Chinese immigrant fathers' participation in early childhood education in Aotearoa New Zealand: An exploration of roles, experiences, and attitudes

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Abstract

Family and community play an indispensable role in children's learning and development. Parental/paternal participation is considered vital and a precondition to establishing teacher-parent/father partnerships. This research explored Chinese immigrant fathers' roles, participation, and attitudes towards their children's early learning experiences. Semi-structured online interviews were used to gather qualitative data based on a constructivist research paradigm. The theoretical framework comprised cultural capital, fatherhood evolution theory, parenting style categorisation, and parental involvement models. *Te Whāriki*, the Aotearoa New Zealand early childhood education (ECE) curriculum, also functioned as an analytical lens when seeking answers to the research questions.

Six participants were recruited using snowball sampling. Participants had to meet the inclusion criteria of being Chinese immigrant fathers, including biological fathers and step-fathers, and having a child or children in ECE settings in Aotearoa New Zealand. Content analysis and an inductive coding approach revealed themes including complexity, dilemmas and perspectives. This research suggests that different parenting styles can reflect the degree of fathers' involvement in their children's ECE. In addition, fathers' roles are complex, influenced by many contextual factors such as their work and life contexts. This research shows a clear gap between the current forms of engagement provided by ECE services and desired forms of participation sought by fathers, and most fathers viewed their participation in terms of benefits for their children. Meanwhile, there are significant overlaps between fathers' and ECE teachers' expectations and aspirations towards early childhood teaching and learning. Research findings have implications for developing robust strategies to encourage participation from this specific cultural and social group.

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This dissertation is dedicated to my mom in heaven, who passed away one month before this submission.

Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Signed: Jingyi (Jasmine) Wang

Date: 28/10/2021

Chapter 1: Introduction

Aotearoa New Zealand has a long-standing reputation as having a relatively sophisticated early childhood education (ECE) system and featuring a renowned national ECE curriculum called *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2017). In the hope that their children can receive a quality education in a less competitive environment, a growing number of Chinese parents choose to immigrate to Aotearoa New Zealand (Chan & Spoonley, 2017; Zhang et al., 2014). According to Statistics New Zealand (2018), the number of Chinese immigrants increased from 171, 000 in 2013 to 231, 387 in 2018. Immigrating to a new country brings challenges when adapting to new surroundings. Previous research shows that Chinese parents have low participation levels in ECE settings in Aotearoa New Zealand (Zhang et al., 2014). Based on my anecdotal observations, Chinese fathers participate less in ECE settings compared to mothers. Only a few local studies have focused on paternal parenting and fathers' levels of involvement in their children's ECE. Thus, it is timely to investigate the nature of Chinese immigrant fathers' participation in ECE in Aotearoa New Zealand.

This chapter is subdivided into four sections: rationale and research questions, conceptual framework, linguistic protocols, and an overview of the chapters.

The rationale and the research questions

Inclusion "encompasses gender and ethnicity, diversity of ability and learning needs, family structure and values, socio-economic status and religion" and underpins *Te Whāriki* (MoE, 2017, p. 13). *Te Whāriki* is an inclusive curriculum for all children living in Aotearoa New Zealand, regardless of where they come from (MoE, 2017). The notion of inclusion reveals that diversity in terms of culture, ethnicity, and gender is widely acknowledged in Aotearoa New Zealand society, and can be traced back to the spirit of *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*, Aotearoa New Zealand's founding document (Te Puni Kōkiri, 2001).

Inspired by the principles of *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*, building a partnership between ECE teachers and parents is a vision underpinning *Te Whāriki*. *Te Whāriki* suggests that ECE teachers work in close partnership with parents and whānau to support children's learning, which helps

realise "high hopes" (MoE, 2017, p. 6) for children. When developing a relationship, it is essential to discover each party's hopes and aspirations. This is why exploring Chinese immigrant fathers' characteristic attitudes towards early childhood teaching and learning is the focus of this dissertation.

There are clear gaps between the rhetoric and reality on how a partnership should be developed. Extensive literature details the benefits of collaboration between teachers and parents and models and guides how to create relationships (Epstein, 1995; Hornby, 2000). However, the reality is that there is a lack of consensus among teachers and parents on parental participation (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). Hornby and Lafaele further explain that teachers and parents might have different goals for parental participation, which, not surprisingly, results in variable perspectives on the degree and type of participation. Therefore, tensions and contradictions between these two parties determine how strong their partnership is. The situation can become more complex because the gendered nature of parental participation is ignored in most cases (Callister & Fursman, 2013; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011).

Much literature suggests that fathers' practices can often be vastly different from mothers' and, accordingly, can significantly influence their children's learning and development (Amato & Keith, 1991; Soleimani Tadi, 2018; Vogel et al., 2006). Therefore, it is essential to explore how fathers participate in ECE. Furthermore, besides gender differences, cultural differences (including possessed cultural capital), taken positions, and identities can also affect parents'/fathers' participation (Vogel et al., 2006; Ward, 2009). As such, it is essential to thoroughly explore the roles that a specific cultural and social group, Chinese immigrant fathers, undertake in their children's ECE.

As this research aims to explore Chinese immigrant fathers' roles, participation, and attitudes towards their children's ECE experiences, these participants' voices will be presented, and their experiences acknowledged. In addition, the findings will address a research gap and increase the understandings of the nature of participation of Chinese immigrant fathers in their children's ECE. The findings of this study will be helpful for ECE teachers and those

with the power to make decisions about promoting strategies that are beneficial to the involvement of such a specific cultural and social group in the ECE sector. As a result, these people will be better able to respond and support Chinese immigrant fathers to participate in their children's ECE experiences.

The purpose of this research is to understand how Chinese immigrant fathers' participation in ECE settings in Aotearoa New Zealand can be positively supported. Accordingly, three research questions were generated:

1. What are participating Chinese immigrant fathers' roles in their children's early learning experiences?
2. How do participating Chinese immigrant fathers participate in ECE settings?
3. What are participating Chinese immigrant fathers' characteristic attitudes towards early childhood teaching and learning?

Conceptual framework

A person's research philosophy influences what and how he or she researches (Newby, 2014). One's ontology, epistemology, values, and emotions inevitably influence how knowledge is constructed and understood. My early experiences of studying in Europe enabled me to gain a deep understanding of how challenging ethnic minorities' lives can be. As an immigrant in Aotearoa New Zealand, I have always had strong connections with people of the same or similar ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Meanwhile, as a qualified early childhood teacher, my teaching philosophy is driven by the Aotearoa New Zealand national ECE curriculum, *Te Whāriki*. I believe that the parent-teacher partnership should be strongly promoted in ECE services to benefit children long-term (Ansari & Gershoff, 2015). Lower levels of Chinese immigrant parents' participation in ECE settings in Aotearoa New Zealand could undoubtedly hinder building teacher-parent partnerships (Zhang et al., 2014). Sharing the same cultural background and ethnic identity, I would like to see Chinese parents and their children actively participate in ECE and benefit from their participation.

Paternal participation is the focus of this study because, based on my observations, Chinese immigrant fathers participate in ECE settings at a lower level compared to Chinese immigrant mothers. This phenomenon contradicts my cultural understanding that Chinese parents/fathers historically value their children's learning (Ng & Wei, 2020; Rao & Li, 2008; Xie & Li, 2017). The discrepancy between reality and my traditional understandings have stimulated this topic of interest. While reviewing relevant studies, I found I had strong feelings towards findings that indicated the importance of fathers' participation in their children's early life (Amato & Keith, 1991; Vogel et al., 2006). My personal childhood experiences, when my father was often away from home working, were profoundly formative. From my early experiences, I believe that fathers play an irreplaceable role in a child's early education, which has fostered my interest in this topic. A literature review revealed no research that focused on Chinese paternal participation in ECE in Aotearoa New Zealand. This research will therefore address this gap in knowledge.

My life experiences shape my values, and my values form my understanding of knowledge. I place a high value on contextual factors, and this fits within a constructivist paradigm. Reality is changeable and formable due to changes in various contexts. In other words, there is no single truth. This ontological stance forms the base for my epistemology, which is that individuals construct knowledge (Lincoln & Guba, 2013). The justification of my chosen position and why a qualitative methodology was employed is elaborated on in Chapter 3.

The research design was informed by Pleck's (1997) theory on the evolution of fatherhood and Baumrind's (1991) refined categorisation of parenting styles. These two theories also include examples of fathers' roles and parenting styles and were provided to participants during the interviews to help their understandings of the questions. Moreover, these two theories will function as a solid base for drawing sound findings and discussions. Hornby and Lafaele's (2011) parental participation and Hornby's (2011) parental involvement models, both from local studies in Aotearoa New Zealand, will serve as an analytical lens to explore Chinese immigrant fathers' experiences of participation in ECE settings in Aotearoa New Zealand. The principles and strands interwoven in *Te Whāriki* will be used to examine participants' attitudes and expectations towards early childhood teaching and learning.

How these theories were applied in this study are explained in the theoretical framework section in Chapter 3.

Linguistic protocols

This section presents several linguistic protocols used in this dissertation. The term "early childhood education" or ECE refers to children's early learning experiences and is frequently used throughout this dissertation. The term "ECE services" is used to describe "licensed and regulated early childhood education provision" (MoE, 2017, p. 7). Education and care centres such as daycares and kindergartens are classed as ECE services in this dissertation, while "ECE settings" emphasise places that participants' children attend.

As a specific cultural and social group was involved in this study, some Chinese phrases and idioms regarding Chinese ideology are used to help understand participants' narratives. However, it should be noted that some cultural ideologies cannot be explained without considering relevant cultural and historical contexts. Therefore, instead of translating the Chinese phrases and idioms into English literally, extra references, including underlying philosophies and cultural identities are provided.

Overview of the chapters

Chapter 1 introduces the rationale, research questions, and conceptual framework of the study. Linguistic protocols are provided to give readers an understanding of frequently used terminology and some context-based translations of Chinese phrases and idioms.

Chapter 2 reviews current and past literature. The reviewed key ideas, theories, and prior findings are organised into three themes: the context of Aotearoa New Zealand ECE, the context of Chinese ideology on fatherhood, and key theories and models. Under each theme, prior scholarship and findings are presented in a systematic yet critical way.

The methodology is explained in Chapter 3. The underlying philosophy, including the ontology and epistemology of the adopted constructivist research paradigm, and the theoretical framework are presented. Employed research methods, including semi-structured

online interviews, snowball sampling, and content analysis are outlined, and their suitability for this study is detailed. The research process is also described in this chapter.

Qualitative results are presented in Chapter 4. The three themes of complexity, dilemmas, and perspectives are illustrated with visual representations of the development process. The participating Chinese immigrant fathers' background information is introduced first as this is an important contextual factor. Under the first theme, complexity, significant findings regarding Chinese immigrant fathers' roles and parenting styles are presented. The second theme, dilemmas, contains the Chinese immigrant fathers' constraints when participating in ECE settings. The third theme, perspectives, includes Chinese immigrant fathers' attitudes towards early childhood teaching and learning. Reflective commentaries are provided with excerpts under each theme.

In Chapter 5, important findings are highlighted and discussed. In addition, a critical commentary is provided that references the reviewed literature. This chapter also implements the theoretical framework, including Pleck's (1997) fatherhood evolution model, Baumrind's (1991) parenting styles categorisation, Hornby and Lafaele's (2011) explanatory model, and *Te Whāriki* (MoE, 2017). These theories and models provide a solid foundation for answering the research questions.

Chapter 6 details the significance of the research, provides reflections on the study limitations, and presents suggestions for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter reviews what is known about Chinese fathers' participation in ECE in Aotearoa New Zealand. By synthesising ideas from previous studies, the systematic themes of the context of Aotearoa New Zealand ECE, the context of Chinese ideology on fatherhood, and key theories relevant to this study are developed. The first section outlines ECE service provision in Aotearoa New Zealand. *Te Whāriki,* the Aotearoa New Zealand ECE curriculum (MoE, 2017), will then be reviewed from the perspective of inclusion. As this study involved a specific cultural and social group, namely Chinese immigrant fathers, a substantial body of literature is reviewed in the second section, where Chinese immigrant fathers' changing roles, parenting styles, and immigrants' special characteristics are discussed. In addition to the knowledge and perspectives, the theories and models that informed this study will be presented in the third section. This literature review serves as an evaluative and critical lens to scrutinise contributions to this area of study, thereby helping define the research gap. Finally, after identifying the limitations and weaknesses of prior research, a conclusion will be drawn to justify the need for this study.

Context of Aotearoa New Zealand early childhood education

Types of services

There is a wide range of ECE services in Aotearoa New Zealand, including education and care services, kindergartens, home-based education and care services, playgroups, Pasifika playgroups, ngā puna kōhungahunga, playcentres, and ngā Kōhanga Reo (MoE, n.d.). According to the Ministry of Education (n.d.), "there are two main types of ECE service – teacher-led and parent-led" (para. 1). Teacher-led implies that ECE teachers play a leading role in settings such as education and care services, kindergartens, and home-based education and care services. In contrast, parents play a dominant role in the other services mentioned.

These various services can also be categorised by how they are funded (Lee et al., 2013). For instance, education and care services are usually privately-owned or group-owned, whereas kindergartens are "non-profit, community-based services managed by a Kindergarten Association" (MoE, n.d., para. 3). In addition to funding, a specific focus on culture and language use can differentiate these services (Education Counts, 2015). For example, ngā puna kōhungahunga and ngā Kōhanga Reo are settings where Māori language and tikanga is maintained and reflected in the structure and content of everyday teaching and learning, and Pasifika playgroups concentrate on reviving and developing Pasifika languages and cultures (MoE, n.d.).

Regardless, taking the various ethnic groups residing in Aotearoa New Zealand into account, most services, regardless of teacher-led, parent-led, profit, or non-profit, aim to include more than one language and cultural base (MoE, n.d.). As a result, parents have many options when considering their children's participation in ECE settings, although some ethnic groups have preferences. According to the Early Childhood Education Census (Education Counts, 2019), 98% of Asian children attended three main types of ECE services, including home-based services, kindergarten, and daycare centres. Three-quarters of Asian children attended education and care services, while only 12% and 11% of Asian families chose kindergarten and home-based services for their children, respectively (Education Counts, 2019).

Asian families' strong preferences towards teacher-led services, including education and care services, kindergarten and home-based services could be attributed to their historical beliefs of ECE provision. Traditional early childhood education in China was teacher-centred (Pang & Richey, 2007). Notably, due to influences from Western educational beliefs, such as learning through play, Chinese ECE teachers' pedagogies have become more child-centred (Sun & Rao, 2017). The priority of China's ECE curriculum shifted from merely preparing children for school to cultivating children's comprehensive abilities, such as logical reasoning and problem-solving skills (Sun & Rao, 2017). Chinese parents' participation also changed from passive abidance of teachers' recommendations to actively collaborating with teachers (Liu & Feng, 2005; Pang & Richey, 2007). However, fathers in China have low participation

levels in their children's education according to 10-year longitudinal research conducted by Wang (2007).

As the ECE sector in China has different terms, some Chinese immigrant parents may lack understanding about the types of ECE services in Aotearoa New Zealand. Zhu (2009) states there are three types of ECE services in China: nurseries, kindergartens, and preschool classes. According to Zhu, nurseries are mainly for children under three years of age. Kindergartens, mostly nation-managed, provide full-day services for children aged three to six years. Preschool classes serving children from five to six years of age are usually combined with primary schools. Although teachers' pedagogies and curriculum priorities have changed in China, the climate of fierce peer pressure and a competitive education system still makes Chinese parents worry about their children's academic performance (Ng & Wei, 2020). Because of this, it is common for preschools and kindergartens to incorporate academic learning such as early mathematics education into their programmes (Sun & Rao, 2017).

Te Whāriki

Although the types of ECE services in Aotearoa New Zealand vary, all of them, including licensed and certified services, are guided by *Te Whāriki*, the Aotearoa New Zealand ECE curriculum (MoE, 2017). Initially released in 1996, *Te Whāriki* was revised and updated in 2017. The latest curriculum retains the core components from the 1996 version, including principles and strands (MoE, 1996), with a new focus on intentional teaching and assessment (MoE, 2017). The word "kaiako" (the te reo Māori word for teacher) is also widely used in the 2017 version, which includes a section indicating the responsibilities of kaiako. One of these responsibilities is that kaiako should be "able to engage in dialogue with parents, whānau and communities to understand their priorities for curriculum and learning" (MoE, 2017, p. 59). The parent-teacher relationship has always been the focus of the Aotearoa New Zealand ECE framework. Two out of four principles, namely family and community, and relationships, outlined in *Te Whāriki* (MoE, 2017) are directly related to this relationship. The concepts of family and whānau are frequently included in learning outcomes under the five strands of

wellbeing, belonging, contribution, communication, and exploration in *Te Whāriki* (MoE, 2017).

Te Whāriki embraces the vision that "all children grow up in New Zealand as competent and confident learners, strong in their identity, language and culture" (MoE, 2017, p. 2). This notion of inclusion can be traced back to Aotearoa New Zealand's bicultural foundations. In 1840, *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* was signed by representatives of the British Crown and rangatira (chiefs) of northern iwi. *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* contains three principles: partnership, participation, and protection (Hayward, 2004). These three principles were initially designed to demonstrate the relationship between the two partners of *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*, Pākehā and Māori, involving Māori as participants at policy-making levels and protecting Māori "as a people, and as individuals, in addition to protecting their property and culture" (Te Puni Kōkiri, 2001, p. 93). However, even though *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* aspired to create a harmonious society where Māori could be treated fairly, the reality is that this partnership has, in large part, neither been upheld nor honoured by the Crown (Walker, 1990).

Nevertheless, clarifying the original intentions of these principles can help understand the implications in a modern context and other fields. For example, in ECE, children are placed at the centre of all decision-making with a focus on protecting their physical health and self-identity (Macfarlane & Macfarlane, 2012). Teachers and families are considered partners that mutually respect and have open and honest communication to ensure children's continuity of learning and development both at home and at ECE services (Guo, 2012). Participation includes children's enrollment in ECE services and their parents' involvement (Booth & Ibanez, 2017). Parents' participation is also highlighted in *He taonga te tamaiti – Every child a taonga: Early learning action plan 2019–2029* (MoE, 2019). This action plan clearly states that "all parents [will be supported] to be aware of the early learning curriculum *Te Whāriki*, [and] how they can participate in their chosen early learning service" (p. 19). The action plan's focus on parents' participation can again link back to the principle of family and community indicated in *Te Whāriki* (MoE, 2017), where family is regarded as "an integral part" (p. 20) of the curriculum.

