



Understanding Culturally Diverse Parents and Teachers

A Case Study of Parent Involvement at a Private
International School in Thailand

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ABSTRACT

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Saint John Mary International School (SJMIS) in Saraburi, Thailand - where the majority of students are Thai - has been facing low response from parents, regardless of the ongoing reform efforts initiated by the elementary department to involve parents. Yet, most of the parents are interested and somehow involved at home and/or at school in their child's education. However, both parents and teachers feel uneasy regarding parental involvement due to several factors such as differing perceptions of the parties, the language barrier, and the unfamiliar school system.

The purpose of this case study was to describe, analyse and evaluate the nature of parent involvement at the SJMIS Elementary in order to do the following: assess the complex dynamics of parent involvement at SJMIS Elementary, examine the types of involvement that exist, and understand parents' and teachers' attitudes towards parent involvement based on their cultural background.

The data were collected in multiple ways for this qualitative study such as individual and focus group interviews with 16 parents and 16 teachers representing 9 different nationalities, a follow-up survey completed by 51 participants, observations, and documentation and artefact review in August and September, 2019. A pragmatic iterative approach was applied to analyze the research data by using several coding cycles.

The findings from this study strongly supported prior research showing that the majority of parents wanted their children to do well in school and had a desire to help their children to succeed regardless of their nationality. The findings also suggested that the majority of parents found the current school-family interactions satisfactory. Perceptions towards responsibilities were to some extent different among parents and teachers from diverse ethnicities/nationalities.

The results suggest that regular face-to-face interactions initiated by the school between parents and teachers may strengthen trust and create a closer partnership among the members of the school community. Further research is required to determine how the school should serve underrepresented minorities. Furthermore, international school administrators should promote cultural diversity which also involves culturally competent care for children.

Key words: parent involvement, culturally diverse parents and teachers, elementary education, international school

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ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMS

MAP	Measurement of Academic Progress
MOE	Ministry of Education
PI	parent involvement
PLC	Professional Learning Community
PTO	parent – teacher organization
SJMIS	Saint John Mary International School
WASC	Western Association of Schools and Colleges

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research topic

I have to start with a confession: through many years of my educational career at the same international school in Thailand, I had considered parent involvement (PI) as a necessary burden instead of an opportunity for partnership to improve children's learning development. I firmly believed in the school-as-expert or top-down approach as the only option to interact with the dominantly Thai parents and inclined to view parents as grown-up students who only needed instructions to support our work as teachers. Furthermore, interacting with parents or guardians of the students felt always challenging due to both the language barriers and cultural differences. Fortunately, my perception of the role of parents in their children's schooling has changed significantly since I started my educational journey in this master's programme of Educational Leadership. In addition, my position at the school has changed since the beginning of my studies and so has my focus. Being now responsible for the elementary school, my mission is to provide the best education possible and support each individual student to reach his/her potential by involving their families, considering parents as experts and offering culturally appropriate partnership in their children's education.

Within the context of this study, parent involvement process is investigated from the parents' and the teachers' perspectives. Accordingly, this research is focused on the psychological characteristics of parents' and teachers' motivations for involvement based on Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's parent involvement model (1995, 1997, 2005). This approach describes four forms of parental involvement:

1. personal and family values, goals, and expectations
2. home-based involvement activities
3. family-school communication
4. school-based involvement activities.

In the article published in the *Elementary School Journal* (2005) by Hoover-Dempsey and other co-researchers about additional research findings regarding the original model of PI, the authors themselves suggested the following fields for

further investigations about PI such as (1) closer examination of the constructs of PI across different context and settings, (2) understanding perceptions of different sources about PI, and (3) studies focusing on how PI may affect students' self-esteem and self-efficacy (Hoover-Dempsey, Walker, Sandler, Whetsel, Green, Wilkins & Closson, 2005). Consequently, this study attempted to reveal how parents' motivational beliefs, specific invitations, and parents' life context affect PI at a private international school in Thailand by understanding the perceptions of both parents and teachers coming from different cultures.

Furthermore, this study attempted to fill in gaps in the existing research literature by addressing the following issues:

- Most research is about PI in the US mainstream with ethnic minorities and with a white, middle-class approach
- Wrong assumptions about one another's motives, beliefs, and attitudes
- There is little information available about PI in the Southern Asian cultural groups (Thai, Filipino, Indian)
- Special context: international school with the majority of the students from the mainstream culture

The purpose of this case study was to explore the similarities and differences in the expectations for involvement among elementary parents and teachers at an international school in Thailand. This study also sought to understand the influence of culture on both the parents' and teachers' perceptions of their role in education and their efficacy to fulfil that role at the elementary division of Saint John Mary International School (SJMIS). In addition, this case study made an attempt to describe the current situation regarding PI at SJMIS Elementary. The findings of this research study can give to international school personnel an insight into how parents and teachers from culturally diverse backgrounds think about parent involvement. In addition, it can contribute by filling in a gap in the research about parent involvement and therefore it can be useful for educators to develop an effective partnership between families and school and foster a culturally respectful caring environment that supports the full development of the children.

1.2 Research questions

The following research questions were addressed in this study:

1. What are the existing practices of parent involvement at SJMIS Elementary?
2. What are the parents' perceptions, motivations, and expectations for parent involvement?
3. What are the teachers' perceptions, motivations, and expectations for parent involvement?
4. How does parents' and teachers' cultural background affect parent involvement at SJMIS Elementary?

1.3 Research approach

The research was formed around a case study with a purpose of examining the current practices of PI and understand the attitudes of the culturally diverse parties of the SJMIS elementary community. To ensure a broad and reliable view of the case, the researcher used multiple sources such as observations, individual and focus group interviews, a survey, school documents and policies, and other artefacts. The research activities included creating a research plan and strategy, studying, analyzing, and synthesizing the different theories and previous researches through the literature review process, conducting the case study by preparing for the data collection and collecting the evidence, analyzing the case study evidence, composing the case study report by presenting the analysis and results, and the evaluation of the study. The main part of the literature review process took place at the beginning of the research but it was revisited regularly during each research stage to allow modifications to the new aspects of the findings. The analysis and evaluation emerged throughout the whole research process but the main part took place at the end of the research.

The researcher's position as the elementary principal at SJMIS may have affected the results of this study to some extent, therefore it needs to be considered. I am also a parent of three children who attend the secondary school in the same institution. I am a European woman who is married to a Thai and has been living

in Thailand for more than ten years. Given these circumstances, it can be assumed that I represent a Western perspective influenced by the local culture to a certain extent.

The following definitions are explained to clarify the terminology in the context of this study.

Parents – the term of parent refers to individuals who are caretakers of a child enrolled as a current student at SJMIS Elementary

International school – for the purpose of this study, international school is defined by the Thai Ministry of Education (MOE) as

an educational institution which is responsible for providing the education for students without any restriction or limitation on nationality, religion or form of government. It adopts an international curriculum and media to which students from various countries can come. English is to be used as the medium of instruction.

In addition, according to the school's accrediting commission, the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), the characteristics of an international school are the following:

1. The basic language of instruction is English.
2. The school is accredited, or eligible for accreditation, by one of the regional accrediting associations.
3. The course of study, as well as marking, grading, and reporting procedures, facilitates student and faculty transfer to other schools of a similar type in other countries and within the United States.
4. The school administration and governing body are responsive to the needs of their immediate user community meaning students, parents, and faculty.
5. The curriculum is similar to that commonly found in the United States and generally meets the minimum requirements for admission to North American and other worldwide English-speaking colleges and universities.
6. The student body is oriented toward programs commonly found in the United States and other English-speaking countries, including those of an extra-curricular or co-curricular nature.

7. Programs of studies include courses dealing with the history, culture, and language of the host country, in addition to those that are clearly North American.
8. The school's governing body is not subordinated solely to a national government or a central ministry, but is a local entity responsive to the needs of the users of the school.
9. The stated philosophy of the school indicates a flexibility and responsiveness to the wishes of its users and contains procedures for participation by those users to effect changes in the school's program.

(WASC 2009, 4 according to Westerman 2012, 13)

Western culture – this refers very broadly to the way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs, of a particular group of people who identify themselves as “westerners.”

1.4 Structure of the thesis

The thesis is structured in a following way:

Chapter 2. This chapter is composed of the literature review by defining and describing the advantages of parent involvement, the conceptual framework, and the synthesis of the theories. The conceptual framework is based on Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's model of parent involvement, Hofstede's cultural differences theory in teaching and learning, and Hwa-Froelich and Vigil's cultural influence theory on communication.

Chapter 3. The chosen methodological approach of this research study is being presented in this chapter together with the research techniques and procedures. Data acquisition methods and data analysis are also discussed in this part of the study. In addition, the participants such as the elementary student population, parents, and teachers are introduced here.

Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10. The following seven chapters discuss the results of the study according to the conceptual framework and the research questions: (1) PI at SJMIS Elementary, (2) parents' motivational beliefs regarding their involvement, (3) parents' perceptions of invitations for involvement from others, (4) parents' perceived life context, (5) teachers' motivational beliefs about PI, (6) teachers' perceptions of specific invitations for PI, and (7) four aspects of cultural influence on communication – being an international school in Thailand.

Chapter 11. The evaluation, the implications, and the reliability of the results are discussed and conclusions and suggestions for further research are being made.

2 PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parent involvement as a complex topic was studied around multiple factors such as considering the different concepts, perceptions, and advantages of PI in the literature review. The purpose of the literature review was to give an overview of the current research practices and trends regarding PI. Next, the conceptual framework introduces the main theories that served as the starting point for the approach of this research. Lastly, the synthesis of theories formed and validated the methodology of the study.

2.1 Literature review

Parent involvement has been in the focus of educational researchers for many years, therefore the literature on parent involvement is considerable. Recently, the emphasis on parent involvement has shifted to its positive influence on children's academic achievement and success in school (Epstein 1986; Sheldon 2002; Lawson 2003; Mapp 2003; Green, Walker, Hoover-Dempsey, & Sandler 2007; McDermott 2008; Williams & Sanchez 2012). Policy makers and school personnel such as administrators, staff and teachers all over the world have realized that creating partnership between family and school which is based on mutual understanding enhances students' learning (McDermott 2008). At the same time, parents as primary educators of the children also demand to take a more active part and take initiatives to be more involved in their child's educational development in order to assure the child's academic achievement in school (Hwa-Froelich & Westby 2003, 308).

Regardless of the current thinking that the more PI is the better, parties - on both sides - are hesitant to interact with each other. Accordingly, parents and teachers are both facing an increased demand regarding PI. Many researchers argue that involvement has a positive effect on children's academic success. Therefore, parents are expected to be involved in order to positively influence the educational development of the child such as helping with homework, volunteering with school activities, or attending parent-teacher conferences. The traditional ap-

proach to PI is school-oriented: how educators should “*deal with*” parents to support the school and this way, the child. For example, the description of PI of the State of Iowa Department of Education (1994) is the following: “*receiving ideas from the school, learning about school programs, becoming confident in terms of helping children learn and having more positive views of teachers*”. (McDermott 2008, 4-5)

2.1.1 Different concepts of parent involvement

Traditional definitions of parent involvement primarily focus on the children’s academic success from the school point of view where other parties such as parents and students are not welcome to voice out their own goals or question the school-defined status quo regarding PI. For example, Puriefoy (2005) mentioned that many parents feel that they are not encouraged in decision making and school policies are written in an excessively technical language which is hard to understand. Because of the power discrepancies between schools and families, many researchers argue that they are barriers in creating ideal partnerships. (McDermott 2008, 5-7)

Mutually acceptable partnerships are not feasible models in PI as long as schools view parents “good” or “bad” whether these parents agree on and follow instructions according to the values of the school. In reality, schools and teachers are still considered experts and they need to communicate with parents and families who need support and guideline to help their children to be academically successful. According to Calabrese Barton et al. (2004), all parties – including parents, teachers, and students – should be equal members of a learning community where individuals can exchange views about children’s learning and developmental process. They suggested to use the word *engagement* instead of *involvement* underlying the importance of knowing parents and their relationships to the school and the community. This approach sees parents as agents and not just as another types of student. In conclusion, regarding PI schools should think of family needs instead of just focusing on children without the family context. (McDermott 2008, 10-12)

2.1.2 Advantages of parent involvement

Experts agree that enhanced parent involvement positively affects students' academic achievement and their attitudes towards learning (Epstein 1986; Sheldon 2002; Lawson 2003; Mapp 2003; Green et al. 2007; McDermott 2008; Williams & Sanchez 2012). For example, Sheldon's quantitative research (2002) about the relationship between parents' social networks and the level of involvement in their children's education supports the idea that parent involvement at school such as communicating with teachers can affect student achievement positively by modeling the importance of education. At the same time, Lawson (2003) in his study reported that elementary parents expressed their aspiration for seeing the school as a community-serving establishment where parents and children could learn together. Consequently, parents expected that if challenged parents could learn and gain new skills alongside their children, it would positively influence community norms and values. Another, contemporary project called "Family Engineering Night" – a pilot initiative reported by Steiner, Lemke, Nero, and McGlamery (2017) pointed out while the goal was to provide preservice teachers an authentic opportunity and community-based experience, it also served as a school-wide family learning experience by engaging parents and students together in STEM-related engineering activities.

Despite the fact that both parents and teachers agree with the idea that their mutually beneficial partnerships are essential to children's learning, in practice, there is a limited contact among parents and schools. Therefore, schools have a moral commitment to parents to include them in the educational process in meaningful ways. When parents perceive their role as having responsibility to help their child experience success in school and when they have the efficacy to follow through with needed actions, educational outcomes may be enhanced. (Curry & Adams, 2014) In spite of the emphasis on family-school partnership, partnerships are challenging to build and limitations exist in both research and practice.

2.1.3 Parents' perception and teachers' perception of parent involvement

According to research results, parents' and teachers' understandings of parent involvement are different (Hwa-Froelich & Westby 2003; Lawson 2003; Hornby & Lafaele 2011; Trumbull 2011; Williams & Sanchez 2012; Reynolds, Crea, Medina, Degnan, & McRoy 2015; Hwa-Froelich & Vigil 2016;). In his ethnographic research, Lawson (2003) observed that parents' orientations for involvement started in the community and moved into the school. In contrast, teachers described parent involvement as a means for parents and families to cooperate and accept the needs of the school as defined by the teachers. Lawson concluded that these different perceptions associated with diverse epistemologies, differential power, and some competing purposes. In addition, Hornby and Lafaele (2011) suggested that parent involvement was shaped and limited by barriers related to the different perceptions of parents and teachers such as difference in goals, agendas, and attitudes. Trumbull (2011) also mentioned that the assumptions of parents and teachers differed in child development and schooling when parents and teachers were from different cultural backgrounds, therefore communication between parents and teachers presented challenges beyond language issues. Perhaps the limited contact between parents and teachers is the result of the different understandings parents and teachers relate to parent involvement.

In spite of the differences in parents' and teachers' understanding in parent involvement, at times the perceptions can overlap (Lawson 2003). For example, in his ethnographic research about teachers' and parents' perceptions of the meanings and functions of parent involvement in an ethnically concentrated, low-income, culturally diverse, urban elementary school, Lawson observed that both parents' and teachers' conceptions and strategies for parent involvement were child focused. They both shared passion, commitment, and responsibility towards the welfare of children. On the other hand, parents' motivation in PI was community centric but teachers' motivation in PI was school centric. Overall, it was concluded that despite their different perceptions, the common interests could create a mutually acceptable relationship in PI.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

There are two major models which are generally known and researched in the field of parent involvement. The first one is Epstein's parent involvement model which describes six types of parent involvement such as parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating. The six types of parent involvement offer best practices for professionals but it is more focused on the educators' point of view about the process. In contrast, the second model, called the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's parent involvement model is based on a psychological perspective and its main domain is the parents' perspective. Consequently, in order to best answer the research questions of this study, the investigator decided to apply the second model.

The conceptual framework of this research study was built on applying the revised version of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's parent involvement model (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler 1997; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005) about how and why families engage in their children's education and, because the researcher is interested in understanding how the cultural background of parents and teachers has an effect on their perceptions on parent involvement, the study uses Hofstede's cultural dimensions applied in teaching and learning (Hofstede 1986) to describe the influence of cultural values and norms on the social interactions between the school and the families. In addition, the level and the density of parent involvement heavily depends on the communication between the school and the families. In this case study, both the staff and the parents are from different ethnicities and they often find themselves in a culturally unfamiliar situation. Therefore, the researcher built on Hwa-Froelich and Vigil's literature review (2016) about the various aspects of cultural influence on communication. Consequently, the following sections of the study seek to summarize/give information about the above-mentioned perspectives in more details necessary to understand this research.

2.2.1 Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's parent involvement model

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler created their original model of the parent involvement process (1997) which was focused on learning how and why parents became involved in their children's education and what effect of parent involvement had on student achievement. The model was impacted by three major theories related to parent involvement: Piaget's cognitive development theory, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, and Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory. Ten years later, in 2005, they refined their model based on additional research findings about the constructs importance to understand why parents engage in their children's education. The revisions were also published in Walker, Wilkings, Dallair, Sandler, and Hoover-Dempsey (2005).

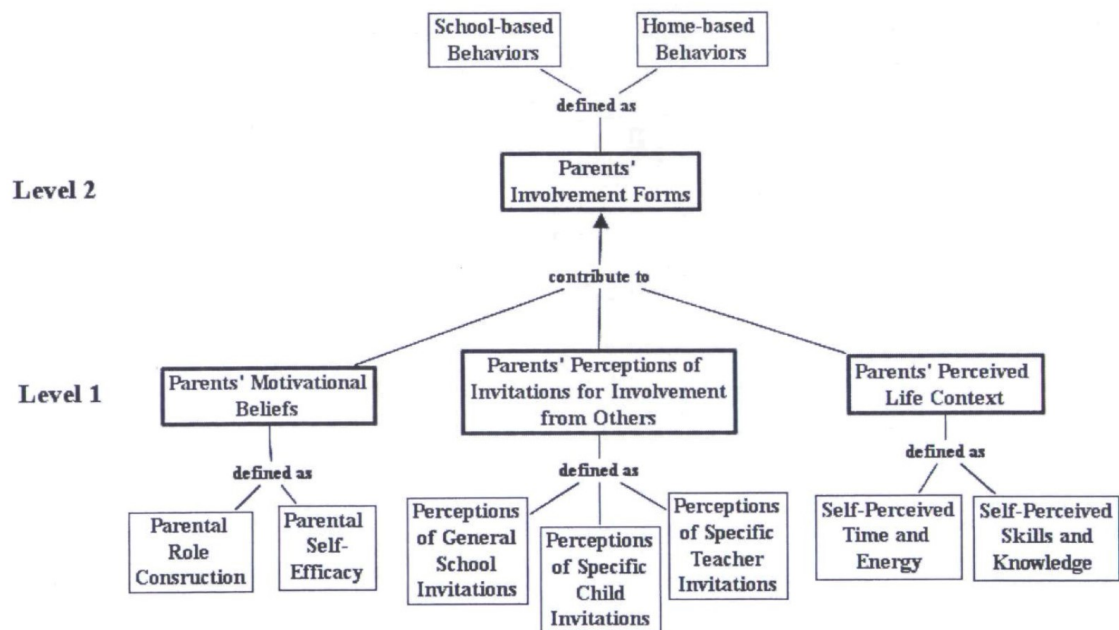


FIGURE 1. Levels 1 and 2 of Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's theoretical model of the parental involvement process (Walker et al. 2005)

It can be seen in figure 1 how these constructs contribute to parent involvement. According to the model, the following three factors influence parents' motivations for involvement:

1. parents' motivational beliefs
2. parents' perceptions of invitations to involvement from others
3. parents' life context.

