
The Influence of Parental Involvement on the Educational Management of Chinese Early Childhood School in Yunnan Province, China

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Abstract

Introduction: Parental involvement is widely recognized as a critical factor in children's early learning and school effectiveness, yet its influence on educational management in China remains underexplored. This study addresses this gap by examining parental participation in the management of early childhood schools in Yunnan Province, a region characterized by ethnic diversity and rural–urban disparities.

Methodology: A mixed-methods design was adopted, involving data collection from 300 parents, 50 teachers, and 20 administrators across ten schools. Instruments included questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups. Quantitative analysis examined patterns of parental involvement and their correlation with management practices, while qualitative analysis explored contextual challenges and perceptions.

Results and Findings: Parental involvement was strongest in home-based support and teacher communication but weakest in decision-making and governance. Active engagement enhanced school transparency, resource mobilization, and policy implementation; however, socioeconomic inequalities, cultural and linguistic differences, and limited opportunities for participation restricted broader impact. Urban schools demonstrated higher parental involvement compared to rural and minority settings.

Conclusion and Recommendations: The study concludes that parental involvement is essential not only for children's outcomes but also for effective educational management. Recommendations include institutionalizing parent councils, providing targeted support for disadvantaged families, promoting culturally responsive practices, and offering teacher training to strengthen collaboration. These findings contribute to theory on participatory school governance and provide practical insights for policymakers and educators in multi-ethnic contexts.

Keywords: parental involvement; educational management; early childhood education; Yunnan Province; school governance; rural–urban disparities; ethnic diversity; China

1. Introduction

Parental involvement has long been recognized as a cornerstone of children's academic success and holistic development, particularly in the early years of education. Early childhood education (ECE) serves as the foundation for lifelong learning, shaping not only the cognitive and emotional growth of children but also their social adaptability and problem-solving skills. Within this formative stage, the participation of parents in educational processes is widely regarded as a decisive factor that complements school management and enriches the educational environment. Scholars such as Epstein (1995) and Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler (1997) have developed comprehensive frameworks to illustrate the multifaceted ways in which parents can engage in children's learning, including communication with teachers, participation in school activities, decision-making, and home-based support.

In China, the rapid expansion of preschool education under national policies such as the *Outline of China's National Plan for Medium and Long-term Education Reform and Development (2010–2020)* has brought unprecedented opportunities and challenges. With an increasing emphasis on equitable and quality early childhood education, schools and kindergartens are expected to establish robust systems of management that ensure the active participation of families. Yunnan Province, located in southwestern China, presents a unique context for such research due to its ethnic diversity, significant rural–urban disparities, and regional economic development levels. As a frontier province bordering Southeast Asia, Yunnan not only serves as a testing ground for educational reform but also reflects broader trends in China's educational modernization efforts.

Parental involvement in Yunnan's early childhood schools, however, is characterized by both progress and limitations. On the one hand, many urban kindergartens have actively promoted parent–school partnerships through regular meetings, parent committees, and collaborative activities. On the other hand, in rural and ethnic minority areas, barriers such as socioeconomic constraints, limited parental education levels, and cultural differences often hinder meaningful participation. Consequently, the degree to which parental involvement influences school management in this diverse province remains an underexplored yet highly significant issue.

The management of early childhood schools in China is undergoing transformation, shifting from a purely administrative focus toward a more participatory and inclusive model. Educational management now emphasizes shared responsibility, effective communication, and stakeholder collaboration. Parental involvement thus becomes a key indicator of both the quality of school governance and the inclusiveness of educational practices. Previous studies have highlighted the positive correlation between parental involvement and children's academic performance, socio-emotional well-being, and school effectiveness (Fan & Chen, 2001; Hill & Tyson, 2009). However, fewer studies have examined the management dimension—specifically, how parental participation shapes decision-making processes, resource allocation, and policy implementation in kindergartens.

