

LEADING CHINESE HERITAGE SCHOOLS: A CASE STUDY EXPLORING THE
LEADERSHIP OF EFFECTIVE TRANSMISSION OF CULTURE

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN EDUCATION: EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

2025

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This dissertation honors the dedicated work of overseas Chinese educators, cultural ambassadors, and volunteers. In a world often driven by material pursuits, these individuals work tirelessly and without seeking reward to keep Chinese culture alive and thriving. Through their commitment to shared values, traditions, and the art of written language, they ensure that our cultural heritage continues to flourish around the globe.

谨以此研究致敬海外中文教育事业的开拓者、中华文明的传承者与无私奉献的志愿者群体。在物欲横流的时代，不被金钱和利益驱使，坚守文化传播的精神值得敬佩。正是有这样的精神，才让博大的中华优秀传统文化、集体主义精神和方块字得以在全球范围传承。

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This milestone is not just a personal achievement but a collective triumph. It marks the Huang family's first doctoral degree, a testament to perseverance, sacrifice, and years of hard work. I am deeply grateful to my late father, whose financial and emotional support laid the foundation for this journey. Though he is no longer here to witness this moment, his spirit lives on in this accomplishment. To my mother, whose love, strength, and endless encouragement have been my anchor through every challenge, I owe more than words can express. Her resilience continues to inspire me, and this achievement is as much hers as it is mine.

Living as a single individual in the United States, far from the familiar comforts of home, I have come to realize that friends can indeed become family. To He Jiayang, Ma Ye, Wang Zinan, Hai Rui, Zhou Yun, Guan Ye, Wang Luna, Zu Lijun, Li Linsha, Wang Le, Gai Chengyu, Zhang Wilson, Yin Qiuwen, and Wang Qi—thank you for the countless nights of laughter, heartfelt conversations, and steadfast friendship. Your companionship has been a source of joy, strength, and solace during moments of loneliness and doubt. You have made this foreign land feel like home, and for that, I am eternally grateful. To my beloved dog, Pudon, who has been a constant source of comfort and entertainment, thank you for your silent but profound presence. Your companionship through countless afternoons and quiet evenings has been a reminder of the simple joys in life.

I am also profoundly thankful to the Chinese school that entrusted me, a young provost without children of my own, to lead a team of teachers, all younger than myself.

This experience taught me the value of trust, leadership, and the importance of nurturing the next generation. It was a privilege to contribute to the preservation of our cultural heritage and to inspire young minds to embrace the beauty of our language and traditions. To all my past boyfriends, neighbors, delivery men, gym owners, school administrative staff, clinic nurses, and doctors—thank you for the roles you have played in my life, no matter how big or small. Each interaction, each moment of kindness, has shaped me and contributed to the person I am today. Life is a tapestry woven from these countless threads, and I am grateful for every one of them.

This journey has been a profound test of my resilience. Through the challenges of the pandemic, volunteering at the Chinese school, navigating job changes, learning to fly the airplane, and living alone in a foreign country, I have found comfort in the quiet hours of reading and writing. Writing in a language that is not my mother tongue has been both a struggle and an achievement, a reminder that with determination, nothing is unattainable. These moments of solitude and reflection have deepened my appreciation for the power of perseverance and the strength of the human spirit.

Finally, I must express my deepest gratitude to Dr. Julia Smith, the first person I encountered in this program and the most pivotal figure throughout my academic career. Her prompt responses, unwavering encouragement, and patient guidance have been invaluable. Whether addressing academic queries or navigating the complexities of doctoral life, she has been a model of what it means to be a scholar and a leader. To my committee members, Dr. Flumerfelt and Dr. Bills, thank you for your insightful suggestions, constructive feedback, and unwavering support. Your belief in my potential has been the driving force behind this achievement.

This dissertation is more than an academic work; it is a tribute to all those who have supported me, to the spirit of volunteerism, and to the enduring legacy of Chinese culture. It reflects the belief that with perseverance, dedication, and the support of a community, even the loftiest dreams can be realized. As I stand at the culmination of this journey, I am reminded that the pursuit of knowledge is never-ending. The spirit of exploration and discovery will continue to guide me forward, and I am excited to see where this path will lead.

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ABSTRACT

LEADING CHINESE HERITAGE SCHOOLS: A CASE STUDY EXPLORING THE LEADERSHIP OF EFFECTIVE TRANSMISSION OF CULTURE

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The purpose of this study was to examine the leadership effectiveness of a nonprofit, volunteer-based weekend Chinese heritage language school, focusing on its Board of Trustees and Administrative Committee. This research explored the dynamics of leadership and collaboration within the school, specifically through the lens of a curriculum reform event.

This study used a qualitative case study approach, collecting extensive data through 17 one-on-one interviews, two board meeting observations, one administrator office observation, a review of the bylaws, and parent survey data with 78 responses. A multi-step coding process identified key themes related to leadership and administration, revealing the situational factors that influence the school's performance, including its challenges and achievements.

Key findings revealed that the leadership team demonstrated effectiveness in both weekly operations and during the curriculum reform, although small conflicts existed. Their collaborative efforts and structured approaches enabled the school to navigate complex challenges while fulfilling its mission of promoting Chinese language and

culture. Their work reflected transformational and distributed leadership, fostering a shared vision and empowering stakeholders through collective decision-making and responsibility.

Implications of these findings suggest that improving governance, communication, and operational efficiency is crucial for the sustainability of nonprofit heritage language schools. Clearer registration processes, structured meeting schedules, and regular curriculum discussions could enhance stakeholder satisfaction and instructional quality. Strengthening leadership accountability and exploring hybrid governance models may also improve long-term stability. Future research on leadership in diverse heritage language schools could offer valuable insights into best practices for organizational effectiveness and cultural preservation.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

When one observes a typical public-school classroom during the school week, it is challenging to envision that many students also attend heritage language schools on weekends. Heritage language schools are on par with extracurricular activities like robotics, sports, and musical instruments, requiring a significant commitment of time, effort, and sometimes a lengthy commute. In the United States, the heritage language school sector encompasses a multitude of ethnocultural communities. These schools play a vital role in instructing languages and conducting cultural activities to preserve language heritage (Leeman, 2015). In the early 1980s, Fishman conducted a comprehensive study, identifying over 6,500 heritage language schools operating outside the U.S. public sector. These schools taught 145 languages, including Amerindian, Chinese, French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Italian, Yiddish, and more. Additionally, data reveals that nearly all U.S. born Chinese children and recent arrivals have been exposed to Chinese community schooling, as highlighted by Xiao in 2014. Given this substantial presence and impact, exploring the heritage language school sector as a valuable educational supplement is a topic worthy of research and investigation.

The term “heritage language” is commonly employed in immigrant countries like the United States, Canada, and Australia. Heritage schools, serving as a significant component of supplementary education, have a unique and valuable impact. Joshua Fishman (2001) categorized heritage languages in the United States into three types, reflecting their historical and social contexts in relation to English. These are: immigrant

heritage languages, spoken by immigrants who arrived in the U.S. after it gained independence. Indigenous heritage languages, representing the languages of Native American communities. Colonial heritage languages, comprising the languages of European groups that initially colonized and are still in use in the United States. This dissertation primarily focuses on immigrant heritage languages.

The imperative for members of various ethnic groups to retain and learn their heritage languages has prompted the establishment of heritage language schools. Numerous ethnic communities, including the Chinese, Japanese, French, Czech, and others, have established community-based heritage language schools in the United States to cater to their residents. These schools serve as crucial educational supplements within immigrant communities, functioning as non-profit organizations that significantly contribute to enriching local cultures and preserving ethnic traditions. Heritage language schools play a vital role by offering language instruction, organizing traditional cultural events, promoting cultural awareness, and fostering connections among local ethnic associations, thus aiding the integration of ethnic groups into larger communities while preserving their cultural heritage (Wang, 1996).

Preserving and expanding language and culture is crucial for immigrants, and the establishment of heritage language schools serves this purpose. However, in the rapidly changing society, these schools need to adapt to new challenges. One significant challenge arises from the conflict between the importance of establishing formal institutions and the lack of scientific management. Notably, these schools primarily operate through volunteer efforts, with volunteers often balancing weekday jobs and

dedicating their free time to serve these schools. This reliance on volunteers makes ensuring consistent professionalism in school operations challenging.

Heritage language schools encounter challenges on multiple fronts, including developing specialized curricula, recruiting qualified instructors, securing sustainable funding, and maintaining student motivation. While pedagogical theories from public schools offer valuable insights, applying these theories to weekend-operated, volunteer-driven heritage language schools demand careful adaptation. This is due to the distinct operational and structural characteristics of heritage schools, such as limited instructional time, reliance on community volunteers, and the need to balance cultural preservation with language acquisition.

Background

Heritage Language Schools

The term heritage language was originally coined in Canada to describe any “language other than English and French,” meaning languages spoken by Indigenous people or immigrants (Cummins, 1991, pp. 601-2). Nowadays, however, a heritage language commonly refers to any language “other than the dominant” one (Kelleher, 2008, p. 3). Kelleher continued to discuss that in the United States, English is the dominant language (not an “official” language, but the primary language used in government, education, and public communication); thus, any language other than English can be considered a “heritage language” for speakers of that language. Aalberse, Backus, and Muysken (2019) explained heritage languages, such as the Turkish varieties spoken in Berlin or the Spanish used in Los Angeles, are non-dominant languages, often

with little prestige. Their speakers also speak the dominant language of the country they live in.

Heritage language schools were established by ethnic groups to support the learning of their languages and cultures (Bradunas, 1988; Fishman, 2001). They continue to be a vibrant force for preserving and developing the linguistic and cultural traditions of ethnic communities (You & Liu, 2010). Fishman's comprehensive study of heritage language schools in the early 1980s identified more than 6,500 heritage language schools outside of the public sector, teaching 145 languages, including Amerindian, Chinese, French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Italian, and Yiddish. Three types of schools are categorized based on frequency of instruction and number of instructional hours per week: all-day schools, weekday afternoon schools, and weekend schools. Other types of schools are summer programs, evening classes, and special classes in community centers (Fishman & Nahirny, 1966).

You and Liu (2010) considered there are both linguistic functions and non-linguistic functions. As the name of heritage language schools, the primary function of the language school is to deliver language. However, as You and Liu revealed that the parents recognized that it is unrealistic that their children become fully proficient in their heritage language by studying it two hours per week, so they believed that the school at least provided an environment for children to learn the language systematically and made learning the language part of a routine.

As for non-linguistic functions of heritage language schools, Wong and Lopez (2000) proposed that the heritage language schools create a sense of cultural and ethnic pride through providing an occasion for socializing and grouping involvement among

parents and opportunities for children to interact with those with similar backgrounds.

Wang (1999) claimed that heritage language schools perform important roles in immigrants' lives beyond language teaching and learning.

In summary, heritage language schools play a vital role in enhancing students' language and cultural proficiency in our multilingual global society. Beyond linguistic benefits, they also contribute significantly to fostering cultural pride and identity. These dual roles complement each other, and while heritage language schools may take inspiration from formal education, they maintain their unique characteristics. It is important not to equate them with formal schools due to differences in priorities and time commitments. Heritage language schools require special attention and personalized research to address their distinct needs, even as they learn from formal education.

History of Chinese Language Schools

Chinese heritage community-based language schools (hereafter referred to as Chinese language schools) are integral parts of the Chinese community in most medium-sized and large cities across the United States (Chao, 1997). The earliest establishment of Chinese language schools can be traced to the immigration of Chinese laborers to the United States in San Francisco in 1886 (Liu, 2010). Motivated by a strong desire to preserve their Chinese heritage and promote the ethnic identity of second-generation Chinese Americans, Chinese immigrants volunteered to teach their youngsters in language schools. During the establishment process, the Secretary of Justice, the Chinese Consulate, and leaders of the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association facilitated. Since 1900 these schools have operated successfully outside the public school system (Chao, 1997).

From the mid-nineteenth century through the early postwar decades, the Chinese American community was overwhelmingly Cantonese speaking, so the majority of Chinese schools in the U.S. taught Cantonese. Cantonese mainstream language school trend began to change after World War II, when the Mandarin-speaking population increased rapidly, especially from the 1970s. Mandarin gradually superseded Cantonese as the predominant language of instruction in Chinese schools (Lai, 2004).

Current State of Chinese Heritage Language Schools

In the United States, there exist both for-profit and nonprofit Chinese language schools. For-profit schools primarily include kindergartens, child-care centers, and tutorial programs catering to secondary school children. On the other hand, nonprofit Chinese language schools can be categorized into those operated entirely by volunteers and those managed by voluntary administrators and board members, often with the support of a small, partially compensated teaching staff. Nonprofit Chinese language schools, in adherence to the U.S. tax code, typically form affiliations with nonprofit organizations such as Chinese American associations or religious organizations (Wang, 1996). It is noteworthy that my research will specifically concentrate on nonprofit Chinese language schools.

With the evolution of Chinese schools, the necessity for organizations to collaborate and communicate has arisen. Two prominent national non-profit organizations dedicated to Chinese language education emerged: the Chinese School Association of the United States (CSAUS), established in 1994, and the National Council of Associations of Chinese Languages Schools (NCACLS), also founded in 1994. These two associations share similar missions, aiming to promote the development and

enhancement of Chinese language educational frameworks and systems. Both CSAUS and NCACLS are committed to coordinating nationwide knowledge and resources in Chinese language and culture education. They provide essential support and platforms for teaching staff and school management.

Over decades of development, Chinese heritage language schools and associations have maintained a close relationship with friendly communications. Most Chinese heritage schools follow similar operating and management models established and modified by previous generations, which are shared among them. Community education has been a focal point for the ethnic Chinese population for over 100 years. Data indicates that nearly all US-born Chinese children or recent arrivals have some level of experience in Chinese community schooling (Xiao, 2008).

Benefits of Heritage Language Schools

Heritage language schools hold significant value for the nation. While scholars like Brecht and Walton (1995) first highlighted a crisis in meeting twenty-first-century language needs, recent studies confirm this urgency. For instance, the Modern Language Association (2020) reports declining language enrollments in formal education and advocates leveraging communities as untapped linguistic resources. Research by Carreira and Kagan (2011) further emphasizes that heritage schools sustain multilingualism by providing community-driven, context-rich environments for language development. These programs also address systemic gaps, resonating with national priorities such as the U.S. Department of Education's (2023) call to cultivate multilingualism through partnerships with community organizations.

Wang (1999) considered of all the language capacity sectors, the heritage language sector has perhaps the greatest potential for producing students with high language and cultural competence, and thus, the preservation and enhancement of language competencies have become a critical priority. According to McGinnis (2008), the Chinese heritage language education sector has replaced both the college/university and K-12 sectors as the majority provider for Chinese language instruction in the U.S. over the past several decades. Besides, the proliferation of languages and cultures is beneficial for social equity and diversity. Compton (2001) stated “The role that these schools play in supporting multilingualism and linguistic diversity is significant” (p. 162). Heritage language schools play a significant role in preventing language loss, preserving linguistic diversity, and fostering international communication.

In the realm of the education system, there is unquestionably a mutual benefit to be derived from increased collaboration and enhanced coordination between heritage community language schools and formal educational systems. According to Wu (2011), immigration to the USA has induced substantial transformations in educational institutions, leading to increased diversity in terms of student demographics, including race and language. This diversity imparts dynamism to the educational environment. It is evident that language schools draw lessons from formal educational institutions in areas such as organization, management, and course settings. Similarly, the formal education system can glean valuable insights from heritage language schools regarding language teaching and learning methods as well as cultural dissemination. The exchange of knowledge between these two educational spheres holds the potential for enriching both.

Heritage language learners are indeed the primary beneficiaries of heritage language schools. Children who grow up proficient in a heritage language gain several advantages, including the ability to think and view things from different perspectives, leading to increased career and personal opportunities. The support and involvement offered by heritage language schools are crucial in helping learners develop their heritage language skills, allowing them to fully capitalize on these opportunities.

In summary, heritage language schools are crucial for preserving ethnic languages, fostering cultural exchange, and safeguarding language diversity in the US. Heritage language schools should actively pursue national recognition, serving as a vital link for students from primary to post-secondary education. They should also take a more active role in mainstream American education, contributing significantly to language education in the United States on a national level.

A Prominent Heritage Language School in the Midwest

I conducted my research within a nonprofit, volunteer-based educational institution that operated on weekends during the regular public school academic year, focusing on teaching Chinese (Mandarin) language and culture to residents in a metropolitan area of the Midwest. Although the school did not follow the standard structure of public schools, its operations included a comprehensive course registration system, an official website, a human resource workflow, a fixed school schedule, a rented school building, and a dedicated leadership team.

At the time of the study, the school had over 500 enrolled students and employed more than 25 Chinese language and culture teachers. Over 95% of the students belonged to the Chinese ethnic group, while the remaining 5% came from non-Chinese families

with an interest in Chinese culture. The school was one of the largest Chinese heritage language schools in its state and served as the exclusive host for a national standardized test for Chinese language proficiency among non-native speakers. The school also maintained positive relationships with other Chinese schools across the nation as well as with overseas organizations promoting Chinese culture and language.

My involvement in this institution had been personally fulfilling, and I sought to enhance understanding of my culture and contribute to the preservation of the Chinese language and heritage. Working in this school for two years allowed me to witness the enthusiasm of volunteers in spreading Chinese culture. Despite being volunteers, the teachers and administrators—who were professionals in fields such as engineering, higher education, medicine, accounting, and business—demonstrated unwavering passion and dedication to the school and the community. They selflessly served as school administrators or teachers on weekends.

However, relying solely on enthusiasm and dedication may not be sufficient for these schools to be competitive and sustainable. Effective organizations require systematic management and professional leadership, even when composed of amateur educators. While existing research on heritage language school development has focused on curriculum design, course settings, teacher efficiency, student assessment, and community impact, it has seldom addressed school leadership, management, and administration. In light of this gap, my dissertation research would delve into the perspectives of various stakeholders regarding the research school's administration and its inherent challenges. I would analyze the reasons behind these difficulties and provide valuable suggestions for improvement.

Leadership in Chinese Heritage Schools

As mentioned earlier, most Chinese heritage schools in the US adhere to similar operating and management models that have evolved over time, shaped by Chinese behavioral characteristics and adaptations to immigrant traits. These models are shared among these schools. In the following paragraphs, I provide a detailed introduction to these unofficial but customary practices.

Administration and HR Management

Nonprofit Chinese language schools, typically operating on weekends or after regular school hours, are run by the parents of enrolled students. Upon enrollment, parents automatically become members of the school's administrative body, participating in formulating bylaws and electing the board of directors, principal, and administrative officials. In some cases, the board of directors is responsible for selecting the principal and administrative officials. This board convenes regularly to establish policies on school administration, activities, teaching materials, and methods.

The teaching faculty and administrative staff are either hired by the board of directors or nominated by the principal, subject to final approval by the board. The principal assumes responsibility for the overall school operation. In smaller schools without board members, principals often manage both teaching and administrative duties.

Traditionally, parents contribute their time and skills to manage schools without financial compensation. For instance, a vice principal of operations may oversee traffic order and material distribution weekly without receiving a salary. This non-compensation system persists in many Chinese language schools, particularly in newly established and

smaller ones. However, as these schools have expanded both in number and size, their infrastructure has grown more complex.

In larger and more established Chinese language schools, parent volunteers find it challenging to handle all school responsibilities. Consequently, mandatory “Parent Service Plan” programs have been implemented to encourage parents to share these responsibilities. Under this plan, the workload is distributed evenly among parents, calculated by the school board based on the total hours needed to operate the school and the number of parents with enrolled children. Each parent is required to contribute a specific number of hours during the semester. To ensure fairness, parents make a cash deposit at the semester's start to guarantee their volunteer services. The number of volunteer hours is recorded, and those who fall short do not receive a refund at the semester's end.

The “Parent Service Plan” program has proven beneficial and is widely adopted by Chinese language schools in the US. It enhances parental understanding of school activities, fosters team spirit among parents in program coordination, leverages parents' professional expertise to enrich school curricula, and eases the growing burden on administrative and teaching staff.

In addition to parental involvement, some schools involve high school and university students as volunteers in Chinese language schools. Many of these volunteer students are graduates of weekend heritage language schools and serve as teacher assistants, helping with learners' writing and tutoring to give back to the Chinese community and maintain their language proficiency. These students dedicate their time, and in recognition of their efforts, they are often awarded community service certificates.

For example, the case study school assisted volunteers in applying for the President's Volunteer Service Award. Apart from the awards, these student volunteers found joy in contributing to the Chinese community and willingly embrace the role of cultural ambassadors.

Coordinating Academic Curriculum and Chinese Language Tests

Mandarin language and Chinese culture are central to the curriculum of Chinese schools, with schools having the autonomy to select their curriculum and textbooks, typically discussed during board meetings.

Most Chinese schools in the United States use the *Zhong Wen* textbooks from Ji Nan University Press in China for Mandarin language curriculum. Originally introduced in 1995, the series underwent revisions in 2006 and 2021, with the Chinese School Association of the United States (CSAUS) collaborating with Ji Nan University to meet curriculum needs. The *Zhong Wen* series, comprising 12 levels with practice books, targets non-native speakers learning Chinese as a foreign language. Content is divided into modules, covering pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and reading comprehension. Using a communicative approach, the textbooks emphasize practical language use in real-life situations and incorporate multimedia materials like audio recordings, videos, and online resources to enhance language skills. The CSAUS is the sole official seller of these textbooks, facilitating easy access for member schools.

However, the content of *Zhong Wen* series textbooks has seldom been adapted to consider cultural relevance or the cognitive abilities of Chinese American students. Teachers often modify content based on students' needs and cognitive levels. For instance, at my research school, first-grade teachers found the level one *Zhong Wen* too

challenging for non-native learners, opting for the *Yu Wen* series from People's Education Press of China. Limited competition in textbook publishing for non-native speakers has contributed to a lack of modifications in the *Zhong Wen* publication.

Cultural classes in Chinese heritage schools are elective courses that cover a variety of subjects such as calligraphy, history, folk dance, chess, origami, brush painting, drama, and ball games. The selection of these classes often depends on the teaching resources available within the local Chinese community. For instance, a teacher with a background in broadcasting and hosting who recently immigrated to the U.S. and settled in a metropolitan area might propose to open a public speech course. After advertising and recruiting, the public speech class would commence, benefiting many learners. These cultural classes typically lacked a standardized curriculum. Instead, teachers, who were experts in their specific fields, developed course syllabi and content independently.

Heritage language learners aim to both inherit their language and demonstrate their proficiency, often setting goals to pass language exams. One such exam is the HSK, which stands for Hanyu (Chinese), Shuiping (Level), and Kaoshi (test), translating to the "Chinese Level Test." The HSK (Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi / 汉语水平考试) is a standardized test designed for non-Chinese speakers to certify their Mandarin language skills. It is also open to overseas Chinese and national minorities in China. HSK levels and scores provide individuals with a precise measure of their proficiency, useful for scholarship applications and job opportunities in China. As students aspire to achieve higher grades, there is a focus on obtaining higher scores in the HSK. Teachers often adopt teaching content aligned with the HSK test as students approach the testing age.

Students' Placement

The task of student placement in Chinese language schools is challenging, given the variations in age, family background, and Mandarin Chinese proficiency levels. To effectively address the diverse needs of students, Chinese language schools have devised a categorization system for classes. These categories include Mandarin Chinese-only classes, Mandarin Chinese as second language classes or bilingual classes, and Chinese Language High School credit classes or AP classes.

1. Mandarin Chinese Only Classes:

In schools with a small number of students, varying levels of Mandarin Chinese and different ages may be grouped together due to limited teachers. In schools with 150 or more students, grouping is based on compatible levels of Mandarin Chinese. Ideally, students of the same age group with similar Chinese proficiency levels should be placed together. In schools with 300 or more students, students of similar age with compatible levels of Chinese are usually grouped together. Age differences range from one or two years in beginning classes to two to four years in mid-level and advanced Chinese classes.

2. Mandarin Chinese as Second Language Classes or Bilingual Class:

Modeled after English as a Second Language (ESL) programs, these classes cater to students who speak only English or other Chinese dialects, or local Americans with an interest in Chinese. Emphasis is on listening and speaking skills, with the goal of transitioning students to regular Mandarin Chinese classes within a year or two.

3. Chinese Language High School Credit Classes or AP Class:

Designed for students in the ninth to twelfth grade, these classes cover listening comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Successful completion grants credits accepted by certain regular high schools, and these credits are applicable to college.

Coordinating Extracurricular Activities

Extracurricular activities in Chinese schools offer a diverse range of opportunities beyond traditional academic coursework. These activities aim to help students develop new skills, explore interests, form friendships, boost confidence, and strengthen bonds within the Chinese community.

In addition to school-year Chinese classes, some local Chinese language schools organize camps tailored for Chinese youths aged eight to eighteen, as well as specially designed camps suitable for interested local non-Chinese-speaking family kids. These intensive summer camps usually last four to six days and encompass a diverse mix of academic and cultural activities.

In the realm of sports, Chinese schools orchestrate games that are accessible to the entire Chinese community, engaging both students and adult participants. These activities encompass a variety of sports, including soccer, badminton, and basketball games. Additionally, during the winter season, opportunities for students arise through seasonal sports like the ACSGD Ski Club, where discounted rates are offered, and parent volunteers take on the role of instructors for interested children.

Traditional holidays are celebrated in Chinese schools as a means to reinforce cultural traditions and promote Chinese culture. In addition to sending wishes via email,

schools organize events for significant holidays such as Lunar New Year, which emulate the galas held in China. These events showcase student performances in dance, song, and various other arts, often featuring traditional costumes. Furthermore, some schools extend their celebrations to include other traditional festivals like Lantern Festival, Dragon Boat Festival, and Mid-Autumn Festival. These extended festivities involve activities such as authentic food tastings, garden parties, and games. Notably, local organizations, such as the NBA Pistons inviting ACSGD students to welcome players during Lunar New Year night, actively contribute to the efforts of spreading Chinese culture.

Contests are organized by local Chinese schools, state associations, national Chinese associations, and global Chinese departments to promote Chinese learning. These competitions encompass a range of activities, such as debates, speeches, vocabulary tests, Chinese history quizzes, and comprehensive Chinese culture competitions, offering appealing rewards. As an illustration, the winners of the 2019 Overseas Chinese Culture Contest were rewarded with a 14-day free trip to China.

Above is a brief introduction to leadership in Chinese heritage language schools. There is a Chinese saying, “A sparrow may be small, but it has all its vital organs.” which perfectly describes the situation of heritage language schools. Despite operating only once a week, these schools mirror formal educational institutions in their leadership responsibilities, which include HR management, parent-student communication, curriculum design, and extracurricular coordination. Since heritage language schools share significant similarities with formal educational systems and other institutions, theories developed for these systems can be effectively applied to heritage schools.

Conceptual Framework

Chinese heritage language schools, being nonprofit and volunteer-based entities, straddle both the educational and nonprofit sectors. When discussing the conceptual framework, my specific focus would be on educational leadership theories within the context of nonprofit, volunteer-driven organizations. This will involve highlighting power distribution, the application of contemporary educational theories, and strategies for ongoing efficiency and growth. Two educational leadership theories particularly relevant to Chinese schools are transformational leadership, and distributed leadership.

Leadership Theories in Nonprofit Organization

In both for-profit and nonprofit organizations, fundamental principles of organizational management are applicable, encompassing elements such as visions, regulations, schedules, and effective leadership. Nevertheless, nonprofit organizations possess distinctive characteristics, as highlighted by Frumkin (2002), emphasizing their avoidance of coercion, and by Salamon (1999), who asserts that nonprofit organization's function based on self-governance and voluntary participation. Due to these unique attributes, leadership theories that resonate with core values like contributions, self-motivation, personal commitment, volunteerism, and self-sacrifice are especially pertinent for nonprofit organizations.

Three leadership theories, namely the Five Practices of Leadership (Kouzes & Posner, 2007), the concept of Leader as a Servant (Greenleaf, 1977), and the principles underlying the Web of Inclusion theory (Helgesen, 1995), offer valuable guidance for leaders within nonprofit organizations. These theories converge on several key principles that nonprofit leaders should consider applying. First and foremost is the emphasis on

service-oriented leadership. Leaders within nonprofit organizations should prioritize service and willingly make sacrifices to advance their causes. They possess an understanding of their unique contributions and excel at building and nurturing relationships with their followers. By fostering trust, earning respect, providing guidance, and genuinely caring about the well-being of those they lead, these leaders create an environment conducive to effective collaboration and shared goals.

In addition to service-oriented leadership, effective nonprofit leaders embody a diverse set of essential qualities. They exhibit visionary qualities, capable of inspiring others by articulating a compelling picture of the future and motivating their team members to collectively pursue a shared vision. Furthermore, these leaders excel in active listening, attentively understanding the diverse perspectives and needs of both team members and stakeholders. This skill allows them to make informed decisions and cultivate an inclusive environment that values the contributions of all involved.

Passion and commitment are also hallmark traits of nonprofit leaders, demonstrating unwavering dedication to their organization's values and goals. Leading by example, they exhibit a profound commitment to their mission, fostering a sense of purpose among team members. Moreover, these leaders prioritize transcendent values, paying attention to self-actualization, as their work is deeply connected to causes and values that extend beyond mundane concerns. Their embodiment of selflessness and a profound sense of purpose distinguishes them in their leadership roles within nonprofit organizations.

In conclusion, leadership in nonprofit organizations is distinct due to their mission-driven and voluntary nature. Leaders who apply the principles of service,

inspiration, active listening, passion, and commitment can effectively navigate the unique challenges and opportunities presented by nonprofit organizations. These leaders not only excel in achieving their organization's goals but also make a lasting impact on the communities they serve.

Leadership Theories Related to Education

Heritage language schools in the United States are officially recognized as non-profit organizations, but at their core, they function primarily as educational institutions. Their operational systems and functions closely resemble those of regular public schools. Consequently, leaders in both public schools and weekend Chinese language schools must possess essential skills related to decision-making, effective communication, analytical thinking, and networking.

Over the past two decades, educational leadership theories have evolved and shown promising results within the context of education. These theories are equally applicable to the administration of Chinese heritage language schools, not limited to traditional public schools. Among the plethora of educational leadership theories available today, several are highly relevant to Chinese language schools. These include transformational leadership, instructional leadership, distributed leadership, ethical leadership, emotional leadership, entrepreneurial leadership, strategic leadership, sustainable leadership, invitational leadership, and constructivist leadership, among others.