Parents' motivational beliefs

Parents' motivational beliefs consist of parental role construction of involvement and parents' sense of efficacy for helping their child succeed in school. Parental role construction includes beliefs about what kind of responsibilities individuals have as parents, perceptions about child development, and expectations of schooling. Role construction is formed socially, since it is influenced by the expectations of social networks and personal beliefs. Thus, parents' role construction can change over a period of time. For example, parents' role construction changes over the child's age and grade (Green et al. 2007, Hornby & Lafaele 2011). Similarly, the model contends that parental self-efficacy motivates parent involvement. Parental self-efficacy means that parents believe in their capability of helping their child to succeed at school. In other words, parents think that they can make a difference in their child's educational development if they are engaged. Parents with strong role construction and high self-efficacy tend to be involved in their child's educational development more actively than parents with weak role construction and low self-efficacy. (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler 1997; Hoover-Dempsey et al. 2005)

Studies investigating the development of parents' motivational beliefs agree that parental role construction and self-efficacy are significant components in shaping parental involvement. For example, Sheldon (2002) who studied 195 mothers of elementary students from American urban and suburban schools, found that parental role construction was positively related to parents' involvement both at home and at school. On the other hand, parental self-efficacy was related only to involvement at home. Moreover, in one of the recent studies about how parent social networks influence parent perceptions of their role in the educational process and their efficacy to fulfil perceived roles, Curry and Holter (2019) suggested that parents have differing perceptions about their role and differences in efficacy for involvement. They also argued that the influence of the parent social networks greatly impacted on how these parents understand their roles and perceive their efficacy by showing examples of how to interact with teachers and administrators in challenging situations, manage a difficult assignment, or participate in school activities and events.

Invitation to involvement from others

Further to parents' motivational beliefs, the model states that another key motivator that shapes parental involvement is invitations to involvement from important others because they suggest to the parents whether their participation in their children's schooling is encouraged, expected, and valued. This type of motivation is especially beneficial when parents' motivational beliefs are weak. Moreover, invitations from important others can strengthen parental role construction. Invitations from important others are coming from three sources: from the school in general, from specific teachers, or from the child.

Indeed, all of these sources are important elements to improve parent involvement, but their effects vary in different life contexts. General school invitation refers to the school environment. Parents form perceptions about whether they are welcomed in their child's learning based on the school structure, interactions with school personnel, and communications about the students' learning process. Although general school invitations are vital in parent involvement, McDermott (2008) noted that the way in which parents receive information from the school depends on how that information is filtered through their cultural beliefs and values. This information is considered particularly important within the context of this current research.

The next contributors to motivate parent involvement are the teachers. Many researchers support the idea that individual teacher's perception of the importance of parent involvement and his/her practice influence parents' decisions to become active and present in their children's education. In general, both school invitations and teachers' practices have a positive influence on parent involvement (Epstein 1986; Reynolds, Crea, Medina, Degnan, & McRoy 2015). Although general school invitations play an important factor in parent involvement, according to Epstein (1986) teachers' practices seem more important when engaging parents.

Besides general school invitations and invitations from the teacher, there is another equally important way to induce parental involvement – invitations from the child. These invitations can be both implicit like when the parents see their child is stressed and want to find out the reason behind, or explicit, for example, when the child asks the parents to watch his/her performance at school. In many cases

though, the invitation from the child is actually coming from the teacher. (Hoover-Dempsey et al. 2005).

In conclusion to the content of invitations to involvement, the researcher agrees with Curry and Holter (2019) when they argued that although school and teacher invitations are essential elements of parent involvement and engagement because they affect parents' attitudes, parent-to-parent invitations work more effectively than school invitations especially in low-income, culturally diverse, urban communities.

Parents' life context

The revised Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (2005) suggests that the parents' life context should be taken into consideration as the third major factor that shapes their involvement in their children's learning process. The main aspects of the life context which are the most important motivators of their decisions about involvement incorporates parents' knowledge and skills together with their time and energy. Parents' self-perceived skills and knowledge appear to affect the type and level of involvement activities (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler 1997; Hoover-Dempsey et al. 2005). According to many researchers, including Adams and Christenson (2000), Grolnick et al. (2000), Garcia Coll et al. (2002), and Drummond and Stipek (2004), parents' involvement in homework support tends to decline from elementary through middle and high school as the complexity of assignments increases (Hoover-Dempsey et al. 2005).

Following on, work and family related requirements and expectations also have an effect on parental involvement. For example, Reynolds et al. (2015) who studied parent involvement in a small, urban high school in the North-eastern part of the U.S. serving primarily culturally diverse children found that according to the parents, the most significant barriers in parent involvement were time, knowledge, skills, and resources. Similarly, in their study about parental involvement at an American inner-city high school, Williams and Sanchez (2012) described one type of uninvolved parents as "*busy parents*" because despite their willingness to participate in their children's schooling, these parents were facing challenges due to their other personal obligations. Parents' limited time due to their work schedules is a great burden on their parental obligations not only at

school, but also at home. In conclusion, life contexts variables such as time, energy, skills, and knowledge influence parents' personal motivation of involvement, but they also serve as resources that shape the range of options of parent involvement Hoover-Dempsey et al. 2005).

Having considered the life context elements of parent involvement, in many cases, they are closely associated with the family culture. In this study, the researcher applies Geert Hofstede's definition of culture as "*the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group from another*" (Hofstede 1980, 25). More and more researchers agree that schools and professionals must respect the culturally diverse parents' beliefs and perceptions when considering parent involvement (Hwa-Froelich & Westby 2003, 315; Hwa-Froelich & Vigil 2016, 112). Hwa-Froelich and Vigil (2016, 107) assumed that a socially acceptable communication style of the mainstream culture could be inappropriate, ineffective, or even confusing for other ethnicities. For example, head nodding is considered in many Asian countries as meaning that the speaker was heard by the listener but not necessarily agreed with (Lustig & Koester, 2003; Lynch & Hanson, 1998; Scollon & Scollon, 1995, according to Hwa-Froelich & Vigil 2016, 111). In another case described by Hwa-Froelich and Westby (2003, 309), the mainstream American teachers expected parent participation in meetings and field trips, therefore in the invitations they used implicit words such as *encouraged to come* or *welcome to attend*. However, many of the Vietnamese parents did not attend these events simply because the messages were not explicit and the Vietnamese parents did not understand them. Accordingly, the next sections are devoted to discuss two aspects of cultural influence on parent involvement such as cultural differences in teaching and learning and cultural influence on communication.

2.2.2 Cultural differences in teaching and learning

Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory was published in 1984 and it originally suggested four factors along which cultural norms and beliefs and their effect on the individuals in the society could be investigated such as individualism versus collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity versus femininity. The following section gives an overview of these dimensions.

Hofstede's Four Dimensions model of cultural differences

1. *Individualism* opposes *Collectivism*. In individualistic societies, individuals care for their own interest and the interest of their closest family. In contrast, collectivist cultures believe that individuals belong to one or more groups which protect their members in exchange for the allegiance of the individuals.
2. *Small Power Distance* opposes *High Power Distance*. In high power distance society, there is a big gap between the wealthy and the poor, inequality and formal hierarchy are accepted as a norm, and people value rank, authority, privileges, and status. Whereas small power distance cultures prefer the sense of equality, are relatively informal, and comfortable with personal differences.
3. *Weak Uncertainty Avoidance* opposes *Strong Uncertainty Avoidance*. Uncertainty avoidance shows to what extent people feel confident about uncertain situations. Individuals from cultures with strong uncertainty avoidance tend to be active, emotional, aggressive, and intolerant. Individuals from cultures with weak uncertainty avoidance, on the other hand, are reflective, less aggressive, relaxed, and more tolerant.
4. *Masculinity* opposes *Femininity*. In masculine cultures there is a sharp difference in the roles between men and women. It is categorized as strong, dominant, assertive, and egoistic. However, in feminine cultures the social roles are overlapping, individuals are more supportive, caring, and relationship oriented.

Two years after Hofstede's book *Cultures' Consequences* was published in which his research about the four dimensions model of cultural differences was introduced together with his personal experiences, Hofstede wrote an article *Cultural*

differences in teaching and learning (1986) about applying the cultural dimensions theory in the field of education and analysing certain situations when teachers and students coming from different cultures were experiencing confusion, particularly in their interactions. The anticipated issues in different teacher/student and student/student interaction were listed with reference to the four cultural dimensions together with some effects of the language differences.

The Four Dimensions model applied to teacher/student/parent interaction

In this section, the researcher modified the original concept and applied it regarding its relevance to the current research topic. Because of the strong correlation between the teacher/student and the teacher/parent relations, the researcher extended the teacher/student interaction with the parent factor and focused more on specific differences in teacher/parent interaction, perception, and beliefs. Accordingly, tables 1, 2, 3, and 4 reveal differences in interaction, expectation, and beliefs linked to Individualism versus Collectivism and to high versus small Power Distances, weak versus strong Uncertainty Avoidance, and Feminine versus Masculine dimensions, respectively. Certain patterns mentioned in these tables may be applicable to particular schools; differences may be connected to other dimensions, not recognized in this study.

TABLE 1. Differences in teacher/parent interaction, perception, and beliefs related to Individualism versus Collectivism dimension (Hofstede 1986, modified)

Collectivist Societies	Individualist Societies
Respect to tradition and age	New ideas are welcome
Young ones should listen to the older ones	Lifelong learning
Individuals speak up in small groups	Individuals speak up in response to general invitation and in large groups
Formal harmony needs to be maintained	Conflicts and discussions are acceptable
Neither the teacher nor the parent should lose face	Making mistakes is part of the learning process
Education is a way to earn status	Education is a way to personal improvement

Acquiring certificates is more important than acquiring competence	Acquiring competence is more important than acquiring certificates
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TABLE 2. Differences in teacher/parent interaction, perception, and beliefs related to the Power Distance dimension (Hofstede 1986, modified)

Small Power Distance Societies	Large Power Distance Societies
Student-centered education	Teacher-centered education
Teacher respects the individuality of the students	Teachers are respected
Teachers are facilitators	Teachers model the way to follow
Contradicting or criticizing the teacher are allowed	Teacher is never contradicted nor publicly criticized
Outside school, teachers are treated as equals	Respect for teachers is also shown outside school
In teacher/student conflicts, parents are expected to side with the student	In teacher/student conflicts, parents are expected to side with the teacher
Younger teachers are more liked than older teachers	Older teachers are more respected than younger teachers

TABLE 3. Differences in teacher/parent interaction, perception, and beliefs related to the Uncertainty Avoidance dimension (Hofstede 1986, modified)

Weak Uncertainty Avoidance Societies	Strong Uncertainty Avoidance Societies
Students are encouraged to explore	Students are expected to follow the teacher's order
Teachers are learners	Teachers are experts
A good teacher uses plain language	A good teacher uses academic language
Innovative approach to problem-solving is awarded	Accuracy in problem-solving is awarded

Parents, teachers, and students are expected to control emotions	Parents, teachers, and students are allowed to behave emotionally
Disagreements are part of the solution process	Disagreements are interpreted as a breach of trust
Teachers seek parents' ideas	Teachers consider themselves experts

TABLE 4. Differences in teacher/parent interaction, perception, and beliefs related to the Masculinity versus Femininity dimension (Hofstede 1986, modified)

Feminine Societies	Masculine Societies
Teachers use average student as the norm	Teachers use best students as the norm
System rewards students' social adaptation	System rewards students' academic performance
A student's failure in school is a relatively minor accident	A student's failure in school is a severe blow to his/her self-image
Teachers are approachable	Teachers are distant
Students practice collaboration	Students compete with each other
Good behaviour means modesty	Students try to be visible
Corporal punishment severely rejected	Corporal punishment occasionally considered salutary

2.2.3 Cultural influence on communication

Communicative interactions are shaped by the individual's cultural background. Since the rules for communicative competence are socially generated and culturally influenced, culturally unfamiliar situations can be challenging (Hwa-Froelich & Vigil 2016, 107). Hwa-Froelich and Vigil (2016) suggested three areas in which culture and communication may be different: responsibility relationships, interpersonal relationships, and risk communication.

Responsibility relationships

Responsibility relationships refer to who is responsible in interpersonal relationships and how the responsibility is controlled and articulated. Communication is based on the values of independence or interdependence (Lustig & Koester, 2003, according to Hwa-Froelich & Vigil, 2016, 108). Figure 2 represents examples of differences in communicative interactions along the range of independence/interdependence.

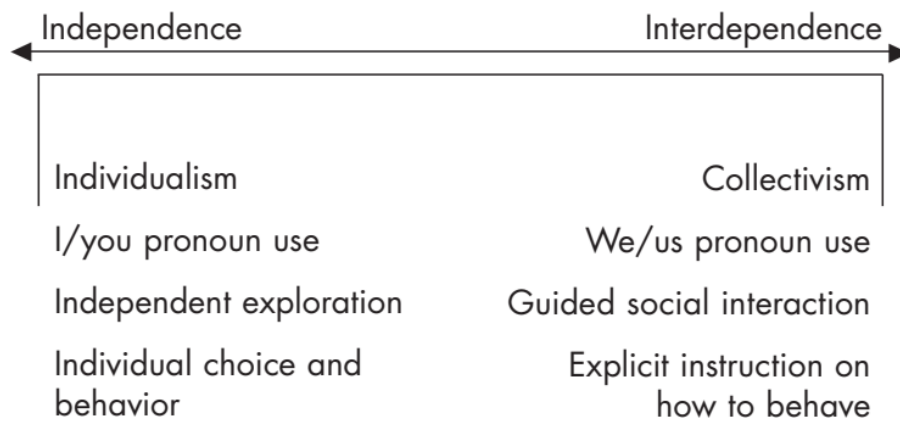


FIGURE 2. Continuum of responsibility relationships (Hwa-Froelich & Vigil, 2016)

Parents in independent cultures teach their children to take care of themselves and they praise them for individual accomplishments. Parents express their expectations in the form of suggestions and allow their children to play alone. Unlike in interdependent cultures, extended family members take responsibility for teaching the children interpersonal obligations. Family members are in charge of teaching the children how to behave appropriately. (Hwa-Froelich & Vigil 2016, 108-110)

Interpersonal relationships

Interpersonal relationships may vary across cultures by age, education, economic wealth, physical strength, occupation, or birth order. Examples of related behaviours are listed in figure 3.

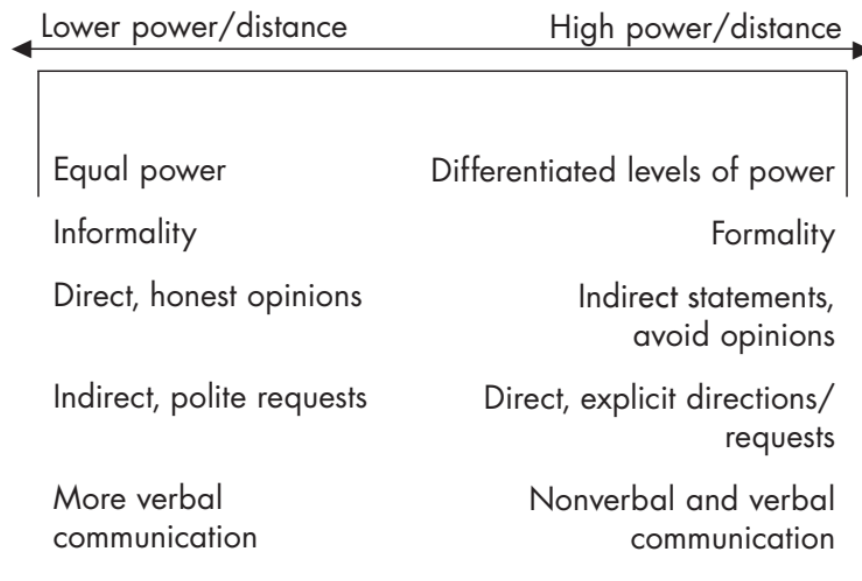


FIGURE 3. Continuum of interpersonal relationships (Hwa-Froelich & Vigil 2016)

Communicative interactions in low power distance cultures use more direct and frank language, however, in order to show respect, individuals tend to stay polite. In situations when individuals are from different power level, conversations are informal to show equality and questions or suggestions are used instead of directives. In high power distance cultures, in contrast, interactions with individuals who possess more power are formal and specific behaviours are expected. Another characteristic of the interpersonal relationships in high power distance cultures to show respect to elders by addressing them with specific names or titles. Tactile communication is a more common form in interpersonal relationships. (Hwa-Froelich & Vigil 2016, 110-112)

Risk management

In weak uncertainty avoidance cultures, children are socialized to question, make mistakes, explore, and be creative. Instead of explicitly showing or telling children what to do, parents comment or make suggestions while actively involved in an activity. Children are allowed to make choices to encourage independence and creativity. In a strong uncertainty avoidance society, however, children are suggested to avoid taking risks, to listen to their parents, and to practice and imitate correct, modelled behaviours. Children are used to receive explicit directions instead of questions. (figure 4)

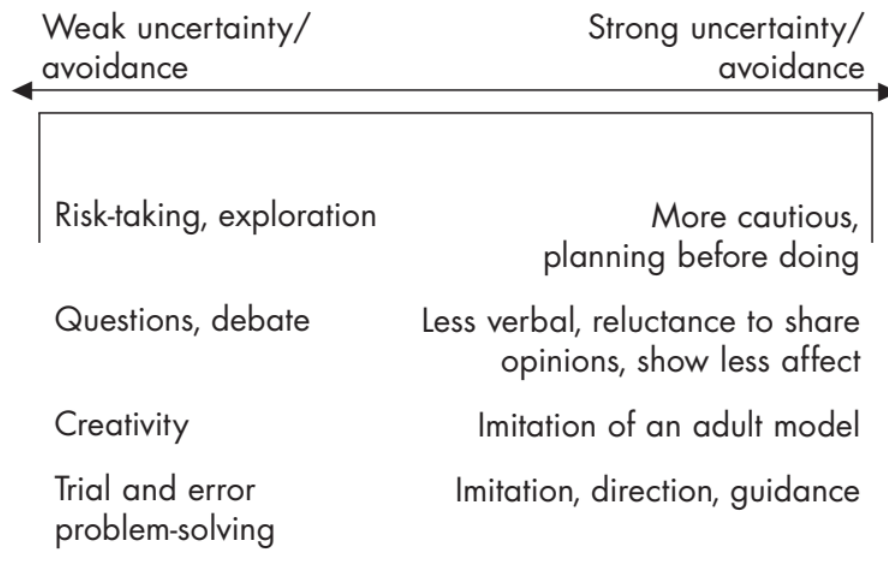


FIGURE 4. Continuum for risk management (Hwa-Froelich & Vigil 2016)

During interpersonal relationships individuals with strong uncertainty avoidance construct are insecure to share differing opinions, show minimal facial expressions, and tend to listen rather than talk. Expected behaviours are demonstrated as many times as necessary so individuals avoid being embarrassed. (Hwa-Froelich & Vigil 2016, 112-113)

2.3 Synthesis of theories

The purpose of this study was to understand parents' and teachers' beliefs about parent involvement at an international school in Thailand where teachers and parents came from different ethnicities in order to foster a culturally respectful caring environment that supports the full development of all the children regardless of nationality. Thus, driven by the above-mentioned target, the current research aims to find answers of the following questions:

1. What are the existing practices of parent involvement at SJMIS Elementary?
2. What are the parents' perceptions, motivations, and expectations about parent involvement?
3. What are the teachers' perceptions, motivations, and expectations about parent involvement?

4. How does parents' and teachers' cultural background affect parent involvement at SJMIS Elementary?

For this reason, the revised Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model of the parental involvement process (Hoover-Dempsey et al. 2005) which addresses the constructs about "*Why do parents become involved in children's education?*" provides the basic framework of the current research by offering ideas to develop awareness of parents' motivations for involvement and the existing gap in the perceptions about PI among teachers and parents among the SJMIS Elementary community. Furthermore, the conclusions of the study derived from the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler theory can support school administrators by suggesting disciplines/strategies to increase schools' capacities for inviting parents to be involved in the children's education and to improve parents' roles to be effectively involved in children's school success. On the other hand, regarding the authors' concern applying the concept in further researches across various cultures and ethnicities, the theory and the scales represented in the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model call for an adjustment in order to appropriately utilize it in the current study. Moreover, the model's limitation on parents' beliefs such as parents' perceptions of the value of the school, their expectations for children's school success, and the role of parents' social network in a culturally diverse environment suggests extending the model and combining it with other theories which can improve the implications on the belief-behavioral links for this study.