Given these considerations, this study focuses on the influence of parental involvement on the educational management of early childhood schools in Yunnan Province. The research aims to address the following core questions:

1. What is the current status of parental involvement in early childhood schools in Yunnan Province?
2. How does parental involvement affect school management practices, including decision-making, communication, and resource mobilization?
3. What challenges hinder effective parental participation, and how do these challenges vary across urban and rural or ethnic minority contexts?
4. What strategies can be adopted by schools and policymakers to enhance parental involvement and improve educational management outcomes?

By exploring these questions, this study seeks to contribute to both theory and practice. Theoretically, it enriches the understanding of parental involvement in the Chinese context, particularly within a multi-ethnic and less developed province. Practically, it provides insights and recommendations for educators, school leaders, and policymakers striving to foster more inclusive and effective management practices in early childhood education.

In sum, the introduction underscores the urgency of studying parental involvement in educational management, highlights the distinctive features of Yunnan Province as a case, and sets the stage for a systematic inquiry into how parents' roles can transform the quality of early childhood education.

2. Literature review

2.1 Theoretical foundations of Parental Involvement

Parental involvement in children's education has been studied extensively across disciplines, ranging from psychology and sociology to pedagogy and educational management. One of the most influential frameworks is Epstein's (1995) *Overlapping Spheres of Influence Model*, which identifies six dimensions of parental involvement: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with the community. This framework highlights the interconnectedness between families and schools, suggesting that active engagement across these dimensions can significantly enhance children's learning outcomes and improve school governance.

Another prominent model is the *Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's Model of Parental Involvement* (1997), which emphasizes the motivational factors driving parental participation, including parents' role construction, sense of efficacy, and perceived invitations from schools and teachers. This model has been widely applied in early childhood education to explain variations in parental behavior and its impact on educational practices. Both frameworks converge on the notion that parental involvement is not a peripheral activity but a central element of effective educational management.

In addition, *Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory* (1979) provides a broader lens to analyze how multiple environmental layers—microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem—affect children's development. Parental involvement can be understood as an essential part of the mesosystem, where the interaction between home and school creates a synergistic influence on children's growth and school practices. These theoretical foundations serve as the basis for examining parental involvement in the Chinese early childhood education context.

2.2 Parental Involvement in Early Childhood Education

Empirical studies consistently show that parental involvement has profound effects on early childhood education. Research in Western contexts indicates that parents who actively engage in school activities and learning support at home contribute to improved academic achievement, better classroom behavior, and stronger socio-emotional skills in children (Fan & Chen, 2001; Hill & Tyson, 2009). In early childhood settings, where young learners require a nurturing and consistent environment, parental participation strengthens the link between home and school, thereby fostering continuity in children's developmental experiences.

Beyond child outcomes, scholars have also examined how parental involvement benefits schools. For instance, Henderson and Mapp (2002) argue that schools with strong parent-school partnerships demonstrate better organizational effectiveness, increased teacher morale, and greater community trust. Such partnerships enhance decision-making processes and ensure that school policies are more responsive to the needs of families. These findings underscore the significance of studying parental involvement not only for children's learning but also for school management and governance.

2.3 Educational management in early childhood schools

Educational management in early childhood institutions encompasses planning, organizing, directing, and evaluating activities that support children's holistic development. Traditionally, school management in many countries has been administrative in nature, focusing on compliance with regulations and efficient resource allocation. However, contemporary perspectives stress participatory and inclusive management, where multiple stakeholders—teachers, administrators, parents, and communities—share responsibility (Bush, 2011).

In the Chinese context, early childhood school management is guided by national and provincial regulations, including the *Guidelines for Kindergarten Education (Trial)* issued by the Ministry of Education (2001). These documents emphasize the importance of home-school collaboration and encourage kindergartens to create mechanisms for parental participation. Yet, the degree to which such policies are implemented varies considerably across regions. Urban schools often have better resources and structured systems for engaging parents, while rural and minority areas may face challenges due to limited infrastructure and socio-economic barriers.

