between people in China are regulated by the rules set forth in The Five Relationships (*wu lun*, 五伦) (Slote & DeVos, 1998).

The Five Relationships include the ruler and his subject, the father and his son, the husband and his wife, the older brother and his younger brother, and between friends. It is important to note that these relationships are assumed to be unequal and complementary. These

relationships are considered unequal because there is an explicit hierarchical nature to each one. The ruler is above the subject; the father is above the son; the older brother is above the younger brother, etc. According to Condon (1977), as cited in Chen and Cheng, 1994, the relationships, at the same time, are considered complementary because they are considered to be mutually beneficial and rely on interdependency. For example, although the younger brother role requires deference to the older brother, the older brother must provide protection and support for the younger brother in times of need.

Chen and Chung (1994) describe the complementary nature of each relationship this way: ...The Confucian Five Code of Ethics stipulates that the ruler has to show justice, and the subject shows loyalty; father shows love, and son shows filial piety; husband shows initiation, and wife shows obedience; the older brother shows brotherly love, and younger brother shows reverence in return, and friends show mutual faith to each other (p.7).

This, according to Confucius, is the only way to create a smooth and harmonious operating system between individuals. Additionally, some researchers have asserted that the Five Relationships concept is one of the specific reasons Asian interactions are primarily characterized as possessing more authoritarian interaction patterns (Chen & Cheng, 1994).

### *Unequal Relationships in Chinese Society*

The Five Relationships, Filial Piety, and Confucian Rites all contribute to a society that can be characterized as relatively hierarchical and regimented. As a result, relationships in China are segmented into greater and lesser and are used as a tool of decision-making. Wei & Li (2013) describe Chinese relationships this way:

While growing up in China, one tends to be sensitive to his or her position in the group, as above, below or equal to others. Individuals' roles and expectations of individuals in a group

correspond with one's hierarchical position in the group. For example, when making a decision, those who sit lower on the hierarchy scale are normally expected not to play the decisive role; therefore, they commonly deemphasize their ideas or stand their ground less firmly. Their opinions should be conveyed in a humbler manner than those who stand higher on the hierarchy scale. And once a decision has been made, individual group members are expected to embrace it and act on it. That's one reason why outsiders seldom hear a Chinese make an irreverent comment or openly express a view at odds with that of his or her inside group. Toeing the mark is important, and it is enforced (p.63).

The inequality of relationships, the categorization of societal roles as high or low, and the total embracing of final decisions made by an authority is another characteristic that can still be seen in many domains of Chinese society today.

### **Saving Face**

Another method of conflict avoidance in Chinese society is 给面子, or "giving face." Giving face, maintaining face, or saving face are all ways of describing the concept of building up someone's self-esteem and confidence through praise, compliments, or agreement. According to American sociologist Erving Goffman (1955), as cited in Wei and Li (2013), "[Face is] the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact. Face is an image of the self-delineated in terms of approved social attributes."

In this way, face is not a uniquely Chinese sociological construct, and all humans strive to keep face in social interaction. However, the concept of face is significantly more emphasized and is used more frequently as a direct communication strategy in Asia than it is in the West. Wei and Li (2013) make a note of the often-repeated Chinese aphorism, "A person needs face

as a tree needs bark.” 人要脸树要皮. It is quite common in Chinese society to seek out as many opportunities as possible to give face to others, especially superiors, in order to garner respect in social circles. Jia, 1997 as cited in Wei and Li (2013), also points out how saving face is more than just giving compliments and recognition. It is also used to navigate areas of criticism. Chinese tactics for giving feedback or criticism are often indirect and use “tactful” and “ambiguous” wording in order for the receiver to maintain face.

Lastly, it is vital to note that saving face may also include agreeing with a decision or opinion that does not truly align with one’s own beliefs or opinions (Wei & Li, 2013). There is a common phrase used to describe this phenomenon known as *an liu chong dong* 暗流涌动, which means an undercurrent of tension. It stresses that underneath the seemingly calm surface, there is hidden opposition. This surface-level agreeableness, despite actual underlying dissent, is a common theme in Chinese education and communication and is an area of great contention between Western ideals of freedom of speech and thought and Chinese beliefs about how to create a more harmonious society.

### **Sense of Shame**

Shame culture is also not a uniquely Chinese invention. Shame is a sociological construction and can be used to influence society in many ways, but its use varies from culture to culture and time period to time period. The dunce cap, public floggings, the stocks or pillories of the Victorian Era in the United States and Europe, for example, and even the head shaving of the Nazi party during World War II are all examples of shame-inducing activities which were common in the West. Most of these activities have fallen out of favor in recent years, but many of these practices are still an integral part of Chinese society and communication.

Confucius (1938) himself emphasizes the importance of shame and moral cultivation in the Analects:

[2-3] 子曰。道之以政、齊之以刑、民免而無恥。道之以德、齊之以禮、有恥且格。

[2:3] The Master said: If you govern the people legalistically and control them by punishment, they will avoid crime but have no personal sense of shame. If you govern them by means of virtue and control them with propriety, they will gain their own sense of shame and thus correct themselves.

In other words, building a sense of shame in society helps to create law-abiding citizens by inducing decent and civilized behavior among the masses, whereas legalism and the rule of law create a population that is only afraid of the consequences of their behavior and not the behavior itself.

Examples of Chinese shame-inducing activities range across the spectrum and include smaller shame-inducing activities such as standing during class (罰站) all the way up to the “struggle sessions” of the Cultural Revolution(批斗大会), and “speaking bitterness” (说苦) of the land reform period.

### **Social Harmony**

All Confucian values, rites, and behaviors are arguably set in stone with only one central purpose: to create social harmony. The Classical Confucian tradition from the Pre-Qin Period and the Early Han period has been influenced by 13 ancient texts, including the Book of Changes, The Book of Rites, The Books of Odes, and the Book of History, to name a few. In addition, The Confucian Analects and the Book of Mencius are also the primary texts of this corpus of Confucian Classics (Li, 2008).

Over the years, this tradition has been shaped philosophically by Confucian followers who further developed the central tenets of Confucianism, including the concepts of *ren* 仁 (compassion), *li* 礼 (rites), and *he* 和 (social harmony). Social harmony is said to be the ultimate goal of all Confucian behaviors and, therefore, deserves its own explanation.

According to Wei and Li (2013), the Confucian value of harmony or 和 ...presupposes the existence of different things and implies a certain favorable relationship among them. As the representatives of Confucianism in Ancient China, Confucius, Mencius, Xunzi, etc. all make an incisive statement of the essence of *he* (harmony) in human relations, in which *ren* is regarded as a faculty possessed by human beings that refers to showing love and affection to one's counterparts in social interaction, and *li*, as the fundamental regulatory etiquette, which refers to propriety and respect for social norms, is considered the best way to realize *he* (p.60).

In other words, Confucians admit there is no sameness among the population and that each individual and family has different unique needs and circumstances. They do not imply that creating a uniform society will decrease conflict and create a harmonious society. It is, instead, *how* we interact with others who are different from us which creates social harmony. Confucians use rites, behaviors, and compassion to realize social harmony. For example, the regulatory etiquette of the Five Relationships and filial piety gives each person a unique role to play within society that allows it to flow smoothly. The parent, for example, is expected to raise their children, protect them from harm, educate them, support them financially, buy them a home, and help them find a spouse. Once the parent is too old to take care of themselves, the child is then expected to give the same care to their parents they received as a child. Parents will move in with their son's family, and, in this way, the social welfare of both the young and the elderly

takes care of itself. The state does not need to worry about this social issue because the population performs the rites (or behaviors) which lead to social harmony.

This process of taking a diverse population and applying rites and compassion to create social harmony is very similar to how Chinese society operates today. The population, overall, is very willing to operate in a regulatory way in order to protect the smooth transactions of society on a day-to-day basis (Spire, 2019). It could be argued, therefore, that tenets of Confucian thought, especially the goal of social harmony is the reason for China's ability to make large-scale social changes happen almost overnight in order to do what is deemed "best for society," including gargantuan policy decisions such as the "The Great Leap Forward," "The One-Child Policy," and the more recent "Zero COVID Policy." These whole-society, large-scale shifts in policy are usually universally accepted as long as they are seen as policies that will create a more harmonious and prosperous society.

### **Educational Changes in the Mao Era**

After the fall of the last dynasty of China during the Xinhai Revolution, the upheaval of the Japanese invasion, WWII, and the Chinese Civil War, the Chinese Communist Party finally emerged as the victors in 1949, banishing the Kuomintang to the island of Taiwan. The establishment of the People's Republic of China as we know it today began with revolution and Chairman Mao's legacy remains impressed upon virtually every aspect of what has become known as The New China, or *Xin Zhongguo* 新中国.

In *Salvaging Confucian Education*, Kam Louie (1984) described the early period of the PRC during the 1950s and 60s as one of great turmoil and the beginnings of a new anti-Western sentiment set off by the Korean War and the Cold War. During this time, Western thought,

especially as it related to thoughts on education, was considered to be ideas of the enemy which needed to be destroyed. During this time, the relationship between the Soviet Union and China was one where wholesale Sovietizing of China was embraced as many of the Party's future leaders were sent to the USSR to study, and Soviet goods were being imported en masse. Initially, there were no deliberate remarks made against traditional thought, Confucianism, traditional Chinese education practices, or ancient Chinese culture as a whole. However, during the mid-1960s, in the lead-up to the Cultural Revolution, a People's Daily editorial was written to introduce the concept of abolishing the "Four Olds" entitled "Sweep Away All Monsters and Demons" (1966).

### **The Four Olds and the Five Black Categories**

The Cultural Revolution, also known as the Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution, began in May of 1966 with the initial goal of purging any capitalist or traditional elements left in Chinese society. The main targets for the destruction were called the Five Black Categories (landlords, wealthy farmers, counterrevolutionaries, bad influencers, and rightists) and the Four Olds (old customs, cultures, habits, and ideas of China's past). This bloody and violent upheaval claimed the lives of millions of people and lasted for a decade until Mao's death in 1976 (Dillon, 2013).

The Cultural Revolution campaign and the destruction of the Four Olds and Five Black Categories led to the mass destruction of much of China's culture, both tangible and intangible. The period consisted of the destruction of cultural relics and icons, mass demonstrations, re-education of city-dwellers, public shaming and execution, and massacres of all types, including



the first massacre known as the DaXing Massacre and the Guangxi Massacre, where massive acts of cannibalism and torture occurred (Su, 2011).

In addition to the physical violence and uprisings of the Red Guards during this time period, the destruction of The Four Olds directly affected the perceptions of Confucian education and philosophy as Confucius was painted as an elitist and anti-revolutionary. During the Cultural Revolution, Confucius' tomb at Qufu was ransacked and damaged, and one of Confucius' heirs, the Duke of Yansheng, was removed from his grave and hung naked on a tree nearby. Kam Louie (1984) noted that during this time, although Mao Zedong used quotations from Confucius approvingly in the past, the new perspective of Confucius was that he represented the idle elite who did not toil for the country or represent the masses. In Louie's work, "Salvaging Confucian Education (1949-1983)", one of Mao's famous quotes on the topic of Confucius is mentioned:

"Confucius never reclaimed land or tilled the soil... When a student asked him how to plough the fields, Confucius answered, 'I don't know, I am not as good at that as a farmer.' Confucius was next asked how to grow vegetables, and he answered, 'I don't know, I am not as good at that as a vegetable gardener.' In ancient times the youth of China who studied under a sage neither learned revolutionary theory nor took part in labour."

This anti-elitist rhetoric and agenda also brought about the decade-long pause of the college entrance examinations from 1966 to 1977 when Deng Xiaoping finally reintroduced it after the death of Mao Zedong. The college entrance examinations, now known as the *Gao Kao*, have been likened to the imperial civil examinations of ancient China in that they represented a meritocratic method of attaining high status through hard work and serious study no matter the student's socio-economic background.

The ending of the college entrance examinations, the eradication of the Four Olds and Five Black Categories, and the fierce rhetoric of Mao and his Red Guards embodied the spirit of the Cultural Revolution and its Anti-Confucianist agenda. There is no doubt that the Cultural Revolution had a massive impact on the education sector in China, with academic freedom and personal beliefs about Chinese educational traditions retreating further into the hidden undercurrent of thought mentioned previously in this paper (暗流冲动).

