

**An Investigation of the Values and Attitudes of Chinese Teachers toward Teacher
Accountability in China**

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ABSTRACT

Teacher accountability has been a controversial topic in the academic domain for many years. In different countries, teacher accountability is reflected in different ways with distinctive characteristics. Compared with other countries, teacher accountability in China was influenced and formed by its own social elements.

The purpose of this study was to examine Chinese teachers' perceptions toward accountability both on external and internal dimensions within the Chinese social context. Three hundred Chinese primary and secondary teachers' questionnaires, which were mainly collected in four provinces, were analyzed using variables of gender, age, geography, school level, teaching area, and leadership role.

Quantitative findings showed that Chinese teachers are both highly accountable for external accountability (bureaucratic) and internal accountability (professional).

DEDICATION

This paper is dedicated to my dear parents, Xiaolin Lu and Xiufen Zhang, who gave me life and have always been encouraging me to bravely face difficulties of life. With their selfless love, they cultivated me and my younger brothers. I could not be around them and take care of them after graduating from my bachelor degree, since I have been working and studying far away from where they live. I would like to dedicate my efforts and achievements in work and academics to my parents. I wish my parents happiness and health.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Definition, Research Problem, and Purpose

The term teacher accountability has been discussed widely in the educational domain. Newmann, King, and Rigdon (1997) describe the historical concept of accountability as a relationship between a provider of a service and the agent who has the power to reward, punish, or replace the provider (as cited in Ahearn, 2000). Ouchi (2003) argues that teacher accountability should be a “national topic”, and he stresses the need for a clear system of monitoring teacher performance and behaviour for the sake of school improvement (as cited in Rosenblatt, 2013). Accountability is an ethical concept – it concerns proper behaviour, and it deals with the responsibilities of individuals and organizations for their actions towards other people and agencies (Levitt, Janta, & Wegrich, 2008). Accountability also was interpreted as the dominant policy of action in the quest for improving educational quality and also as an effective governance tool for increasing performance (Mausethagen, 2013). Jeffrey (2002) contends that “accountability in education is part of the ‘audit explosion’ in which trust has been replaced by audit accountability” (p. 542). Rosenblatt (2013) argues that accountability is regarded as the adhesive between components, where one is answerable to some audience, comparing responsibility.

Some scholars understand accountability on two levels in the

educational domain, institutional accountability and individual accountability.

Institutional-level accountability sometimes means school accountability, while individual accountability mainly is understood as teacher accountability.

Teacher accountability or individual accountability can be defined as two dichotomous kinds of accountability one is external and one that is internal.

External accountability typically represents a response to expectations and demands from an exterior audience, such as the superintendent, school principal, parents, colleagues, and students; while internal accountability makes teachers responsible for their professional selves, such as professional wisdom, values, and ethics (Rosenblatt, 2013).

Teacher accountability is intimately related to school accountability, especially the external part. Educators implement accountability through the ways in which they carry out their jobs (Feng, Figlio, & Sass, 2010). They both exist in the social setting which includes political, economic, and cultural situations. The political situation especially influences the content and implementation of educational accountability. Social institutions are rebuilding themselves as a response to societal changes, and educational restructuring can be seen as a part and parcel of transitions to late modernity (Carlgren & Klette, 2008).

China is in a period of social transition with complicated social situations. The recent transformation that has occurred within Chinese society has caused accompanying changes within the educational system. One of the

areas of change within education relates to the dynamics of accountability both at the institutional level and at the individual level. It seems that as society has become more open and with a developing class structure, the various social classes that have developed perceive social, cultural, and educational change in a different way. This differing approach likely permeates the work lives of teachers within the Chinese educational system. An initial examination is undertaken of how these changes are perceived by Chinese teachers to affect how they are being held accountable. This examination looks at both internal accountability and external accountability.

Teacher Accountability in Different Historical Contexts

During the Cultural Revolution period of Mao Zedong, the educational system almost collapsed. Students gave up school work to commit themselves to the class struggle, while teachers and other intellectuals were thought of as *choulaojiu* which means lower social levels. Everything including school accountability had to follow the ruling ideology over the entire country. External teacher accountability was controlled by political and ideological forces even though it should not have been. According to some reports, teachers were very weak and often bullied by their students; it was therefore hard for them to maintain their original internal beliefs about teacher accountability. Recently, some former students of the Cultural Revolution period have started to apologize to society and their former teachers who were abused by them during that time, due to their inappropriate behaviours in the

past (Feng, 2014).

After the reform and cultural opening up in 1978, the educational system recovered and gradually went back to normal. As the market economy started to develop in China, market elements pervaded everywhere including within education and health. Since the funding from government was far from sufficient and educational development could not meet the needs of people (Shi & Yang, 2004), many schools started to obtain funding from various sectors of society such as parents and financial consortiums. For example, in some schools, parents were either taxed or became direct tuition payers, and they therefore were more influential than before. In this situation, schools and teachers were more accountable to stakeholders. Concurrently, like the argument of Ravitch (2012), teacher accountability was narrated as part of a larger effort to restructure the teaching profession by turning it into a market-based activity; the corporate reform changed the motivation of teachers to the desire to earn a large salary, making teaching more like business.