2.4 Parental involvement and educational management in China

In China, the concept of “*jiaxiao hezuo*” (家校合作, home–school cooperation) has gained prominence in recent years. Studies reveal that parental involvement in Chinese preschools often includes attending parent–teacher meetings, participating in school-organized events, and providing material or financial support (Zhang & Chen, 2014). However, parental participation in decision-making and policy formulation remains limited, reflecting a top-down administrative culture in Chinese education.

Research conducted in major urban centers such as Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou shows positive correlations between parental involvement and school effectiveness (Li, 2016). Schools that foster strong communication channels with parents are better able to align teaching practices with children’s home environments, leading to more effective management outcomes. Nevertheless, in less developed regions, including Yunnan Province, studies suggest that parental involvement is often constrained by parents’ educational background, occupational commitments, and cultural practices (He & Wang, 2019). These disparities highlight the importance of examining parental involvement within diverse socio-economic and cultural contexts.

2.5 Parental Involvement in Ethnic Minority and Rural Areas

Yunnan Province, known for its ethnic diversity with over 25 recognized minority groups, presents unique challenges for parental involvement. Ethnographic studies have documented how cultural norms and linguistic diversity influence parents’ attitudes toward schooling (Yang, 2020). For instance, some minority parents prioritize traditional cultural practices over formal education, which may lead to lower participation in school affairs. In rural areas, economic migration further complicates the picture, as many children are left behind with grandparents who may lack the resources or capacity to actively engage in school management (Chen, 2018).

Despite these challenges, innovative practices have emerged. Some kindergartens in Yunnan have introduced bilingual parent–teacher workshops to overcome language barriers, while others have leveraged community organizations to mobilize parental support. These examples demonstrate that context-sensitive strategies can enhance parental involvement even in resource-constrained environments.

2.6 Gaps in the Literature

Although a growing body of research underscores the benefits of parental involvement, several gaps remain. First, much of the literature in China focuses on child outcomes, while the impact of parental participation on educational management—such as decision-making, accountability, and resource mobilization—has received less attention. Second, few studies explicitly examine the unique cultural and socio-economic factors in provinces like Yunnan, where ethnic diversity and rural–urban disparities shape parental engagement differently from developed urban centers. Third, existing research often relies on quantitative surveys, with limited qualitative insights into how parents and school administrators perceive and negotiate their roles.

Addressing these gaps is essential for developing more effective and inclusive educational management models that recognize the contributions of parents as critical stakeholders. This study seeks to bridge these gaps by combining quantitative and qualitative methods to analyze how parental involvement influences school management in Yunnan's early childhood education sector.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research design

This study adopts a mixed-methods research design, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to comprehensively examine the influence of parental involvement on the educational management of early childhood schools in Yunnan Province. The rationale for employing mixed methods lies in the complex and multidimensional nature of parental involvement, which requires both statistical evidence of patterns and in-depth insights into stakeholders' perceptions. Quantitative data, primarily collected through structured questionnaires, provide measurable evidence of the extent and forms of parental participation, while qualitative data from semi-structured interviews and focus groups allow for a deeper understanding of cultural, social, and contextual influences.

3.2 Research Site and Participants

The research was conducted across five representative cities and counties in Yunnan Province, namely Kunming, Qujing, Lijiang, Honghe, and Xishuangbanna. These locations were deliberately selected to reflect both urban and rural contexts as well as ethnic diversity. Within each site, two early childhood schools (one urban and one rural, where applicable) were selected, yielding a total of ten schools for the study.

Participants included:

- Parents: 300 parents of children enrolled in the selected schools, chosen through stratified random sampling to ensure representation across socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds.
- Teachers: 50 early childhood teachers, sampled purposively based on their experience in engaging with parents.
- School administrators: 20 principals or vice principals, who provided managerial perspectives on parental involvement.