Although the Cultural Revolution is a historical tragedy with far-reaching implications, the hysteria of the time was primarily caused by the cult of personality attached to Mao Zedong himself. After the death of Mao in 1976 and the subsequent arrest of the Maoist faction in the party, known as the Gang of Four, China began a rapid and comprehensive retreat from the tenets of the Cultural Revolution and even went as far as admitting that the Cultural Revolution was a mistake and was “responsible for the most severe setback and the heaviest losses suffered by the people, the country, and the party since the founding of the People’s Republic.” (Wilson Center, 1981).

### **Post-Mao Changes in Chinese Education**

The swift changes made after Mao’s death are an attestation to the depth and pervasiveness of the traditional Confucian ideals in Chinese society. After all, despite the severe setbacks the Cultural Revolution caused, one dictator, across one decade, still could not blot out thousands of years of Chinese history on his own accord. Cao, 2004 as cited in Bin Wu and Nesta Devine’s piece on “Self-cultivation and the legitimation of power: Governing China through education” point out that the “Chinese people, regardless of their educational backgrounds, internalize Confucian values through daily interaction and communication without

necessarily reading Confucian canons (Cao, 2004). Furthermore, for many of these scholars, to be Chinese is to be Confucian. The two are synonymous.

After the Death of Mao, an actual economic turning point began when the de facto leader Deng Xiaoping, who was purged twice from the Party during the Cultural Revolution by Mao, emphasized reforms of all sorts, including education and the economy. He realized the importance of an educated workforce in building the economy, especially in technical areas. There was less stress put on the political learning that school provided (which was so crucial to Mao), and more emphasis was placed on the quality of the education and its economic outcomes for the country on the world stage. During this time, China's Reform and Opening Up Policy (改革开放) was introduced, and special economic zones were created in places like Shanghai and Shenzhen. The rapid economic success of these regions further demonstrated the need for additional reform, and education was transformed for the purposes of greater economic construction.

During this time, the competitive college entrance examination (*The Gaokao*) returned with a vengeance, and of the 5.7 million students who took the exam in 1977, only 4.7% were given admission to a university, the lowest admission rate in history (BBC, 2017). The class of 1977 was fiercely intelligent and went on to become the elite of China. They represented the doctors, lawyers, and politicians of China, with many from this class becoming familiar faces of the political elite, including China's current Vice Premier, Li Keqiang (BBC, 2017).

### **The Modern Influence of the *GaoKao***

The return of the *GaoKao* has also had an immense influence on Chinese educational philosophy and structure. Modern Chinese education has pushed the ancient Confucian concepts

of self-cultivation and self-perfection to a whole new level, and the *GaoKao* is a great force that pushes the agenda of self-perfection to new heights. Bakken (2000) and Bin Wu and Nesta Devine (2018) point out that competitive exams push students to higher proficiencies in subject areas and that these tests demonstrate several unique aspects of traditional Chinese thinking. Tu (1984), as cited in Bin and Devine's work, points out that, in China, learning is not about "fun." Furthermore, self-sacrifice, hardship, and pain are all a part of self-cultivation. Work from Bin and Devine (2018) Fong, 2004 and Kipnis, 2009, 2011, 2012 all point out that as long as the examinations are seen as meritocratic and fair, they "give purpose" to self-sacrifice, delayed gratification, and self-discipline. The test is almost seen as proof of one's ability to engage in acts of filial piety, nationalism, and care for others over oneself.

Because of this intense competition to prove one's ability to engage in self-cultivation and prove loyalty to the family and the nation, the commercialization of the education industry has exploded. According to the International Trade Administration, China has the largest K-12 Education Market in the world. Weighing in at 120 billion dollars in 2019, over 75% of Chinese students K-12 engage in some form of after-school or extra-curricular education. Many parents spend more than 10% of their salary on outside education because the publicly provided curriculum is not seen as enough for students to outcompete their peers. One of the recent phrases used by parents on the mainland to defend copious training for their children even before kindergarten, is "We don't want to lose the race before ever reaching the starting line" 我们不要输在起跑线上.

The run-away nature of the K-12 education market in China has caused some severe consequences, including a number of gruesome student suicides, a lowering of the birth rate because of the rising costs of educating children, and rising inequality between the poor rural

classes and the more affluent urban elite. As a result, the Ministry of Education announced widespread clampdowns on the education sector, also known as the “Double Reduction Policy,” shutting down virtually all off-campus after-school tutoring programs which were being run as for-profit businesses. This included online e-platform businesses such as VIP Kid, which employed over 70,000 American and Canadian teachers to teach Chinese students online (Pak, 2021). The new rules require authorities to ban weekend, holiday, and any classes after 9 pm on weekdays. Online education platforms are no longer allowed to raise funds through IPOs, and foreign investment is no longer allowed for companies that teach school curriculums (South China Morning Post, 2021).

While the urge to level the playing field and decrease the academic pressure on Chinese students, all while decreasing the financial pressure on parents, is welcome for many, the urge Chinese families have to compete in the education sector has not waned. The *GaoKao* remains the sole indicator and decisive factor for college admission, and, as a result, many parents are scrambling to find “underground” tutors or more expensive 1-on-1 classes which, in some cases, are running up to over 400 USD per hour. (China’s Education Crackdown, 2021). The CCP has a keen interest in the reforms and the future of China’s education system. It has produced both impressive results on the PISA Assessments and unimpressive results in indicators for technological innovation and creativity (OECD). Holbig, 2009, as cited in Bin Wu and Devine’s work, sums it up nicely:

The CCP walks a tightrope between ideological flexibility and continuity. Its implementation has been an amalgamation of modernized versions of Marxist and socialist tenets (with a particular emphasis on social equality and justice propagated as socialist core values), and of

Confucian traits and other elements of Chinese tradition and culture—including appeals to national resurrection (Bin Wu and Devine, 2018, p. 1196).

As China continues its process of modernization, more reforms will be made and “unmade” as the authoritarian nature of policies both present and future continue to wax and wane. Perhaps the only constant to remain is the essence of Confucianism.

### **Perceptions of Chinese Educators in the United States**

Understanding this brief history of Chinese education and Western education models is essential when discussing the current phenomena of organizations such as the Confucius Institute in the United States. When Chinese teachers, who are developed under the educational philosophies and political structure outlined above, meet with students, parents, and administrators who have been educated with democratic style teaching methods and purposes, the results can be disastrous.

There are a number of qualitative studies which have shown the general frustration of Asian-born teachers in the United States. Lilach Marom’s qualitative study entitled Eastern/Western conceptions of the “Good Teacher” and the construction of difference in teacher education (2018) looked at BC recertification board data, conducted one-on-one interviews, and observed classes to find out more about how the definition of a “good teacher” differs between Eastern and Western participants. Participants from Asian countries generally complained about teacher status:

Teaching in [my East Asian home country] is very different from Canada for a number of reasons. . .the teachers are regarded as having a higher status than the students. Over here, they are like this [shows the same level with his hands], and there it is such [shows one hand higher than the other]. So, in terms of giving instructions, it is easier there. . .the

teacher would tell the students to do something, and most likely they'd do it. (Lilach, 2018, p.7)

In addition, participants from the study mentioned teacher-student relationships and dynamics as an area where they felt uncomfortable:

To be a good teacher in [my East Asian country], you need to work a lot, to prepare a lot, to give them a lot of homework, contrary to what my kids are experiencing here. . . You spend a good deal of time teaching the content. . . Here the teachers are more friends. They [students] call the teachers by their name. We never do it there – you don't even know the first name of your teacher. Hierarchy is very important. (Lilach, 2018, p.8)

Participants also mentioned differences in pedagogy and assessment:

In my home country, it's more about academic [knowledge]. In Canada, it is more student-centered; it is more hands-on. Teachers are more like facilitators; they will not do everything for students. [In my home county] it was more teacher-centered. The main difference is in the approach. Like, for me, to get used to the hands-on activities was hard. You have to make sure that everything is hands-on and students do most of the work, and you are just facilitating the process. (Lilach, 2018, p.8)

Interesting comments and perspectives on Western-style classroom management and discipline were also mentioned in the themes:

When I see students not doing their work in my home country, I can go and tell them, "Do your work." Here, I cannot. I need to ask, "Do you have a problem?" You need to be very gentle with the students. . . You cannot talk to them like a strict father would talk to a child; here they are more like customers – you have to treat them like a businessman would treat a client. . . We cannot pressure the students here, so we do what we can, and the rest is

up to you. But in my home country, we do pressure you. We call the parents; we send you to the headmaster, we send you to counseling if you're not performing. . .So maybe there is something positive [about the way it is here]; students are not so fearful, they can loosen up. Certainly, this is something that I have to learn, to loosen up myself. [One] just has to blend the two systems. (Lilach, 2018, p.12)

Also mentioned are the public ranking systems of East Asia in the classroom:

In my home country, we have ranking, we have grading. All the students know where they stand. After the test, you tell them, "You're number one," or "You're the last in the class," so they know they have to work harder if they want to go up. Canadian schools don't allow as much pressure on students. (Lilach, 2018, p.9)

Clearly, the perceptions of Asian teachers in North America have developed clear themes which relate to shame culture, hierarchical relationships, and academic pressure. Other qualitative studies have presented interesting insights and interviews which demonstrate similar frustrations Asian teachers feel in Western teaching contexts (Xu, 2012, Bear et al. 2016, Ekaterina, 2015, and Liu, 2013).

Many of the Asian teachers from these studies feel their entire skillset and worldview must be refashioned in order to succeed in Western classrooms. Qualitative studies such as these offer an important glimpse into the attitudes and perceptions of Chinese teachers but do little to offer the quantitative data necessary to pinpoint which specific techniques and strategies are being used in the classroom and how they differ from their Western counterparts.

This study aims to uncover those specific techniques and shed greater light on the differences between Mainland-born and non-Mainland-born teachers in the United States. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the researcher to look at Western research as it relates to classroom management



to find the effect size of classroom management techniques. Understanding the effect sizes of certain aspects of classroom management can help build a complete picture of the data which were collected in Chapter Three of this study.

### **Classroom Management and Effect Size**

In addition to understanding the basic theoretical frameworks that support both Eastern and Western understandings of the purpose of education, how children learn, and the history of educational thought, we must also seek out the importance of classroom management in student outcomes in the literature. If we are seeking to understand and change our teachers' perceptions of classroom management, we must first verify its effect size on student outcomes. How quantifiable is an adjustment in classroom management strategies? What impact does it have on our student achievement? In other words, is classroom management a worthwhile investment for the professional development of teachers, especially those who come from educational systems which are very different from the United States? Moreover, which components require the most focus and attention?

Perhaps the most influential discussion of the elements of effective teaching was conducted by John Hattie in 2009. His key research called *Visible Learning*, which included 500 meta-analyses and over 50,000 individual studies with data taken from millions of students, looked at the effect sizes of many different key variables in the US educational system. Of all the in-school variables identified, the teachers themselves were found to have the largest effect size on student achievement across the board. This means that what teachers do on a daily basis with their students and how they view themselves (teacher self-efficacy) matters more than any other in-school variable. Therefore, looking at classroom management, how teachers view

themselves, how teachers interact with students, and how teachers engage in the daily operations of their classroom can tell us a lot about what students are going to achieve in the classroom.

Work by Marzano, 2003 includes a meta-analysis of more than 100 separate reports on classroom management. The findings from these reports were then organized into four general components of classroom management. These include rules and procedures, disciplinary interventions, teacher-student relationships, and mental sets (Marzano, 2003). For each of these categories, an effect size was calculated. In the most basic terms, these effect sizes can tell us how much of a difference we will see in behavior we can expect when teachers skillfully employ one of the above techniques.

#### *Rules and Procedures*

Marzano found the rules and procedures category of classroom management to have an effect size of  $-.763$ . This explains that in classes where rules and procedures were used effectively, the average number of classroom disruptions was  $.763$  standard deviations less than the average number of disruptions in a class that does not use rules and procedures effectively.

#### *Disciplinary Interventions*

Marzano's research shows that disciplinary interventions have an average effect size of  $-.694$ . Additionally, his research demonstrates that this category is more effective with lower grade levels, suggesting that disciplinary interventions, which tend to be more behavioral in nature, tend to work better with younger children.

### *Teacher-Student Relationships*

The effect size found in Marzano's research for teacher-student relationships sits at  $-.869$ ; however, the effect sizes for this category at the middle school and high school level go beyond  $-.900$ . This suggests that as students age, especially as they reach the middle and high school level, relationships with their teachers become more important than ever before. In fact, this effect size would lead to a 40% reduction in classroom disruptions at the middle school level (Marzano, 2003).