Parental participation and paternal participation

It is acknowledged that "parental engagement within ECE settings is a prerequisite to parent-teacher partnerships" (Chan & Ritchie, 2016, p. 290). The importance and necessity of parental participation have always been stressed, and female parents have usually been employed primarily as research participants (Chan & Ritchie, 2016; Chan & Spoonley, 2017; Guo, 2012; Zhang et al., 2014). Conversely, not many studies have focused on paternal participation, and even fewer studies have given sufficient attention to paternal parenting in general. Greater importance should be attached to such a topic, not only because of the value of a father's involvement in their children's education, but also because of the crucial differences between male and female parents' participation levels in their children's ECE (Amato & Keith, 1991; Soleimani Tadi, 2018; Vogel et al., 2006). More specifically, Vogel et al. (2006) found that children who had stable connections with their fathers were more self-regulated and less aggressive than children who had less contact with their fathers. In other words, father connectedness can be related to child developmental outcomes. Garcia Coll and Pachter (2002) proposed that extended family supports could compensate for a father's absence and mitigate the impact of father disconnectedness. However, a father's role as an educator seems to be important. Amato and Keith's (1991) findings showed that children were more likely to achieve higher academic performance and have more self-control if fathers were involved in their early lives.

Vogel et al. (2006) further stated that the relationship might vary by race and ethnicity as fatherhood and family relationships can be defined and implemented differently within cultural and ethical groups. Ward (2009) also indicated that cultural differences might result in different parental participation levels in ECE. Chan and Ritchie (2016) found that parents from cultural groups who position teachers as "authority figures" (p. 291) might consider participation in ECE settings as "inappropriate" (p. 291) owing to inferior self-positioning. Further, Guo's (2005) research on Asian parents in Aotearoa New Zealand showed that immigrant parents whose primary language was not English communicated less frequently with teachers. Although the importance of considering cultural and ethnic aspects when analysing parental participation has been highlighted, the studies by Chan and Ritchie (2016),

Guo (2005), and Ward (2009) did not consider gender differences. Conversely, Callister and Fursman's (2013) study on the New Zealand fathers' participation levels in children's ECE suggested that long working hours, lack of paid parental leave, and Aotearoa New Zealand laws and policies hindered greater involvement in children's care and education. However, further research is needed as Callister and Fursman did not consider race and ethnicity as variables.

Context of Chinese ideology on fatherhood

The father's changing role

Pleck (1997) identified three stages of fatherhood throughout different periods in the United States—the stern patriarch, the distant breadwinner, and the co-parent or involved father. However, several studies have indicated that a Chinese father's role has also changed over time, and in a similar pattern, despite different cultural and historical contexts between the United States and China (Choy, 2017; Ng & Wei, 2020; Sun & Rao, 2017; Wu et al., 2013; Xie & Li, 2017).

The stern patriarch

Confucianism has long influenced people in China and in Chinese societies in several Asian countries such as Malaysia, Singapore, Korea, and Japan (Choy, 2017; Ng & Wei, 2020; Wu et al., 2013). Confucius, a leading philosopher in the history of China, systematically developed a range of Confucian values, some of which are connected to parenting. Therefore, the body of literature reviewed on Chinese parenting drew heavily on Confucianism. Conversely, Daoism (Kohn, 2009), another influential philosophy in China, was rarely mentioned. An essential principle of Confucian values is that parents make a full commitment to ensure their children behave properly, which is highly stressed in the *Analects of Confucius* (Cai, 1994). *Analects of Confucius* documents the teaching and thoughts of Confucius, traditionally believed to be written by Confucius' students and taking hundreds of years to be completely formed. Confucius philosophised that a man should observe his father's will while his father is alive, and after his father has passed away, he should reflect on his father's former actions (Cai, 1994). This highlights the father's function as a moral teacher in

educating his child's behaviour and thoughts. *Three Character Classic* (Zhu & Hu, 2011) is another traditional work that significantly influenced the Chinese ideology of fatherhood. One of the principles indicated in *Three Character Classic* is 子不教，父之过 (pronounced: Zi Bu Jiao, Fu Zhi Guo). This expression translates as "failing to educate the child is the fault of the father", which emphasises that fathers should take full responsibility for educating their children (Wu et al., 2013).

Consequently, Confucianism and influential literature of that era depicted an early figure of Chinese parents as "a stern father and a compassionate mother" (Wu et al., 2013, p. 302). The father's absolute power within a family has been further defined by the word "stern". To preserve their dignity and power, most fathers historically even chose to distance themselves from their children as they believed intentional alienation would help create a linear hierarchy (Xie & Li, 2017). However, the father's image is rarely portrayed in today's Chinese poems and other types of literature works (Yi, 2009), which, to some extent, is evidence that a father's role as an educator has been diminished.

The distant breadwinner

The belief that children's education is the father's duty started to change with the Cultural Revolution in the 1960s (Wu et al., 2013). When Chairman Mao advocated for improving women's social position, women shifted their focus from family life to the outside world (Sun & Rao, 2017; Wu et al., 2013). Although an increasing number of women began to study at school and were devoted to working like their male counterparts, discrimination in the labour market remained. In contrast to men, women found it more challenging to find jobs. Consequently, many mothers had to stay at home, while at the same time, fathers became the breadwinners (Wu et al., 2013). This resulted in a societal change that saw mothers becoming more involved in educating their children. Female parents found themselves more confident in this role because they became more capable and knowledgeable (Sun & Rao, 2017; Wu et al., 2013).

In contrast, the father's role as a provider was reinforced throughout the Reform and Opening-Up and economic restructuring periods (Wu et al., 2013). Additionally, the Chinese

Government implemented their the one-child policy from 1979–2015 (Sun & Rao, 2017), further removing fathers from everyday involvement in their children's lives. Influenced by Confucianism, Chinese parents have historically attached importance to children's learning with high expectations for their futures (Ng & Wei, 2020). Consequently, the only child was the central focus of the whole family. Therefore, because of the consistently fierce peer competition, an increasing number of children were forced to attend extracurricular activities on weekends, resulting in limited interaction and communication with their fathers who usually worked full-time during weekdays (Wu et al., 2013). Hence, the father's role as the provider was strengthened, but their childrearing commitments were reduced.

Meanwhile, with tasks clearly divided between father and mother, an ideology regarding gender roles became increasingly prominent in China. 男主外，女主内 (pronounced: Nan Zhu Wai, Nv Zhu Nei) means men's work centres around being outside, while women's work centres around the home (Fang & Walker, 2015). During a relatively long period in China's modern history, women were expected to conduct the main duties of the home, including doing housework and educating children. In contrast, men were expected to go out to work. However, the way of conducting oneself based on one's assigned sex is criticised by many gender theorists. Butler (1990), for example, believed gender should be seen as flexible rather than fixed to sex, and can therefore be constructed. Notably, Butler's notion of gender as a performative identity provides an interestingly critical lens when considering some female-dominated industries such as the ECE sector.

The involved father

The one-child policy ended in 2015; however, the mother's leading role remained (Sun & Rao, 2017). This role has gradually evolved into an extreme – Tiger Mother, vividly depicted in Amy Chua's book *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother* (2011). The book triggered debates in Western societies about whether Chinese mothers were superior to Western mothers (Sun & Rao, 2017). Regardless of its controversy, the book indicates that Chinese mothers nowadays have a powerful influence over their children's education. Xie and Li's (2017) study confirmed that female parents were more authoritarian than their male partners. Xie and Li

also denoted a new term to describe this type of paternal role – Panda Father, for their newly-emerged supportive role in children's education.

Xie and Li (2017) attributed this new pattern to a compromise between traditional Chinese culture and new socio-cultural formation influenced by the market economy and globalisation. Despite this change in parental roles, Chinese mothers and fathers still share the same goal towards their children's academic achievement. This is driven by their belief that the more effort the child puts into learning, the more accomplished he or she will become (Cai, 1994; Ng & Wei, 2020; Xie & Li, 2017). Notably, achievement is not only about academic success, but is also a way of showing self-improvement which is a core value of Confucianism (Cai, 1994). Furthermore, as previously mentioned, Chinese parents believe they should take full responsibility for ensuring their children's academic success and moral improvement. Many Chinese parents also believe that their child's academic achievement can bring fame, reputation, and fortune (Li, 2009). This belief has been passed down generations. As far back as the seventh century, Imperial China used a civil service examination system, also known as the Imperial Examination, to select exceptional candidates (only males) to serve as administrative officials (Ng & Wei, 2020). If a person passed the exam, his deprived background could change dramatically. Therefore, education has historically been considered the only way to change a person's social class. Chinese people still hold a similar view, especially under China's current climate of fierce peer pressure and a competitive education system (Ng & Wei, 2020).

Parenting styles

Conflicts between Chinese and Western educational values have long existed. For instance, some Western educators have cast doubt on Chinese parenting styles (Dombusch et al., 1987; Kelley, 1992). Chinese parents were thought to be more likely to give negative reinforcement on their children's performance to "highlight areas that future efforts should target" (Ng & Wei, 2020, p. 63). Thus, it is not surprising to discover that Chinese parents were criticised for being more authoritarian than Western parents (Chao, 1994). The term "authoritarian parents" was systematically introduced by Baumrind (1991) in her model that

categorised four parenting styles: authoritative, authoritarian, indulgent, and neglectful. Baumrind, a prominent psychologist, significantly contributed to knowledge on parenting styles with data primarily collected from the United States communities. According to Baumrind (1991), authoritative parents are "demanding and responsive" (p. 62), which means they deliver clear rules without being rigid. They are warm and supportive to their children. In contrast, authoritarian parents are demanding. They expect children's blind obedience without providing any rationale. Indulgent parents are believed to have few rules and usually "avoid confrontation" (p. 62), while neglectful parents are "neither demanding nor responsive" (p. 62) but uninvolved in childrearing.

Baumrind (1991) later refined her model and added a directive parenting style after noticing its difference from authoritarian parenting. These two styles are "high on demand or control but vary in quality of control, responsiveness and socialisation goals" (Sorkhabi, 2012, p. 857). Baumrind's categorisation has been used to analyse parenting behaviour over the past two decades (Casas et al., 2006). However, as most studies focused on European-American parents, it was argued that this categorisation was insufficient for describing Chinese parenting styles (Quoss & Zhao, 1995). Chao's (2000) study supported this argument and brought a new style to attention – 教训/training (pronounced: Jiao Xun). The term was first used to describe Asian American parents' practices (Chao, 1994). Chao (2000) emphasised the difference between authoritarian and training, with authoritarian referring to dominant, hostile, and aggressive, and training referring to governing, loving, and caring. It is worth noting that Chao's findings may have significant implications for this research that focuses on Chinese immigrant fathers.

Moreover, Chinese parents and Western parents hold different views towards children's play. Traditional Chinese parents usually pay closer attention to children's academic achievement and do not value children's play (Ng & Wei, 2020; Xie & Li, 2017). On the contrary, children's play-based experiences have attracted much importance in Western societies (Santrock, 2009). For example, learning through play is a notion underpinning *Te Whāriki*, the play-based ECE curriculum of Aotearoa New Zealand. Play is considered a meaningful activity by which children can achieve holistic development (MoE, 2017). In recent years, Chinese

parents' mindsets towards ECE have evolved. With the impact of globalisation, Chinese parents have had more opportunities to become exposed to advanced ECE theories, concepts, and ideas (Choy, 2017). According to Rao and Li (2008), a growing number of parents in China have begun to understand the value of play-based education. For example, "eduplay" has become many Chinese parents' favourite term, reflecting a new way of balancing their consistent emphasis on children's education and their emergent approval of children's play (Rao & Li, 2008). Roopnarine and Johnson's (2001) research also showed that more than two-thirds of Chinese parents regarded ECE services as educational institutions where their children could achieve academic goals relating to literacy and numeracy. Chinese parents gradually changed their beliefs through exposure to Western perceptions of children's early education. Sun and Rao (2017) found Chinese parents, especially those in cities, believed their children could develop social skills by playing and interacting with peers at ECE services. Ng and Wei (2020) added that contemporary Chinese parents have started to shift their attention from their children's academic performance to their children's holistic development.

Special characteristics of Chinese immigrant parents

Chen (2001) reported that there is "no significant differences found between the Chinese and Chinese-American groups" (p. 310). However, Ng and Wei (2020) observed distinct differences between Chinese parents in China and Chinese immigrant parents from Chinese societies in the United States. Ng and Wei believed that social pressures and dominant norms in the society where the immigrants lived may influence their parenting styles, preventing Chinese parents from behaving according to their own beliefs (Ng & Wei, 2020).

Acculturation, a term that can be located in research focusing on immigrants, refers to the process of adjustment to a new cultural environment (Choy, 2017; Liu et al., 2020; Miao et al., 2018). Stressors such as difficulties speaking English, feeling excluded, and facing discrimination can be linked to acculturation (Miao et al., 2018). Furthermore, immigrant parents who experience a high level of acculturation-related stress usually have fewer positive parenting practices, such as lower parental reasoning, monitoring, and warmth (Miao

et al., 2018). In other words, such stressors can adversely impact immigrants' parenting. Liu et al. (2020) added that besides acculturation stressors, unemployment, financial hardships, and low education levels might also result in negative parenting behaviour and even lead to harsher discipline of children. Although these two studies focused on Chinese immigrant families outside Aotearoa New Zealand – Canada and the United States, the results are still relevant to Chinese immigrants in Aotearoa New Zealand, who might have been through similar challenges (Zhang et al., 2014).

Guo's (2012) local research on Chinese immigrants' experiences of ECE indicated that parenting perspectives and experiences were influenced by both Chinese tradition and the programmes and routines of ECE centres in Aotearoa New Zealand. Guo (2012) further explained that Chinese immigrant parents perceive teachers to be an authority, and therefore intend to "embrace the mainstream culture of the centres" (p. 7). However, Chinese parents' value on their children's academic development results in a discontinuity of learning between home and ECE settings. It has been reported that Chinese immigrant parents in Aotearoa New Zealand actively engage their children with academic activities at home (Guo, 2012). This is consistent with results from Chan and Ritchie's (2016) study showing "a high degree of parental involvement of the participants in out-of-kindergarten context" (p. 295). Chan and Spoonley (2017) added that while some Chinese immigrant parents in Aotearoa New Zealand were aware of the value of child-centred learning, they were still interested in seeing more structured learning activities set up by teachers in ECE settings. Chan and Spoonley's findings can further explain why teacher-led ECE services are where most Asian children attend (Education Counts, 2019).

Chan and Spoonley (2017) further attributed complex parenting practices to the paradoxical perceptions of their own and their children's identities. Their findings showed that the first-generation Chinese immigrants identified themselves as Chinese, regardless of how long they had lived in Aotearoa New Zealand. However, while those Chinese immigrant parents believed "identity was innately determined and constrained in a static manner" (p. 21), they thought their children's identity was "fluid and hybrid" (p. 24) regardless of where the children

were born. This is a case in point illustrating the complexity of cultural capital that immigrants specifically possess.

Key theories and models

The concept of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) can further illustrate how migrants bring their cultural resources from their home countries to their recipient countries. One of the prevalent features of cultural capital is the rucksack approach, which figuratively describes how migrants unpack their cultural resources from their backpacks (Bourdieu, 1986). Erel (2010), however, criticised this approach for "missing out on an important layer of complexity" (p. 646) and noted that one ethnic group does not "hold homogeneous cultural capital" (p. 646). For example, different genders and social classes within a migrant group can produce different cultural capital (Erel, 2010). In terms of how cultural capital has been employed by migrants, Bourdieu and Wacquant (2007) stated that it depends on an individual's "position-taking" (p. 99). This means that migrants can select their cultural capital strategically to adapt to the society of their residence. This notion can help explain why Confucian values are "selectively preserved" (p. 46) by Chinese immigrant parents (Choy, 2017). Erel (2010) further adds that even some new forms of cultural capital can be created by migrants, which he calls "migration-specific cultural capital" (p. 643).

In terms of how parents participate in children's education, Epstein (1995) identified six types of involvement: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with community. Epstein's framework of six types of involvement is well-known for its "overlapping spheres of influence" (p. 82), including family, school, and community. However, this framework is heavily school-based and in the context of the United States. Hornby (2011), a scholar of Aotearoa New Zealand, extended Epstein's findings and developed a parental involvement model that "consists of two pyramids connected at the base" (p. 32). One represents a hierarchy of parents' needs including: 1) a channel of communication, such as telephone contacts or newsletters; 2) liaison with school staff, including parent-teacher meetings; 3) parent education, such as parent workshops; 4) parent support, including counselling. The other represents a hierarchy of parents' possible

contributions, including: 1) sharing information about children; 2) collaborating with teachers, such as home-school reading; 3) acting as a resource, including classroom aides; 4) policy formation, such as PTA members (Hornby, 2011). As such, Hornby's parental involvement model can be used to analyse Chinese immigrant fathers' hierarchy of needs and contributions. Further, Hornby and Lafaele (2011) developed an explanatory model outlining four main types of barriers that may adversely impact the effectiveness of parental involvement in children's education. These are child factors, parental and family factors, parent-teacher factors, and societal factors. Indeed, Hornby and Lafaele's comprehensive model serves as another systematic lens to analyse parental involvement practices. These two models are useful when exploring the nature of participation of Chinese immigrant fathers in their children's ECE. An explanation of how these two models have been adapted to the ECE context of Aotearoa New Zealand is presented in the theoretical framework section in Chapter 3.

Conclusion

This chapter outlined the context of Aotearoa New Zealand ECE, including the types of services and the national curriculum, *Te Whāriki*. Acknowledging the fact that home-based services, kindergartens, and daycare centres have long been chosen by the vast majority of Asian families (Education Counts, 2019) is of help when understanding Chinese immigrant fathers' participation levels in ECE settings. In addition to the principles and strands of *Te Whāriki* (MoE, 2017), where the teacher-parent relationship is strongly promoted, a rich body of literature provides evidence of the benefits of parental participation in children's ECE (Booth & Ibanez, 2017; Chan & Ritchie, 2016; Guo, 2012; Ward, 2009). Nonetheless, few studies have focused on paternal parenting in general. Moreover, the limited findings from previous research cannot fully define contemporary fatherhood because of the changing nature of a father's role and position (Ng & Wei, 2020; Sun & Rao, 2017; Wu et al., 2013; Xie & Li, 2017).