Although Hofstede's cultural-dimensions theory originally was extended to the teacher and student interactions and roles in teaching and learning (Hofstede 1986), it can be also adopted to the teacher and parent interactions and roles in parental involvement. In the context of international schools when the parties come from different cultures, many differences are expected with reference to the four dimensions of Individualism versus Collectivism, large versus small Power Distance, strong versus weak Uncertainty Avoidance, and Masculinity versus Femininity. Based on Hofstede's observations, these differences can result in conflicts due to the differences in the social status of the teachers in different cultures, differences in what is considered relevant schooling/education, differences in the cognitive ways people from different societies process information, and differences in expected patterns of teacher/parent interaction.

Following on the cultural influence on parent involvement, Hwa-Froelich and Vigil (2016) described further three areas in which culture and interpersonal communication can be different such as responsibility relationships, interpersonal relationships, and risk management. According to Hwa-Froelich and Vigil, professionals such as teachers should evaluate each family's cultural attributes, they work with for variations along the three continua in order to accurately interpret behaviors and indirect descriptions. Based on their observations, teachers in a multicultural environment such as an international school must consider the hidden values that their attitudes and interactions may represent and strive involvement that support the families' values.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Methodological approach

According to Creswell (2017), qualitative approach is a suitable research method when the researcher seeks to claim knowledge through socially created meanings. As the researcher of the current study was interested in gaining understanding the different perceptions of the elementary parents and teachers about parental involvement in a culturally diverse community, a social constructivist approach was used. Social constructivists argue that individuals find meanings of the world around them by interacting with each other and these understandings are embedded in the cultural norms of the individuals (Creswell 2017, 8). Accordingly, a case study approach was used to conduct this exploratory study and to gain a detailed understanding of what culturally diverse parents and teachers were thinking about parent involvement in general and at SJMIS Elementary.

According to Merriam (2009), Simons (2009), Stake (2006), and Yin (2014) case study research aims to carry out an extensive analysis of a subject by attempting to understand the subject in its context through the views of the participants (Harrison, Birks, Franklin, & Mills 2017, 6). In other words, the researcher observes the participants in their natural setting and seeks to explore, absorb, and represent their perceptions (Creswell 2013, according to Harrison et al. 2017, 6). During the data collection procedure, the researcher focuses to collect detailed information over time by using various methods including observations, interviews, focus groups, document and artefact review (Creswell & Creswell 2017, 15; Harrison et al. 2017, 6).

Using focus groups has proved to be an appropriate method for understanding and examining cultural differences, especially in cases when the participants are from a collectivist society which is the case of the current study.

The focus group methodology is a culturally sensitive data collection method for research in cross-cultural settings and research with ethnic minorities since it permits the researcher to reach communications which people use in their everyday interactions, and reveals cultural norms and values. (Liamputtong, 2015, 128)

To carry out an effective focus group interview, the researcher needs to consider several factors that play an important role in the process: group composition, the number of participants and focus groups, the length of a focus group interview, and other factors necessary to the success of the research project. In the following sections, these factors are being introduced. (Liamputtong 2015, 35)

Since focus group interviews are based on the interactions among the participants, the group arrangement is a very important issue in any focus group research design. Homogeneity indicates the participants' similar social and cultural background and not their understanding and approach (Morgan 1997; Peek & Fothergrill 2009 according to Liamputtong 2015, 35). Accordingly, homogeneous groups work well when the study aims to get an insight into the participants' views and practices about a specific topic. This structure creates a comfortable environment and increases the flow of the discussion among the participants. In this study, homogeneous groups were used based on the ethnicity of the parents and teachers. On the other hand, heterogeneous group setting is more appropriate in cases when a diverse range of responses is expected (Hesse-Bibe & Leavy, 2010 according to Liamputtong 2015, 36). In this study, the western parent and teacher groups were more heterogeneous. Thus, their answers were more varied. To sum up, researchers must take into consideration the purpose of the research in order to accurately select between homogeneous and heterogeneous groups.

Further on, typical focus groups tend to involve four to ten participants, at times the number of participants can be less or more than the ideal numbers (Conradson, 2005 according to Liamputtong 2015, 44). All of the focus groups in this research met the criteria of the ideal number of participants, except one case. The Indian parent focus group consisted of only three participants from two families due to an unexpected incident. Nevertheless, the small size of the group enabled the participants to speak about their values and experiences in greater detail. In addition, the number of focus groups also contributes to the success of the research. Realistically, the number of focus groups heavily depend on the given time and cost constraints. This study used three focus groups both for parents and teachers (total of six) according to the composition and the size of the samples.

Typically, most focus group interviews last about an hour and a half. It is also recommended that the participants are informed ahead of time about the tentative length of the interview. (Liamputtong 2015, 46-47) in the current study, the average length of the interviews was about an hour. Meanwhile, the interview with the Thai parents was split into two parts because of the time restraint. The first session took about 45 minutes and the second part lasted for about 80 minutes (2 hours in total).

Lastly, there are several other factors that can determine the quality of the focus group interviews such as specificity, range, depth, and personal context (Merton et al. 1990 according to Liamputtong 2015, 47). The selection of the participants in this study was constructed according to these factors. Therefore, the criteria of involvement in the study stated that the parents' child should have been enrolled in SJMIS Elementary for at least six months prior to the interview. The personal context played a significant part in the success of the interview with the Thai parents. The moderator's role and relationship to the participants made it possible that the individuals were able to fully articulate their views and experiences.

3.2 Participants

This study was conducted at the elementary section of SJMIS, a private international school in Saraburi, Thailand. The school was selected based on the researcher's personal motivation. I was employed as the elementary principal at SJMIS hence the validity of the data and the access to the participants were secured.

The following section introduces the elementary student population by nationalities at SJMIS. In order to conduct a valid inquiry about the parent sample, it is important to first study the proportion of the student body. Second, the parent samples are characterized and validated based on the student data. Next, the elementary teacher body is identified by nationalities. Finally, the teacher samples are proposed and validated.

3.2.1 Students

Based on the official data from the school, there were exactly 200 students enrolled in the elementary school at SJMIS at the time of the research. The distribution of the elementary student body by nationalities is represented in both table 5 and figure 5. According to the data, most of the elementary students were mainstream Thais (80 percent), followed by dual nationals (7 percent), Indians (6 percent), Filipinos (5 percent), and Koreans. The least but still represented nation was Ukrainian with the total number of one. Students from two different nationalities (i.e. Thai/Australian or Japanese/Brazilian) were identified in this study as dual nationals. Although the data collected on SJMIS elementary student ethnicity as reported in table 5 and figure 5 is the best proxy available to estimate the number and percentage of parent representatives in each ethnic group, there is bias in the estimates due to the fact that some parents had more than one child enrolled at the school.

TABLE 5 The elementary student population at SJMIS by nationalities in 2019

Nationalities	Filipino	Indian	Korean	Thai	Ukrainian	Dual nationals
Number of students	10	13	2	160	1	14

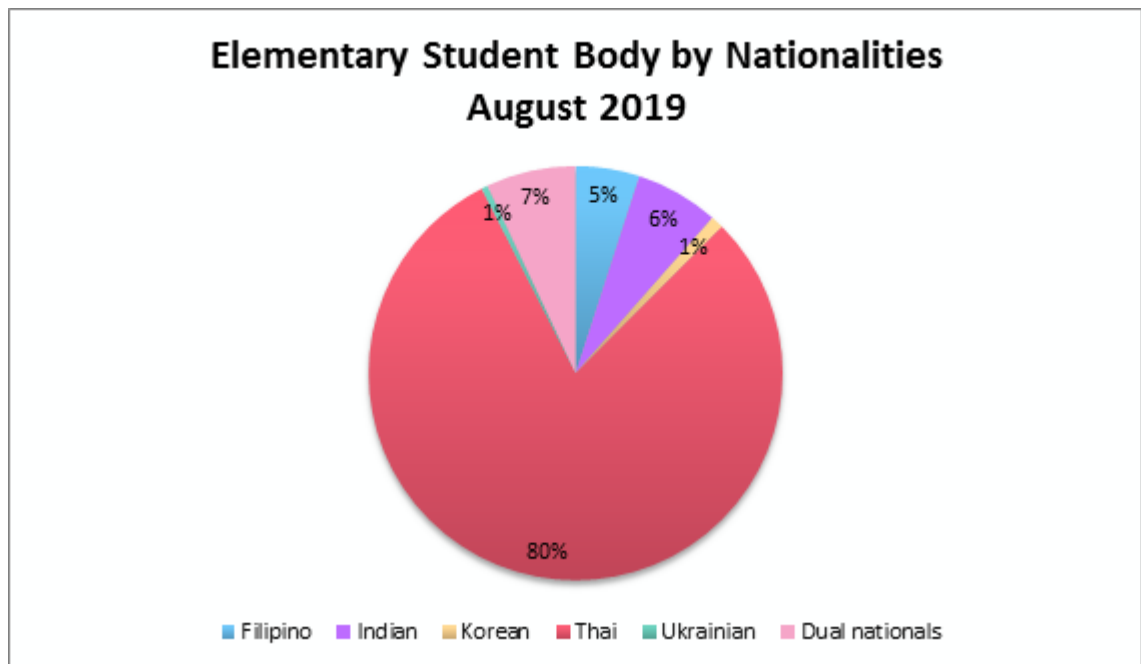


FIGURE 5. The proportion of the elementary student body by nationalities at SJMIS in August, 2019

3.2.2 Parents

Based on the number and proportion of the elementary student population, three focus groups emerged based on the parents' nationality/ethnicity: Thai, Indian, and Western parent focus groups. The fourth biggest ethnicity group, the Filipinos were excluded from the parents' focus group's choice because of their status: all of them were SJMIS employees and most of them worked at the elementary school. Instead, they were selected to represent one of the teachers' focus groups. Furthermore, those parents whose child was identified as dual nationals were characterized as westerners based on the fact that at least one of the parents came from a western country. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, "*westerner is a person who comes from a country in the western part of the world, especially North America or western Europe.*" These parents were also recognized as the dominant parents in the families who were taking charge of their children's education.

After identifying the parent focus groups, the next step was to recruit a suitable number of available individuals for each focus group who agreed to volunteer in this research. Consequently, the parents were asked verbally by the researcher

to be part of a discussion group about parental involvement at the end of the SJMIS Elementary Open Day meeting, in the first week of August, 2019. Those parents whose children had been enrolled in SJMIS Elementary for at least six months or more were identified as ideal participants. Families new to SJMIS Elementary were only partially excluded from participation because of their lack of experience at the school. Nevertheless, these parents were still able to contribute to the research by providing valuable insights of their beliefs and values about education and parent involvement. The parents who volunteered to support the research were particularly those parents who were in different ways but actively involved in their children's education. At the same time, their level of involvement did not have any effect on the research because the focus of the research was (1) to find out what parent involvement means for them, (2) to learn about their actual experience about parent involvement at SJMIS Elementary, and (3) to study if their beliefs and choices are different based on their ethnicity/cultural background. In case of each parent focus group, additional participants were needed to recruit in order to reach a desirable number for the focus group interviews. Further candidates were approached in two ways: targeted messages were sent to individuals who were considered eligible for the research using the LINE application or I directly asked these parents in person.

A1 Focus Group – Thai Parents

The first focus group consisted of parent representatives from families where both parents were Thais. The Thai parent participants were recruited by the researcher and the Thai moderator who served as one of the parent-teacher representatives at SJMIS Elementary. Involving a bilingual moderator is advisable to lead the group discussion when the researcher is not familiar with the language of the research participants (Liamputtong 2016, 132) Consequently, the role of the Thai moderator was imperative for the purpose of the research because the Thai parents were more comfortable to share their personal beliefs, opinions, and experiences in their own language. Meantime, Thai parents seemed more open to answer questions coming from a person who was also a parent, Thai, and not a foreign administrator of the school. Moreover, the moderator was able to phrase the original English questions in Thai in a way that did not change the meaning of them by providing interpretation for any question necessary. This way, a total

of nine parents with seven children currently enrolled in SJMIS Elementary participated in the focus group discussion. There were four girls and three boys among their children. Four kids were studying in the second grade, one in the third grade, and two in the fourth grade. The family participants who were interviewed included two mothers, one father, and three mother and father pairs.

A2 Focus Group – Indian Parents

Due to an unexpected incident, this focus group included only three parents. However, the researcher was able to conduct an additional one-on-one in-depth interview with another Indian parent a few days after the focus group discussion took place. All of these parents were contacted directly by the researcher and were willing to support the purpose of the study. A total of four parents with three children currently enrolled in SJMIS Elementary were the parent representatives in this focus group. There were two boys and one girl among the children. Two of them were enrolled in the third grade and one child was in the first grade. The parents who were interviewed included two mothers and one mother and father pair. Although they were all Indians, they came from different parts of India. One mother was even a second-generation Malay Indian. Despite their subcultural differences, they were all expats and lived in Thailand because of the father's occupation. The fathers were mainly engineers working for various Indian owned subsidiaries in Thailand.

A3 Focus Group – Western Parents

Originally, the researcher intended to conduct a third parent focus group interview among Western parents. At the same time, due to the time and availability constraints of the parent representatives, the focus group format was impractical to deliver. Instead, I conducted three one-on-one, in-depth interviews. The parents were all fathers from three different countries such as UK, Australia, and Italy with four children currently enrolled in SJMIS Elementary. The children studied in the first grade, second grade, fourth grade, and the fifth grade. All of the children were dual citizens which means that the father and mother belonged to two distinct ethnicities and cultures.

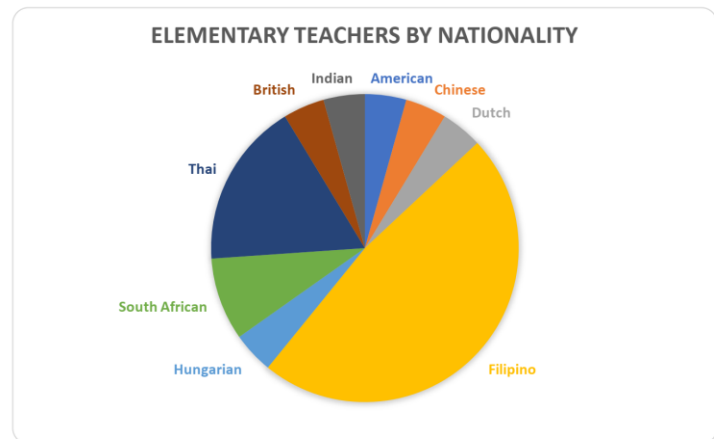
3.2.3 Teachers

There were 23 teachers working at the SJMIS elementary during the time of the research excluding four teacher assistants. The number and ratio of teachers based on their nationalities/ethnicities are represented in table 6. According to the data, most of the teachers were Filipinos, followed by Thais, and there was a South African couple. In addition, there was one representative from the following countries: USA, China, UK, the Netherlands, India, and Hungary. In total, 23 teachers came from nine different nationalities. The diverse teacher body had an average of four years of teaching experience at SJMIS varying from 0 to 13 years in service.

TABLE 6. The SJMIS elementary teachers' body by nationalities

Nationality	Number of teachers
American	1
Chinese	1
Dutch	1
Filipino	11
Hungarian	1
South African	2
Thai	4
British	1
Indian	1
Total	23

Note: excluding the TAs



B1 Focus Group – Thai Teachers

This teacher focus group included four Thai female teachers. All of the teachers received their education and had been working only in Thailand. At the same time, three of them had many years of experience working for an international school at SJMIS. Accordingly, the average year of teaching at SJMIS was the highest in this teacher focus group with six years. They taught Thai language and culture for both native and non-native elementary students. Two of them were married with three children currently enrolled in SJMIS Elementary.

B2 Focus Group – Filipino Teachers

The Filipino focus group consisted of seven teachers with an average of four years of teaching experience at SJMIS. Five of them were females and two of

them were males. They all completed their higher education in the Philippines and had teaching experiences mainly in the Philippines and Thailand. Except one teacher, all of them were grades 1-6 homeroom teachers teaching a variety of core subjects such as English, Math, Science, and Social Studies. Two teachers had children currently enrolled in SJMIS Elementary.

B3 Focus Group – Western Teachers

The B3 focus group included five teachers in total, one female and four male teachers. Two of them were from South Africa while the rest came from the USA, the UK, and the Netherlands. Their higher educational degrees were issued by universities located in South Africa, the Philippines, and Thailand. This teacher focus group had the least teaching experience at SJMIS with an average of one year. Three of the western teachers were homeroom teachers in grades 1, 4, and 5. In addition, one of them taught Physical Education while another one worked in the English Language Development Program. One teacher had a child currently enrolled in SJMIS Elementary.

3.3 Research techniques and procedures

First, the executive director of SJMIS was approached in July 2019 to request permission conducting the case study research at SJMIS Elementary about parent involvement. After the approval of this qualitative case study research, consent forms were created both for the parent participants and for the teacher participants to ensure informed consent had been obtained. The parent consent form was translated into Thai by the Head of the Thai Department at SJMIS and the translation was reviewed and edited by the Thai moderator to confirm that the contents were the same in the English and the Thai versions. Each parent and teacher were asked to sign a consent form indicating his or her agreement to participate in the study and granting permission to have the interviews audio-recorded. All parents and teachers were informed that pseudonyms or initials would be used in all write-ups of the study to guarantee confidentiality. Next, as part of the case study protocol, a parent involvement interview guide with the potential questions organized under topics was constructed for the parents (see Appendix 1) and a similar but modified version for the teachers (see Appendix 2)

based on the theoretical framework. Lastly, a field procedure document (see Appendix 3) was crafted to list all the information needed to conduct the research.

I led all of the focus group interactions as the moderator except one occasion. During the interview planning process, thinking of the language barrier, I intended to use a translator with the Thai parent participants. However, after recruiting the Thai parent representatives for the focus group interview and discussing the interview procedure with one of the parents who worked as a senior lecturer at Bangkok University, I started to consider the idea of using a Thai moderator instead of a translator. Using a translator during the focus group interview can break the flow of the discussion and cause distraction among the participants (Liamputtong 2015, 132) In contrast, a bilingual moderator has the advantage to phrase the questions in a way that parents can easily understand and to seamlessly guide the interactions among the participants during the discussion. This way, the moderator who was also a parent with a child in the second grade (and was asked to participate in the study as a parent originally, but then she volunteered to take the role of the moderator) managed to conduct a very productive focus group discussion meeting among the Thai parents about their views and experiences at SJMIS Elementary in the topic of parent involvement. Because of the time limit, the focus group interview was completed in two parts. I was also present during these occasions with a translator who helped me understand the content of the discussions. In fact, this arrangement gave me the opportunity to make observations and take intensive notes about the participants' behaviour and body language during the interactions. All interviews were audio recorded with the consent of the participants.

3.4 Data acquisition methods

Based on the case study method, data were collected in multiple ways, including semi-structured focus group and individual interviews with parents and teachers from SJMIS Elementary, observations of formal and informal parent – teacher, parent – child, and parent - parent interactions in campus, and various artefact and documentation review during the first two months of the 2019-2020 academic year.