### *Mental Set*

The final component of classroom management mentioned in the Marzano meta-analysis was "mental set." This component has the largest effect size of all four components of classroom management introduced in the study. The effect size given for this category is  $-1.294$ , which means that in a classroom where teachers make good employ of their mental preparedness, the average number of classroom disruptions would be a little more than a full standard deviation lower than the mean. According to Marzano, one can think of "mental set" as equivalent to John Kounin's 1970 term "withitness." Kounin is considered by many to be the first researcher to look at classroom management characteristics in the classroom. He did so by reviewing video footage of teachers in the classroom and noting how different teachers handled or did not handle disruptions in the classroom. Ultimately, the conclusion was that the major difference between effective and ineffective managers of the classroom was the degree to which teachers were able to remain aware of what was always going on around the room, even when a large physical distance was maintained. This ability or awareness was thereafter known as "withitness." In the

same vein, Marzano's research also confirms this notion, and Marzano refers to it as "mental set."

### **Types of Classroom Interventions**

More recently, Hanke et al. (2016) presented an extremely comprehensive meta-analysis of classroom management strategies and programs. The research looked at over 50 different classroom management strategies and programs. The researchers split the strategies and programs into categories according to the focus of the intervention. These included Teachers' behavior-focused interventions, Teacher-student relationship-focused interventions, Students' Behavior-focused interventions, and Students' social-emotional development-focused interventions.

The first type is focused on interventions that focus completely on teachers' techniques and result in changes in the teacher's behavior, such as setting up rules and procedures at the beginning of a school year. Although the goal of these activities is to alter or prevent certain student behaviors, the actual intervention originates with the instructor and is therefore characterized as a teacher behavior intervention.

The second type of intervention is focused on developing caring and supportive relationships between the students and the teacher. For example, sending a student a personal letter congratulating them on their performance on a test would be an example of this type of intervention.

The next intervention is focused on student behavior. For example, interventions that focus on improving self-control among all students would be considered student behavior interventions. Teaching students proper behavior for different contexts, such as standing in a

line, walking down the hallway, or passing in homework, would all be examples of student behavior interventions.

The last category of interventions is called the students' social-emotional development-focused intervention. This type of intervention is more focused on developing students' social and emotional intelligence. For example, this type of intervention would include any intervention that revolves around enhancing a student's feelings of empathy for other children.

Of these four types of interventions, it was found that interventions that focused on students' social-emotional development had a larger impact on the intervention's effectiveness. However, teacher-focused programs and interventions had the largest impact on students' academic outcomes.

## Summary

学记:

发虑宪，求善良，足以謏闻，不足以动众；就贤体远，足以动众，未足以化民。君子如欲化民成俗，其必由学乎！

The Records on the Subject of Education:

When a ruler is concerned that his measures should be in accordance with law and seeks for the (assistance of the) good and upright, this is sufficient to secure him a considerable reputation but not to move the multitudes. When he cultivates the society of the worthy and tries to embody the views of those who are remote (from the court), this is sufficient to move the multitudes, but not to transform the people. If he wishes to transform the people and to perfect their manners and customs, must he not start from the lessons of the school?

Translated by Legge, 1882, p.82

These words, though they were written over two and a half millennia ago, still ring true today in the field of education. No matter if the setting is 19<sup>th</sup> century London, 20<sup>th</sup> century New York City, or 21<sup>st</sup> century Shanghai, a true transformation of the people can only occur through the careful molding of young minds that happens at home and in the classroom.

How each nation goes about that transformation, however, can take many different forms. Education around the world has evolved within unique cultural, political, and historical contexts. When trying to make sense of how and why education is different from culture to culture, it is important to investigate the theoretical frameworks for education from both points of view. In the West, theoretical frameworks from such camps as the Behaviorists, Constructivists, and Humanists make up the educational practice and have a significant impact on how we understand the process and purpose of learning.

In Eastern culture, education is often understood in a more traditional sense. The learning process and dynamics between the teacher and the student are often dictated by deeply-rooted Confucian values, such as self-cultivation, filial piety, and social harmony. Although these values have morphed over time, especially in post-dynasty China, during the Mao Era, and during the reform period of Deng Xiaoping, the basic tenets of Confucian education and values remain.

As the number of Chinese teachers in the United States from Mainland China continues to increase, so does the literature about cultural conflicts in the classroom. Classroom management, in particular, is an area of concern, not only for the Chinese teachers themselves but also for the American side, including the local school administrators, the parents, and the students.

Poor classroom management has been shown throughout the literature to have a sizable impact on student outcomes. Classroom management has been further broken down in the literature into four basic components: disciplinary interventions, rules and procedures, teacher-student relationships, and mental set. Of these four components, Mental Set was found to have the largest effect size, followed closely by teacher-student relationships. Both of these categories require deep cultural understanding.

Additionally, four types of classroom management interventions were discussed, including teacher-focused interventions, student behavior interventions, teacher-student relationship interventions, and social-emotional interventions. Of these four types of interventions, research shows that interventions that focused on students' social-emotional development had a more considerable impact on the intervention's effectiveness. However, teacher-focused programs and interventions had the most significant impact on students' academic outcomes.

This research aims to uncover which types of interventions are being used by both Mainland and non-Mainland-born teachers in the United States in order to assess the most effective methods for teaching cultural competence and classroom management to foreign-born Chinese instructors in the United States.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Research Design and Methods**

#### **Introduction**

This research was conducted using a Quantitative Comparative Research Design comparing Chinese-born Chinese teachers' and non-Mainland-born Chinese teachers' classroom management strategies.

The groups which were compared in this study consisted of 188 teachers of Mandarin Chinese in K-12 schools, both public and private, throughout the United States. Group A consisted of those teachers who were born in Mainland China, and Group B consisted of those Chinese teachers who were born in the United States or other Democratic Mandarin-speaking nation-states and regions, such as Taiwan or Singapore.

The purpose of this study was to determine how specific aspects of classroom management differed between the two groups so that strategies could be designed to better train teachers coming from mainland China before they enter American classrooms.

This chapter details the design, methods, and procedures used to analyze the nine research questions used in this study. The research questions, population, sample, and instrumentation used in the study were examined. Additionally, the data analysis process was discussed.

#### **Research Questions and Null Hypotheses**

The following research questions were used to guide the analysis of data for this study.



1. Is there a significant difference between Mainland-born Chinese teachers and non-Mainland-born Chinese teachers in their self-reported levels of confidence in managing classroom behavior?
2. Is there a significant difference between Mainland-born Chinese teachers and non-Mainland-born Chinese teachers in their self-reported frequency of use of parental involvement techniques for classroom management?
3. Is there a significant difference between Mainland-born Chinese teachers and non-Mainland-born Chinese teachers in their self-reported frequency of use of positive reinforcement techniques for classroom management?
4. Is there a significant difference between Mainland-born Chinese teachers and non-Mainland-born Chinese teachers in their self-reported frequency of use of negative reinforcement techniques for classroom management?
5. Is there a significant difference between Mainland-born Chinese teachers and non-Mainland-born Chinese teachers in their self-reported frequency of use of social and emotional skill instruction as a classroom management technique?
6. Is there a significant difference between Mainland-born Chinese teachers and non-Mainland-born Chinese teachers in their self-reported frequency of use of teacher-student relationships as a classroom management technique?
7. Is there a significant difference between Mainland-born Chinese teachers and non-Mainland-born Chinese teachers in their self-reported frequency of use of rules and procedures as a classroom management technique?

8. Is there a significant difference between Mainland-born Chinese teachers and non-Mainland-born Chinese teachers in their self-reported frequency of use of planned ignoring as a classroom management technique?

### **Population and Sample**

The population for this study included all Chinese teachers K-12 in the United States. Although there were no definitive figures on how many Chinese teachers exist in the United States, the most recent available data confirmed 1,114 Chinese programs in American high schools, both public and private as of 2017 (American Councils for Education, 2017). Language programs at the elementary and middle school level are less popular, and most of the programs which exist at these lower levels come from immersion programs. The estimated number of Mandarin Immersion programs in the United States sits at approximately 343 as of 2021 (Weise, 2021). Therefore, combined, it is reasonable to suggest that the number of Chinese teachers K-12 in the United States sits between 1,500 and 2,000 teachers total.

The sample for this study targeted all K-12 Chinese teachers in the United States. An examination of websites of American public schools throughout the nation yielded 229 contacts. Also, included in the sample were teachers who were members of the American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). Due to the large number of female teachers in secondary Chinese classrooms, it was not possible to have equal male and female participants. A total of 118 participants who fitted the eligibility criteria were selected for the study. These participants were administered a survey on classroom management strategies.

Figure 1 displays percent of the participants by country of birth while Table 1 represents the demographic profile for the participants.