Since this study focuses on Chinese immigrant fathers, literature on Chinese fatherhood was reviewed. Contemporary fatherhood is shaped by socio-cultural changes, and despite the

different cultural and historical contexts between China and Western society, the father's role has evolved in a similar pattern (Ng & Wei, 2020; Pleck, 1997; Xie & Li, 2017). A further review of the literature on parenting styles helped identify the differences in parents' practices regarding childrearing. It is important to note that many Chinese scholars have used numerous terms to describe Chinese fathers' roles, Chinese parenting styles, and Chinese parents' practices, such as Panda Father (Xie & Li, 2017), 教训/training (Chao, 2000), and eduplay (Rao & Li, 2008). In addition, the dominant norms in the recipient country may influence immigrants' parenting styles and practices (Ng & Wei, 2020). Therefore, special characteristics of Chinese immigrants should be considered. Theories and models, including Bourdieu's (1986) theory of cultural capital, Hornby and Lafaele's (2011) explanatory model, and Hornby's (2011) parental involvement model, have laid solid theoretical foundations for this study, which sets up the framework for the research.

Finally, although some Aotearoa New Zealand based research has been conducted concerning Chinese immigrant parents in ECE, the research focused on Chinese parents' identities (Chan & Spoonley, 2017) or the importance of teacher invitations for parental involvement (Zhang et al., 2014). While Chinese immigrant parents' participation in ECE was a focus of two studies conducted by Chan and Ritchie (2016) and Guo (2012), again, gender differences were not considered. There is no specific research that pays sufficient attention to Chinese immigrant fathers' parenting and Chinese paternal participation in ECE in Aotearoa New Zealand, and this study will address this gap.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter details how and why this study into the nature of participation of a group of Chinese immigrant fathers in their children's ECE was conducted. A qualitative methodology was employed to ensure the findings could serve as a critical lens to increase understanding of Chinese immigrant fathers' roles, experiences, and attitudes in the ECE of their children. The ontology and epistemology underpinning the methodology are explained in the first section, after which the theoretical framework incorporated into the research design is explained. In the third section, data collection and analysis methods are introduced. The fourth section is where the sample size, inclusion criteria, and participant recruitment method are detailed. Then, the research process is described, starting with the pilot study. Ethical issues, the participant recruitment process, and data collection and analysis are also discussed. The final section notes the limitations of the methodology and research methods, followed by a conclusion highlighting the major points mentioned in this chapter.

Underlying philosophy

Constructivism was adopted and applied as the methodological paradigm for this study (Lincoln & Guba, 2013). The adopted position for this research is that multiple realities and truths exist, and knowledge can be created by individuals (Lincoln & Guba, 2013; Newby, 2014). To further elaborate on my ontological stance, reality is understood through the theory of relativism, meaning "reality is relative to the individuals involved and to the particular context in which they find themselves" (Lincoln & Guba, 2013, p. 39). In other words, knowledge and truth are not absolute, and are always being influenced and shaped by cultural, social, and historical contexts. My research philosophy illustrates why participants' contextual influences have been of focus in this study. Exploring participating Chinese immigrant fathers' multi-layered life contexts can help gain insights into relationships between the interplayed contexts and how different contexts influence the participants' roles, experiences, and attitudes. This aligns with my research goal of understanding how a particular cultural and social group's participation in ECE settings of Aotearoa New Zealand can be positively supported.

My epistemological stance is that individuals' interactions can construct knowledge, which is why interviews were chosen to collect the qualitative data for this research. Kvale (1996) noted that qualitative research interviews can show how individuals can create knowledge. Kvale states that interviews should be regarded as interpersonal encounters that "may provoke new insights and changes" (p. 30). Cohen et al. (2018) posited that interviews are an effective form of two-way communication, thereby ensuring knowledge can be generated between individuals through interactions. Notably, knowledge is not always newly constructed, but sometimes reconstructed (Lincoln & Guba, 2013). In other words, new knowledge is not always produced by inquiries, but can often be generated by reflections on previous knowledge. For example, in the participant interviews, Baumrind's (1991) categorisation and Chao's (2000) Chinese parent-specific typologies were introduced to support discussions between myself and the participants. Some previous knowledge of parenting styles was reconstructed through participants' reflections, leading to interesting findings towards Chinese immigrant fathers' multiple roles and mixed styles.

Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework was drawn from a wide range of reviewed literature on fatherhood, parenting styles, parental participation, and Aotearoa New Zealand's ECE contexts. This section outlines the conceptual and analytical approaches taken to ensure this research is grounded and informed by theories in the field.

The first research question asks what a group of Chinese immigrant fathers' roles are in their children's early learning experiences. Pleck's (1997) theory of fatherhood evolution defines various roles that fathers might undertake, such as the distant breadwinner and involved father, and identified that a father's role could change over time, for example, from patriarch to co-parent. Combined with other scholars' findings on Chinese fatherhood (Choy, 2017; Ng & Wei, 2020; Sun & Rao, 2017; Wu et al., 2013; Xie & Li, 2017), Pleck's (1997) model significantly influenced the data analysis and collocation process. Baumrind's (1991) refined model categorising parenting styles further helped explore Chinese immigrant fathers' roles in their children's ECE. According to Baumrind's model, parenting styles can be classified

into authoritative, authoritarian, directive, indulgent, and neglectful, and the parenting style can be seen in the role that a father takes. For example, authoritative parents/fathers can be highly demanding and responsive, indicating they are heavily involved parents/fathers. In contrast, neglectful parents/fathers hardly make demands or provide responses to their children, which suggests they are unlikely to be involved in their children's ECE. As such, Pleck's (1997) theory of fatherhood evolution and Baumrind's (1991) categorisations laid a solid theoretical base for analysing relevant data and answering the first research question.

Hornby's (2011) parental involvement model and Hornby and Lafaele's (2011) parental participation model were used when seeking answers to the second research question of how Chinese immigrant fathers participate in ECE settings. More specifically, Hornby's (2011) parental involvement model, including two pyramids of parents' contributions and needs, was used to analyse Chinese immigrant fathers' current and desired forms of participation. It should be noted that Hornby's model is a school-based model used to investigate parental involvement practices in elementary, middle, and secondary school settings. However, by adapting Hornby's (2011) model with aspects of *Te Whāriki*, this model could also applicable for ECE studies. For instance, home-school reading is listed as an example of parents collaborating with school teachers in Hornby's (2011) model; however, home-school reading in ECE in Aotearoa New Zealand is uncommon. The equivalent principle suggested in *Te Whāriki* (MoE, 2017) in the context of this research is parents/fathers posting a story about their children's learning at home or responding to their children's learning stories on Storypark, which illustrates a level of collaboration with ECE teachers (Higgins & Cherrington, 2017).

Two other adaptations are regarding PTA members and school governors, which are provided by Hornby (2011) as examples of parental contributions to school policy formation. It is rare to see parent associations or groups in the ECE sector. However, as suggested in *Te Whāriki* (MoE, 2017), parent surveys can help ECE teachers understand parents' perspectives about priorities for learning, thereby contributing to ECE service planning and evaluation. Therefore, any activities involving parents in decision-making and planning and improving ECE services can be regarded as evidence that shows parents'/fathers'

contributions to policy formation. Hornby's (2011) model also considers parent-teacher meetings as an example of liaising with school staff. Even though parent-teacher meetings are uncommon in ECE settings, it is indicated in *Te Whāriki* (MoE, 2017) that "parents and whānau will be included in discussions about their children's progress and achievements" (p. 64). Therefore, formal and informal dialogue regarding children's assessment with teachers can be seen as examples of liaising with ECE teachers.

Further, Hornby and Lafaele's (2011) parental participation model served as a comprehensive checklist to investigate factors influencing Chinese immigrant fathers' participation in ECE settings. According to this model, four main factors act as barriers to parental participation. These factors include parental and family factors, child factors, parent-teacher factors, and societal factors. Notably, this model is also originally school-based but can be applied to this study with some adaptions. For example, Hornby and Lafaele (2011) believed that parents' lack of confidence in their own academic abilities might affect their willingness to participate in their children's higher education. However, this would unlikely be the case for parental participation in ECE. The focus of this study should be to check if participants have other concerns regarding their capabilities, such as language barriers since English is not their first language. Furthermore, Hornby and Lafaele (2011) stated "parental participation decreases as children grow older" (p. 42), and this is also a very strong school-based statement. Hornby and Lafaele added that parental participation "is at its lowest level for children of secondary school age" (p. 42). Again, a layer of critical thinking should be applied to this claim, and it is important to investigate if this is also the case in ECE settings.

Due to the limited timeframe, teachers' voices were not included in this study. Lack of exploration into teachers' narratives towards Chinese immigrant fathers' participation may have meant that some of the societal factors indicated by Hornby and Lafaele (2011) less emerged. For example, Hornby and Lafaele state that "conflicting pressures between the educational market and funding" (p. 49) may constrain the development of parental participation. Teachers could likely provide better answers into whether programmes and resources are adequately available compared to parents. When applying Hornby and Lafaele's (2011) model to discuss parent-teacher factors, including different goals, agendas,

and attitudes, secondary information about teachers' expectations and aspirations was heavily drawn from *Te Whāriki* (MoE, 2017).

Te Whāriki played a vital part in adapting the previously mentioned school-based models and also served as a critical lens when analysing collected data regarding Chinese immigrant fathers' attitudes and expectations towards early childhood teaching and learning. The curriculum framework is organised by principles, strands, goals, and learning outcomes (MoE, 2017). More specifically, four fundamental principles underpin the curriculum, including empowerment, holistic development, family and community, and relationships (MoE, 2017). The principle of family and community is most relevant to this study, as it suggests that parents' aspirations should be respected by ECE teachers (MoE, 2017). *Te Whāriki* also clearly indicates that "children's learning and development is enhanced when parents, whānau and community are encouraged to participate in and contribute to the curriculum" (MoE, 2017, p. 20). In other words, the curriculum places a great amount of value on parents' participation in their children's ECE. The five strands, including wellbeing, belonging, contribution, communication, and exploration, are the areas of children's learning and development (MoE, 2017). Under each strand, there are goals for ECE teachers who are responsible for "facilitating environments and pedagogies that are consistent with the principles" (MoE, 2017, p. 16). These goals are important references when examining Chinese immigrant fathers' expectations and aspirations towards their children's learning. These goals could be used to investigate whether ECE teachers and parents have the same expectations for children's learning. Using *Te Whāriki* (MoE, 2017) as an analytical framework, the third research question about Chinese immigrant fathers' attitudes towards early childhood teaching and learning could be answered critically.

Data collection and analysis methods

Semi-structured online interviews

Semi-structured interviews were considered an appropriate method for data collection because they allow for flexibility and deep exploration of topics. Semi-structured interviews also empower interviewees to consistently share their thoughts and ideas (Cohen et al.,

2018). Individual interviews were chosen over focus groups for two reasons. The first was that through one-to-one interviews, varied but individualised information from each interviewee could be gathered, contributing to the multiplicity of final research findings. The second was that Chinese people sometimes feel less comfortable talking in front of "outsiders" (Chan & Spoonley, 2017, p. 20). Therefore, if participants were asked to share their thoughts within a focus group, they may have felt uncomfortable and contributed less. Additionally, "group dynamics may lead to non-participation by some members and dominance by others" (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 533). Therefore, the selected approach ensured that everyone's voice could be heard. This is consistent with the study's ontological and epistemological stance that there is no single truth, and individuals' interactions can generate knowledge (Lincoln & Guba, 2013; Newby, 2014).

Lincoln and Guba (2013) state that constructivist research is subjective, meaning a qualitative researcher's position cannot be neutral (Daniel & Harland, 2017; Mutch, 2005; Newby, 2014). In other words, the researcher's philosophy, values, and emotions inevitably affect how the research will be conducted, and therefore the research is "never authentically objective" (Lincoln & Guba, 2013, p. 38). This is also true for this study, as the findings rely on interactions between myself and the participants through interviews and my active interpretation of the data. Notably, a "shared reality" was created by myself and the participants (Lincoln & Guba, 2013, p. 41). As the participants are stakeholders in this study, all participants were provided with an opportunity to check and approve their interview transcript. After data analysis was completed, all participants received a summary of the findings with the option to provide feedback. However, no feedback was provided.

Given the COVID-19 pandemic situation when this research occurred, it was decided that online interviews were the most appropriate method for data collection. Furthermore, online interviews were deemed to be in the best interests of everyone's physical and emotional safety. Although this method has attracted criticism concerning less "immersive contact with participants" (Howlett, 2021, p. 3), I did not find this to be the case. During the online interviews, video capability enabled participants' verbal and nonverbal cues to be read similarly to face-to-face interviews. In addition, Zoom rooms with passcodes helped maintain

a private space and ensured immersive engagement with participants. A "digital and socially meaningful space" (p. 7) was also co-constructed (Howlett, 2021). This space was created by setting up meetings, sending links to participants, and hosting the interviews, while participants could choose to accept the invitation, suggest a different time or day, and decide to show up on time and turn their webcams on. Despite interviewing participants online, the video and audio quality made the interviewing process seamless. A significant advantage of online interviews, based on my observations, is that participants feel more relaxed when expressing their thoughts, and most informed me that they forgot their voice was being recorded.

One issue of online interviews is that the interviewer can enter a participant's personal space (Howlett, 2021). Although having Zoom rooms with passcodes and only recording audio can help protect participants' personal spaces, the interviews could sometimes be interrupted by others who had access to participants' personal spaces. A solution of pausing the interview and turning off the camera was suggested to protect participants' privacy. This was clearly indicated in the online interview consent protocol approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (see Appendix B for the consent protocol). Another challenge with online interviews is that an unstable internet connection can sometimes mean lulls in conversation can occur, affecting the quality of the recording.

Content analysis

Content analysis was used to analyse the data (Cohen et al., 2018). This analysis method is considered a generic analytic approach that enables patterns and themes to be generated from data sources. Coding is just one important step in content analysis. While a pre-coded approach can help set pre-decided coding categories to which the interview data can be assigned, data can also be post-coded based on transcriptions (Gibbs, 2017). Once a coding framework is established, the next step is to move beyond the coding stage and look for themes, which according to Braun and Clarke (2006), "capture something important about the data in relation to the research question and represent some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set" (p. 82). The flexibility of content analysis is sometimes

misrepresented by some researchers, who believe that such a method is limited to grounded theory. However, content analysis does more than this, and it depends on how researchers construct the data network (Cohen et al., 2018). As such, "coding is heuristic – a method of discovery" (Miles et al., 2014, p. 64). Content analysis can be considered an inductive approach and was suitable for this research. NVivo was chosen as an analysis tool because it supports various data types such as audio and documents, and has various useful functions such as nodes, memos, and queries (Cohen et al., 2018).

While I sought to define patterns and themes to inform the findings to serve as a critical lens, my perspective means that the findings will not be considered the only truth. This again links back to my ontological stance that there is no single truth (Lincoln & Guba, 2013).

Sample selection

A total of six participants were recruited. In order to identify and access this particular group, snowball sampling (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015) was used. The first participant that met the selection criteria (i.e., Chinese immigrant fathers, including biological fathers and step-fathers, who have a child or children in ECE settings of Aotearoa New Zealand) was selected from my social network. The other five participants were recruited through referrals by previous participants. Snowball sampling is particularly useful when recruiting hard to reach samples (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). As this study involved a specific cultural and social group (Chinese immigrant fathers), I was less likely to locate all participants in one ECE setting. Therefore, snowball sampling was an effective and efficient way to locate prospective participants, especially within the limited timeframe.

Since I share the participants' cultural and linguistic backgrounds, I could be sensitive to Chinese immigrants' identities and cultural norms. For example, I asked participants to pass my contact information on to potential participants because I understood that being approached by a "stranger" (Chan & Spoonley, 2017, p. 20) could be considered unsafe and sometimes offensive by some Chinese people. In addition, as English was not the participants' first language, the information sheets and consent forms were translated into Chinese (see Appendix B). Written information in both English and Chinese was provided to

participants by email so participants could have a clear idea about the research project. Before the interviews were conducted, participants could choose what language they wanted the interview to be conducted in. The language options included English, Mandarin, and Cantonese. This was to ensure that participants would be comfortable conversing during the interviews.

Process

Before commencing the study, two pilot interviews were conducted for methodological reasons. Feedback from the pilot interviews allowed me to rethink the research design for the study proper. Firstly, the choice of online interviews was justified as the data collection method because of its flexibility and reliability shown in the pilot study. Consultation with the trial participants proved that contactless interviews were preferred under the current circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic. After reflecting on the trial participants' responses, some overly complicated questions were rephrased to make them clearer and use more accessible language.

I sought ethics approval (Reference 21/46) from the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC). The process comprised of completing an ethics application form and preparing documents, such as the consent form, the information sheet, and consent protocol for the online interviews. This process equipped me with new knowledge regarding research ethics and helped address any possible ethical concerns for this study. For example, unlike a shared location where traditional fieldwork is conducted between participants and the researcher, personal spaces can be accessed by others, such as family members or colleagues during online interviews. (Howlett, 2021). Therefore, it was suggested in the consent protocol that participants needed to pause the interview and turn off the camera to protect the privacy of all concerned if a third party entered their space.

The first participant was contacted by phone. Upon his verbal agreement, a consent form with translations in Chinese was sent via email. After obtaining his written informed consent, an online interview was organised and conducted via Zoom. When the interview was completed, the participant was asked to recommend at least two potential participants and

to pass on my contact details and the information sheets with translations. Within the following two weeks, I received emails from two prospective participants saying they would like to be a part of the study. I then sent them the consent forms. After receiving their signed consent forms via email, interview times were negotiated based on each participant's preference. Once the meeting times were agreed upon, I sent an email with a link, date and time, and Zoom room passcode to each participant. After the individual interviews, I asked the two participants to recommend another two or more potential participants.