The centrepiece of the data collection strategy took the forms of focus group and in some cases, because of the difficulty in scheduling, one-on-one, in-depth interviews conducted in August 2019 with sixteen parents and sixteen teachers representing nine nationalities. All the interviews were conducted in the school. The average duration of each interview was an hour. The semi-structured interviews contained an initial set of twenty-five open-ended questions for the parents and another eighteen open-ended questions for the teachers. Modifications between questions for teachers and parents were substituted as needed. The use of open-ended questions supported the free sharing of beliefs and experiences among the participants. Except the opening and closing questions, all the questions were organized under topics based on the categories of the theoretical framework of the study. The questions were constructed in a way to gain contextual information about the perceptions of parents and teachers and the current situation of parent involvement at SJMIS Elementary. Participants were told that any questions considered “uncomfortable” or “irrelevant” were allowed to remain unanswered. In addition, anonymity was promised, and participants were told that pseudonyms or initials would be used throughout the research study.

An online survey (see Appendix 4) was created after the interviews were transcribed to support and supplement the existing data about the cultural context of PI at SJMIS Elementary. The survey used a five-point semantic differential scale and included 15 statement pairs selected from tables 1-4 which demonstrated different views in interactions, expectations, and beliefs linked to Hofstede’s four cultural dimensions such as Individualism versus Collectivism, high versus small Power Distance, weak versus strong Uncertainty Avoidance, and Femininity versus Masculinity. Semantic Differential Scale was chosen for the survey because it is mainly used to get information on individuals’ emotional attitude or belief towards a topic of interest (“Semantic differential scale questions with examples | questionpro”, n.d.). At each end of the survey there were opposing statements like *Teachers are facilitators – Teachers model the way to follow*. Participants had to choose in a five-point scale which statement was closer to their beliefs. Both parents and teachers at SJMIS elementary were asked to fill in the online survey using Google Forms. The survey was available both in English and Thai. At the end, a total of 56 people filled in the survey. After excluding the answers

of those participants whose nationality didn't fit into the characteristics of the focus groups (Korean, Burmese, and Chinese), 51 answers remained for analysis. Table 7 shows that the sample was representative with respect to the participants' nationalities and their role at SJMIS Elementary. Most of the participants were Thai parents.

TABLE 7 Survey participants by nationalities and their roles

Role/ Nationalities	Thai	Indian	Filipino	Western
Parent	28	3	0	2
Teacher	2	1	7	6
Total	32	4	7	8

Further on, observations of parent-teacher, parent-child, and parent-parent interactions were made during the first two-months of the 2019-2020 school year in general at students' drop off and pick up times and at activities such as several Open House meetings led by the school administrators, the elementary principal, and the homeroom teachers, grade-level Coffee Talks between parents and teachers, and various staff meetings and PLCs. Meanwhile, artefact and documentation such as memos, letters, meeting minutes, school records, flyers, posters, and field notes were reviewed to help triangulate the data collection and ensure the validity of the research.

3.5 Data analysis

A pragmatic iterative approach was chosen to analyse the qualitative data collected for this study. According to a definition provided by Tracy (2013, 202), iterative analysis is a method of data analysis that combines the emic insights of the data with an etic practice of existing models and theories. "*Iteration is – – a reflexive process in which the researcher visits and revisits the data, connects them to emerging insights, and progressively refines his/her focus and understandings*" (Srivastava & Hopwood 2009, 77, according to Tracy 2013, 184).

Appendix 5 illustrates the iterative analysis process in the form of a flowchart. Accordingly, as the first step, I systematically collected the raw materials such as interviews, pictures, key documents, and fieldnotes and organised these computer files under folders using the type of data as a criterion. In addition, I printed the interview transcripts and organized the transcripts into clearly labelled binders by source. For example, one binder was allocated for the parent interview transcripts and clearly divided into the different focus groups. Another binder was used for the teacher interview transcripts organized at the same way as the parent binder. During the data collection, data immersion had already started in the forms of reading, rereading, listening, and taking notes. Meantime, I studied various tools for qualitative analyses and decided to use both manual and basic computer-aided coding (with the help of word-processing and spreadsheet programs) to label and systematize the data. Next, I applied primary-cycle coding followed by secondary-cycle coding and developed a codebook (see Appendix 6) to list key codes, definitions, and examples used in the analysis. Then I practiced synthesizing activities by writing several analytic memos as a way to reflect on the central themes emerged from the research questions and the theoretical framework.

The reporting results are presented in the next seven chapters in the following order.

Chapter 4: Parent Involvement at SJMIS Elementary

Chapter 5: Parents' Motivational Beliefs Regarding Their Involvement

Chapter 6: Parents' Perceptions of Invitations for Involvement from Others

Chapter 7: Parents' Self-Perceived Life Context

Chapter 8: Teachers' Motivational Beliefs About PI

Chapter 9: Teachers' Perceptions of Specific Invitations for PI

Chapter 10: Being an International School in Thailand

4 PARENT INVOLVEMENT AT SJMIS ELEMENTARY

4.1 Overview of the school

Saint John Mary International School is a K-12 private institution established in 2004 and located in Saraburi, Thailand. Saraburi, a province in the upper central region of Thailand, is rich in tourist attractions, including natural sites, artifacts, festivals, temples, and historical sites. Located 108 km. from Bangkok, Saraburi is conveniently commutable within a day. SJMIS is currently using an American curriculum adapted from the California Department of Education. SJMIS was accredited in March of 2009 by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. (Visiting Committee Report for...2019, 1)

SJMIS Owner and Executive Director, supported by the School Board, and other officers, provide leadership and administrative support to the Supervising Principals and their teaching staff. SJMIS is divided into three divisions: Kindergarten (preschool), Elementary, and Secondary (Middle and High School); each under the leadership of a principal. (Visiting Committee Report for...2019, 1)

The SJMIS student body represents fifteen nationalities with a total population of 509 students from Kindergarten to Secondary school. The majority of SJMIS students are Thais. With the large number of Thai students, the biggest challenge teachers at SJMIS face is to promote the use of English Language on campus. Foreign students study Thai language and culture which helps them understand and adapt to the norms, customs and practices in Thailand. (Visiting Committee Report for...2019, 2) Foreign students and those who live far from the school stay in the dormitory.

The Elementary school facilitates the learning of students from grade one to grade six. There are two classes run by the homeroom teachers in every grade level, except grade 3 where there is only one class. Thai teacher assistants support the learning in each class in grades one and two. The homeroom teachers are responsible to teach all the core subjects (except Thai Language) such as

English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies for the students within the grade level. Accordingly, specialist teachers teach across grade levels the non-core subjects such as ICT, Music, Mandarin, Art, and Physical Education. The student body represents over ten countries and cultures. Meantime, the teacher body represents nine countries and cultures. Most of the elementary students are Thais but there is growing number of students with dual nationalities such as Thai-British or Thai-Australian.

The campus is spacious because of its location compared to the other international schools in Bangkok or elsewhere in Thailand. The campus consists of seven main buildings besides the dormitories including an auditorium, a library, and a cafeteria. There are soccer fields, a golf range, tennis courts, a swimming court, two playgrounds, and an outdoor basketball court to facilitate both curricular and extra-curricular activities.

There is security in campus at the gates and in each school. The staff is required to wear nametags and visitors need to have a visitor's card to enter the campus. Parents or caretakers are registered in order to get inside the campus and to pick up a child. Parents usually drive their children to school; however, a large number of students use the school van service.

4.2 Parent involvement practices at SJMIS Elementary

4.2.1 Snapshot

The following is from my journal that I took during one of my morning observations in August 2019.

It's a sunny and already hot Monday morning. The sky is clear and the lusty breeze dashes across a bunch of third-graders running towards the building. They are wearing their fresh school uniforms with comfortable sneakers and greet you with huge smiles and a loud "Good morning, teacher Barbara." as they pass by. They quickly drop their bags at the front of the classroom and run off to play badminton

at the court. More and more teachers and students are arriving. Some of the students, mainly from the first and second grade, come with their parents or with their nannies. Many of the kids are bringing their own fancy bags but some parents or nannies are still carrying the bags for them. A quick “Goodbye” followed by a hug or a wave and the parents rush back to the parking lot. A few of them decide to stay a little longer. They mingle at the entrance waiting for the right moment to have a prompt chat with the assistant teacher or to greet the homeroom teacher. While they are waiting and when they are not on their phones, they may glance at the bulletin board. If they find anything interesting or useful on the board, “Click” a picture is saved. The air inside and outside of the building is swiftly filled in with chats both in Thai and in English among students, teachers, and parents. Kids are running all around. Suddenly, the bell rings. Teachers and students are rushing to get ready for the flag line-up ceremony. It’s the first day of the week, so after the Thai national anthem and the school song, everybody spreads out to do a morning exercise. Today, the fifth graders lead a “Just Dance’ style workout. The parents who are still around, peek inside and try to take the last picture of their child with their phones. Those students who are late just stand and wait quietly at the entrance. The morning ceremony is over. Groups of students and teachers head back to the classrooms. The last students arrive. Parents are chatting with each other on the way out. The day has officially begun.

4.2.2 The school climate

The overall environment of the elementary school is welcoming. There are several bulletin boards (see Appendix 7 for samples) for the parents with a wide range of information: upcoming events, the school calendar, the cafeteria menu, promotions of activities, list of the after-school program, the names of the student awardees of the month, and information about the flu season. The most important pieces of information are in both English and Thai.

The importance of school-to-home communication is represented in forms of school policies, flowcharts, and guidelines. For example, as it is shown in Appendix 8, the translation of each letter addressing the parents, has a certain procedure to follow in order to maintain the credibility of the original message through the translation process and to ensure that the content is in agreement with the Thai context. Accordingly, every letter sent home has to be approved by the Associate Executive Director.

The school principal has an open-door policy to meet with parents. Thai teachers are assigned as liaisons between the elementary school and the families. They also act as translators if a parent cannot communicate in English. The elementary principal sends home welcome letters at the beginning of each semester, issues a newsletter in every semester, and hosts meetings for parents at least twice a year - at the beginning and at the end of the school year. In addition, she holds regular meetings for the Elementary PTO representatives to discuss and share ideas about current topics such as organizing game and food booths at the SJMIS Fair and provides further information about new school policies. One of her responsibilities is to approve any message that is shared with the parents and the community through social media or the school website. She also monitors the official grade-level parent LINE group chats. The principal makes an attempt to be visible to parents by being in a morning duty at the entrance of the elementary building every morning and being around to chat with or just greet parents at the end of the school day.

Before the first day of school, SJMIS Elementary annually organizes an **Open House** for parents. This is an important event for the school because of two reasons: every year, (1) the class groupings are reshuffled and (2) students get a new homeroom teacher in order to maintain a healthy and balanced student-centered learning environment. Therefore, the main purpose of this event is to provide a smooth transition for the students and their parents from one grade level to another. Additionally, meeting the parents provides a great opportunity for the principal and the homeroom teachers to get first-hand information about the children and discuss expectations regarding parent involvement.

Parent-teacher conferences (PTC) are scheduled in the middle of each semester. This is a formal meeting between the parents and the teachers. Homeroom teachers give out a midterm progress report and discuss the children's overall performance with the parents. Parents are welcome to talk to any teacher besides the homeroom teacher. Translators are also available for parents who prefer to communicate in Thai.

Coffee Talks are great opportunities for both the school and the families to build relationships and get to know each other. They are scheduled by the school twice in each semester for each grade and run by the homeroom teachers. The topics and activities of the Coffee Talks are more grade-level specific. Translation is provided and refreshments are available to encourage parent participation.

4.2.3 Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO)

Typically, all parents and teachers are automatically members of the PTO. At SJMIS Elementary School a committee is elected to run the PTO – usually consisting of the grade/class representatives. The committee also includes the principal, vice-principal, and the Thai liaisons. Its role is to develop a close relationship between parents and the school to work together towards achieving the common goal of teachers and parents that of enabling each student to achieve his/her full potential.

The parent representatives act like a bridge between the school and other parents in their child's class/grade. The Elementary PTO committee usually meets twice a semester and sets up smaller working groups to organise individual events. In addition, the committee helps to organize fundraising activities, usually once in every semester. Occasionally, special guests are invited to attend the meeting based on the agenda.

On average one or two parents of each grade level are represented in the current PTO committee. There is no maximum number limited, however, most of the parents are reluctant to be part of the PTO. There are several possible explanations

for this: language barrier, time constraint, lack of motivation, and unfamiliar school system.

4.2.4 Parent-teacher communication

Teachers are encouraged to maintain a professional two-way communication with the parents and caretakers. Besides the formal meetings such as Open House, Coffee Talks, and PTCs, parents can meet with teachers individually upon request. Teachers are also communicating with parents in many ways including letters, the Elementary Student Handbook and Communication Log, the parents' LINE group app, and the ALMA school management software.

4.3 Challenges in parent involvement at SJMIS Elementary

In many cross-cultural interactions such as in the context of international schools, parents and teachers speak different native languages.

The conclusion is that what represents a “message” in one language does not necessarily survive as a message in the other language; and this process of loss of meaning works both ways. “information” is more than words – it is words which fit in a cultural framework. (Hofstede 1986, 316.)

One of the most significant challenges in parent involvement - according to both parents and teachers – is the language barrier. Many parents are not involved in their children's education because they don't speak in English. Consequently, they are not able to communicate directly with the foreign teachers or administrators, they cannot help their children with schoolwork at home, and feel less comfortable to attend any school event. Despite the continuous effort of the school to provide translation or a translator, both sides experience this issue as a huge burden in parent involvement.

Similarly, many parents find the international school system unfamiliar due to the fact that their experience is either from the public Thai school system or from

other – mainly Asian - foreign countries such as South Korea, the Philippines, or Japan. Therefore, they get easily confused about the curriculum, the assessment, or the expected learning outcomes. This factor negatively affects both their motivation for and their self-perceived knowledge and skills about parent involvement.

Thai parents also feel frustrated and less able to be involved when the information coming from the school is “*incomplete*.” They expect the school and the teachers to be more explicit and direct when instructions are given. For example, test is on Tuesday and students need to review pages 223-226 in the textbook. On the other hand, teachers expect more indirect support from parents at home. Overall, parents’ and teachers’ understandings of and expectations for parent involvement differ in many ways but at times, they overlap.

According to teachers, the level of parent involvement can be an issue when parents are less or more involved than they should be. Some parents want to control everything including the way how the teacher should teach the children. Some parents expect a lot from the child and the teacher but they do little. Sometimes, parents are overprotective when it comes to discuss a sensitive topic about their children. Teachers feel that there are a few parents who just like to complain and gossip with other parents instead of cooperating with the teacher to find a solution to solve the problem. Nevertheless, the most important challenge – based on the teachers’ perceptions – is to get the parents involved.

The next three chapters (Chapters 5,6 and 7) discuss the results regarding the second question in this study which sought to understand parents’ differing motivations for and expectations about parent involvement based on the three main constructs of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler’s model: parents’ motivational beliefs, invitation to involvement from others, and parents’ life context.

5 PARENTS' MOTIVATIONAL BELIEFS REGARDING THEIR INVOLVEMENT

In this chapter, findings are discussed in detail about the SJMIS Elementary parents' motivational beliefs about their role and self-efficacy of involvement in their child's education. The following five themes emerged around parents' motivational beliefs such as involved parents, parental roles and responsibilities, a good teacher, educational beliefs, and support the school. The first four themes are related to parents' beliefs regarding involvement, while the fifth theme is about their sense of efficacy for helping their child learn and be successful at school.

5.1 Involved parents

The parent representatives who volunteered to participate in the focus group or one-on-one interviews are the ones with strong beliefs about their roles and capacity to help their child succeed at school.

5.1.1 Thai parents

This study demonstrated that Thai parents moderately involve themselves in their student's education during early childhood. It has been found that parents, especially in lower elementary level regularly attend parent meetings at school as an involvement in the student's education process. Parent Coffee Talk meetings are such occasions. These meetings are formal and mainly about children's learning and school policies. Attendance of these meetings is considered to be voluntary.

It was also found that the majority of the Thai parents have positive moderate relationship to the school and teachers because most of the parents lack the opportunity or experience to communicate to the teacher or to the school. Some parents are working and have the opportunity to come to school 2-3 times per month. Some parents come to school just to pick up the kids at the school and go home immediately. This way they don't have a chance to talk to the teachers. Only a few parents have strong experience and regular face-to-face communication with the school and the teacher.

The results of this study show that communication plays a significant part in parent involvement. One interesting finding about perceptions of PI was that Thai parents prefer face-to-face communication with the school, followed by school letters and LINE messages. Involved parents also consider supporting their child at school during activities and events as an effective way of PI.

It is somewhat surprising how the Thai parents thought of the uninvolved parents.

[PI is] Difficult - sometimes parents feel like it is the school's duty to teach students and that parents should not get involved. However, they don't get involved yet are very forceful in their comments about activities. Parents should adjust their attitude to become more of a middle person. (Thai parent's comment about uninvolved parents)

Based on their comments, they think of uninvolved parents as parents with more traditional mindsets. This finding may be somewhat limited by the circumstance that it expresses the opinions of those involved Thai parents who enrolled their child in an international school.

5.1.2 Indian parents

The current study found that Indian parents consider that there are three important aspects of PI such as support at school, support at home, and communication with the teacher. Similar to Thai parents, Indian parents find it important to visit school events and activities. Another similarity was in the findings that Indian parents like to maintain positive strong relationship with the school, especially with the homeroom teacher. Consistent with the Thai parents' answers, this research found that Indian participants also strongly support their child at home by teaching them the lessons and helping with the homework.

5.1.3 Western parents

This study supports evidence from a previous study (Westerman, 2012) stating that western parents seek to support the school's goals through parental

involvement in more professional interactions such as in a form of a parent-teacher organization.

So, I have no reason to push out or to suggest anything different than what's going on. Because I guess that's what the parent-teacher system is supposed to do. In the worst case is to make sure you don't get a very bad teacher who's causing problems. I guess. I mean if the parents get together and say this teacher sometimes doing this or that. Then that's a good safety valve... There's nothing wrong but that I think the parent-teacher [organization as part of PI] is probably more important to me as a way of looking to the management than my [Thai] wife looking to the teacher. If there's a problem with the teacher, it's the management's fault and not the teachers. (Western parent)

Another interesting point that can be concluded from the above example is that while western parents look at the school as the entire organization and evaluate it accordingly, Thai parents form their opinion about the school based on their experience with a specific teacher.

5.2 Parental roles and responsibilities

This study confirms that parents have positive attitude towards PI (Epstein, 1986) and they understand clearly that their involvement help their children's educational development (Mapp, 2003). When asked about the most important roles that a parent should have in relation to his/her child's education, participants mentioned similar and different ideas as it is shown in table 7.

TABLE 7. Role activity beliefs by ethnicities

Parental Roles	Thai parents	Indian parents	Western parents
Financial support	x		x
School support	x	x	x
Home support	x	x	x
Discipline	x	x	
Overall wellbeing of the child	x	x	x
Extra learning activities	x		
Communicate with the school/teacher		x	
Guide the child's learning progress	x		x
Provide food		x	x
Spend time with the child	x	x	x

Table 7 indicates that Thai parents believe that they should provide extra learning activities for their kids whether it is curricular such as Math, English, Thai lessons or extracurricular like ballet and piano. Most of the Thai students have extra classes after school and on the weekends. At the same time, western parents focus more on spending quality time with their child and let them play after school.

Keep her in a good school and pay the fees. Be aware of something happening in the school that isn't right. Assess her state of mind. Watch out if something goes wrong at school which can happen. And help with homework which is more as a way of staying connected. Less direct help on the homework. The reason we do the homework together is just to have some fun together. Not really because she can't do it without. I enjoy being with her. (Western parent)

Financial support and providing the best education possible were priorities for both Thai and western parents. A possible explanation why Indian parents didn't mention financial support as their role, might be that as expats working for Indian subsidiaries, their company sponsors their children's educational costs abroad.