The policy of having all Chinese students completing College Entrance Exams (CEE), which is called Gaokao in China, is a very important factor that impacts school accountability and teacher accountability, because only students who have high marks in the entrance examinations can enroll in highly reputed universities to seek a higher education. In addition, the traditional concept of *officialdom as the natural outlet for good scholars* still plays an important role in forming people's percepts. Therefore, based on the

institutional and cultural roots, schools and teachers have too much focus on students' scores if they wish to achieve good reputations from society, students, and parents.

In recent years, more and more social problems arose concomitantly with higher levels of economic and social development but without adequate balance in China. Additionally, as China is open to international communication and the use of internet becomes popular, more and more people have become open-minded, and they also are increasingly critical of the government and society. "Societal and social changes put the teachers in a situation that makes certain responses unavoidable" (Carlgren & Klette, 2008, p. 131). Consequently, some controversial teachers became the centre of interest concerning teacher accountability and social ethics. Examples of this were, "Fan Paopao", a teacher who threw out a hot topic that a teacher had the right to protect himself/herself first when earthquake happened in Sichuan in 2008; Yuan Tengfei, a history teacher in Beijing, was criticized by people with left-wing political views and was also chastised by right-wing people for his countercultural views of teaching about Mao Zedong.

In November, 2013, the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China expounded a policy entitled "Methods of Disposition of Violating Professional Ethic Actions of Elementary and Secondary School Teachers (Exposure Draft)" ("The Ministry of Education", 2013), which addressed ten "Red Lines" that are not allowed to be crossed by teachers. The

first red line was that the statements and actions of teaching and educational activities should not violate the policies and guidelines of the ruling party and the state (“The Ministry of Education”, 2013). This “red line” had an observable impact on the content and implementation of teacher accountability. Like the general statement, the policies of accountability have the effect of restricting the conditions under which teachers work, putting into place a system to reward those who comply with government and who reach government targets, and to punish those who do not (Day, 2002).

The Importance of Understanding Teacher Accountability in Society

Teachers are generally considered as a special group who have great influence in society, even though their accountabilities and professional pressure are from various individuals, ranging from district superintendents, principals, and parents (Vernaza, 2012), and are impacted by many social factors. We can understand that through the interaction between education and society. The goals of education are to cultivate individuals to have good futures in society and to facilitate the development of society; Ayers (2012) stated that education should contribute to complete “human development---humanization—enlightenment and freedom” (p.27); while education is influenced, impacted, and limited by social situations. We can assume, for example, the North Korean government would demand schools educate students to believe and admire their “great leader’s behaviours” more after he executed his uncle, who “was convicted of planning a coup and seeking to

seize the supreme power of the party and state” (Swenson-Wright, J, 2013).

We also can believe that the comments of Mandela, the former president of South Africa, are described somewhat differently in the history textbooks of different countries. “It is important to recognize that what has happened to education is one outcome of a larger ideological debate...” (Day, 2002, p. 677). Marshall and Gerstl-Pepin (2005) argued countries differ in relation to the values, resources, and goals they have for education. Carlgren and Klette (2008) emphasized that educational reform is an effect of national context, history, power, and strengths among different stakeholders, as well as occasional circumstances. The understanding of education should therefore be put into its proper social context to grasp; also, we only comprehend teacher accountability which presents the extent of educators’ behaviours in its proper societal context.

The main responsibility of teachers is to focus on students, who will become a critical element of society, and who will undertake countless wishes and hopes of parents and social groups. Accountability was interpreted as the dominant policy of action in the quest for improving educational quality (Mausethagen, 2013). Teacher accountability also appears to be a moderator of social information processing and judgement formation during the process of educational assessments (Krolak-Schwerdt, Bohmer, & Grasel, 2013), which influence the assessments of students in a positive way. However, teachers in most countries across the world are experiencing similar

government interventions, such as national curricula, national tests, criteria for measuring the quality of schools, and the publication of these on the internet, which are done to raise standards and promote more parental choice (Day, 2002). Teacher accountability has always been described with all kinds of labels in multiple domains such as ethical, moral, political, and legal; meanwhile, teachers succeed only by satisfying and complying with others' definitions of their work (Day, 2002). The professionalism of teachers has been associated with having a strong technical culture, service ethic, professional commitment, and professional autonomy (control over classroom practice) (Etzioni, 1969; Larson, 1977; Talbert & McLaughlin, 1996; as cited in Day, 2002). If stakeholders or policy makers are not careful, perhaps, the overloaded emphasis on teacher accountability will have a negative influence on teachers in invisible ways.

It is necessary that we continue to carefully discuss and explore teacher accountability, and try to seek a form of professional accountability that is more influential in supporting teachers' practice than one that is perceived as being limited to compliance with a set of minimum standards (Levitt, Janta, & Wegrich, 2008).