**Figure 1**

*Percentage of Respondents by Country of Birth.*

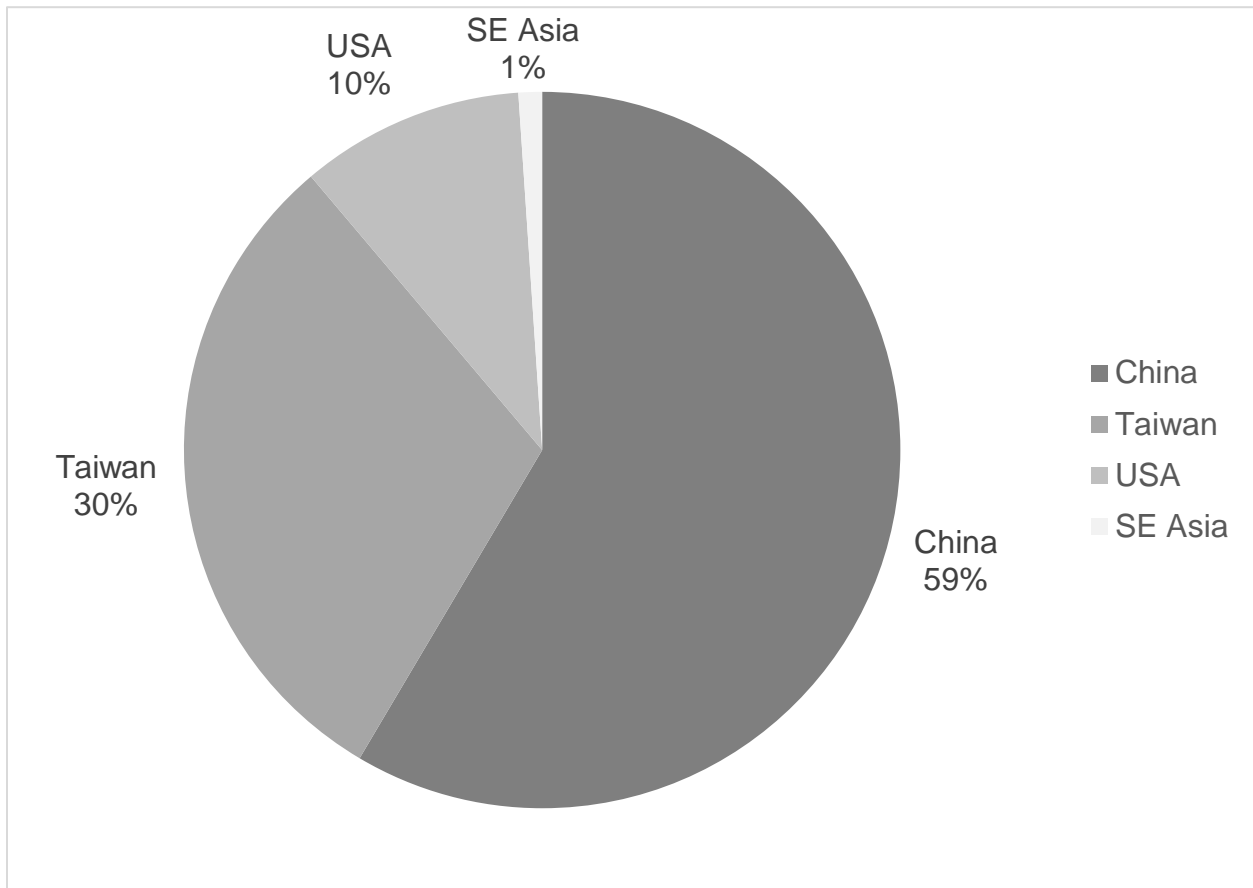


Table 1

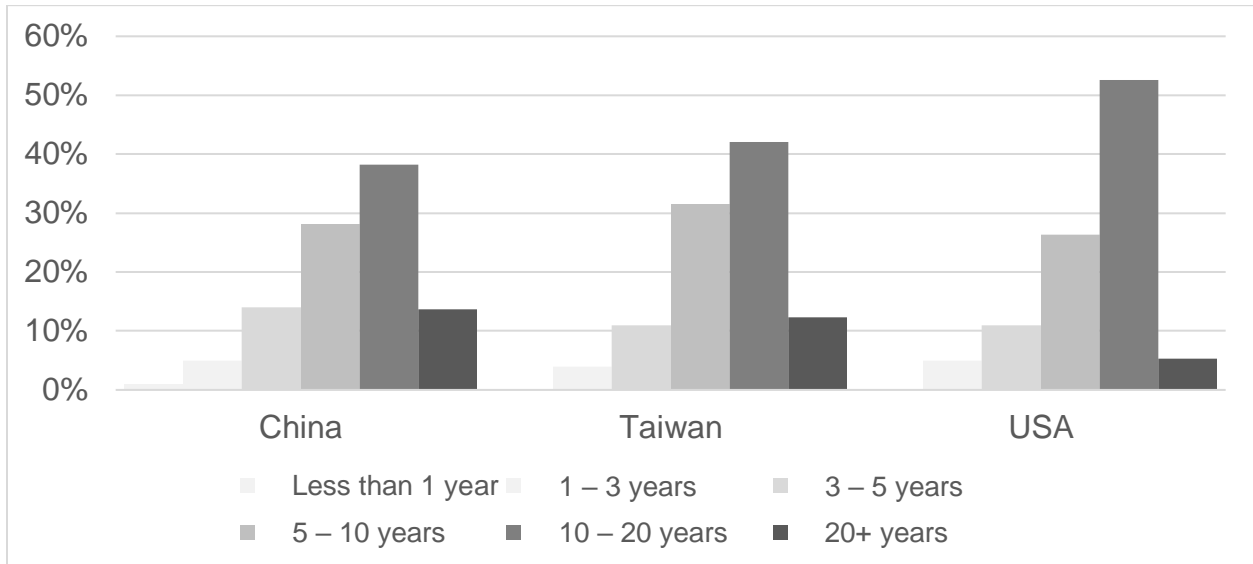
*Summary of Teacher Participant Demographic Data, by Group*

| Characteristic                        | China | Taiwan | USA | SE<br>Asia | Total |
|---------------------------------------|-------|--------|-----|------------|-------|
| <b>Gender:</b>                        |       |        |     |            |       |
| Female                                | 96    | 53     | 13  | 2          | 164   |
| Male                                  | 14    | 3      | 5   | 0          | 22    |
| Non-binary                            | 0     | 1      | 1   | 0          | 2     |
| <b>Grade Level:</b>                   |       |        |     |            |       |
| Elementary                            | 33    | 22     | 1   | 0          | 56    |
| Middle                                | 37    | 12     | 3   | 1          | 53    |
| High                                  | 31    | 20     | 9   | 1          | 61    |
| Multiple                              | 9     | 3      | 6   | 0          | 18    |
| <b>Age:</b>                           |       |        |     |            |       |
| 20 – 30                               | 20    | 3      | 2   | 0          | 25    |
| 30 – 40                               | 44    | 15     | 10  | 1          | 70    |
| 40 – 50                               | 32    | 20     | 3   | 0          | 55    |
| 50+                                   | 14    | 19     | 4   | 1          | 38    |
| <b>Highest level of education:</b>    |       |        |     |            |       |
| High School                           | 1     | 0      | 0   | 0          | 1     |
| Educational specialist                | 1     | 0      | 0   | 0          | 1     |
| Bachelor's degree                     | 23    | 13     | 3   | 1          | 40    |
| Master's degree                       | 78    | 37     | 14  | 1          | 130   |
| Doctorate degree                      | 7     | 7      | 2   | 0          | 16    |
| <b>Years of experience:</b>           |       |        |     |            |       |
| Less than 1 year                      | 1     | 0      | 0   | 0          | 1     |
| 1 – 3 years                           | 6     | 2      | 1   | 0          | 9     |
| 3 – 5 years                           | 15    | 6      | 2   | 0          | 23    |
| 5 – 10 years                          | 31    | 18     | 5   | 0          | 54    |
| 10 – 20 years                         | 42    | 24     | 10  | 1          | 77    |
| 20+ years                             | 15    | 7      | 1   | 1          | 24    |
| <b>Years of experience in the US:</b> |       |        |     |            |       |
| Less than 1 year                      | 6     | 2      | 0   | 1          | 9     |
| 1 – 3 years                           | 15    | 5      | 2   | 0          | 22    |
| 3 – 5 years                           | 31    | 9      | 5   | 0          | 45    |
| 5 – 10 years                          | 35    | 18     | 4   | 0          | 57    |
| 10 – 20 years                         | 22    | 20     | 8   | 1          | 51    |
| 20+ years                             | 1     | 3      | 0   | 0          | 4     |
| <b>School type:</b>                   |       |        |     |            |       |
| Rural                                 | 12    | 2      | 1   | 0          | 15    |
| Suburban                              | 43    | 28     | 13  | 0          | 84    |
| Urban                                 | 55    | 27     | 5   | 2          | 89    |

*Note on Participants:* Results included two respondents from South East Asian countries other than China and Taiwan; however, they were excluded from the analysis.

**Figure 2**

*Distribution of Years of Experience by Country of Birth.*



## **Instrumentation**

The instrument used for this study was adapted from The Incredible Years, Teacher Classroom Management Strategies Questionnaire (Appendix A). The original instrument contained 44 items, including sections on Managing Classroom Behavior, Specific Teaching Techniques, and Working with Parents. The main purpose of the original instrument was to investigate teachers' use of both positive and negative classroom management strategies.

## **Questionnaire**

The questionnaire used in this research was redesigned and adapted from the Incredible Years survey to include 55 questions. The 55 questions were subdivided into four sections: Specific Teaching Techniques (both positive and negative), Managing Classroom Behavior (levels of confidence), Working with Parents (frequency), and Demographic Sections, including gender, place of birth, age, grade levels taught, location of educator preparation program, highest education level obtained, years of teaching experience abroad and in the United States, and school location. Contact with the Incredible Years Program yielded express written permission to use the instrument in this research.

## **Administration**

Administration of the survey took place through Google Forms across a three-month time period. Eligibility criteria were used to screen out participants who were not K-12 Chinese teachers in the US. Data collected from the survey were then transferred to SPSS Statistics for analysis.

## **Scoring**

The adapted instrument used for this research included 55 items, including a Likert scale from 1-5. For each item, participants rated how frequently they used the strategy. Frequency is rated from 1-5, where 1=Rarely or Never, 2=Sometimes, 3=Half the time, 4=Often, and 5=Very Often. Part C (Working with Parents) ranges from 1-6, describing the frequency of action where 0= Never, 1= 1 Time Per Year, 2= 2-3 Times per year, 3= Once Per Month, 4= Once a Week, and 5= Daily. An adaptation was made to (Part D) in order to include demographic information, including years of teaching, teacher preparation background, and highest education level.

## **Reliability and Validity**

The original instrument has been tested for both reliability and validity in previous research conducted by The Incredible Years Program. Additionally, in 2010, The Teacher Strategies Questionnaire was administered in New Zealand to over 200 educators. The Questionnaire was administered within the first week of class and again on the last day of courses. Ferguson's research demonstrated scale reliabilities for the pre-course and post-course with the following alpha values: confidence managing classroom behaviour ( $\alpha = .78, .86$ ); use of positive strategies total frequency ( $\alpha = .76, .81$ ) and usefulness ( $\alpha = .86, .89$ ); use of inappropriate strategies frequency ( $\alpha = .64, .56$ ) and usefulness ( $\alpha = .78, .79$ ); positive approaches with parents ( $\alpha = .79, .84$ ) (Ferguson et al., 2013).

## **Data Collection and Procedures**

Permission to conduct this study was obtained from Milligan University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). Once permission was given, the researcher began selecting participants and implementing the study. Data collected from the instrument (found in Appendix A) were

compiled automatically within Google Forms. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to compare data for statistical significance. All data were reviewed to ensure accuracy before and after the transition from platform to platform.

Data for this study were collected through the use of the web-based Google platform, Google Forms. Surveys were administered through various channels and groups which were created for the collective use of Chinese as a foreign language teacher based in the United States. Additionally, the researcher searched through public school databases and websites to find American public schools which have Chinese programs and teachers. These teachers were contacted individually to participate in the survey.

Once the data were collected, the researcher ensured the results were reliable and compiled data using spreadsheet software in order to disaggregate final data using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

Participants voluntarily completed the survey and were given the opportunity to withdraw from the research at any time. No incentive was offered to encourage participation in the survey. Names were not indicated, and personally identifiable information in regard to the teacher was eliminated from the documentation. Measures were in place to ensure that all participants understood that all information remained confidential and was to be used for the sole purpose of this research.

## **Data Analysis**

The following research questions guided the analysis of data in this study.

1. Is there a significant difference between Mainland-born Chinese teachers and non-Mainland-born Chinese teachers in their self-reported levels of confidence in managing classroom behavior?



2. Is there a significant difference between Mainland-born Chinese teachers and non-Mainland-born Chinese teachers in their self-reported frequency of use of parental involvement techniques for classroom management?
3. Is there a significant difference between Mainland-born Chinese teachers and non-Mainland-born Chinese teachers in their self-reported frequency of use of positive reinforcement techniques for classroom management?
4. Is there a significant difference between Mainland-born Chinese teachers and non-Mainland-born Chinese teachers in their self-reported frequency of use of negative reinforcement techniques for classroom management?
5. Is there a significant difference between Mainland-born Chinese teachers and non-Mainland-born Chinese teachers in their self-reported frequency of use of social and emotional skill instruction as a classroom management technique?
6. Is there a significant difference between Mainland-born Chinese teachers and non-Mainland-born Chinese teachers in their self-reported frequency of use of teacher-student relationships as a classroom management technique?
7. Is there a significant difference between Mainland-born Chinese teachers and non-Mainland-born Chinese teachers in their self-reported frequency of use of rules and procedures as a classroom management technique?
8. Is there a significant difference between Mainland-born Chinese teachers and non-Mainland-born Chinese teachers in their self-reported frequency of use of planned ignoring as a classroom management technique?

The first research question, “Is there a significant difference between Chinese-born Chinese teachers and American-born Chinese teachers in their self-reported levels of confidence in

managing classroom behavior?” was tested based on responses to Section A of the survey: “Managing Classroom Behavior.”

Respondents will be asked to rate their level of confidence in three categories of classroom behavior management using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (Very unconfident) to 7 (Very confident). The mean score for each respondent was used to conduct an ANOVA, comparing the answers for respondents born in the USA, China, and Taiwan, to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the groups in their self-reported level of confidence in managing classroom behavior.

The second research question, “Is there a significant difference between Chinese-born Chinese teachers and American-born Chinese teachers in their most frequently used specific classroom management techniques?” was tested based on responses to Section B of the survey: “Specific Teaching Techniques.” Respondents were asked to rate the frequency with which they use 38 different teaching techniques using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (Rarely / Never) to 5 (Very often). The mean score for each respondent was used to conduct an ANOVA, comparing the answers for respondents born in the USA, China, and Taiwan, to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the groups in their self-reported frequency of use of each teaching technique in the survey. Any teaching techniques that were used at a significantly different rate of frequency between the groups were noted.

The third research question, “Is there a significant difference between Chinese-born Chinese teachers and American-born Chinese teachers in their self-reported frequency of use of parental involvement techniques for classroom management?” was tested based on responses to Section C of the survey: “Working with parents.” The mean score for each respondent was used to conduct an ANOVA, comparing the answers for respondents born in the USA, China, and

Taiwan, to determine whether there is a statistically significant difference in the overall frequency of use of parental involvement techniques.

The fourth research question, “Is there a significant difference between Chinese-born Chinese teachers and American-born Chinese teachers in their self-reported frequency of use of positive reinforcement techniques for classroom management?”, was tested based on responses in Section B of the survey. The mean scores of each respondent for all of these techniques were used to conduct an ANOVA, comparing the answers for respondents born in the USA, China, and Taiwan to measure whether positive reinforcement techniques, on the whole, were used at statistically significant different rates by the two groups.

The fifth research question, “Is there a significant difference between Chinese-born Chinese teachers and American-born Chinese teachers in their self-reported frequency of use of negative reinforcement techniques for classroom management?” was tested based on responses in Section B of the survey. The mean score for each respondent for all of these techniques was used to conduct an ANOVA, comparing the answers for respondents born in the USA, China, and Taiwan to measure whether negative reinforcement techniques, on the whole, were used at statistically significant different rates by the groups.