In this section, I will emphasize two leadership theories that are particularly relevant to Chinese heritage language schools.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership was shaped by the initial ideas of James MacGregor Burns (1978). He was recognized as a trailblazer in the field of leadership studies, having introduced the concept of transforming leadership. According to Burns, transforming leadership stresses the mutual, reciprocal relationship between a leader and followers, whereby the motivation and the morality of both the leader and the followers are raised to higher levels. Transforming leadership generates awareness and acceptance of the purposes and mission of the group and stirs employees to look beyond their own self-interest for the good of the group. Transforming leadership is contrasted with transactional leadership, which is a relationship based on a transaction or exchange between a leader and followers, such as giving a raise for meeting certain performance standards in instituting some form of punishment or demotion when tasks are not completed satisfactorily.

Bass (1985) and Avolio (1999) developed transformational leadership from its original theoretical concept into the formal ideology that it is today. Bass expanded Burns' theory to transformational leaders motivating followers to do more than originally expected. Bass also pointed out that the leaders are the ones who persuade followers to transcend their own self-interest for the sake of a greater good. According to Bass (1990), transformational leaders broaden the interests of employees. Bass and Riggio (2006) stated that the essence of transformational leadership lies in developing employee commitment, which then leads to the achievement of the goals and objectives of the organization.

In school settings, transformational leadership goes beyond administrative tasks and focuses on creating an environment that empowers students and educators to excel and innovate (McCarley, Peters & Decman, 2016). Different from the commercial world, educational institutions mainly deal with relationships among human beings.

Transformational leadership involves fostering a positive and motivating environment that encourages both educators and students to reach their fullest potential. For example, offering a variety of courses allows students largely explore and develop their interests, as distinct from a school that mandates more academic courses because that school is governed by leader who merely cares about test scores and academic ranking that contribute to his or her own advancement.

School leaders who adopt transformational leadership can produce positive outcomes. From the perspective of student development, transformational leadership increases student engagement, participation, and enthusiasm for learning and activities, and also enhances students' academic performance and personal growth (Ytterstad & Olaisen, 2023). McCarley, Peters, and Decman (2016) stated that, for educators, transformational leaders value teachers' contributions and encourage their work motivations. Teachers in a positive school culture feel respected and included, in addition to experiencing enhanced job satisfaction and commitment. More importantly, transformational leaders encourage experimentation and innovation in teaching methods and curriculum design, enabling schools to adapt to the fast-changing world effectively (Al-Husseini, & Elbeltagi, 2016). Heritage language schools that apply transformational leadership will benefit similarly. For example, the head of the school could implement a new vision for language education that inspires and motivates both teachers and students,

such as encouraging innovative teaching methods instead of traditional, teacher-centered instruction. The leadership team create a compelling vision by articulating a clear and inspiring vision for the school that emphasizes the importance of preserving and promoting the heritage language and culture.

Distributed Leadership

Distributed leadership is a relatively new concept that has emerged in response to the recognition that not all school leaders fit the "charismatic hero" model associated with transformational leadership (Lynch, 2012). Given the increasing complexity of tasks handled by school leaders, distributed leadership has become more prevalent.

Bennett et al (2003) argued that “distributed leadership is not something ‘done’ by an individual ‘to’ others, or a set of individual actions through which people contribute to a group or organization. It is a group activity that works through and within relationships, rather than individual action.” Distributed leadership is a humanistic approach to shared governance. Many authors have quoted Tom Peters as having said "Great leaders do not create followers; they create more leaders." While this quote does not appear in any of his writings, it has become a common basis on which to describe the principles of distributed leadership (e.g. Reiner, 2023, Eades, Elgar). This sentence describes the essence of distributed leadership, which creates autonomous subordinates rather than employees who need to be monitored and micromanaged. One of the principles of distributed leadership is the concept of one mission with multiple leaders (Harris, 2012). Distributed leadership emphasizes that authority does not only reside with one leader. It promotes collective skill sets. Distributed leadership is dedicated to shared values and mission, which generally provides autonomy and authority to managers of different departments.

As part of illustrating the practical implementation of distributed leadership, Solly (2018) explained the concept of distributed leadership by providing three elements in an organization. They are autonomy, capacity, and accountability. All three elements are applicable to school administrative work. To be specific, autonomy means that, within their sphere of influence, leaders must be given at least a certain amount of authority. Leaders within a school need to be given the autonomy to make key decisions in their areas of responsibility. A good principal leads the school as a whole but does not follow up on the latest mathematics progress or determine which sound system to use for an assembly – instead delegating those more specific tasks to expert subordinates. Thus, an effective school needs to have professional curriculum leaders for different subjects. Autonomy is central to achieving the objective of empowering leaders and giving them ownership of their work.

Autonomy produces additional leaders within an organization. However, trust in these new autonomous leaders needs to be earned as it is dangerous to give ineffective or inexperienced leaders full autonomy within their sphere of expertise. With earned autonomy comes accountability. According to Solly (2018), the term “accountability” means responsibility and having impact. To be specific, when leaders have autonomy, they use it appropriately and in furtherance of the institution’s goals. Solly recommended that school administrators should enable staff to reflect, develop and grow in order to learn from and fix mistakes. Today, many schools require new teachers or administrators to write reflection journals as a way to test or track their accountability.

Finally, the term “capacity” describes the requirement for these autonomous leaders, who are aware of their responsibility for certain activities, to be backed with

resources in order to carry out their devolved strategy (Solly, 2018). In the educational context, a school principal provides the autonomous classroom teachers with the capacity to succeed by imposing a basic curriculum and providing necessary classroom materials and supplies.

Distributed leadership is beneficial in many ways. First, a stronger leadership culture can be fostered in organizations and schools. This is because the power is distributed among multiple individuals. In leadership culture, distributed leadership encourages shared values, cooperation, and cross-communication (Wright, 2008). Second, as Harris (2012) concluded, distributed leadership expands leadership potential. Distributed leadership enhances the scope and potential of the organization's leadership. When all members lead, a company gains from maximizing knowledge, combined capabilities, and the leadership of an entire organization. The practice of shared leadership also advances the growth of the individual leader. Third, distributed leadership emphasizes continued learning and leadership development at all levels of the organization (Thorpe, Gold, & Lawler, 2011). In decentralized management control, people are more likely to cooperate with each other. This fills the deficiencies in the company's leadership. This openness to sharing strengthens the learning culture. When leadership activities are delegated, the group of leaders grows and strengthens the organization.

Discussion

Researchers (Anderson 1984, Brueggemann 1996, Hollander 1978, Van Fleet & Yukl 1989) have established that leadership primarily revolves around three key themes: the traits or characteristics of leaders, the actions that organizational leaders undertake,

and the interactions between leaders, followers, and the context. Having explored various leadership theories from the perspectives of organizational leadership, educational leadership, and cross-cultural influence leadership, it is essential to return to these fundamental themes. It's important to note that leadership theories and models cannot be examined in isolation; rather, they must be considered and applied in specific circumstances because each context and team member is unique.

Chinese school leaders require distinctive characteristics due to the unique nature of their institutions. These schools are typically formed and run by parent volunteers, established with the primary goal of preserving heritage language and cultural traditions, often operating only on weekends. Consequently, Chinese school leaders must possess qualities that enable them to lead individuals who may not have a professional background in education, potentially being experts in their respective careers. Additionally, to effectively serve the Chinese community, school leaders must maintain strong connections with various stakeholders, including peer schools, American Chinese school associations, local government bodies, Chinese government overseas educational departments, other members and organizations within the Chinese community, parents, teachers, and students.

When discussing the first theme of leadership, which pertains to the traits or characteristics a leader should possess, several theories and findings shed light on this matter. Transformational leadership theory emphasizes that leaders should be charismatic figures who inspire trust and demonstrate a strong commitment to their words. Transformational leaders set an example for their followers by living out their values and vision. In Chinese school settings, this often means that leaders themselves actively

participate as volunteers to spearhead the school's development. One of the five practices of leadership, as outlined by Kouzes and Posner (2007), is "model the way." Chinese school leaders aim to lead by example, particularly when working with volunteers. By volunteering themselves, they demonstrate the behaviors and commitment they expect from others. Kouzes and Posner conducted extensive research by soliciting input from 75,000 people about their expectations of leaders. The findings revealed several key leadership traits that people value in leaders, including honesty, forward-looking vision, inspiration, and competence. Additionally, other characteristics such as intelligence, fairness, open-mindedness, supportiveness, straightforwardness, dependability, and more were also considered important.

When delving into the second theme of leadership, which pertains to how a good leader should behave and act, several leadership theories emphasize the significance of effective communication. Transformational leadership includes the attribute of "individualized consideration," which underscores the importance of leaders establishing individual-level relationships with their followers. In this context, communication should be two-way, fostering open and meaningful dialogue between leaders and their team members. Greenleaf's (1977) Leader as a servant theory places importance on giving followers equal opportunities to express themselves and fostering a sense of belonging. This approach encourages leaders to be attentive listeners and facilitators of communication, ensuring that all voices are heard and valued. Helgesen's (1995) theory highlights the power of inclusive communication in creating an environment of continuous information sharing. Such communication practices help reduce fear and

promote a culture of self-management, breaking away from traditional hierarchical communication structures.

In essence, these leadership theories emphasize that effective leadership involves not only conveying a clear vision but also actively engaging in open and inclusive communication with followers. By creating an atmosphere where team members feel heard, valued, and empowered to express themselves, leaders can foster a positive and collaborative work environment.

When considering the third theme of leadership, which revolves around contingency and adaptability, it becomes evident that many leadership theories offer guidance on how to effectively navigate conflicts between old and new paradigms. Avolio et al (1999) advocate for stimulating workers by encouraging them to critically evaluate old assumptions and approach problems with fresh perspectives. This approach aligns with the notion that embracing change and innovation is essential for effective leadership in a dynamic environment. Greenleaf (1977) emphasizes the concept of foresight, which involves making informed judgments about future events based on a thorough understanding of the present moment. In this view, leaders continually consider the interconnectedness of the past, present, and future, treating them as an organic unit. This approach enables leaders to anticipate and adapt to changing circumstances. Strategic leadership theory underscores the importance of planning at both micro and macro levels. Leaders are expected to maintain a comprehensive understanding of current conditions while simultaneously envisioning a larger picture of the future. This dual perspective allows leaders to adapt their strategies as needed to align with evolving circumstances.

In essence, these leadership theories highlight the necessity of leaders being proactive in anticipating and addressing conflicts that arise from the clash between old and new paradigms. Effective leaders possess the capacity to foster innovation, adapt to changing environments, and strategically plan for the future while remaining grounded in the present.

Volunteering in a nonprofit organization differs significantly from conventional employment, as individuals unite based on shared beliefs and values. This characteristic suggests that even the top leader of a nonprofit organization should not take themselves too seriously. Effective leadership within nonprofit organizations demands a higher level of commitment, time dedication, and a willingness to make personal sacrifices. Chinese schools, as a distinctive presence within the US nonprofit sector, have the opportunity to draw insights from various theoretical frameworks, including nonprofit theories, educational leadership theories, and cross-cultural leadership theories. Furthermore, understanding the operational processes of these schools can serve as practical supplements to the theories, ensuring that leadership practices align with the unique dynamics of Chinese schools and their cultural context.

Research Questions

Chinese language schools have flourished over the last century, yet their significant contributions have frequently gone unnoticed beyond their own community (Wang, 1996). These schools stand as a testament to the power of collective efforts by the community and parents. While heritage language schools such as Chinese language schools undeniably boost children in learning their language and culture, they encounter challenges related to student engagement (Carreira & Kagan, 2011), teacher development

(Potowski & Carreira, 2004), learning outcomes (Caloi & Torregrossa, 2021), and administrative leadership (Merino, Trueba, & Samaniego, 1993).

In my three-year engagement with the Chinese school, I've identified significant deficiencies in organizational leadership. Expanding on Fandino's (2019) framework, a strong research question should encapsulate characteristics of being intriguing, achievable, innovative, ethical, pertinent, and theoretically rooted. Drawing from Fandino's framework, I've outlined the issues as follows.

Heritage language schools often struggle with loose and inefficient management practices. These include ad-hoc meeting arrangements and a lack of accountability, which undermine responsibility (e.g., frequent resignations due to interpersonal conflicts, or no repercussions for chronic tardiness or errors). Additionally, Human Resources management faces challenges, particularly in streamlining hiring processes, implementing fair teacher evaluations, and providing professional development opportunities for educators. Finally, conflicting values emerge between traditional and modern ideologies, such as tensions between collectivist principles (e.g., expecting unconditional respect for teachers) and individualistic norms (e.g., adapting to masked communication during the COVID-19 pandemic).

My research aimed to investigate how heritage language schools address and overcome these challenges within their organizational framework. Specifically, I will focus on identifying and analyzing these organizational shortcomings. As Kleiner (1985) suggests, good research questions should be clear, unambiguous interrogative statements that imply the potential for empirical investigation and cannot be answered with a simple 'yes' or 'no'.

Drawing from relevant literature on heritage language schools and my practical experiences, my research focuses on how administrators influence leadership in curriculum modification, class setting modification, and student placement process in a Chinese Heritage school. My guiding research questions for this study will be:

1.What are the responsibilities of administrators in the effective operation of heritage language schools?

My intention for this question is to delineate the ideal responsibilities of administrators that are regulated by bylaw and conduct research to ascertain the actual duties performed by my research participants. The aim is to identify and analyze the gaps between the ideal and the practical roles during the observation and engagement in the curriculum modification process.

2.How do the administrators of heritage language schools work together to coordinate the successful operation of a nonprofit volunteer-based organization?

Given the unique characteristics of the nonprofit volunteer-based weekend school, I recognize the necessity for a distributed leadership approach. My focus lies on the transformation of organizational culture, particularly in the context of curriculum reform. This study aims to explore how two specific leadership theories manifest in practice through descriptive case analysis. While the primary goal is to document and analyze the process (rather than prescribe solutions), I will derive contextualized implications from the findings that may inform future improvements.

3.How do current formal educational leadership theories fit or differ when applied to heritage language schools?

My intention for this question is to identify and analyze two popular educational leadership theories derived from formal educational systems. Through the lens of curriculum modification, I aim to determine which aspects of these theories can be effectively applied to non-profit Chinese schools and which aspects may not be as applicable.

Significance

The urgency of scholarly attention to heritage language schools is well-documented. While early scholars like Wang (1999) highlighted systemic challenges in Chinese heritage schools, contemporary research underscores persistent gaps. For instance, Xiao (2016) argues that despite rapid expansion, heritage schools remain "institutionally marginalized" in U.S. educational policy (p. 28), while Lee and Chen-Wu (2021) note a disconnect between community efforts and academic recognition. Existing studies primarily focus on cultural transmission (Leeman, 2015), teacher identity negotiation (Yang & Tochon, 2022), and heritage language proficiency outcomes (Carreira & Kagan, 2011). However, organizational leadership, particularly in volunteer-driven, nonprofit context remains understudied (Harris, 2012; Thorpe et al., 2011). My research addresses this gap by investigating administrative practices and distributed leadership models in heritage schools, drawing on frameworks like transformational leadership (McCarley et al., 2016) and nonprofit management theory (Frumkin & Chetkovich, 2002).

Community-based Chinese heritage language schools face challenges from both internal community dynamics and external pressures. Initially established to preserve linguistic and cultural heritage, these schools often encounter ideological fragmentation

within the ethnic community. Divergent views among parents and volunteers—such as disagreements over pedagogical approaches (e.g., traditional character literacy vs. simplified characters) or cultural priorities (e.g., Confucian values vs. modern diaspora identities)—frequently lead to the proliferation of splinter schools aligned with specific factions (Xiao, 2016; Yang & Tochon, 2022). The resulting competition among schools exacerbates resource strain, including non-ethical recruitment practices (e.g., offering discounted tuition to "poach" students) and volunteer attrition (Wang, 1999). For instance, the San Francisco Bay Area Chinese School saw a 30% enrollment decline between 2015 and 2020, directly attributed to the establishment of three new community-run heritage schools promoting distinct political or religious affiliations (Lee & Chen-Wu, 2021, p. 789).

In the face of such competition and changing dynamics, the importance of administrative work becomes evident. Furthermore, the development of online tutors and learning resources, particularly accelerated by the impact of COVID, has made students more adaptable to online learning. Consequently, heritage language learning no longer necessarily depends solely on local heritage schools. In this context, the administrative task includes establishing a robust community and leveraging the concept of community to foster ethnic cohesion. Emphasizing the importance of community is crucial in navigating these challenges and ensuring the continued inheritance of Chinese culture.

Ineffective administration serves as a deterrent for volunteers and parents within heritage language schools. A concrete example can be observed in Chinese school, where out of the nine administrative members, one consistently fails to attend meetings, and two attend but do not actively participate. These members express dissatisfaction with the

policies and principal, often leading to inconclusive and unproductive meetings. Over time, such unfit policies and lax administrative management can have detrimental effects on the school. Rectifying ineffective administrative work is crucial to motivating current and future administrators to actively participate and contribute to the team.

This study examines the administrative challenges faced by a community-based Chinese heritage language school through the lens of its curriculum reform efforts. By analyzing the decision-making processes, stakeholder interactions, and cultural negotiations within this school, the research provides context-specific perspectives on how leadership navigates complexities unique to volunteer-driven heritage institutions. The findings aim to deepen understanding of organizational dynamics in such settings, offering insights that may inform similar schools grappling with balancing tradition, innovation, and resource constraints.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The United States stands as one of the largest immigrant-receiving countries globally. Throughout centuries, immigrants have worked diligently to both assimilate into American culture and maintain and propagate their own cultural heritage. Language serves as a vital medium for transmitting and preserving culture. Benmamoun et al. (2013) asserted that the maintenance and development of heritage languages rely on two fundamental resources. First, natural exposure within the home environment plays a crucial role, as family members foster an immersive linguistic setting through regular communication and imitation. Second, additional support, such as attending heritage language schools or utilizing online learning platforms, further reinforces language retention and proficiency (Aalberse et al., 2019). Together, these resources contribute to the preservation and transmission of heritage languages across generations.

A metropolitan region in the Midwest, known for its industrial strength, has historically attracted immigrants from diverse backgrounds worldwide. In this area, several heritage language schools play a crucial role in preserving the languages and cultures of different ethnic groups. The languages and communities represented in these schools are remarkably diverse, with some of the more prevalent ones being Arabic, Polish, Chinese, Japanese, and Spanish.

In my search for information about heritage schools, I adopted a multifaceted approach to collect comprehensive and relevant data. Initially, I consulted academic databases such as JSTOR, Google Scholar, and the Oakland University library database

using keywords “heritage schools,” “cultural education,” and “language preservation.”

This initial search provided foundational insights and key concepts surrounding heritage schools.

Furthermore, I expanded my search to educational leadership research, focusing on scholarly articles and studies related to heritage schools. This enabled me to access current research and gather references used by other researchers in the field, providing a broader perspective and potential sources for further investigation. Additionally, I utilized online platforms and repositories such as heritage language school websites and annual reports to explore the specific characteristics of different ethnic language school development and features. This approach helped me access a variety of sources and perspectives beyond traditional academic literature.

Overall, my search strategy for information about heritage schools was comprehensive, involving the use of academic databases, online platforms, and manual search techniques to gather a diverse range of sources and perspectives.

Research on Heritage Schooling

Heritage language schools come in various forms, categorized based on the frequency of instruction and the number of instructional hours per week. These categories include all-day schools, weekday afternoon schools, and weekend schools. Other types of programs, such as summer classes, evening classes, and special classes held in community centers, also contribute to heritage language education (Fishman & Nahirny, 1966). Based on the most recent three years of data from the National survey conducted by the Coalition of community-based heritage language schools (2019 to 2021), there has been an increase in the number of weekday program classes from 2019 to 2021: 42, 58,

and 84; weekend classes have seen significant growth: 76, 249, and 307; and whole-week programs have also increased: 21, 66, and 59. These findings suggest that contemporary heritage language learners in the United States are more likely to attend weekend schools than other types. They often combine traditional U.S. school attendance during the week with heritage language and culture school attendance on weekends to supplement their learning. Therefore, my research primarily focused on formal heritage language education, where students attend both traditional U.S. schools and additional heritage culture schools, with a particular emphasis on weekend schools, as outlined by Fishman and Nahirny (1966).

Heritage Schools Development in the United States

Undoubtedly, immigration has been the lifeblood of the United States, fueling its growth, diversity, and dynamism. The heritage schools established and developed in the United States serve as a reflection of the immigration from various countries, making them a topic worthy of discussion. According to the 2021 survey conducted by the Coalition of Community-based Heritage Language Schools, there were 39 language programs in the United States, an increase from the 37 programs reported in the 2020 survey. Notably, Estonian and Marathi were among the two new language programs added in 2021. This trend underscores the growing interest in and importance of preserving and sharing cultural heritages in the United States. The top ten programs in the 2021 survey were Japanese, Chinese, Lithuanian, Polish, German, Czech, Portuguese, Bulgarian, French, and Spanish. These programs reflect the enduring commitment to promoting and celebrating a wide range of cultures and languages within the United States.

According to the website *Heritage Languages in America* (Heritage Briefs, n.d.), there are several representative ethnic groups whose heritage language schools have thrived in the U.S., making them noteworthy for discussion. In this context, I explored the motivation behind the creation of heritage schools, their historical development, the associations and organizations that support them, and the challenges they encounter.

Chinese Heritage Schools

Chinese heritage community-based language schools are integral parts of the Chinese community in most medium-sized and large cities across the United States (Chao, 1997). The earliest establishment of Chinese language schools can be traced to the immigration of Chinese laborers to the United States in San Francisco in 1886 (Liu, 2010). Motivated by a strong desire to preserve their Chinese heritage and promote the ethnic identity of second-generation Chinese Americans, Chinese immigrants volunteered to teach their youngsters in language schools. Since 1900 these schools have operated successfully outside the public school system (Chao, 1997).

Currently, there are both for-profit and nonprofit Chinese language schools in the United States. For-profit schools primarily encompass kindergartens, child-care centers, and tutorial programs catering to secondary school children. Nonprofit Chinese language schools, on the other hand, are categorized into those operated entirely by volunteers and those managed by voluntary administrators and board members, often with the support of a small, partially compensated teaching staff. To comply with the U.S. tax code, nonprofit Chinese language schools typically maintain affiliations with nonprofit organizations such as Chinese American associations or religious organizations (Wang, 1996).

With the growth of Chinese schools, the need for organizing and communication has arisen. Two national nonprofit organizations in Chinese language education emerged in 1994: the Chinese School Association of the United States (CSAUS) and the National Council of Associations of Chinese Language Schools (NCACLS). Both associations share similar missions, aimed at enhancing Chinese language education, coordinating nationwide resources in Chinese language and culture education, and offering support and platforms for teachers and school management. Nonetheless, each organization has its member schools and plays distinct roles in curriculum development, communication, advocacy, and articulation.

Over the course of several decades, Chinese schools and associations have fostered strong relationships and maintained friendly communication. The majority of Chinese heritage schools follow similar operating and management models. Community education has been at the heart of the ethnic Chinese population for over a century. Research indicates that nearly all US-born Chinese children or young arrivals have had some exposure to Chinese community schooling (Xiao, 2014).

Over the past century, Chinese language schools have prospered. While these schools undoubtedly help children learn their language and culture, they face various challenges concerning students, teacher development, learning outcomes, and administrative leadership. First, heritage students grapple with high parental expectations, dedicating Saturday mornings, coping with heavy workloads, and engaging in extensive memorization, which can diminish their enthusiasm for language learning, especially as they reach middle or high school age. Adolescents also bear the weight of managing bilingualism and biculturalism, leading to real conflicts between their home culture and

mainstream culture, potentially affecting their self-perception. Second, students in Chinese language schools may experience additional pressures, prompting schools to consider teacher training. Many teachers at Chinese language school receive education outside the United States and are trained in memorization-based methods, resulting in potential clashes between students' learning preferences and teachers' teaching styles. Consequently, students may find their studies less motivating.

Japanese Heritage Schools

A significant population of individuals with Japanese ancestry resides in the United States, with the U.S. Census identifying 717,413, of whom 299,022 were born outside the nation (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022). The composition of Japanese community in the US is multifaceted. According to Kataoka (2008), there are four primary groups of Japanese children live in the U.S.: 1) Those living in the U.S. temporarily, expected to return to Japan in around five years; 2) Those who have resided in the U.S. for over five years and anticipate returning to Japan before completing their schooling; 3) Long-term residents, including permanent residents, who complete their schooling in the U.S.; and 4) Children of international marriages, having one native Japanese-speaking parent and one parent who doesn't speak Japanese, typically permanent residents or U.S. citizens. Because each of these groups has different Japanese language needs and requirements for developing proficiency, Japanese heritage language schools are categorized into various types, including Japanese supplementary schools, *hoshuukoo*, Japanese heritage schools established both before and after World War II (Chinen, Douglas, & Kataoka, 2013). It's worth noting that while two-way immersion programs are a popular method for language acquisition and have strong representation in the Japanese context (Chinen, Douglas, &

Kataoka, 2013), they are part of the formal educational system and are not included in this discussion.

The first wave of Japanese immigrants to the United States arrived between 1868 and 1924. Shortly after their arrival, this group of immigrants, known as the first generation or “*issei*” Japanese, recognized the need to provide Japanese education for their children. There was a various reason for this, but the most urgent one was to facilitate communication between the Japanese-speaking parents and their children. The first school was established in Maui, Hawaii, in 1895, and the second in Honolulu in 1896 (Yano, 2011). The first Japanese school on the mainland United States was established in Seattle in 1902; in subsequent years, schools were established in San Francisco, Sacramento, and Los Angeles (Yano, 2011). These schools primarily operated on Saturdays, and classes were held in various locations, including school facilities, community centers, churches, and temples, or rented local schools on instructional days. Most pre-World War II Japanese heritage language schools closed during the war, but after the war ended, many were re-established and resumed classes (Shimada, 1998). Following World War II, with the arrival of new immigrants, especially in California, new Japanese heritage language schools were established. These schools welcomed all children, regardless their ethnic backgrounds, as long as they expressed an interest in learning Japanese.

Hoshuukoo represents a unique category of Japanese heritage language schools. Original Hoshuukoo are supplementary, private, academic, Saturday schools specifically designed for children who were born in Japan and sent abroad. The mission is to provide education in Japanese, ensuring these children can smoothly reintegrate into Japanese

schools upon their families' return to Japan (Chinen, Douglas, & Kataoka, 2013). The first Hoshuukoo in the United States was established in 1958 in Washington, D.C. Hoshuukoo curricula may vary from one to another, schools adjust the curricula according to students' needs. There are instances where a Hoshuukoo was established near one or more major Japanese companies to serve the children of their employees from Japan, such as the case with Toyota Motor Corporation in the United States. In these situations, the students are likely to be primarily native speakers of Japanese, rather than Japanese heritage language speakers intending to return to Japan after some years (Douglas, Kataoka, & Kishimoto, 2003).

Japanese heritage language education faces several challenges. 1.They lack specialized curricula designed for heritage language learners (Douglas, 2005). 2. A shortage of qualified teachers with expertise in teaching Japanese as a heritage language. 3.Diffidulty in motivating heritage children to learn the language. 4. Limited financial support for school development.

French Heritage Schools

French is one of the most widely spoken languages around the world (Pereltsvaig, 2020). It emerged in the United States as a colonial language, alongside Spanish and German, and enjoyed extensive usage before English took precedence (Fishman, 2001; Wiley, 2007). The 2011 U.S. Census reports that 1.33 million people speak French at home (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011), and many are also speaking additional languages. As Valdman (2010) noted, French heritage speakers in the United States constitute a diverse community, encompassing historically French-speaking enclaves in six New England states and Louisiana, European expatriates residing in major urban hubs like New York

City and Miami, as well as more recent, sizable Francophone immigrant populations from Haiti and West Africa.

Low levels of immigration of French speakers and the absence of intergenerational transmission of French has resulted in a decline in the number of French speakers (Valdmen, 2010). Furthermore, the teaching of French and German as second languages has significantly waned in both elementary and secondary public-school systems over the past few decades (Rhodes & Pufahl, 2009). Given the decreasing influence of public schools in French language instruction, there is a growing need for French heritage language schools and programs to preserve French as a cultural and heritage language in the United States.

French heritage language programs started relatively recently, in the 1980s (Lasserre, D., Lamplugh, S., & Liu, N., 2012). Over the years, these programs have diversified to meet the varied needs of learners and families. For example, in New York City, Education Française à New York (EFNY) was formed in 2005, initiated by French expatriates. Their goal was to impart the French language to their children and provide cost-effective educational options. They began by offering after-school classes in neighborhood public schools, managed by volunteers (Ross & Jaumont, 2012). These programs are designed to empower French-speaking communities, enhance the community's visibility, and foster the motivation and proficiency of individuals in learning the language. Many of these programs are after-school initiatives partly supported by the French government and the parents of French-speaking students.

Similar to other heritage language schools, there are nationwide associations supporting them. For instance, the French Heritage Language Program (FHLP),

established in 2005, is dedicated to assisting Francophone immigrants and young Americans with francophone background in preserving their linguistic and cultural heritage. FHLP focuses on supporting underserved French-speaking youths and helping French become an asset for new Americans (Jaumont, Le Dévédec & Ross, 2017). The French Heritage Association (<https://french-heritage.org/school/about>) is a non-profit organization founded in 2015 by parents with the goal of supporting, encouraging, and enhancing French language education for children enrolled in American schools. Additionally, the French government also plays a significant role in providing support. The Français Langue Maternelle – French as a Native Language (FLAM) was established in 2001-2002 by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. FLAM promotes the use of the French language by French children attending schools in other language by facilitating the creation of after-school French language classes and cultural activities. However, one character is different from other heritage language schools is that most of the students enrolled in the French Heritage Language Program are not French speakers from France (Lasserre, D., Lamplugh, S., & Liu, N., 2012). For example, many students in New York and Miami come from Haitians and African backgrounds, and the curriculum is tailored to the unique cultural backgrounds of the students in each classroom.

In addition to the challenges shared with many other heritage language programs, such as a shortage of qualified teachers, a lack of relevant instructional materials, and limited financial support, French heritage language schools and programs also encounter distinct issues. The complexity of heritage French speakers arises from the fact that many of them are multilingual, which can pose challenges when teaching French due to the influence of other languages. Additionally, maintaining French is not a high priority for

many families in the United States, as societal pressures often favor an all-English lifestyle (Valdman, 2010). Given the limited functional role of French in the United States, there may be a lack of motivation to learn and sustain the language.

Czech Heritage Schools

Unlike other languages discussed above, Czech is not considered a critical foreign language, and there are limited opportunities for language courses and scholarship programs. Czech is a less commonly taught language (LCTL) in the United States, and locating Czech classes is difficult (Hrouda, 2011). However, Czech heritage language schools develop well compared to all other heritage language schools.