Research Questions

I worked as a high school teacher for eight years, and I was involved in school administration during my last two years. Throughout my experience in teaching and administration, the understandings of teacher accountability of

teachers themselves were always somewhat different from the understanding of administrators, parents, and other stakeholders. Even they are insisting that there are some contradictions between teachers' internal beliefs and commitment and the external demands of official discourse (Barrett, 2009; Gillborn & Youdell, 2000), there are also struggles among different stakeholders over the definition of teacher professionalism (Whitty, Power, & Halpin, 1998). Administrators usually put teacher accountability into a management system which emphasizes that teachers should obey and comply with the rules and regulations in the school and educational system. In this type of understanding, teacher accountability is a kind of professional limitation and control, and teacher accountability works for power and authority. Parents would hope teacher accountability can facilitate teachers to take care about how individual students learn and grow. In this type of understanding, teacher accountability is always identified as a kind of expectation or requirement, which needs to be satisfied by different individuals and types. As educators in the front line of the educational domain, teachers would like teacher accountability to facilitate their professional development, and provide incentives to be creative, innovative, and to be motivated to help them achieve professional job satisfaction and a sense of happiness. However, the expectations of teachers would be idealization, not the reality.

Based on these points above, I am using data collected from a

questionnaire developed and tested by the Consortium for Cross Cultural Research in Education. This questionnaire investigates teacher accountability data obtained from teachers themselves, and analyzes factors that influence them within a societal context. The questionnaire contains 58 items investigating teacher accountability, and responses from several hundred teachers from junior high schools and high schools in China are analyzed. The proposed quantitative study should add to our knowledge of teachers' perceptions toward teacher accountability.

It focuses on two questions:

1. What are Chinese teachers' perceptions toward external accountability (bureaucratic)?
2. What are Chinese teachers' perceptions toward internal accountability (professional)?

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

A Cross-Cultural Comparison of Teacher Accountability

Teachers in most countries around the world are experiencing similar government interventions in the form of national curricula, national tests, and criteria for measuring the quality of schools (Day, 2002). No doubt, every country has distinctive characteristics of teacher accountability within their own social context. It is necessary to grasp what teacher accountability is in various countries before exploring teacher accountability in one specific country.

In the United States, teachers are accountable for student academic performance, curriculum, learning, and continuity of academic experience (Common Core State Standards, 2010). Accountability is expressed as being both important and necessary, with accountability systems identified that must follow professional standards for test development and the reporting and use of data (“Accountability”, n.d.). The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) believes that accountability in public education is essential to a standards-driven education system (“Accountability”, n.d.) During the past decades, the standards movement quickly evolved from an early emphasis on minimum graduation requirements toward comprehensive curriculum frameworks, standardized testing programs, increases in teacher qualifications, and the introduction of *benchmarks* for continuous improvement in student learning

outcomes (Louis, Febey, & Schroeder, 2005). Valli, Croninger, and Walters (2007) argue that test-based accountability has become a central force driving educational change at the federal, state, and local levels in America. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) uses high-stakes tests to hold schools accountable for their proficiency goals. In the United States, standards-based accountability in the form of testing was mandated at the federal level (Donnelly & Sadler, 2009). While teachers and teacher unions have welcomed the introduction and development of new standards for curriculum and teaching, they are reported to have been dismayed by the quality and applicability of the new tests which form the basis for judging the value of their work (Day, 2002). However, Ludlow, Mitescu, Pedulla, Cochran-Smith, Cannady, Enterline, and Chappe (2010) contend that educational accountability always has to do with values and ethical questions, and not simply with assembling good empirical evidence about fixed goals. The accountability system widely impacts teachers' professional practice. Even for beginning teachers, to monitor what they are learning and what "professional development" they undertake really translates to an accountability-based testing environment (Certo, 2006).

In Canada, the constitution gives responsibility for education to the provinces. For the purposes of the present study, the province of Ontario, which is the largest province in Canada, was chosen as a typical case to observe. The Ontario College of Teachers conducted a formal review of the

Standards of Practice and the Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession, including commitment to students and student learning, professional knowledge and practice, leadership in learning communities, ongoing professional learning, and the moral requirements of care, respect, trust, and integrity (“Professional Standards”, n. d.). Ontario also uses large-scale assessments in its teacher accountability system, which has been in place since the late 1990s; provincial policies require school boards and schools to use the accountability system to support their educational efforts in order to increase student learning outcomes (Klinger & Rogers, 2011).

In contrast to the high-stakes accountability framework linked to large-scale assessments in the United States, the accountability system of Canada is quite different, avoiding such consequences of high-stakes as sanctions and connections to salaries, and with no attached negative consequences to schools or teachers (Klinger & Rogers, 2011). However, accountability is still commonly framed by professional responsibility, being expected that administrators and teachers will use the assessment results to inform and support their own ongoing educational practices (Klinger & Rogers, 2011).