The sixth research question, “Is there a significant difference between Chinese-born Chinese teachers and American-born Chinese teachers in their self-reported frequency of use of social and emotional skill instruction as a classroom management technique?” was tested based on responses in Section B of the survey. Specific classroom management techniques listed in the survey were categorized as “social and emotional skill instruction techniques.” The mean score for each respondent for all of these techniques was used to conduct an ANOVA, comparing the answers for respondents born in the USA, China, and Taiwan to measure whether social and

emotional skill instruction techniques, on the whole, were used at statistically significant different rates by the groups.

The seventh research question, “Is there a significant difference between Mainland-born Chinese teachers and non-Mainland-born Chinese teachers in their self-reported frequency of use of teacher-student relationships as a classroom management technique?” was tested based on responses in Section B of the survey. Specific classroom management techniques listed in the survey will be categorized as “teacher-student relationship techniques.” The mean score for each respondent for all of these techniques was used to conduct an ANOVA, comparing the answers for respondents born in the USA, China, and Taiwan to measure whether negative reinforcement techniques, on the whole, were used at statistically significant different rates by the groups.

The eighth research question, “Is there a significant difference between Mainland-born Chinese teachers and non-Mainland-born Chinese teachers in their self-reported frequency of use of rules and procedures as a classroom management technique?” was tested based on responses in Section B of the survey. Specific classroom management techniques listed in the survey will be categorized as “rules and procedures.” The mean score for each respondent for all of these techniques was used to conduct an ANOVA, comparing the answers for respondents born in the USA, China, and Taiwan to measure whether negative reinforcement techniques, on the whole, were used at statistically significant different rates by the two groups.

The ninth research question, “Is there a significant difference between Mainland-born Chinese teachers and non-Mainland-born Chinese teachers in their self-reported frequency of use of planned ignoring as a classroom management technique?” was tested based on responses in Section B of the survey. Specific classroom management techniques listed in the survey will be categorized as “planned ignoring.” The mean score for each respondent for all of these

techniques was used to conduct an ANOVA, comparing the answers for respondents born in the USA, China, and Taiwan to measure whether negative reinforcement techniques, on the whole, were used at statistically significant different rates by the two groups.

Data collected from participants were compiled within Google Forms. Data were grouped according to the various demographic subgroups, including nationality and number of years of teaching experience. The data were also grouped according to subsections A-D (Managing Classroom Behavior, Specific Teaching Techniques, and Working with Parents). Specific questions were also viewed according to the various demographic data mentioned above. All data compiled in Google Forms were transferred to the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for initial data analysis. This analysis included frequency tables, mean, and standard deviations. Additionally, all research questions were analyzed using ANOVA statistical procedures. All data were analyzed at the .05 level of significance. Chapter 4 includes the analysis results for each research question.

## **Summary**

This chapter presented the methodology used in this quantitative research study. A brief introduction to the methodology followed by the research questions, null hypotheses, and the sample was examined. Additionally, the instrumentation, along with its validity and reliability, were discussed. Data collection procedures were introduced along with the process for examining each research question. Statistical procedures which were used in the research were also presented.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Data Analysis and Findings**

The purpose of this research was to identify how specific aspects of classroom management differ between Mainland-born Chinese teachers and non-Mainland born Chinese teachers so that strategies can be designed to better train teachers coming from mainland China before they enter American classrooms.

The groups which were compared in this study consisted of 188 teachers of Mandarin Chinese in K-12 schools, both public and private, throughout the United States. Group A consisted of teachers born in Mainland China, and Group B consisted of those Chinese teachers born in the United States and other democratic Mandarin-speaking nation-states and regions, such as Taiwan and Singapore. Both groups were given a questionnaire where they provided teacher-reported data on their own use of various classroom management strategies. This chapter provides the results of data analyses and findings of this study.

#### **Demographic Data**

While the population of Chinese teachers in the United States is unknown, the most recent available data indicate that there were 1,114 Chinese programs at American high schools, both public and private, as of 2017 (American Councils for Education, 2017). The estimated number of Mandarin Immersion programs in the United States sits at approximately 343 as of 2021 (Weise, 2021). It is reasonable to suggest that the number of Chinese teachers K-12 in the United States sits between 1,500 and 2,000 teachers total.

The sample used for this study consisted of 188 Chinese teachers who have teaching experience in the United States of America. From a total of 188 participants, 110 were born in

Mainland China, 57 were born in Taiwan, and 19 were born in the United States. Of the 188 participants, 164 were female, 22 were male, and two were non-binary. 21% of participants held Bachelor's degrees, 69% of participants held Master's degrees, and 8% of participants held Doctorate degrees.

The number of years of teaching experience for the sample ranged from less than one year to over 20 years. Teachers with 0-3 years' experience made up 5% of the sample, teachers with 3-5 years' experience made up 12% of the sample, teachers with 5-10 years' experience made up 29% of the sample, teachers with 10-20 years made up 41% of the sample, and teachers with more than 20 years of experience made up 13% of the sample.

The number of years in the United States for this sample ranged from less than one year to over 20 years. Teachers who have resided in the United States for less than three years represented 16% of the sample. Teachers who have resided in the United States for 3-5 years represented 12% of the sample. Teachers who have resided in the United States for 5-10 years represented 29% of the sample. Teachers who have resided in the United States for 10-20 years represented 41% of the sample. Finally, teachers who have resided in the United States for 20+ years represented 13% of the sample.

8% of the teachers sampled described their schools as having a rural setting, 45% described their schools as suburban, and 47% described their schools as urban. There was a roughly even distribution of teachers from the elementary school levels (30%), middle school levels (28%), and high school levels (32%).

### Research Question 1

RQ: Is there a significant difference between Mainland-born Chinese teachers and non-Mainland born Chinese teachers in their self-reported levels of confidence in managing classroom behavior?

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant difference between Mainland-born Chinese teachers and non-Mainland born Chinese teachers in their self-reported levels of confidence in managing classroom behavior.

H<sub>a</sub>: There is a significant difference between Mainland-born Chinese teachers and non-Mainland born Chinese teachers in their self-reported levels of confidence in managing classroom behavior.

A one-way ANOVA was computed to compare the difference between self-reported levels of confidence in managing classroom behavior of Chinese teachers born in Mainland China, Taiwan, and the United States. No significant difference was found between the three groups ( $F(3, 184) = 0.971, p = .408, \eta^2 = 0.016$ ).

The results are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2

*One Way Analysis of Variance on Self-Reported Levels of Confidence*

| Birth County   | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>Df</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>P</i> | <i>Eta</i> <sup>2</sup> |
|----------------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|-------------------------|
| Mainland China | 5.53     | 1.05      | 184       | .971     | .408     | .055                    |
| Taiwan         | 5.42     | 1.29      |           |          |          |                         |
| USA            | 5.84     | 1.13      |           |          |          |                         |



## Research Question 2

RQ: Is there a significant difference between Mainland-born Chinese teachers and non-Mainland born Chinese teachers in their self-reported frequency of use of parental involvement techniques for classroom management?

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant difference between Mainland-born Chinese teachers and non-Mainland born Chinese teachers in their self-reported frequency of use of parental involvement techniques for classroom management.

H<sub>a</sub>: There is a significant difference between Mainland-born Chinese teachers and non-Mainland born Chinese teachers in their self-reported frequency of use of parental involvement techniques for classroom management.

A one-way ANOVA was computed to compare the self-reported frequency of use of parental involvement techniques for classroom management of teachers born in Mainland China, Taiwan, and the United States. No significant difference was found between the three groups ( $F(3, 184) = 1.642, p = .181, \eta^2 = .026$ ). The results are displayed in Table 3.

Table 3

### *One Way Analysis of Variance on Self-Reported Use of Parental Involvement Techniques*

| Birth County   | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>Df</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>p</i> | <i>Eta</i> <sup>2</sup> |
|----------------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|-------------------------|
| Mainland China | 1.84     | .71       | 184       | 1.462    | .181     | .026                    |
| Taiwan         | 1.95     | .73       |           |          |          |                         |
| USA            | 1.58     | .86       |           |          |          |                         |

### Research Question 3

RQ: Is there a significant difference between Mainland-born Chinese teachers and non-Mainland born Chinese teachers in their self-reported frequency of use of positive reinforcement techniques for classroom management?

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant difference between Mainland-born Chinese teachers and non-Mainland born Chinese teachers in their self-reported frequency of use of positive reinforcement techniques for classroom management.

H<sub>a</sub>: There is a significant difference between Mainland-born Chinese teachers and non-Mainland born Chinese teachers in their self-reported frequency of use of positive reinforcement techniques for classroom management.

A one-way ANOVA was computed to compare the self-reported frequency of use of positive reinforcement techniques for classroom management of teachers born in Mainland China, Taiwan, and the United States. A significant difference was found between the three groups ( $F(3, 184) = 3.431, p < .05, \eta^2 = .053$ ).

Tukey's HSD was used to determine the nature of the differences between the three groups. This analysis revealed that teachers born in Mainland ( $M=3.58, sd=.84$ ) and Taiwan ( $M=3.65, sd=.69$ ) made more frequent use of positive reinforcement techniques than teachers born in the United States ( $M=2.98, sd=1.10$ ). The results are displayed in Table 4.

Table 4

*One Way Analysis of Variance on Self-Reported Use of Positive Reinforcement Techniques*

| Birth County   | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>Df</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>p</i> | <i>Eta</i> <sup>2</sup> |
|----------------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|-------------------------|
| Mainland China | 3.58     | 0.84      | 184       | 3.431    | .018     | .053                    |
| Taiwan         | 3.65     | 0.69      |           |          |          |                         |
| USA            | 2.98     | 1.10      |           |          |          |                         |

*Note: P < 0.05***Research Question 4**

RQ: Is there a significant difference between Mainland-born Chinese teachers and non-Mainland born Chinese teachers in their self-reported frequency of use of negative reinforcement techniques for classroom management?

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant difference between Mainland-born Chinese teachers and non-Mainland born Chinese teachers in their self-reported frequency of use of negative reinforcement techniques for classroom management.

H<sub>a</sub>: There is a significant difference between Mainland-born Chinese teachers and non-Mainland born Chinese teachers in their self-reported frequency of use of negative reinforcement techniques for classroom management.

A one-way ANOVA was computed to compare the self-reported frequency of use of negative reinforcement techniques for classroom management of teachers born in Mainland China, Taiwan, and the United States. No significant difference was found between the three groups ( $F(3, 184) = 2.488, p = .062, Eta^2 = .039$ ). The results are displayed in Table 5.

Table 5

*One Way Analysis of Variance on Self-Reported Use of Negative Reinforcement Techniques*

| Birth County   | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>Df</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>p</i> | <i>Eta</i> <sup>2</sup> |
|----------------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|-------------------------|
| Mainland China | 2.56     | .51       | 184       | 2.488    | 0.62     | .039                    |
| Taiwan         | 2.38     | .49       |           |          |          |                         |
| USA            | 2.38     | .70       |           |          |          |                         |

### Research Question 5

RQ: Is there a significant difference between Mainland-born Chinese teachers and non-Mainland born Chinese teachers in their self-reported frequency of use of social and emotional skill instruction as a classroom management technique?

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant difference between Mainland-born Chinese teachers and non-Mainland born Chinese teachers in their self-reported frequency of use of social and emotional skill instruction as a classroom management technique.

H<sub>a</sub>: There is a significant difference between Mainland-born Chinese teachers and non-Mainland born Chinese teachers in their self-reported frequency of use of social and emotional skill instruction as a classroom management technique.

A one-way ANOVA was computed to compare the self-reported frequency of use of social and emotional skill instruction as a classroom management technique of teachers born in Mainland China, Taiwan, and the United States. No significant difference was found between the three groups ( $F(3, 184) = 0.509, p = .676, \text{Eta}^2 = .008$ ). The results are displayed in Table 6.

Table 6

*One Way Analysis of Variance on Self-Reported use of Social and Emotional Skill Instruction*

| Birth County   | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>Df</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>p</i> | <i>Eta</i> <sup>2</sup> |
|----------------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|-------------------------|
| Mainland China | 3.56     | .62       | 184       | 0.509    | .676     | .008                    |
| Taiwan         | 3.49     | .58       |           |          |          |                         |
| USA            | 3.39     | .76       |           |          |          |                         |

### Research Question 6

RQ: Is there a significant difference between Mainland-born Chinese teachers and non-Mainland born Chinese teachers in their self-reported frequency of use of teacher-student relationships as a classroom management technique?

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant difference between Mainland-born Chinese teachers and non-Mainland born Chinese teachers in their self-reported frequency of use of teacher-student relationships as a classroom management technique.