Motivations are found in a survey conducted by David Bíróczy (2008). First, the efforts of Czech heritage speakers who keen wish to preserve their ancestral language and culture. Second, want to communicate with family members abroad and in this country. Third, interethnic marriages draw couples to learn the language of their partners in order to communicate with in-laws and better understand the culture and language. Fourth, some students learn the language to study abroad, travel, work in the Czech Republic, or carry out research in Czech.

The history of Czech heritage school development together with the extended of immigration of Czechs to the United States. The largest immigration of Czechs to the United States took place between the years 1848 and 1914, when over 350,000 Czechs fled their homeland and established Czech communities across the United States (Thernstorm & Handlin, 1981). The first Czech school was opened in New York in 1856, followed shortly by a Czech school in Chicago (Kovtun, 2009). More Czech language schools opened all over the United States in cities with high Czech populations

such as Nebraska, Texas, and Wisconsin (Capek, 1920). As Czech communities grew in urban and rural regions, so did use of the Czech language.

Representatives of Czech classes and schools are worth discussing. Czech language programs are variety because different areas characters, population intense, different learners' needs, and local Czech cultural center support. Community-based Czech language classes are essential for preserving the Czech culture and language, particularly in areas with significant Czech heritage populations. These classes are prevalent in Midwestern states such as Iowa, Nebraska, Texas, and Wisconsin, as well as in states with large Czech heritage communities like Illinois and New York. They are often organized by Czech heritage societies with the goal of cultural preservation and have seen growth since 1980 (Hrouda, 2011). These community-based classes often attract Czech heritage speakers and those interested in Czech culture. The classes are two hours long and take place on Saturdays. The average proficiency reached by students is advanced beginner, offering instruction in grammar, conversation, and incorporating elements of Czech history, music, politics, and culture. In addition, native Czech speakers teach private lessons across the country to anyone interested in learning the language but tend to be more expensive than group classes.

Different from other heritage schools, where the association is nationwide, Czech community associations are more focused on state-level organizations. In specific regions, like Texas, where Czech heritage is prominent, various organizations and cultural centers play a crucial role in promoting Czech language and culture. In Texas, the Czech Heritage Society of Texas and the Texas Czech Heritage and Cultural Center have been established to support Czech culture and heritage. The Czech Education

Foundation of Texas aims to promote Czech language and culture through scholarships and education programs.

Czech language programs in the United States encounter several noteworthy challenges. First, difficulty in finding qualified Czech instructors who possess both language and teaching skills. Second, struggled associated with sustaining classes due to low students' enrollment, that is because the relatively small population of Czech heritage speakers. Third, limited resources restrain the development of heritage schools, such as venue shortage, limited visibility in the community. Forth, dialect variation is a reason special of Czech. The challenge of incorporating different home dialects familiar to heritage Czech speakers, particularly in regions where specific dialects, such as Moravian, predominate (Hroudá,2011).

Arabic Heritage Schools

The initial wave of Arab immigrants reached the United States in 1876 (Orfalea, 2006). Arabic heritage schools in the United States emerged from the collective efforts of Arab Americans, aimed at imparting the Arabic language and cultural heritage to their children. This endeavor was also supported by non-Arab Muslim Americans who were instrumental in establishing these heritage schools to teach their children how to read the Qur'an and fulfill religious obligations that required knowledge of the language (Mango, 2011). However, the offspring of these early immigrants displayed limited enthusiasm for their parents' culture and heritage. As stated by Naff (1985, p. 4), "Early heritage language classes, organized by churches and clubs to teach spoken Arabic, were short-lived and yielded minimal results."

Today, the majority of Arabic heritage language schools focus on teaching Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) without a direct connection to religious studies (Mango, 2011). According to a survey conducted by Bagby, Perl, and Froehle (2001), out of 416 surveyed mosques, more than half regularly offered Arabic classes. Furthermore, 21% of these mosques had full-time schools, and 71% had weekend schools, with half of the weekend schools being exclusively for children. At the K-12 level, Arabic heritage learners can be categorized into two distinct groups: those who are exposed to the language at home through their parents and those who engage with Arabic primarily for religious reasons, gaining exposure to it through religious practices (Arab American Institute, <https://www.aaiusa.org/>, 2009-2011).

Three associations are related to Arabic heritage schools. The American Association of Teachers of Arabic (AATA) and the Arabic K-12 Teacher Network, part of the National Capital Language Resource Center, aim to support Arabic educators and foster communication among professionals in the field. Additionally, the Arab American Institute (AAI) represents the interests of Arab Americans across the United States and works to encourage their participation in the U.S. electoral system.

Teachers in Arabic in heritage schools encounter several challenges, notably the need for adequate funding, well-designed curricula, highly qualified educators, and suitable textbooks to meet proficiency objectives (Ayari, 2009; Greer & Johnson, 2009; Sehlaoui, 2008). Additionally, addressing the issue of diglossia in schools poses a significant challenge. This linguistic situation arises from the coexistence of multiple Arabic varieties (Wahba, 2006). Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) serves as the written form of the language, used in the media and limited formal contexts such as speeches and

interviews. In contrast, native speakers predominantly use spoken dialects for their daily verbal interactions (Mango, 2011). The spoken varieties that differ from one Arab country to the other, and even within the same country. The complexity in teaching Arabic stems from the unresolved question of which Arabic variety to prioritize.

Turkish Heritage Schools

The Turkic languages are spoken today in a vast geographical area stretching from southern Iran to the Arctic Ocean and from the Balkans to the great wall of China. There are currently 20 literary languages in the group the most important among them being Turkish with over 70 million speakers and it is the national language of Turkey and Northern Cyprus (Arslan, & BARIŞCI, 2021). In addition, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Greece, Northern Iraq, Southern Russia, Turkish immigrants in Germany and other European countries also speak Turkish (Boeschoten, 2021; Rudin & Eminov, 1990; Yavuzer, 2009). According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2020), 239,667 people living in the United States reported their ancestry as Turkish. The Turkish community in the United States has been growing steadily over the years, with a significant number of Turkish immigrants residing in various states, including New Jersey, New York, and the northeastern United States, among others (Yavuzer, 2009).

Many Turkish immigrant families implement a “home language policy” to ensure that Turkish remains the dominant language in their households (Spolsky, 2008). However, as their children enter the American school system, the fear of their children being categorized as English Language Learners often leads to a shift towards English as the dominant language in the home. As a result, many parents abandon a Turkish-only home language policy when their children start school, and English becomes children’s

dominant language. With the desire of maintain Turkish, Turkish heritage language schools risen. The oldest known Turkish heritage language school is Ataturk School in New York under the umbrella of the American Turkish Women's League. The school was founded in 1971 by the Turkish community (Ozcilingir, 2009). From the 1980s to 1990s, educated Turkish immigrants who come for graduate studies brought new dynamic to Turkish heritage language schools and they have been expending (Uludag, 2011). Turkish Cultural Centers offered hosting places for heritage schools operating.

Approximately seventeen Turkish expatriate organizations in the U.S. are dedicated to preserving Turkish culture and language (Uludag, 2011). The Assembly of Turkish American Associations (ATAA) and the Federation of Turkish American Associations (FTAA) are the largest organizations. These organizations run community schools, promote cultural understanding, and host events that celebrate Turkish heritage.

Like other heritage language schools, Turkish heritage language schools lack qualified teaching staff, a structured curriculum, and sufficient resources (Uludag, 2011). These challenges need to be addressed to ensure effective language education.

All of the heritage language schools mentioned above share a common purpose: the establishment of these schools aims to preserve languages and promote cultural heritage among immigrants and their descendants. They also serve as a means to protect and nurture their cultural identities, foster connections within their domestic communities, provide a social context for individuals of the same ethnic background, and collectively work towards advancing their national interests and causes within the United States. Furthermore, these schools aim to make a meaningful and lasting ethnic impact on society. In addition to their common goals and objectives, these heritage language

schools typically have national associations that support their efforts across the United States. Each ethnic language school has its own special characteristics, and my research will refer to all of those that benefit Chinese schools.

However, it's important to note that these schools also encounter similar challenges. These challenges include developing specialized curricula tailored to their heritage languages and cultures, finding qualified instructors who can effectively teach these languages, securing funding and resources to sustain their operations, lack of systematic leadership teams, and maintaining high levels of motivation among students to continue their language and cultural education.

Research on Weekend Schools Operating System

As mentioned earlier, Fishman and Nahirny (1966) classified heritage language programs into various categories, including all-day schools, weekday afternoon schools, and weekend schools. These categories have remained in existence over time. Based on the previous literature (Creese et al., 2006; Lee & Chen-Wu, 2021; Nordstrom, 2016), it is evident that the most common form of heritage language school is the weekend school. Community-based heritage schools, also known as Saturday or Sunday schools, are considered as supplemental programs that occur outside the mainstream schooling in the host country and are supported by immigrant communities who wish to preserve their heritage languages and cultures (Coşkun Kunduz, 2022). This preference is attributed to the fact that, for immigrant families, the primary focus is on exposure to the mainstream language, with heritage language education being secondary. In this context, this paper will delve into a detailed exploration of the operational structure of weekend heritage schools, with a particular focus on Chinese heritage language schools.

Volunteered-based Administration and HR Management.

Heritage language schools are primarily established with a focus on preserving cultural and linguistic heritage rather than generating profit. These schools typically operate solely on weekends, understanding that sustaining them as a sole source of income is impractical. Their viability for financial sustainability is limited due to their non-profit nature and restricted operational hours. These educational institutions heavily depend on the dedication and contribution of volunteers who passionately support the mission of cultural and linguistic education.

Almost all heritage language schools are run and managed by volunteers. Işık-Ercan (2012) found that Turkish schools in the U.S. are mainly run by volunteers, often mothers of the students. An example is the New York Turkish School, situated on the 2nd floor of the Turkish Consulate's 10-floor building in Manhattan. The school operates on Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. from October to June, relying solely on voluntary efforts and donations from the Turkish Women's League of America, parents, and philanthropists (Otcu, 2010). Uludag (2011) notes that some families establish Turkish community schools by opening their homes, taking on the responsibilities of organization, scheduling, and teaching. Similarly, Kim (2011) described typical Korean heritage language schools that depend on student tuition and church funds, conducting one-hour classes every weekend. For instance, at St. Clare Church in the southeastern United States, a Korean heritage language school had teachers and staff who were all Korean immigrant parishioners volunteering their time, many of whom were mothers of the students.

In line with the heritage language school model, nonprofit Chinese language schools operate similarly, with parents of enrolled students taking on the operational roles. These Chinese language schools are open exclusively on weekends. Upon enrolling their children, parents automatically become members of the school's administrative body, participating in formulating and adopting bylaws and electing members of the board of directors, the principal, and administrative officials. Traditionally, parents contribute their time and skills voluntarily to run these schools without receiving any financial compensation (Chao, 1997).

In well-established Chinese language schools with a lengthy history, managing all school responsibilities solely through parent volunteers can be challenging. To address this, they have introduced mandatory “Parent Service Plan” programs to encourage a more equitable sharing of responsibilities among parents. The plan involves determining the total hours needed to run the school before each semester and distributing this workload among all parents with enrolled children. Each parent is then required to contribute a specific number of hours during the semester. To ensure fairness, parents make a cash deposit at the semester's start as a guarantee for their volunteer services. The number of volunteer hours from each parent is tracked throughout the semester, and those who do not fulfill their required hours do not receive a refund at the semester's end (Chao, 1997). The “Parent Service Plan” program has gained widespread acceptance in Chinese language schools in the United States due to its benefits. It promotes a better understanding of school activities among parents, fosters teamwork in program coordination, effectively utilizes parents' professional expertise to enhance school curricula, and eases the growing workload on administrative and teaching staff.

Coordinating Events and Cultural Activities

When teaching language, intertwining culture and extracurricular activities becomes paramount. Most heritage language schools regularly organize events and commemorate traditional holidays. These activities serve a dual purpose: they provide children with a deeper understanding of their cultural heritage, fostering cultural awareness, while also igniting their interest and engagement.

Research conducted by Evcen (2020) on a Turkish heritage language school in Chicago highlighted the immersion of children in Turkish language and culture through organized activities and ceremonies. Similarly, Shibata (2000) examined a Japanese heritage language school in the northeastern U.S. that occasionally conducted Japanese cultural events alongside celebrating American holidays within their ethnic community. Notably, Japanese heritage language schools place significant emphasis on *Kodomo no Hi*, or Japanese Children's Day, observed on annually May 5th. They leverage this celebration as an effective method to familiarize local communities with Japanese culture. For instance, the Japanese Cultural & Community Center of Washington (JCCCW) annually hosts a diverse array of events encompassing handcraft making, doll displays, martial arts demonstrations (Karate, Taiko, Kendo), musical performances (Koto), and exhibitions showcasing tea culture. In 2023, this event attracted over 950 guests (<https://www.jcccw.org/kodomo-no-hi>).

Furthermore, Bradunas (1988) documented in book that Greek language schools in the U.S. celebrate Greek Independence Day on March 25th, coinciding with the Feast of the Annunciation. This celebration holds significance in identifying Greek ethnicity with the Orthodox faith, as March 25th marks the commencement of the Greek revolution

of 1821 against the Ottoman Empire, symbolizing the announcement of good news to the Virgin by the Archangel Gabriel.

Similar to the previously mentioned language schools, traditional holidays provide invaluable opportunities to reinforce and uphold Chinese cultural heritage while disseminating its rich traditions. Chinese heritage language schools, aside from sending wishes via emails to registered families, organize holiday events that play a pivotal role in this cultural dissemination. Lunar New Year stands out as the most crucial holiday in Chinese culture. In emulation of schools and organizations in China, Chinese schools abroad often host grand New Year galas. The Coalition of Community-based heritage language schools presented in 2022 highlighted the San Diego Hua Xia Chinese School, where students showcase various forms of arts—dancing, singing, and other performances—donning traditional costumes and displaying cultural symbols during these galas.

Collaboration with local organizations further amplifies the cultural outreach efforts. For instance, NBA teams regularly invite students from local Chinese heritage language school during Lunar New Year nights. These students get the opportunity to welcome the players and sing the national anthem in the court, fostering a connection between the local community and Chinese cultural traditions. Furthermore, Chinese schools extend their celebrations to other important festivals such as the Lantern Festival, Dragon Boat Festival, and Mid-Autumn Festival. Events during these festivals often include authentic food tastings, garden parties, and traditional games (Wang, 1999).

In essence, through a variety of events and collaborations, Chinese heritage language schools actively engage in spreading Chinese culture, fostering a sense of pride

and understanding among both the Chinese diaspora and the broader community. These initiatives serve as bridges, connecting generations and cultures while preserving the richness of Chinese traditions.

Research on Heritage School Instructional Leadership

Previously, I introduced the overarching framework and inspiration behind the operation of heritage language schools. However, it's essential to understand that a heritage language school fundamentally functions as an educational institution, providing an environment where teaching activities take place. Green (1984) succinctly stated that "Teaching is a triadic undertaking" (p. 284), a principle applicable not only to heritage language teaching but to education in general. Green's notion refers to the interconnected relationship among the subject matter, the teacher, and the learner within the teaching process. In the subsequent section, I will delve into an exploration of the workings of curriculum and teachers in various heritage language schools, shedding light on their current states and operational dynamics. Ultimately, I will conclude by summarizing the challenges faced by these institutions.

Curriculum

Distinct from the curriculum goals of second language programs in public schools, heritage language schools possess unique objectives tailored to the needs of their specific learner demographic. Before establishing language learning goals, understanding the needs of learners is essential. According to the national survey of heritage language learners by Carreira and Kagan (2011), the reasons for studying their heritage language are primarily: (1) to learn about their cultural and linguistic roots (59.8%), (2) to improve

communication with family and friends in the United States (57.5%), and (3) as a practical goal to fulfill their language requirement (53.7%).

Therefore, heritage language curriculum design should align with these needs. Potowski and Carreira (2004) gave suggestions to Spanish Native Speaker (SNS) instruction in three significant ways, which are also adopted or learned by other language curriculum design. They strongly suggest that:

1. SNS materials need to match Latino students' language, academic abilities, and background. Some literature may be challenging due to complex structure, posing difficulty for Latino students but not for those with a background in English literature and strong reading skills. Rather than simplifying the curriculum, we aim to create strategies to help Latino students effectively engage with these materials.

2. SNS instruction should address educational gaps in prose and document literacy for Latinos. It involves explicitly teaching reading and writing strategies and cultivating habits that may have been missed during childhood.

3. The SNS classroom should provide students with the opportunity and the tools to explore cultural notions and practices that may encumber the academic progress of Latinos. Some of these include the tendency to postpone college and to marry and start a family early in life.

Additionally, the significance of integrating heritage language teaching within the ethnic community has long been acknowledged. Merino, Trueba, and Samaniego (1993) proposed that pedagogies and curricula for Spanish heritage language education should embrace students' home language and culture(s), offering activities and curricula that align with this approach. Faltis (1990) and Rodríguez-Pino (1994) advocated for the

utilization of Vygotskian principles to establish learning contexts where students actively engage in the learning process. They emphasized creating environments where learning emerges from the interactions among learners, educators, and the community.

A good Turkish heritage language curriculum design which adopted by Turkish Saturday school in New York City is as shown in Table 2.1

Table 2.1*Example of a Heritage Curriculum Design*

Grade	Language Lessons	Culture Lessons
Pre-K	Turkish alphabet, grammar, numbers, colors, shapes, directions, parts of the body, English songs	Ataturk, Turkish flag, Turkish national and religious holidays, respect, hygiene information
1 st	Turkish sounds, grammar, reading, vocabulary, tongue-twisters	Life studies, Ataturk, national and religious holidays, family structure, traditions
3 rd	Grammar, reading, vocabulary	Life studies, history, national and religious holidays, family structure, traditions, parts of the body, germination
5 th	Grammar, reading, vocabulary, summarizing, composition writing	Social studies, history, geography, Islam, religious education
Music (all)	Patriotic and school songs in Turkish	Patriotic and school songs in Turkish
Folkdance (all)	Folkdances from different geographical regions of Turkey	Folkdances from different geographical regions of Turkey

(Otcu, 2010, p. 117)

In this content-based curriculum, language and culture intertwine within various subjects like life studies, social studies, and Turkish lessons instead of having separate culture-focused classes. Every lesson incorporates language skills, encouraging students' exposure to Turkish through text analysis, reading, and answering questions. Pedagogical methods employed adhere mainly to traditional techniques: memorization, writing, dictation, reading aloud, summarization, language games, tests (written and oral), and essay writing (Otcu, 2010).

Japanese heritage language schools prioritize curriculum design by initially organizing students based on their language proficiency and age. Following a three-month trial period, the curriculum framework is solidified. Teachers select or create teaching materials tailored to students' performance levels and ages (Kataoka, 2008). Hoshuukoo, a distinctive form of Japanese heritage schools, utilize their unique curriculum. All Hoshuukoo offer kokugo (Japanese language instruction) using textbooks

and curriculum authorized by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT). Certain Hoshuukoo expand their teaching beyond kokugo and include subjects like mathematics. Additionally, some schools extend their instruction to encompass social studies and science alongside kokugo and math (Doerr & Lee, 2009).

In the United States, the Mandarin language curriculum in Chinese schools predominantly adopts the *Zhong Wen* textbooks published by Ji Nan University Press in China. These textbooks are specifically crafted to assist non-native speakers in learning Chinese as a foreign language. Originally introduced in 1995, the *Zhong Wen* series underwent revisions in collaboration with the Chinese School Association in the United States and Ji Nan University in 2006 and 2021 to meet evolving curriculum requirements. Comprising 12 levels, each accompanied by a practice book, the *Zhong Wen* series is structured into modules covering pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and reading comprehension (CSAUS, 2023). Employing a communicative approach to language learning, these textbooks emphasize practical language usage in real-life scenarios. They integrate multimedia resources like audio recordings, videos, and online materials to enhance students' proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Notably, the Chinese School Association in the US exclusively offers these textbooks for sale, ensuring member schools easy access to the materials as needed.

The *Zhong Wen* series textbooks have rarely been adjusted to consider cultural relevance or the cognitive capabilities of Chinese American students. Teachers have taken it upon themselves to modify the content to better suit students' needs and cognitive levels. For instance, at my research school, first-grade teachers found the level one *Zhong*

Wen textbooks too challenging for non-native learners. Consequently, they opted for *Yu Wen*, published by the People's Education Press of China, instead. Furthermore, due to limited competition in textbook publishing aimed at non-native speakers, there has been a lack of motivation for the *Zhong Wen* publication to make necessary modifications. This reluctance to adapt or update the content reflects a certain complacency within the *Zhong Wen* series, hindering its responsiveness to the evolving needs and learning abilities of Chinese American students.

Professional Training

Teachers in heritage language schools often consist of volunteers or individuals with minimal formal training. Given the constraints of limited instructional time, the focus on employing effective teaching strategies becomes crucial in both motivating students and embracing their cultural backgrounds. Hence, regular and diverse professional training is essential to support these educators.

High-quality professional training begins with a clear understanding of what constitutes effective heritage language courses. Armed with this knowledge, teachers can purposefully enhance their teaching skills. Valdes (1997) outlines four fundamental goals for well-structured heritage Spanish language courses, providing valuable insights applicable to other language curricula:

1. Spanish language maintenance: Maintaining Spanish proficiency among second and third generation Latino students is a key objective of formal Spanish study.
2. Acquisition of the prestige variety of Spanish: Heritage classes aim to increase students' understanding of the diverse regional and social variations within the Spanish language.
3. Expansion of bilingual range: Focusing on various competencies such as grammar, text comprehension, and pragmatic skills, striving to

balance these abilities across both languages for bilingual learners.⁴ Transfer of literacy skills. By this, Valdes encouraged the transfer of effective reading and writing strategies from one language to another, aiding in overall language competence.

In general, heritage language communities often organize nationwide workshops and conferences aimed at enhancing teachers' skills and facilitating resource sharing. In the context of Spanish language education, several initiatives and organizations play crucial roles (Potowski & Carreira, 2004):

- National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH): Offers programs and resources dedicated to Spanish heritage language education.
- Heritage Languages Initiative: Focuses on promoting and supporting heritage language education, particularly in Spanish.
- Associations: Organizations such as AATSP (American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese), ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages), and NABE (National Association for Bilingual Education) actively contribute by providing support and resources for Spanish language educators.
- ACTFL Listserv: ACTFL sponsors a listserv (www.uic.edu/orgs/actflsigns/sns/listserv) where approximately 200 Spanish native speaker educators collaborate, share ideas, and organize readings and discussions.
- ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics: Manages a website (www.cal.org/ericcll/faqs/rgos/sns.html) that hosts useful resources related to Spanish heritage language education.

Potowski and Carreira highlighted these initiatives as valuable resources for Spanish heritage language educators seeking professional development opportunities and access to supportive communities for collaboration and resource sharing.

Collaboration with colleges and universities significantly benefits heritage language schools in enhancing instructional methods and resources. For instance, at the University of New Mexico in Las Cruces, specialized programs and resources cater specifically to Spanish heritage language education (Potowski & Carreira, 2004). Similarly, in the case of Japanese heritage language education, collaborations with college faculty and programs have proven invaluable. For instance, institutions like California State University, Long Beach, have facilitated summer workshops tailored for Japanese heritage language teachers. These workshops have a strong focus on curriculum development, multilevel instruction strategies, and activities designed to enhance speaking, reading, and writing skills. Furthermore, these workshops emphasize differentiation techniques to address varying student needs (Chinen, Douglas, & Kataoka, 2010).

Moreover, the influence of research-based scholarly work on Japanese heritage language schools is substantial. Scholars have made significant contributions to the field through their research-based endeavors, including curriculum development and assessments of proficiency among Japanese heritage learners (Douglas, 2005; Kataoka et al., 2008). These scholarly contributions offer valuable insights and evidence-based approaches that directly benefit Japanese heritage language education.

Chinese language schools face a common challenge shared by many other heritage language institutions: a significant portion of their teachers lack formal training

as professional educators. Many instructors in these schools were educators in China several years ago but changed professions upon immigrating to the U.S. Others may have a genuine interest in teaching and possess fluency in standard Mandarin, affording them the opportunity to teach in Chinese schools without formal pedagogical training.

To address the imperative need for enhanced language instruction quality, top-down Chinese associations have initiated efforts to support these schools. Regional school associations frequently organize annual conferences and workshops aimed at providing training to local teachers. For instance, a notable two-week training program in Taiwan conducts classes each summer, encompassing Chinese language, culture, and the performing arts (Wang, 1999). While these initiatives have proven beneficial by enabling teachers to engage with peers, receive professional training, and acquaint themselves with the latest teaching methodologies, limited funding restricts the number of teachers who can attend these programs.

Within the individual schools, ongoing professional development activities are conducted as required. Teachers have the autonomy to select topics of personal interest for discussion and collaborative exploration. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, online seminars and communication conferences among teachers have flourished, serving as platforms for continuous learning and sharing best practices. In addition to regional and individual schools' efforts, the Chinese government actively supports the dissemination of Chinese language and culture abroad. The Office of Chinese Language Council International (Hanban) allocates scholars to heritage language schools in the US, offering complimentary training sessions and donating educational resources (Xiao, 2016). During these engagements, participating teachers partake in seminars, workshops, and

collaborative sessions focused on innovative instructional methods while also sharing their own teaching experiences.

In conclusion, Chinese language schools have benefited from various initiatives aimed at bolstering the proficiency and teaching capabilities of instructors. However, challenges such as limited funding for teacher training programs persist, necessitating continued support and innovative approaches to ensure sustained professional development within these educational settings.

Heritage Language Schools Instructional Challenges

Heritage language schools encounter several challenges in their instructional approaches and outcomes. I have listed several of these below.

Students from heritage language backgrounds often have varying identifications with the same language. For instance, in the case of Chinese, there are multiple mainstream languages like Cantonese and Mandarin. Research by Tucker and Murphy (2022) highlighted challenges in teaching Jamaican Creole as a heritage language, citing issues such as the lack of a standardized system and English translation equivalents as obstacles to effective instruction.

Teachers in heritage language schools often face the complexity of mixed-language classes where students possess differing proficiencies, goals, and attitudes toward the language. For example, in areas with diverse Spanish heritage language learners, some students might be highly proficient due to being first-generation immigrants (Potowski & Carreira, 2004).

Tailoring instruction to meet the diverse needs of students is challenging, especially considering the wide variation in proficiency, learning objectives, and

motivation among heritage language learners. As Brown (2007) notes, the one-size-fits-all approach is inadequate, necessitating instructors to adopt differentiated instructional strategies based on individual learner needs (Carreira & Kagan, 2011).

Heritage language schools often grapple with demonstrating the quantity and quality of learning achieved within limited instructional hours (typically two hours per week). While researchers have extensively focused on aspects such as vocabulary knowledge and morphosyntax, there's a scarcity of studies assessing the actual learning outcomes of students. Scholars like Caloi and Torregrossa (2021) emphasize the significance of consistency and continuity in language experience, yet there's a gap in assessing what students genuinely learn.

By addressing these challenges systematically and implementing tailored instructional strategies, heritage language schools can better support their students in achieving meaningful language proficiency and learning outcomes.

In conclusion, the preservation of linguistic diversity is of paramount importance, as languages represent the wisdom of humanity and serve as authentic records of our history. Heritage language schools play a crucial role in this endeavor, fulfilling significant linguistic and non-linguistic functions. They help students build their language and cultural competencies in a diverse, multilingual society, while also fostering a sense of cultural pride and identity.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

My research aimed to investigate how heritage language schools address and overcome these challenges that previously mentioned within their organizational framework. Specifically, I would focus on identifying and analyzing these organizational shortcomings through the curriculum reform process. As Kleiner (1985) suggested, good research questions should be clear, unambiguous interrogative statements that imply the potential for empirical investigation and cannot be answered with a simple 'yes' or 'no'. Yin (2018) posited that framing a case study with "how" or "why" research questions might offer a more insightful approach compared to using "what" research questions, which are typically more suited for survey studies or analyzing archival records. However, it is important to note that there are differing viewpoints among researchers on this matter. Ary et al. (2019) argued that case studies can effectively address descriptive questions, emphasizing that the underlying inquiry in case studies revolves around understanding the characteristics of a specific entity, phenomenon, person, or setting (Ary et al., 2019, p. 392).

In alignment with Yin's (2018) principle of formulating "how" research questions, and to better address current issues within Chinese schools, I have crafted my research questions accordingly. This approach aimed to delve into the operational mechanisms and the reasons behind certain practices within Chinese school settings, aiming for a deeper understanding rather than a mere description of events or characteristics.

As discussed in more detail in Chapter One, my research interests were:

- 1.What were the responsibilities of leaders in the effective operation of heritage language schools?
- 2.How did the leaders of heritage language schools work together to coordinate the successful operation of a nonprofit volunteer-based organization?
- 3.How did current formal educational leadership theories fit or differ when applied to heritage language schools?

Research Design

Rationale for Use of Qualitative Methods

Research is an endeavor aimed at systematically exploring and understanding the world and its phenomena in a structured manner (Farghaly, 2018). Human approaches to research are often rooted in their assumptions about social reality, knowledge, and human nature, encompassing ontology, epistemology, and methodology. Traditionally, these assumptions have given rise to two distinct approaches: quantitative and qualitative research, often perceived as opposing poles (Kanis, 2004). However, there has been a shift in this perspective, recognizing that quantitative and qualitative research can complement each other.

Qualitative data, as identified by Patton (2002), commonly originates from interviews, observations, and documents, none of which are easily subjected to statistical software analysis. Descriptions of people's lived experiences, events, or situations in qualitative research are often termed 'thick' (Denzin, 1989), emphasizing the attention given to rich detail, meaningful social and historical contexts, emotional content, and a comprehensive understanding of the subjects being studied. It is essential to note,

following Sutton (1993), that hypotheses and theoretical explanations in qualitative research stem from interpretations of observations made during the research study itself, rather than being predetermined before the study commences.

My research aimed to delve into the experiences of the Chinese community residing in the United States, specifically focusing on those who have established heritage language schools. Through a combination of interviews, observations, document analysis, and other qualitative methods, I intended to explore and understand a series of natural occurrences within this community without any manipulation or experimentation. This comprehensive approach allowed me to gain insights into human behavior concerning norms, beliefs, values, structures, and behavioral patterns prevalent in this context. This approach helped facilitate a deeper exploration of the nuanced experiences, perspectives, and cultural intricacies within the Chinese community establishing heritage language schools in the United States.