Compared to North America, the teachers’ standards of the Department of Education in the United Kingdom (UK) holds teachers accountable for achieving the highest possible standards in work and conduct. “Teachers act with honesty and integrity; have strong subject knowledge, keep their knowledge and skills as teachers up-to-date and are self-critical; forge positive

professional relationships; and work with parents in the best interests of their pupils.” This is stated both in teaching and personal and professional conduct (“Teachers’ Standards”, 2011). The key element of accountability in the UK, which was set by the 1988 Education Act, is the recording of key aspects of school performance in the public domain, central to which are the outcomes of national tests; parents having the right of choice of school and the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) inspection are two instruments of public accountability of schools; threshold assessment is a way in which performance measurement is related directly to teachers’ pay (Elkins & Elliott, 2004). The Office for Standards in Education makes judgments based upon a national assessment framework, and successful schools have been awarded *specialist*, *lighthouse*, or *beacon* status and given more resources (Day, 2002).

In China, according to *Opinions of State Council Concerning Strengthening the Cultivation of Teachers* (Guofa 2012, No. 41), the country should strengthen the work of teachers both on political-ideological and moral levels as well as professional development.

Besides articulating their rights and obligations, the *Teacher Law of the People’s Republic of China* (1994) defines assessment for teachers: “Schools or other institutions of education shall conduct assessment of teachers’ political awareness and ideological level, professional competence, attitude toward work and their performances. The administrative departments of education shall guide and supervise the assessment work for teachers” (Article

22), and “Assessment results shall be the basis for teachers’ appointment and pay rise as well as rewards and punishments” (Article 24). Since 1985, a series of education reforms have been implemented in China to transform from the traditional examination-oriented approach to a quality-oriented education system (Liu & Onwuegbuzie, 2012). However, there are at least 1000 years of history and social support behind the use of public examinations as a selection tool in the Chinese context (Paine, 1990, as cited in Brown, Hui, Yu, & Kennedy, 2011). The College Entrance Exam (CEE, Gaokao) is very important for students, since a good score on the CEE is the basic requirement for students to enroll in a higher educational institution. The reputation of schools is determined absolutely by student scores (Brown et al., 2011), the teachers’ achievements of teaching is also determined by their students’ scores.

There are both differences and similarities on teacher accountability among the countries above. Day (2002) summarized that although the educational situations are different in every country, they have some common factors on accountability. For example, first, the governments believe that by intervening they can accelerate improvements, raise standards of achievement and somehow increase economic competitiveness; second, they challenge teachers’ existing practices, and this result often in an increased work load for teachers.

The Actual Influence or Implication of Teacher Accountability

Carlgren and Klette (2008) argue that there is growing evidence

internationally that the professional life of teachers is changing, that curriculum demands are broadening, and that accountability, assessment, and the paperwork are increasing; teachers are being urged to extend their role as professionals and assume more responsibility. In England, accountability has had the effect of restricting the conditions under which teachers work, putting into place a system which rewards those who successfully comply with government directives and who reach government targets and punishes those who do not (Day, 2002). The government's hypothesis is that higher standards and school improvement will be achieved, at least in part, by the managing and monitoring of the performance of head teachers and teachers (Elkins & Elliott, 2004).

In the United States, a high stakes testing regime has been established in order to ensure that schools engage in a state-determined improvement agenda for all students to meet a prescribed level of achievement on state authorized tests (Day, 2002). The Carnoy and Loeb (2002) study shows that students in high-accountability states averaged significantly greater gains than students in states with little or no state measures to improve student performance. Teacher participants in the Donnelly and Sadler (2009) study identified positive aspects of standards-based instruction including how standards provide guidance and align curricula. Boyd, Lankford, Loeb, and Wyckoff (2008) state that standards-based reforms can provide opportunities for schools to focus on student learning, while administrators may use

accountability policies as leverage to get rid of ineffective or distracting teachers, and teachers may prefer to teach in these environments rather than in environments that do not recognize success in the classroom.

In China, accountability is positively correlated with improvement among Chinese teachers (Brown, Kennedy, Fok, Chan, & Yu, 2009; Li & Hui, 2007), partly because teachers are usually persuaded that a powerful way to improve student learning is to examine them using the long-standing history of examination-merit decisions (Brown, Hui, Yu, & Kennedy, 2011). Although the new curriculum reform, which was implemented in 2001, guides the evaluation system for teachers combined with teacher self-evaluation (Liu & Onwuegbuzie, 2012). Teacher evaluation has been practised mainly to hold teachers accountable based on their past performances, primarily students' test scores (Walker, Qian, & Zhang, 2011). Compared with other countries, Paine and Fang (2006) argue that Chinese teachers are held accountable in more aspects and more diverse ways with greater external setting of standards and more top down control. Paine and Fang (2006) also point out that Chinese teachers have been held accountable both for students' outcomes and for their own continued learning (professional development practices).

In the Krolak-Schwerdt, Bohmer, and Grasel (2013) study, accountable teachers generate more objective assessments of students with less bias compared to unaccountable teachers. However, the understandings vary among present studies. According to some research, opposite statements have

been existing about the impact of accountability policies among teachers

(Louis, Febey, & Schroeder, 2005) and educational stakeholders (Donnelly & Sadler, 2009).