H<sub>a</sub>: There is a significant difference between Mainland-born Chinese teachers and non-Mainland born Chinese teachers in their self-reported frequency of use of teacher-student relationships as a classroom management technique.

A one-way ANOVA was computed to compare the self-reported frequency of use of teacher-student relationships as a classroom management technique of teachers born in Mainland China, Taiwan, and the United States. A significant difference was found between the three groups ( $F(3, 184) = 3.577, p < .05, \text{Eta}^2 = .055$ ).

Tukey's HSD was used to determine the nature of the differences between the three groups. This analysis revealed that teachers born in the United States made more frequent use of

teacher-student relationships as a classroom management technique ( $M=3.11$ ,  $sd=.99$ ) than teachers born in China ( $M=2.45$ ,  $sd=.86$ ) and Taiwan ( $M=2.41$ ,  $sd=.86$ ). The results are displayed in Table 7.

Table 7

*One Way Analysis of Variance on Self-Reported Use of Teacher-Student Relationships*

| Birth County   | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>Df</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>p</i> | <i>Eta</i> <sup>2</sup> |
|----------------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|-------------------------|
| Mainland China | 2.45     | .86       | 184       | 3.577    | .015     | .055                    |
| Taiwan         | 2.41     | .86       |           |          |          |                         |
| USA            | 3.11     | .99       |           |          |          |                         |

*Note: P < 0.05*

### **Research Question 7**

RQ: Is there a significant difference between Mainland-born Chinese teachers and non-Mainland born Chinese teachers in their self-reported frequency of use of rules and procedures as a classroom management technique?

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant difference between Mainland-born Chinese teachers and non-Mainland born Chinese teachers in their self-reported frequency of use of rules and procedures as a classroom management technique.

H<sub>a</sub>: There is a significant difference between Mainland-born Chinese teachers and non-Mainland born Chinese teachers in their self-reported frequency of use of rules and procedures as a classroom management technique.

A one-way ANOVA was computed to compare the self-reported frequency of use of rules and procedures as a classroom management technique of teachers born in Mainland China,

Taiwan, and the United States. No significant difference was found between the three groups ( $F(3, 184) = 1.475, p = .223, Eta^2 = .023$ ). The results are displayed in Table 8.

Table 8

*One Way Analysis of Variance on Self-Reported Use of Rules and Procedures*

| Birth County   | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>Df</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>p</i> | <i>Eta<sup>2</sup></i> |
|----------------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|------------------------|
| Mainland China | 4.20     | .64       | 184       | 1.475    | .223     | .023                   |
| Taiwan         | 4.13     | .58       |           |          |          |                        |
| USA            | 4.15     | .62       |           |          |          |                        |

### Research Question 8

RQ: Is there a significant difference between Mainland-born Chinese teachers and non-Mainland born Chinese teachers in their self-reported frequency of use of planned ignoring as a classroom management technique?

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant difference between Mainland-born Chinese teachers and non-Mainland born Chinese teachers in their self-reported frequency of use of planned ignoring as a classroom management technique.

H<sub>a</sub>: There is a significant difference between Mainland-born Chinese teachers and non-Mainland born Chinese teachers in their self-reported frequency of use of planned ignoring as a classroom management technique.

A one-way ANOVA was computed to compare self-reported frequency of use of planned ignoring as a classroom management technique of teachers born in Mainland China, Taiwan, and

the United States. A significant difference was found between the three groups ( $F(2, 184) = 4.4$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $Eta^2 = .046$ ).

Tukey's HSD was used to determine the nature of the differences between the three groups. This analysis revealed that teachers born in the United States made more frequent use of planned ignoring as a classroom management technique ( $M=3.30$ ,  $sd=1.26$ ) than teachers born in China ( $M=2.45$ ,  $sd=1.21$ ) and Taiwan ( $M=2.70$ ,  $sd=1.21$ ). The results are displayed in Table 9.

Table 9

*One Way Analysis of Variance on Self-Reported Use of Planned Ignoring*

| Birth County   | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>Df</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>p</i> | <i>Eta</i> <sup>2</sup> |
|----------------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|-------------------------|
| Mainland China | 2.45     | 1.21      | 184       | 4.40     | 0.014    | 0.046                   |
| Taiwan         | 2.70     | 1.21      |           |          |          |                         |
| USA            | 3.30     | 1.26      |           |          |          |                         |

## Chapter Summary

Chapter four presented an analysis of the data related to this research study. In this chapter, data from 188 Chinese teachers across the United States were analyzed and presented. The research questions and null hypotheses were addressed. The findings show significant differences between groups for Research Questions 3 and 6. Chapter 5 covers the conclusions of the research study, the implications for practice, and the recommendations for future study.



## Chapter 5

### Summary of Findings, Discussions, Recommendations, and Conclusions

This chapter focuses on a summary of the findings found in chapter 4, the limitations of the study, the recommendations for practice, and the recommendations for further study.

Chinese teachers in the United States and the schools that provide Chinese language programs continue to face serious challenges surrounding classroom management. This research attempted to unpack the most profound differences in classroom management techniques between Mainland-born and non-Mainland born Chinese teachers in the United States.

The cultural disconnects described in Lilach's 2018 qualitative study covered many of the key issues perceived by Asian teachers in western classrooms. These included the perceived lower status of teachers in the United States, the de-emphasis of content knowledge, and the hands-on approach to learning vs. the teacher-centered approach. Many teachers from this study expressed general discontent and frustration with the lack of hierarchical relationships between teachers and students, lack of academic pressure, and inability to put academic pressure on students to perform well. This study corroborates these findings and pinpoints those areas which are most convergent in the area of classroom management.

This research attempted to reveal the types of classroom management strategies that are being used by both Mainland and non-Mainland-born teachers in the United States and provide some interesting insights into the classroom management styles of Chinese teachers in the United States. Mostly importantly, this study issues new recommendations on how American schools and administrators should approach cultural competence and classroom management professional development for foreign-born Chinese teachers in the United States.

## **Summary of Findings**

The findings of this study point to a number of similarities and differences between mainland-born and non-Mainland-born Chinese teachers in the US. The most significant findings of this study concerned teacher-student relationships and planned ignoring of misbehavior as a classroom management technique. Other significant findings included differences in how Mainland-born and Taiwanese-born teachers use positive reinforcement and positive behaviorist techniques in the classroom.

It is also important to note that the differences between Taiwanese-born, Mainland Chinese-born, and American-born teachers revealed that the differences in classroom management techniques are unlikely to stem from political differences or structures of government. In fact, the study shows teachers from Taiwan and Mainland China share common methods for dealing with classroom management across the board. A lack of discernible differences between Taiwanese and Mainland-born Chinese teachers in their handling of classroom management may point to the importance of deeply-seated cultural norms which are shared between the two and may not necessarily be significantly influenced by political organizations or structures. However, the research indicated there are a number of differences between American-born teachers and both Taiwanese and Mainland-born Chinese teachers in the United States.

## **Discussion of Findings**

The results of the research questions which were found to be statistically insignificant included those questions which were concerned with confidence in managing classroom

behavior, parental involvement, negative reinforcement, social and emotional skill instruction, and frequency of use of rules and procedures.

The results demonstrate that despite teaching in a foreign context, Chinese-born and Taiwanese-born teachers in the United States do not necessarily feel less confident in their abilities to manage a classroom than their US-born counterparts. In fact, many Chinese-born and Taiwanese-born teachers may be feeling confident in their classroom management skills even if the resulting classroom dynamic is not viewed favorably by their US peers or administrators. This may be explained by the elevated social status of Mainland and Taiwanese teachers in their home country. Teachers are not evaluated, for example, according to their ability to develop relationships with students or engage them in classroom activities. Instead, evaluation comes from data associated with standardized testing and assessment results. Additionally, Wei & Li (2013), Condon (1977), and Chen and Chung (1994) all point out the significance of unequal relationships in Chinese society which produce special reverence for one's teachers and authority figures. This may explain why these teachers feel great confidence in their classroom management strategies despite how they may appear in American contexts.

Secondly, the findings show that Mainland-born Chinese teachers and their Taiwanese counterparts do not use negative reinforcement and frequency of use of rules and procedures at a statistically significant different rate from US-born teachers. This is an interesting finding because which negates the notion that foreign-born Chinese teachers in the United States are completely driven by behaviorist teaching techniques. While negative behaviorist teaching techniques such as 罰站 (to punish by standing) and 罰蹲 (to punish by squatting) are still in common use in Chinese public schools today, these techniques do not seem to have come with these teachers to an American context. It seems that most foreign-born Chinese teachers are well

aware of the inadmissibility of certain negative reinforcement techniques in the American context and, therefore, do not engage in them regularly. This is in direct accordance with Lilach's 2018 qualitative study on Asian teachers' perceptions of what it means to be a "good teacher."

Additionally, self-reported use of parental involvement techniques did not possess statistically significant differences in the means. However, a look at specific questions from the survey showed that, although the overall means for all parent involvement techniques were not significantly different, there were statistically significant differences in how parental involvement was used between questions. For example, Mainland-born and Taiwanese-born teachers were more likely to involve parents in positive interactions, including sending home teacher-to-parent communication newsletters. American-born teachers, on the other hand, were more likely to engage parents with specific reporting on bad behavior. American-born teachers were significantly more likely to send home notes or frowny faces to report problem behavior to parents. They were also more likely to call parents to report bad behavior after school. This points out a major difference between how these groups approach parent interaction which may have roots which are in line with Spires (2019) study on Chinese social harmony and Wei & Li's 2013 study on harmony and ritual in Chinese social norms. It may also point to a lack of cultural and linguistic proficiency which may cause the teacher to focus solely on positive interactions even when there are serious problems in the classroom.

The next area of interest in the study's findings is the statistically significant difference between Mainland-born teachers and American-born teachers in their self-reported use of positive reinforcement techniques. Both Mainland-born and Taiwanese-born Chinese teachers in

the US are much more likely to use positive reinforcement techniques as a behavioral management technique.

Mainland teachers are more likely to praise positive behavior verbally in the classroom, and Taiwanese teachers are more likely to use group incentives. Both groups are more likely than American teachers to set up individual incentive programs and use a clear classroom discipline plan and hierarchy. This is interesting because it points back to the difference between the Humanist and Behaviorist camps of classroom management. This study reveals the behaviorist worldview of Mainland-born and Taiwanese-born teachers in the US. However, there was no statistically significant difference found in the self-reported frequency of use of negative reinforcement techniques. This could be a result of training in PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention Systems) across the United States.

Although social and emotional skill instruction was not found to be a statistically significant difference among groups, there was a significant difference in the domain of teacher-student relationships. American-born teachers rely on the student-teacher relationship to manage the classroom to a much higher degree than their Mainland-born and Taiwanese-born counterparts. The Humanist and Democratic classroom management theories highlighted in Chapter 2 of this study may have some influence on this finding. This research revealed American-born teachers are more likely to send home a student interest survey at the beginning of the year to find out more about their students' individual personalities, hobbies, and interests. This finding supports the findings of Postholm, 2013 and Tauber, 2007 who discussed viewing the student democratically as an equal with their own unique contributions to the classroom. This seems to be a uniquely western approach to classroom management.

The use of rules and procedures did not have any statistically significant differences between the groups. All groups were equally as likely to prepare children for transitions with a predictable routine, give clear, easy-to-understand directions, or warn of consequences for misbehavior (e.g., loss of privileges).

The last area of interest in the findings included questions about the technique of planned ignoring. Planned ignoring is the intentional act of ignoring misbehavior by a teacher in order to withhold attention from a student who is engaging in attention-seeking behavior. It is also used in circumstances where the misbehavior is trivial or non-disruptive to the class or lesson objectives. Planned ignoring is useful for classes where student personalities are strong and diverse and where the repression of these personalities might cause students to engage in more serious disruptive behavior. This research revealed that American-born teachers are significantly more likely to ignore misbehavior that is non-disruptive to class.