The inclusion of multiple stakeholders was intended to capture a holistic view of how parental involvement interacts with school management practices.

3.3 Data collection methods

3.3.1 Questionnaire survey

A structured questionnaire was designed for parents, consisting of four sections:

1. Demographic information (e.g., age, education level, occupation, family income).
2. Forms of parental involvement (home-based support, communication with teachers, participation in school activities, involvement in decision-making).
3. Perceptions of school management (effectiveness of communication, transparency, responsiveness, and inclusiveness).
4. Barriers to involvement (time constraints, cultural differences, financial limitations).

The questionnaire used a five-point Likert scale (from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*) to measure attitudes and behaviors. The survey was piloted with 30 parents to test clarity and reliability, and necessary adjustments were made before large-scale distribution.

3.3.2 Semi-structured interviews

To complement the survey data, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 parents, 15 teachers, and 10 administrators. The interviews explored participants' experiences, challenges, and expectations regarding parental involvement. For example, parents were asked to describe their interactions with schools, while administrators discussed how parental input was integrated into management decisions. Interviews were conducted in Mandarin or local dialects, depending on participants' preferences, and were audio-recorded with consent.

3.3.3 Focus groups

Two focus group discussions were organized, each involving parents from different ethnic minority backgrounds. These sessions aimed to capture collective perspectives and cultural nuances influencing parental involvement.

3.4 Data analysis

3.4.1 Quantitative analysis

Survey data were analyzed using SPSS software. Descriptive statistics (mean, frequency, percentage) were used to summarize demographic characteristics and general patterns of parental involvement. Inferential statistics, including correlation analysis and multiple regression, were applied to examine relationships between parental involvement and perceptions of school management.

3.4.2 Qualitative analysis

Interview and focus group data were transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Coding was conducted in three stages: open coding to identify initial categories, axial coding to establish connections among categories, and selective coding to refine themes. Triangulation of multiple data sources ensured validity and reliability of the findings.

3.5 Reliability and validity

Several measures were taken to enhance the reliability and validity of the study. For quantitative data, Cronbach's alpha was used to test internal consistency, with a threshold of 0.70 considered acceptable. Content validity was established by consulting three experts in early childhood education who reviewed the questionnaire and interview protocols. For qualitative data, peer debriefing and member checking were applied to confirm accuracy of interpretations.

3.6 Ethical considerations

This study adhered to ethical principles of research involving human participants. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, who were assured of confidentiality and the voluntary nature of their participation. Pseudonyms were used in reporting qualitative data to protect participants' identities. Special attention was given to cultural sensitivity, particularly when working with ethnic minority groups in Yunnan. The research protocol was reviewed and approved by the academic ethics committee of Yunnan Minzu University.

3.7 Limitations of methodology

While the mixed-methods design strengthens the comprehensiveness of the study, certain limitations must be acknowledged. First, the sample size, though diverse, may not fully represent all early childhood schools across Yunnan Province. Second, self-reported data in surveys and interviews may be subject to social desirability bias. Finally, language barriers in some ethnic minority regions posed challenges, despite efforts to employ translators and bilingual facilitators.

4. Findings

The findings of this study are presented in four major sections: (1) the current status of parental involvement in early childhood schools in Yunnan Province, (2) the positive impacts of parental involvement on educational management, (3) challenges and barriers to effective parental participation, and (4) variations across urban–rural and ethnic minority contexts. These results are derived from both quantitative survey data and qualitative insights from interviews and focus groups.

4.1 Current status of parental involvement

Survey data indicate that parental involvement in Yunnan’s early childhood schools is moderately strong but uneven across different forms of participation. Among the 300 parents surveyed:

- Home-based support (e.g., helping with reading, discussing school experiences) was reported as the most common form of involvement, with 72% of parents stating that they “often” or “very often” engage in such activities.
- Communication with teachers was relatively frequent, with 63% of parents reporting regular interactions through parent–teacher meetings, WeChat groups, or phone calls.
- Participation in school activities (e.g., cultural events, classroom volunteering) was less frequent, with only 45% of parents reporting active involvement.
- Involvement in decision-making was the weakest dimension, with fewer than 20% of parents indicating that they had opportunities to contribute to school-level policy discussions or management decisions.