This stage of recruitment was not as successful as the previous stage, as I only received a response from one out of a possible four or more prospective participants. Fortunately, one participant decided to participate and scanned the signed consent form and returned it via email. After being interviewed, the participant also recommended two potential participants, one of whom was interested and contacted me, making him the fifth participant. The sixth participant was a referral from the fifth participant and went through the same recruitment procedure, including signing and returning the consent form, arranging an interview time, and receiving an email with meeting details. Upon gaining his consent to participate in the research, recruitment ended, as there were enough participants for the study.

Each interview lasted up to 45 minutes and the topics and questions were prepared beforehand. A rich body of literature guided the development of the interview questions. For example, one question asked participants to describe their parenting style and was informed by Baumrind's (1991) categorisation and Chao's (2000) Chinese parent-specific typology. Another question, which asked participants to indicate in what forms/ways they participated in ECE settings, was guided by Hornby's (2011) parental involvement model. Besides the literature review, pilot interview feedback also contributed to forming some of the interview questions. For example, I avoided using academic words and/or jargon, such as "scaffolding" and "provocations" during interviews. I also consulted with my supervisor throughout the development of the interview questions.

During the interviews, the wording and sequence of interview questions were "tailored to each individual interviewee and the responses given, with prompts and probes" (Cohen et

al., 2018, p. 511). For example, in response to the question "How do you define your parenting style?", Participant A indicated, "I could be an authoritative father when I have to make important decisions relating to big things. However, when it comes to the small things, I tend to be more careless, and sometimes I can be indulgent too". This response was very stimulating; however, I felt there were some underlying meanings that needed to be discovered. Therefore, instead of asking the next planned interview question, I prompted and probed, "pressing for clarity and elucidation" (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 512) by asking Participant A to give further examples to distinguish between "big things" and "small things". This resulted in more specific explanations being provided, and in turn, I gained a detailed understanding of the differences.

To make each interviewee feel as comfortable as possible, I offered interviewees an option as to what language was used. These options included English, Mandarin, and Cantonese. As participants could choose the language that the interviews were conducted in, power was shared. Audio for all interviews was recorded, and participants were informed of this in both written and verbal forms. Data was recorded on a digital audio recorder and transcribed. As all of the interviews were conducted in Chinese, translating the transcriptions was time-consuming and somewhat challenging. The process of translating transcripts is an example of subjectivity in qualitative research. The fact that I, as the active processor of gathered information, brought my own background knowledge and sensitivities to the translation of collected data cannot be ignored. Another aspect of subjectivity is that the precision of translating the raw interview data relied on my word choices. As English is not my first language, I sometimes struggled to find the right words to use. However, to ensure the accuracy of the collected data, a bilingual dictionary and thesaurus were used. In addition, a "back translation strategy" to check my translations was also applied (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 29). This strategy involves a bilingual person translating a sample of the translation back to the original language. The result showed that my translation was reliable as the back translation was very close to the original.

As previously mentioned, content analysis was chosen as the data analysis approach (Cohen et al., 2018). Coding is the main feature of this analysis method and was conducted

pre and post data collection. This process is known as the pre-coded approach and post-coded approach (Gibbs, 2017). Several pattern codes were pre-decided from the reviewed literature and included 'parenting styles' (Baumrind, 1991; Chao, 2000), 'father roles' (Pleck, 1997; Xie & Li, 2017), 'contribution' and 'need' (Hornby, 2011). The coding process confirmed the notion of Cohen et al. (2018), who stated that "coding is not a one-off exercise" (p. 671) since codes are assigned and reassigned, placed and replaced in order to achieve "consistency and full coverage" (p. 671).

Therefore, after data was collected, some pre-decided pattern codes were changed or adapted. For example, 'parenting styles' and 'father's roles' were revised into 'mixed styles' and 'multiple roles', while 'contribution' and 'need' became codes under 'current participation' and 'desired participation'. More codes progressively emerged from the collected data, such as 'joining', which referred to Chinese immigrant fathers' desire to join in children's learning. There were two cycles of coding. In the first cycle, a portion of data ranging from one word to a full sentence was coded. Then, in the second cycle, some codes remained, while others were revised and even reconfigured (Saldaña, 2013). For example, in the first cycle, I created codes such as 'benefit' – Chinese immigrant fathers' participation for their own good. In the second cycle, I decided to change the code's name to 'self' and assign it to a reconfigured pattern code of 'motivations' – incentives that encourage Chinese immigrant fathers' participation.

During the data analysis process, and especially in the first cycle of coding, a number of approaches, including concept coding, value coding, simultaneous coding, and *invivo* coding, were adopted. Of these approaches, *invivo* coding (which relies on the participant's own language) was used least because the interviews were conducted in Chinese. Miles et al. (2014) also note that different code types can assist in finding patterns. This occurred during coding, as different types of codes, such as concepts and values, helped categorise the raw data. As mentioned earlier, the second coding cycle was where themes and patterns started to emerge based on my understandings and interpretations. Pattern coding was the main method in this process (Miles et al., 2014). It is also worth noting that not all text in the data corpus was coded. In order to keep the research questions clearly in mind, the conceptual

framework and research questions were written down and reflected upon throughout the coding process. This helped me avoid the irrelevant coding of data. A full listing of codes can be found in Appendix D.

Finally, while NVivo was useful for coding, I found that manual coding was more effective for the first coding cycle. Word frequencies were generated using a query in NVivo, but the results were not useful. For example, 'children' was the second most frequently mentioned word in the conducted interviews, but after reviewing all the references to 'children' that NVivo found, none were applicable for coding.

Therefore, I printed out all the transcriptions with translations. I went through every word and sentence at least three times, codified the data, and highlighted commonalities using different coloured markers and created the first set of codes. I then imported all the transcriptions into NVivo and reconsidered the codes, which were later subsumed, relabeled, and even deleted. One useful feature of NVivo is the ability to search through the data (Saldaña, 2013). By retrieving, filtering, and comparing data, I could connect codes and identify patterns and relationships. In addition, NVivo's note function allowed me to document my analytic reflections. Unlike writing notes on paper, annotations in NVivo can be attached to particular units of data, which helped me synthesise them "into higher level analytic meanings" (Miles et al., 2014, p. 88). Notably, a number of my annotations laid solid foundations for the discussion section.

Limitations

As a researcher who designed and conducted this research, I had some uncertainty when entering the field. Although my cultural background significantly helped build a deep understanding of Chinese parents'/fathers' thoughts and practices in their children's ECE, I was still a novice in this topic. In order to respond to this, a rich body of literature was reviewed, which helped me gain insights into previous scholarship and developed my knowledge of the research area.

One limitation was that due to the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic, all interviews were conducted online. Following my suggestion, participants chose quiet places, such as study rooms and offices. However, one of the biggest challenges of data collection was that a stable internet connection was required. Although only one participant experienced an unstable internet connection during interviews, the recorded audio quality was affected to some extent.

Because of this project's scope, a small sample size of six Chinese immigrant fathers was decided upon. One of the limitations of a small sample size is that the reliability of the research findings can be affected to a certain extent (Cohen et al., 2018). A larger sample size would have undoubtedly provided a wider range of narratives, thereby providing a richer data set for analysis. This is important when considering the methodological paradigm of constructivism, because there is a strong possibility that varied knowledge will be created with a larger data set. While this study successfully responds to the identified knowledge gap, the lack of data heterogeneity in the sample adds further caution regarding the generalisability of the findings. The snowball sampling method meant participants came from the same general social group and were similar in terms of education level and socio-economic backgrounds, and the experiences they shared had much in common. Therefore, besides enlarging the sample size, adopting a different sampling approach could also contribute to collecting data of greater variation.

Conclusion

A qualitative methodology was employed in this study to explore participating Chinese immigrant fathers' roles, experiences, and attitudes towards the ECE of their children. Six Chinese immigrant fathers, who had a child or children in ECE settings of Aotearoa New Zealand, were recruited by snowball sampling. The decision to use online interviews to collect data was based on the nature of this research, the research philosophy of this study, and consideration of the COVID-19 pandemic. The content analysis method of coding was selected for its reliability and validity. However, I functioned as the primary instrument, meaning codes were generated based on my active interpretation of the data. How I used my background knowledge and understandings when translating the raw interview data

introduced a level of subjectivity. I endeavoured to show sensitivity to the participants' identities and norms. Notably, the ethics approval obtained from AUTEC helped address ethical concerns towards online fieldwork for this study and ensured that the research was conducted ethically.

Chapter 4: Findings

This chapter presents the results in a systematic and detailed way. The first section provides the participating Chinese immigrant fathers' background information. Themes are then used to answer the research questions. The first theme, complexity, explores Chinese immigrant fathers' roles and their parenting styles. The second theme, dilemmas, describes participants' constraints by comparing their current and desired forms of participation in ECE settings and outlining their barriers and motivations for participation. Under the third theme, perspectives, participants' attitudes and expectations towards their children's learning at ECE are explored. Commentaries on each theme are included, illustrated with excerpts from the raw data. Finally, a conclusion will be drawn to highlight the findings.

## Background information: Chinese immigrant fathers' life contexts

The first set of interview questions included: 1) How long have you lived in Aotearoa New Zealand?; 2) What is your occupation?; and 3) How long has your child been attending ECE?. These questions aimed to explore the research participants' life contexts. Participants had lived in Aotearoa New Zealand for a range of periods. The shortest period was almost two years, while the longest period was 20 years. As for participants' occupations, two participants had their own businesses, leading to busy but relatively flexible timetables. Two participants had a fixed work schedule starting from nine o'clock in the morning. Another participant also had a full-time job but worked from home two days a week. Only one participant worked on a part-time basis, which, he believed, had been influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic. All of the participants' children had attended ECE for at least three months but were enrolled in different rooms, including infant, toddler, and preschool rooms. There is a definite relationship between one's actions and his or her surrounding contexts (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). Therefore, discovering participants' backgrounds is useful when exploring their parenting styles, their roles undertaken in their children's experience of ECE, their participation forms in ECE settings, and their attitudes towards early childhood teaching and learning, all of which will be elaborated on in the next chapter.

Theme 1: Complexity

Complexity is a theme that emerged from interview data concerning Chinese immigrant fathers' roles in their children's experience of ECE and their parenting styles. The theme is made up of two categories, namely multiple roles and mixed styles. Figure 1 illustrates how the first theme was systematically developed. For a full listing of codes, refer to Appendix D.

Figure 1

A visual representation of the development of complexity
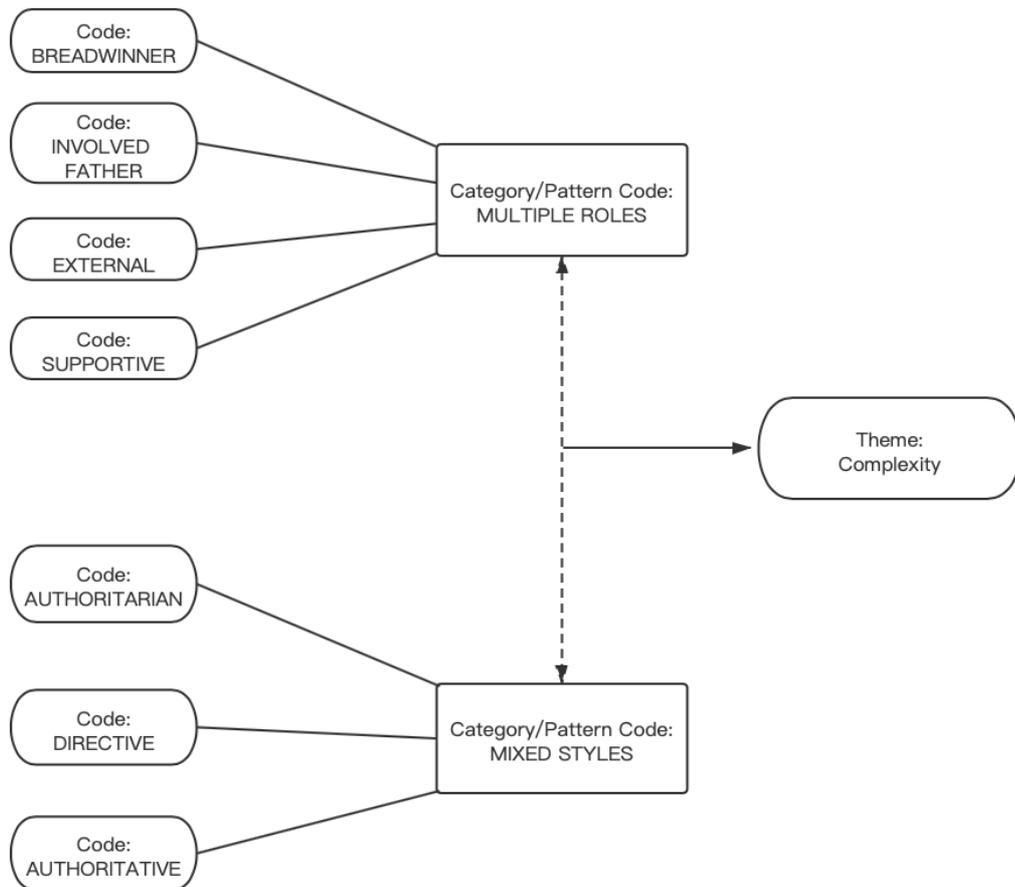
Category 1: Multiple roles

The first research question asked what Chinese immigrant fathers' roles were in their children's early learning experiences. One of the most interesting results that emerged from the interview data was that rather than having a sole role, all participants had undertaken multiple roles in their families as well as in their children's experience of ECE. Notably, the

experience shared by Participant F about how his family raised him is highly consistent with two stages indicated in Pleck's (1997) theory on fatherhood evolution and other scholars' previous findings on Chinese fathers' roles (Choy, 2017; Ng & Wei, 2020; Sun & Rao, 2017; Wu et al., 2013; Xie & Li, 2017). Participant F said:

> I think how to be a good father is something that a man needs to take time to think about, especially a man with Chinese background. The reason is that China's Reform and Opening-Up has provided too many opportunities, and my parents have invested a lot of time in making money. Correspondingly, they have spent very little time with their families. I don't think I got much attention from my father. I don't want my children to have a similar experience. So my goal is to be a very involved father.

Although Participant F's experience shows that a Chinese father's role has changed throughout different time periods, he and the other five participants considered they were taking multiple roles. Two-thirds of the participants identified they were "the breadwinner and involved father" at the same time, while two other participants used adjectives of "supportive" and "external" to describe their roles. The word supportive aligns with Xie and Li's (2017) findings on Chinese fathers' emerging supportive roles in children's education. According to Participant A, the external role refers to the duties a husband should take outside the home, including "taking children to swimming class and dancing class". Participant E also mentioned that the duties were clearly assigned between him and his wife. Their perception fits traditional Chinese ideology towards gender roles – 男主外，女主内 (pronounced: Nan Zhu Wai, Nv Zhu Nei), meaning men's work centres around being outside, while women's work centres around the home (Fang & Walker, 2015), which will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

To further unpack Chinese immigrant fathers' responsibilities, all participants provided financial support for their families, and half were the sole providers and therefore breadwinners. Not surprisingly, the vast majority of fathers stated that they did not have much time to play, accompany, communicate and interact with their children at home, not to mention participating in their children's ECE settings. Nonetheless, all the participants hoped they could play a more pivotal role as a father and spend more time with their children and families. Hence, they came up with varied strategies to increase their participation, one of

which was time management. Some fathers considered weekends family days, which meant they would cut off any social gatherings with their business partners, colleagues, and even friends. Instead, they actively participated in family activities and joined events concerning their children's development. Some fathers chose to sacrifice their own time during weekdays. Fathers woke up early and dropped their children off at ECE services before they went to work. Participant C, who had his own business, always worked at night after his children went to sleep. Most participants were willing to undertake more responsibilities when taking care of their children, which is consistent with Pleck's (1997) finding that fathers nowadays tend to be more involved in families and more engaged in their children's experiences.

Category 2: Mixed styles

When asked what their parenting style was, the majority of participants showed a vague understanding of the phrase "parenting style" even when provided with an explanation in Chinese. However, after being informed of Baumrind's (1991) categorisation, illustrated with examples, all participants had a better vision of how they could define their parenting styles. Surprisingly, all participants indicated that instead of being solely authoritative, authoritarian, directive, and indulgent, they tended to have mixed styles depending on different situations. For example, Participant A shared that he was usually an authoritative father, but could be authoritarian when he was "in a bad mood". Participant C shared a similar opinion, saying, "I can be authoritarian when my children are naughty, and once they are well-behaved, I can be very indulgent". Surprisingly, the word "authoritarian" was repeatedly used by all participants when describing their parenting practices. However, after further analysis of the data, it became evident that most participants had a different understanding of the word "authoritarian", and the meaning they assigned was "strict". Therefore, what they described is more consistent with Baumrind's (1991) model as a directive/strict parenting style.

Another interesting finding was that half of the participants considered that their styles were not only mixed, but also transformed. For instance, Participant D said, "When my children were very young, I was not too strict. My eldest son is eight years old now, so I can be a bit stricter with him". Participant F thought that he used to be authoritarian because he did not

"know anything better", and after drawing on his experiences with his first child, he believed his knowledge about educating his second child improved and he became more authoritative. Although all the participants admitted their styles were not unique, they all appeared to have a least preferred style category, which was the neglectful style. The vast majority of participants did not favour Chao's (2000) typology – 教训/training (pronounced: Jiao Xun), which is somewhat counterintuitive, leading to more thorough discussions in the next chapter. Only one participant thought that the 教训/training style applied to him, while others doubted the effectiveness of the one-way communication behind it, and as Participant F expressed, "the term, training, seems like my parent's style, but not mine".

Theme 2: Dilemmas

The second theme, dilemmas, was created during data collection and mainly focuses on the constraints that participating Chinese immigrant fathers were coping with. The theme is also composed of two categories, including current participation and desired participation. Figure 2 illustrates how this theme was systematically developed. For a full listing of codes, refer to Appendix D.