Methodological Approach: Case Study

Case study approaches have been defined in various ways within research literature. First, a case study is characterized as a method aimed at closely observing the specific attributes of individual entities like a person, a group, or a community. This method enables the analysis of different phenomena concerning the chosen unit of study (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2002). Another perspective, MacDonald and Walker (1975) articulated case study as the examination of an instance in action. Furthermore, Merriam (1988, p. 9) described a case study as an investigation into a particular phenomenon, whether it's a program, an event, a person, a process, an institution, or a social group. According to Robert Yin (2018), a case study is an empirical inquiry

designed to investigate a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context, especially when distinguishing between the phenomenon and its context isn't straightforward. Additionally, Bassey (1999) emphasized that the primary objective of a case study is to generate reports based on experiences and evidence rather than aiming for generalizations.

The defining feature of a case study lies in its focused examination of a particular group, event, or program. The responsibility of the researcher involves delineating the scope of the study. The case might encompass a significant and substantial phenomenon, such as Hurricane Katrina, or it could involve a smaller-scale event like a championship football game between rival high schools. Additionally, it might center on the study of a specific program, whether expansive, like the charter school movement, or more limited in scope, such as a new high school math program. Furthermore, a case study can delve into examining a process, such as how an organization undergoes transformation (Lichtman, 2010). Yin (2018) delineated that case studies can adopt either qualitative or quantitative approaches. Stake (2005) complemented this notion by emphasizing that qualitative case studies often concentrate on experiential knowledge related closely to social and political influences. In alignment with these characteristics, my research adopts a qualitative case study approach, focusing on the administration of a Chinese heritage language school. Specifically, it examines the school as an organizational entity, exploring its administrative processes, decision-making structures, and the broader social and cultural influences that shape its operations.

Case studies often adopt three primary purposes: descriptive, interpretative, and evaluative, as outlined by Merriam (1988). A descriptive approach involves presenting a

detailed account of the phenomenon under study. An interpretative stance aims to offer thick descriptions that either shed light on, support, or challenge existing theoretical assumptions. Meanwhile, an evaluative perspective focuses on making judgments regarding the phenomenon. In my case study research, I integrated all three purposes. Firstly, I provided a comprehensive description of the daily operations of a Chinese school, focusing specifically on board and administration dynamics. Secondly, I undertook a comparative analysis, juxtaposing the school's leadership style with established leadership theories to discern similarities, differences, and potential implications. Lastly, I evaluated the functionality and effectiveness of the operational model employed by the school. This multifaceted approach will enable a comprehensive exploration and understanding of the Chinese school's operations and leadership dynamics.

Researcher Role

Considering my pivotal position as the provost at school, overseeing curriculum design and modifications, teacher management, and overall school operations, active engagement in the school's administration demanded a participatory approach rather than a purely observational one mandated by ethnography. Therefore, adopting the role of a participant-researcher better accommodated the depth and breadth of my involvement in this research. Balancing the dual roles of participant and researcher, I aimed to uphold a neutral stance while fully immersing myself in the research process. This methodology enabled me to effectively observe, document, and analyze the intricacies of administrative collaboration and decision-making within the school environment.

Setting

This research was conducted at a Chinese heritage language school in an urban area in the midwestern United States. This school was a nonprofit educational institution operating on weekends throughout the regular academic year of public schools. The school's primary objective was to impart knowledge of the Chinese (Mandarin) language and culture to residents in the area. Structured similarly to public schools, the school maintained a comprehensive course registration system, an official website, a human resources workflow, a fixed school schedule, and operated within a rented school building. The institution was served by a dedicated leadership team comprising three departments: a Parents Council, a Board of Trustees, and an Administrative Committee. The school year of my research conducted had more than 500 enrolled students, along with a faculty comprising over 20 teachers specializing in Chinese language and culture. Notably, over 95% of the students were of Chinese ethnic descent, while the remaining 5% were individuals from non-Chinese families who share a keen interest in Chinese culture. The school stood as one of the largest American Chinese schools in the nation and maintains cordial relations with Chinese schools in other states, as well as with the overseas department of the Chinese government.

The case-study school leased the premises of a middle school on Saturdays, a public middle school situated in the heart of Chinese residential areas on weekdays. The contract specified the shared use of campus facilities, encompassing classrooms, media resources, boards, and parking. The home school reserved one office and a portion of the basement exclusively for the storage needs of the Chinese school during weekdays. The Chinese school offered classes on Saturdays, running from 9 am to 2:30 pm, spanning

from September to June. The schedule aligned with both US and Chinese holidays, resulting in breaks throughout the year. This collaborative arrangement enabled the school to make use of the conveniently situated school facilities, all while respecting the holiday activities of the families involved.

Like other heritage language schools in the United States, this case study school operated under the governance of parents whose children are enrolled in the institution. Upon enrolling their children, parents automatically became part of the school's administrative body, involved in formulating, and adopting bylaws, and participating in the election process for board members, the principal, and administrative officials (Wang, 1996). At that time, the school was managed by ten administrative staff members and a board consisting of ten members, overseen respectively by the principal and the board chair. Each member was responsible for different sectors such as registration, publicity, teaching and curriculum, planning, and support services. In addition to weekly Chinese language classes, the school organized cultural activities and events aimed at expanding its influence within the community. To ensure the successful execution of these events, decision-making processes follow democratic principles. Elections, budget, and activity planning occur through meetings or voting, including staff meetings, board meetings, monthly gatherings, election days, and parent meetings.

The school hosted numerous activities and events apart from its regular weekly classes. Despite the diverse range of events, the primary focus of the school, true to its name, was the impartation of knowledge. The school's remarkable development and esteemed reputation, along with its conducive learning environment for acquiring the Chinese language, had attracted an increasing number of children and adults eager to

enroll and learn. The school had been contemplating expansion, and the upcoming semester's decisions regarding offered classes, budget allocation, teacher placements, and hiring would be pivotal. These decisions required extensive discussions and interactions among administrators, teachers, and board members. My research explored the collaborative process within the school staff to promote and manage this expansion. I investigated how the school navigates crucial decision-making processes and collectively addresses the challenges associated with its growth.

Participants

For my research, I focused on studying administrative collaboration within the school for this case study. The primary participants in my study included seven board members, six administrative staff members, and one principal who was part of both the board and the administrative team. These individuals played key roles in analyzing needs, gathering suggestions, making decisions, and implementing changes related to the promotion of new classes and the potential cancellation of unnecessary ones. Except for the Provost, who was myself and a full-time single doctoral student, the other participant administrators held their positions because their children were enrolled in school.

Additionally, three representative teachers from various class types (standard, experimental, and bilingual) also participated in my research. These teachers were essential as they possess frontline knowledge about students' and families' real needs and were crucial practitioners in any potential curriculum reform. Parents would be my indirect research participants. The viewpoints of parents collected and analyzed from existing data concerning modifications to the curriculum and organizational effectiveness.

Table 3.1 provides information about the interview participants and their roles in the school.

Table 3.1

Summary of Participants, Their Departments, and their Role in the School

Department	Identification	Title and or Designation
Both board member and administrative staff	Alpha	校长 (Principal), Fund raising, Public relations.
Administrative committee staff	Bravo	财务副校长 (会计) (Finance Accountant Vice Principal)
	Charlie	文化课副校长 (Cultural Vice Principal)
	Delta	宣传副校长 (Communication Vice Principal)
	Echo	注册副校长 (Registration Vice Principal)
	Foxtrot	总务/活动副校长 (Activity Vice Principal)
	Golf	教务长 (Provost)
Board of trustee members	Hotel	Recruiting of students and faculty, Nomination, Bylaws.
	India	Finance 1
	Juliet	Finance 2
	Kilo	Fund raising
	Lima	Recruiting of students and faculty, Curriculum, Public relations.1
	Mike	Recruiting of students and faculty, Curriculum, Public relations.2
	November	Nomination, Bylaws.
Teacher	Oscar	Standard Chinese teacher who was eighth grade teacher, had been teaching in school for seven years.
	Papa	Experimental Chinese who was level one grade teacher, had been teaching in school for ten years.
	Quebec	Bilingual Chinese teacher who was both bilingual level one and two teacher, had been teaching in school for eight years.

Data Sources

To comprehensively address the research questions, I intended to employ diverse data collection methods. Qualitative researchers are encouraged to draw upon a variety of sources of evidence, aiming to consolidate and reinforce findings through the integration of different data sources and methods. In the case study, data collection was conducted using diverse methodologies, as recommended by Stake (2005). Patton (2002) suggested that

aside from documents, data can be sourced from interviews, participant or non-participant observations, and physical artifacts. Rapley (2007) emphasized the importance of triangulating data, which involves merging evidence from various sources to enhance the credibility of findings. By utilizing multiple approaches such as interviews, observations, document analysis, and possibly other sources, I aimed to gather a comprehensive and multifaceted dataset. This approach was geared towards ensuring a robust understanding of the research topic by cross-referencing and triangulating information gathered from various sources.

Observation and Field Notes

Observational data collection, as defined by Gorman and Clayton (2005), involved systematically recording observable phenomena or behaviors within a natural setting. Baker (2006) emphasized the complexity of observation as a research method. It necessitates researchers to assume various roles and employ multiple techniques, often engaging all five senses to gather data. This approach prioritizes the capture of unfiltered, context-bound practices rather than retrospective or idealized accounts. As Baker recommended, they need to remember their primary role as a researcher and maintain enough detachment to collect and analyze data pertinent to the investigated problem.

The rationale for selecting observation as a primary data source arose in part from the weekend-only operational structure of the Chinese heritage language school under study. Leadership activities occurred in two distinct settings: board meetings, where strategic decisions were made, and administrative office workflows, where daily tasks were carried out. Because board members and administrative staff did not interact during weekdays, observing these separate contexts allowed documentation of their natural

working patterns as they unfolded. Board meetings reflected condensed decision-making processes typical of time-limited gatherings, while administrative activities revealed how daily operations functioned without direct oversight. By observing both settings in Chinese school, the study captured context-specific realities shaped by the school's unique schedule, avoiding reliance on reconstructed accounts.

For the board meeting observation, I utilized a meeting observation form (Appendix B) to take notes, which allowed me to focus on specific aims and preferences. The form addressed both "what" (content and structure) and "how" (relationships and dynamics), providing a comprehensive view of the meeting's effectiveness.

Regarding the "what" aspect, the form emphasized the importance of starting on time, having a published agenda, and ensuring participants are well-prepared—crucial elements for nonprofit boards where time and resources are often limited.

In terms of the "how" aspect, the form enabled me to observe the level of engagement, participation, and challenge among board members, which is vital for healthy governance and decision-making in nonprofits. It also allowed me to assess how the leader encourages or hinders discussion, manages time, and prioritizes key issues. Furthermore, the form captured the leader's role in fostering trust and respect among board members, essential for long-term cohesion and effectiveness.

By evaluating both the content of the meeting and the interpersonal relationships, the form provided a holistic understanding of how leadership impacts the overall success of the meeting.

For the observation of the administrators' office, I designed a template myself (Appendix C). Since office activities occurred organically and lacked the structured

preparation or agenda typical of meetings, I kept the template simple, focusing on key aspects such as workflow, external interactions, and incidents. These categories were informed by my previous office work experience and provided a basic framework for what to expect in an office setting. Despite the simplicity of the template, I aimed to record as much detail as possible.

Interviews

Many proponents of case study research highlighted interviewing as the primary tool for qualitative researchers (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2018; Merriam, 1998). Merriam (1998) asserted that “Interviewing is the most effective technique for conducting in-depth case studies of a few selected individuals” (p. 72). The interview serves as a method to gather insights into how individuals perceive and interpret the world around them. Moreover, interviews can provide valuable information about past events that are not directly observable (Merriam, 1998). Based on these perspectives, I conducted interviews as a crucial method for data collection. This approach aligned with the emphasis placed on interviews as a means to delve deeply into the perspectives, experiences, and interpretations of the participants, allowing for a comprehensive understanding within the context of the case study. I interviewed two groups of participants: the leadership team and the teachers.

For the leadership team, I interviewed seven board members, six administrative staff members, and one principal who was involved with both the board and the administrative team. All interviews followed a standardized template (Appendix D). Initially, participants were asked to describe their roles and responsibilities. Then, they explained how their roles related to their primary professions. If their roles were not

directly related to their professional backgrounds, I further inquired about their motivation for volunteering at the school. These questions were closely aligned with addressing my first research question: *What were the responsibilities of leaders in the effective operation of the heritage language school?*

The interviews then focused on how each individual contributed to or could contribute towards promoting curriculum reform. Additionally, each member discussed the current obstacles facing their teams and suggested ways to enhance their development as a cohesive unit. These questions were closely related to my second research question: *How did the leaders of the heritage language school work together to coordinate the successful operation of a nonprofit volunteer-based organization?* In general, these refined questions were designed to uncover insights from the leadership team regarding their roles, perceptions, and collaborative efforts in fostering the school's growth and addressing pertinent issues.

For the representative teachers' interview, the questions centered on two main themes: curriculum improvement and the effectiveness of communication between the leadership team and teaching staff. The interview questions were designed considering that the Chinese school's transition to the Three-line model (standard, bilingual, and experimental) was decided by the board and implemented by administrators. As frontline practitioners, teachers have valuable insights into the success of these changes. Evaluating the leadership team's effectiveness includes understanding teachers' perspectives on this curriculum shift. Additionally, the leadership team was responsible for curriculum development and quality monitoring, making it crucial to explore current curriculum advantages and disadvantages through teacher feedback. The responses from

these interviews also addressed my second research question: *How did the leaders of heritage language schools work together to coordinate the successful operation of a nonprofit volunteer-based organization?*

Document Review

According to Fischer (2006), document analysis involved a systematic approach to reviewing and evaluating printed or electronic materials. Similar to other analytical methods, qualitative research employing document analysis necessitates examining and interpreting data to derive meaning, enhance comprehension, and develop empirical knowledge. This method was often utilized alongside other qualitative research methods, serving as a means of triangulation, as described by Denzin (2017, p. 48), which involved combining different methodologies in studying the same phenomenon.

When applying the theories mentioned above to this study, my goal was to collect all relevant documentation related to the reform of class settings at the school and evaluate the performance of administrators throughout this process. Two key documents were essential for addressing my research questions.

First, to gain a better understanding of the roles of the leader team, I reviewed the detailed bylaws (Appendix E) that outlined the responsibilities of both the board and the administrative committee. This document, which was seven pages long, included a preamble and five articles. It not only regulated the roles of three important departments—the Parents Council, the Board of Trustees, and the Administrative Committee—but also described the school's non-profit, volunteer-based nature, its history, and its goals.

The other document was a previously conducted survey (Appendix F) of parents by the school, which collected opinions on both curriculum settings and satisfaction with

the leadership team. I retained both the original questionnaire and the subsequent analysis reports to understand parents' needs. Additionally, I reviewed meeting slides, agendas, topic summaries, and vote results to gather comprehensive insights.

Approach to Data Collection

Observation

During regular Chinese school operating weekends, I observed one full school day of administrative staff activities. A total of four hours were dedicated to staff observations. While the staff usually work within the office, they might occasionally attend to emergencies such as contacting families when a student falls ill or managing traffic disruptions. I meticulously took field notes and observed activities and occurrences outside the classroom during staff observation day.

Additionally, as board meetings played a crucial role in discussing and modifying class settings, I actively observed and interacted during all meetings that happened between May to June 2024. This comprehensive approach was used to capture a holistic view of staff responsibilities, and decision-making processes during meetings.

In this study, field notes were gathered during the staff meetings and office observations. These notes detailed the date, sequence, and incidents observed. Additionally, during interviews, I hand-recorded data while simultaneously tape-recording the conversation, which also be considered as part of the field notes. To ensure a systematic approach, a field note chart was designed to guide the recording of observations and interview data. This comprehensive approach aimed to capture detailed information and enhanced the depth of analysis in the study.

Because the note taking process was for my convenient to analyze, my draft contained both Chinese and English.

Interview

For the leader team interviews, all interviews were conducted in person, either in the school cafeteria or in the hallway. In contrast, since the teachers had less time available at the school, all three interviews were conducted over the phone. Prior to the interviews, I sent out the questions to the interviewees, allowing them to review them in advance. If they were uncomfortable with any of the questions, they had the option to decline participation. If they agreed to proceed, they filled out a consent form. With their permission, I video recorded the conversations. Each interview lasted between 10 and 30 minutes.

While the questions were prepared in advance, the interviews were conducted as semi-structured conversations, allowing for follow-up questions based on the interviewees' responses. Since the interviews were conducted in Chinese, the primary language of the speakers, all questions were asked and answered in Mandarin. The following tables provide the interview questions in both English and their Mandarin Chinese translations.

Document Review

The Bylaws

I reviewed the Bylaws in detail, examining the school's history, development, and the creation and modifications of the Bylaws. I carefully read and outlined the roles and responsibilities of the Parents Council, the Board of Trustees, and the Administrative Committee. This included the selection process for members, election procedures,

composition of each department, number of meetings per year, meeting rules, rights and responsibilities of each department, terms, expectations, and consequences of absences. I also analyzed the relationships among the three departments. I summarized the practical advantages and disadvantages of the Bylaws and identified any unreasonable aspects. Additionally, I compared these elements with leadership theories to assess their alignment and effectiveness.

The Survey

The survey (Appendix F) comprised 24 questions, covering topics such as satisfaction with class settings, curriculum design, and opinions on the effectiveness of the leadership team. It was distributed via Qualtrics and analyzed using SPSS. Over the two-month distribution period, 78 responses were received, with 68 considered valid. The report included frequency data detailing demographic information about the survey participants, such as the number of children registered in the Chinese school and their class types. It also featured descriptive statistics on curriculum satisfaction and responses to open-ended questions, which provided recommendations, comments, and suggestions for the leadership team.

With permission from the board, I analyzed the survey data, focusing on two main areas. For curriculum design, I assessed parental satisfaction with three different curricula and explored how various factors influenced their satisfaction. The survey also examined whether the curriculum was a determining factor in parents' decisions to continue enrolling their children at the school, highlighting the potential need for offering different types of classes. Additionally, I evaluated parental satisfaction with different aspects of school leadership by analyzing average levels of agreement and integrating parents' self-

reported opinions to understand the reasons behind their satisfaction with the leadership team.

Data Analysis

The collected data, including observations, interviews, field notes, and relevant documents, underwent a thorough process of repeated reading and analysis. I used MAXQDA Analytics Pro 24, a qualitative analysis software, to assist with data organization, coding, and analysis. Data entry began with uploading hard copies of observation field notes, such as meeting and office observation forms. After each one-on-one interview, I promptly transcribed the data and entered it into MAXQDA. Questionnaire responses and reports were also uploaded. The data were categorized by source—questionnaire, observation, interview, and documents—and further subdivided. For example, interview data were grouped by interviewee type, such as teachers, administrators, and board members. This categorization was then refined to improve clarity and coherence. Additionally, MAXQDA enabled me to easily revisit and analyze specific data as needed.

Subsequently, the data were categorized according to the research questions, guided by two overarching objectives:

1. Explore the current Chinese class settings and the services offered by the Chinese school in meeting the identified needs.
2. Examine the functionality of the leadership team in fostering improved class settings and determining the methods employed to achieve this goal.

Coding

As per Saldaña (2016), a code represents “a word or concise phrase that symbolically attributes a summarizing, significant, essence-capturing, and/or evocative quality to a segment of language-based or visual data” (p. 4). Coding serves as the bridge between the qualitative data collection phase and the subsequent data analysis phase of a study. It is primarily an interpretative, heuristic, and exploratory process that demands problem-solving abilities and the synthesis of data. Importantly, coding is not a one-off or linear event, as emphasized by Rogers (2018). The qualitative analytical process is cyclical, and the initial stage involves first-cycle coding, which occurs during the initial coding of the data.

Saldaña (2016) delineated the first cycle of coding into seven subcategories: grammatical, elemental, affective, literary and language, exploratory, and procedural. In this stage, I applied all seven methods as outlined by Saldaña. For grammatical coding, I focused on identifying key words directly addressing my research questions. For instance, I highlighted instances in the interview transcripts where participants used the word “responsible,” analyzing the surrounding sentences to explore the responsibilities of administrators. Elemental coding, which breaks down data into core themes or ideas, was useful for organizing large amounts of information. For example, by grouping responses from both the board and administrators regarding their responsibilities, I gained a clearer understanding of the findings.

Affective coding, which analyzes emotions, values, and attitudes in the data, was particularly important in my research on nonprofit organizations, as the volunteer spirit was frequently expressed and appreciated in the interviews. For example, in the parent

survey, parents showed appreciation for the school's creation of a positive learning atmosphere. I interpreted this as a key aspect of evaluating leadership outcomes. Literary and language coding, which focuses on the creative or metaphorical use of language, helped uncover deeper meanings and cultural references. For instance, a board member used the metaphor "ten years to shape a tree and a hundred years to shape a person," emphasizing the importance of education, which I coded accordingly.

Exploratory coding involved an open-ended approach to discovering unexpected themes or patterns. For example, a board member mentioned that "it was hard to judge a thing aside from the person," reflecting a trait of Chinese culture—an idea I had previously overlooked. This remark sparked my desire to explore behaviors rooted in cultural context. Finally, procedural coding, which focuses on processes, actions, or sequences described in the data, was especially useful for analyzing meetings and office observations, highlighting tasks and routines. By utilizing multiple methods, I completed the first cycle of coding effectively.

During the first cycle of coding, I absorbed essential ideas, key words from sentences, notes and dialogues. I named them in a rough way. Table 3.2 shows the final set of codes that I identified, their translation, an example of what was coded and frequency in that manner.

Table 3.2*Description of Final Codes Used in this Research*

Code in Chinese	Code in English	Example	segment
学校组织关系	School organization	The School Facility Foundation is established to raise funds for school facility acquisition and rental (bylaws_updated_doc (1), P:5)	8
学校历史	School history	The School was first started in the fall of 1972 by several families in the suburbs of a big city as a cooperative venture for their children to learn elementary Chinese (bylaws_updated_doc (1), P:1)	2
学校定义和宗旨	School vision	The School is a non-profit educational institution dedicated to the teaching of Chinese language and culture, to interested residents in the area. T (bylaws_updated_doc (1), P:1)	1
上升层面-到整个华人	Sublimation-the whole Chinese American characters	One of the characters of the entire Chinese American is focus on the person itself more than the thing. Trust person and trust the thing.	1
董事会-个人促进关系发展	Board-individuals promote relationship	I think the publicity of the school is not enough. I can help with enlarge the publicity.	3
董事会-三条线建设	Board-three line develop	One of the obstacles that I saw of three-line develop is no clear leader to lead this revolution.	13
董事会-对关系的肯定	Board- affirm the relationship	The administrative team has a bond relationship and internal is stable.	8
董事会-职责专业相关	Board-background or profession is related to responsible	I majored in financial, and I am responsible for the school financial operation.	5
董事会-职责	Board- role and responsible statement	I am responsible for recruiting, and policy revise.	8
校委会-工作困难	Admin-work difficulties	The workload is more than expected.	1
校委会董事会工作矛盾	Board and admin work conflict	The board should not have meeting that is not open to administration.	11

Table 3.2 (cont.)

Code in Chinese	Code in English	Example	segment
两个部门工作关系展望	Board and admin future relationship foresee	Both departments should be open and reinforce communication.	29
课程改革建议-校委会董事会	Board and admin-curriculum reform advise	Two departments need to have at least three meetings together in terms of curriculum.	6
校委会董事会工作矛盾	Board and admin work conflict	The board should not have meeting that is not open to administration.	11
两个部门工作关系展望	Board and admin future relationship foresee	Both departments should be open and reinforce communication.	29
课程改革建议-校委会董事会	Board and admin-curriculum reform advise	Two departments need to have at least three meetings together in terms of curriculum.	6
两会总体凝聚力	Board and admin bond	Both board and admin have good bond.	6
校委会-职责与建设三条线	Admin-responsibilities and three-line finalized	I do not like Jinan curriculum myself, so it is good our school has three options.	7
校委会-岗位职责	Admin-role	I am the provost of the school, and i am responsible for comprehensive teaching and curriculum activities.	9
校委会岗位助发展	Admin role boost development	I will put extra effort into public bilingual class because I noticed before this class was lack of publicity.	2
校委会专业联系不大	Admin-profession not related to the role	I am an engineer, totally not related to Chinese education.	7
校委会-职位和专业联系	Admin-role connected to profession	I was a music teacher, and i know most of teachers here, so i am familiar with the school.	4
老师-部编教材缺点	Teacher-curriculum defects of Yuwen	It is too fast for overseas learners.	3
老师个人想法	Teacher personal thoughts	We have such good Chinese traditional cultures, such as humility, resilience, and modesty, which worth to teach to our students.	4

Table 3.2 (cont.)

Code in Chinese	Code in English	Example	segment
校委会-对自身工作肯定	Admin-affirm self-work	Within the administration, everyone fulfills their respective responsibilities, each focusing on their own area of expertise while actively demonstrating initiative and creativity.	3
目标	Goal	I think the goal of all the board of trustees, the school administration and teachers is relatively straightforward—improve students Chinese proficiency and gain an understanding of Chinese culture.	2
老师对 leader team 整体的感知	Teacher-sense to leadership in general	I feel that I've gained a lot of insight over the past two years. I think it's been especially good.	16
老师-校委会合作例子	Teacher-examples of work with admin	In terms of supporting teachers, generally speaking, if teachers have any requests or needs, the admin tends to respond and provide support fairly well.	3
老师-校委会工作不足	Teacher-admin work defects	We lack teacher training. Teachers should have meetings to understand what issues they might encounter.	9
老师个人教学风格	Teacher-self teaching style	I removed some of the politically oriented content, and I'll create some of my own material.	9
暨大缺点	Zhongwen curriculum defects	The curriculum has been superficially updated; its content remains outdated	11
暨大优点	Zhongwen curriculum advantages	Zhongwen curriculum teaches learners not only the language aspects such as listening and character recognition but also traditional culture.	5
实验班难点	Difficulties of experimental classes	I think continuing this class will actually come with certain challenges. In my opinion, the difficulty lies primarily in the teachers' qualifications.	2
实验班肯定原因	Affirm experimental reasons	cater to advanced learners needs.	1
家庭要求	Family requirement	Teacher's interpretation, difficulty, interactiveness, entertainingness, and Learning outcome	3
家长作用	Parental functions	A significant portion of the content requires parental supervision at home for the students to complete.	3
家长满意度	Parents' satisfaction	How satisfied are you with the current curriculum?	9

Table 3.2 (cont.)

Code in Chinese	Code in English	Example	segment
家校合作	Family school cooperation	I explained it like this: i said, "we are a team, and within this team, there are three of us (parent, teacher and student)."	2
三种班型肯定	Affirm three-line model	I think it's great that our school now has bilingual classes, standard Chinese classes, and experimental classes.	3
会议观察记录	Meeting observations	Does the meeting start on time?	4
办公室观察记录	Office observation	Date, workflow	2
总计	Total segments		213

Themes

The second cycle coding methods offered a valuable means to reorganize and reanalyze data initially coded in the first cycle. According to Saldaña (2016, p. 234), the primary objective in the second cycle coding is to establish categorical, thematic, conceptual, and/or theoretical frameworks from the array of first cycle codes. During this phase, given the fact that comparative complexity of the subject and data resources, I decided to organize my results based on how the codes address each research question. Patterns and themes emerging from the data were carefully condensed or expanded upon, aiming to refine the identified themes while discarding those deemed less relevant. For instance, in terms of school organization, I condensed several codes related to administrative roles and responsibilities, such as board-role and responsibility statement and admin-role, into a broader theme of organizational roles and responsibilities. Conversely, I expanded on the code board and admin work conflict by differentiating it into more specific themes, like interdepartmental communication issues and decision-making overlaps, as these complexities emerged through the data analysis. To determine which themes were "less relevant," I assessed their alignment with the central research

questions, frequency across responses, and significance to the study's main objectives. For example, family school cooperation was mentioned by a few participants but did not provide enough depth or frequency to warrant its inclusion as a central theme in the study. Similarly, codes related to extracurricular activities, while discussed, were less directly connected to the research focus on administrative processes and school governance, leading to their exclusion from further analysis.

Table 3.3 shows the final set of themes that I developed from the set of codes. Moreover, a thorough analysis involved a comparative assessment of the existing situation and the anticipated future needs. Additionally, comparisons were drawn between observed leadership behaviors in real-world scenarios and established theoretical leadership frameworks. This analytical approach aimed to draw meaningful insights into the alignment between observed practices and established leadership theories.

Table 3.3*Final Themes Organized by Research Questions*

Research questions	Themes	Definition	Code
1. What were the responsibilities of leaders in the effective operation of heritage language schools?	The bylaws regulation	The bylaws of the Chinese school explicitly define the responsibilities of the Board and the administrators.	School organization
	Leaders self-stated and recognized responsibilities	In the interviews, board members and administrators reflected on their roles and responsibilities, how their backgrounds supported their positions at the Chinese school, and the steps they had taken to strengthen their contributions.	• Board- individuals promote relationship • Board-background or profession is related to responsible • Board- role and responsible statement • Board and admin future relationship foresee • Admin-role • Admin role boost development • Admin-role connected to profession
	Evaluation of leadership efficiency	The evaluations incorporated perspectives from Board members and administrators through self- and peer evaluations, feedback from teachers obtained through interviews, and parent satisfaction data gathered from surveys.	• Board and admin bond • Admin-affirm self-work • Teacher-sense to leadership in general • Teacher-examples of work with admin • Teacher- admin work defects • Affirm three-line system
2. How did the leaders of heritage language schools work together to coordinate the successful operation of a nonprofit volunteer-based organization?	Weekly workflows or working procedures of the Chinese school leadership team	Overall, how the Chinese school leadership team functions and collaborates throughout the weekly workflow.	• School organization • Admin-work difficulties • Board- affirm the relationship • Board and admin work conflict • Board meeting observations • Office observation

Table 3.3 (cont.)

Research questions	Themes	Definition	Code
2. How did the leaders of heritage language schools work together to coordinate the successful operation of a nonprofit volunteer-based organization? (cont)	A specific event to observe the leadership team's collaboration, procedures, and efficiency.	Through the lens of curriculum reform, this theme explored how the leadership team collaborated and how teachers and parents assessed its outcomes.	• Board-three lines develop • Board and admin-curriculum reform advise • Admin-responsibilities and three-line finalized • Teacher-curriculum defects of Yuwen • Affirm experimental reasons • Parents' satisfaction • Affirm three-line system
	Common goal	Referenced across all data sources, including the school bylaws, which serve as the foundation for the successful operation of a nonprofit organization.	• School history • School vision • Admin-profession not related to the role • Goal
3. How did current formal educational leadership theories fit or differ when applied to heritage language schools?	Transformational leadership	Examples and comments from teachers and leadership team members that illustrate whether transformational leadership was effectively applied within the Chinese school.	• Teacher-examples of work with admin • Teacher- admin work defects • Parents' satisfaction • Teacher-self teaching style • Affirm three-line system • Goal
	Distributed leadership	Examples and comments from teachers and leadership team members that illustrate whether distributed leadership was effectively applied within the Chinese school.	• Teacher-examples of work with admin • Teacher-self teaching style • Admin-work difficulties • Board- affirm the relationship

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

This case study was guided by the overarching research questions: What are the responsibilities of the administrators of the heritage Chinese School, and how do they work together to coordinate the successful operation of a nonprofit, volunteer-based organization? The study specifically focuses on the 2023-2024 school year curriculum reform.