These results suggest that while parents in Yunnan are generally supportive of their children’s learning at home and maintain communication with teachers, their participation in school management and governance remains limited.

4.2 Positive impacts of parental involvement on educational management

Qualitative data highlight several ways in which parental involvement enhances the management of early childhood schools.

4.2.1 Improved communication and transparency

Administrators and teachers reported that active parental communication fosters transparency in school operations. For example, a principal in Kunming noted:

When parents are regularly updated and encouraged to give feedback, our decisions on curriculum adjustments and safety measures are implemented more smoothly. Parents become partners rather than passive observers.

4.2.2 Resource mobilization

Parents’ material and financial contributions significantly supported school management. Survey data revealed that 38% of parents had contributed resources such as books, toys, or classroom materials, while 12% had provided financial donations. In rural areas, parents often contribute through labor or in-kind support, such as assisting in school maintenance or gardening projects.

4.2.3 Strengthening policy implementation

Teachers emphasized that when parents understood and supported school rules (e.g., health protocols, attendance policies), enforcement became easier and more effective. The alignment of parental and school expectations created a more consistent environment for children's development.

4.3 Challenges and barriers to effective participation

Despite positive impacts, significant barriers hindered parental involvement in educational management.

4.3.1 Socioeconomic constraints

Survey results showed that parents with higher education levels and stable employment were more likely to participate actively in school activities. Conversely, low-income families, particularly those involved in seasonal labor or migrant work, reported limited time and resources to engage in school matters.

4.3.2 Limited decision-making opportunities

Over 70% of parents indicated that they were rarely or never invited to participate in decision-making processes. Interviews with administrators revealed a prevailing perception that school management is a professional domain, not an area for parental input. This administrative culture often discouraged parents from taking initiative.

4.3.3 Cultural and linguistic barriers

In ethnic minority areas, language differences and cultural practices created additional obstacles. For instance, in Xishuangbanna, Dai minority parents expressed discomfort attending meetings conducted solely in Mandarin. Some parents also perceived school management practices as being misaligned with traditional values, reducing their willingness to engage.

4.3.4 Teacher workload and attitudes

Teachers reported that engaging with parents, while beneficial, added to their already heavy workload. Some teachers expressed reluctance to involve parents in decision-making, fearing that it might lead to conflicts or undermine professional authority.

4.4 Variations across urban–rural and ethnic minority contexts

The study revealed stark contrasts between urban and rural schools as well as among different ethnic communities.

- Urban schools in Kunming and Qujing demonstrated higher levels of parental involvement, particularly in communication and participation in cultural activities. These schools had established parent committees and used digital platforms (e.g., WeChat groups) to facilitate ongoing communication.

- Rural schools in Honghe and Lijiang reported lower parental participation, largely due to economic migration and the prevalence of “left-behind children”. Many children were cared for by grandparents, who often lacked the capacity or confidence to interact with school administrators.
- Ethnic minority schools in Xishuangbanna showed innovative practices such as bilingual parent workshops and culturally adapted activities. However, these schools still faced challenges in aligning school management with diverse cultural expectations.

Quantitative analysis confirmed these disparities. Regression results indicated that parental education level, urban residency, and Mandarin fluency were significant predictors of higher involvement in school management ($p < 0.05$).

4.5 Summary of findings

Overall, the findings demonstrate that parental involvement in Yunnan’s early childhood schools is strongest in home-based learning support and communication with teachers, but weakest in formal participation in decision-making and governance. While parental contributions enhance transparency, resource mobilization, and policy implementation, barriers such as socioeconomic inequality, administrative culture, and cultural diversity limit broader engagement. The urban–rural and ethnic differences underscore the need for context-sensitive strategies to promote inclusive parental involvement in educational management.