In England, the schools with a negative evaluation, put more pressure on teachers and cause an increase in teachers' work time (Day, 2002). Menter et al. (2002) suggest that threshold assessment is "more of the same for teachers-more change, added pressure, increased surveillance and regulation, more bureaucracy" (as cited in Day, 2002, p. 19). In the United States, teachers in multiple states have reported feelings of increased pressure from various individuals, ranging from district superintendents and principals to students' parents due to the state-mandated assessment (Louis, Febey, & Schroeder, 2005; Vernaza, 2012). Teachers experience anxiety when student test results are released, especially if the results are shared publicly (Valli, Croninger, & Walters, 2007). Accountability and high stakes testing are important reasons for teacher attrition, job dissatisfaction, and teachers leaving their positions (Donnelly & Sadler, 2009). Day (2002) observed that some teachers said there was "too much filling in paper at the expense of teaching". As one of the teachers explained it: "That's why people do not enjoy teaching so much because there is not that opportunity to put something of yourself into your classroom."

It is too early yet to determine whether performance management and assessment will have any impact in raising standards and in improving the

quality of teaching and learning (Elkins & Elliott, 2004). Development of external accountability systems is not a proven strategy for long-range improvement (Louis, Febey, & Schroeder, 2005). The high stakes testing measures do not yet appear to have contributed to improvements in pupil achievements (Day, 2002). It generated to some degree unfair competition for the students who are from low socioeconomic status, when they have to meet the same standards to compare the students who are from middle class (Day, 2002; Vernaza, 2012). Some teachers reported feeling stifled by their lack of flexibility in shaping their curriculum to meet student needs because of the pressure for high test scores (Louis, Febey, and Schroeder, 2005). In China, the validity of the accountability was also being questioned (Brown, Hui, Yu, & Kennedy, 2011). In the study of Paine and Fang (2006), some teachers and principals who were surveyed both criticized that the development impacts of accountability were superficial, added more workload for them, reflected the choices of providers rather than participants, and ignored teacher expertise. In the survey of Liu and Onwuegbuzie (2012), more than 40% of teachers reported that they had turnover intentions if such opportunities presented themselves because of the professional pressure they experienced as teachers.

According to Vernaza (2012), teachers throughout the United States were not opposed to accountability and recognized the importance of accountability for their teaching; yet, they were in disagreement with the negative effects of their state accountability system, and did not believe their

state's high-stakes achievement test was an accurate measure of students' learning. Teachers also claimed that they were in favour of shared responsibility, with accountability being shared across all groups including teachers, students, and parents, as well as administrators, policymakers, and educational researchers (Vernaza, 2012). Valli, Croninger, and Walters (2007) argue that, in the accountability system, it is unfair for teachers that teaching and student achievement had always been linked while the learning of a child is influenced not just by a teacher. There are some personal student factors beyond the teacher's control, such as student ability (including capability, disabilities, and reading ability), students' home environments, and students' behaviours and backgrounds (Vernaza, 2012). Relatedly, Steeves, Carr-Stewart, and Pinay (2012) pointed out that neither the American nor the Canadian accountability system of education is centered on students' learning outcomes within the school setting, with little attention to strategic goals of society and long term objectives.

Day (2002) mentions that the new age, in which teachers succeed only by satisfying and complying with others' definitions of their work, is called post-professionalism, and the ethical-professional identities that were dominant in schools are being replaced by "entrepreneurial-competitive" identities. Burton and Bartlett (2002) interviewed seven teachers from five schools: "none attested to an enhancement of their professional activity nor to any effect of achieving threshold status; one even implied that, once they had

learned the ropes, teachers could play the target-setting game by recycling their targets” (as cited at Elkins & Elliott, 2004, p. 20). Many teachers indicate that they view the high-stakes tests as an imposition on their professional autonomy, an invasion into their classrooms, a message that the state views them as incompetent, and a hindrance to professional creativity (Luna & Turner, 2001; as cited in Boyd, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2008). Brown, Hui, Yu, and Kennedy (2011) argue that, in the Chinese context, accountability is about controlling schools, teachers, and students; not simply determining how good they are. In a study in Hong Kong, Morris (2004) indicates that the nature of teacher accountability had been determined by the government with an ambivalent and paradoxical approach. A related study by Paine and Fang (2005) point out that the nature of Chinese teachers’ teaching is changing, responding to curriculum reform and its embedded conceptions of the good student and good teacher.

The Social Elements Impacting Teacher Accountability

Teachers always assume a number of roles in their work, including classroom instructors and out-of-classroom practitioners of education (Valli & Buese, 2007). As a consequence of being a socially constructed concept, and, therefore, changing and contested in its nature, teacher professionalism is marked by ambiguity and complexity. Understanding its meaning implies, consequently, the consideration of the historical, cultural, and political context in which it is embedded (Day, Flores, & Viana, 2007). It is necessary for us to

explore what teacher accountability is and what form teacher accountability takes in this society.

Over the last decades, schools and teachers have been confronted with many new challenges, such as increasing roles and responsibilities, changes occurring in social agencies, greater influence of the mass media on the education of children and young people, the co-existence of different educational models in a multicultural society, increased bureaucracy, and public scrutiny (Day, 1999, 2001; Esteve, 2000; Estrela, 2001; Hargreves, 2001; as cited in Day, Flores, & Viana, 2007).