My data emerged from various sources, including observations, interviews, field notes, and document reviews. These sources comprised seventeen separate one-on-one interviews, two board meeting observations, one administrator office observation, a review of the bylaws, and existing parent survey data, which had 78 responses. Field notes were also utilized to facilitate the verification of my observations and interviews. All data were collected during the last two months of the 2023-2024 school year, between May 2024 and June 2024. I will present my findings in the order of different data sources.

Observation Findings

Administrator Office Observation

The observation date was May 4, 2024. According to the school calendar (Appendix F, that day was the 5th Teacher Council Meeting from 11:15 am to 12:15 pm and Registration Information Day at the cafeteria, which would take place in the morning from 9:30 am to 10:30 am and in the afternoon from 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm. The office, which was more of a storage room, doubled as a workspace with desks and only three chairs. It held Chinese school items such as display boards, printers, flags, trophies, and

graduation gowns. Despite its primary function as a storage room, it served as an office where parents inquire about courses, new students check in, and teachers come for materials.

In the morning, administrators presented at the school included the operation vice principal, the Activity vice principal, the Provost, the Registration vice principal, the Finance cashier vice principal, and the Finance accountant vice principal. The Board Chair was also present for a brief visit of about 15 minutes. School started at 9:00 am. Four volunteer parents arrived before that time to sign up and receive instructions from the operation vice principal. Volunteers were assigned various tasks, such as ringing the bell to mark class start, breaks, and end times at 9:00 am, 10:00 am, 10:10 am, and 11:00 am. Other volunteers acted as gate guardians to prevent unauthorized entry, while some helped with copying and printing tasks in the office. Volunteer roles can change based on operational needs. For instance, during COVID, volunteers helped monitor temperatures before entry. Generally, volunteers had few tasks and spent much of their time socializing with others from the same ethnic community.

The office was hectic before 9:00 am. Administrators had to comfort angry teachers and parents while simultaneously solving problems. Once the morning issues were resolved and classes started, the administrators were able to relax a bit. Before and during class time, parents from different classes frequently brought materials to copy and then returned them to the classroom as needed by the teachers.

It was almost 9:00 am when a teacher arrived, complaining that the classroom door remained locked. Shortly after, a parent from another class reported the same issue. The building had a custodian responsible for opening the rented classrooms and cleaning

afterward. The custodian's number was on the office whiteboard for such incidents. However, the position of the custodian changed frequently; this semester alone, it had changed three times. The Finance Accountant Vice Principal called the custodian, but the person who answered said she had resigned. Several vice principals then went through the school building to find the new custodian. When they located her, she insisted on opening only the doors listed on a piece of paper she had, which detailed the rooms from the original contract. One administrator explained, *"The list is from the original contract, but after a few weeks, some rooms were found unsuitable due to issues like malfunctioning AC or projectors. We verbally reassigned rooms without updating the contract, and the previous custodian knew which doors to open."* The new custodian remained firm, stating she would only follow her boss's instructions, which came from the district. The Chinese school principal, who was supposed to handle such matters with the district, was not there that day. We called the principal, requesting him to communicate with the district. The problem was eventually resolved, and the new custodian opened the classrooms, but it was already 9:15 am by then.

Not all administrators were required to come every week. They used a sign-up sheet for an "in-duty principal," with only one administrator scheduled to come each week. This process ensured that all principals were familiar with the general operations of the school, such as the previously mentioned issue with the new custodian opening the wrong rooms. Specific vice principals were responsible for their respective areas. For example, May 4th was the first Saturday of the month, and it was the scheduled salary distribution day. The Finance Cashier Vice Principal distributed checks to teachers, with the amounts calculated previously by the provost. Although the school's administrators

had specific responsibilities, they worked as a unit to solve both expected and unexpected problems.

This week, six out of ten administrators were present, which was unusual. The end of the school year was approaching on June 8th, and the school was preparing for a significant event. The morning would feature the graduation ceremony, and the afternoon would host "China Day," which included Chinese games, culture displays, performances, and traditional food sales. This event, known as Graduation China Day, welcomed all registered students, their families, and the broader community. It is one of the biggest events of the year, with many details to discuss and settle. The operation vice principal suggested, *"Why don't we talk about the arrangement for Graduation-China Day since so many admins are here today?"* An unofficial meeting emerged with no agenda and no fixed seating. Some stood while others sat at the table. The operation vice principal asked for advice on activities for the Graduation-China Day event, such as who would be responsible for judging the Chinese games and who would invite food sellers. Participant administrators randomly shared their opinions, suggesting ideas like hiring a fourth grader's dad as the photographer, buying from a local bakery to sell items for profit, and requesting lunch funds from the board for the organizing team. The discussion was constantly disrupted by parents needing copies.

The conversation was disorderly, with no guided themes, resembling more of a brainstorming session. No one took notes on the opinions shared. *"I am going to leave for my dance class,"* said the Registration vice principal, leaving during the conversation. The Finance cashier vice principal also left without saying anything. The remaining administrators continued to chat. Two hours passed quickly on Saturday morning, but no

significant agreements or decisions were made. Participants attempted to make their voices heard by raising their volume. The meeting, being unscheduled and lacking an agenda, provided only superficial ideas and served as a way to inform everyone about the upcoming big event, acting as a morale booster for future arrangements. *“Guys, we should make such an important meeting a formal one,”* said the Finance accountant vice principal. The group agreed, and the meeting was dismissed. Although the discussion had little immediate effect, all attendees contributed their thoughts beyond their specific roles. They made a joint effort to ensure that the Graduation-China Day event would go smoothly and successfully.

According to the calendar, the 5th Teacher Council Meeting was scheduled from 11:15 am to 12:15 pm, with lunch provided. Since teachers had only a 90-minute lunch break, the meeting took place while they ate. Before the meeting, all present administrators helped arrange the lunch, including unloading it from the delivery truck to the cafeteria and preparing napkins. The meeting focused on two main topics: asking teachers to consider their grade preferences for the upcoming year and informing them about the approaching Graduation-China Day event. After the meeting, the administrator team helped clean up the cafeteria.

In the afternoon, most administrators left, leaving only the Activity vice principal and the provost. The Cultural Principal arrived as well. Many administrators' children, who were enrolled in the Chinese school, had morning classes. The remaining administrators either had children in afternoon classes or were in roles that required their presence. As a result, the office was quieter compared to the morning. The afternoon followed the same procedure as the morning. Volunteers arrived and signed in, and

parents came in to make copies. With fewer disruptions, the provost finally had time to work on tasks, such as recording teachers' attendance. One of the scheduled events on May 4th was Registration Information Day at the cafeteria. However, it did not occur, and no one inquired about the reason for its cancellation. No parents came to inquire about it.

This day was typical in the Chinese school office—busy with various tasks and clearly showing the dedication of the volunteers. The office functioned as a multifunctional room, serving as the central gathering place outside of teaching areas. It helped solve problems, welcome new students, and organize and discuss events. However, the office often appeared disorganized, with items scattered around and a loosely structured approach, as meetings were often unscheduled or informal. The decision-making process relied heavily on weekday WeChat group chats rather than in-person discussions.

Board Meetings Observations

I observed two board meetings that provided valuable insights into the board's operations and workflow. These meetings illustrated how the board navigated complex processes, including principal elections, while adhering to established bylaws and maintaining effective control over the proceedings. The meetings highlighted both the procedural rigor, and the strategic planning involved in the board's decision-making process.

Principal Election Meeting

The Principal Election Meeting was one of the most significant board meetings of the school year. It typically took place in the spring, before the current semester ended, as

it was an ideal time to summarize the year's work and transition leadership. The board meeting was open to both teachers and parents, who were welcome to observe. This year, the meeting occurred on May 11th, 2024, at 11:15 a.m. in the school cafeteria, allowing interested individuals to attend and witness the process. This year's election was particularly important because the experimental classes had been introduced the previous year. Whoever assumed the role of principal would need to prioritize gathering feedback from these new classes and making necessary adjustments to ensure their success.

The meeting started on time. However, since the information was finalized only three days prior, not all members were available to attend in person. Two out of the ten members participated via Zoom, while the remaining eight attended in person, including two of the candidates who would later be up for election. Approximately ten teachers and parents were present to observe and prepare to ask questions afterward. Four administrators also attended as observers. The meeting was hosted by one of the volunteer board members, who began by orally announcing the agenda: each principal candidate would have five minutes for a self-statement, followed by a ten-minute debate to answer questions from board members, ten minutes to answer questions from parents, and finally, a ten-minute voting period with the results immediately revealed. Before the procedure began, the host asked if there were any questions. One board member inquired about the possibility of a tie, given that there were eight voting members (excluding the two candidates). The board explained that in the event of a 4-4 tie, the Parent Council would cast the deciding vote to determine the new principal.

The order for the two candidates to give their self-statements was determined by rolling dice. Mr. G went first. He outlined his volunteer history, which began eight years

ago, and included roles as class parent representative, board member, acting principal, and currently, board Chair. During his tenure as acting principal, especially throughout the COVID period, he reinforced safety measures to ensure the school operated safely. He also strengthened the relationship between the board and administrators by establishing a WeChat group. If elected, he planned to further develop rules and budget control to ensure systematic and regulated operations. Mr. Z, the current principal, is seeking reappointment. He highlighted his successes over the past year, including transitioning afternoon classes from online to in-person, appointing a culture vice principal who introduced cultural classes, and opening experimental classes (despite a modest enrollment of six students at the middle level). He also increased cultural activities, established new clubs, and attracted more donations. Mr. Z supported graduates in applying for the Seal of Biliteracy and leading to participate in state Chinese contests, attended the annual state Chinese conference, and finalized the Three-line classes. Looking ahead, he planned to introduce summer classes, such as math and oral Chinese classes, and enhanced vocabulary identification.

During the questions and answers stage, board members, observing teachers, and parents actively participated. Questions covered a range of topics including reputation, budget, and teaching priorities. Key questions addressed were: What are the most important aspects to focus on? What were the candidates past dissatisfactions and areas for improvement as principals? The responses from the two candidates were distinctive and reflected their vision and mission. For example, Mr. Z acknowledged that he needed to do more to strengthen bonds within the administrative team and enhance proactive engagement. Mr. G proposed optimizing the current website if elected to office.

The voting procedure was open and fair, and Mr. G emerged as the winner. He will next be approved by the Parent Council, after which he would assume the role of principal next year. Despite the challenges inherent in an election debate, the meeting successfully achieved its primary goal: nominating a new principal.

New Principal Nomination Meeting

The meeting, held on June 4, 2024, was convened in response to the Parent Council's decision not to approve the principal candidate elected on May 11th. In accordance with the bylaws, the Board of Trustees was required to nominate a new candidate for the principal position. The meeting, conducted via Zoom on a weekday evening, was attended by all members of the Board of Trustees, with some administrators also in attendance as observers.

Before the meeting, another candidate, Ms. L, who was also a board member, submitted her application. Along with Mr. Z, she would participate in a new round of elections. Similar to the previous principal election meeting, the process included self-statements from the candidates, followed by questions from board members and administrators, and then a vote. The board chair hosted the meeting, managing both the timing and content. Unlike the in-person meeting held in the cafeteria, this Zoom meeting allowed the candidates to use slides to better present their visions and plans. Both candidates excelled in articulating their visions and provided detailed explanations of their plans if selected as principal.

The meeting concluded with Ms. L being selected as the principal for the upcoming year. Based on my observations during the meeting, Ms. L immediately pushed forward on key issues, including preparations for the upcoming Graduation-China

Day, the end-of-semester picnic, increasing teachers' salaries, and expanding enrollment and publicity efforts.

The two meetings together settled the principal election. Throughout the meeting, the team adhered to shared norms, showing respect, enjoying each other's presence, being open to all opinions, and focusing on reaching agreements and commitments. The entire process adhered to the bylaws and demonstrated that the board effectively managed the proceedings.

Interview Findings

Teacher Interview

I interviewed three teachers, each representing one of the three lines of the classes that the school offers. The participants' details were provided in Chapter Three, Table 3.1. Ms. Oscar is an eighth-grade standard Chinese class teacher with seven years of teaching experience at the school. Ms. Papa is a Level One experimental class teacher who has been teaching at the research school for ten years and also teaches Chinese in other heritage language schools. She has experience teaching AP classes, bilingual classes, and is familiar with all popular Chinese curricula. Ms. Quebec is currently a Bilingual Chinese teacher for both Level One and Level Two classes and has been teaching at the school for eight years. She previously taught standard Chinese and transitioned to the bilingual class two years ago, making her familiar with both the *ZhongWen* and *YangYang* curricula.

As described in Chapter three, the teacher interview questions covered two main topics: their opinions on teaching and curriculum, and their relationship with leadership teams, which were highly relevant to my research questions. Upon analyzing the data, I

identified the following themes: opinions on the curriculum reform, advantages and shortcomings of the curricula, teachers' personal adjustment to the curriculum, and the teacher and leadership team relationship.

Opinions on Curriculum Reform

All three interviewed teachers advocated for the reform through the introduction of experimental classes. They each described their belief that offering three types of Chinese classes caters to the diverse needs of language learners. Ms. Oscar noted that:

Despite the school's predominantly American Chinese student body, there are significant variations in language proficiency levels among students. This realization led to the implementation of differentiated curricula, tailored to meet the higher expectations of some parents who invest more time in Chinese language education, including exposure to Chinese TV programs and enforcing Mandarin at home.

Ms. Quebec considered that standard Chinese classes, which are mainly divided by age, are not as effective as those divided by proficiency level or needs. She confirmed that *"When I joined the school eight years ago, it only offered one type of Chinese class, which was the standard Chinese class. This led to a high dropout rate because some of the students could not keep up."* She added that the reform also enhanced the full grade level range, accommodating learners from pre-K to AP levels. Overall, Ms. Quebec considers the changes beneficial to both students and school development.

Ms. Oscar outlined two challenges in continuing the experimental classes. Firstly, it requires teachers with more experience and a willingness to invest extra time in lesson planning. Secondly, determining the optimal integration point between standard and

experimental classes poses a challenge. This decision is crucial as it impacts when experimental class students will be adequately prepared to take standardized tests like HSK and AP exams, which are ultimate goals in Chinese language education.

In summary, the teacher interviews indicated that the introduction of standard, bilingual, and experimental Chinese classes reflects a proactive response to diverse student needs and parental expectations. Despite challenges like curriculum integration and teacher preparation, the teacher interviews made clear that these reforms are expected to improve educational outcomes and cultural identity, fostering a more inclusive and effective learning environment at the school.

Advantages and Shortcomings of the Curricula

Regarding the current standard Chinese curriculum, *ZhongWen* by Jinan University, all three teachers discussed its strengths and weaknesses. Ms. Oscar praised its extensive vocabulary coverage, standardized text passages that promote literacy, and rich cultural content. Ms. Quebec also highlighted the curriculum's cultural integration, stating:

I like the ZhongWen curriculum because it teaches learners not only the language aspects such as listening and character recognition but also traditional culture.

Chinese teachers who teach overseas have a responsibility to spread culture, and this curriculum includes cultural elements.

Several weaknesses were also pointed out about *ZhongWen* curriculum. Ms. Oscar identified the curriculum's focus on literacy over listening and speaking skills, its inability to foster complete self-expression, and its lack of relevance to students' daily lives. Additionally, she noted that while the curriculum has been superficially updated, its

content remains outdated. She suggested improvements for the publisher's website to enhance accessibility and user-friendliness, thereby maximizing its educational resources.

Ms. Papa highlighted a significant shortcoming in character recognition:

It was originally designed for heritage learners to use two books per school year, but now only one book is used per year. This results in inadequate exposure to new characters. By the end of eighth grade, students can only learn 1200 characters, which is less than China's anti-illiteracy level of 1600 characters.

By making this comparison, Ms. Papa clearly demonstrated that one of the major shortcomings of the *ZhongWen* curriculum design is inadequate character recognition.

Ms. Papa also pointed out that this inadequacy leads to high dropout rates at higher levels:

The low teaching goals of the traditional ZhongWen curriculum prevent students from becoming literate at a certain age, making it difficult for them to read even simple content. This leads to discouragement and lower satisfaction, especially since most Chinese students are high achievers with good academic performance in their daily schools.

In this statement, Ms. Papa recognized the curriculum's shortcomings not only from an academic perspective but also in terms of students' mental development.

Ms. Quebec and Ms. Oscar did not comment on curricula other than *ZhongWen*. However, Ms. Papa described the characteristics of the *YangYang* and *YuWen* curricula. She mentioned that the bilingual curriculum *YangYang ZhongWen* is designed for learners with no Chinese learning context, whose families do not speak Chinese. Most learners start from zero and can eventually reach HSK levels 3 to 4. Regarding *YuWen*,

published by People's Education Press, she noted that it is faster paced compared to ZhongWen, *“Due to limited learning time, the learning results are not as good as those of learners in China. YuWen’s learning speed is three times faster than ZhongWen. Students in experimental classes using YuWen rely heavily on parental supervision.”* To conclude, based on their teaching experiences and student feedback, the three teachers provided useful comments on the curriculum. They leverage the curriculum's strengths and incorporate their own insights into their teaching practices.

Teachers’ Personal Adjustment to the Curriculum

Three teachers actively addressed the curriculum shortcomings: In addressing the curriculum's emphasis on literacy over listening and speaking skills, Ms. Oscar described how she tailored her teaching approach. She described *“I require all students answer my questions in a complete and meaningful sentence, then I revise their grammar or wording issues. I also integrate cultural content to enhance lesson relatability.”* for promoting equity, she explained that she fostered active participation in group discussions and employs engaging activities such as word card games to reinforce vocabulary.

To mitigate dropout rates stemming from literacy challenges, Ms. Papa stressed the importance of parental involvement, urging consistent attendance at Saturday Chinese classes to ensure children's commitment to learning. She noted that she said to students the first days of school *“once you made up mind to learn Chinese, you need to come every Saturday. If you absent for excuse such as going to a wedding or going to some sports game, I would rather you not start to learn at the beginning.”* She stated her belief that by fifth grade, students should achieve independent reading proficiency, setting a foundation for sustained academic progress. Additionally, Ms. Papa described adjusting

the *YuWen* curriculum by removing politically sensitive passages and incorporating suitable content.

Besides addressing curriculum shortcomings, the interviewed teachers deliver lessons with their unique styles and goal orientation. Ms. Oscar's passion for spreading Chinese language and culture was palpable. Transitioning from a weekday profession to teaching seven years ago, she has grown significantly through learning from her students and peers. As she noted, *"I knew nothing about teaching at first; I learned as I taught. The teachers here have been very helpful."* Her dedication was evident in personal initiatives, such as funding her own trip to meet the creator of the Yuzi Dictionary in Beijing, emphasizing her commitment beyond financial gain. Ms. Oscar expressed a belief that heritage language schools, as non-profit organizations, should prioritize their core mission of cultural dissemination over profit-driven motives or budgetary concerns.

Ms. Quebec, deeply influenced by Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism, described holding a profound love for Chinese culture. Integrating fables, idioms, and mythological stories into her lessons, Ms. Quebec explained that she emphasizes key traits of Chinese character, such as humility, resilience, and modesty. She stated that she fosters critical thinking by discussing cultural conflicts and disparities between Western and Eastern perspectives, such as differing interpretations of color symbolism.

I've observed that in Western culture, it's common and accepted for kids to decorate with black and white flowers. However, in Chinese culture, black and white flowers signify special moments, often used in funeral decorations. Given the opportunity to teach this aspect, I would highlight the cultural differences in the

perception of colors. I'd encourage students to engage in deep thinking and discussions to explore further the cultural significance embedded in language.

Ms. Quebec's statement reflects a view that learning the language was not merely as a means to achieve academic credits but as a vehicle for imparting cultural concepts to future generations.

Each teacher expressed a commitment to enriching students' understanding of Chinese language and culture through unique teaching approaches, driven by personal passion and educational philosophy. Their efforts not only address curriculum challenges but also foster deeper appreciation and exploration of Chinese cultural values among their students.

The Teacher and Leadership Team Relationship

When discussing the relationship between teachers and the leadership team within the school, three teachers representing different types of Chinese classes affirmed the effectiveness of administrators and board members. Ms. Oscar emphasized her dedication to student-centered teaching, with minimal involvement in administrative affairs beyond necessary interactions. She expressed a closer relationship with the administrative team due to their frequent operational interactions. She highlighted a positive experience where the school principal effectively supported her in addressing a student issue:

I inadvertently overlooked a student's inappropriate painting and writing on a school building wall, which was later reported by the facility staff. The Chinese school principal intervened by facilitating communication with the parents and allowing me to directly address the students involved. I requested that the student write a regret report and promise never to repeat the behavior.

She described her feeling that the principal stood by her and aligned with her approach in dealing with inappropriate behaviors.

Ms. Quebec praised the leadership team for promptly and effectively resolving her issues. She cited an example where I assisted in securing a budget for trophies needed for a bilingual class speech competition, which was initially out of budget. She also appreciated the organization of numerous events by the administrators.

Overall, the teachers described feeling supported by the leadership team and emphasized the importance of aligning goals between teachers and administrators. Ms. Oscar stressed that the primary goal should be enhancing cultural identity and confidence among heritage learners through the promotion of Chinese language and culture, fostering the best possible learning environment.

Regarding suggestions for future improvements, all three teachers mentioned the need for professional development, each focusing on different areas. Ms. Oscar emphasized the importance of training in multimedia teaching tools, noting, *"In the rapidly evolving field of AI, there's a trend of using tools like ChatGPT, which offer numerous functions beneficial to language study, such as converting pictures to text and text to poems."* She also recommended investing in the Yuzi Dictionary, a paid app, as a valuable resource for enhancing language education. Ms. Quebec expressed a desire for more collaborative time with peers, proposing structured time for lesson planning and report card preparation. She emphasized the importance of detail, *"the school has a template report card, which simply clicks on the item. I abandon that because it could not better reflect students' progress. I gave each student report cards in detail, elaborated record their learning."* She advocated personalized student progress reports over

template-based systems. Ms. Papa emphasized the need for more internal teaching and curriculum meetings focused on professional training and problem-solving.

When asked about the shortcomings in administrative work and future suggestions, these three teachers independently agreed that the school should hold more professional development meetings and address topics they are eager to discuss. They believe the school should seriously consider this recommendation. In terms of communication, Ms. Papa recommended clearer communication channels as they are on the frontline with parents and students. *“Important strategy reforms, such as adding an experimental line, should be communicated formally, like in a sit-down meeting. Otherwise, teachers do not know what will happen and why.”* Additionally, Ms. Papa suggested updating the school website to improve usability. She noted that the current information is disorganized, making it challenging for users to locate the correct registration information.

In summary, the perspectives shared by Ms. Oscar, Ms. Quebec, and Ms. Papa underscore a collaborative effort between teachers and the leadership team to enhance educational practices at the school. Their insights into effective communication, professional development needs, and alignment of goals highlight a commitment to improving the learning experience for students of diverse backgrounds and proficiency levels in Chinese language education. As the school moves forward, implementing these suggestions will not only strengthen teacher-administrator relations but also further enrich the cultural and academic growth of the students they serve.

Administrator's Interview Findings

Seven members of the administrative committee were interviewed. Each member first described their roles and responsibilities and then explained how their roles were related to their major professions or their motivation for volunteering at the school. The interviews then focused on how each individual was working towards promoting curriculum reform, though its success was not yet certain. Finally, each member discussed the current obstacles facing their teams and suggested ways to develop as a cohesive unit.

Role Description and Background

These seven interviewees shared their titles and described their roles in detail, respectively. Ms. Delta, the communication vice principal, described her as being responsible for weekly and event publicity. She explained that each week, she published a newsletter to both the school's official WeChat and Facebook account. For special events, such as Graduation-China Day and the Halloween parade, she advertised to the community as well. Ms. Echo was the Registration Vice Principal, whose role was to help students register for courses and coordinate other activities or events, such as tests. Ms. Golf was the provost and explained that she was responsible for the entirety of school teaching and curriculum, as well as teacher-related work. She stated,

My responsibilities include hiring, interviewing, training, managing teacher resignations, and handling retirements. I am also involved in curriculum design, monitoring the syllabus, and conducting needs analysis to determine if new classes are necessary. Additionally, I match the right teacher to the right class. I communicate with parents to evaluate and recommend appropriate grade levels

for new or transferring students. Furthermore, I oversee graduate learners from our school who wish to serve as teaching assistants, assigning them to the appropriate classes.

Her role was crucial to the school's core tasks, such as teaching and curriculum, as indicated by the above statement.

Ms. Bravo was the finance accountant vice principal, whose role was to "*handle bookkeeping, assist the principal in creating the budget at the beginning of the school year, and monitor spending throughout the year. I ensure expenditures remain within reasonable limits, maintain related documents, and pass audits.*" Mr. Alpha was the principal and board member, whose role in the administration team was to "*oversee the holistic operation of the school, including all Chinese and culture classes, engage in future vision planning, and coordinate with all other administrators.*" Ms. Foxtrot was the activity vice principal, and her responsibilities included "*purchasing supplies needed by the school operation and teachers and organizing various events and activities.*" Ms. Charlie was the cultural vice principal, whose role was to "*reach out to culture teachers, develop new culture classes, review their syllabi and content, schedule class times, and avoid class repetition.*" Each administrator was aware of their role and could describe it explicitly.

Three out of the seven administrators described roles related to their daily work or academic backgrounds. For example, Ms. Bravo worked as an accountant in an auto company, dealing with tax transfers. She held a CPA certification and was knowledgeable about tax laws. Ms. Golf highlighted her background relevant to the role by stating, "*I have been majoring in the education field for 14 years and have experience*

teaching Chinese. I am currently majoring in educational leadership. This dual background in leadership and education makes me well-suited for the provost role." Ms. Charlie was a piano teacher and majored in ballet in college. She knew many professional music teachers within the community, which fit the needs of the cultural vice principal role. Their backgrounds were beneficial to their work at the school.

For those whose professions were not directly related to their current roles, their reasons for volunteering at the Chinese school varied. Ms. Delta, for example, described discovering through her daily job that she enjoyed communicating with people and taking pictures. These interests and skills were well-suited for her role as communication vice principal, helping to raise the school's profile. Ms. Echo, an engineer, explained she became involved because her son attended the Chinese school from a young age. She recognized the school's need for volunteers and saw the opportunity to contribute as a way to support her son's language learning while helping the school. Ms. Alpha, who had three children enrolled in the Chinese school, expressed being motivated by his ambition for education and his understanding of the school environment. He believed that serving as the principal would not only benefit his own children's language acquisition but also enhance the learning environment for other students. Their passion fueled their spirit of volunteerism.

Based on the interviewees' self-introductions and their understanding of their roles, the distribution of responsibilities seems reasonable and well-aligned with their capacities, interests, and relevant backgrounds. This alignment appeared to enhance their enthusiasm for their work. Effective role distribution is essential for the successful operation of a school, regardless of whether it is nonprofit or for-profit. Although each

administrator has their primary responsibilities, they work collaboratively to support the school's development.

Role Contributes to Three-Line Model Development

All interviewees contributed to various school activities and development according to their capacities. However, my interview questions specifically focused on their contributions to curriculum reform from the traditional focus mainly on Standard Chinese and some Bilingual instruction to the “Three-Line” model, which equally emphasizes Standard Chinese, Bilingual Chinese, and the newly added Experimental Chinese. By focusing on their individual efforts, we can gain a broader understanding of the school’s overall operation.

Five out of seven interviewees shared their contributions from the perspectives of their roles. Mr. Alpha, who was candid about his lack of an educational background, was nonetheless responsible for confirming and implementing the reform. He described relying heavily on the provost for class settings and curriculum design. Meanwhile, he actively communicated with teachers and parents to gather feedback and improve his work. His goal was to channel all available resources to support the three-line development.

Ms. Golf, the provost, explained how she would contribute to the development of the Three Lines from teaching and curriculum perspectives. She emphasized the importance of creating an attractive and competitive curriculum through discussions with teachers. Additionally, she focused on assigning the right teachers to the appropriate grade levels. For example, she noted, *'The experimental classes have higher learning goals, so I prefer to assign experienced teachers to those positions. On the other hand,*

bilingual classes often involve less intense, student-centered learning, so I would assign teachers who excel at using games or fun activities in those classes.' She further added, “*Only when the lesson content and quality are high will more students register.*” Ms. Golf had a clear vision of what she was doing, which contributed to the successful finalization of the Three Line project, as her role was crucial.

Ms. Delta, the vice principal of communication, discussed her contributions from an advertising perspective. She stated,

Compared to last year, I plan to focus more on promoting the experimental classes. These classes began last year, and after a year of trial, the results have been positive. We need increased publicity to raise awareness within the community. The same goes for the bilingual classes, as we previously focused too much on promoting the standard classes. Additionally, I need to broaden the methods we use for advertising.

Ms. Delta’s statement reflected her proactive approach in aligning with the school's reform efforts and making necessary adjustments to the course publicity strategy. Ms. Bravo, the vice principal in charge of finance, identified the primary concern as whether the new classes balance income and expenses. She stated,

It's acceptable if we just break even or even run a slight deficit in the initial stages, as this can be justified for advertising and promotional purposes. However, in the long run, we need to see the benefits these classes bring to the community and how they attract more students.

Ms. Bravo demonstrated a balance between short-term flexibility and long-term financial sustainability, showing an understanding of the need for initial investment. Finally, Ms.

Foxtrot, focused on her role, emphasized that she would ensure the timely purchase of whatever resources the school needs to support the development of the courses.

Apart from their role-specific or background-related contributions, the participant administrators offered broader opinions, often without emphasizing their roles. They provided ideas based on feedback from teachers and parents. Regarding parent feedback, Ms. Echo suggested that administrators could further investigate parents' opinions on aspects such as course difficulty, homework load, and curriculum. When discussing teacher resources, Ms. Echo highlighted the importance of finding passionate teachers, especially in a volunteer-based school where high pay isn't an option. She noted that enthusiasm is crucial, as teachers who are adaptable can tailor the class to meet both student needs and curriculum requirements.