This finding is interesting because it points to a definitive difference between American-born, Mainland-born, and Taiwanese-born teachers in the US. Mainland-born or Taiwanese-born teachers may see ignoring misbehavior as a teaching flaw or laziness on the part of the instructor. It may also be related to the emphasis on the teaching of moral values in Confucian societies. Moral education is an integral part of the state-sanctioned curriculum on the Mainland, especially in the early grades, and it allows little room for ignoring misbehavior. The smallest details of social interaction are outlined and taught directly to children beginning in pre-school. Trivial misbehaviors, such as speaking without raising your hand or getting up to use the bathroom without asking, would be seen as egregious misbehaviors in a Mainland classroom. Therefore, the thought of ignoring these details, even if they do not disrupt the flow of the lesson, may be seen as a flaw for the instructor. The instructor, not taking the time to address the issue,

correct the behavior, or teach some value might be seen as an incorrect way of handling classroom behavior issues. From the western perspective, however, students enter the classroom with certain rights and privileges which might not be afforded to students in Asia on the grounds that they do not foster a moral education among students. Western notions of students' individuality and personal characteristics make most educator preparation programs focus on teacher-oriented strategies for classroom management. In other words, how can the teacher change instead of the student? If the student is misbehaving, what can the teacher do to change the circumstances or environment in such a way that the conditions are no longer favorable for the misconduct? For example, if two students are constantly talking during a lesson, distracting the teacher and the other students, the Mainland-born or Taiwanese-born teacher might be inclined to stop the class and address the issue directly. The two students may be confronted while the rest of the class watches. The teacher may take some time to discuss the importance of listening during a lecture so that they can perform better later on the test, or they may discuss how the talking is affecting the other students. Both social pressure and moral education are the points of an exercise such as this one. The goal is to create an opportunity to teach a social or emotional lesson in order to change undesirable behavior in the classroom.

Western teachers in the above example, however, may ask themselves, "How can I arrange or manage the classroom in such a way that the students no longer wish to talk during class?" Possible solutions would include separating the students to different corners of the classroom, moving one of the students to a different class, or setting up incentive programs that are so effective that the desire to talk during class becomes so diminished that it is no longer a viable option. In the western example, the goal is no longer to change or affect a student's sense of

morality, only to change their decision-making, environment, or circumstances in such a way that the behavior is no longer a desirable option for the student.

### **Limitations of Study**

This study was not without its limitations and could be improved greatly along the following lines. First, data gathered from the Teacher Classroom Management Questionnaire are considered teacher-reported data, which has inherent limitations on validity. All self-reported data brings forth certain questions about validity.

Additionally, this research was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, which may have caused some classroom management changes, especially in regards to parent engagement behaviors and strategies. One participant reached out to me to tell me her answers for the parent engagement questions might have been answered differently under different circumstances where parents would be more welcome in and out of the classroom on a daily basis.

Lastly, and most importantly, the lack of American-born Chinese teachers makes it difficult to obtain enough data to achieve statistical significance. Unfortunately, there are likely less than 200 American-born Chinese teachers in the United States, so reaching out to them can be quite difficult. As a result, this study was only able to identify the most profound differences between American-born, Mainland-born, and non-Mainland-born Chinese teachers in the United States.

This research study examined differences in classroom management strategies between Mainland Chinese-born teachers, American-born Chinese teachers, and Taiwanese-born Chinese teachers in the United States. The results found significant differences in the use of positive reinforcement, teacher-student relationships, and planned ignoring. Additionally, the use of



parental involvement, although not statistically significant overall, had statistically significant differences in approaches between the groups.

The research suggests both Mainland-born and Taiwanese-born Chinese teachers in the United States are much more likely to use positive reinforcement techniques as a behavioral management technique. Mainland-born Chinese teachers are more likely than their American-born counterparts to praise positive behavior verbally in the classroom, and Taiwanese teachers are more likely to use group incentives. Both groups are more likely than American teachers to set up individual incentive programs and use a clear classroom discipline plan and hierarchy. This suggests positive-behavior support systems are familiar to foreign-born Chinese educators in the United States, and these groups tend to use behaviorist classroom management techniques in the classroom as opposed to humanist or democratic approaches which may be preferable for many of their American-born counterparts.

This behaviorist approach to classroom management and the hierarchical nature of relationships in Mainland China and Taiwan may also be the reason that these groups are less likely to utilize teacher-student relationships as a classroom management technique. Although social and emotional skill instruction was not found to be a statistically significant difference among groups, there was a significant difference in the domain of teacher-student relationships. American-born teachers rely on the student-teacher relationship to manage the classroom to a much higher degree than their Mainland-born and Taiwanese-born counterparts. For example, American-born Chinese teachers were found much more likely to send home a student-interest survey at the beginning of the year.

Another area of difference was discovered in the area of parental involvement. While the overall use of parental involvement did not differ significantly, the approaches taken to parental

involvement, if categorized according to positive and negative interactions, was found to be significant. For example, Mainland-born and Taiwanese-born teachers were more likely to involve parents in positive interactions, including sending home teacher-to-parent communication newsletters. American-born teachers, on the other hand, were more likely to engage parents with specific reporting on bad behavior.

Lastly, the use of planned ignoring as a classroom management technique was significantly different among the groups with American-born teachers being significantly more likely to ignore misbehavior that is non-disruptive to class.

All these findings point to the need for more targeted intercultural professional training for foreign-born Chinese teachers in the United States. This chapter also included the recommendations for further study, the limitations of the study, and recommendations for practice which should encourage educational professionals in the United States to emphasize relationship building across cultures, nonverbal cuing in the classroom, parent-teacher communication norms in the United States, and the use of professional learning communities with cultural differences in mind.

### **Recommendations for Practice**

The findings of this study present several insights for American educational administrators looking for the best professional learning programs for Chinese teachers in their states, districts, or school buildings. Additionally, the research provides suggestions for Mainland-born and Taiwanese-born teachers who find teaching in American contexts challenging.

Since Mainland-born and Taiwanese-born Chinese teachers in the United States are far less likely to rely on relationship building in the classroom as a classroom management

technique, it may be beneficial to provide training on teacher-student relationship building strategies used in the United States. Relationship building can look quite different across cultures, especially with teachers who are accustomed to the hierarchical relationship dynamic of teachers and students in their home country. Teacher-student relationship training may include strategies such as taking a student interest survey at the beginning of the year. Taking inventory of student interests is a common approach to relationship building in American classrooms, and the incorporation of student interests into class time is a common occurrence. Many teachers in the United States make use of popular music, memes, viral videos, or social media as a part of relationship building process in the classroom. These techniques and strategies should be used in training foreign-born staff on relationship building in the classroom. However, one word of caution is to ensure all teachers understand the difference between classroom appropriate and age-appropriate material and material that is not appropriate for the classroom. This is a common problem with using popular media in the classroom for any teacher, but especially with foreign staff. While it can be a powerful tool, it must be selected with a certain amount of discretion. Cultural norms may also play a part in causing some misunderstandings about what types of popular media are appropriate to show in class. Therefore, any program created to train teachers on building teacher-student relationships with media should include explicit guidelines and examples of both appropriate and inappropriate media with checks for understanding. Training in relationship-building can help immensely in assisting foreign-born teachers to build rapport in American classrooms.

Another area of recommendation is scenario training, especially in the domain of planned ignoring and nonverbal cues for redirection. Mainland born and Taiwanese-born Chinese teachers in the United States are significantly less likely than American-born Chinese teachers to

use planned ignoring and redirection cues such as proximity, pointing, or pausing. This suggests these teachers may need scenario training where they can make use of these classroom management techniques. These teachers may need example scenarios where small infractions or misbehaviors should be ignored instead of being addressed. Additionally, it is crucial teachers are taught how to “address” these types of infractions without stopping a lesson. For example, many teachers in the United States may continue to lecture while simultaneously walking around the room, hovering near a student who is off-task, pointing at the correct page, or pausing momentarily while a student is redirected. The lesson is never stopped and the students are never directly addressed. The redirection takes place without any explicit direction from the teacher. It is natural and implied. This research reveals a preference for Mainland-born and Taiwanese teachers to rely on positive behaviorist techniques and explicit rules to manage classroom behaviors. However, the majority of minor classroom misbehaviors in the United States are managed nonverbally, in real time, and are administered in a way that is virtually subconscious on the part of the student. Training in the area of non-verbal cuing and misbehavior redirection without stopping a lesson may be beneficial for many of these teachers who are struggling with minor infractions in the classroom.

This research also indicates a reasonable reticence on the part of non-US born Chinese teachers in communicating with parents about behavior issues in the classroom. While Mainland-born and Taiwanese-born Chinese teachers in the US are more likely to engage parents with positive home-school communications, such as a weekly newsletter or an invitation, they are significantly less likely to call a parent about a negative behavior issue in the classroom. This is to be expected considering the linguistic and cultural barriers experienced by these teachers. Moreover, for most districts, it is imperative that the majority of parent-teacher

communication should be overwhelmingly positive. However, it may be worthwhile for districts to train teachers in parent-teacher communication, including the best methods for broaching difficult subjects. Teachers should be trained that the first interaction with parents should be a positive one, but that subsequent interactions can include areas for improvement.

Communication strategies should be discussed and example conversations and scenarios should be modeled.

Lastly, and most importantly, teachers who are born the Mainland and Taiwan need professional learning time with other Mainland-born or Taiwanese-born teachers in similar contexts in addition to American-born peer mentors. Peer mentors should be used to observe the classes of these teachers and provide nonevaluative feedback. Teachers who are born in Mainland China or Taiwan should also be required to spend time observing the classes of their peer mentors who were born in the United States. Professional learning activities should include not only observation but time for debriefing and questions where teachers can ask questions about what they have observed. Professional learning communities have been supported in the research for many years now in education and intercultural professional learning communities provide many of the same benefits, especially in helping foreign-born staff acclimate to American classrooms and teaching norms.

### **Recommendations for Further Study**

This study was conducted with the considerable limitation of little access to American-born Chinese teachers. Unfortunately, the number of American-born Chinese teachers is considerably lower than many of the other popular foreign languages in American public schools. This makes it difficult to make comparisons between groups. As the number of American-born Chinese teachers continues to rise, however, it will be beneficial to reassess

many of these differences to see if there are any changes in outcomes. As such, any future studies should accumulate a sample with more American-born participants.

Future studies should also consider using classroom observation data whenever possible. Using teacher-reported data has the inherent limitation of veracity and, often, teachers overestimate or incorrectly categorize their performance. Future studies may want to use classroom observations to calculate the number of specific actions taken in the classroom. For example, the number of times a teacher utilizes proximity during a lesson or the number of times a student is verbally reprimanded. These data may then be used to compare the groups based on actual observed data rather than self-reported data.

Past qualitative studies have looked at the perceptions of Chinese and Asian teachers in western classrooms. However, future qualitative studies may want to explore the perceptions of these teachers' students. Interviewing the American students of Mainland-born and Taiwanese-born teachers in the United States may give greater insights into the disconnects which have been highlighted in this research, such as the challenges faced by these teachers in building effective teacher-student relationships as a classroom management technique. Similarly, future research may also be conducted to compare Chinese and American student perceptions about their teachers. Understanding the differences between student perceptions of teachers across cultures may give us greater insight into the expectations of students about what role the teacher should play in the classroom and how relationships should be built depending on cultural context.

Lastly, future research which looks at classroom management strategies used in Mainland China instead of the United States will be useful for understanding the origins of many of the significant differences revealed by this research. Comparing American classroom management

strategies with on-the-ground Chinese classroom management strategies would illuminate many of the issues Chinese teachers are facing on a daily basis in the United States.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: IRB Approval Letter



Date: September 17, 2021

Principal Investigator: **Sarah Gillette**, Graduate Student, Milligan University  
 From: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Milligan University  
 Project: *A Comparative Study on Classroom Management Strategies between Chinese-born and American-born Chinese Teachers in US Secondary Schools*  
 IRB Tracking Number: **2021-02**  
 IRB Approval Number: **Exe2109171523**  
 Subject: **Declaration of Exemption**

The Milligan University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your research application and has determined that your proposed research is exempt from further review based on federal guidelines provided in 45 CFR 46.104(d)(2)(i) in that you have demonstrated your research to be:

*Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) and The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subject.*

You are expected to conduct your research in accordance with the research plan that was presented for review. Substantive modifications to your research plan will require another formalized review of your plan by our office. Please remember that while we are not specifically reviewing your informed consent, all researchers should provide potential participants with an informed consent statement that includes all pertinent information.

Best wishes as you conduct your research! Please feel free to contact the IRB office by email should you have any questions; [IRB@milligan.edu](mailto:IRB@milligan.edu)

On behalf of the IRB Committee,

Trini Rangel, Ph.D.  
 Chair, Institutional Review Board  
 Milligan University



## **Appendix B: Teacher Invitation to Participate in Research**

Dear Chinese Educator,

The following survey is being used for a dissertation project. Your role involves participating in the survey and providing honest answers to each question. The survey contains items related to teachers' classroom management abilities and strategies. The survey will be conducted through the use of Google Forms, and all personally identifiable results acquired will remain confidential.