The elements of politics, policies, and the contexts of teachers' education

The relationship between politics and education is symbiotic, with each influencing the fate of the other (Thomas, 1983). Currently, education has become a very high profile issue for politicians (Naidu, 2011). How educational restructuring is designed and accomplished may be partly an effect of national context and history and partly a political aspect (Carlgren & Klette, 2008). Valli and Buese (2007) argue that teachers' roles have been particularly impacted over the two decades of educational reform that led to the high-stakes accountability climate teachers now experience with the ratification of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 2001, and the No Child Left Behind legislation (NCLB, 2002). As cited in Achinstein and Ogawa (2012), the logic of American accountability policies posits that the academic performance of students will improve and disparities in the

achievement of students from different racial, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds will disappear if educators are held accountable for students' performance by standard curriculum, tests, and policies (Berger 2000; Thompson 2001).

Eighty-five percent of the English teachers stated that the development and implementation of national policies had affected or changed the way that professionalism was now being defined (Day, Flores, & Viana, 2007). In societies with different assessment policies and practices, teachers' conceptions of assessment should be different (Brown, Hui, Yu, & Kennedy, 2011).

In China, the education system has been promoted by the content of *official histories* with moral-ideology, and has also been changed by political and historical situations. (Jones, 2002). Education, being part of the national development in China had been subject to the tensions of ideologies and views within the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), in the past several decades (Tsang, 1994). Chinese education has been widely acknowledged as existing in one of the more highly charged political situations and environments among the countries of the world (Hawkins, 1983).

The educational system of contemporary China consists of three hierarchical levels, which are the national level (being in charge of formulating general policies and documents), provincial level (determining the

implementation of the educational laws and policies), and district level (being responsible for actually evaluating local schools) (Liu & Onwuegbuzie, 2012). Naidu (2011) in his study of Australia also states that “there is extensive involvement of local, state and federal officials in matters relating to education” (p. 4) towards teacher accountability. Even the school principals (in Shanghai, China) also emphasize upward accountability, since they understand their positions are “beneath” the government officials, the vertical loyalty to superiors appeared to be taken for granted (Walker, Qian, & Zhang, 2011).

Chinese society was marked by large-scale social changes in last several decades (Tsang, 1994), and Chinese education has been influenced by various historical periods with distinctive political situations and views (Jones, 2002). After the establishment of the People Republic of China in 1949, China copied the educational model of the former Soviet Union with a socialist ideology (Hu, 2009). During that period, to achieve the economic and political functions were the main tasks in higher education; this reduced the spirit of humanities and culture that was supposed be valued in universities (Hu, 2009). For example, there was only Russian curriculum as the content of second language education, but no English language. The educational system in China, including teacher education, was severely collapsed during the “‘Great Leap Forward’ movement in 1958 and the 10-year Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976” (Zhou & Reed, 2005). Students could not receive the

appropriate education from schools and the whole society developed struggling concepts.

Currently, people, especially those who were educated later, still criticize some behaviours of older people with the red cultural ways of thinking. After stopping the Cultural Revolution, the Communist Party of China (CPC) started to redevelop the educational system, and to build and raise the quality of teacher education which made teaching a profession (Zhou & Reed, 2005). In the late 20th and early 21st centuries, Chinese teacher reforms involving subjects, processes, and responsibility for professional development, represent a growing policy area; these reforms reflect the broader changes in economics, society, and politics (Paine & Fang, 2006). In the 1990s, education in China was promoted through an internationalization and globalization process by various stakeholders (Wang, 2014). Contemporarily, Chinese thinking (including teachers' thoughts of education and policy makers' educational perspectives) is often influenced by 'traditional' views of the history of education, as well as by more recent borrowings from abroad (Jones, 2002). It is, therefore, not hard to assume that teachers of different ages are likely to have different views on the understanding of education and professional beliefs.

The elements of economics and locations

Educational institutions focus their policies and practices on improving performance and survival to maintain and develop their market share, due to

the competitive nature of the market structure (Jeffrey, 2002). In England, the schools of high ranking from the national inspection service can improve a school's attraction to parents and students in the educational market place (Jeffrey, 2002).

Every educational reform redefines the role of the educational stakeholders (Carlgren & Klette, 2008). The educational reforms, plans, or policies across the U. S. were shaped by the ideas of experts or reformers who were not experienced educators but they had money and power behind them (Noguera, 2012). Concurrently, in addition, like the argument of Ravitch (2012), in America teacher accountability is a part of a larger effort to restructure education by turning it into a market-based activity; people become teachers out of a sense of idealism and purpose, since corporate reform changed the motivation of teachers to the desire to earn a large salary, making teaching more like business. Roellke and Rice (2008) argue that increasing teacher compensation and offering other types of economic rewards are frequently cited policy options for enticing teachers to enter and remain in the teaching workforce.