All participants demonstrated enthusiastic and supportive attitudes toward the Chinese school's Three-line development. Whether considering their roles or not, the administrators carried out their responsibilities and worked together to develop the Three-line courses, ensuring the school remains competitive and runs smoothly. Furthermore, the administrators were deeply focused on the school's long-term development, aiming to benefit the entire community.

Opinions On Leadership Team

In terms of the relationship between the administrative committee and the board of trustees, most participating administrators generally held a positive attitude, appreciating the time and effort devoted and the volunteer spirit. However, when asked further, they pointed out shortcomings, particularly in communication, power distribution, cooperation, and receptiveness to advice.

Ms. Bravo first affirmed that both the administrators and board members who were elected had a strong volunteer spirit, were dedicated, and genuinely wanted to help the Chinese community grow. She further noted that the Board of Trustees held significant power, including voting and decision-making, which the administrative team did not have. However, this power was entrusted by the parents, and it was important to use it properly. Ms. Echo also praised the good traits of all individual administrators and board members, even though the organization was nonprofit, and the management structure was somewhat loose.

Unlike the positive attitudes toward the relationship between the administrative team and the board, Ms. Golf had a somewhat negative view. She complained that there was no clear boundary of power. She noted,

The administrators do not know the extent of their authority when it comes to specific matters, so they sometimes hesitate. They fear that if they apply for something and it isn't approved, it would be better not to act at all. Some ideas are good, but no one pushes them forward because, on one hand, everyone has their own weekday responsibilities, and on the other, being pushy might hurt someone else. No one wants to be the guilty party.

Ms. Golf's statement primarily expressed frustration with the disorganized procedures when dealing with two departments. Another issue Ms. Golf mentioned was the slow and ineffective communication between the two departments. She noted,

Small matters were subject to endless discussion with no clear deadlines, and there was a lack of meeting order and agenda. This was probably caused by the

frequent turnover of administrators and board members, with the old ones being eager to explain the history, causes, and reasons to the new ones.

Apart from Ms. Golf's comments on communication, many participants mentioned this issue, as it caused numerous problems between administrators and board members. Ms. Bravo provided an example, noting that whenever there was a communication problem, the board chair would use the Bylaws as an excuse to assert that the board's authority was higher than that of the administrators. However, Ms. Bravo explained that when she read the Bylaws, she found that it actually encouraged the Board of Trustee active involvement in school operations and the board meetings should be opened to all. Ms. Delta described her belief that the two departments lacked connection and communication. She suggested that the board should be clearer in its decision-making, while the administrators should report more on operational matters to the board, with everyone playing their part in serving the school. Similarly, Ms. Foxtrot reported feeling that the two departments were too separate; they didn't know what the other was doing and seemed like two distinct groups with little intersection. Additionally, she stated her view that the previous principal lacked innovation and was fearful, preferring to follow previous norms and maintain a low standard to avoid making mistakes. This *“not for achievement, but not making mistakes”* attitude, she argued, caused the school to have little influence in the community.

When asked how the leadership teams could better work together to promote curriculum reform, participants offered several suggestions. First, they emphasized the need for improved communication. Ms. Delta suggested that the two departments hold three scheduled joint meetings rather than meeting separately. She proposed, *“At the*

beginning of the semester, we should outline the plans and distribute tasks. A mid-semester meeting would review progress and encourage the next stage's work, and the final meeting would assess the results and summarize the successes and shortcomings"

Mr. Alpha and Ms. Foxtrot both indicated that the two teams need to enhance communication and actively listen to each other.

Second, Ms. Echo highlighted the importance of planning. She began her administrative work at the school in 2019 and remarked,

To be frank, I have never heard of the board having any long-term planning, such as a three-year plan. This is supposed to be the board's responsibility, whereas last year's class reform was managed and pushed by the administrative group.

The board really needs to play its role as a captain and truly lead the school.

This quote reflects that Ms. Echo was not satisfied with the planning developed by the board.

Third, some participants mentioned the need for the Bylaws modification. Because the board chair often referenced the Bylaws to justify decisions, many people questioned the accuracy and clarity of the Bylaws. For example, Ms. Charlie pointed out a misleading expression in the bylaws regarding the plural term "candidate," which led to confusion about whether the new principal candidate should be a single individual or multiple candidates. This ambiguity raised concerns during the voting process about whether to vote for a single candidate or select from multiple candidates. Consequently, both Ms. Charlie and Ms. Bravo suggested discussing and revising the Bylaws so that in the future, any issues could be resolved by adhering to clear, agreed-upon rules and regulations, not limited to curriculum reform. Additionally, Ms. Golf believed the school

could learn from parallel institutions, such as other Chinese heritage schools or French heritage schools, in terms of both their curriculum reform and leadership teams.

Through the interviews, the administrative committee team clarified their roles, current challenges, and their relationship with the board. While sharing a common goal of prioritizing the school's success over individual interests, participants explicitly identified organizational and structural inefficiencies within the leadership framework. They suggested that addressing these specific issues – particularly through improved role delineation and decision-making processes – could enhance team effectiveness. Such improvements, they argued, would create synergies between curriculum reform initiatives and broader institutional development goals.

Board Interview Findings

Seven members of the Board of Trustees were interviewed. Like the administrator interviews, each member first described their roles and responsibilities, then explained how their roles relate to their major professions or their motivation for volunteering at the school. The interviews followed the same question template as those conducted with administrators, resulting in similar content and sequence.

Role Description and Background

Ms. India described being responsible for finance on the board. She clearly stated that her role involved supervising the operating budget. She emphasized that she majored in finance and accounting and liked to combine the school's practical operations with her financial expertise. *"Accounting is the language of business; the numbers reflect the school's operations. The healthy development of the school can be seen through its sound financial growth."* Ms. Juliet also reported serving on the board's finance committee

alongside Ms. India. She majored in banking and finance, and her daily work involved company finance. She described her role in the school board as complementary to Ms. India's, saying,

Because the school is a non-profit association, when we make decisions, we need to ensure that we break even without focusing too much on generating profits. If the profits are substantial, the board is responsible for using them wisely, such as increasing teacher benefits or investing in students. Additionally, at the end of the school year, we need to audit the finances, ensuring the accuracy of the administrative team's financial reports and providing guidance for the internal audit. All of these are important documents for the IRS.

Both Ms. India and Ms. Juliet described backgrounds relevant to their roles on the board. Additionally, finance-related roles should be handled by professionals.

Mr. Hotel joined the board this March. He explained that he served on two board committees: student recruitment and faculty nomination, as well as bylaws. His daily work involved business management and marketing development, experiences that are valuable for managing the school. Mr. Kilo described being responsible for fundraising on the board. His role involved raising donations and ensuring their legality. He candidly mentioned that he immigrated to the country not long ago, which posed a challenge for fundraising since he didn't have many connections with local enterprises. However, he explained that he saw it as a valuable opportunity to remain on the board. Mr. November also stated that he was responsible for nominations and bylaws, as well as any other tasks the school needed. He described seeing himself as a servant of the school. Ms. Mike expressed that she was in charge of recruitment, curriculum, and public relations. She

previously worked in China, where she trained adults and management teams. During that time, she also handled curriculum planning and design, which she believes is closely related to school management. Ms. Lima held a similar role to Ms. Mike. She added that she focuses on the broader direction of the school, which aligns with her passion and her role as a strategy manager in her company. She explained that she was well-versed in finance, marketing, policy, planning, goal setting, and research, which are essential for the school's development. Similar to the administrators, board members also described themselves as motivated by their passion for volunteering.

Generally, the board members were typically not just volunteers who were eager to contribute; they were also senior managers or held higher positions in their professional fields. People trusted their reputation and expertise in their respective industries, believing that they could make sound decisions and guide the school board in the right direction.

Role Contributions to Three-Line Model

All participating board members first affirmed the three-line model course structure. For example, Mr. Hotel mentioned that the three-line model represents diversity and caters to the varying needs of different students and parents. Ms. Lima emphasized that many classic texts that embody profound Chinese culture would be taught in the YuWen curriculum used in the experimental class, which were previously not included in the ZhongWen curriculum. Ms. India stated, *“Offering various options can attract learners with diverse needs. Given that the school is located in a relatively affluent and open-minded area, there is significant demand from families interested in learning Chinese. The three-line model provide quality learning resources and have*

helped us become well-known in the community.” The interviewees discussed the rationale behind the three-line structure from different perspectives.

Meanwhile, they pointed out issues that arose during the first-year trial. Mr. Kilo said, *"Although the three-line concept is good, communication with parents was unclear. I didn't see clear definitions, introductions, content descriptions, or learning goals for the newly implemented experimental class. I had to interpret on my own—does the experimental class mean an advanced class? Additionally, the publicity should be done through multiple channels to reach more people."* Mr. Kilo expressed the inefficiency of publicity issues. Ms. Lima raised a similar concern, noting that such a strong program deserved better and clearer publicity.

The second issue was that the goal was not achieved. Since Ms. Lima's daughter was in the experimental class, she observed that while the learning goals sounded promising, they were not achieved after a year of the trial. She speculated it was likely due to the intense learning tasks relying heavily on parental cooperation, which diminished when teachers did not assign homework.

The third issue was addressing feedback. Mr. November said,

A year ago, we didn't know how the experimental class and the three-line concept would work, but now we've conducted a parent survey and a year trail. We should compare the results to our original goals and make adjustments if needed. Who initially drove the idea for the experimental class? Who originally opposed it? You should now consider opinions from both sides after a year of trying.

His statement emphasized the importance of considering parental feedback and using data. Mr. Kilo also shared an example of a child he knew who cried frequently and

eventually quit Chinese school because it was too difficult and had too much homework. However, he then suggested that the child return, as we've established a class with easier learning goals. He mentioned this example to highlight the importance of gathering feedback from parents and families, which can help the school make necessary adjustments

The fourth issue addressed the needs of those students with less interests of learning Chinese. Ms. Juliet suggested an idea that I found particularly appealing. She proposed that,

Since the experimental class is designed for advanced learners who want to significantly improve their language skills, we should also consider a group of learners who just want to catch up on listening and speaking. Should we adjust the goals to accommodate this group? The principle of catering to needs should also extend to those who do not wish to devote too much time to learning Chinese.

The board members were deeply concerned with the school's reform and development. They clearly identified the positive aspects of the reforms, demonstrating their commitment to their roles. They gathered and considered feedback from families, friends, and teachers, reflecting their perspectives as parents themselves. They could pinpoint issues and offering constructive suggestions. Their engagement showed a thorough understanding of the school's challenges and opportunities, and their willingness to address concerns and adapt strategies underscored their dedication to improving the educational experience for all stakeholders.

Opinions On Leadership Team

The interviewees unanimously agreed that the organizational roles are clearly defined. Many participants mentioned that the Board functions as the goal-setting and strategic planning department, while the administrative committee serves as the operational department. For example, Ms. India stated that *"the Board is responsible for planning and providing orientation, whereas the administration is responsible for detailed execution."* Her statement reflected a common sentiment shared by all the interviewees. This division of roles is also regulated by the bylaws. Under this framework, harmonious relationships are affirmed.

The participants detailed the strengths of the two departments. Ms. India highlighted that the two departments have utilized various communication methods, such as a WeChat group, which has brought them closer together and allowed for instant updates. Ms. Lima mentioned that although she was not involved in the day-to-day operations as a board member, she believed that the administrators were doing a good job because she could see their effective collaboration. Ms. Juliet observed that the internal relationships among the administrators were stronger than those within the board, possibly because the board members frequently changed, with one- to two-year terms followed by elections, which prevent strong internal bonds from forming. As a result, the administrators received praise from board members, and everyone's work and improvements were acknowledged.

However, some participants expressed dissatisfaction with the relationship between the two departments. The issues primarily revolved around communication, the lack of clear boundaries of responsibility, and the order in which tasks were reported and

executed. Ms. Mike clarified that the atmosphere between the two departments changed after COVID. She remarked,

I don't know why, but after COVID, people's passion for community engagement decreased, or perhaps there are issues with the organizational staffing. The two departments are no longer as supportive of each other as before; instead, they seem to be at odds. I feel that whenever something needs to be done, there's significant resistance. If this major resistance exists among the leaders, the school's cohesion won't be strong enough.

Ms. Mike clearly highlighted the growing disharmony between the two departments, expressing concern over the lack of mutual support that once existed. Similarly, Mr. Kilo mentioned that the organization's management and operations were not running smoothly. Although the bond between the departments was adequate, communication needed improvement. Mr. November believed the issue stemmed from the two department heads—the principal and the board chair. He noted, *“Both were strong individuals with distinct characteristics: one was visionary, while the other excelled in execution. They needed better communication and should have found a calm environment to discuss matters, such as having a meal together.”* Ms. Juliet expressed concern about the significant disagreements among the leaders as well, saying, *“Discussion is fine, but not fighting. Don't forget the ultimate goal is to develop the school and serve the students. I hate small cliques.”* The conflict between the principal and the board chair, both key figures in the leadership, drew the attention and concern of the members. In conclusion, the board member interviews revealed that the key issues centered around

communication, conflicts among department leaders, and unclear boundaries of responsibility.

While participants were aware of the organization's issues, they also had their own strategies for coping and improving the organization as a whole. When it came to improving relationships on an individual level, Ms. Mike explained she volunteered to serve as a mediator between the two departments and parents. Her son was in the 5th grade, and being in her 30s-40s, she felt that both her age and her son's grade level positioned her well to bridge the gap between the lower and higher levels. She stated that she knew many children and families in the school and was able to connect with them effectively. She also recommended encouraging parents of lower grade students to become more involved in the school's development, as they would eventually take over the school's responsibilities in the coming decade, while the older parents would naturally step back once their children graduated. Both Mr. Kilo and Ms. Lima also emphasized the importance of younger parents in their interviews, seeing them as crucial to the school's future. It was possible that the participants' focus on younger parents and their willingness to address issues stem from dissatisfaction with the traditional leadership approach, suggesting that a more modern, inclusive leadership style could better align with the needs of the community.

Additionally, participants offered suggestions to improve the relationship between the two departments. Mr. Kilo emphasized the importance of clearly defining work boundaries. He noted, *“Since there was a consensus that the Board is responsible for planning, the Board should not interfere excessively with operations. Conversely, the administration should respect the Board's decision-making authority.”* Mr. Kilo gave an

example, explaining that if administrators wanted to undertake activities outside the budget, they should apply to the Board as early as possible instead of acting first and informing later. He also recommended appointing a secretary to facilitate communication between the two departments, preventing direct conflicts between the principal and the Chair. Mr. Kilo further stressed the importance of documenting decisions. He suggested keeping records of decisions to refer back to when conflicts arise, helping to avoid unnecessary disputes and discussions. Mr. Hotel mentioned that the school could learn from peer institutions, such as by looking at the websites of other Chinese schools in the area. He noted that those schools have more professional websites for publicity. These suggestions point to a broader issue: the school's internal dynamics may benefit from clearer structures and external benchmarking to strengthen both communication and reputation.

Although small conflicts did exist, all participants described recognizing the positive aspects and were committed to the school's success. Everyone agreed on the school's common goal, even if there were minor differences that were open to discussion. For example, Mr. Kilo said, *“Both the Board and the administration are enthusiastic and warmhearted; they both want the school to succeed, and this is always the case.”* Ms. India added, *“As long as the primary direction is focused on student development and not individual interests, nothing cannot be resolved.”* Participants like Mr. Kilo and Ms. India expressed a positive attitude toward the school's development. The conflicts were viewed as temporary and not indicative of deeper personal disagreements. Instead, they reflected different perspectives on achieving success. There was a consensus that these differences were manageable and part of the process of striving for the school's success.

Document Review

Existing Parent Survey Data

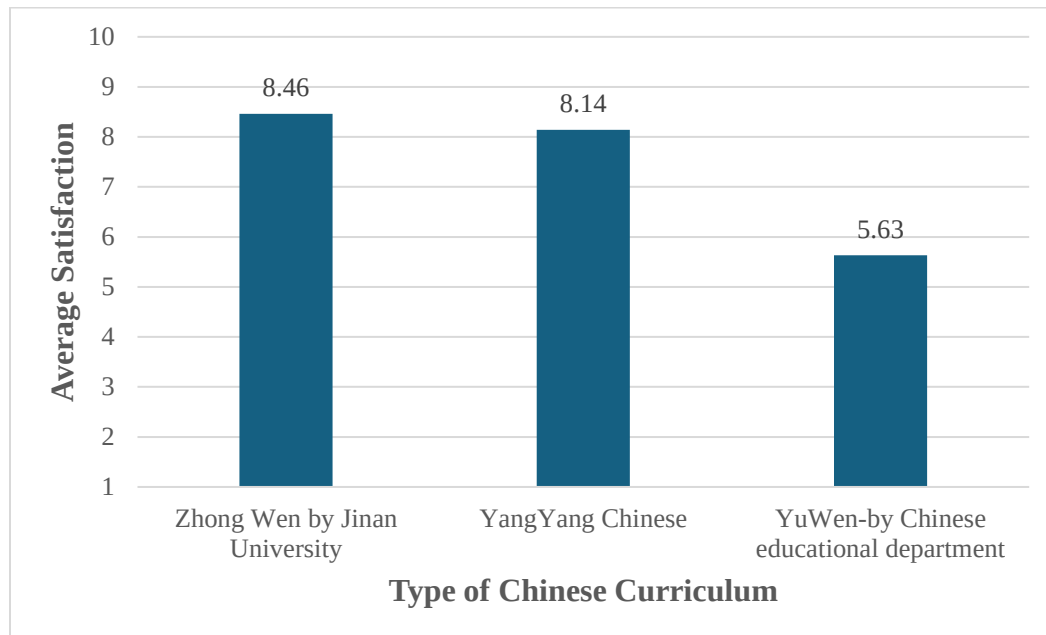
As described in Chapter Three, the school surveyed parents about their views about curriculum design and about the school leadership. I present these findings according to these two areas.

Curriculum Design

One question on the parent survey asked parents their satisfaction with the type of curriculum their child received. The range of possible responses was from 1 (Very dissatisfied) to 10 (Very satisfied). Figure 4.1 shows the results of this question.

Figure 4.1

Parental Satisfaction with Different Chinese Curricula



It is indeed intriguing that the satisfaction levels for the Zhong Wen and YangYang Chinese curricula were close, with both scoring above 8. Meanwhile, the YuWen curriculum scored significantly lower ($F = 15.4, p < .001$), which could suggest that the

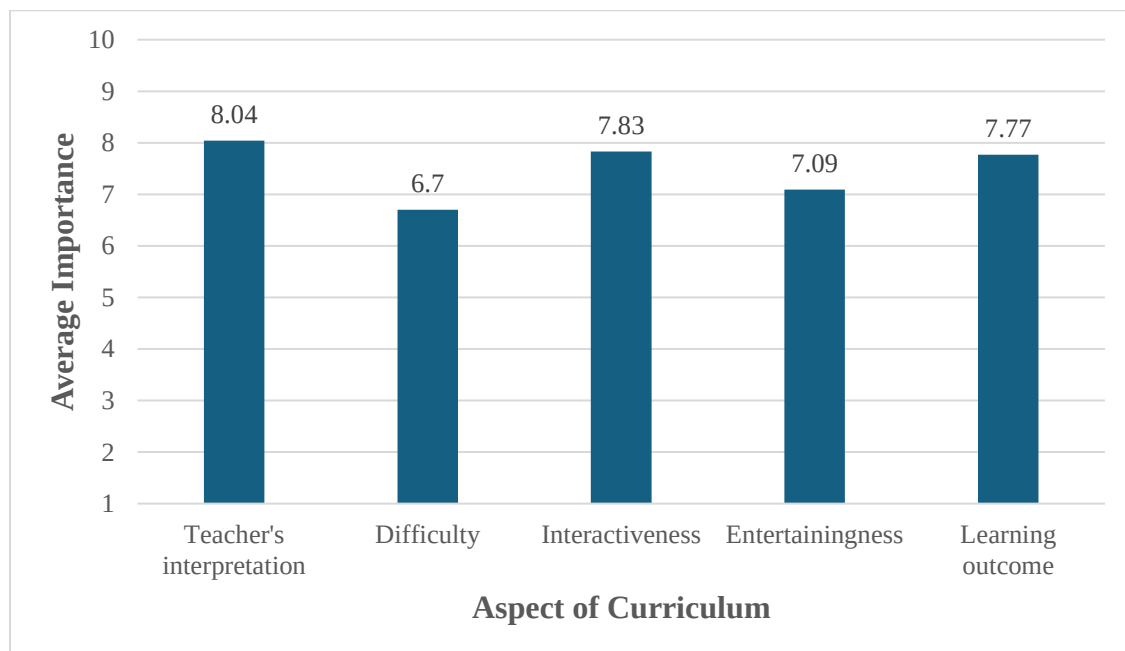
higher expectations set by the parents for YuWen might be harder to meet, potentially leading to lower satisfaction. The more stringent or "picky" standards from these parents could make it challenging for the curriculum to meet their expectations consistently.

In addition to the different types of curricula, the survey asked parents in detail about the importance of various factors contributing to their satisfaction. The responses to this question again could range from 1 (Not at all important) to 10 (Very important).

These results are shown in Figure 4.2 for the full sample of parents.

Figure 4.2

Parents' Views of the Importance of Different Aspects of the Curriculum



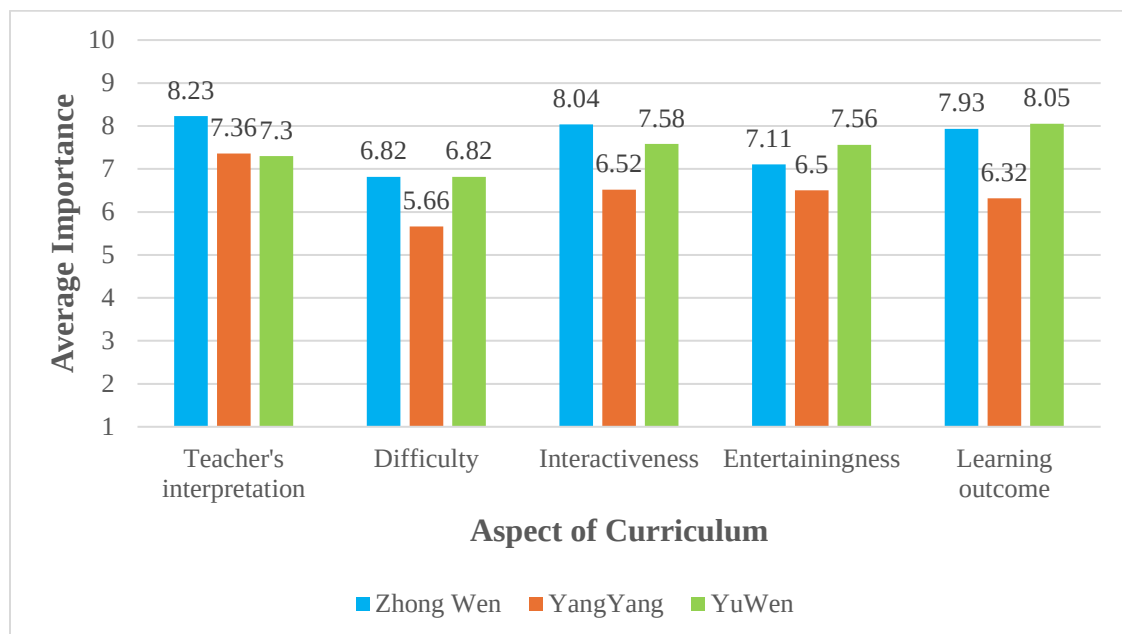
The importance levels across different areas were relatively similar, with means ranging from 6.7 (for difficulty) to 8.04 (for teacher's interpretation). It is unsurprising that teacher's interpretation was rated the most important, as families often choose prestigious schools for their superior teaching resources, rather than opting for homeschooling or online learning. Difficulty may have been considered the least important because a large

number of parents were more focused on exposing their children to the heritage language environment rather than challenging them with rigorous learning.

It is also useful to compare the parents' views of importance separately by which type of curriculum their child was receiving. Figure 4.3 shows the averages for each type, with Zhong Wen shown with blue bars, YangYang shown with orange bars, and Yu Wen shown with green bars.

Figure 4.3

Parental Importance for Different Curricular Aspects Separated by Curriculum Type



It is interesting to observe that almost all scores for the YangYang curriculum were lower than those for the other two curricula.

After surveying parental satisfaction with the curricula and the factors influencing their perceptions, the survey further inquired whether the curriculum is a determining factor for their children to continue attending school. Out of 57 respondents, 30 indicated

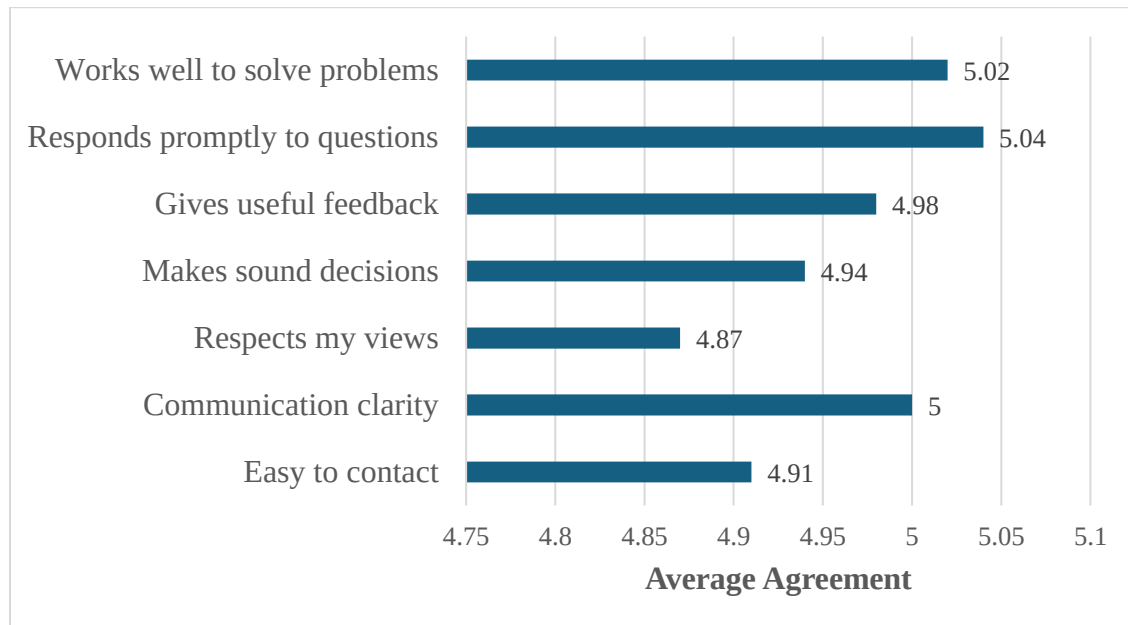
the response of “yes, if the curriculum does not meet my expectations, I will not make children continue here.” Conversely, 27 selected the statement of “No, as long as my child(ren) is exposed to the Chinese environment and has connections with peers, I am not concerned about what they actually learn.” This result indicates a split in parental priorities: while most parents want their children to genuinely learn something, a significant proportion values the language atmosphere and social connections over the curriculum's content. This finding also underscores the necessity of offering different types of classes with varying levels of learning goals to cater to these diverse expectations.

Leadership Satisfaction

The parent survey also asked parents questions about the leadership team of the school. Their responses could range from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 6 (Strongly agree). Figure 4.4 shows these results. It is insightful to see that parents have a positive view of the leadership team's responsiveness and problem-solving abilities, with scores of 5.04 and 5.02, respectively. This finding suggests that the team is effective in addressing issues quickly. However, the lower score of 4.87 for “respect my views” might indicate a need for better communication channels to ensure that parents feel their opinions are valued. Improving communication strategies could enhance overall satisfaction further.

Figure 4.4

Average Parent Agreement to Different Aspects of School Leadership



The survey also gathered parents' opinions on the previous year's school reform, which introduced Experimental classes alongside the Standard and Bilingual programs to finalize the Three-line structure. Among 57 respondents, 31 (39.7%) were satisfied with the current program and planned to continue with it, while 25 (32.1%) were open to exploring other programs and switching if they found a better fit for their children. These two groups of respondents reported being likely to stay with the school. Only one parent reported being certain to leave the current program for another, and this parent was likely to leave the school as well. This statistic indicates that most parents were satisfied with the school's operations, while the new curriculum has also sparked curiosity among parents.

Lastly, the survey included an open-ended question inviting respondents to share any complaints or suggestions for the Chinese school leadership team.

The feedback was mixed. On the positive side, the school was praised for creating a positive learning environment and for having responsible teachers and leaders. For example, comments like *“The school leadership team is very responsible and reliable”* and *“Thank you to the Board of Trustees for their contributions and efforts in creating a Chinese learning environment for the children.”* reflect that the school's efforts have been recognized and appreciated.

However, several areas of concern were raised by parents. One common complaint was the issue of ineffective communication. Parents noted that weekly emails lacked sufficient coverage, the school website was not adequately publicized, and there was a need for teachers to provide weekly recaps. For example, parents wrote, *“The school and holiday dates are confusing and not updated nor displayed properly on website”*, *“Weekly recap of Chinese school, classwork, homework should be sent to parents”*, and *“The weekly communication from administration is missing”*. Additionally, some parents expressed frustration with last-minute notifications for events and activities. A parent stated, *“Late notifications for various meetings, events, and competitions have caused scheduling conflicts or insufficient time for preparation”*. suggesting that more advance notice would be appreciated.

Parents who were particularly concerned about teaching quality felt that the school should prioritize guaranteeing instructional time rather than incorporating too many additional activities. For example, a parent wrote, *“We hope that, even with various activities like the Chinese New Year Gala or speeches, the regular weekly class time can still be maintained as much as possible.”* There was also a call for the school to regularly update the curriculum to ensure it remains current and relevant. A parent stated, *“the*

curriculum is too old”, and some parents want to know their kids learning, stating in the suggestion part that “*we want to have more feedback or parents meeting with class teach and board.*” Parents raised several concerns in the survey, particularly regarding communication and teaching quality. Common issues included ineffective communication, with parents asking for more comprehensive weekly emails, better website updates, and regular recaps from teachers. Last-minute notifications for events also caused frustration. Additionally, some parents emphasized the importance of prioritizing instructional time over extracurricular activities and requested regular curriculum updates. They also expressed a desire for more feedback and meetings with teachers and the Board.

In summary, while the survey received positive feedback regarding both the curriculum reform and the leadership's efforts, it also highlighted areas where improvements could be made.

The Bylaws

One of the important documents for the Chinese school is the Bylaws, frequently referred and quoted during school meetings and conflicts. The rules and regulations have been modified as the school has developed. Analyzing and decoding them can provide a better understanding of the school's character.