One interesting finding was that all the western parents were fathers who were solely responsible about their child's education. As one of them said:

But the parenting side is left out to me. The same with her children, the two older ones. It was always me who went to school for meetings, parent-teacher conferences, and all sorts of stuff. It's always me. She wouldn't have understood most of it in the U.K. anyway. And I take the responsibility here as well. (Western parent)

5.3 A good teacher

According to Thai parents a good teacher is passionate about his/her profession, responsible, uses positive reinforcement, and easy to understand. Indian parents highlighted the importance of trust between the teacher and the students. One Indian mother described a good teacher as someone who boosts students' self-esteem by accepting that children are meant to make mistakes. The findings indicate that both Thai and Indian parents find it important that the teacher should act as a second parent, should have a holistic approach, should care for the individual needs, and be vigilant in reporting on the overall progress of the child to the parent.

The teacher should also, you know, give attention to the emotional level that the child is okay. He's feeling down or he is easily lost. So, the teacher has to always communicate with the parents just to let them know not only about academics but also about their emotions as well. (Indian parent)

Meantime, Western parents mentioned characteristics such as kind and understanding, making students feel welcomed and interested in learning.

A good teacher is a teacher who can make the children willing to learn, anxious to learn, and happy to learn. (Western parent)

The most interesting finding was for the researcher herself that even nowadays, teachers are highly respected in the Indian society. One Indian mother told me:

There is an Indian proverb that every child learns: “Matha, Pitha, Guru, Deivam.” [Sanskrit] It means that your mother, father, and the teacher are equal to God. Other than your parents, the teachers are the most important in your life. It is the essence of Indian culture. I was taught like that and I taught her, too. If you equal someone to God then that’s it. So, you should respect your teacher. Whatever he/she says, you should follow. Never question. Even if you are not agreeing in it. “Sometimes things are bitter but they are good for your health.” (Indian parent)

5.4 Educational Beliefs

Since almost all the parents regardless their ethnicity stressed that one of the main roles in parenting was to provide the best education possible for their child, the main purpose of the follow-up interview questions was to find out what exactly “good education” means by asking them to list reasons for enrolling their child in SJMIS Elementary. The following table 8 summarizes the answers.

TABLE 8. Reasons for choosing SJMIS Elementary

Thai parents	Indian parents	Western parents
English program	English program	An international school system
Location	Location	Location
Child-friendly environment	Best school in the area	Good reputation
Safe campus	Campus	Small class sizes
Highly motivated teachers	Multicultural environment	First impression
Friends study here	Friends study here	

The result of this question shows that there are many similarities in the parents’ preferences. All of the parents prefer their child learn in an international school where the curriculum is from the U.S. or U.K. and the main language is English. However, while for Thai parents the main goal is to have their child proficient in English, Western parents’ approach is for their child to continue secondary or higher education in a western country.

Location, the campus, and the reputation of the institution are main factors for parents when it comes to schooling. The result also supports a previously generated hypothesis such as while Western parents evaluate a school as an entire unit, Thai parents assess and focus more on the quality of specific teachers.

One interesting finding is that both Thai and Indian parents were influenced by their social network when choosing the school. This result may be explained by the fact that Thailand is a highly collectivist country. At the same time, the same result coming from Indian parents is likely to be related to being an expat in a foreign country.

Another significant finding is that Indian parents appreciate the multicultural environment of the school because they have experienced lots of cultural issues in India.

5.5 Support the School

The Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's (1995, 1997, 2005) model suggests that besides role construction parents' involvement is influenced by parental self-efficacy or parents' beliefs that they are able to help their children. According to the authors, parents with high self-efficacy are more likely to be actively involved in their children's education than parents with lower self-efficacy. Similar to role construction, parental self-efficacy is also socially constructed (Hoover-Dempsey et al. 2005, 109).

Below, table 9 shows the summaries of the interviewees' responses to the question "*In which ways can you support your child to be successful at school?*".

TABLE 9. Beliefs about parental self-efficacy

Thai parents	Support the child to maintain the interest in the areas he/she likes
	Support the child if he/she is weak in something at school
	Learn how to be a good role model (sleep early, waking up on time)
Indian parents	A good relationship with the child in order to support her/him at home
	Continue what the child is learning at school
	Contact the teacher to follow-up
Western parents	Make sure that she/he is doing all the schoolwork
	Encourage them to focus on learning at school
	Character building

The findings indicate that all participants strongly believe that they are able to help and would like to continue supporting their children's learning at home. At the same time, it is also evident that parents have somewhat different ideas about the level and the type of involvement. For example, some Thai parents focus only on the child's weak areas while others would like their child to pursue his/her own interest. In contrast, Western parents' objective is more about having their child understand what he/she is learning about. Some Indian parents believe that keeping good relationship with both the child and the teacher is important in order to support the child's learning. Meantime, the majority of Thai parents would like to receive more information from the teacher about what is being learnt to better support their child. The current study also found that some Thai parents needed to adapt their life style to better serve their parental roles. Overall, all interviewees agree that they should support the school as much as they can.

6 PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF INVITATIONS FOR INVOLVEMENT FROM OTHERS

This chapter aims to describe findings about how parents' motivations for involvement depend on their perceptions of invitations from various members of the school community such as in general, from specific teachers, students, and other parents. Accordingly, the results are presented in four themes: school climate, child invitations, teacher invitations, and Gossip Girl vs. The Powerpuff Girls.

6.1 School climate

Prior studies noted that general school invitations have a positive influence on parent involvement (Epstein, 1986; Reynolds et al., 2015). In general, parents are satisfied with the variety and the frequency of school-to-home communication. The results of this study show that the school-to-home communication is in moderate level at SJMIS Elementary. The school communicates adequate information to the parents such as important dates and times of certain activities like Coffee Talks, Sports Fest, and field trips. Information is shared several ways: on the bulletin boards, in parent meetings, in the LINE groups, by letters, and on the school website. However, parents would like to receive more detailed information related to the students' learning, especially about the assessments, so parents can help the students to practice at home. The school can improve the level of communication with the parents by asking about parents' feedback and this way improve the school-to-home communication. Another way to improve the current practices in the school-to-home communication is to send the information at least one week prior to give ample time for parents to react.

6.2 Child invitations

On the questions about parents' perceptions of specific child invitations, this study found that SJMIS Elementary students – mostly those who are in grades one to four – do invite their parents to participate in their schooling. Most of these invitations are explicit, for example, when children ask their parents for help with the

homework, ask to solve an issue with a classmate, or ask them to volunteer in school events. This finding is consistent with that of Hoover-Dempsey et al. (1995, 2005) who argued that student invitations are critical and these invitations can be explicit or implicit. This may be the reason of hearing many comments during the interviews from these involved parents about their children's interactions:

Yes, of course. She keeps reminding me days earlier. "Mother's Day is on Friday. You should come." (Indian parent)

Yes. My son asked me to make spaghetti. He wanted other people to try my spaghetti. (Western parent)

Yes. If he has a problem with his friends." No, I don't want to go to school tomorrow because of this happened." So, I always talk with the teacher or to its friends and get to know what happened. And the teachers are very helpful. (Indian parent)

P. always asks the parents to help to do homework at home. P. will tell that he has homework or examination and needs the parents help to review the lesson at home. (Thai parent)

6.3 Teacher invitations

As mentioned in the literature review, general school invitations play an important factor in PI, but according to Epstein (1986), teachers' practices seem more important when engaging parents. Findings of this study show that Thai parents perceive their opinion based on their personal experience with specific teachers. They believe that the communication depends on the certain teacher whereas Western parents' remarks are more general.

In grade one, the relationship is good. There is a report for everything, the teacher reports on everything. The teacher always uses the word "help". In grade two, things just flipped. I ask the teacher

why there is no communication and the response was [that] she wanted to develop the student's responsibility. I understand that but in the LINE group, there are no students, so it should be ok for her to communicate on there. Just tell us and we will ask our children ourselves. Send us a signal. If students don't tell the parents, then we have missed it [the activity or assignment] completely. (Thai parent)

When I asked them about what kind of topics teachers discuss with the parents, study indicated that parents expect all kinds of information to be shared from the child's academic to non-academic activities. The findings also show that parents have different expectations regarding specific teacher invitations. For example, Thai parents would like to receive information about homework, test dates and details, and activities. Similar to Thai parents, Indian parents expressed that they would like to hear about activities, the child's academic progress, the social and emotional level of the child, any concerns (mainly behaviour-oriented), and anything good that happens to their child. At the same time, besides hearing about the learning progress, Western parents were more concerned about any issues regarding their child at school. In addition, they encouraged the two-way communication between parents and teachers. As one of them stated:

I think the same as last year [the parent-teacher communication]. If there are any issues, we would like to know about it straight away. And I suppose the same with us. If we find out that she is not being herself at home for whatever reason is, there is at least a two-way communication. To find out if she got an issue with somebody. It's pretty good. You know, she tells us if something is wrong. She comes straight upfront and tells us "Such as such said this and this today." and I just say "They are just kids, you know." They are the best mates tomorrow. (Western parent)

6.4 Gossip Girl vs. The Powerpuff Girls

Previous studies evaluating the positive relationship between parents' social networks and parent responsibilities observed that although school and teacher invitations are essential elements of PI because they affect parents' attitudes, parent-to-parent invitations work more effectively than school invitations especially in culturally diverse communities (Curry & Holter, 2019). Comparison of the findings with those of other studies (Curry & Adams, 2014; Curry & Holter, 2019) confirms that there is limited contact among the majority of parents in school. A possible explanation for this might be that many parents run their own business and they don't have time or other potential reasons could be the language barrier and the cultural differences as one of the Western parents explained it:

No. I can't personally [communicate with the Thais]. Sometimes I think it's difficult. My wife sat me once and I don't know whether this is just something with all the foreigners or not but we pretend not to communicate with Thais or at least not as Thais do. Thais, they are going to talk, they are great on conversing on one another. I think we tend to be a little bit more shy and now and then I tried to talk to some of the parents. But it's normally just "Hi. How are you?" And that's pretty much it. I had a conversation with an Australian guy a couple of times. Last meeting, we had at Burger King one afternoon because my daughter wanted ice cream. So, we recognized each other. As I said, I try to get into a conversation. Once a big guy waited out here in the afternoon for his son, I suppose. And we nodded, but that's it. (Western father explaining his experience with other SJMIS parents)

While most of the parents are in contact with only one or two other SJMIS parents, there are a few Thai parents who communicate with other parents every day or at least 2-3 times per week. The parents communicate with each other face-to-face, by LINE and phone call. There are also parents who only contact other parents when "there is an issue":

I have a school LINE group and a parent friend LINE group. (Thai parent)

Only when there is an issue. It depends on whether or not there is an issue. For example, the smartwatch. What can we do to change this policy? Parents will discuss it. (Thai parent)

There are lots of topics that parents discuss with each other as one of them said, “*We discuss everything from small [things] to big [things].*” The general topics include the food, bags, travel, or the kid’s activity. Other topics that parents regularly discuss about the school are the teacher, activities, the environment of the school, lessons, homework, school policies, bullying, and students’ behavior.

Findings of this study also show that the parent social network could help parents to share the necessary information about the kids and their learning process. Parents could also help each other to prepare school supplies. The network could promote sharing information about either concerns or success of the student, help each other to improve, and find a mutually beneficial solution for the success of the students’ learning.

7 PARENTS' PERCEIVED LIFE CONTEXT

Following on, chapter 7 discusses the findings about parents' perceived life contexts at SJMIS Elementary under two main themes such as perceived knowledge, time, and energy and changing times. As mentioned in the literature review, the modified Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler model (Walker et al., 2005) considered parent' life context as the third major motivator of their decisions about involvement. Parents' perceived life context includes families' knowledge, time, and energy together with the family culture. In this chapter, the results of parents' perceived life context regarding their skill, knowledge, time, and energy are presented because the findings in chapter 10 focus in details on the cultural aspects of PI at SJMIS Elementary regarding the fourth research question.

7.1 Self-perceived time, energy, and knowledge

Results of this study indicate that the majority of the participants considers spending time with their children as a priority in spite of their time constraint. In accordance with the present results, previous studies have demonstrated that parents with time demanding work and/or family related responsibilities tend to be less involved than other parents who are self-employed and/or with flexible working hours (Griffith, 1998; Pena, 2000; Garcia Coll et al., 2002; Machida et al., 2002; Weiss et al., 2003 according to Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). During the focus group interview with Thai parents, one father explained his role and the time he spends regarding his daughter's schooling:

Not a lot [involvement]. When I feel that my wife does not have boundaries, I am usually the one who sets boundaries. For example - my daughter wanted to study ballet. When she started, she wanted to stop, I said OK but I gave the ultimatum that if she stops, there is no returning to it. She needs to understand the reasons and consequences. Sometimes it is difficult but it needs to be done.

One interesting finding, based on the above reflection and on further discussions with the parents, was that Thai mothers are the ones who spend most of their

time and energy on schooling. Based on the conversations with Thai couples, results indicate that parents try to share the responsibilities among each other based on their time and skills.

Another result in this study shows that most of the parents engage in student's education mainly at home because most of the activities they do with their kids are at home like homework and practice for any test and examination. There is only a limited school-sponsored activity at school such as Sport Fests or meetings. Besides, only some full-time parents could involve in their child's education both at home and school. This result is somewhat in agreement with Mapp's (2003) findings which showed parents were involved in their children's education both at home and at school.

According to the findings of the study about parents' self-perceived skills and knowledge, Thai parents are more motivated and they feel more confident for involvement in their children's education when the teacher provides them explicit information about the lessons, tests, and other learning activities. For example, one of the Thai parents mentioned:

Most of the parents could involve in child's schooling as much as they want because the teacher from previous year informed and communicated in deep detail about the school activities. Parents also take care of the students based on what the teacher communicates to the parents such as if the teacher notified that there was a math test on a specific date and page [in the workbook]. The parents will practice with the students based on the given information from the teacher.

7.2 Changing times

In the current study, results found that the majority of parents feels challenged regarding their skills and knowledge when it comes to homework support. The two main reasons they mentioned were about technology and the fact that education has changed over time. The following comments reflect their perceptions:

The understanding between me and the kids [is a challenge]. We are different ages. We learned in very different ways. Sometimes the way I learnt something, isn't the way my child learnt. So, I don't know how to explain it. (Thai parent)

When teaching something, we have to try very hard to teach it. I have to teach many times. Kids believe teachers more than parents. Trust Google more than dad. (Thai parent)

I think, it's what I saw with the other two [children], we had challenges there. It's a different way they are taught compared to the ways I was taught. I wasn't the sharpest at school but I can still remember ways I was taught. And I look at things sometimes, especially with the Math and "Wait a minute. Why are you doing that way?" while it's simpler doing it this way. But I try hard to understand what she has to do and I try to follow that because that's what she has to do in class. There are sometimes when you are looking at and "I wanna do it this way, but..." I think this is the biggest challenge. I am sure that there will be other things to crop up later on. (Western parent)

A possible solution for these challenges might be to enhance parent's capacities to be involved effectively by offering specific information about the curriculum and learning goals and offering specific suggestions of what parents can do.

8 TEACHERS' MOTIVATIONAL BELIEFS ABOUT PARENT INVOLVEMENT

In chapter 8, the main goal was to present the results of the SJMIS Elementary teachers' motivational beliefs about PI. The following four themes emerged during the analysis: involved parents, the perfect parent, a good teacher, and educational beliefs and experiences.

8.1 Involved parents

The following results are from the analysis of interviews which were conducted by the researcher in three focus groups among SJMIS Elementary teacher participants in August 2019.

In general, teachers considered parent involvement very important regarding students' overall performance in school. When I asked what parent involvement meant to them, teachers used words like "*collaboration*," "*partnership*," and "*teamwork*." Thai teachers emphasized two areas regarding PI such as supporting teachers at school in activities and supporting kids at home who are academically weaker than the others. At the same time, Filipino teachers stressed the importance of communication. They feel that parents should communicate with teachers in order to better understand the child and his/her individual needs. They also would like parents to follow-up on the students what they have learned because according to one of the teachers, "*education is a continuous process from school to home*". Meanwhile, Western teachers consider PI important to see parents just to be involved with their children.

I want the parents to support me by trusting me and my beliefs [in education] ... try to understand each other and figure out what's best for the kids. (Filipino teacher)

Yeah, and it's like a partnership, between parent and teacher. (Filipino teacher)

It's a win-win situation. (Filipino teacher)

I consider parental involvement in the education of the child very relevant. (Filipino teacher)

It all comes down to teamwork. Because we all need to work together and basically [to help the child] improve. I just say, working together with the parents as a team and make the whole learning experience positive for the child. (Western teacher)

I think with the parent involvement like helping with the homework. You can see which parents are actively involved with their child and those children whose parents are active, they do much better in the class than the others. (Western teacher)

Lawson (2003) who conducted an ethnographic research in a culturally diverse elementary school located in an urban community in the U.S. observed that teachers and parents had different perceptions of parent involvement, but at times might include overlapping elements. He also argued that teachers and parents both claimed that firm, mutually beneficial partnerships are essential to children's learning. The results of this study support evidence from Lawson's (2003) research experience.

8.2 The perfect parent

Table 10 summarizes the answers teachers gave regarding the most important parental roles. According to table 10, in general, all teachers want the parents to be actively involved in their children's education. The biggest contrast in the results is that while Thai teachers tend to be very explicit regarding parents' roles and responsibilities towards their children's schooling, Western teachers' answers are more conceptual. These results seem to be consistent with the results from the Thai and Western parents' interview analyses.

TABLE 10. Teachers' perceptions about parental roles

Thai teachers	Filipino teachers	Western teachers
Support the kids' needs	Support the teacher	Encouragement
Teach life skills	Encourage them to do their homework by themselves	Emotional support
Teach Thai culture		Interconnectedness
Finance the studies	Show interest in the child's studies	Be involved and be there for the child
Collaborate with teacher		
Support school activities	Be aware of the holistic development of the child	Have the child make mistakes
Help with homework		

When teachers think of parental roles and responsibilities, they concentrate on the children's learning process. The following answers sum up their beliefs about parents' responsibilities:

If students see that parents aren't really interested in what they're doing here in school they might copy the parent. (Filipino teacher)

Encouragement, emotional support. These are the big twos for me. They don't necessarily have to be spending time with teaching, supplementary materials, you know. Just to show that they are interested in the student's learning, ask them about the school, and if they do something to recognize it and praise it. (Western teacher)

Parents should be involved and be there for their children. (Western teacher)

I think a huge role a parent should play in helping the children to feel comfortable with the idea of failure because they have to come across it if they want to be good at something, you're gonna fail at it more than once. Because the pressure feels uncomfortable when it comes to the failure comparing themselves to others instead of trying the habit of sort of mindset. (Western teacher)

8.3 A good teacher

Findings of this study indicate that teachers' perceptions about teachers' roles and responsibilities corroborate the ideas of the parents. Teachers' perceptions are overlapping with the parents' perceptions in the following areas:

- take care of the students' individual needs
- guide students in the learning process and let them guide themselves through it
- let students realize that mistakes are part of the learning
- make students confident and enjoy learning
- show a good example.

Another interesting finding is that teachers feel important it to build trust with the students. As one of the western teachers mentioned, *"I think just listen to the students. Sometimes they just need to talk to someone."*

Most of the teachers feel sometimes exhausted by the pressure of their roles. One Filipino teacher who doesn't have many years of teaching experiences described his feelings, *"It's very hard acting like an educator and also being a second parent of a child... [It's like being] Superman."*

8.4 Educational beliefs and own experiences

..in grade 1...she hit me with a stick and so I hated school...and right now when I look back that's when I realized I have to show love, I have to show care because I don't want them to experience what I experienced... (Filipino teacher)

Because as a child I was really scared of the teachers and therefore I want them to enjoy [learning], I want them to become confident. Especially those shy ones. Try to build confidence and be positive. Just seeing something positive even when they get it all wrong. Just point

out that you did something right. And not to feel like you did everything wrong. (Western teacher)

...in high school I met this teacher who is really affectionate. I looked up to her. She was very eloquent and that's what motivated me to become a teacher. And when I started higher education, I would take English because I looked up to that person and even now we still have communication. And she's still very positive and encouraging. And she sees the potential in you and she would tell you "You can make it!" or "You can be good at that!" She was the one who opened my mind. (Filipino teacher)

The above examples show that teachers' own learning experiences – whether they are negative or positive - significantly influence their attitudes towards their profession as a teacher. As one of the teachers summarized:

Teachers can have a very big impact on students' lives and we remember teachers whom we hated or the ones we loved. Teachers in between were insignificant; therefore, we don't remember them. (Filipino teacher)

Thai teachers had both positive and negative experiences as students. They described Thai schools as places where individual ideas were not respected and tolerated. If they had different opinions than the teacher's, it meant that they were not respecting the teacher. Thai teachers also believe that academic success in school does not mean success in real life.