In China, during the 1990s with the deepening of the market reforms, returns to education steadily increased (Murphy & Johnson, 2009), and educational demand has increased due to the rise in living standards (Dello-Lacovo, 2009), teacher accountability was thus altered by the changing economic situation. Teaching reform in China was occurring as part of the

processes of globalization; Chinese teacher accountability was formed by both global and local practices with hybrid characteristics (Paine & Fang, 2006).

However, educational funding and resources are currently unequal in China among districts and between rural and urban areas, since there is a serious shortage of schools particularly in rural and underdeveloped areas (Cheng, 2009; Dello-Lacovo, 2009; Liu & Onwuegbuzie, 2012). Education was politicized in the process of development (Tsang, 1994), and the current policies are characterized with a strong urban bias (Yang, 2000; as cited in Cheng, 2009). On the rates of educational achievement and the entering of upper secondary schools, the situation of urban areas was much better than rural areas (Cheng, 2009). Cheng (2009) also concluded that urban-rural inequality was the predominant aspect of the overall educational inequality in China, rather than regional inequality. The average per-student expenditure and the budgetary per-student of urban areas were much higher than rural spending on basic education (Yuan, 2005; as cited in Cheng, 2009). However, urban teachers were more stressed than their rural peers, while their educational quality and salaries were better than rural teachers, since urban parents' expectations were much higher than those of rural parents (Liu & Onwuegbuzie, 2012).

The elements of culture

Teachers' perceptions are influenced by social cultural norms (Li, & Hui, 2007; Hui, 2012). East Asian societies (e.g., Hong Kong, China, Japan,

and Korea), while having similar cultural and policy practices to each other, are quite different from Western societies on many historical, linguistic, ethnic, and cultural levels (Brown, Kennedy, Fok, Chan, & Yu, 2009; Brown, Hui, Yu, & Kennedy, 2011). The policies imbedded in those jurisdictions may reflect cultural differences (Brown et al 2011; Hui, 2012; Kennedy, 2007).

In China, in the classical canons of Confucian philosophy, obedience was the most valued characteristic of an intellectual (including a teacher) which was purposefully cultivated by the education system (Walker, Qian, & Zhang, 2011). In traditional education, the task of education in China was devoted to teach how to conduct oneself in society rather than to teach how to work; and to educate how to be kind rather than to educate how to pursue truth (Gu, 2006). In the past few thousand years, education in China could be summarized by the term “obedience”. Additionally, the exam (education) system under imperialism and then under communism shared an almost uncanny resemblance (Walker, Qian, & Zhang, 2011), while the people they educated were expected to possess the virtues and qualities of selflessness; dedication to the ruling power, modesty, and honesty (Louie, 1984; as cited in Walker et al., 2011). Differences in culture or society lead not only to differing policies, but also to distinctive perceptions of practices or processes (Brown et al., 2011). Under this culture, Chinese teachers obeying the demands of the system would be normal and acceptable. These cultural influences are considerably different from the United States and other English-

speaking countries. Those other countries share common socio-cultural roots but differ as to how educational policies are implemented and how they are carried out in East Asian countries (Brown et al., 2011).

Other research concepts

Personal values and professional beliefs

Teachers have an image of society that teaching is a matter of values; people teach because they believe in something (Day, 2002) that are called professional beliefs. Day (2002) points out that much empirical research indicated that teachers work through a strong sense of moral purpose. A contradiction exists between teachers' internal beliefs and commitments and the external demands of official pedagogic discourse, and the teachers' own ideas of professional practice might be most beneficial to their individual students (Barrett, 2009). Experiences with policy, district roles, and teachers' beliefs about power relations exert great impact on teachers' willingness to make sense of the policy and incorporate it into educational practice (Louis, Febey, & Schroeder, 2005).

Subject areas and educational contexts

The impacts of accountability are different among disciplines as reported by teachers; Math and science were affected more than social studies and English (Louis, Febey, & Schroeder, 2005).

Work conditions and school levels

Work conditions including school context and organizational

environment influence teachers' performance (Roellke & Rice, 2008).

Teachers who feel supported in the workplace psychologically, instructionally, and administratively also may be more likely to remain in teaching (Odell & Ferraro; Shen; Weiss; as cited in Roellke & Rice, 2008) and to be effective teachers (Day, 2002).

Firestone and Herriott (1982) point out that it is different in important respects between elementary schools and secondary schools, as the differences of educational purpose, leadership styles, the degrees of subject-area specialists, school staff size, and so on.

Work experience and positions

Roellke and Rice (2008) also indicate that novice teachers versus veteran teachers, and school administrators versus teachers, have different understanding of professional development, recruitment, and supportive environment in their accountability system.

School administrators tend to look at the larger picture when considering the effects of accountability programs, and their thought processes are probably similar to those of policy makers and politicians who want to have the type of data provided by testing programs in order to make data-driven decisions about teachers, programs, and schools (Jones & Egley, 2006). Administrators also appear to view testing accountability programs more positively than teachers in part because it provides them with student and teacher data that are useful to them in their role as instructional leaders (Jones

& Egley, 2006).