Figure 2

A visual representation of the development of dilemmas
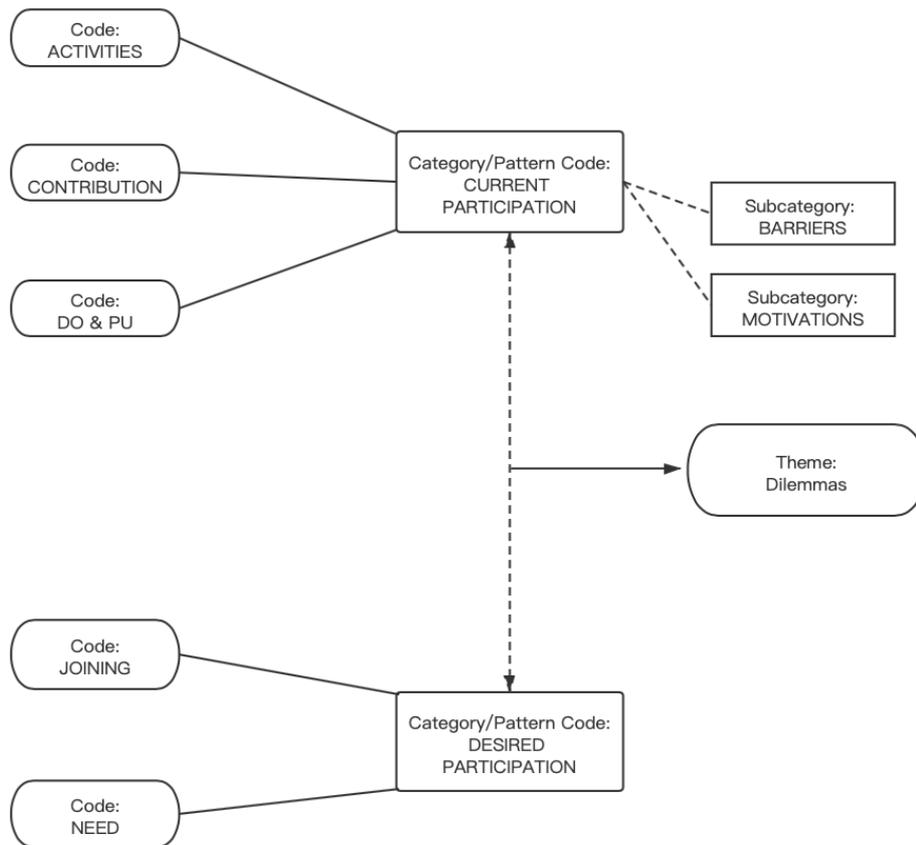
Category 1: Current participation

The results from exploring Chinese immigrant fathers' forms of participation were consistent with Hornby's (2011) parental involvement model. Hornby notes that parents participate in their children's education by: 1) sharing information about children, 2) collaborating with teachers, 3) acting as a resource, and 4) taking part in policy formation. The data showed that five out of six participants wanted to communicate with teachers about their children's learning and experiences if time permitted. Almost every participant mentioned that they loved reading their children's learning stories; however, only three fathers had access to Storypark. None of the participants had thought about posting a story documenting how their children's interests had been continued and extended at home via Storypark. Two participants said they would participate in ECE settings by offering assistance either voluntarily or if asked by teachers. None of the participants took the initiative to give

suggestions on the future development of ECE services. Although the fathers' participation forms appeared quite limited (i.e., sharing information about children and acting as a resource), their frequency of going to ECE settings was relatively high. All participants reported that as long as they had time, they would do the pick-ups and drop-offs. Notably, Participant D said, "I mainly drop him [my child] off and then go to work", showing that his life context, such as his employment, influenced his participation forms and frequency.

Barriers versus motivations

Therefore, it is not surprising that time was repeatedly mentioned as one of the most significant barriers that hindered fathers' participation in their children's ECE. This is also highly consistent with Callister and Fursman's (2013) local study, that long working hours prevented fathers from being more involved in their children's care and education. Besides a busy work schedule, Callister and Fursman also reported two other obstacles for fathers' participation in ECE. These were lack of paid parental leave and Aotearoa New Zealand's insufficient laws and policies. However, based on my interview data, none of the participants mentioned these two issues. On the contrary, Participant F commented, "In New Zealand, there is not much pressure in life", indicating that he was somewhat satisfied with the status quo.

Another interesting result was that self-identity connected to masculine roles could be a barrier that discouraged some fathers from participating in their children's ECE. For instance, Participant C said, "I won't talk too much, because it sounds a bit nosy". Participant E discussed his participation in terms of the roles he and his wife played by saying, "If the activities [organised by ECE services] require participants who have certain skills, I think I will [participate]. But let's say if it is a high tea, my wife will participate". Participant F also shared the insight that, "the barriers come from my heart, by which I mean if I think playing a silly game with my child is too boring, I will not be willing to participate". As such, one's perception and beliefs can influence one's behaviour patterns. In addition to the two main obstacles of a tight schedule and masculine self-identity, a few other difficulties, including financial pressure and the COVID-19 pandemic, were also noted by some participants.

As for the motivations that encouraged Chinese immigrant fathers' participation, Participant A thought it could be a great opportunity to "develop friendships" with other parents/fathers. Participant D shared a similar opinion but with a different purpose – "to know more about my child's surroundings". On the other hand, four participants did not consider socialising with other parents as a motive for participating in ECE settings. Participant D mentioned he could acquire a lot of useful information about educating his children when he participated in activities such as parent workshops. He added that he would love to participate if such activities were free of charge and could occur on weekends. This is an interesting comment because it turns out that some barriers, such as time and cost, can become motivations if seen with a different lens.

Category 2: Desired participation

In response to the interview question about how they would like to participate, most fathers indicated they were satisfied with the current channels used to communicate with teachers for accessing information about their children's learning at ECE services. However, one interviewee rarely read learning stories and stated, "since I don't know how often the teachers will update stories, it is my wife that usually checks and shows me the stories". Notably, he was also the only participant who did not actively share information about his child with the teachers. However, when asked if he would communicate with teachers about his expectations towards his child's academic learning, he said, "Probably, yes", which is paradoxical with his previous comment. This could perhaps show he is a father who places high value on his child's academic performance. This participant also had some insightful views on how he believed his child should learn, which is discussed in the next theme.

According to Hornby's (2011) model on parental involvement in Aotearoa New Zealand, besides channels of communication and liaison with school staff, parents may also be interested in receiving parent education, such as parent workshops and parent support, including counselling. However, two interviewees reported they would like to participate only if time permitted. Another two participants felt ambivalent towards their participation, with one indicating, "If the daycare provides such opportunities, I think I will be present, but it doesn't

matter if there is not". Conversely, two interviewees decided not to participate, as they believed their wives were more suitable for such matters. Apart from the participation forms indicated by Hornby (2011), the fathers mentioned other specific experiences that they would like to have. For example, two fathers stated that they would love to stay longer and observe their children's play in the ECE settings. Another interviewee said he wanted to do some handicraft activities with his child at ECE services. Two fathers, including the father who chose not to communicate with teachers daily, mentioned they were willing to participate in outdoor teaching or activities, such as picnics and excursions to local parks if organised by the ECE settings.

Theme 3: Perspectives

The final theme was constructed based on the interview data regarding participating Chinese immigrant fathers' attitudes toward their participation in children's ECE settings and their expectations towards early childhood teaching and learning. Two categories, namely attitudes and expectations, constitute this theme, and Figure 3 illustrates how the theme was systematically developed. For a full listing of codes, refer to Appendix D.

Figure 3

A visual representation of the development of perspectives
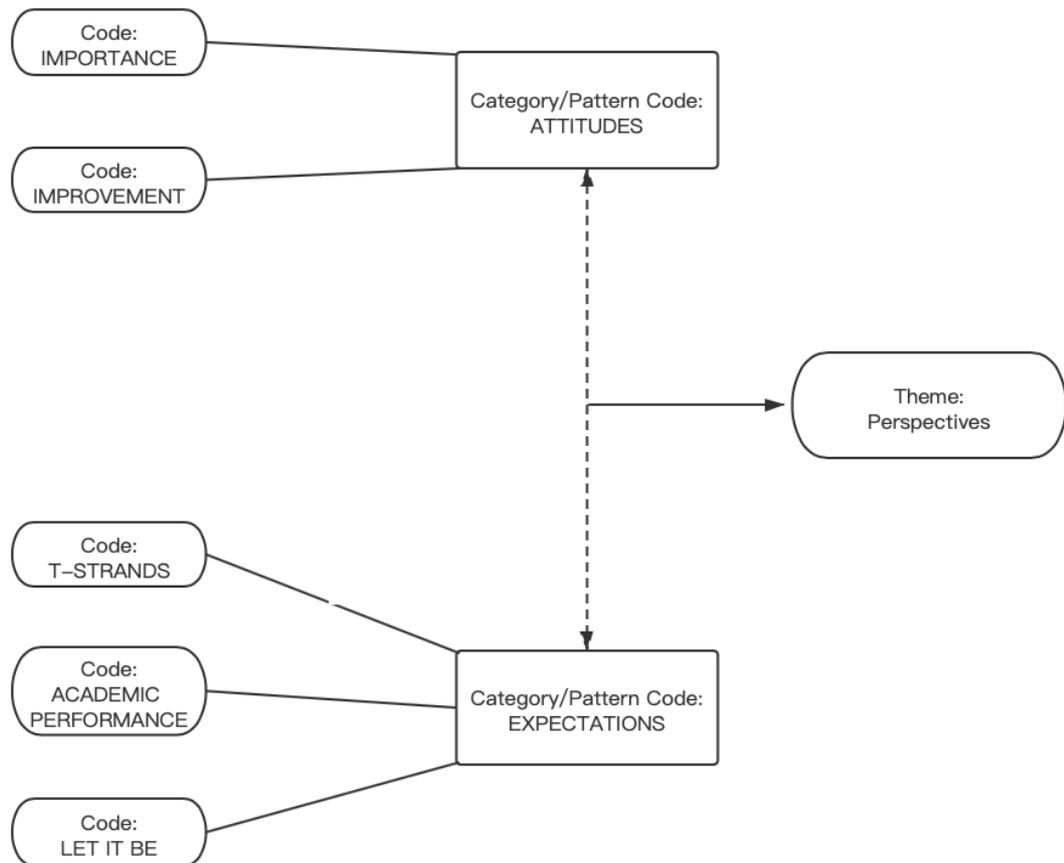
Category 1: Attitudes

All participants remarked that it was important to participate in their children's learning in ECE settings. When asked why they believed this, participants expressed thoughts strongly correlated to several principles and strands, including holistic development, relationships, wellbeing, and belonging, outlined in *Te Whāriki* (MoE, 2017), the Aotearoa New Zealand ECE curriculum. For example, some opinions showed that participation could help gain insights into their children's behaviour in ECE settings. As Participant B noted, "My knowledge about my daughter's daycare experiences is either based on what she told me or what teachers informed us. Seeing is better than hearing". This view was echoed by Participant A and Participant F, who further indicated that participation could help strengthen their bonds with their children. Participants A, C, and D all pointed out that their participation in ECE settings could increase their children's positive emotions, such as happiness and a

sense of pride, and therefore be beneficial to their children's emotional development. Furthermore, half of the participants proposed that their participation was of great help for building their children's sense of belonging in ECE settings. Participant F illustrated this point of view with the following example:

> My child has recently transitioned to preschool, but he has some problems in settling. My wife and I noticed what he struggled, so we decided to stay with him a bit longer and we even talked to his friends and teachers so that he could feel that his parents get along well with others at daycare, making him feel more secure.

Another recurrent code in the interview data was that most interviewees stated they needed to increase their participation in their children's ECE. For example, half of the participants stated that they had paid closer attention to their wives' feedback about whether or not they performed as "good fathers" to their children. In addition, two participants learned strategies to get along with their children from others, including their friends and colleagues. Notably, Participant C, a highly involved father who dropped off and picked up his children every day and actively participated in every activity organised by ECE settings, mentioned he had not done enough, as he believed he did not have much quality time to spend with his children. Participant F also stressed that he would grab every opportunity to learn how to become "a better father".

Category 2: Expectations

In terms of the Chinese immigrant fathers' expectations towards their children's play and learning at ECE services, almost all interviewees prioritised their children's wellbeing, stating that they hoped their children could have fun and be happy, healthy, and safe. Two interviewees commented that they wished their children could feel connected with teachers and build relationships with other children. Half of the interviewed fathers had specific requirements regarding their children's literacy and numeracy development. One interviewee highly praised the learning through play approach, compared with the disadvantages of the spoon-feeding method that many teachers in China used. Notably, these fathers' expectations are highly aligned with the ECE teachers' goals across the strands of *Te Whāriki*

(MoE, 2017). More specifically, the majority of participants' expectations towards their children's health, emotional wellbeing, and safety were consistent with the goals under the strand of wellbeing, including "their [children's] health is promoted", "their [children's] emotional wellbeing is nurtured", and "they [children] are kept safe from harm" (MoE, 2017, p. 24). Fathers whose expectations towards their children's connections with others shared similar goals under the strands of belonging and contribution, which are "connecting links …with the wider world are affirmed and extended", and "[children] are encouraged to learn with and alongside others" (MoE, 2017, p. 24). The goal indicating "[children] experience the stories and symbols of their own and other cultures" (p. 25) under the strand of communication corroborates some participants' expectations towards their children's learning of literacy and numeracy. The appreciation that one interviewee had about the approach of learning through play reflects a goal under the strand of exploration, which is "their [children's] play is valued as meaningful learning and the importance of spontaneous play is recognised" (p. 25).

Conversely, the interviewee who approved of learning through play felt it was unacceptable that his child could not write her name before she went to primary school, and stated that he would be likely to communicate with ECE teachers about his expectations towards his child's literacy learning at the ECE service. This seems an interesting paradox, since he did not usually choose to talk to teachers regularly. Another two fathers who had similar concerns about their children's literacy and numeracy learning at ECE services decided to use a different approach to meet their expectations. According to Participant C, "I noticed ECE settings in New Zealand focus less on teaching numeracy and literacy, but we [the participant and his wife] probably will teach our children at home". In other words, these two participants accepted the current practice of ECE settings in Aotearoa New Zealand, and instead of sharing their expectations with ECE staff, chose to engage with their children's learning at home.

Although some participants had specific expectations towards children's learning at ECE services, one-third of participants reported that they did not want to put their children under

pressure, as Participant F explained, "Expectation is a source of pressure". He even shared his previous experience of raising his eldest daughter, who was nine years old, saying:

> I had great expectations for her before, which gave her a lot of pressure, so for our younger child, we will lower our expectations and let it be. In New Zealand, there is not much pressure in life. As parents, we should not put too much pressure on our children.

Participant A alluded to the notion of "let it be", saying, "We should let everything go with the flow". Notably, how these two participants adapted their ideologies considering the societal factors is another good example illustrating how "migration-specific cultural capital" is formed and developed (Erel, 2010, p. 643) and will be further discussed in Chapter 5.

Conclusion

It is not surprising that participants all had different life contexts, and that their contexts influenced their parenting styles, roles, and participation forms in ECE settings. The correlations between participants' contexts, parenting styles, roles and participation forms are further elaborated in Chapter 5 by drawing on Hornby and Lafaele's (2011) parental participation model. One of the most striking findings was that Chinese immigrant fathers' roles were multiple, and their parenting styles were mixed and continually changing. When considering the participants' cultural backgrounds, it is not difficult to understand why all of them did not categorise themselves as neglectful parents. However, 教训/training, Chao's (2000) Asian-parent-oriented typology was unexpectedly rejected by most participants. The reasons behind this are discussed in Chapter 5.

After comparing participating Chinese immigrant fathers' current participation forms and desired forms, some interesting findings, including participants' self-identity and their preference towards outdoor activities and teaching, will have significant implications, especially for ECE settings struggling with gaining the participation of Chinese immigrant fathers. It is also interesting to note that Chinese immigrant fathers' characteristic attitudes and expectations were, on one hand, highly consistent with the strands and principles outlined in *Te Whāriki* (MoE, 2017), while on the other hand were influenced by their culture-

rooted ideology of putting a high value on children's literacy and numeracy development. This important finding, together with the participants' migration-specific cultural capital are discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter centres around the important findings of this study and in-depth reflection is provided. The three sections are structured corresponding to three themes of complexity, dilemmas, and perspectives, with the ultimate aim for answering the research questions exploring participating Chinese immigrant fathers' roles, experiences, and attitudes in their children's ECE. The theoretical framework demonstrated in Chapter 3, including theories regarding fathers' roles and parenting styles, parental participation models, and *Te Whāriki* will be justified in this chapter to ensure sound findings can be drawn. The originality of this research will be demonstrated by indicating thought-provoking research outcomes and by comparing previous scholarship.

Roles that fathers take in their children's early learning experiences

The first research question investigated Chinese immigrant fathers' roles in their children's early learning experiences. In order to answer this question, participants' roles in their families and their parenting styles were explored. One important finding was that the more flexible participants' work schedules were, the more likely they would be involved in their children's ECE. However, the vast majority of participants claimed that their roles were compound. They considered themselves both the breadwinner and the involved father. Notably, the breadwinner role that participants talked about differs from the second stage of fatherhood evolution identified by Pleck (1997), the distant breadwinner, since the participants earned money to support their family and attempted to be as engaged as they could in their children's ECE. As such, the findings suggest that rather than having pre-identified patterns, Chinese immigrant fathers' roles are numerous, meaning the responsibilities fathers take on are increasingly diverse.

Meanwhile, some fathers believed it was their wives' main responsibility to look after and educate their children. Therefore, those participants identified their role as less involved but more "supportive" and "external". One commonality of those interviewees' statements is that the committed responsibilities and duties in a family were clearly divided between husband

and wife. As mentioned in the literature review, influenced by a series of societal changes in China, including the Cultural Revolution, Reform and Opening-Up, and the only-child policy, Chinese mothers' roles as educators for the child has been strengthened (Sun & Rao, 2017; Wu et al., 2013). Accordingly, the father's supportive role can be understood as a result of the mother taking a leading role in childrearing.

While the emergence of the supportive role can be seen as a product of contextual changes, the external role seems quite old-fashioned, showing that the interviewed fathers' understandings are affected by gender norms. This is highly consistent with a Chinese proverb – 男主外，女主内 (pronounced: Nan Zhu Wai, Nv Zhu Nei), which means men's work centres around being outside, while women's work centres around the home (Fang & Walker, 2015). Notably, this kind of mindset became increasingly fixed after the 1960s, when women's role as educators for their children was reinforced. Women were then supposed to take care of home responsibilities including, but not limited to, doing household chores and educating children. On the flip side, men focused on earning money to improve families' financial status, meanwhile extricating themselves from most of their educational duties. However, the external role that one father talked about is different from the original meaning of that perception. To further illustrate, the interviewee believed it was his duty to actively participate in ECE activities because he considered those activities part of out-of-home responsibilities. As such, his definition of the external role is adapted, in a way, reflecting the growing flexibilities of gender roles (Butler, 1990). Therefore, the collected evidence supports the assertion that Chinese immigrant fathers' roles are complex and numerous.