5. Discussion

This study examined the influence of parental involvement on the educational management of early childhood schools in Yunnan Province, highlighting both the benefits and the challenges of integrating families into school governance. The findings resonate with international literature while also revealing context-specific characteristics shaped by China’s social, cultural, and economic landscape.

5.1 Parental Involvement as a Driver of Inclusive Educational Management

The results confirm that parental involvement enhances transparency, resource mobilization, and policy implementation in early childhood education. These findings align with Henderson and Mapp’s (2002) assertion that family–school partnerships strengthen organizational effectiveness. In Yunnan, parents’ provision of material support and participation in communication channels significantly contributed to smoother school operations. This suggests that parental involvement, even when limited to non-decision-making roles, can still reinforce the managerial effectiveness of schools.

However, the limited parental role in formal decision-making raises questions about the inclusiveness of educational management. Epstein’s (1995) model emphasizes decision-making as a crucial dimension of parental involvement, yet fewer than 20% of parents in this study reported opportunities to engage in school policy processes. This gap reflects the

prevailing top-down administrative culture in Chinese education, where professional authority is prioritized over collaborative governance. For early childhood education to adopt a more inclusive model, schools in Yunnan need to create structured mechanisms that actively invite and value parental voices.

5.2 Socioeconomic Inequalities and Participation Gaps

A significant finding of this study is the disparity in parental involvement across socioeconomic groups. Parents with higher education levels and stable employment were more likely to participate actively, while low-income or migrant parents often faced time, financial, and logistical constraints. This pattern mirrors global evidence that socioeconomic status strongly predicts parental engagement (Lareau, 2003).

In Yunnan, these disparities are further complicated by rural–urban divides and the prevalence of left-behind children. The reliance on grandparents as primary caregivers often reduces the capacity for meaningful parental engagement. While schools benefit from active parental contributions in urban centers, rural institutions face persistent gaps that undermine management inclusivity. This highlights the need for policies and practices that specifically target disadvantaged families, such as flexible meeting schedules, transportation subsidies, or digital platforms adapted for rural use.

5.3 Cultural Diversity and Contextual Adaptation

Yunnan’s ethnic diversity introduces cultural and linguistic dimensions that influence parental involvement. As qualitative findings revealed, some minority parents experienced discomfort participating in school activities conducted exclusively in Mandarin, while others perceived a cultural mismatch between school practices and traditional values. These findings echo Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological perspective, which emphasizes the role of cultural and social contexts in shaping child development and family–school interactions.

Innovative practices, such as bilingual workshops and culturally adapted events, demonstrate the potential for schools to bridge these gaps. However, such practices remain exceptions rather than the norm. A more systematic approach is needed to integrate cultural sensitivity into educational management, ensuring that minority parents are not only included but also empowered to contribute to school governance.

5.4 Teachers’ Roles and Professional Boundaries

Another noteworthy finding is the ambivalence among teachers regarding parental involvement. While teachers recognized the benefits of parent–school partnerships, many expressed concerns about increased workload and potential conflicts. This tension reflects a broader challenge in balancing professional authority with participatory management. Previous studies in China (Li, 2016) suggest that teachers often view parental involvement as supportive but not authoritative, limiting parents’ influence on school-level decision-making.

Addressing this tension requires professional development programs that equip teachers with strategies for collaborative engagement. Training in communication skills, conflict resolution, and partnership-building can help teachers perceive parents as allies rather than burdens, thereby fostering a more cooperative management environment.

5.5 Implications for Educational Management Theory and Practice

The findings of this study contribute to educational management theory by illustrating how parental involvement functions as both a resource and a challenge in school governance. The Yunnan case underscores the importance of adopting a context-sensitive approach that accounts for socioeconomic disparities, cultural diversity, and administrative traditions.