Similar to Thai teachers', **Filipino teachers** also discussed both positive and negative learning experiences. They mentioned that students were encouraged to compete and were grouped according to their abilities. Similar to those in Thailand, they felt that teachers paid more attention and spent more time with the good students.

The results about **Western teachers'** own experiences in school show a great variety. This finding may partly be explained by the different educational systems

of the various countries these teachers come from. Western teachers seemed to remember more negative than positive experiences about their schooling. Interestingly, many of the Western teachers had a story about a Math teacher:

I had a Math teacher in primary school. Luckily, I wasn't scared of him, but his son and his friend were scared of him... And then we went to the same high school and they refused to take Math as an elective. They said that they never take Math in their life. Because of that experience.

Yes, I have that experience in Math. I had a Mathematics teacher who was very proud of showing to the class that I was the weakest in Math. And I hated it. So, it's kind of a similar situation. Like he came to me once and told me "You're just a stupid rabbit." something like that. He would call me names and others would laugh because it was kind of funny. But I was totally embarrassed and very reluctant to join that class.

I also had a bad experience with Math in the early years of my education. I was really scared of the teacher because he used to bite us. When you did something wrong, he tried to bite your hand and if you did something wrong again, he would just bite harder.

Some of the teachers mentioned that during the time when they were students, they felt that most teachers were not passionate, they did not appreciate their jobs, and they did not have a relationship with their students:

I think it comes down to the fact that when we grew up teachers didn't have a relationship with their students. The teacher was a teacher. Now we ask the kids "How are you doing?" They just stood at the front of their class. I guess that was their job. But they didn't care about [the child's overall wellbeing] - but I am sure some did - they just did their job. (Western teacher)

9 TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF SPECIFIC INVITATIONS FOR PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Chapter 9 is about how elementary teachers at SJMIS think of specific invitations regarding PI. The results are structured around the following four themes: school climate, forgetful kids, teacher invitations, and Gossip Girl vs. The Powerpuff Girls.

9.1 School climate

Results of this study show that teachers believe that the school-to-home communication is effective and the school does the maximum to make the environment welcoming for parents to be involved. They also mentioned that the school communicates with parents in multiple ways and makes a great effort to translate all the information in Thai.

Thai teachers argued that the school should follow what is considered an appropriate and acceptable way of communication in the Thai culture. This finding further supports the idea of many researchers who indicate that schools should respect different family cultures in order to fully partner with families (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005, 110). According to the Thai culture, any official information coming from the school should be sent to parents by letter. Meanwhile, a short message that a letter was sent out should be supplemented by LINE or other means of communication like the Elementary Student Handbook & Communication Log. In cases, when the topic is sensitive, personal, or the involvement of certain parents are necessary, invitations should be made face-to-face or by phone call:

When we send a message, there is no feeling... For example, Khun A. We invited her to join the Mother's Day. It's hard to tell in the LINE message. Not good. We had to call her to show respect. And if we see face-to-face, it's better. (Thai teacher)

Both **Filipino and Western teachers** mentioned the importance of proper translation of the messages. According to them, translation can be a big burden in interacting with parents:

Sometimes the message is very long but the translation is short. And there are parents who really would like to talk to you but because of the language gap, they couldn't do so. (Filipino teacher)

A possible explanation for this might be that the original messages in English are mainly written by Western administrators but the translations are done by Thai administrators. Therefore, the style of both the original message and the translation is influenced by the culture of the individuals who are responsible for the two versions of the same message. In addition, the English version represents the school as an international school and it is written to a broader, English-speaking audience but the Thai version specifically targets the Thai parents. This kind of translation issue also occurs during meetings and any other face-to-face interactions.

9.2 Forgetful children

According to the results of this study, teachers consider student invitations important in terms of motivation for parent involvement. Consequently, teachers regularly use student invitations on purpose for getting higher response rates from parents:

If we depend only on the Line [communication] then the response is low. So, we really need to make it clear with the students. Because parents receive the message and the students will follow-up. The more we involve the students, the more the parents are forced to react. (Filipino teacher)

At the same time, elementary teachers are aware that they can not only rely on students when they want the parents to be involved. Besides information can be lost or modified before it reaches its final audience:

Sometimes they add to the story or leave out things.

*Yes. Exactly. Important information will be taken out. (Both laughing)
(conversation among Filipino teachers)*

Results of this study show that some students like to share stories with their parents about their school day. It may be that these elementary students are still in their young age and their relationship with their parents is strong. During the focus group interviews, teachers shared stories when they informed a parent about something but the parent confirmed that he/she already had heard it from his/her child. As one of the teachers commented it jokingly:

*So, we should be more concerned if they can remember. So, we should tell them, "When your parents ask you about the school, you should say this and that." (laughing)
(Western teacher)*

9.3 Teacher invitations

Findings of this study indicate that elementary teachers at SJMIS regularly communicate with parents about the students' academic and non-academic progress. It has been also shown that the frequency of interactions decreases by grade levels. The observed decrease in communication could be attributed to the facts that (a) many parents' motivation for involvement tend to decrease when their children are in higher grades and (b) students in general become more responsible about responding to their parents.

Results of this study show that teachers play a key role at SJMIS Elementary in involving parents. These results corroborate the idea of Epstein (1986), who argued that teachers' practices seem more important when engaging parents than general school invitations. Teachers discuss a wide range of topics with parents about their children such as academic progress, areas of strengths and weaknesses, emotional stability, social skills, achievements, and concerns. Some

teachers mentioned that most of the parents expect them to communicate about their children's progress, especially achievements in a regular basis:

Parents are really curious about what their children do at school. Parents really appreciate it when you give them the picture. And how you - as a teacher - motivate them, guide them, or reach their potential. (Filipino teacher)

They [parents] want to hear good things. You always have to start with something positive before you break anything negative. So, parents can receive it with a heart, with an open mind. (Filipino teacher)

Furthermore, teachers also inform parents about upcoming events, school policies, news, expectations, teaching practices, lessons, and so on.

Another interesting finding is that teachers communicate with parents in many ways: face-to-face (which can be initiated either by the school, the teacher, or the parent), by phone calls, and by sending messages (in the Elementary Student Handbook and Communication Log and/or LINE). Both **Filipino and Western teachers** stated that the LINE messages are very practical and effective but some of them argued that this way of communication was the most professional way to communicate with parents. Many teachers noted that the response rate of parents is low but parents seem to receive the information:

I think some of them are well-informed and don't react and some of them are overloaded with information. I have this experience in my LINE group. You get very few responses and most of them are very passive. But when you assign them to do something or bring something, they do it. The students do or bring what is expected but there is no feedback in the LINE group. (Filipino teacher)

9.4 Gossip Girl vs. The Powerpuff Girls

Results of the current study show that elementary teachers at SJMIS consider parents' social network both positive and negative regarding its effect to PI.

It [parents' social network] can be both positive and negative. Positive in a way that when they see something good, it can spread out. But if a student reported something negative, then yeah...It would also spread like a wildfire.

It can make or break.

(conversation among Filipino teachers)

Despite the teachers' general feelings that parents use their networks as "gossip groups," they also agree that if it is used in the right way, it can be very effective. For example, when students see that their parents are connected and get together, it could also motivate and encourage them to interact with their peers. Another example, if a student is bullying other students and parents know about it, they could immediately mobilize the whole group of parents. So, the student becomes more reluctant to bully others.

10 BEING AN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL IN THAILAND

Families from different cultural backgrounds may have different expectations, communication styles, and educational goals. When teachers from one communicative framework interact with children and parents from different frameworks, there may be a mismatch of communication expectations, styles, values, and goals. (Hwa-Froelich & Westby, 2003) To understand cultural differences in communication, the different cultures and their effect on parent-teacher interactions should be described. In the following, the main goal is to explore four areas in which culture and communication may be different: responsibility relationships, interpersonal relationships, risk management, and how the LINE app takes over Thai people's everyday life and therefore becoming an integral part of their culture.

10.1 Responsibility relationship

According to Hwa-Froelich and Vigil (2016), responsibility relationships indicate who is responsible in different interpersonal relationships and how responsibility relationships are communicated. Hofstede (1984) illustrated cultural differences in terms of four dimensions. In responsibility relationships individualism is aligned with independence and collectivism is aligned with interdependence (Triandis, 1995 according to Hwa-Froelich & Vigil, 2016, 108).

10.1.1 Country comparisons – Individualism

The values of independence/interdependence influence the language and the behaviour of the participants in parent-teacher relationships. Therefore, we need to compare first the main participants' values for Individualism versus Collectivism dimension regarding to the parent-teacher responsibility relationships at SJMIS Elementary. The main ethnicity groups as they were identified when forming focus groups are: Thais, Indians, Filipinos, and Westerners. As Western parents and teachers are coming from different countries and it would be really complicated to analyse all data, I decided to use the data available for the United States.

There are two reasons supporting this decision: (1) as the U.S. is a melting pot of different nationalities, the country's values are similar to or the same as those of Western parents and teachers who are represented in this study; (2) SJMIS is an international school that uses US curriculum. Accordingly, figure 6 represents the scores on the Individualism versus Collectivism dimension of the following countries: Thailand, India, Philippines, and the United States. The scores clearly show that Thailand and the Philippines are collectivist societies, India is a society with both individualistic and collectivistic traits, and the United States is one of the most individualist cultures.

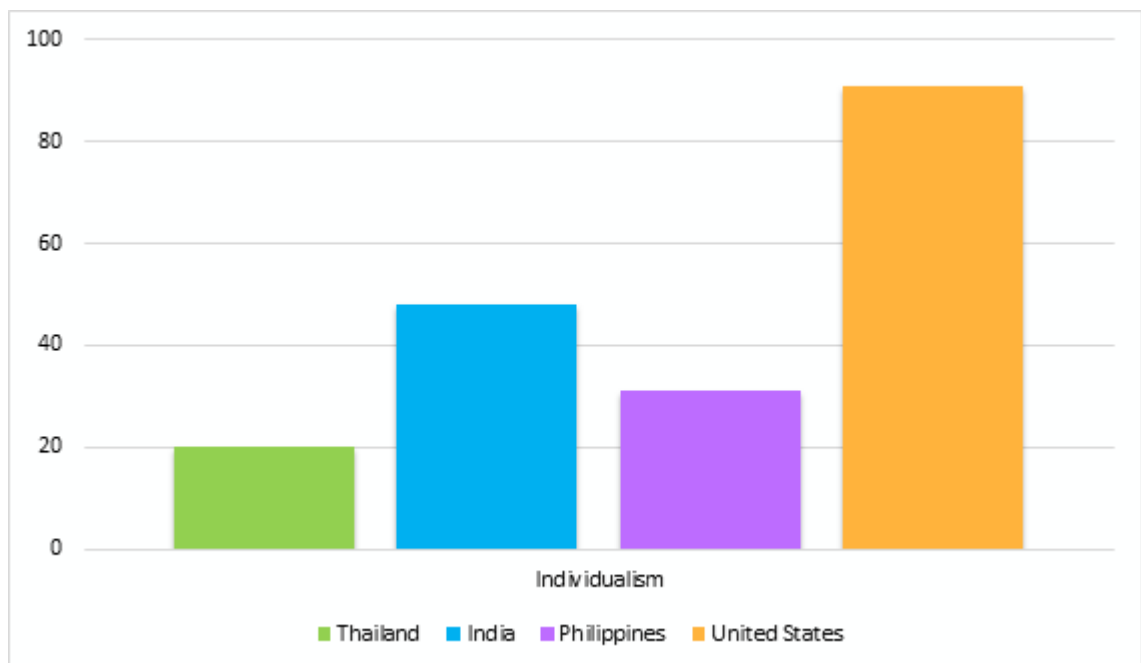


FIGURE 6. Individualism versus Collectivism (Hofstede-Insights, n.d.)

In general, it means that in collectivist societies – such as Thailand and the Philippines- people's self-image is defined in terms of "We" and people belong to larger groups that take care of them in exchange of loyalty. Personal relationships are considered very important. India with its intermediate score tends to show characteristics of both individualistic and collectivist societies. In practice, individuals are responsible for the way they lead their own life. At the same time, there is a high desire among people for belonging to a larger community. In contrast, in individualistic societies like the United States, people are expected to look after themselves and their close families only and should not rely too much on authorities to support. (Hofstede-Insights n.d.)

10.1.2 Different values in the communication of decision and values towards the educational system

In the survey (see Appendix 4), the first three statement pairs (selected from table 1) were about finding out whether the participants had individualistic or collectivist beliefs about education. Figure 7 illustrates these statement pairs of the Google Form. As it is seen, the smaller numbers on the Likert scale indicate if an individual has collectivist/interdependent values. Meantime, the greater the number, the more individualistic is the individual regarding his/her beliefs.

1. Respect tradition and age - new ideas are welcome *
Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Respect tradition and age New ideas are welcome

2. Young ones should listen to the older ones - Lifelong learning *
Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Young ones should listen to the older ones Lifelong learning

3. Formal harmony needs to be maintained - Conflicts and discussions are acceptable *
Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Formal harmony needs to be maintained Conflicts and discussions are acceptable

FIGURE 7. Part 1 - Individualism, Perceptions about Education

Below, table 11 shows the results of the first three statement pairs by the four main cultural groups at SJMIS Elementary.

TABLE 11. Survey results regarding questions 1-3

Culture group	Thai	Filipino	Indian	Western
Mode	4.7	4.7	3.4	4.2

According to table 11, the relatively high numbers indicate that most participants share individualistic values regarding responsibility relationships. The results of the Indian and Western participants are in agreement with Hofstede's country projections which show that Westerners are highly individualistic whereas Indians have both individualistic and collectivistic traits. However, the findings of the Thai participants in the current study do not support the country projection. This finding was unexpected and suggests that Thai participants' communicated values of independence in responsibility relationships align better with a western-style international school system than with the traditional Thai school system. The reason for this is not clear but it may have something to do with the fact that all Thai respondents enrolled their children in or work for SJMIS Elementary because the practices at an international school better match their individual expectations as a parent towards the school.

10.2 Interpersonal relationship

Educational beliefs include values about perceived and expected power role differences among teachers, students, and parents. The social distance in Interpersonal relationships depends on the level of formality which is related to how the power differences are communicated. In Hofstede's terms, societies with great respect to power roles in interpersonal relationships are called high-power distance cultures. Meantime, individuals in low-distance power cultures expect equal social status in informal interactions. (Hwa-Froelich & Vigil, 2016, 110)

10.2.1 Country comparisons – Power Distance

The power distance dimension is based on equality and inequality among individuals. In high power distance cultures individuals are aware of inequality. Thus, their behaviours in interpersonal relationships are based on whether the other person has more or less power and importance. Older people are often called by titles or special names in order to show respect for their age. In some high-power distance cultures, like in Thailand, parents use direct verbal and nonverbal lan-

guage to teach their children the expected behaviour like when a mother instructed his son by tapping his shoulder and saying “*Say thank you to teacher Barbara.*” At the same time, individuals in low power distance cultures are informal and consider each other equal in interpersonal relationships. People in different positions freely share their direct and honest ideas and show respect to each other by using indirect language to communicate directions. These kinds of communication styles can be really confusing for someone who comes from a high-power distance culture in which direct and explicit language is used.

Accordingly, figure 8 below shows the scores of Thailand, India, the Philippines, and the U.S. in the Power Distance chart. The findings show that except the U.S., all other countries are considered high-power distance societies.

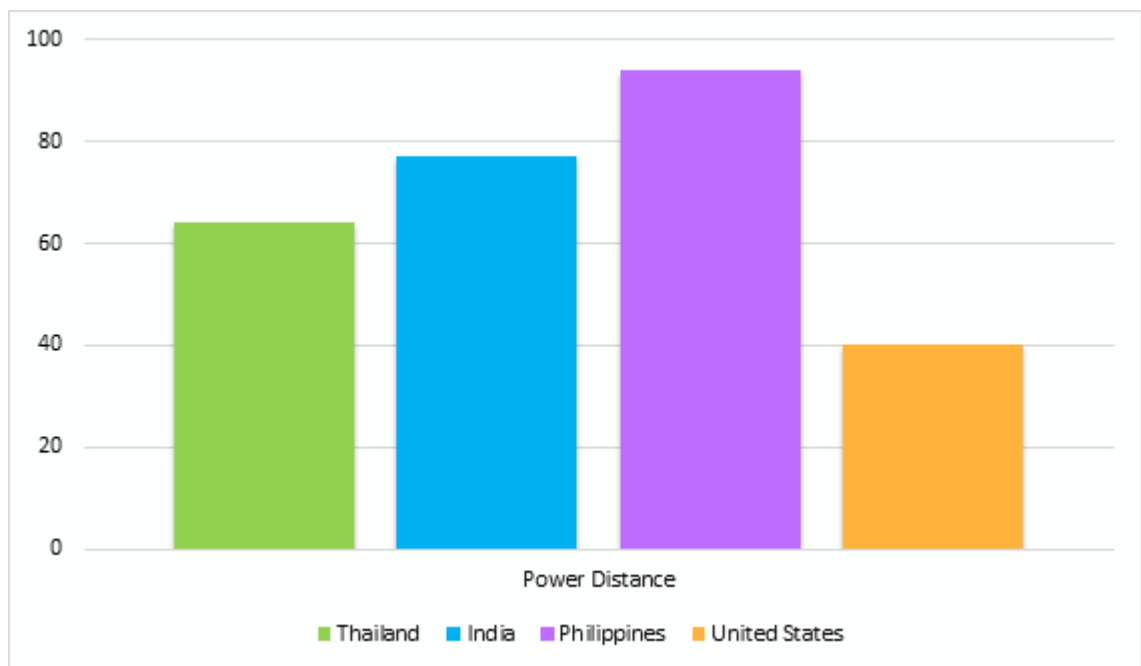


FIGURE 8. Small versus Large Power Distance

With the score of 94, the Philippines is the most hierarchial society among the others. The next in the order is India with the score of 77 seems to be a relatively high-power distance country. The score of Thailand is slightly lower than that of India. It means the ranks and positions come with priviligies and strict protocols are expected to follow in interactions between people from different level or status. At the same time, the relatively low score of the U.S. indicates that managers and administrators are accessible. Communication is informal, ideas

are freely shared, and consultation among the participants is expected. (Hofstede-Insights n.d.)

10.2.2 Interaction differences related to Power Distance at SJMIS

Elementary

In the survey (see Appendix 4), statement pairs 4-8 were about finding out whether the participants prefer hierarchy in accordance to their interpersonal relationships in PI. Figure 9. Illustrates these statement pairs of the Google Form. As it is seen, the smaller numbers on the Likert scale indicate if an individual shares characteristics of a low-power distance culture. Meantime, the greater the number, the more power the individual represents in parent-teacher-student relationships.

4. Making mistakes is part of the learning process -Neither the teacher nor the parent should lose face *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Making mistakes is part of the learning process	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Neither the teacher nor the parent should lose face

5. Teacher respects the individuality of the students - Teachers are respected *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Teacher respects the individuality of the students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Teachers are respected

6. Teachers are facilitators - Teachers model the way to follow *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Teachers are facilitators Teachers model the way to follow

7. Outside school, teachers are treated as equals - Respect for teachers is also shown outside school *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Outside school, teachers are treated as equals Respect for teachers is also shown outside school

8. In teacher/student conflicts, parents are expected to side with the student - In teacher/student conflicts, parents are expected to side with the teacher *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

In teacher/student conflicts, parents are expected to side with the student In teacher/student conflicts, parents are expected to side with the teacher

FIGURE 9. Power distance relationships among parents, teachers, and students

Below, table 12 shows the results of the next four statement pairs by the four main cultural groups at SJMIS Elementary.