The Content

In the Preamble section of the document, after briefly recounting the school's establishment history—beginning in the fall of 1972 as a cooperative effort by several families in the metropolitan suburbs to teach their children elementary Chinese—it outlined two important ideas. First, the school was described as a “non-profit educational

institution” that relied on the voluntary and active participation of parents in teaching and preparing instructional materials. Second, the school’s aim was stated as “the teaching of the Chinese language and culture to interested residents in the area, with a particular emphasis on helping young people, especially those of Chinese ancestry, appreciate and enrich our pluralistic cultural heritage.” This preamble aligns with Salamon (1999), who asserts that nonprofit organizations’ function based on self-governance and voluntary participation.

The main part of the bylaws began by outlining three departments that served the school: the Parents Council, the Board of Trustees, and the Administrative Committee. It then briefly described the relationship between these departments “*The Board of Trustees has the main responsibility to review and determine the direction and the policy of the school. The Administrative Committee has responsibility for the routine operation of the school. Both the Board of Trustees and the Administrative Committee are elected by the Parents Council, which has also the responsibility to amend the Bylaws as needs arise.*” This relationship appeared to be well-structured and complementary, a view acknowledged and supported by current members in my previous interviews.

This section was followed by seven articles that made up the main part of the document. The first three articles detailed how members of each of the three departments were selected, including election procedures, the composition of each department, the number of meetings within a school year, meeting rules, department rights and responsibilities, terms, expectations, the consequences of absences, etc. For example, regarding how Parent Council members were selected: “*The parents of the students registered at the school—the latter shall be hereafter referred to as the student body—*

and the parents of the alumni residing in the area constitute the members of the Parents Council.” When it comes to the composition of the Board of Trustees, it was stated: *“It shall consist of eleven members: Principals of the last and present school years, a Faculty representative, two elected members of the Class Representatives Council as described in Article V, and six members to be elected by the Parent Council.”* As for departmental responsibilities, for example: *“The Committee shall prepare the annual budget for each coming school year, which shall be reviewed with the Board of Trustees for approval by the Parent Council.”* Regarding consequences, under the Board of Trustees, it was stipulated that *“A member of the Board who has been absent from two successive Board meetings without prior notice shall be considered to have resigned.”* Besides each department's specific regulations, the bylaws consistently outlined how different departments coordinate their work. For instance, *“The officers of the Committee shall attend the meetings of the Board of Trustees as regularly as necessary to maintain close communication and exchange of ideas to serve the school efficiently.”* Such regulations ensured that the organization developed with transparency, mutual checks and balances, and supervision.

The remaining four articles covered the nomination of school officers, the election of the Class Representatives Council, the amendment of the Bylaws, and the establishment of a school facility foundation. The Bylaws were well-written and effectively regulated the rules and development of the organization. From the Bylaws, it can be concluded that they align with the core principle of distributed leadership described in Chapter Two, which emphasized one mission with multiple leaders. (Harris, 2012).

The Disadvantages Aspects of the Bylaws

First, the Bylaws were outdated and needed to be amended. According to the content of the Bylaws, the last amendment was on November 14, 1987, making it outdated, especially given the changes in society and conditions. Some of the wording was unclear when addressing special circumstances. For example, under Article III, one item stated, “*The successive service years of the principal shall not exceed three years.*” However, during the COVID years, no one was willing to serve as principal, so an acting principal held the position for three years. This spring, when he was elected as principal, some argued that the Bylaws stipulated a maximum of three years. The candidate countered that the Bylaws referred to the principal, not an acting principal. Additionally, participants I interviewed also pointed out the need to amend the Bylaws. One reason for the lack of amendments could be the complicated process required: “*The Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of the parents attending the Parents Council Meeting.*” Another reason might be the short term of board members, making no one willing to take the lead as the initiator to amend the Bylaws during their term.

The second disadvantage was that while the Bylaws outlined the relationship between the three departments, they did not specify the detailed work procedures. For example, when the budget was approved at the beginning of the school year, there were inadequacies in its execution. The administrators were unsure how to address the situation and proceeded with actions first, then sought approval. This led to disputes between the departments during meetings.

Third, there were issues with inconsistencies and losses due to the insufficient content in the Bylaws. For example, discussions often arose over lost items such as gifts

for retired teachers. Due to the varying approaches of different leaders and some years of inefficient budgeting, retired teachers sometimes received gifts while others did not. This inconsistency led to the school facing the same issues with varying results.

Some aspects of the Bylaws appeared impractical. For example, in addition to the current registered parents, the parents of alumni residing in the area were also considered part of the Parents Council. Since the Parents Council had significant powers, such as approving the school's annual budget and voting for principal candidates, this created problems. Alumni parents might not stay engaged to the school and might return just to vote for friends, which meant their votes did not reflect the current state of the school but rather the interests of small groups. This also made documentation challenging, as it required verifying which year the children were registered to validate the authenticity of their parents' participation.

Last but not least, the Bylaws were written only in English, despite the fact that Chinese was the first language of all administrators and board members. Having a bilingual version would facilitate better communication, as native language use made it easier to understand and implement the regulations.

The problems stated above likely increase the potential for organizational issues. Updating the Bylaws and including more detailed regulations could enhance the effectiveness of the organization.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this study was to examine the leadership effectiveness of a nonprofit, volunteer-based weekend Chinese heritage language school, focusing on its Board of Trustees and Administrative Committee. This research explored the dynamics of leadership and collaboration within the school, specifically through the lens of a curriculum reform event, to better understand the challenges and opportunities faced by nonprofit educational organizations. By examining the practices and decision-making processes of the school's leadership, this study aimed to explain how leadership and organizational structures operated in such a unique setting.

Using a qualitative case study approach, this research employed observations, interviews, field notes, and document reviews to collect rich, detailed data about the school's operational model. The analysis followed a multi-step coding process, identifying themes that encapsulated the school's leadership and administrative dynamics. These findings illuminated the situational factors influencing the school's performance, providing a nuanced explanation of its challenges and achievements.

This chapter summarizes and discusses the emergent findings from the research, their implications, limitations, and recommendations for future research. By examining the interplay of leadership theories and practical dynamics, the chapter provides insights into how nonprofit, volunteer-based organizations can achieve sustainability and success within unique educational contexts.

Summary and Implication of Findings

Key findings suggest that the leadership team demonstrated effectiveness in both weekly operations and during the curriculum reform. Their collaborative efforts and structured approaches enabled the school to navigate complex challenges while fulfilling its mission of promoting Chinese language and culture. However, certain limitations, such as timing and participant availability, shaped the scope of the findings and highlighted areas for future improvement.

This section is arranged by research questions, beginning with a summary of the major themes that emerged in response to each line of inquiry, followed by a discussion of the implications of these findings. The three primary questions that guided this study were:

- 1.What were the responsibilities of leaders in the effective operation of heritage language schools?
- 2.How did the leaders of heritage language schools work together to coordinate the successful operation of a nonprofit volunteer-based organization?
- 3.How did current formal educational leadership theories fit or differ when applied to heritage language schools?

The findings were analyzed and organized according to these questions to provide a comprehensive understanding of the leadership dynamics within this nonprofit, volunteer-based Chinese heritage language school. Each theme was examined in depth, connecting the observed data to the theoretical frameworks introduced in earlier chapters, thereby explaining how the unique characteristics of this heritage school align with or diverge from the broader literature.

Research Question One: Leadership Responsibilities

Individual leaders in the Chinese heritage language school operated within distinct roles defined by their expertise, personalities, and assigned responsibilities, all while working collectively toward the common goal of advancing the school's mission. Their contributions were recognized and affirmed by parents, teachers, and peers, reflecting the importance of their work in sustaining the school's operations. Leaders in heritage language schools take on responsibilities that span administrative management, curriculum oversight, event coordination, and conflict resolution. These roles were often divided among board members, administrators, and volunteer teachers, ensuring that tasks were distributed according to individuals' skills and availability. This structure highlighted the collaborative nature of leadership in nonprofit, volunteer-driven educational settings.

The findings addressing this research question were organized into three key themes: (1) The bylaws regulation, which outlines the framework for role distribution and authority; (2) Leaders' self-stated and recognized responsibilities, which examined how individual leaders perceive and fulfill their roles; and (3) Evaluation of leadership efficiency, which explored how effectively leadership practices support the school's operations. Together, these themes provided a comprehensive understanding of how responsibilities were defined, perceived, and enacted in this heritage language school.

The Bylaws Regulation

The bylaws of the Chinese heritage language school provided a clear framework for leadership responsibilities, specifying distinct roles for the Board of Trustees and the Administrative Committee. The Board of Trustees was responsible for defining the

school's strategic direction, setting policies, and ensuring governance, while the Administrative Committee managed operational tasks such as curriculum oversight, teacher coordination, and event organization. These roles were designed to ensure that governance and operations complemented each other effectively. Additionally, the bylaws emphasized democratic participation, requiring the election of leadership by the Parent Council and granting parents the authority to amend the bylaws through a majority vote. This structure not only reflected the cooperative spirit of the school's origins but also aligned with the practices of other heritage language schools, which operate as nonprofit, volunteer-based organizations.

In practice, the school's operations closely adhered to the bylaws, reflecting the intended division of responsibilities. Leaders generally fulfilled their assigned roles, which were affirmed by parents, teachers, and peers as effective in supporting the school's mission. This alignment also mirrored the national norms observed in other heritage schools, such as Turkish and Korean programs, which rely on similar frameworks to balance governance and operations (Otcu, 2010 & Kim 2011). While the bylaws might have benefitted from periodic revisions to address emerging challenges, their foundational role in defining responsibilities provided stability and ensured collaborative governance.

These findings align with Salamon's (1999) assertion that clear governance structures were essential for nonprofit organizations to function effectively. The democratic mechanisms embedded in the bylaws supported the collaborative leadership model described by Aalberse et al. (2019), and Fishman and Nahirny (1966), emphasizing the importance of community-driven efforts in heritage education. However,

compared to Helgesen's (1995) "web of inclusion," which advocated open and adaptive communication, the bylaws relied more on structured role delineation to achieve collaboration. Overall, the bylaws played a critical role in maintaining organizational coherence, providing leaders with the guidance necessary to fulfill their responsibilities effectively.

Leaders Self-Stated and Recognized Responsibilities

From the research findings, leaders from both the Board of Trustees and the Administrative Committee demonstrated a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. These roles were shaped by their titles, personal interests, and strengths. Participants described their responsibilities with confidence, aligning their tasks with their professional expertise or passions. For instance, board members specializing in finance handled budget oversight, while administrators with teaching experience focused on curriculum development. Other responsibilities included organizing events, addressing parent concerns, and ensuring the smooth operation of weekly classes. Each leader operated within a defined scope of duties, shaped by the bylaws and the specific needs of their roles.

Despite having distinct responsibilities, leaders occasionally undertook tasks outside their formal roles during critical events. For example, during the preparation for Graduation-China Day, leaders addressed logistical challenges, vendor coordination, and unexpected technical issues. In these cases, leaders' responsibilities extended beyond their primary duties to ensure the success of major school activities. This adaptability was not a departure from their roles but rather a reflection of the flexible nature of leadership in a volunteer-driven organization. By remaining responsive to the immediate needs of

the school, leaders fulfilled their responsibilities in a manner that aligned with the institution's mission and goals.

These findings were consistent with Aalberse et al. (2019), who emphasized the significance of assigning responsibilities based on individual strengths in volunteer-based organizations. They also resonated with conclusions from Fishman and Nahirny (1966), who highlighted that heritage language schools often depend on leaders who balance formal responsibilities with situational demands. While this flexibility allowed the school to function effectively, the alignment between leaders' stated responsibilities and their actual contributions was key to maintaining organizational stability and achieving the school's objectives.

Evaluation of Leadership Efficiency

The evaluation of leadership efficiency revealed a largely positive perception of the leadership team's ability to fulfill their responsibilities. Feedback was collected through three key perspectives: self- and peer evaluations among board members and administrators, teacher interviews, and parent satisfaction surveys. The findings indicated that both the Board of Trustees and the Administrative Committee met their primary responsibilities effectively. Administrators were praised for managing immediate tasks such as scheduling, teacher support, and event coordination, while board members ensured financial oversight and guided policy development. However, the absence of a consistent mechanism for long-term planning was noted as a limitation. Leaders often focused on addressing immediate needs rather than proactively shaping the school's future direction.

The leadership team's efficiency was closely tied to their ability to adapt to the school's volunteer-based structure, resonating with distributed leadership theory (Bennett et al., 2003; Harris, 2012), which emphasizes shared governance and decentralized decision-making. Administrators' responsiveness to teachers' and parents' concerns exemplified transformational leadership principles (Bass & Riggio, 2006), particularly in fostering trust and addressing individualized needs to maintain a supportive learning environment. However, the Board of Trustees' reactive governance reflected challenges noted by Frumkin (2002) in nonprofit organizations, where volunteer-driven models often prioritize operational immediacy over long-term strategic planning. This dynamic aligns with Wang's (1999) observations of Chinese heritage schools, where enthusiasm and personal initiative compensate for systemic gaps in formalized leadership structures. While the collaborative ethos mirrored Helgesen's (1995) "web of inclusion," the lack of structured accountability mechanisms underscored the tension between volunteerism and institutional sustainability—a recurring theme in heritage school research (Xiao, 2016; Lee & Chen-Wu, 2021). The interplay of these factors highlighted both the resilience of community-driven leadership and the limitations of informal coordination in addressing complex organizational challenges.

Research Question Two: Collaboration and Coordination

The leaders of the Chinese school worked collaboratively and demonstrated a commitment to seeking common ground while respecting differences to guide the organization effectively. Their coordination encompassed a wide range of operations, including regular meetings, needs assessments, event planning, resource allocation, and conflict resolution. These activities ensured the smooth functioning of both routine tasks

and large-scale initiatives. Leadership efforts could be broadly categorized into two areas: daily operations, such as managing class schedules, supporting teachers, and communicating with parents, and special events, such as organizing cultural activities and implementing curriculum reforms. To address Research Question Two, this section examined three key themes: the weekly workflows or working procedures of the Chinese school leadership team, an analysis of the team's collaboration and efficiency during a specific event (the curriculum reform initiative), and the shared common goals that unified their efforts.

Weekly Working Procedures of The Chinese School Leadership Team

The weekly working procedures of the Chinese school leadership team reflected a clear division of responsibilities and a structured approach to managing daily operations. Administrators were responsible for tasks such as managing class schedules, addressing teacher and student needs, and ensuring the smooth operation of weekly classes. Board members, on the other hand, focused on governance-related tasks, including policy reviews, budget oversight, and strategic planning. Observations showed that administrators rotated as the “on-duty principal” each week, ensuring consistent leadership presence and responsiveness to operational issues. This system allowed team members to share responsibilities while maintaining accountability for routine tasks. For example, during office observations, administrators resolved logistical issues, such as ensuring classrooms were unlocked and addressing teacher concerns, demonstrating their ability to handle challenges efficiently.

Despite this clear structure, minor conflicts occasionally arose between the Board of Trustees and the Administrative Committee, particularly when operational decisions

intersected with governance priorities. For instance, board members sometimes questioned the allocation of resources for operational needs without prior consultation, which led to delays in decision-making. Additionally, administrators faced challenges such as managing workloads and balancing their volunteer roles with professional commitments. Nevertheless, both groups affirmed their collaborative relationship, emphasizing mutual respect and a shared commitment to the school's mission. This balance between structured routines and flexibility enabled the team to navigate the complexities of managing a nonprofit, volunteer-based organization.

These findings aligned with Wang's (1999) observation that heritage language schools often operated efficiently despite limited resources and professional leadership. The rotational "on-duty principal" system also reflected the adaptability and community-oriented nature of these schools, as highlighted by Fishman and Nahirny (1966), who noted the reliance on volunteer-driven structures to sustain heritage language education. While conflicts between governance and operations were common in nonprofit organizations, the team's ability to maintain collaboration underscored the resilience and dedication that were characteristic of heritage language schools.

A Specific Event to Observe the Leadership Team's Collaboration, Procedures, And Efficiency.

The implementation of the three-line curriculum reform served as a critical event to observe the collaboration, procedures, and efficiency of the leadership team. This reform introduced three types of Chinese classes—standard, bilingual, and experimental—to better address the diverse needs of students and their families. The Board of Trustees played a key role in approving the overall framework and ensuring

financial sustainability, while the Administrative Committee focused on operationalizing the plan by assigning teachers, preparing syllabi, and managing class logistics. Both groups collaborated closely throughout the process, sharing insights and responsibilities. For example, administrators sought advice from board members on long-term goals, while board members relied on administrators to implement practical solutions. Teachers also contributed valuable feedback on curriculum materials, such as identifying gaps in the *Yuwen* curriculum used in experimental classes, which informed the refinement of teaching strategies.

This collaboration highlighted both the strengths and challenges of the leadership team's coordination. On the one hand, the Board of Trustees and the Administrative Committee demonstrated a strong sense of shared purpose, working together to align strategic objectives with practical considerations. Board members provided governance and oversight, ensuring that the reform aligned with the school's mission and budget constraints, while administrators managed day-to-day implementation, such as teacher assignments and classroom readiness. On the other hand, differences occasionally surfaced, particularly regarding resource allocation and decision-making authority. For instance, administrators requested additional resources for experimental classes to meet high parental expectations, while some board members expressed concerns about financial feasibility. These tensions required negotiation and compromise, but the shared commitment to improving student outcomes ultimately unified both groups.

Teachers and parents also provided critical evaluations of the reform, offering insights into its outcomes and areas for improvement. Teachers appreciated the reform's responsiveness to the diverse needs of students but highlighted challenges in

implementing the experimental curriculum. For instance, they noted that the *Yuwen* curriculum in the experimental classes lacked sufficient cultural relevance and required significant adaptation to meet students' needs. Teachers emphasized the importance of aligning the experimental curriculum with standardized assessments like the Hànyǔ Shuǐpíng Kǎoshì (HSK) to enhance its long-term impact. Parents expressed mixed satisfaction through surveys and open feedback sessions. While many praised the school for offering more tailored learning options, some voiced concerns about the workload and instructional pace in experimental classes. However, the majority of parents affirmed the reform's value, noting that it provided clearer pathways for their children to achieve fluency and cultural connection.

This feedback underscored the importance of collaboration between the leadership team and stakeholders in ensuring the success of large-scale initiatives. By incorporating teacher and parent perspectives, the Board of Trustees and the Administrative Committee demonstrated their commitment to accountability and continuous improvement. These findings align with Vangen and Huxham's (2003) concept of collaborative advantage, which emphasizes the value of diverse perspectives in achieving complex goals. They also resonate with Wong and Lopez's (2000) observation that community involvement is essential for the success of heritage language schools. Furthermore, the ability to adapt based on stakeholder feedback highlighted the team's effectiveness in balancing governance, operational needs, and stakeholder expectations. The success of the three-line curriculum reform exemplified how collaborative leadership can overcome challenges and drive meaningful reform in heritage language schools.

Common Goal

The leadership team's efforts were unified by a shared commitment to the school's overarching goal: promoting Chinese language proficiency and cultural understanding among students while fostering a sense of community. This common goal was deeply rooted in the school's history and vision. Established as a nonprofit, volunteer-based institution, the school was founded with the purpose of preserving Chinese heritage and serving as a cultural bridge for both Chinese and non-Chinese families in the local community. This mission was reflected in interviews, where leaders consistently emphasized the importance of creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment. Board members highlighted their role in ensuring financial and policy support to uphold this vision, while administrators focused on daily operations to bring the goal to life through curriculum development, teacher support, and community events.

Despite their different roles, all leaders aligned their efforts toward achieving the school's mission. Administrators often came from professional backgrounds unrelated to education, such as engineering, accounting, and medicine, yet their passion for heritage preservation motivated them to contribute to the school's success. For example, a vice principal with a background in engineering noted during interviews, *"Although my profession has little to do with education, I use my problem-solving skills to organize events and improve logistics for the school."* This commitment extended to board members, who saw their governance responsibilities as an opportunity to create long-term sustainability for the school. Both groups collaborated to balance immediate operational needs with strategic planning, ensuring that every decision contributed to the shared goal of advancing the school's mission.

This shared focus on the school's goals fostered a sense of unity and purpose among the leadership team, yet it also revealed the challenges inherent in aligning diverse perspectives. Leaders sometimes differed in their approaches; for instance, board members prioritized financial sustainability, while administrators emphasized immediate operational improvements. However, interviews revealed that such differences rarely undermined collaboration. Instead, they were resolved through dialogue and a mutual understanding of the school's mission. This dynamic reflected the team's ability to navigate the complexities of a volunteer-based organization while maintaining a unified direction.

The alignment of leadership efforts with the school's history and vision underscores the importance of shared goals in heritage language schools. These findings echo Kouzes and Posner's (2007) leadership practices, which highlight the significance of a shared vision in driving collaboration and commitment. They were also consistent with Fishman and Nahirny's (1966) observation that heritage language schools often rely on the collective dedication of individuals from diverse professional backgrounds to sustain their operations. Furthermore, the collaborative efforts observed in this nonprofit institution reflect Salamon's (1999) theory on nonprofit effectiveness, which emphasizes that the success of such organizations often depends on their ability to integrate the mission-driven focus of volunteers with structured governance and resource management. By connecting their individual roles to the school's broader mission, leaders demonstrated how shared goals in nonprofit educational settings can overcome resource constraints, align diverse stakeholders, and ensure sustainable growth.

Research Question Three: Applying Leadership Theories to Heritage Language Schools

The leadership practices observed in the Chinese heritage language school reflected both alignment with and divergence from the formal educational leadership theories discussed in Chapter One. While the unique context of a nonprofit, volunteer-based organization shaped leadership dynamics, elements of transformational leadership and distributed leadership were evident in the leaders' approaches. Transformational leadership was reflected in the leaders' ability to inspire and motivate stakeholders around a shared mission, while distributed leadership emerged through the delegation of responsibilities and collaborative decision-making processes. However, the application of these theories was not without challenges, as resource constraints, volunteer-driven roles, and cultural factors added complexity to their implementation. This section examined the extent to which transformational leadership and distributed leadership fit or differed in the context of the school, highlighting their strengths, limitations, and adaptability within this unique educational setting.

Transformational Leadership

The leadership team of the Chinese heritage language school demonstrated several elements of transformational leadership, particularly in their ability to inspire and motivate teachers, parents, and students toward shared goals. Teachers provided examples of how administrators supported them in their instructional efforts, such as quickly addressing classroom needs and facilitating resource allocation. For instance, one teacher shared how the leadership team secured funding for trophies for a bilingual class speech competition, which motivated both students and teachers to perform at their best.

Parents also expressed satisfaction with the leadership team's responsiveness to their concerns, noting their efforts to maintain open communication and foster a positive learning environment for students. The implementation of the three-line system further underscored the leadership team's ability to articulate a clear vision and rally stakeholders around a major reform that addressed the diverse needs of the school community.

However, certain gaps in transformational leadership were also evident. Teachers highlighted areas where administrative support fell short, such as insufficient training opportunities and inconsistent communication about curriculum changes. For example, one teacher mentioned that while the three-line system was a step in the right direction, its implementation could have been smoother with clearer guidelines and more proactive involvement from the leadership team. Similarly, parents voiced concerns about the pace and workload of experimental classes, suggesting that the leadership team could have done more to align the curriculum with realistic expectations. Despite these shortcomings, the shared commitment to improving the school's offerings reflected the leadership team's broader vision and dedication to fostering a culture of growth and innovation.

These findings align with Bass's (1990) theory of transformational leadership, which emphasizes the importance of inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation. The leadership team's ability to inspire teachers and parents through initiatives like the three-line system reflects the principles of transformational leadership, particularly in its focus on aligning stakeholders with a shared mission. However, the observed gaps in administrative support highlight the

challenges of applying transformational leadership in a volunteer-driven context, where resource limitations and part-time commitments can hinder consistent execution. These challenges resonate with Wong and Lopez's (2000) observations on the complexities of leadership in community-based schools, where balancing vision with practical constraints often requires significant adaptability. Overall, while the leadership team demonstrated key elements of transformational leadership, their efforts were constrained by the structural realities of a heritage language school.

Distributed Leadership

The leadership team of the Chinese heritage language school exhibited significant elements of distributed leadership, with responsibilities shared among the Board of Trustees, the Administrative Committee, teachers, and parents. This approach allowed for collaborative decision-making and ensured that diverse perspectives were incorporated into the school's operations. For instance, the implementation of the three-line system involved input from multiple stakeholders: board members approved the strategic framework, administrators managed logistical execution, teachers provided curriculum feedback, and parents evaluated the reform's outcomes. Teachers described how administrators regularly consulted them on classroom needs and curriculum adjustments, emphasizing the importance of their frontline perspectives. One teacher shared an example of how her feedback on the pacing and content of the Yuwen curriculum led to adjustments that better aligned with students' learning capacities. These collaborative practices reflected the essence of distributed leadership by leveraging the expertise of all contributors.

However, the implementation of distributed leadership also revealed challenges. Teachers noted instances where communication breakdowns delayed responses to their requests, such as the slow resolution of curriculum-related concerns or the lack of follow-up on professional development opportunities. Similarly, administrators expressed frustration with overlapping roles and unclear boundaries between governance and operations, particularly during high-pressure periods like curriculum reform. Despite these difficulties, parents' feedback highlighted their appreciation for the leadership team's collective efforts to address diverse needs. For example, parents affirmed the success of the three-line system in providing tailored learning paths, reflecting the school's commitment to shared decision-making and inclusivity.

These findings align with Spillane et al.'s (2004) framework of distributed leadership, which emphasizes the collective nature of leadership and the importance of interdependent relationships among leaders, followers, and their context. The collaboration observed within the leadership team demonstrated how distributed leadership can enhance organizational effectiveness by utilizing the strengths of various stakeholders. However, the challenges of role clarity and communication resonate with Gronn's (2002) caution that distributed leadership requires robust coordination mechanisms to prevent inefficiencies. Furthermore, the school's reliance on part-time volunteers to fulfill leadership roles underscores the complexities of implementing distributed leadership in a nonprofit, volunteer-driven context. While these structural limitations posed challenges, the leadership team's ability to align multiple stakeholders toward shared goals highlighted the potential of distributed leadership to sustain and advance heritage language schools.

Limitations

This study provided valuable insights into the leadership dynamics of a nonprofit, volunteer-based heritage language school, shedding light on how leadership practices aligned with educational theories and operational challenges. The qualitative data gathered from interviews, observations, and document reviews offered a comprehensive understanding of the school's governance and collaboration processes. However, like any research, this study faced certain limitations that must be acknowledged, particularly regarding participant availability, timing, and the researcher's positionality. These factors may have influenced the findings and their interpretation.

Participant Availability

One of the primary limitations was the availability of participants. While most leadership members agreed to participate, one critical figure, the chair of the Board of Trustees—refused the interview after initially agreeing. This individual played a pivotal role in approving budgets and enacting major policies, such as the curriculum reform, and was often referenced by other interviewees as a central figure in the school's governance. His refusal may have been influenced by his personal circumstances; he initially cited his preparation for the principal election as a reason for declining and later refused without explanation after losing the election. It was possible that his sense of loss or reluctance to reflect on the election outcome influenced his decision. His absence left a gap in the data, as his insights could have provided unique perspectives on board-administrative relationships and policy-making processes.

Despite this limitation, 14 out of 20 leadership team members participated in the interviews, representing 70% of the total leadership body. This robust sample size

ensured that the data captured diverse perspectives and offered a comprehensive understanding of the leadership team's dynamics. While the absence of the board chair may have affected the richness of specific insights, the significant participation rate supported the reliability and depth of the study's findings.

Timing of Interviews

The timing of the interviews, conducted between late April and May, coincided with the school's general election period, creating a charged and dynamic environment. During this time, the former principal and the former board chair, both candidates for the principal position, were embroiled in a conflict that influenced leadership dynamics. As a result, some interviewees, perhaps unconsciously, framed their responses through the lens of this ongoing tension. For instance, when asked about improving relationships between the Board of Trustees and the Administrative Committee, one board member replied that the two top leaders should "sit down and have a meal together to calmly talk." Such responses highlighted the influence of individual relationships on broader organizational dynamics.

Although references to the election and related conflicts appeared frequently, they did not dominate the data. Instead, they provided a unique contextual layer, shedding light on how interpersonal dynamics shaped leadership practices during this period. These comments offered valuable insights into the challenges of maintaining cohesion within a volunteer-based organization. However, the prevalence of election-related narratives occasionally diverted attention from other aspects of the team's general functionality or the curriculum reform process. While the interviews provided a nuanced snapshot of leadership during a critical moment in the school's history, blending insights

into interpersonal dynamics with broader organizational themes, the findings may have been different if this specific issue was not part of the participants' focus.

Researcher's Positionality

As the researcher, I held the position of provost at the school, making me both a researcher and a member of the leadership team. This dual role might have influenced the responses of interviewees, particularly teachers and administrators. Participants may have been hesitant to offer critical feedback about the Administrative Committee or leadership team, instead opting for more cautious or complimentary remarks. For example, when asked to provide an example of how the administration supported teachers, one teacher cited my own actions as an example. While this was truthful and related to my interview question, it felt subjective and less reflective of the broader team. My positionality as a peer and leader may have inadvertently limited the depth of critique, resulting in data that was less intense or confrontational than it might have been with an external researcher.

Recommendation and Directions for Future Research

This study provided valuable insights into the leadership dynamics of a nonprofit, volunteer-based heritage language school, but it also highlighted areas for improvement and potential directions for future research. Practical recommendations for the school and theoretical considerations for future research are outlined below. Additionally, strategies to address the limitations discussed earlier are proposed.

From a practical perspective, certain operational improvements could enhance the school's functionality and stakeholder satisfaction. Both teachers and parents mentioned in surveys and interviews that the school website required better organization and timely updates. One critical issue identified was the absence of a clear registration portal, which

caused frustration among parents trying to enroll their children. Addressing this would involve creating a dedicated registration section on the website, with easy-to-follow steps and links to relevant resources. Additionally, organizing the website into user-friendly sections and ensuring regular updates would make it a more effective communication tool for all stakeholders.

Moreover, the scheduling and communication of meetings and events could be improved. Teachers and parents expressed frustration with late notifications and insufficient planning time for events, such as cultural activities or administrative meetings. To resolve this challenge, the school could adopt a more systematic approach to scheduling by creating an annual calendar at the beginning of the school year and sharing it with all stakeholders. Important notifications could also be disseminated through multiple channels, such as email, text messages, and social media platforms, ensuring that everyone remains informed in a timely manner.