In terms of the Chinese fathers' parenting styles, there was one type that all participants least preferred, which was neglectful, drawn from Baumrind's (1991) parenting styles categorisation. One possible explanation for this might be that being a neglectful father means not giving proper care to the child, which is against participants' traditional cultural understandings: 子不教，父之过 (pronounced: Zi Bu Jiao, Fu Zhi Guo). This highlights Chinese fathers' responsibility for educating their children. This old saying indicated in *Three Character Classic* (Zhu & Hu, 2011), a renowned piece of literature from China, was once upheld as an essential principle. From participants' cultural perspectives, the word "neglectful"

is regarded as a synonym of "irresponsible", thereby not being a desirable choice. Furthermore, one surprising finding from this study was that almost every participant claimed he was or used to be an authoritarian father. However, while a few participants sometimes forced their children to obey their instructions when they were "in a bad mood", which is authoritarian indeed, the majority of participants who identified they were authoritarian fit the directive or strict category identified by Baumrind (1991). This discrepancy could be attributed to most participants' vague understandings of "parenting styles" and the corresponding categories. Although illustrations with examples and explanations in Chinese were provided, based on the collected data, some participants still understood "authoritarian" to mean "strict". Indeed, authoritarian and strict parenting styles share some similarities; both of them are high on demand and control (Baumrind, 1991). However, compared with authoritarian parents who tend to adopt power-assertive practices, including "issuing directives without a reason", "discouraging verbal give-and-take" (Sorkhabi, 2012, p. 857), strict/directive parents are "warm" and have "affectively positive relations" with their children (Sorkhabi, 2012, p. 861).

One reason why authoritarian and directive parenting were participants' favourable styles can be traced back to their Chinese cultural backgrounds. Chinese society has long placed a high value on respect for authority (Ng & Wei, 2020; Sun & Rao, 2017; Wu et al., 2013). Therefore, it is believed that to meet such socialisation goals, there is a high probability that Chinese parents implement practices as forms of obedience (Sorkhabi, 2012). Chao (1994), a Chinese-American scholar, proposed an Asian-parent-oriented typology: 教训/training (pronounced: Jiao Xun), aiming to differentiate the demandingness and responsiveness between Asian and Western parents. From Chao's perspective, Asian parents are highly demanding, but how they govern their children stems from their love and caring. Unexpectedly, only one participant agreed that 教训/training was applicable, while the other five participants condemned the one-way communication style. Instead, the five participants stated they tended to engage in reciprocal interactions with their children. For example, they all had experiences of solving problems together with their children, being open when their

children disagreed, and listening to their children's critical comments, all of which match the indicators of an authoritative parenting style (Baumrind, 1991; Sorkhabi, 2012).

The findings of this study show that instead of being solely authoritative, authoritarian, directive, and indulgent, Chinese immigrant fathers have mixed styles. In other words, their styles can vary from time to time, depending on different situations, such as their mood, which is in accord with Baumrind's (1991) explanations that some styles are linked to emotional parental characteristics. A thorough investigation of Chinese immigrant fathers' parenting styles can help further understand their roles in their children's ECE. In this study, fathers who had a directive and authoritative parenting style appeared to be more involved in their children's ECE and had positive relationships with their children. Conversely, fathers who identified they were sometimes authoritarian or downplayed the value of two-way communication were less willing to participate in their children's experiences in some cases, which is, in a way, consistent with their supportive and external roles mentioned earlier.

Another interesting finding is that some participants claimed their styles were changing, which might be a result of their accumulated knowledge and experiences. For instance, one participant, who used to be authoritarian, became authoritative because he actively learned from others and previous experiences. His narratives about why he changed showed his positive attitude of being "a better father" and indicated that contexts, such as family and education backgrounds, can have a profound influence on fathers' roles and parenting styles. To further unpack this, that father, together with another two interviewed fathers cast doubt on the distant breadwinner role and authoritarian style that their fathers had. Therefore, they hoped they could be different from their fathers and endeavoured to participate in their children's ECE. In addition, two out of the three participants stated that education also played a vital role in setting up their mindset. In other words, the tertiary education background enabled them to be exposed to advanced educational ideas, thereby helping form their parenting styles. Notably, these two participants indicated they made every effort to be an authoritative father, but unavoidably were directive or authoritarian from time to time, which shows Chinese immigrant fathers' parenting styles are mixed and transformed.

This study shows a clear correlation between parenting styles and fathers' roles taken in their children's ECE. None of the fathers identified their parenting style as neglectful, which indicates participants in this study believed they were involved in their children's ECE, albeit to varying degrees. Specifically, fathers whose parenting styles were authoritative or directive played a more active role in educating their children because of the high demandingness and responsiveness identified by Baumrind (1991). In contrast, fathers who believed they were or used to be authoritarian appeared less involved, thereby functioning as an assistant to the primary educators – their wives. However, as discussed, the nature of the formation of a father's role is complex. Therefore, when exploring experiences of Chinese immigrant fathers' participation in ECE, contextual factors, including family and education backgrounds, work and life contexts, and even individuals' emotions and self-identity, should be considered.

Experiences of fathers' participation in ECE

The second question in this study sought to discover how Chinese immigrant fathers participated in ECE settings. Hornby's (2011) parental involvement model helped categorise Chinese immigrant fathers' participation forms, including communication and resources. Hornby and Lafaele's (2011) explanatory model is of greater use when reviewing parental involvement, therefore fitting the purpose of this chapter. According to the model, there are four main factors that influence parental participation: 1) parent and family factors, 2) child factors, 3) parent-teacher factors, and 4) societal factors. These factors will be discussed in the following subsections.

Parent and family factors

As mentioned earlier, Chinese immigrant fathers had varied beliefs about their roles in families and their children's ECE. Findings from this study suggest that participants who considered themselves involved fathers were more likely to actively participate in ECE settings than those who perceived their role as supportive. Likewise, participants who claimed they lacked verbal communication skills tended to reduce the opportunities to share their children's information and experiences with teachers regularly. This finding is consistent with that of Hornby and Lafaele (2011), who stated that parents' views of their role in their

children's education and their confidence level determined their level of participation. What is different from Hornby and Lafaele's (2011) and other scholars' (Miao et al., 2018) previous findings is that participants in this study did not mention language skills as a barrier. This could indicate that English language proficiency is no longer considered a stereotyped obstacle to Chinese immigrants' participation in ECE settings in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Another significant finding that differs from that of Hornby and Lafaele (2011), who argued that parents' beliefs about participation were correlated to their actual participation. The findings from this study suggest there is no such correlation. In other words, although all Chinese immigrant fathers believed it was important to participate in ECE settings in terms of their children's benefits, some participants still chose not to do so. Some fathers faced dilemmas of whether to participate in the currently provided forms that were neither attractive nor inviting. Further, personal factors, including gender, personality, and even emotions, may be more decisive at different times.

This study into Chinese immigrant fathers also confirms that family circumstances are one of the major barriers to participation (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). The breadwinner role that many participants undertook limited their flexibility to participate in ECE settings. For instance, one participant indicated that due to his busy agenda, he could not be absent from work to participate in a parent workshop organised by the ECE setting, while another participant, who had a relatively flexible work schedule, could participate in ECE settings regardless of when and where those activities took place. As such, fathers' work situations influence their participation level.

An interestingly emergent point relates to the gendered nature of parental participation. Participation in educational settings is believed to be usually dominated by women, including female parents and teachers (Callister & Fursman, 2013; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). Even though Butler (1990) advocates that gender should be treated separately from sex and therefore should be considered flexible and performative, this study shows that the mindset of many participants is still very informed by normalised ideas of gender. One-third of Chinese immigrant fathers indirectly expressed similar opinions that some activities, such as an

afternoon tea party, were not suitable for them as fathers to participate in. One participant directly stated he hoped to see more male teachers in ECE settings, and that would help increase his participation. Notably, how some fathers determined whether activities were suitable for them or not also reflects the fact that tasks were clearly divided between husband and wife in some families, resulting from those participants' cultural ideals towards gender roles.

Parents' perceptions of invitations for involvement could be another potential barrier that corroborates Hornby and Lafaele's (2011) findings. In other words, parents are more likely to become involved if teachers or ECE services value their participation. The overwhelming majority of participants stated they would participate in ECE settings if invited by ECE staff. Similarly, many participants expressed disappointment that they were not involved in ECE services' decision-making process. For example, they said they would love to offer suggestions on ECE services' future development if they were asked. The results suggest that those participants had relatively high self-esteem, meaning they hoped they would be respected by ECE staff and their suggestions would be valued. Besides participants' perceptions of invitation, their personality influenced their participation.

Despite not being indicated in Hornby and Lafaele's (2011) model, half of the participants repetitively mentioned the word "personality". Because of their personality variation, some fathers considered participation as a social gathering where they could meet new friends. In contrast, some fathers felt uncomfortable being surrounded by a crowd of new people. However, interestingly, while two interviewees identified their personality type, only one of them considered it as a barrier. Conversely, the other interviewee actively participated in his children's ECE settings because he believed doing so was of great benefit to his children. His view is representative, as most interviewed fathers considered their participation in terms of their children's experiences.

Factors of participation in connection to the child

According to Hornby and Lafaele's (2011) model, children's age influences parental participation. For instance, Hornby and Lafaele pointed out "parental participation decreases

as children grow older and is at its lowest level for children of secondary school age" (p. 42). However, it should be noted that the climates between ECE settings and schools are different. Parents often perceive secondary schools as "large bureaucratic organisations which are not welcoming to parents" (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011, p. 40). The findings of this study showed that in ECE settings there was not much difference in participation levels between Chinese immigrant fathers whose children are babies, toddlers, or preschoolers. This study, however, found that children's age did influence their fathers' participation forms. For example, the older the child was, the more outdoor activities such as excursions and outdoor teaching organised by ECE settings, which fathers desired to participate in. Conversely, those participants whose child's age was under three hoped they could have opportunities to observe what their children did at daycare. In addition, some participants also stated that they were keen on liaison and further support provided by ECE settings when their children were newly enrolled. This statement is sensible because the transition can be challenging for all involved, including children themselves, parents, and teachers.

Chinese immigrant fathers' expectations towards children's learning at ECE services varied depending on children's ages. For instance, the expectations of a participant whose child was turning two years old were about his child learning self-management skills and becoming more independent, while participants whose children were closer to school age were more concerned about their children's literacy development. Furthermore, findings from the current study indicate that children's gender and the number of children in a family, while not indicated in Hornby and Lafaele's (2011) model, do influence Chinese immigrant fathers' participation levels and forms. One participant who decided to actively participate believed his participation would positively impact his daughter's mental development, which is consistent with the findings of Vogel et al. (2006). Also, two participants noted they became more involved and engaged in their second child's ECE because they learned from the experiences of educating their first child and became aware of the value of their participation. As such, child factors, including age, gender, and even the number of children in the family, play a vital part in Chinese immigrant fathers' participation in their children's ECE.

Parent-teacher factors

Based on the findings from this study, there is tension when determining levels of Chinese immigrant fathers' participation, which corroborates Hornby and Lafaele's (2011) statement that differences in goals and agendas between families and teachers influence parental participation. To further unpack this, the findings showed most Chinese immigrant fathers had adequate opportunities to communicate with teachers about their children's experiences regularly, because of their frequency of dropping off and picking up their children. Meanwhile, all of them knew they had a channel – Storypark, via which they could be informed of their children's learning at ECE services. However, some participants also mentioned they did not have access to Storypark and were less likely to leave comments on a story about their children's learning experiences at ECE services. When asked why they did not have access, participants stated they did not have an account. This was because it was usually their wives' responsibility to check the story updates and then inform them. This response indirectly reflects inadequate invitation and support from ECE services. Based on my anecdotal observations, fathers' (including, not limited to Chinese immigrant fathers') emails were sometimes not added when ECE teachers set up children's profiles via Storypark. This is either because only the mother's email account was obtained as a family unit or because it is believed that mothers would inform fathers by sending them invitation links to Storypark. This is a clear gap between ECE teachers' assumptions and parents' views of participation.

In terms of Chinese immigrant fathers' desired forms of participation, many participants claimed they would act as resources, meaning they would like to participate in activities that required certain skills or knowledge such as carpentry. Many participants had strong preferences for indoor activities, such as observing children's play and doing handicrafts with children, and outdoor activities, such as excursions. All of which, however, were not provided by the ECE services that their children attended. Further, all fathers recognised it was their choice whether they participated or not because participation is voluntary rather than compulsory. Nevertheless, they did hope that their opinions would be asked of by staff and would like to receive more formal invitations for participation from ECE settings.

Parent support and education, such as workshops and counselling, are thought to be parental needs by Hornby (2011). However, findings from this study showed that such forms were not popular amongst Chinese immigrant fathers because they either felt it was unnecessary to take time off from work or thought these forms were preferred by their wives. Therefore, despite benefiting parents and children, parent support and education provided by ECE settings should not be seen as a form of participation by Chinese immigrant fathers.

Societal factors

Hornby and Lafaele's (2011) model indicates that societal factors, including demographic factors and political factors, influence parental participation in their children's education to a certain extent. Hornby and Lafaele (2011) and other scholars, including Callister and Fursman (2013) stated that the policies enforced by the New Zealand Government are not very supportive for parental involvement in school settings. However, the findings of this study showed that Chinese immigrant fathers were satisfied with the current circumstances. Admittedly, the contexts of schools and ECE are very different, but another possible explanation for this might be that those participants have compared Aotearoa New Zealand's less pressured education legislation to China's fiercely competitive education system. It may also explain why many Chinese immigrants choose to move to Aotearoa New Zealand for their children's education (Chan & Spoonley, 2017; Zhang et al., 2014).

Literature suggests that immigrant parents go through a series of challenges in terms of their participation levels and forms, which probably results from differences between the cultural capital those parents possess and that of teachers (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Ward, 2009). The findings from the current study showed that most participants endeavoured to be consistent with teachers and hoped their children could be educated in a local way. To further elaborate, the Chinese immigrant fathers had a clear position and acknowledgement of their cultural identity. What is vastly different to previous research findings is that participants in this study neither regarded the English language as a barrier to participation nor considered their immigrant position inferior. As such, societal factors seem not to be a barrier influencing Chinese immigrant fathers' participation in ECE settings.

Attitudes of fathers towards ECE

The third research question investigated what Chinese immigrant fathers' characteristic attitudes towards early childhood teaching and learning were. In order to seek answers to this question, participants' expectations towards their children's learning at ECE services and their perceptions about the importance of their participation in ECE settings were constructively explored. Notably, a significant number of participants' perspectives were highly consistent with ECE teachers' goals across the strands indicated in *Te Whāriki* (MoE, 2017). Meanwhile, some perspectives were not aligned with the essence of *Te Whāriki*, which, in a way, reflects Chinese immigrant fathers' knowledge and cultural capital.

Fathers' perspectives connected to Te Whāriki

All participants believed it was important for their children to attend ECE services, and some fathers had a preference for specific service types. As mentioned earlier, participants' expectations towards their children's learning in ECE settings varied, depending on factors such as their child's age. Nonetheless, as mentioned, a large number of expectations accorded with ECE teachers' goals and can be categorised into three main dimensions, including empowerment, holistic development, and relationships. These are also three principles interwoven in *Te Whāriki* (MoE, 2017). Many participants appreciated the value of children's free play at ECE services and believed children could learn through play. Such an attitude is in line with what is stated under the empowerment principle of "[children's] play and playfulness are valued" (MoE, 2017, p. 18). Participants expected that their children could be happy, safe, and physically and mentally healthy. These expectations match what is indicated under the holistic development principle, that children learn and grow in a holistic way (MoE, 2017). Some participants believed their children could become more outgoing and learn to get along with others at ECE services, including both children and adults. This belief is clearly elaborated on under the relationships principle, that "children learn through responsive and reciprocal relationship with people, places, and things" (MoE, 2017, p. 21). As such, ECE settings are perceived by Chinese immigrant fathers as a place where their children are empowered to develop holistically and build relationships with others.

There is only one principle, family and community, which did not appear in the narratives of Chinese immigrant fathers' expectations. However, all fathers were aware of the importance of their participation in their children's ECE settings. They all thought their participation would inevitably benefit their children's wellbeing and improve their children's sense of belonging in ECE settings, which is again in accordance with the two strands of wellbeing and belonging in *Te Whāriki* (MoE, 2017). The contribution that fathers believed they could make also reflects the significance of the family and community strand of "family and community is an integral part of early childhood curriculum" (MoE, 2017, p. 20).

Another important attitude held by some Chinese immigrant fathers towards early childhood teaching and learning is 顺其自然/let it be (pronounced: Shun Qi Zi Ran). This Chinese idiom originates from the ideology of another influential philosopher in Chinese history – Lao Tzu, who is the founder of Daoism (Kohn, 2009). Daoism, vastly different to Confucianism, is from another philosophical angle, advocating to govern by doing nothing that goes against nature (Kohn, 2009). Interestingly, the rich body of literature that I reviewed before conducting the research project did not involve Lao Tzu's ideology, but focused heavily on Confucius. It is difficult to explain why this occurred, but it might be related to the fierce competition in China's contemporary society. In other words, the mindset of "doing nothing" obviously does not help one survive in a competitive environment, which is probably why such an ideology has slipped out of the popular consciousness of Chinese people. On the contrary, one-third of participants of this present study used 顺其自然/let it be to describe their attitude, which again indicates Aotearoa New Zealand has less a pressured education system.

How the fathers appreciated their children's dispositions reflects the ethos and ECE curriculum of Aotearoa New Zealand (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). According to *Te Whāriki* (MoE, 2017), dispositions are understood as a combination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Children in Aotearoa New Zealand are recognised as "active learners who choose, plan, and challenge" (p. 17). In other words, children are supposed to construct their knowledge based on their understandings of their worlds. Similarly, children's skills refer to "what children can do" (p. 22), and children's attitudes are "viewpoints or positions that reflect their values and beliefs" (p. 22). Children's dispositions are, therefore, encouraged to be individualised rather

than standardised. This is in line with the Chinese immigrant fathers' attitude of 顺其自然/let it be, showing fathers' hope that children can learn at their own pace and understand meanings in their own way.