TABLE 12. Survey results regarding questions 4-8

Culture group	Thai	Filipino	Indian	Western
Mode	3.8	2.5	3.3	3.5

According to table 12, the fairly moderate numbers indicate that most participants share characteristics of both low and high-power distance relationships. Most of these results do not support Hofstede’s country projections. The most anticipated finding was that the Filipino respondents tend to be the least hierarchical in interpersonal relationships with the lowest score despite the fact that their country seems to be one of the most hierarchical societies in the world. This discrepancy could be attributed to the fact that the survey intended to understand the participants’ beliefs or expectations and not their practices. Surprisingly, the findings of

this study indicate that Western respondents have a moderately high-power distance relationship preference which may be related to their expatriate status. Thus, their answers reflect their many years of experience in Thailand. In addition, the fact that the Thai respondents scored the highest confirms previous findings in this study according to which Thais require explicit or direct language in interactions.

10.3 Risk management

Risk management is about how individuals in different cultures view changes and risks. This factor in Hofstede's cultural dimensions is called Uncertainty Avoidance. The dimension of Uncertainty Avoidance indicates how individuals in different cultures perceive the future. Communication may vary along this dimension. Individuals with weak uncertainty avoidance like to explore and are not afraid of taking risks. Their exploring and risk-taking nature enables them to creatively solve problems by asking questions and discussing ideas. At the same time, people in strong uncertainty avoidance societies try to avoid conflicts by using less controversial opinions. Adults model social behaviours for children in a way they think it is appropriate and expect the kids to imitate them without questioning. (Hwa-Froelich & Vigil, 2016, 112-113)

10.3.1 Country comparisons – Uncertainty Avoidance

Figure 10 shows the scores of Thailand, India, the Philippines, and the U.S. in the dimension of Uncertainty Avoidance. According to figure 10, India, the Philippines, and the U.S. are considered fairly weak in regard to avoiding uncertainty. In contrast, Thailand with the score of 64 is slightly indicating a preference for avoiding uncertainty.

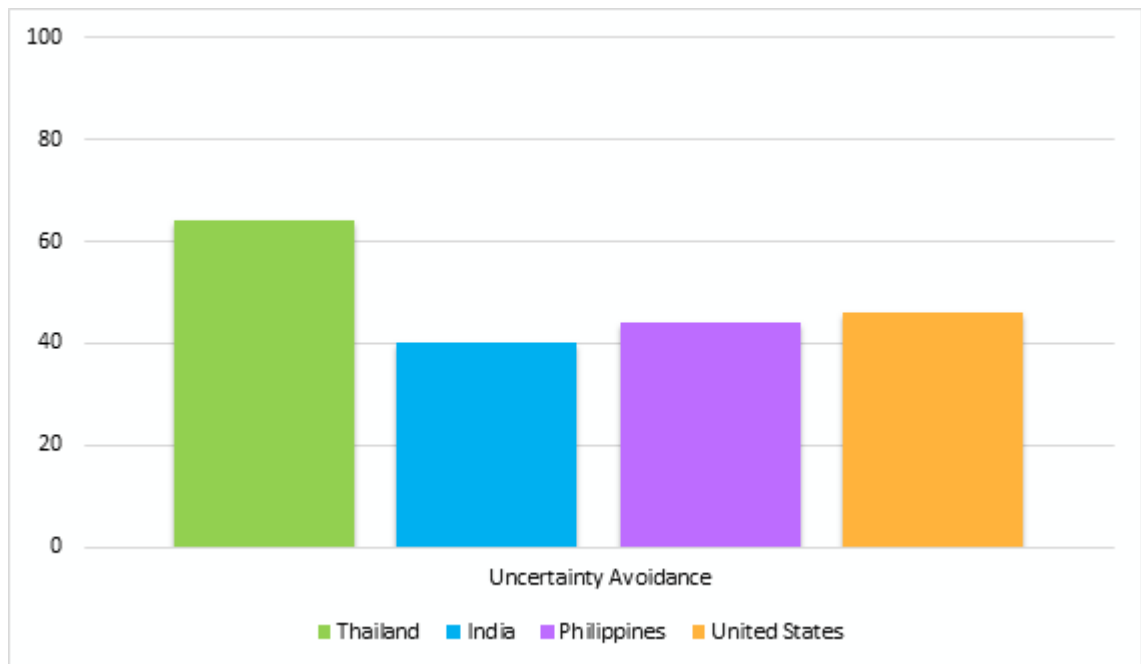


FIGURE 10. Strong versus Weak Uncertainty Avoidance

Consequently, in order to minimize the level of uncertainty, policies and rules are implemented in Thailand. Changes are not easily accepted and adopted unless they can be seen for the greater good of the group. On the other hand, the rest of the countries with weaker uncertainty avoidance characteristics tend to avoid unnecessary rules and deviance from the norms is easily tolerated. (Hofstede-Insights n.d.)

10.3.2 Risk management in different situations at SJMIS Elementary

In the survey (see Appendix 4), statement pairs 9-12 were about finding out whether the participants are comfortable to deal with uncertainty in different situations. Figure 11 illustrates these statement pairs of the Google Form. As it is seen, the smaller numbers on the Likert scale indicate if an individual shares characteristics of a weak uncertainty avoidance culture. Meantime, the greater the number, the stronger avoidance the individual represents in uncertain parent-teacher-student relationships.

9. Students are encouraged to explore - Students are expected to follow the teacher’s order *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Students are encouraged to explore	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Students are expected to follow the teacher’s order

10. Innovative approach to problem-solving is awarded - Accuracy in problem-solving is awarded *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Innovative approach to problem-solving is awarded	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Accuracy in problem-solving is awarded

11. Disagreements are part of the solution process -Disagreements are interpreted as breach of trust *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Disagreements are part of the solution process	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Disagreements are interpreted as breach of trust

12. Teachers seek parents’ ideas - Teachers consider themselves experts *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Teachers seek parents’ ideas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Teachers consider themselves experts

FIGURE 11. Risk management in parent-teacher-student interactions

Below, table 13 shows the results of the above four statement pairs represented by the four main cultural groups at SJMIS Elementary.

TABLE 13. Survey results regarding questions 9-12

Culture group	Thai	Filipino	Indian	Western
Mode	3.2	2.5	2.6	2.5

According to table 13, the relatively low scores of the Filipino, Indian, and Western respondents indicate a weak preference for avoiding uncertainty. All of these results of this study are in agreement with Hofstede’s country projections which

state that India, the Philippines, and the U.S. are among the countries where uncertainty avoidance is weak and Thailand has a preference for avoiding uncertainty.

10.4 LINE



The LINE app is an integral part of the Thai culture by leading the country's messaging app market with an approximate 44 million active users (LINE Q3 2018 Earnings Results 2018). Its huge success is due to creating “*an ecosystem of apps that deliver various consumer needs – from photo sharing to games and music*” (Lawrence 2017). Another possible explanation is that Thai people like to use its colourful stickers and emoticons when interacting with others. The result of this study show that even foreign parents accept the fact that LINE is the most common way of communication in Thailand. As one of the Indian parents said, “*LINE is the best way and very convenient. In Thailand everybody uses LINE.*”

The topic about whether the school should use LINE for its official communication with parents sparked a long and lively discussion among the Western teachers. Some of them believe that LINE is not professional and it should not be used at school. A possible explanation for this might be that LINE's features like the cute stickers do not seem to attract many Western teachers and parents. When Western teachers send a message, they expect to receive a feedback from parents instead of stickers.

I really understand that everybody has a favourite [means of communication]. Like where I come from, people use email for official communication. Any chat group is not considered as official. (Western teacher)

They claim that emails are also as easy to access on smartphones as the LINE app. It seemed that their main concern was about the potential abuse of the app by the parents. They agreed that certain rules or expectations must be set at the beginning of the year in order to keep the comments professional such as giving

positive and constructive feedback instead of only complaints. In addition, some Western teachers felt that the constant comments/messages jeopardize their private time:

I just want to say something from the teacher's point of view...I know you want to make it easy for them but I am not that type of person who gets a message, won't look at it. If I get a message at ten, I am going to look at it and may not be able to sleep. (Western teacher)

At the end of the discussion, teachers concluded that in spite of the fact that the LINE app is not their preferred way of communication, it is effective when involving parents.

In my opinion, it's not feasible [using emails] in Thailand because here in Thailand people use Line for everything: buying petrol or your groceries. So, in my opinion, we just have to balance and deal with it and try to be ready. Because the faster we can respond, in the parents' perception, the better and more efficient we are as teachers. Even if it's not really helpful but we send out something. Every country has its own type of communication. Like in China they do WeChat and in Thailand it's Line. In my country, it is WhatsApp without pictures and stickers. We just type. So, I believe that Thai parents are so used to this. ... And I see parents driving their Mercedes and 50 Line messages popping up, so they do everything in Line. There are no other means of communication. Like if they have would have to make an exception to the rule, it will eat up their time. (Western teacher)

11 CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to understand both parents' and teachers' beliefs about parent involvement and describe the existing practices at SJMIS Elementary, Thailand in order to foster a culturally respectful caring environment that supports the full development of the children. Accordingly, the following research questions emerged with the aim of gaining a valuable insight of how parent involvement is interpreted and experienced in an international elementary school setting with mainly Thai student population.

1. What are the existing practices of parent involvement at SJMIS Elementary?
2. What are the parents' perceptions, motivations, and expectations for parent involvement?
3. What are the teachers' perceptions, motivations, and expectations for parent involvement?
4. How does parents' and teachers' cultural background affect parent involvement at SJMIS Elementary?

The case study research method was found the most appropriate approach for the current study. The research was formed around focus group and individual semi-structured interviews with the support of observations, studying organizational materials and artefacts, and conducting a follow-up survey. Table 14 summarizes the six focus groups which unfolded after studying the school's student and teacher population by nationalities.

TABLE 14. Focus groups of the research

Type	Nationalities		
Parent	Thai (A1)	Indian (A2)	Western (A3)
Teachers	Thai (B1)	Filipino (B2)	Western (B3)

Influenced by the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's theoretical model of the parental involvement process (Walker et al. 2005), the data collection and analysis methods together with the evaluation of the results were presented accordingly:

parents' and teachers' motivational beliefs regarding PI, parent's and teachers' perceptions of specific invitations for PI, and parents' perceived life context. The cultural influence on PI was evaluated with the help of Hofstede's cultural-dimensions theory applied in teacher and student interactions (Hofstede 1986) and Hwa-Froelich and Vigil's three aspects of cultural influence on communication (2016) such as responsibility ownership, interpersonal relationships, and risk management.

11.1 Main research findings

11.1.1 Current PI practices at SJMIS Elementary

Findings indicate that the general school-to-home communication is at a moderate level, both parents and teachers, in general, are satisfied. The school has several policies and procedures to guideline school-to-home communication. Because of the large number of Thai families, Thai translation of every official letter is required and translators are available for meetings. The elementary principal has an open-door policy to meet with parents. Besides she makes an attempt to be visible around the school and regularly hosts meetings for parents. The elementary school monthly offers special meeting opportunities for parents such as Open House, PTCs, and Coffee Talks. These meetings are mainly formal occasions with a broad selection of topics. The purpose of these meetings is to inform, discuss, and receive feedback about different curricular and extra-curricular activities, teaching strategies, learning progress, assessment procedures, or educational trends. There is also an Elementary PTO in place but its function is limited due to several factors: the language barrier, time constraint, lack of motivation, and unfamiliar school system.

Currently, PI at SJMIS Elementary is mainly challenged by the language barrier, the international school setting, and different perceptions and expectations about PI. Therefore, the findings of this study suggest that the school administration should provide more bilingual training and workshop opportunities for both parents and teachers about the importance of PI in children's overall development.

11.1.2 Parents' perceptions, motivations, and expectations regarding PI

This study has argued that according to the revised Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler parent involvement model (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler 2005; Walker et al. 2005), parents' motivational beliefs regarding involvement, parents' perceptions of invitations for involvement from others, and parents' perceived life contexts are the three main psychological and contextual constructs of motivation for involvement. All involved parents in this study - regardless of their nationalities/ethnicities - strive to provide the best education possible for their children. For this reason, all participants have strong motivational feelings regarding their involvement. Involved parents advocate active involvement and school support because they believe that having these attitudes support their children to succeed at school. At the same time, parents' perceptions of engagement show both similarities and differences among specific ethnicities. For example, Thai and Indian parents may base their motivational beliefs on their personal relationship with a particular teacher. Moreover, involved Thai and Indian parents favor face-to-face communication with the school and precise guidelines from the teacher. Unlike Thai and Indian parents, westerners tend to form their opinions about involvement based on the overall performance of the school.

The findings of this study show that parents' willingness to involvement both at home and at school is positively influenced by specific invitations as it is suggested by Epstein (1986) and others (Reynolds et al. 2015). Parents' perceptions of specific invitations for PI at SJMIS Elementary are predominantly influenced by the teacher because the findings of this study revealed that most Thai and many Indian parents perceive their attitude towards PI based on their personal experience with the teacher. It was also found that children of those involved parents who participated in the interviews, especially in lower elementary grades do invite their parents to be involved in both explicit and implicit ways. Findings of PI influenced by parent network support previous studies (Sheldon 2002, Curry & Adams 2014) that indicate that there is limited contact among parents in the school. At the same time, parents with access to more social capital are more likely to be involved in their child's education than those with less access. Actively

involved parents find their network effective in many ways; from sharing information and school supplies to a better understanding of school policies and assignments.

Concerning parents' self-perceived skills and knowledge, findings from this study support previous studies by Mapp (2003) and Williams and Sanchez (2012). Involved parents are actively engaged both at home and at school but they consider involvement at home more valuable than their involvement at school. The finding of this study indicates that involved parents do spend time with their kids as a priority despite the constant time limits. In Thai and Indian families, mainly mothers are involved in PI but parental roles are shared most of the time. Conversely, in families with dual nationals, PI is the western fathers' role. It may be explained that the international school system is more familiar to the western fathers' own learning experience than to that of the Thai mothers. Study results also revealed that parents' self-perceived skills and knowledge are higher when there are explicit instructions or guidelines available. Despite all the support, parents, in general, feel challenged regarding their skills and knowledge because of the technology, unfamiliar school system, and the changes in educational practices.

The results of this research support the idea of Westerman (2012) that interactions between families and the school such as Open House, Coffee Talks, or PTCs should encourage parents to actively participate in the school's decision-making process about important projects or reform initiatives by asking questions, voicing out their opinions, and giving constructive input. These findings have other significant implications for the better understanding of how parents are motivated in involvement. For example, the school should set a volunteer program and create volunteering practices for parents by surveying them about their interests or talent and providing a training about how to become a volunteer at the school. Additionally, in order to involve new parents and support them in setting up their parent network, the school should foster more activities such as friendly parent-teacher games or family picnic. These events would also potentially increase and reinforce the feeling of involvement among the existing parents.

11.1.3 Teachers' perceptions, motivations, and expectations regarding PI

Similar to parents' understanding, the elementary teachers at SJMIS are child-centered and consider PI very important regarding students' overall performance. For example, as Lawson (2003) stated and this study confirmed that firm, mutually beneficial partnership between the school and families is vital regarding children's learning for both teachers and parents. The findings of this study revealed that teachers' perceptions of PI are different by ethnicities and individuals but all teachers want parents to be involved. When teachers think of parental roles, they focus on the development of the children's learning and the support parents should provide to the school and the teachers. Meanwhile, when it comes to teachers' roles, teachers and parents have similar ideas. The findings also suggest that teachers' own learning experiences as a child significantly impact on their attitudes towards their self-perception as a teacher.

Concerning teachers' perceptions of specific invitations for PI, study results revealed that teachers believe that the school does its maximum to make the environment welcoming for parents to be involved. The research has also shown that teachers' observations about effective types of communication corroborate with parents' expectations, but most of the time do not correspond with their preferred way of communication. Teachers see their role important in involving parents and they intentionally use student invitations to increase PI at the school. The finding further emphasizes the role of parents' social network and it indicates that teachers consider parents' social network both positive and negative. One of the most significant findings of teachers' perceptions of specific invitations for PI to emerge from this study is that teachers view the language barrier and the translation as a big burden. Therefore, the various stakeholders of international schools such as parents, teachers, school administrators, and students need to consider not only the content and the importance of proper translation but the potential interpretation modifications in school-home interactions.

In general, it seems that the elementary teachers at SJMIS acknowledge PI as a significant factor in children's learning process but they do not consider that family values should be incorporated into students' learning goals. Taken together, these results suggest that teachers need to be better prepared to understand culturally and linguistically diverse families and be culturally adept in their communication practices.

11.1.4 Cultural influence on PI

The present study was designed to determine the effect of the participants' diverse cultural background on PI. In order to do that, Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory applied in teacher-student interactions (1986) was used as a framework and supported by Hwa-Froelich and Vigil's literature review about the three aspects of cultural influence on communication (2016). The findings of this study confirmed that parents from societies with weak uncertainty avoidance prefer to solve problems creatively by asking questions and discussing ideas. At the same time, parents from societies with strong uncertainty avoidance such as in Thailand try to avoid conflicts by using less controversial opinions. Given what we know about Hofstede's country profiles regarding individualism and power distance and their influence on responsibility and interpersonal relationships, the findings of this study revealed interesting deviations. For example, most participants (including Thai parents and teachers) share individualistic values regarding responsibility relationships. These findings have significant implications for the understanding of how parents' values - despite their cultural background - are strongly biased towards the international working environment.

11.2 Validity, recommendations for further research and development

There are several limitations that must be addressed in this study. First, the case-study approach was focused on one school in a specific context and therefore any generalizations to other school contexts should be considered carefully. Besides, the small sample size did not allow to study involvement behaviours across all available cultural/ethnic groups within the school population.

Next, in qualitative research, the researcher's position as in this case - a parent and a school administrator at SJMIS Elementary - also needs to be recognised as it may affect the results to some extent. The presence of the researcher in the focus group and individual interviews could also, possibly, influence participant feedback to the questions asked. Researcher bias concerning the evaluation

of the current practices of PI at SJMIS Elementary could be considered as a limitation, especially because the researcher is the elementary principal at SJMIS.

Thirdly, the parent participants in the focus group and one-on-one interviews and in the survey may be biased toward more involved parents, suggesting that the most involved parents participated in this qualitative study. The researcher was aware of these limitations, and the researcher was careful to interpret the results in an attempt to accurately represent the perspectives of these involved parents about their roles, their efficacy for involvement, and their educational beliefs.

In addition, this study was limited by the absence of a second coder to validate the authenticity of the researcher's coding process. Nevertheless, the pragmatic iterative approach in the analysis process with the multiple-cycle coding and the use of codebook system helped to maintain the accuracy of this research study. The reliability or consistency of the study did not depend only on the coding process. Other findings from observations, studying the documentation and several artefacts corroborated the results of the coding process and gave substantial insights to the research.

Although the current study is based on a small sample of participants and in a specific context, the findings suggest that parents and teachers from different cultural backgrounds may have different beliefs, expectations, communication styles, and educational goals that affect parent involvement. Consequently, interactions between the parties (school and family, parent and teacher) can cause challenges beyond the language barrier. As most of the studies about PI were conducted in public American schools among culturally and economically diverse parents and where teachers' understandings on PI were more homogeneous, this research provides important aspects for consideration and ideas for further research. One suggested area of further study could be about at what level individuals - whether teachers or parents – adapt their own values to a multinational environment.