Practically, the study suggests that educational policymakers and school administrators should:

1. Establish formal structures for parental participation in decision-making, such as parent councils with voting rights.
2. Develop targeted support mechanisms for disadvantaged families, ensuring equitable opportunities for engagement.
3. Incorporate cultural and linguistic inclusivity into school management practices, particularly in ethnically diverse regions.
4. Provide teacher training to strengthen parent–school collaboration and reduce perceived conflicts.

These implications align with the global shift toward participatory governance in education, while also reflecting the distinct challenges of China’s multi-ethnic provincial contexts.

5.6 Limitations and directions for future research

While this study provides valuable insights, limitations must be acknowledged. The sample, though diverse, may not fully represent all early childhood schools across Yunnan. Self-reported data may have introduced bias, and language barriers may have constrained some participants’ ability to fully express their perspectives.

Future research could adopt longitudinal designs to assess how parental involvement evolves over time and influences long-term management outcomes. Comparative studies across provinces would also help determine whether the patterns observed in Yunnan are unique or reflective of broader national trends. Additionally, intervention-based studies could test the effectiveness of specific strategies—such as digital communication platforms or parent training workshops—in enhancing parental participation.

6. Conclusion and recommendations

6.1 Conclusion

This study investigated the influence of parental involvement on the educational management of early childhood schools in Yunnan Province, China, drawing on data from surveys, interviews, and focus groups. The findings confirm that parental involvement is a significant factor in shaping school governance, contributing to improved communication, enhanced transparency, resource mobilization, and smoother policy implementation. Parents' engagement, particularly in home-based learning and teacher communication, strengthens the link between families and schools, thereby fostering a supportive learning environment for young children.

However, the study also reveals critical limitations. Parental participation in school decision-making remains minimal, constrained by traditional administrative cultures that prioritize professional authority. Socioeconomic inequalities, rural–urban divides, and cultural–linguistic differences further exacerbate disparities in involvement. Teachers, while recognizing the benefits of parental support, often perceive parental engagement as an additional burden, reflecting a need for more structured collaboration frameworks.

Overall, the study highlights that parental involvement is not merely an auxiliary activity but an integral component of effective educational management. By recognizing parents as stakeholders, schools can cultivate more inclusive and context-sensitive governance systems that better serve children's holistic development.

6.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed for policymakers, school administrators, teachers, and parents:

6.2.1 For Educational Policymakers

- Institutionalize parental participation: Establish policies that require schools to create parent councils or advisory committees with meaningful roles in decision-making.
- Provide targeted funding: Allocate resources to support parental engagement initiatives, especially in rural and minority areas where economic constraints limit participation.

6.2.2 For School Administrators

- Develop structured channels for input: Introduce regular forums where parents can voice concerns and contribute to management discussions.
- Promote transparency: Use digital platforms (e.g., WeChat, parent portals) to share management decisions, policies, and school activities in accessible formats.

- Culturally responsive practices: Adapt school events and communication to reflect the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of diverse communities in Yunnan.

6.2.3 For Teachers

- Enhance professional development: Provide training in parent–teacher communication, conflict management, and collaborative decision-making.
- Balance authority and partnership: Encourage teachers to view parents as allies in children’s education rather than as external critics.

6.2.4 For Parents

- Adopt proactive engagement: Move beyond home-based support to participate in school meetings and decision-making processes when opportunities arise.
- Leverage community networks: Collaborate with other parents to collectively advocate for better school management and resource allocation.

6.3 Future Research Directions

Future studies should expand beyond Yunnan to include cross-provincial comparisons, providing broader insights into how parental involvement affects educational management across diverse Chinese contexts. Longitudinal research could also track changes in parental participation and their long-term effects on school governance and child development. Intervention studies that evaluate the effectiveness of specific engagement strategies—such as bilingual parent workshops, digital communication tools, or parent leadership programs—would further enrich the literature and inform practice.

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