The findings of Chinese immigrant fathers' characteristic attitudes towards early childhood teaching and learning also confirm Erel's (2010) criticism about the rucksack approach of cultural capital. Erel states that different genders in the same ethnic group may produce different cultural capital. This could explain why the Daoism philosophy, which was not found in previous research focusing on Chinese parents, mainly mothers, underpins the participants' expectations in this study. Moreover, Chinese immigrant fathers' attitudes show how they develop their own cultural capital to adapt to the society of their residence. Some participants indicated that they hoped their children could "be educated in a local way", which shows they paid close attention to being consistent with teachers' teaching approaches and strategies. Further, most participants abandoned the ways they were taught, such as "spoon-feeding" and "learning by rote". Instead, they accepted the local notion of "learn through play", which can be understood as an adaption into the norms of the recipient country's education system.

Fathers' perspectives disconnected to Te Whāriki

It is widely believed that Asian parents pay close attention to their children's academic performance (Cai, 1994; Ng & Wei, 2020; Xie & Li, 2017). This study, however, found that Chinese immigrant fathers did not expect as much from their children's learning at ECE services as mothers. Some participants stated that their wives were very specific about what level their children should reach by a certain age, such as counting to 20 by school age. Conversely, the Chinese fathers indicated that they did not have such expectations but were more concerned with their children's wellbeing and safety in ECE settings.

Nonetheless, when asked if they minded that their children could not write their own names before primary school enrollment, half of the participants stated that it was not acceptable. While one father said he might communicate his expectation toward literacy development with teachers at ECE services, two fathers decided to teach their children at home. The

participant's initiative to talk about his concern with ECE teachers shows he prioritised his children's academic learning in ECE settings, and reflects he put faith in the effect of his communication with teachers. However, interestingly, this father did not usually choose to talk to teachers regularly, which can be attributed to the participant's self-identity linked to normalised masculine roles as discussed previously. The paradox suggests that fathers can share their expectations and attitudes with ECE teachers if they think their proposals are important and valued.

Alternatively, teaching children at home with a focus on equipping them with academic skills is a traditional norm for Chinese people (Chan & Ritchie, 2016; Chao, 2000; Guo, 2012; Ng & Wei, 2020). Further, fathers' indirect participation in their children's education at home reinforces their active role as educators, as found by this study. From a critical perspective, the home teaching approach may also be seen as a consequence of tensions from the mismatch between fathers' educational aspirations and the current curriculum content provision available in ECE services.

When asked about why they gave priority to their children's ability of name-writing, participants believed such an ability was essential, especially for a child reaching school age, and that their friends' children could do it. Such a statement shows that participants were still influenced by the fierce competition they had experienced in China, even though they had resettled in Aotearoa New Zealand. Also, the way some participants compared their children to others is not promoted by *Te Whāriki* where it is believed "each child learns in their own way" (MoE, 2017, p. 13). It is also worth mentioning that children's literacy and numeracy development is in fact one of the foci illustrated in *Te Whāriki* (MoE, 2017), but in a different way from what the Chinese immigrant fathers understood. For instance, two learning outcomes under the communication strand are about children "recognising print and mathematical symbols and concepts and using them with enjoyment, meaning and purpose" (p. 42). Therefore, it becomes important as to how ECE staff can strategically inform parents of the ultimate goal they mutually share, which will be stated in Chapter 6.

Conclusion

This study examined the role of Chinese immigrant fathers in their children's ECE. While a father's role is complex and may be influenced by many factors, most fathers strived to be involved in their children's ECE. Exploration of participants' parenting styles informed by Baumrind's (1991) model increases the credibility of identifying fathers' roles in their children's education, as different styles indicate the varying degrees of fathers' involvement. As such, authoritative and directive fathers tend to play an active role as educators to their children. In contrast, fathers who self-reported as authoritarian seemed less involved in children's experiences in some cases. However, the parenting styles that fathers adopt are not static, but dynamic. In aiming to be a "better father", the overwhelming majority of participants in this study strived to make progress by learning and consulting. Such attitudes make fathers' parenting styles transform positively, which in turn increases fathers' engagement with children.

Therefore, this study suggests that fathers' roles are linked to their participation level in children's experiences. Chinese immigrant fathers' participation experiences in ECE settings have been further revealed by adapting and incorporating Hornby and Lafaele's (2011) explanatory model on parental involvement. Noticing the different contexts between schools and ECE settings, four main dimensional factors regarding participants' contexts were carefully but thoroughly discussed, including parent and family factors, child factors, parent-teacher factors, and social factors. Clearly, there are gaps between what Chinese immigrant fathers are doing (their current participation forms), what they want to do (their desired participation forms), and what they can do (their realistic participation forms). Notably, most fathers still weigh up the pros and cons of their participation in ECE settings by pondering their motivations and barriers.

Ascertaining Chinese immigrant fathers' attitudes can help better understand their nature of participation in ECE. As mentioned, fathers' positive attitudes towards self-improvement increase their participation levels in their children's ECE. Nonetheless, unexpectedly, this study showed there is no definite link between fathers' recognition of the importance of their

participation in ECE settings and their actual participation. This may sound paradoxical, indicating other significant factors such as work and life context may influence fathers' decisions to participate. Also, Chinese immigrant fathers' various, sometimes, conflicting views towards early childhood teaching and learning can be understood as a product of their migrant-specific cultural capital. Using *Te Whāriki* as an analytical lens to examine Chinese immigrant fathers' expectations towards their children's learning in ECE settings helps indicate an overlap between fathers' aspirations and ECE teachers' goals. While there are similarities between the learning outcomes of the curriculum and fathers' aspirations for their children's early learning, the particular focus of some Chinese fathers on their children's academic growth should not be overlooked. Only when their early literacy concerns have been addressed can those fathers and ECE teachers build meaningful partnerships to benefit children's learning and development.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This research aimed to explore Chinese immigrant fathers' roles, experiences, and attitudes towards the ECE of their children. The introduction presented the rationale and conceptual framework for this research. Knowledge relevant to the project was critically reviewed, followed by the methodology where the underlying philosophy and theoretical framework were clearly articulated. Justifications of data collection and analysis methods were also provided. The entire process, including ethics approval and sample selection, was also presented in the methodology. Themes were generated through two coding processes and revealed important findings. Reflective and critical commentaries on the research outcomes were aligned with the theoretical framework in the discussion. In this final chapter, the significance of the findings will be detailed. Then, the study's limitations and suggestions for future work will be demonstrated, followed by final words for my first qualitative research journey.

Implications of the findings

The present study's findings suggest that Chinese immigrant fathers' roles are numerous and their parenting styles are mixed and dynamic. It is important to acknowledge complexities such as historical, societal, and cultural contexts of both origin and recipient countries as well as other micro-contextual factors when considering the experiences of fathers. For example, educational background and family background influence the formation of Chinese immigrant father's roles and their parenting styles. An implication of this is to remind ECE teachers of the importance of acknowledging Chinese immigrant fathers' parental identities, so that culturally appropriate and gender-inclusive strategies can be adopted. For example, it is important to be mindful that the roles a father takes and the styles a father engages in influence how and to what extent he participates in his child's ECE. Further, taking the complex nature of fathers' multiple roles' formation into consideration will help increase understandings of Chinese immigrant fathers' participation experiences in ECE settings. Therefore, it may be fruitless to use a one-size-fits-all strategy when involving such a cultural and social group in ECE settings. Instead, culturally and socially sensitive communications

may help Chinese immigrant fathers feel valued and encourage further participation and contribution to the curriculum (MoE, 2017).

The results of this study show there are various obstacles indicated by the Chinese immigrant fathers. While some of the issues cannot be solved immediately, some barriers, if seen from a critical lens, can be turned into motivations. Many participants stated that some activities organised by ECE settings were not suitable for or desired by fathers. For example, fathers who had children over three years of age tended to participate in outdoor activities. Therefore, tt can be assumed that those fathers would happily accept opportunities to join centre trips and excursions. The findings of this study also show that many participating Chinese immigrant fathers preferred to be invited formally. Rather than sending group emails or 'non-customised' invitations via centre newsletters, a printed-out invitation-to-join with fathers'/parents' names addressed appears more formal and inviting, especially during face-to-face communications.

Another possible way to encourage Chinese immigrant fathers' participation is to involve them in ECE settings' decision-making processes, such as internal evaluation. Such involvement will be affected by centre policies on evaluation and reflections, yet merits attention. Besides identifying what kind of participation should be given priority, it is also necessary to acknowledge when to provide these opportunities. For instance, parent support, such as a one-on-one planning meeting, is required during children's transition. The results of this study indicate that Chinese immigrant fathers might lose their interest in such forms when their children fully settle. Another interesting finding regarding Chinese immigrant fathers' frequency of going to ECE settings suggests teachers can make most of the fathers' drop-off and pick-up time slots to exchange children's information and experiences. This can also improve both fathers' and children's belonging to ECE settings.

Through clarifying Chinese immigrant fathers' perspectives towards early childhood teaching and learning, it has become evident that there are remarkable similarities between participants' expectations and ECE teachers' goals as described in *Te Whāriki* (MoE, 2017).

However, interestingly, none of the participants had read or had a general understanding of the Aotearoa New Zealand ECE curriculum. This should draw our attention to the importance of introducing *Te Whāriki* to parents, including both fathers and mothers. Rather than delivering hardcopies of the curriculum or sending a digital version by email, more vivid forms, including visual aids, should be considered. Doing so will enable parents to gain confidence about being on the same page with teachers' pedagogies "that are consistent with the principles and that will support children's learning and development across the strands of the curriculum" (MoE, 2017, p. 16). This will also help build an effective teacher-parent partnership, supporting children's long-term wellbeing and holistic development.

This study also found that some participants' attitudes and expectations were inevitably influenced by contextual factors related to culture and society. Therefore, having a better understanding of Chinese immigrant fathers' cultural capital will greatly increase their participation in ECE settings. Some previous local studies showed that Chinese parents considered teachers authority figures and thought their participation in ECE settings was inappropriate (Chan & Ritchie, 2016; Guo, 2012). This study, however, indicates that participants did not have such notions. Participants did not position themselves as inferior; instead, they believed they could contribute to their children's ECE and would participate in ECE settings if encouraged and invited by ECE staff. The present study's findings can hopefully function as a resource that can be used in the training of teachers and other professionals working in the education system.

Limitations of the study

This study has certain limitations in terms of the time frame, the scope of the study, and sampling.

Considering the limited time frame to conduct this study, the relatively small size chosen to reach data saturation affects the reliability of findings to some extent (Cohen et al., 2018). Under the research paradigm of constructivism, it is believed that a wider range of collected data can contribute to the construction of multiple truths and knowledge (Lincoln & Guba, 2013). Therefore, due to the sample size, the results of this study may not apply to all

situations. In other words, there might be different truths and knowledge of the nature of Chinese immigrant fathers' participation that has not been identified yet. Also, snowball sampling was deployed to seek participants of a specific cultural and social group within a limited timeframe. Because of this sampling method featuring referrals, the data set of this study tended to be homogeneous, and all participants were biological fathers to their children. However, the selection criteria included both biological fathers and step-fathers. Therefore, a larger sample size could show a possible variety of roles, experiences, and attitudes of different types of fathers.

Another limitation related to the scope of the study is that voices from other parties involved in ECE were not gathered. As mentioned, the Chinese immigrant fathers' participation experiences in ECE and their characteristic attitudes towards early childhood teaching and learning were two of the main foci of this study. If more time were available, it could have been beneficial to include ECE teachers' voices. In addition, teachers' perspectives about paternal participation and their aspirations toward children's learning could also be identified, which would be of great use in clarifying the contradictions between teachers and Chinese immigrant fathers. For instance, fathers and teachers might have different points of view towards how children could be equipped with literacy and numeracy skills. Finding these differences could reduce the misunderstanding about inconsistency between Chinese immigrant fathers' and teachers' practices and help build meaningful teacher-parent partnerships.

Suggestions for future research

As mentioned previously, a larger sample size with the inclusion of different types of Chinese immigrant fathers, such as step-fathers and single fathers, should be considered when future work is conducted. A larger sample will help gather a wider range of information from participants, increasing the reliability of research findings. Also, to ensure the sample represents economic and educational diversity, a different sampling approach (i.e., maximum variation sampling) (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015), should also be considered. The inclusion of different types of fathers could contribute to a heterogeneous data corpus, which means it is

more likely to unveil multiple ways of knowing and understanding the nature of Chinese immigrant fathers' participation in ECE.

The current study set out to increase understanding of how Chinese immigrant fathers' participation in ECE settings of Aotearoa New Zealand can be positively supported. As indicated earlier, it would be beneficial to involve the voices of other parties, such as ECE teachers, mothers, and even children, because their perspectives can further help identify the potential gaps in understanding fathers' participation. It is worth noting that I intended to adopt Bronfenbrenner's (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006) bioecological model for this study. This model features the concepts of microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem and could be used to analyse Chinese immigrant fathers' multi-layered life contexts. However, after thoroughly reviewing Bronfenbrenner's full theory, I found that it should not be treated as an oversimplified model that only helps explain contextual influences. Instead, the model's essence is about proximal processes that focus on individuals' interactions with environments and incorporating persons (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). Therefore, considerably more work would need to be done to explore the reciprocal nature of interactions. This also explains why ECE teachers', mothers', and children's voices should be involved. As such, Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model could be more fully incorporated in examining fathers' participation in their children's ECE.

This study has provided deeper insights into Chinese immigrant fathers' attitudes and expectations toward early childhood teaching and learning. The issues related to the discontinuity of children's learning at home are intriguing and could be explored in future research. The present study suggests a gap between what the current ECE curriculum provides and what fathers expect. Some aspects need to be further exploited. For example, 1) After their children enter primary school, do those fathers still consider it necessary for their children to learn their own name-writing before enrolment?; 2) Do those fathers have new struggles or concerns during their children's transitioning to primary school? If so, what are they?; 3) Can their emergent expectations toward school teaching and learning be fully met? If not, why?. As such, a longitudinal study might be needed to follow up on those participants. While such a study may sound school-focused, the findings may contribute to

reshaping some parents' attitudes towards early childhood teaching and learning. This could also help ECE teachers understand the expectations parents have regarding their children's literacy skills before entering the schooling system. Further, pathways to school and kura, a section in *Te Whāriki* (MoE, 2017) indicates how the ECE curriculum weaves together with the New Zealand curriculum, aiming to support children's learning continuity, especially when they transition from ECE settings to schools. However, considering the discrepancy found by this study, looking at how robustly the framework is implemented is another fruitful area for further research.

Final words

This is the first study to investigate the nature of Chinese immigrant fathers' participation in their children's ECE in Aotearoa New Zealand. Examination of a group of Chinese immigrant fathers' multiple roles in their children's early learning experiences expands our understandings of how complex contextual factors influence the formation of fathers' roles. Further exploration of fathers' parenting styles helps identify the degree of fathers' engagement with their children in terms of demandingness and responsiveness. The findings of how the Chinese immigrant fathers participated in ECE settings shed new light on the gap between fathers' current participation and their desired participation. Again, many contextual factors, such as work and family contexts influence fathers' participation decisions. The insights gained may be of assistance to developing robust strategies to encourage Chinese immigrant fathers' participation. This study shows Chinese immigrant fathers' characteristic attitudes towards early childhood teaching and learning vary from one to another, resulting from the societal and cultural contexts of both China and Aotearoa New Zealand. Fathers' aspirations and sometimes conflicting expectations towards children's learning should be taken into serious consideration when ECE teachers aim to build meaningful partnerships with Chinese fathers/parents.

Altogether, these findings suggest all three research questions for this inquiry have been answered, which means the pre-identified research gap is filled. Contextual factors have been considered in this study. This is because I see reality as changeable and formable,

influenced by various contexts, which can again link back to my research paradigm of constructivism. This research, indeed, has some limitations regarding scope and sampling. Nonetheless, it still has valuable implications, especially for ECE teachers. Therefore, the purpose of this research is also met, that is, increasing understandings of how Chinese immigrant fathers' participation in ECE settings in Aotearoa New Zealand can be positively supported. 千里之行，始于足下 (Pronounced: Qian Li Zhi Xing, Shi Yu Zu Xia). This Chinese old saying means a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step, and while this project has come to an end, it is indeed my first step to the research field, therefore signifying the start of a journey.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Ethics approval
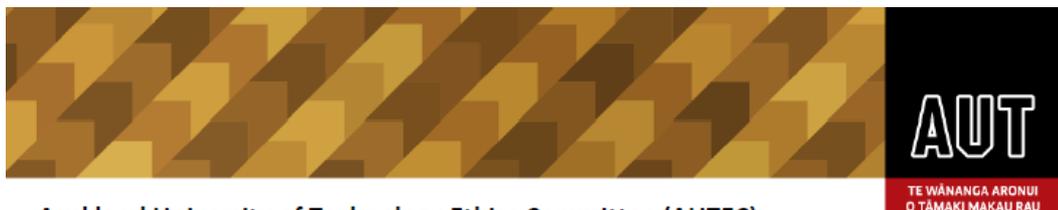
29 March 2021

Rebecca Hopkins
Faculty of Culture and Society

Dear Rebecca

Re Ethics Application: 21/46 Chinese fathers' participation in early childhood education in Aotearoa New Zealand: An exploration of roles, experiences, and attitudes

Thank you for providing evidence as requested, which satisfies the points raised by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC).

Your ethics application has been approved for three years until 29 March 2024.

Non-Standard Conditions of Approval

1. Inclusion in the Information Sheet of advice about how the participant's consent will be evidenced.

Non-standard conditions must be completed before commencing your study. Non-standard conditions do not need to be submitted to or reviewed by AUTEC before commencing your study.

Standard Conditions of Approval

1. The research is to be undertaken in accordance with the Auckland University of Technology Code of Conduct for Research and as approved by AUTEC in this application.
2. A progress report is due annually on the anniversary of the approval date, using the EA2 form.
3. A final report is due at the expiration of the approval period, or, upon completion of project, using the EA3 form.
4. Any amendments to the project must be approved by AUTEC prior to being implemented. Amendments can be requested using the EA2 form.
5. Any serious or unexpected adverse events must be reported to AUTEC Secretariat as a matter of priority.
6. Any unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project should also be reported to the AUTEC Secretariat as a matter of priority.
7. It is your responsibility to ensure that the spelling and grammar of documents being provided to participants or external organisations is of a high standard and that all the dates on the documents are updated.