In addition, teachers and one of the vice principals in the interview highlighted the need for regular curriculum meetings to address teaching challenges and promote alignment across different classes. Teachers emphasized that such meetings would provide opportunities to share the best practices, discuss curriculum adjustments, and resolve issues collaboratively. Currently, the lack of consistent curriculum discussions often left teachers without clear guidance or opportunities for professional development. Establishing a routine schedule for curriculum meetings—such as quarterly or semi-annual sessions—would enhance communication between the leadership team and teachers while fostering a more cohesive teaching environment. These meetings could also serve as a platform for administrators to gather feedback on curriculum effectiveness

and instructional needs, further supporting the school's commitment to continuous improvement.

As for future research directions, one critical area is the accountability of leadership teams in nonprofit educational organizations. Investigating how leaders define and measure their accountability could provide valuable insights into improving governance and operational efficiency in similar contexts. Additionally, future research could explore the long-term impacts of leadership practices on organizational sustainability and stakeholder satisfaction. For example, studying how schools balance volunteer leadership with the need for professionalization could offer guidance for developing hybrid models that combine the strengths of both approaches. Comparative studies across different types of heritage language schools, such as those serving Korean, Spanish, or Arabic communities, could also provide a richer understanding of the common challenges and unique solutions within this sector.

To address the limitations identified in this study, future research should consider timing as a critical factor. Selecting a period free from major events, such as elections or high-stakes conflicts, would allow researchers to observe the leadership team in a more typical state. This approach could yield a more balanced and comprehensive understanding of their day-to-day operations and interactions. Ensuring the participation of key figures, such as board chairs or other influential leaders, would also enhance the depth and representativeness of the data. Strategies such as anonymized surveys or third-party interviews could encourage reluctant participants to share their perspectives more freely.

By implementing these recommendations and pursuing these research directions, both practitioners and scholars can contribute to the ongoing development and understanding of leadership in nonprofit heritage language schools. These efforts will not only enhance the functionality and sustainability of such institutions but also support their vital role in preserving cultural heritage and fostering community connections.

Conclusions

Heritage language schools represent a unique and invaluable presence in the United States, embodying the dual mission of preserving cultural and linguistic heritage while navigating the challenges of integration into mainstream society. These schools, including Chinese heritage language schools, serve as cultural bridges, fostering a sense of identity and belonging for new generations while enriching the broader community with diverse traditions and perspectives. The journey of these schools has been far from easy, as they strive to sustain operations in a competitive and resource-limited environment. Yet, their resilience reflects the enduring value of their mission.

The Chinese heritage school examined in this study exemplifies the integration of traditional Chinese collective spirit with the organizational demands of a nonprofit, volunteer-driven institution. Leaders, teachers, and parents collaborate to ensure the school's success, often sacrificing personal time and energy to fulfill their roles. Their commitment highlights the deep sense of responsibility and dedication that sustains these institutions. As volunteers, they contribute not just skills but also passion, demonstrating an admirable willingness to serve the community. This ethos of selflessness and collaboration is a cornerstone of heritage schools and a testament to the power of collective effort in achieving meaningful cultural preservation.

This research contributes to the understanding of leadership effectiveness within nonprofit educational organizations, particularly those operating in the unique context of heritage language schools. The findings demonstrate that leadership is most effective when it is rooted in shared goals, supported by collaborative practices, and adaptable to the challenges of a volunteer-based structure. The school's leadership team effectively balanced governance and operational responsibilities, illustrating how a clear division of roles and a commitment to open communication can sustain organizational success even in resource-constrained settings. However, the study also highlights the importance of addressing systemic challenges, such as professionalizing leadership roles and enhancing accountability, to ensure long-term sustainability.

For practitioners in the field, this study underscores the need for strong leadership frameworks that balance flexibility with structure. Heritage language schools can benefit from leveraging volunteer dedication while implementing systems that support strategic planning, transparent communication, and stakeholder engagement. Building stronger networks among heritage schools—whether Chinese, Korean, Spanish, or Arabic—can also facilitate the sharing of best practices and mutual support, helping these institutions thrive collectively in a shared mission.

Finally, for researchers, the study provides a foundation for further exploration into the dynamics of leadership in nonprofit educational organizations. Future research could examine how different cultural values influence leadership practices or explore the long-term impact of heritage schools on cultural preservation and community building. As these institutions continue to evolve, understanding their unique challenges and

successes will be vital to supporting their critical role in fostering diversity and inclusivity within the American educational landscape.

Heritage language schools are more than educational institutions; they are cultural lifelines, sustained by the brilliance and commitment of those who choose to contribute. Their work deserves not only admiration but also tangible support from the broader community. By recognizing and addressing the needs of these schools, we can ensure their continued vitality as they preserve language, culture, and identity for generations to come.

APPENDIX A: IRB



Institutional Review Board

Date: May 23, 2024

Study #: IRB-FY2024-248

Study Title: Chinese heritage schools- case study exploring the leadership of effective transmission of culture

Submission Type: Initial

IRB Decision: Exempt

Research Team:

Shuo Huang

Julia Smith

Based on applicable federal regulations, the above referenced study has been determined to be Exempt, with the following categories:

Category 2.(ii). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:

Any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research would not reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, educational advancement, or reputation; or

Notes for Researcher(s):

This submission includes the following approved documents:

- Recruitment Script
-
- Date-Stamped Consent Form - English V 5/23/2024
-

Date-Stamped Consent Form - Chinese V 5/23/2024 Interview Questions for Teachers and Staff

Letter and Consent Document:

This letter along with the IRB approved (date-stamped) consent document can be found in Cayuse in the [Submission Details](#) page under [Letters](#) and [Attachments](#), respectively.

Please make sure to use the most recent IRB approved version of the consent form in consenting participants.

Permission from Research Site(s): Please note the following:

- This IRB exemption determination letter means that this research has met one or
- more of the federal criteria for exemption per 45 CFR 46.104- Exempt Research.

Before the research is initiated, permission to conduct research at a given site must be obtained from all research locations listed in the IRB submission. You must keep copies of all such permission letters for your files.

- It is the responsibility of each researcher to follow all applicable policies and procedures of any outside institution where the research will be conducted.

Modifications:

Any changes to this exempt project must be reviewed by the IRB prior to initiation by submitting a MODIFICATION request. Do not collect data while the changes are being reviewed. Data collected during this time cannot be used in research.

Record Retention:

Exempt projects will be retained by the IRB office for three years after the last action on the project.

You are approved to start the research. Please retain a copy of this notification for your records.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRB office.

Thank you.

The Oakland University IRB

APPENDIX B: MEETING OBSERVATION FORM

Area being recorded	Notes
<u>THE WHAT (CONTENT AND STRUCTURE)</u> Does the meeting start on time? Is there a published agenda? Is the agenda sent out ahead of time? Are the most important items on the agenda first? Did people prepare for the meeting? What did they do? Does the team follow shared norms?	
<u>THE HOW (RELATIONSHIPS AND DYNAMICS)</u> Dialogue and Discussion Dynamics Are all team members engaged and participating? Does the team go beyond information sharing in its dialogue? Do team members challenge each other? Do team members ask each other about their areas? Do people express differences of opinions, even when unpopular? Decision Making Dynamics Is the team focused on agreement or commitment? How does the collective style of the group impact problem solving and decision making? Is the team closing out on decisions? Are decisions and actions summarized at the end of the meeting? General Dynamics of Team Do people generally respect each other, enjoy each other's presence, act as colleagues? Are there signs of trust -asking for help, offering help, apologizing, being vulnerable? Do they act like a first team? Focused on overall goals versus individual responsibilities, agendas, and egos. What individual habits impact conversation (laughing, exaggerated words, body language and reactions, rambling, too many stories/examples, etc.)? Leader Dynamics What is the leader doing to encourage discussion? What is the leader doing to blunt conversation?	

APPENDIX C: OFFICE OBSERVATION FORM

Date:	Members:
Workflow	
External Interaction	
Incident	

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Leader Team Interview Questions

English Question	Mandarin Translation
<i>What do you perceive as your primary role in the day-to-day operation of the school? Please describe your role and responsibilities. (How does this role align with your usual work or your strengths?)</i>	你在中文学校日常运营中的职责是什么？请描述你的职位和职责。（这个职位和你个人的日常工作或专业特长有什么联系？）
<i>Currently, the school offers three types of Chinese classes: Chinese, bilingual, and experimental. The experimental classes were introduced last school year, and the school intends to continue and establish them. The experimental class differs from the regular Chinese class in curriculum, with more tasks and higher expectations from parents. Offering more classes could make school more competitive in the Chinese community. In what ways do you believe you can contribute to promoting the school's expansion or growth within your role?</i>	目前中文学校有三种中文课：中文班，双语班和实验班。实验班是去年刚刚试行的，学校想继续开展下去。实验班不同于以往的中文班，它有更高的学习目标和学习任务。提供不同班型，可以让底特律中文学校在社区中更有竞争力。你觉得以你的岗位职责，你能够怎样的帮助中文学校发展？
<i>How would you assess the level of collaboration within the current team? (Can you provide examples? What aspects of the current team do you dislike? Which aspects of the administrative team do you think will be obstacles to curriculum modification?)</i>	你觉得现在的董事会校委会凝聚力怎么样？（你能举例说明团队中哪部分是你不喜欢的？校委会董事会中哪部分因素会是课程改革的障碍因素？）
<i>From your perspective, what can the team undertake to facilitate the school's expansion? (What strategies should we consider using, and what lessons can we learn from other institutions or your past experiences?)</i>	你觉得你在校委会/董事会中怎样做能够凝聚团队力量，和团队中的他人一起促进中文学校的发展？（我们可以采取什么策略，或者从历史，从其他的学校机构中学习什么经验？）

Teacher Interview Questions

English Question	Mandarin Translation
<i>Currently, the school offers three types of Chinese classes: Chinese, bilingual, and experimental. The experimental classes were introduced last school year, and the school intends to continue and establish them. The experimental class differs from the regular Chinese class in curriculum, with more tasks and higher expectations from parents. Offering more classes could make school more competitive in the Chinese community. What are your thoughts on expanding the school by offering additional classes? (Follow up prompts: What are the strengths and weaknesses of the current curriculum or class settings? What aspects should be retained and what should be eliminated in future curricula? How do you tailor the curriculum to individuals? Can you provide examples? What are the obstacles to modifying the curriculum?)</i>	目前中文学校有三种中文课：中文班，双语班和实验班。实验班是去年刚刚试行的，学校想继续开展下去。实验班不同于以往的中文班，它有更高的学习目标和学习任务。提供不同班型，可以让底特律中文学校在社区中更有竞争力。你怎么看待提供不同的课型？（你觉得当前的班级设置，课程教材有哪些优缺点？未来的课程中，哪些该从现有的课程中保留，哪些该移除？你是怎样把课程适用于不同学生的？有哪些例子？你觉得修改课程会有什么障碍？）
<i>How would you describe the current coordination between school administration and teachers, particularly concerning advice and feedback reception? (Follow up prompts: Do you feel that your opinions have been taken into account by school leaders? Any examples? What aspects of the administrators' work do you appreciate? What aspects do you dislike? How can they improve to better facilitate curriculum modification ?)</i>	你认为目前校委会和老师的合作关系怎么样，尤其是在意见听取和反馈方面？（你觉得你的意见校方会听取接纳吗？有什么具体事例？你觉得校委会或者董事会哪方面工作是你最赞许的？哪方面觉得还有欠缺？他们怎样做有助于课程改革？）

APPENDIX E: BYLAWS

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE AMERICAN CHINESE SCHOOL OF GREATER DETROIT (Established on September 25, 1976)

PREAMBLE

The American Chinese School of Greater Detroit is a non-profit educational institution dedicated to the teaching of Chinese language and culture, to interested residents in the Greater Detroit area. The School was conceived in the belief that gaining a knowledge of the Chinese language and culture by our young people, and especially by those of Chinese ancestry, shall aid them in the appreciation and enrichment of our pluralistic cultural heritage.

The School was first started in the fall of 1972 by several families in the suburbs of Detroit as a cooperative venture for their children to learn elementary Chinese. It relied on voluntary and active participation of the parents in teaching and preparation of instruction material, and on equitable sharing of the expenses and of the administrative and other duties, the last with help by the students. And the students, mostly of high school age or younger, also made valuable suggestions, directly or indirectly, regarding the teaching method and the content of the instruction material. This cooperative effort has persevered and contributed to the growth of the school. The Bylaws described below are based on the spirit and experience of this cooperative venture from which the present School has evolved.

The School shall not operate in lieu of the Compulsory School Attendance Law and shall not award credit, degree, diploma or other symbol of achievement.

THE BYLAWS OF THE AMERICAN CHINESE SCHOOL OF GREATER DETROIT

(As Amended on November 14, 1987)

The School is served by a Parents Council, a Board of Trustees and an Administrative Committee. The Board of Trustees has the main responsibility to review and determine the direction and the policy of the School. The Administrative Committee has the responsibility for the routine operation of the School. Both the Board of Trustees and the Administrative Committee are elected by the Parents Council, which has also the responsibility to amend the Bylaws as needs arise.

ARTICLE I - THE PARENTS COUNCIL

- 1.1 The parents of the students registered at the School--the latter shall be hereafter referred to as the student body--and the parents of the alumni residing in the Greater Detroit area constitute the members of the Parents Council.
- 1.2 The Parents Council shall meet twice each year, once during the fall and once during the spring session.
- 1.3 Special meetings of the Parents Council may be convened upon the request by a majority of the parents of any one class of the School.
- 1.4 The meetings of the Parents Council shall be convened by the Board of Trustees, except the first Parents Council which will be convened by an ad hoc committee.
- 1.5 The quorum for the Council's meeting shall consist of such members of the Council representing a majority of the families of the student body.
- 1.6 In the Council's business meeting each member present shall be entitled to one vote.
- 1.7 The Parents Council shall elect the Board of Trustees and the Administrative Committee as described in Articles II and III.
- 1.8 The Parents Council shall approve the School's annual budget and shall determine the number of members to serve on the Board of Trustees.
- 1.9 Each member of the Council shall take an active interest in the School and shall participate in the School's activities as often as possible.
- 1.10 The Parents Council may recall a member on the Board of Trustees or an officer on the Administrative Committee whose conduct of his(her) elected duties shall be found, by a three fourths majority vote of the Council, to be contrary to the achievement of the School's objectives.

ARTICLE II - THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

- 2.1 The Board of Trustees shall consist of eleven members:
 - Principals of the last and present school years
 - Faculty representative
 - Two elected members of the Class Representatives Council as described in Article V
 - Six members to be elected by the Parent CouncilTo ensure continuity of the Board of Trustees, the Parent Council shall elect three of the six members at the Spring Meeting.
- 2.2 The parents of the student body and of the alumni, the faculty, the alumni, members of the senior class and other qualified persons nominated by at least three members of the Parents Council are eligible to serve as Trustees.

2.3 Each member of the Board of Trustees shall each serve a two-year term except for the member from the faculty and the two members from the Class Representatives Council, who shall serve a one-year term.

2.4 The Board of Trustees shall establish the following six committees: finance, recruiting of students and faculty, curriculum, fund raising, public relations, and nomination.

2.5 Vacancy in the membership of the Board of Trustees not due to term expiration shall be filled by a special meeting of the Board of Trustees from candidates nominated by the Nominating Committee as described in Article IV. The meeting shall be held promptly to ensure the continuity of the Board.

2.6 The Trustees shall keep themselves informed of the concerns of the separate groups they represent, and shall work with the Administrative Committee to alleviate such concerns.

2.7 The Board of Trustees shall meet at least four times each year, once before and once after each semi-annual meeting of the Parents Council.

2.8 The Board's meeting shall be open to all members of the Parents Council, the faculty and the student body.

2.9 The quorum for the Board's meeting shall consist of a two third of the Board's membership.

2.10 The Board shall elect to have one of its members to chair its meetings.

2.11 A member of the Board who shall have been absent from two successive Board meetings without prior notice shall be considered to have resigned.

ARTICLE III - THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE

3.1 The Administrative Committee shall consist of following core positions: the Principal, the Vice-Principal of Treasurer, the Vice-Principal of Chinese Education, the VicePrincipal of Culture Education, the Vice-Principal of Operation Management.

3.2 The Principal shall be nominated by the Board of Trustees and elected at the annual spring meeting of the Parents Council, and serve a one-year term for the coming school year. The successive service years of the Principal shall not excess three years.

3.3 The student body and members of the Board of Trustees (except the present principal) and members of the Class Representatives Council may not serve as officers of the Administrative Committee.

3.4 Vacancy in the Committee's membership due to resignation shall be filled by appointment by the Board of Trustees until the next election.

3.5 The Committee shall serve all the administrative and supervisory needs of the School with the participation of the faculty and the student body.

3.6 The Committee shall prepare the annual budget for each coming school year which shall be reviewed with the Board of Trustees for approval by the Parents Council.

3.7 The individual responsibilities for the four officers of the Committee shall be such that the officers serve, respectively, as the principal, the treasurer, the secretary and the staff administrator of a public school

3.8 The officers of the Committee shall attend the meetings of the Board of Trustees as regularly as necessary to maintain close communication and exchange of ideas to serve the school efficiently.

ARTICLE IV - NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS

4.1 The nominating committee shall consist of at least three members, one of them a member of the Board of Trustees.

4.2 Only persons as described in paragraph 2.2 of this By-laws may serve on the nominating committee, hereafter referred to as the committee.

4.3 At least one half of the committee's members shall be persons who are not current officers of the School.

4.4 The committee shall nominate candidates to serve on the Administrative Committee for the following school year.

4.5 The committee shall nominate candidates to fill the vacancies in the Board of Trustees not due to term expiration.

4.6 The committee shall present its recommendation of the candidates to the Board of Trustees at least one month before the Spring meeting of the Parents Council. Thereby the committee shall have discharged its duty and thereafter it shall become duly dissolved.

4.7 After the election of the Spring meeting of the Parents Council the committee shall have fulfilled its duty and its members shall become relieved unless they shall be reappointed by the Board of Trustees to serve on the committee for the nomination of the School's officers for the following year.

4.8 The committee shall assist, when such assistance shall have been requested, the parents of the School's class(es) to elect their representative(s) to serve on the Class Representatives Council as described in Article V.

ARTICLE V - CLASS REPRESENTATIVES COUNCIL

5.1 Parents of each class shall elect, in the fall session, a class representative to form the Class Representatives Council.

5.2 Two members of the Class Representatives Council shall be elected by the Council to serve as members of the Board of Trustees.

ARTICLE VI – AMENDMENT OF THE BYLAWS

6.1 The Bylaws may be amended by a two third majority vote of the parents attending the Parents Council Meeting.

ARTICLE VII – SCHOOL FACILITY FOUNDATION

The School Facility Foundation is established to raise funds for school facility acquisition and rental. This section of Bylaws described below is to define the responsibility and function of the fund raising committee and to serve as a guideline for the fund management.

7.1 Committee Name. The committee is named as the Facility Fund Raising Committee of

American Chinese School of Greater Detroit, which is abbreviated as ACSGD Facility Fund Raising Committee or ACSGD_FFRC. Facility Fund Raising Committee of

American Chinese School of Greater Detroit is thereafter called “the Fund Committee”.

7.2 Function. The Fund Committee shall exercise its power and authority to coordinate, plan and execute fund raising activities and to manage the fund. The Fund Committee Chairman shall report its activities and progress to the Board of Trustees of ACSGD on a regular basis.

7.3 Meetings. The Fund Committee shall meet at least four times each year to exchange ideas and make plans. All meetings shall be open to the members of the Board of Trustees, the Administrative Committee, and Parents of ACSGD.

7.4 The Fund Committee Chairman. The Fund Committee shall elect its Chairman in winter/spring semester. The Chairman shall name a secretary after the election. The Fund

Committee Chairman shall chair all committee meetings and the secretary shall take meeting minutes and keep decision records.

7.5 Election and Term. The Board of Trustee and the current Fund Committee members elect the Chairman and new committee members together every two years. The elected Chairman shall serve a term of two years and hold office until his/her successor shall have been elected and qualified or until his/her earlier resignation. The elected Chairman can serve for a maximum of two successive terms.

7.6 Quorum and Voting. A majority of the number (two thirds) of the Fund Committees fixed by these Bylaws shall constitute a quorum for the decision. The act of voting by the committee members present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the Fund Committees.

7.7 The Fund Committee Members. The Fund Committee shall consist of seven members:

One member shall be current member of the Board of Trustees, and serve one year in the Committee.

One member shall currently serve at the Administrative Committee, and serve one year in the Committee.

Other five members including the Committee Chairman shall not simultaneously serve at either the Board of Trustees or the Administrative Committee, and must serve for at least two years.

The total number of the Fund Committee members shall be an odd number. The members shall understand the nature of the activity for fund raising and shall serve for a three-year term. Each member can serve for a maximum of two successive terms.

7.8 Vacancies. Any vacancy occurring in the Fund Committee, including any vacancy created by reason of an increase in headcount, may be filled by the affirmative vote of a majority of the remaining Fund Committee members and the Board of Trustees though less than a quorum of the Fund Committee members. A Fund Committee member elected to fill a vacancy shall hold office only until the next election of the Fund Committee member.

7.9 Absent in the Fund Committee Meeting. If a Fund Committee member is absent himself/ herself in a Committee meeting without submitting a proxy with a signature and date, his/her vote shall be considered as abstain, and action on any committee matter shall be assented to the action based on the majority of the rest votes. A member of the Fund

Committee who shall have been absent from two successive meetings without prior notice shall be considered to have resigned automatically.

7.10 Presumption of Assent. A member who is present at a meeting of the Fund Committee at which action on any committee matter is taken shall be presumed to have assented to the action taken unless he/she votes against such action or abstains from voting in respect thereto because of an asserted conflict of interest.

7.11 Fund Usage. The fund shall be used for **ACSGD facility acquisition only**. Any other usage of the fund shall be approved, by a majority (two thirds) of the voting power, by each of the Board of Trustee, the ACSGD Facility Fund Raising Committee, and ACSGD Administrative Committee.

7.12 Dissolution. The Fund Committee shall be dissolved if failure to raise enough fund to acquire a facility for ACSGD after many years of efforts. The Fund Committee, and Board of Trustees of ACSGD, by a vote of the majority of both the Fund Committee and Board of Trustees, shall elect to terminate the Fund Committee. Under Michigan Law, upon the dissolution all assets of the foundation shall be donated to another non-profit organization elected by trustees.

THE FUND SHALL NEVER BE DISTRIBUTED AMONG THE ENROLLED ACSGD FAMILIES UNDER ANY CONDITIONS.

7.13 Amendment. This section of Bylaws may be altered, amended or repealed, and new Bylaws may be adopted, by a majority (two thirds) of the voting power of the Board of Trustees making such resolution; and, thereafter, submitting the said altered, amended, repealed and new Bylaws to a specially called meeting, at which meeting all Fund Committee members, the Board of Trustees and Administrative Committee members of ACSGD entitled to vote, represented in person or by proxy, shall have approved or disapproved.

APPENDIX F: PARENTS SURVEY

Before beginning the survey, please indicate your language preference:

- A. Chinese
- B. English

(When applying this to the questionnaire software, participants will be directed to the language they prefer based on their selection above.)

本问卷旨在了解您对底特律中文学校当前班级设置和课程的看法，以及校委会董事会工作满意度调查。底特律中文学校一直致力于提供最好的中文学习环境，我们希望通过问卷了解不同需求，以便新学年做出课程调整和改善校委会董事会工作。

I am Shuo Huang, working under the direction of Julia Smith, Oakland University Educational Leadership department, the faculty advisor for this project. I am conducting a research study to gather your thoughts on the current class settings and curriculum design at the American Chinese School of Greater Detroit (ACSGD). Additionally, I am collecting opinions on the effectiveness of the leadership team. As ACSGD continually strives to create the best Chinese learning environment, we are considering changes to the class settings to meet a variety of needs.

I am recruiting individuals who are current parents or guardians of registered students at ACSGD to fill out the questionnaire. The research will take approximately 10 minutes.

Your participation in this study is voluntary.

The research will take place online using the Qualtrics platform. You can participate using a smartphone, laptop, or tablet.

If you wish to participate in the study or have any questions about the research, please contact me at shuohuang@oakland.edu or my advisor at j15smith@oakland.edu.

1. How many children in your family are registered in ACSDG?
 - A.1
 - B.2
 - C.3

(Questions 2-4 will cycle based on the answer to Q1, as: Children 1, Children 2)

2. What type of Chinese class dose your kid enroll?
 - A. Chinese

- B. Bilingual
- C. Experimental Chinese

3. How satisfied are you with the current curriculum (textbook)?
(Chinese-Zhong Wen; Bilingual- YangYang Chinese; Experimental Chinese-YuWen)
 - A. Very satisfied
 - B. Satisfied
 - C. OK
 - D. Dissatisfied
 - E. Very dissatisfied
4. How would you rank the importance of the factors influencing your rating of the previous question?
 - A. Teachers' interpretation
 - B. Difficulty
 - C. Interactive
 - D. Fun to learn.
 - E. Learning outcome
5. Since last year, ACS DG has introduced two experimental classes. The school is now looking to finalize these experimental classes and confirm the structure of its three Chinese class options: Chinese, Bilingual, and Experimental. What is your opinion on this matter?
 - A. I am satisfied with the current program and will continue with it.
 - B. I will explore the other programs and switch if they are more suitable for my children.
 - C. I will definitely leave the current program and switch to another.
6. Will curriculum be the determined factor for you to stay?
 - A. Yes, if the curriculum does not meet my expectations, I will not make children continue here.
 - B. No, as long as my child(ren) is exposed to the Chinese environment and has connections with peers, I am not concerned about what they actually learn.
7. What are your recommendations, comments, and suggestions regarding the modification of the ACS DG curriculum design and class settings? (e.g., difficulty level, textbook relevance, recommended curriculum, etc.)
Type:_____

8. Evaluate communication with the leadership team. (For example, if you need to talk to a school administrator about exchange grade level or safety issues, are they accessible?)
 - A. Very satisfied
 - B. Satisfied
 - C. OK
 - D. Dissatisfied
 - E. Very dissatisfied
9. Evaluate the effectiveness of the leadership team in operating ACSDG.
 - A. Very satisfied
 - B. Satisfied
 - C. OK
 - D. Dissatisfied
 - E. Very dissatisfied
10. How involved am I in the decision-making process of ACSDG?
 - A. I have been informed about decisions after they are made.
 - B. I have actively participated in the decision-making process, and my input has been considered.
 - C. I have disengaged from the decision-making process.

APPENDIX G: SCHOOL CALENDAR

ID	SchoolDate	ChineseClass	CultureClass	Cafeteria	Gym	Events
	2023/9/2	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	"All staff meeting 全体教职工大会"
1	2023/9/9	TRUE	FALSE	TRUE	FALSE	"2023-2024学年开学; Collect Summer homework 交暑假作业"; 中国签证填表讲座
2	2023/9/16	TRUE	FALSE	TRUE	FALSE	"1st Teacher council meeting 教师会 11:15-12:15; " 中国签证申请收件
3	2023/9/23	TRUE	FALSE	TRUE	FALSE	"发放暑假作业奖; 中国签证申请收件"
4	2023/9/30	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	"Culture class starts 文化课第一次课; "1st parent council meeting: financial report and meet school Administrative team 家长会 9:15-10:00 上午, 12:45 -1:30下午 at cafeteria."
5	2023/10/7	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	Normal
6	2023/10/14	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	safety drill
7	2023/10/21	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	2nd Teacher council meeting/ 教师会 - 11:15-12:15"
8	2023/10/28	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	"Normal"
9	2023/11/4	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	"Normal"
10	2023/11/11	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	"Normal; "
11	2023/11/18	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	"Normal"
12	2023/11/25	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	"不上学 (Thanksgiving Weekend) - No Classes"
13	2023/12/2	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	"3rd Teacher council meeting 教师会, 11:15-12:00"
14	2023/12/9	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	"Normal"
15	2023/12/16	TRUE	FALSE	TRUE	FALSE	"Normal""Last School Day before Winter Recess"
16	2023/12/23	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	"不上学 (New Year) - No Classes"
17	2023/12/30	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	"不上学 (New Year) - No Classes"
18	2024/1/6	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	"School Resumes; "
19	2024/1/13	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	"Midterm exam 期中考试; "
20	2024/1/20	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	"normal"
21	2024/1/27	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	normal
22	2024/2/3	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	"4th Teacher council meeting 教师会, 11:15-12:00, 安排各班演讲及分年级演讲比赛"
23	2024/2/10	TRUE	FALSE	TRUE	FALSE	"9am-11am 上下午班各上一节课, 发成绩单和奖状。 1pm-4pm Chinese new year celebration 春节联欢会" 看场地时间
24	2024/2/17	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	"Mid winter recess"
25	2024/2/24	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	"2nd parent council meeting 家长会: election of new board members 选举新董事, 上午 9:30-10:00, 下午 1:00-1:30 Cafeteria "
26	2024/3/2	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	"Normal "
27	2024/3/9	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	HSK test registration"
28	2024/3/16	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	"HSK test registration at room 115; 3rd Board meeting, electing board chairman and Prepare coming Pincipal election 董事会议 11:15-12:15 room113 ;"
29	2024/3/23	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	"春假(Spring Recess)"
30	2024/3/30	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	"春假(Spring Recess)"
31	2024/4/6	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	"HSK test registration at room 115; "
32	2024/4/13	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	"4th Board meeting 董事会议 11:15-12:15""班内演讲比赛 Classroom Speech contest; "
33	2024/4/20	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	"Normal"3rd Parent council meeting, Principal election 家长大会 (校长选举) 上午 9:15-10:00 , 下午 12:45 -1:30 at cafeteria."
34	2024/4/27	FALSE	FALSE	TRUE	TRUE	school speech test
35	2024/5/4	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	"5th Teacher council meeting 教师会, 11:15-12:15, registration information day at Cafeteria, Morning 9:30am-10:30am, afternoon 1pm-2pm"
36	2024/5/11	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	"在校生下学年报名开始 (start of new school year registration for current students)"
37	2024/5/18	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	"Normal ,new school year registration for current students"
38	2024/5/25	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	"不上学 (Memorial Weekend)"
39	2024/6/1	TRUE	FALSE	TRUE	FALSE	"下学年报名 (registration for current and new students); "
40	2024/6/8	TRUE	FALSE	TRUE	FALSE	"期末考试, 下学年报名. (Final Exam, registration)"
41	2024/6/15	TRUE	FALSE	TRUE	TRUE	"Last day of school 发全年成绩单, 领期末考卷。 Last day of registration; Graduation Ceremony 毕业典礼, China Day
	2024/6/16	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	"谢师宴 11am-1pm, ACSGD服务奖 service award"
total		33	25	33	26	

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