As one of the purposes of this study was to understand Thai parents' motivations, expectations and perceptions about PI – among other nationalities/ethnicities –

at a private international school and not to examine Thai parents' parent involvement practices in general, further research is required to determine whether parents of the mainstream culture share similar ideas about PI in a public-school setting. Furthermore, considerably more work will need to be done to determine how international schools should better serve minorities to be involved.

Finally, ensuring appropriate systems, services, and support for creating a long-term partnership among the culturally diverse stakeholders should be a priority for international school leaders.

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APPENDICES

1 (2)

Appendix 1. Parent interview guide with suggested questions

1. Introduction questions
 - As an introduction, let's go around so that you can introduce yourselves, and perhaps tell us your relationship to the child who studies here, and his/her grade level.
2. Definition of parent involvement
 - What does parent involvement mean to you?
3. Motivational Beliefs
 - 3.1 Role Activity Beliefs
 - What is your role in your child's education?
 - Who is a good teacher?
 - 3.2 Valence/Values toward School
 - What was your purpose enrolling your child in SJMIS Elementary? What criteria did you consider?
 - How would you describe your child being successful at school?
 - People have different feelings about school. Based on your personal experience as a student, how would you describe your feelings about your school and teachers?
 - How did your parents support you when you were a student?
 - 3.3 Beliefs about Parental Self-Efficacy for Helping the Child Succeed in School
 - How do you support your child to be successful at school?
 - Do you talk with your child about his or her school day?
4. Perceptions of Invitations for Involvement
 - 4.1 Perceptions of General School Invitations
 - Do you feel welcome at the elementary school? Please give me a specific example.
 - What do you think about the school-to-home communication?
 - What type of invitations would you like to see the most from school?
 - 4.2 Perceptions of Specific Child Invitations
 - Does your child ask you to help with his or her homework?
 - Does your child talk to you about the school day?
 - Does your child ask you to attend a special event at school?
 - Has your child ever asked you to talk with his or her teacher? Please give an example.
 - 4.3 Perceptions of Specific Teacher Invitations
 - Are you satisfied with the level of communication coming from your child's teacher?
 - What do you expect from your child's teacher regarding communication/interactions with the parents?

Parent interview guide with suggested questions

4.5 Perceptions of Other Parents Invitations

- How often do you communicate with other SJMIS parents about the school?
- What do you typically discuss with other parents about the school?
- How does your parent network help you being involved in your child's schooling?

5. Perceived Life Context

5.1 Self-Perceived Time and Energy

- Based on the previous school year, did you involve in your child's schooling as much as you wanted?
- Do you mainly engage in your child's education at home or at school?
- What kind of challenges do you face as a parent in the involvement in your child's educational process?

5.2 Self-Perceived Knowledge and Skills

- Do you involve effectively in your child's education? Please give me examples.

6. Closure

- Can you suggest anything that could help us improve parental involvement at our school?

Appendix 2. Teacher interview guide with suggested questions

1. Introduction questions
 - As an introduction, let's go around so that you can introduce yourselves, and perhaps tell us your position at the elementary school.
2. Definition of parent involvement
 - What does parent involvement mean to you?
3. Motivational Beliefs
 - 3.1 Role Activity Beliefs
 - What are the most important parental roles that you feel a parent should have in relation to his or her child's education?
 - What are your most important roles as a teacher?
 - 3.2 Valence/Values toward School
 - People have different feelings about school. Based on your personal experience as a student, how would you describe your feelings about your school and teachers?
 - 3.3 Beliefs about Parental Self-Efficacy for Helping the Child Succeed in School
 - What do you think about whether parents here at SJMIS elementary are able to help their child do well in school?
4. Perceptions of Invitations for Involvement
 - 4.1 Perceptions of General School Invitations
 - What do you think about the school-to-home communication?
 - What type of invitations would work the most effectively from school?
 - 4.2 Perceptions of Specific Child Invitations
 - Do you encourage your students talking about their school day with their parents or engage their parents in other ways?
 - Do you expect your students to pass on your messages to their parents?
 - 4.3 Perceptions of Specific Teacher Invitations
 - How often do you communicate/interact with parents?
 - What do you usually communicate about with parents?
 - What ways do you prefer to communicate?
 - What kind of information do you think parents expect you to communicate with them?
 - 4.5 Perceptions of Other Parents Invitations
 - What do you think about parents' social network and its effect to their parental involvement?
5. Perceived Life Context
 - 5.1 Self-Perceived Time and Energy
 - Do you mainly expect parents to be engaged in their child's education at home or at school?
 - 5.2 Self-Perceived Knowledge and Skills
 - What kind of challenges do you face as a teacher about parental involvement?
6. Closure
 - Can you make any suggestions about how we should increase parent involvement at our school?

Appendix 3. Field procedures

Interview Resources:

- Copies of the consent form for all the participants
- Pens to sign
- Phone with full battery to record the focus group interviews
- Notepad & pen
- Enough chairs arranged in a circle
- Reserved room (have a do not disturb sign on the door!)
- Available translator if needed
- Thai Moderator for the A1 focus-group interview
- Provide water or snack

Procedure for calling for assistance and guidance:

- Talk to each person involved in advance!
- Thai parents: Ms. Sarasin as the moderator for the A1 interview
- Consult with the Thai moderator in advance and discuss each question, share with her the documents/resources necessary to understand the research project
- Technical assistant: IT teacher (LINE)
- Emergency assistant: Vice-Principal (LINE)
- Thai liaisons: elementary Thai teachers

Schedule of focus group interviews:

Focus Group	Date	Time	Venue	No. of participants
A1 Thai parents	August 9th, 2019 and August 22nd	8:30 A.M.	Principal's office	9 (including 3 couples)
A2 Indian parents	August 4th and 6th	1:00 P.M./2:30 P.M.	Principal's office	4 (including 1 couple)
A3 (individual interviews) Western parents	Various dates	Various times	Principal's office	3
B1 Thai teachers	August 1st, 2019	3 P.M.	Thai Room	4
B2 Filipino teachers	August 2nd, 2019	1:00 P.M.	Music Room	7
B3 Western teachers	August 8th, 2019	3:15 P.M.	Principal's office	5

Field procedures

Group A – Parents:

A1 - Thai parents

A2 - Indian parents

A3 - Western parents

Group B - Teachers:

B1 - Thai teachers

B2 - Filipino teachers

B3 - Western teachers

Collecting evidence:

- Taking pictures of the bulletin boards
- Collecting samples of letters, flyers, or other messages (Homework Diary)
- Visiting the school's website and Facebook page
- Observing interactions before and after school
- Checking policies and announcements regarding parent involvement
- Attending staff meetings and grade-level PLCs

Appendix 4. Perceptions about education – Google Forms

Perceptions About Education

This survey is aimed to find out individuals' beliefs about education. There are no right and wrong answers. Please choose your answer on the Likert scales according to which describes the best your personal beliefs about education.

* Required

1. Respect tradition and age - new ideas are welcome *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Respect tradition and age	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	New ideas are welcome

2. Young ones should listen to the older ones - Lifelong learning *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Young ones should listen to the older ones	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Lifelong learning

3. Formal harmony needs to be maintained - Conflicts and discussions are acceptable *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Formal harmony needs to be maintained	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Conflicts and discussions are acceptable

4. Making mistakes is part of the learning process -Neither the teacher nor the parent should lose face *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Making mistakes is part of the learning process	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Neither the teacher nor the parent should lose face

5. Teacher respects the individuality of the students - Teachers are respected *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Teacher respects the individuality of the students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Teachers are respected

Perceptions about education – Google Forms

6. Teachers are facilitators - Teachers model the way to follow **Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
Teachers are facilitators	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Teachers model the way to follow

7. Outside school, teachers are treated as equals - Respect for teachers is also shown outside school **Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
Outside school, teachers are treated as equals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Respect for teachers is also shown outside school

8. In teacher/student conflicts, parents are expected to side with the student - In teacher/student conflicts, parents are expected to side with the teacher **Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
In teacher/student conflicts, parents are expected to side with the student	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	In teacher/student conflicts, parents are expected to side with the teacher

9. Students are encouraged to explore - Students are expected to follow the teacher's order **Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
Students are encouraged to explore	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Students are expected to follow the teacher's order

10. Innovative approach to problem-solving is awarded - Accuracy in problem-solving is awarded **Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
Innovative approach to problem- solving is awarded	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Accuracy in problem-solving is awarded

Perceptions about education – Google Forms

11. Disagreements are part of the solution process -Disagreements are interpreted as breach of trust *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Disagreements are part of the solution process	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Disagreements are interpreted as breach of trust

12. Teachers seek parents' ideas - Teachers consider themselves experts *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Teachers seek parents' ideas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Teachers consider themselves experts

13. Nationality *

Mark only one oval.

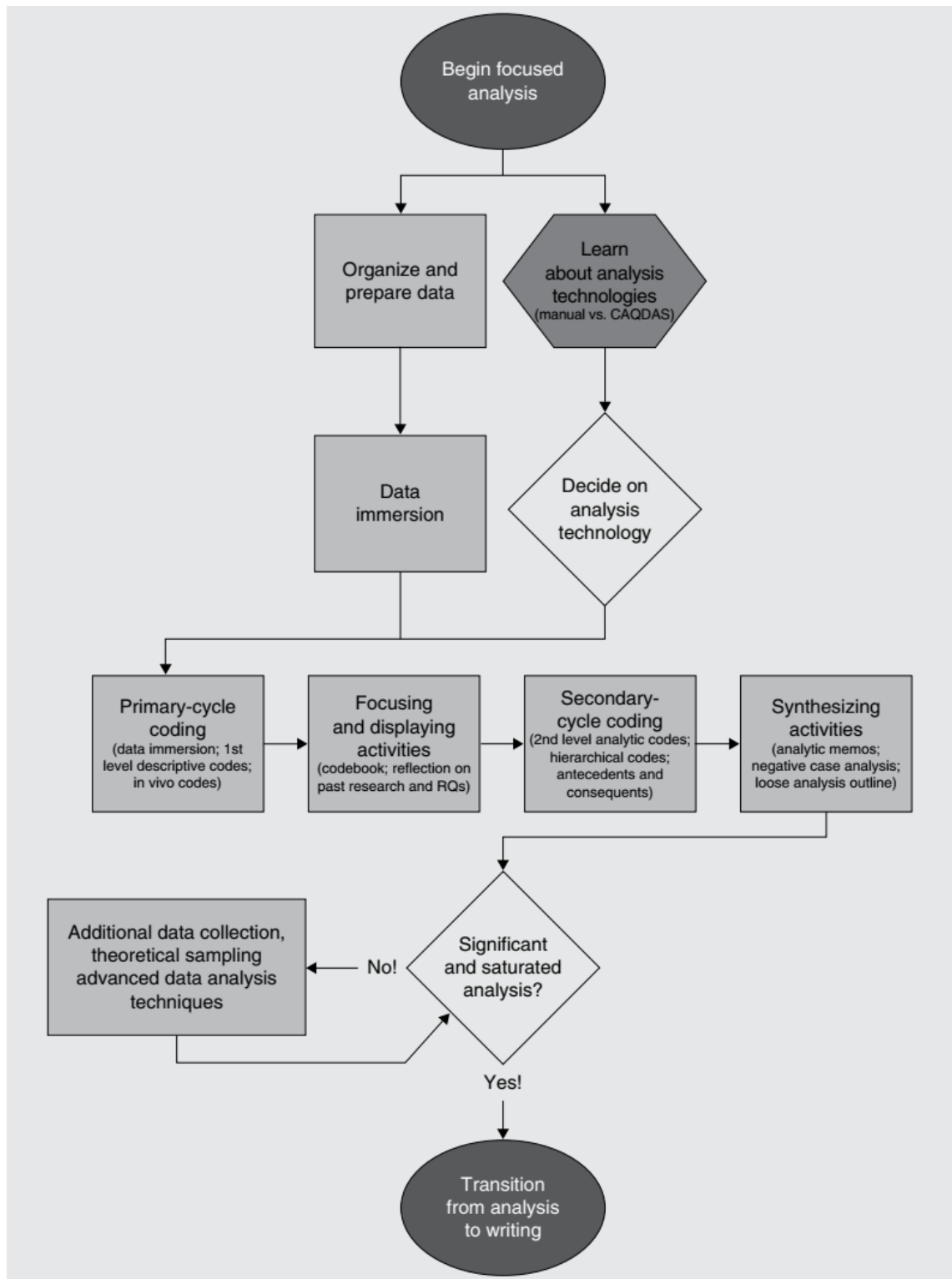
- Thai
- Filipino
- Indian
- Other: _____

14. *

Mark only one oval.

- Parent
- Teacher

Appendix 5. Flowchart depicting iterative analysis process (Tracy 2013, 218)



Appendix 6. Codebook

Codes and Descriptions

Description	Letter code	Color code
parental role construction	PRC	Orange
parental self-efficacy	PSE	Purple
perceptions of (general) school invitations for involvement	PSI	Cyan
perceptions of ((specific) child invitations for involvement	PCI	Light Green
perceptions of (specific) teacher invitations for involvement	PTI	Yellow
perceptions of parent (network) invitations for involvement	PPI	Magenta
(self-)perceived time & energy	PTE	Red
(self-)perceived skills & knowledge	PSK	Dark Green
perceived family culture	PFC	Dark Blue

Appendix 7. Bulletin board samples



โรงเรียนนานาชาติเซนต์จอห์น
 ชั้น 4 ปีที่ 2019-2020

10:00-10:15: พิธีเปิดงานวันแม่
 10:15-10:30: พิธีมอบรางวัลนักเรียนดีเด่น
 10:30-10:45: พิธีมอบรางวัลนักเรียนดีเด่น
 10:45-10:55: พิธีมอบรางวัลนักเรียนดีเด่น

Student Council reps.
 Parents reps.
 Ms.Ladda Mr.Anumart
 Ms.Kathy Ms.Kotchaporn
 Ms.Barbara Mr.Surachai
 Mr.Kevin Ms.Bettie
 Dr.Punnarat Chinnapha

10:55: พิธีมอบรางวัลนักเรียนดีเด่น
 11:00: พิธีมอบรางวัลนักเรียนดีเด่น

หน้างาน :
 อนุบาล : ๑๖:๐๐-๑๖:๓๐
 ชั้นประถมศึกษา : ๑๖:๓๐-๑๖:๔๕



Mother's Day Program
 August 9, 2019

Venue: Peter Samai Auditorium
 Time: 10:00 am. - 11:00 am.

10:00: Welcoming MC
 10:05: VDO/Power Point presentation about mothers
 10:10: To the mother with love Ms. Geysa
 10:15: Beyond Discrimination Ms. Nichanee
 10:20: Salutation to the Queen Mom ceremony

- Student Council reps.
- Parents reps.
- Ms.Ladda Mr.Anumart
- Ms.Kathy Ms.Kotchaporn
- Ms.Barbara Mr.Surachai
- Mr.Kevin Ms.Bettie
- Dr.Punnarat Chinnapha

10:45: Thai Traditional Blessing Dance - Thai Language & Culture Dept.
 10:50: Closing Remarks Dr.Punnarat Chinnapha

Formal Dress :
 • Students wear their school uniforms and SIMIS jackets
 • Parents & Teachers wear blue attire

Elementary School
 Events and Activities

August, 2019

August 4: Open House
 August 5: First Day of School
 August 5 - 9: Student Orientation Week
 August 9: Mother's Day Program
 August 12: Mother's Day (Holiday)
 August 19: After-School Program (ASP) starts
 August 29 - 30: Grades 5 & 6 Leadership Camp

Saint John Mary International School

ELEMENTARY OPEN HOUSE
 4 August, 2019

7:30 - 15:30
 Workbook checkout @ Library (B2)

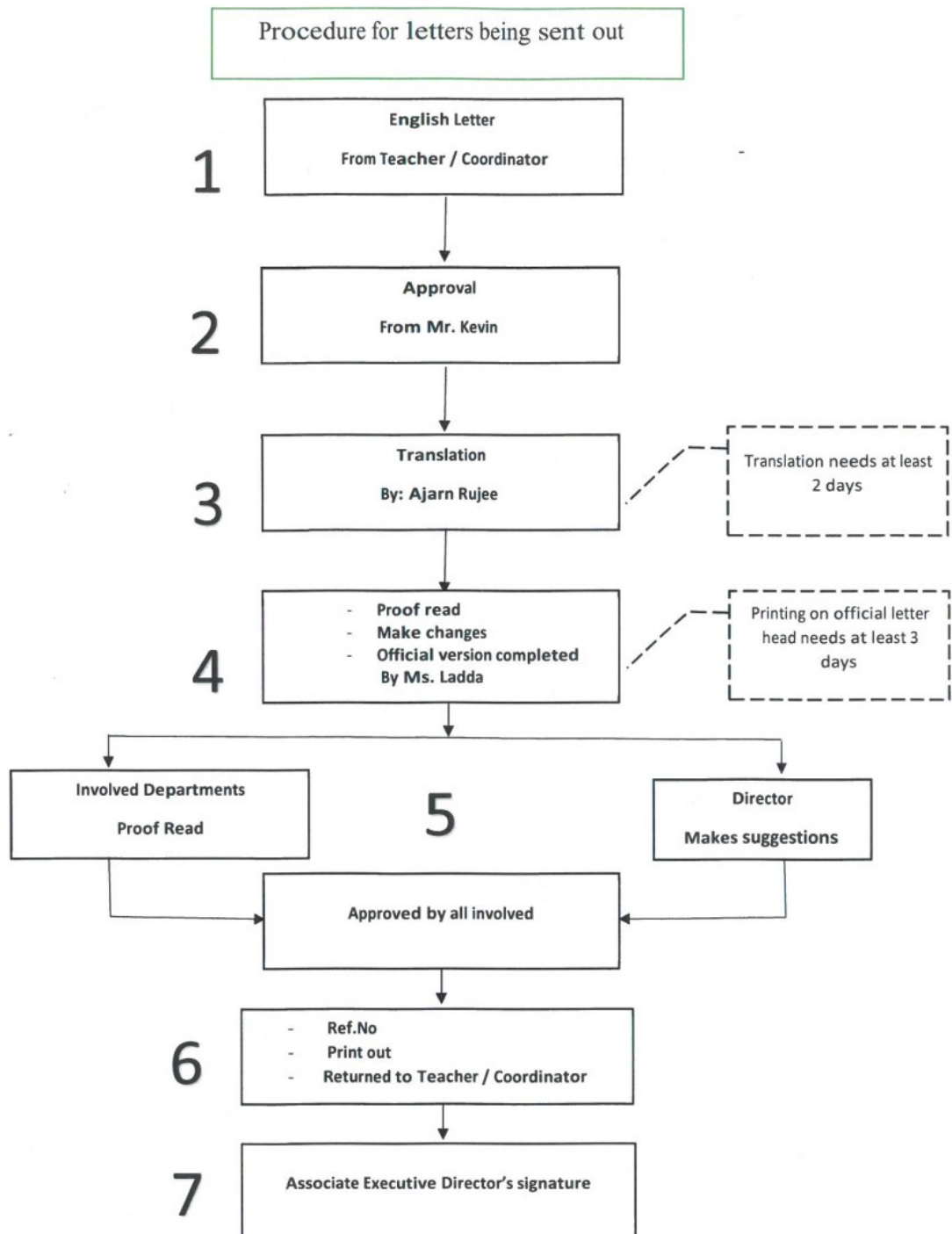
9:00
 General Meeting @ Auditorium (B4)

10:00
 Meet the Homeroom teacher @ Elementary School (B6)

11:00
 Meet the Principal @ Thai Room (B6)

131 Moo 1, Phahonyothin Road, Tambon Klongkiew, Sakon Nakhon 47000, Thailand
 info@sjmis.ac.th

Appendix 8. Translation procedure – flow chart (SJMIS, 2019)



Remark: Letters that are sent out with attached permission slips must be returned to Teachers or Coordinators with parent signatures.