AUTEC grants ethical approval only. You are responsible for obtaining management approval for access for your research from any institution or organisation at which your research is being conducted and you need to meet all ethical, legal, public health, and locality obligations or requirements for the jurisdictions in which the research is being undertaken.

Please quote the application number and title on all future correspondence related to this project.

For any enquiries please contact ethics@aut.ac.nz. The forms mentioned above are available online through http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/researchethics

(This is a computer-generated letter for which no signature is required)

The AUTEC Secretariat
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: rzs4163@autuni.ac.nz

Appendix B: Resources and techniques

Consent Protocol for Online Interviews

a)   The researcher needs to make sure participants are informed of what the research is about and what they are signing. As the research is focused on a particular cultural group: Chinese immigrants, the researcher needs to show sensitivity to their identities and cultural norms. As English is not the participants' first language, all the relevant documents, including the Information Sheet and Consent Form, are translated in Chinese language. Also, the interviews can be conducted in Chinese as necessary.

b)   In response to the current situation of Covid-19, online interviews will be conducted in the interests of the researcher and the participants' safety. Meanwhile, in order to ensure clear recordings, quiet places where the online interview will take place, such as a study room or a private office, will be highly suggested by the researcher. In addition, Zoom rooms with passcodes will help maintain a private space online.

c)   Unlike the shared location where the traditional fieldwork is conducted between participants and researchers, the personal spaces of participants joining online interviews might be accessed by others unexpectedly, such as family members, colleagues, etc. The solutions, including to pause the call and to turn off the camera will be suggested by the researcher for the sake of protecting participants' privacy.

d)   Although video discussions will be held over Zoom, the interview will be audio-recorded only with notes taken, which can help protect participants' personal spaces as well. Participants will be informed of this by both written and oral modes.

e)   For participants who may have difficulties in installing Zoom App and/or are unfamiliar with Zoom platform, the researcher has the duty to provide technical support for them either via phone or email.

Participant Information Sheet

Date Information Sheet Produced:

19 November 2020

Project Title

Chinese fathers' participation in early childhood education in Aotearoa New Zealand: An exploration of roles, experiences, and attitudes

An Invitation

You are invited to participate in this research project, which is part of the requirements for a master's degree at AUT. My name is Jasmine Wang, and I am a master's student at AUT. I am also a qualified early childhood teacher and has three years of professional experience. I have generated the research focus and developed the research questions in consultation with my project supervisor, Dr Rebecca Hopkins, in AUT's School of Education. Rebecca has been involved in early childhood education for close to two decades in a range of roles, including parent, teacher, researcher, and academic. Rebecca holds current registration and certification with the Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand and lectures in Early Childhood Education in the School of Education at AUT.

What is the purpose of this research?

The purpose of this research is to develop understandings of how Chinese immigrant male parents' participation in early childhood education [ECE] settings of Aotearoa New Zealand can be positively supported. All of the research elements, including the literature review, methodology, findings, discussion, etc. will be submitted for assessment and contribute towards my postgraduate qualification. It may be published in the public domain only with the research participants' consents.

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

Participants are being recruited based on their suitability for the research focus. You have received this information sheet because you are regarded as someone who fits the inclusion criteria for my proposed research approach. As snowball recruitment is employed for this research, you are recommended by an early participant, while the first participate who meets the selection criteria is located from my social network.

The inclusion criteria for the proposed study includes: Chinese immigrant fathers, including biological fathers and step-fathers, who have a child or children in early childhood settings of New Zealand

Since this is only a small scaled research, a limited number of participants are being recruited. This means that not all people who would like to participate may be included when the total number of participants is reached.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

You should have received my contact details, and if you are interested, please contact me by email within two weeks. You need to sign the Consent Form before you take part in this study. Your participation is voluntary (it is your choice) and whether or not you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. You are able to withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the study, then you will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to you removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of your data may not be possible.

What will happen in this research?

In this research, one-to-one online interviews will be the main research method to collect data from the participants. All the online interviews will be audio-recorded and notes taken, and participants will be informed of this by both written and oral modes. Each interview will last no longer than one hour. Notably, the interview can be conducted in Chinese as necessary. After collecting and analysing the data from the interviews, I will draw findings, based on which the discussion section will be conducted. It should be noted that participants will receive a summary of the findings.

What are the discomforts and risks and how will they be alleviated?

It is possible that some discomfort may be experienced by participants if they have had negative experiences of participating in ECE. However, as this research is seeking to give participants a voice, participation could provide a positive way for participants to share their experiences.

What are the benefits?

You will receive no direct benefits from participating in this research, but it may help improve the quality of research conducted in an area with which you are associated. Since the report of the research will be assessed, your involvement contributes to my postgraduate qualification.

How will my privacy be protected?

Your confidentiality will be preserved because you will not be identified in the report of the research. You will be identified by a pseudonym.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

The cost associated with participation is your time. You can expect that your involvement will take up to one hour.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

Please consider this request and if you are interested in participating please contact me within two weeks of receiving this information sheet.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

If you would like to receive a summary of the findings, please indicate this on the consent form.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Dr Rebecca Hopkins, *rebecca.hopkins@aut.ac.nz,* 921 9666 ext 5521.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEC, Dr Carina Meares, *ethics@aut.ac.nz*, 921 9999 ext 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

Researcher Contact Details:

Jasmine Wang, rzs4163@autuni.ac.nz

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Dr Rebecca Hopkins, rebecca.hopkins@aut.ac.nz

研究参与者通知单

通知单建立时间：

2020 年 11 月 19 日

研究项目名称

新西兰华人父亲参与幼儿教育：对角色、经历和态度的探索

邀请

你受邀参加这个研究项目，此项研究是 AUT 硕士学位要求的一部分。首先，请容许我进行一下自我介绍。我的名字是 Jasmine Wang，目前在 AUT 硕士在读。同时，我也是一名有资质的幼教老师，有着三年的教学实战经验。我与 AUT 教育学院的项目主管，Rebecca Hopkins 博士协商，确定了研究重点并提出了研究问题。Rebecca Hopkins 博士从事幼儿教育近二十年，担任了一系列包含了家长、教师、研究人员和学术界人士的角色。Rebecca 博士持有新西兰教学委员会的注册和认证证书，并在 AUT 教育学院担任讲师。

本研究的目的是什么？

本研究的目的在于增进对中国移民男性家长如何参与新西兰幼儿教育的了解。所有的研究内容，包括文献综述、方法论、研究发现、讨论等，都将提交评估，并为我的研究生资格做出贡献。只有经研究参与者同意，才能在公共领域发表。

我是如何被确认的，为什么我会被邀请参加这项研究？

我是如何被确认的，为什么我会被邀请参加这项研究？

根据研究对象的适合性招募参与者。您之所以收到此通知单，是因为您符合我的研究方向的纳入标准。由于本研究采用了滚雪球方式招募参与者，因此您是由早期参与者推荐的，而第一个符合选择标准的参与者则来自我的社交网络。

本研究的纳入标准包括：在新西兰有一个或多个孩子的中国移民父亲（包含亲生父亲以及继父）

由于这只是一项小规模的研究，因此招募的参与者数量有限。这意味着并不是所有想要参与的人都可以被包括在内。

我如何同意参与这项研究？

你应该已经收到我的联系方式，如果你有兴趣，请在两周内通过电子邮件与我联系。你需要在同意书上签字才能参加这项研究。您参与这项研究是自愿的（这是你的选择），无论您是否选择参与与否都不会损害您的利益。您可以随时退出研究。如果选择退出，那么您将可以选择删除任何可识别为属于您的数据或允许研究者继续使用这些数据。但是，一旦研究成果出来，便不可能删除您的数据。

在这项研究中会发生什么？

在本研究中，一对一线上访谈将是主要的研究方法来收集信息。所有在线访谈都将进行录音和笔记，并通过书面和口头两种方式告知参与者。每次面试时间不超过一小时。值得注意的是，访谈可以用中文进行。在收集和分析访谈数据后，研究者将得出研究发现，并在此基础上进行讨论分析。应当指出的是，与会者有机会获得调查结果摘要。

有哪些不适和风险，如何缓解？

如果参与者有过幼儿教育的负面经历，他们可能会经历一些不适。然而，由于这项研究试图让参与者有发言权，参与为参与者提供一种分享经验的积极方式。

有什么好处？

参与这项研究不会给您带来任何直接的好处，但它可能有助于提高与您有联系的领域的研究质量。由于研究报告将被评估，您的参与会对我的硕士学位的取得作出贡献。

如何保护我的隐私？

您的隐私将得到保护，因为您不会在研究报告中被确认身份。化名将会被使用。

参与这项研究的成本是多少？

参与的成本就是您的时间。您的参与将需要至多 1 个小时。

我有什么机会考虑这个邀请？

请考虑这一要求。如果您有兴趣参与，请在收到此通知单后两周内与我联系。

我会收到这项研究结果的反馈吗？

如果您想收到研究结果的摘要，请在同意书上注明。

如果我对这项研究有顾虑，我该怎么办？

任何有关本研究项目的性质的问题应首先联系项目主管 Rebecca Hopkins 博士，邮箱：*rebecca.hopkins@aut.ac.nz*. 电话：921 9666 转 5521.

对研究执行上的顾虑应通知 AUTEC 执行秘书 Dr Carina Meares，邮箱：*ethics@aut.ac.nz* 电话：921 9999 转 6038。

关于这项研究的更多信息，我应该联系谁？

请保留此通知单及同意书副本，以供日后参考。您还可以通过以下方式联系研究团队：

研究人员联系方式：

Jasmine Wang，rzs4163@autuni.ac.nz

项目主管联系方式：

Dr Rebecca Hopkins，rebecca.hopkins@aut.ac.nz

Consent Form

Project title: **Chinese fathers' participation in early childhood education in Aotearoa New Zealand: An exploration of roles, experiences, and attitudes**

Project Supervisor:　**Dr Rebecca Hopkins**

Researcher:　　　　**Jasmine Wang**

O　　I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet

O　　I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.

O　　I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.

O　　I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without being disadvantaged in any way.

O　　I understand that if I withdraw from the study then I will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to me removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of my data may not be possible.

O　　I agree to take part in this research.

O　　I wish to receive a summary of the findings (please tick one): YesO　　NoO

Participant's signature:　　………………………………………………………………………………..

Participant's name:　　………………………………………………………………………………

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

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Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 29/03/2021 AUTEC Reference number 21/46

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form

同意书

项目名称：新西兰华人父亲参与幼儿教育：对角色、经历和态度的探索

项目主管：Rebecca Hopkins 博士

研究员： Jasmine Wang

○   我已阅读并理解通知单中提供的有关本研究项目的信息。

○   我有机会提出问题并得到解答。

○   我了解访谈时采访者会做笔记，而且还会录音以及转录。

○   我理解参加本研究是自愿的（我的选择），我可以随时退出本研究，而不会以任何方式处于不利地位。

○   我明白如果我退出研究，我将可以选择是删除任何可识别为属于我的数据，还是允许研究者继续使用这些数据。然而，一旦研究成果出来，删除我的数据是不可能的。

○   我同意参加这项研究。

○   我希望收到研究结果的摘要（请勾选一项）：是○ 否○

参与者签名: ....

参与者姓名: ....

参与者的联系方式 (如适用):

....

....

....

....

日期：

由奥克兰理工大学伦理委员会于 29/03/2021 批准AUTEC 参考编号 21/46

注：参与者须保留本表格的副本

Confidentiality Agreement

Project title: **Chinese fathers' participation in early childhood education in Aotearoa New Zealand: An exploration of roles, experiences, and attitudes**

Project Supervisor: **Dr Rebecca Hopkins**

Researcher: **Jasmine Wang**

- ○ I understand that the interviews meetings or material I will be asked to translate is confidential.
- ○ I understand that the content of the interviews meetings or material can only be discussed with the researchers.
- ○ I will not keep any copies of the translations nor allow third parties access to them.

Translator's signature: ………………………………………………………………………………………………

Translator's name: ………………………………………………………………………………………………

Translator's Contact Details (if appropriate):

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…………………………………………………………………………………………..

Date:

Project Supervisor's Contact Details (if appropriate):

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Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 29/03/2021 AUTEC Reference number 21/46

Note: The Translator should retain a copy of this form.

Chinese immigrant fathers' participation in ECE

Codes

Name	Description	Files	References
ATTITUDES	Pattern code: participating Chinese immigrant fathers' settled ways of thinking or feeling about participation in their children's ECE	6	31
IMPORTANCE	Code: importance of Chinese immigrant fathers' participation in their children's ECE settings	6	20
BELONGING	Subcode: building children's sense of belonging to ECE settings	2	5
KNOWLEDGE	Subcode: gaining knowledge about children's experience in ECE settings	2	3
POSITIVE EMOTION	Subcode: increasing children's positive emotions	4	5
IMPROVEMENT	Code: Chinese immigrant fathers' willingness, act and/or process of making their participation better	5	12
BARRIERS	Pattern code: barriers that discourage participating Chinese immigrant fathers' participation in children's learning at ECE services	6	15
SELF IDENTITY	Code: Chinese immigrant fathers' perceptions of their characteristics in relation to their masculine roles	3	4
TIME	Code: conflicting time schedules	4	10
TA	Subcode: TA is the abbreviation for time allocation, focusing on how participating Chinese immigrant fathers balance their work and life.	6	32

Name	Description	Files	References
CHILD FACTORS	Pattern Code: child factors, including age, gender, etc, influence the effectiveness of participating Chinese immigrant fathers' participation	5	8
AGE	Code: child's age	3	4
CHILDATT	Code: the information regarding how long Chinese immigrant fathers' children have been attending ECE	6	6
NUMBER	Code: the number of children Chinese immigrant fathers have	2	3
CURRENT PARTICIPATION	Pattern code: the current forms/ways participating Chinese immigrant fathers participate in ECE settings	6	39
ACTIVITIES	Code: activities, such as party, open day, etc organised by ECE settings	2	8
CONTRIBUTION	Pre-decided code: adapted from Hornby's (2011) parental involvement model, including 1) sharing information about children, 2) collaborating with teachers, 3) acting as a resource	6	29
AR	Subcode: AR is the abbreviation for acting as resource	3	4
CO	Subcode: CO is the abbreviation for collaborating with teachers	4	9
SI	Subcode: SI is the abbreviation for sharing information about children	4	7
DO&PU	Code: DO&PU is the abbreviation for drop off and pick up.	5	9
DESIRED PARTICIPATION	Pattern code: the desired forms/ways participating Chinese immigrant fathers participate in ECE settings	6	15
JOINING	Code: Chinese immigrant fathers' desired experience of joining children's learning	4	7

Name	Description	Files	References
IN	Subcode: inside ECE settings	3	3
OUT	Subcode: outside ECE settings	2	2
NEED	Pre-decided code: adapted from Hornby's (2011) parental involvement model	6	10
CHANNEL	Subcode: channel of communication	4	6
EXPECTATIONS	Pattern code: participating Chinese immigrant fathers' expectations toward their children's learning at ECE services	6	19
ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE	Code: Chinese immigrant fathers' expectations towards their children's academic performance	4	7
HT	Subcode: HT is the abbreviation for home teaching	2	2
LET IT BE	Code: the manner Chinese immigrant fathers appreciate their children's dispositions and choose to do nothing against children' nature	2	2
T-STRANDS	Code: Chinese immigrant fathers' expectations consistent with strands of Te Whāriki (MoE, 2017)	6	20
T-BELONGING	Subcode: drawn from strands of Te Whāriki (MoE, 2017)	2	3
T-COMMUNICATION	Subcode: drawn from strands of Te Whāriki (MoE, 2017)	3	3
T-CONTRIBUTION	Subcode: drawn from strands of Te Whāriki (MoE, 2017)	2	2
T-EXPLORATION	Subcode: drawn from strands of Te Whāriki (MoE, 2017)	2	4
T-WELLBEING	Subcode: drawn from strands of Te Whāriki (MoE, 2017)	4	9
MIXED STYLES	Pattern Code: varied parenting styles	5	27

Name	Description	Files	References
AUTHORITARIAN	Pre-decided code: drawn from Baumrind's (1991) categorisation	6	7
AUTHORITATIVE	Pre-decided code: drawn from Baumrind's (1991) categorisation	5	11
DIRECTIVE	Code: adapted from Baumrind's (1991) categorisation	4	9
MOTIVATIONS	Pattern code: incentives that encourage participating Chinese immigrant fathers' participation in children's learning at ECE services	6	14
CENTRE	Code: being invited by centre staff	6	13
CHILD	Code: Chinese immigrant fathers' participation for their children's benefits	4	5
SELF	Code: Chinese immigrant fathers' participation for their own benefits	5	5
MULTIPLE ROLES	Pattern code: how pariticpating Chinese immigrant fathers see their roles as in their children's experience of ECE	6	14
BREADWINNER	Pre-decided code: drawn from Pleck's (1997) stages of fatherhood evolution	4	4
EXTERNAL	Code: Chinese immigrant fathers' external role, mainly referring to the duties that they take outside home	2	7
DA	Subcode: DA is the abbreviation for duties assignment between husband and wife.	2	7
INVOLVED FATHER	Pre-decided code: drawn from Pleck's (1997) stages of fatherhood evolution	4	4
SUPPORTIVE	Code: Chinese immigrant fathers' supportive role in their children's education	2	3
PARENTAL & FAMILY FACTORS	Pattern code: parental and family factors that influence the effectiveness of participating Chinese immigrant fathers' participation	5	19

Name	Description	Files	References
BELIEF	Code: Chinese immigrant fathers' opinions about how their children should be educated in Aotearoa New Zealand	2	3
OCCUPATIONS	Code: Chinese immigrant fathers' current jobs	6	9
PERSONALITY	Code: Chinese immigrant fathers' personality	3	5
POSITION & IDENTITY	Code: including how Chinese immigrant fathers perceive their position and identity and how they adapt their parenting to Aotearoa New Zealand's norms	2	7
SPAN	Code: the information regarding how long Chinese immigrant fathers have been in New Zealand	6	7
VAGUE UNDERSTANDING	Pattern code: participating Chinese immigrant fathers' lack of knowledge on certain terms and/or typologies.	6	10