Participation in the survey allows teachers to be entered into a drawing to win a gift card for the Teachers Pay Teachers online store. Additionally, the results have the potential to enhance knowledge in the Chinese as a Second Language domain, specifically in the area of classroom management. The knowledge gained from this research will benefit Chinese teachers looking for a better understanding of classroom management strategies and common pitfalls for Chinese teachers. Research from this study will be available to you per your request. If you have questions throughout the study or following the study, please contact me, Sarah Gillette, at (423) 433-7212 or via email at [sgillette@my.milligan.edu](mailto:sgillette@my.milligan.edu) or my Dissertation Chair, Dr. Patrick Kariuki at [PNKariuki@milligan.edu](mailto:PNKariuki@milligan.edu).

Thank you in advance for your participation.

Best Regards,

Mrs. Sarah Gillette

Milligan University, Doctoral Student



## Appendix C: Classroom Management Survey Instrument

Shortened Electronic Form Link: <https://bit.ly/2VhiF0K>, [Google Forms Survey](#)

| In completing this questionnaire, think about your general strategies for managing your entire classroom and not a specific child.                      |  | Very unconfident | Unconfident | Somewhat unconfident | Neutral | Somewhat confident | Confident | Very confident |           |               |       |            |
|---|--|------------------|-------------|----------------------|---------|--------------------|-----------|----------------|-----------|---------------|-------|------------|
| <b>A. Managing Classroom Behavior</b>   |  |                  |             |                      |         |                    |           |                |           |               |       |            |
| 1. How confident are you in managing current behavior problems in your classroom?   |  | 1                | 2           | 3                    | 4       | 5                  | 6         | 7              |           |               |       |            |
| 2. How confident are you in your ability to manage future behavior problems in your classroom?  |  | 1                | 2           | 3                    | 4       | 5                  | 6         | 7              |           |               |       |            |
| 3. How confident are you in your ability to promote students emotional, social and problem solving skills?  |  | 1                | 2           | 3                    | 4       | 5                  | 6         | 7              |           |               |       |            |
| <b>B. Specific Teaching Techniques</b>  |  |                  |             |                      |         |                    |           |                |           |               |       |            |
| In this section we'd like to get your idea of how often you use the following techniques, and how useful you find each one for managing your classroom. |  |                  |             |                      |         |                    |           |                |           |               |       |            |
|   |  | Frequency        |             |                      |         |                    |           | Usefulness     |           |               |       |            |
|   |  | Rarely/Never     | Sometimes   | Half the time        | Often   | Very Often         |           | Rarely/Never   | Sometimes | Half the time | Often | Very Often |
| 1. Coach positive social behaviors (helping, sharing, waiting)  |  | 1                | 2           | 3                    | 4       | 5                  |           | 1              | 2         | 3             | 4     | 5          |
| 2. Describe or comment on bad behavior  |  | 1                | 2           | 3                    | 4       | 5                  |           | 1              | 2         | 3             | 4     | 5          |
| 3. Reward targeted positive behaviors with incentives (e.g., stickers)  |  | 1                | 2           | 3                    | 4       | 5                  |           | 1              | 2         | 3             | 4     | 5          |
| 4. Praise positive behavior   |  | 1                | 2           | 3                    | 4       | 5                  |           | 1              | 2         | 3             | 4     | 5          |
| 5. Use Time Out (Time Away to calm down) for aggressive behavior  |  | 1                | 2           | 3                    | 4       | 5                  |           | 1              | 2         | 3             | 4     | 5          |
| 6. Single out a child or a group of children for misbehavior  |  | 1                | 2           | 3                    | 4       | 5                  |           | 1              | 2         | 3             | 4     | 5          |
| 7. Use physical restraint   |  | 1                | 2           | 3                    | 4       | 5                  |           | 1              | 2         | 3             | 4     | 5          |
| 8. Reprimand in a loud voice  |  | 1                | 2           | 3                    | 4       | 5                  |           | 1              | 2         | 3             | 4     | 5          |
| 9. In-house suspension (send to Principal's office for misbehavior)   |  | 1                | 2           | 3                    | 4       | 5                  |           | 1              | 2         | 3             | 4     | 5          |
| 10. Warn or threaten to send child out of classroom if s/he doesn't behave  |  | 1                | 2           | 3                    | 4       | 5                  |           | 1              | 2         | 3             | 4     | 5          |
| 11. Send child home for aggressive or destructive misbehavior   |  | 1                | 2           | 3                    | 4       | 5                  |           | 1              | 2         | 3             | 4     | 5          |
| 12. Call parents to report bad behavior   |  | 1                | 2           | 3                    | 4       | 5                  |           | 1              | 2         | 3             | 4     | 5          |
| 13. Ignore misbehavior that is non-disruptive to class  |  | 1                | 2           | 3                    | 4       | 5                  |           | 1              | 2         | 3             | 4     | 5          |
| 14. Use verbal redirection for child who is disengaged  |  | 1                | 2           | 3                    | 4       | 5                  |           | 1              | 2         | 3             | 4     | 5          |
| 15. Use problem-solving strategy (e.g., define problem, brainstorm solutions)   |  | 1                | 2           | 3                    | 4       | 5                  |           | 1              | 2         | 3             | 4     | 5          |
| 16. Use anger management strategy for self (e.g., deep breaths, positive self-talk)   |  | 1                | 2           | 3                    | 4       | 5                  |           | 1              | 2         | 3             | 4     | 5          |
| 17. Prepare children for transitions with predictable routine   |  | 1                | 2           | 3                    | 4       | 5                  |           | 1              | 2         | 3             | 4     | 5          |
| 18. Use group incentives  |  | 1                | 2           | 3                    | 4       | 5                  |           | 1              | 2         | 3             | 4     | 5          |
| 19. Use special privileges (e.g., special helper, extra computer time)  |  | 1                | 2           | 3                    | 4       | 5                  |           | 1              | 2         | 3             | 4     | 5          |
| 20. Set up individual incentive program (e.g., stickers, prizes)  |  | 1                | 2           | 3                    | 4       | 5                  |           | 1              | 2         | 3             | 4     | 5          |
| 21. Give clear positive directions  |  | 1                | 2           | 3                    | 4       | 5                  |           | 1              | 2         | 3             | 4     | 5          |
| 22. Warn of consequences for misbehavior (e.g., loss of privileges)   |  | 1                | 2           | 3                    | 4       | 5                  |           | 1              | 2         | 3             | 4     | 5          |
| 23. Use clear classroom discipline plan and hierarchy   |  | 1                | 2           | 3                    | 4       | 5                  |           | 1              | 2         | 3             | 4     | 5          |
| 24. Use emotion coaching  |  | 1                | 2           | 3                    | 4       | 5                  |           | 1              | 2         | 3             | 4     | 5          |
| 25. Use nonverbal signals to redirect child who is disengaged   |  | 1                | 2           | 3                    | 4       | 5                  |           | 1              | 2         | 3             | 4     | 5          |
| 26. Use persistence coaching (focusing, being patient, working hard)  |  | 1                | 2           | 3                    | 4       | 5                  |           | 1              | 2         | 3             | 4     | 5          |
| 27. Send home notes (or frowny faces) to report problem behavior to parent  |  | 1                | 2           | 3                    | 4       | 5                  |           | 1              | 2         | 3             | 4     | 5          |
| 28. Send notes/happy grams home about positive behavior   |  | 1                | 2           | 3                    | 4       | 5                  |           | 1              | 2         | 3             | 4     | 5          |

Please turn page and complete the other side

|  |           |           |
|--|-----------|-----------|
| 29. Call child after a bad day   | ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ | ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ |
| 30. Take a student interest survey   | ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ | ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ |
| 31. Call parents to report good behavior   | ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ | ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ |
| 32. Model self-regulation strategies for students  | ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ | ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ |
| 33. Teach specific social skills in circle time  | ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ | ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ |
| 34. Use imaginary play/drama, stories and puppets to teach problem solving               | ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ | ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ |
| 35. Set up problem solving scenarios to practice prosocial solutions                     | ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ | ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ |
| 36. Promote respect for cultural differences in my classroom                             | ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ | ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ |
| 37. Teach children to ignore disruptive behavior   | ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ | ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ |
| 38. Teach children anger management strategies (Turtle technique, calm down thermometer) | ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ | ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ |

### C. Working with parents

In this section we'd like to get your idea of how often you use each of the following approaches.

Please mark the response that most clearly describes your interactions.

|  | Never | 1 time per year | 2-3 times per year | Once a month | Once a week | Daily |
|--|-------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------|-------------|-------|
| 1. Promote parent involvement in classroom   | ①     | ②               | ③                  | ④            | ⑤           | ⑥     |
| 2. Teach parent skills to enhance classroom learning at home (e.g. coaching, reading, use of incentives) | ①     | ②               | ③                  | ④            | ⑤           | ⑥     |
| 3. Collaborate with parents on a home-school behavior plan and share goals for student                   | ①     | ②               | ③                  | ④            | ⑤           | ⑥     |
| 4. Hold extra parent conferences for particular problems   | ①     | ②               | ③                  | ④            | ⑤           | ⑥     |
| 5. Talk with parents about special activities to do with child at home                                   | ①     | ②               | ③                  | ④            | ⑤           | ⑥     |
| 6. Develop teacher-parent partnerships   | ①     | ②               | ③                  | ④            | ⑤           | ⑥     |
| 7. Send home Teacher-to-Parent Communication letters or newsletters                                      | ①     | ②               | ③                  | ④            | ⑤           | ⑥     |
| 8. Ask parents to share ways to incorporate their cultural history/stories/traditions in the classroom   | ①     | ②               | ③                  | ④            | ⑤           | ⑥     |
| 9. Make Home Visits  | ①     | ②               | ③                  | ④            | ⑤           | ⑥     |
| 10. Hold parent support groups   | ①     | ②               | ③                  | ④            | ⑤           | ⑥     |

### D. Planning and Support

In this section we'd like to get your idea of how often you use each of the following Incredible Years (IY) Strategies.

Please mark the response that most clearly describes your approach.

|  | Never | 1 time per year | 2-3 times per year | Once a month | Once a week | Daily |
|--|-------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------|-------------|-------|
| 1. Use IY self-reflective inventories to plan personal teaching goals  | ①     | ②               | ③                  | ④            | ⑤           | ⑥     |
| 2. Review my progress in reaching goals for individual student behavior plans  | ①     | ②               | ③                  | ④            | ⑤           | ⑥     |
| 3. Review my discipline hierarchy according to the student's developmental ability   | ①     | ②               | ③                  | ④            | ⑤           | ⑥     |
| 4. Collaborate with other teachers for solutions and support   | ①     | ②               | ③                  | ④            | ⑤           | ⑥     |
| 5. Give support to other teachers  | ①     | ②               | ③                  | ④            | ⑤           | ⑥     |
| 6. Read the IY classroom management book   | ①     | ②               | ③                  | ④            | ⑤           | ⑥     |
| 7. Manage my stress level utilizing positive cognitive strategies  | ①     | ②               | ③                  | ④            | ⑤           | ⑥     |
| 8. Encourage a positive school community (e.g., including input from teacher aides, sharing successes in the classroom with the principal) | ①     | ②               | ③                  | ④            | ⑤           | ⑥     |

Thank you

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## **Appendix D: Participant Consent Form**

Dear Participant:

My name is Sarah Gillette, and I am a doctoral candidate at Milligan University. I am currently working on my Ed. D. in Educational Leadership. As part of fulfilling the requirements for my program, I am completing a research study. The research study is A Comparative Study on Classroom Management Strategies between Chinese-born and American-born Chinese Teachers in US Secondary Schools.

The purpose of this study is to compare classroom management strategies between American-born Chinese teachers and Chinese-born Chinese teachers in the United States. This study may provide additional insight into the culturally derived differences between classroom management strategies between American and Chinese teachers.

Your confidentiality will be maintained throughout the process to the degree permitted by the technology use. Specifically, no guarantees can be made regarding the inception of data sent via the internet by third parties, as in the case of emails. In other words, we will make every effort to ensure that your name is not connected with your responses. Although your rights and privacy will be maintained, the Milligan IRB and my dissertation committee will have access to study records. I will be the only one with direct access to the study data; however, no identifiable data will be used in this survey. This survey is voluntary. You may refuse to participate. If you wish not to complete the survey, it will not affect you in any way.

If you have any research-related questions or problems, you may contact the researcher, Sarah Gillette, at (423)433-7212. I am working under the supervision of Dr. Patrick Kariuki. He may be contacted directly at [PNKariuki@milligan.edu](mailto:PNKariuki@milligan.edu).

Thank you for your consideration of participation.

Sincerely,

Sarah Gillette