Collaboration and Clients

Teaching is team work that is collective rather than solely an individual behaviour (Valli, Croninger, & Walters, 2007). In the Paine and Fang (2006) study of China, teachers' public conversations among various work groups and informal communication in offices are important avenues for professional development; teacher learning and lesson preparation are affected both by curriculum content and collegial interaction. Teacher accountability must be seen in conjunction with the causal relationship between teachers' teaching and students' learning outcomes (Christophersen, Elstad, & Turmo, 2010). The senses of achievement and pressure are different between teachers having students of high learning abilities and those having students of low learning abilities. It is impossible to hold the teacher accountable for students' achievements within their control or located outside their realistic sphere of influence (Christophersen et al, 2010; Ingersoll, 2003).

Conclusion

The literature review has shown that it is necessary to explore Chinese teacher accountability within its own distinctive social context, compared with cross-cultural situations. Also, the literature review has shown that it is feasible to employ teachers' age, geography, school level, teaching area, and leadership role as independent variables to inquire about Chinese teacher accountability. Due to the literature limitation, not enough academic

information on previous research about gender has been included, but nonetheless the researcher would still like to conduct gender research in this study, since gender differences often produce significant findings. The following chapter will introduce the methods and research philosophy of the current study.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Chapter three contains information on the research methodology. The chapter is organized into three main sections. The first section describes the population that is studied. It outlines the context in which the study is completed and describes the population. Variables identified in the review of literature are operationalized. The presentation of variables is organized under categories that correspond to the survey instrument used to gather data from Chinese teachers. The second section contains a description of the variables that are examined within the survey that was administered. Operational definitions are provided for the retained variables in the context of the present study. The third section reviews how data were gathered and analyzed.

Study Design

This research uses a cross-sectional survey design focused on the values and attitudes of Chinese teachers toward teacher accountability. The cross-sectional survey approach is economical in terms of time and resources (Creswell, 2012), and it has been found to be a reliable and valid way to collect data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

Data Collection

The survey was conducted in the winter of 2014. Participants are school teachers from mainland China. Most of them are from Shaanxi, Guangxi, Guangdong, and Jilin provinces. Guangdong is a developed province in the southeast part of China. Guangxi is the neighbouring province of Guangdong, but not as developed as Guangdong. Jilin province is located in the northeast, and Shaanxi is located in the western part of China. Both Jilin and Shaanxi are northern provinces, and less developed than Guangdong.

Five approaches were employed to contact participants to finish the questionnaires either on paper or online. First, some teachers were contacted directly; second, an educational district department was contacted, and then district administrators helped to contact several principals in their district, and then the principals helped to collect questionnaires from their teachers; third, the researcher contacted a normal university which holds teacher public conferences, and then university staff helped to collect questionnaires from the teachers during the conference; forth, the researcher contacted the alumni office of the second normal university, and then the alumni officer helped collect questionnaires from their alumni who were engaged in an educational career; Fifth, a professor of the third normal university helped to collect questionnaires from his previous students who were teachers. It is necessary

to state that, in China, normal universities mainly develop graduates for teaching in the public school system, and they are qualified to issue teacher certificates to their own eligible graduates. That is the reason why three normal universities were contacted to participate in this study.

The survey was adapted from the Consortium for Cross Cultural Research in Education (CCCRC) and has been field tested for validity and reliability internationally (Rosenblatt, 2013). The CCCRC is a consortium that has studied international education from a social and cultural perspective for nearly four decades. It has recently begun a ten-country study of teacher accountability and each country has started gathering data using the Rosenblatt Questionnaire. The Questionnaire has been validated in each participating country.

Ethics approval has been obtained by Dr. Noel Hurley to begin a teacher accountability study at the Faculty of Education at Memorial University. This study is being conducted under the umbrella of his research program. A copy of the Ethics Approval can be seen in Appendix B.

Several hundred questionnaires were received. However, after selection, only three hundred valid questionnaires were retained for analysis. In the 300 valid responses, 32% of them are from male teachers, 64% are from female teachers, and 4% are missing gender identification. Similarly, 62% are from the teachers who are under 35 (including 35) years old, 36% are from the

teachers who are over 35, and 2% are missing age indemnification; 58% are from urban area, 14% are suburban, 21% are rural, and 3% are other cases, and 4% are missing of school location; 14% are from elementary teachers, 16% are middle school teachers, 69% are high school teachers, 1% are from the school with 12 grades or missing this school level information; 50% are from those teachers subjected in arts (humanities, languages, and social studies), 41% are from those teachers subjected in science (including mathematics and technology), 5% are from art or sport teachers, 3% are from other teachers, and 1% are missing this information on subjects; and 17% responders are holding school leadership positions, 77% are general teachers, 6% are missing leadership role information.

The Variables

Independent variables

Six independent variables were examined: gender, age, geography, school level, teaching area, and school leadership role. Age groups were coded using the boundary of 35 years old, since those teachers who are under 35 were born after the Reform and Opening Up in 1978, which was an important turning point during the process of development of Chinese society. School geography categories were coded as urban, suburban and rural areas, as the degrees of development and styles of life situations are different among these locations. School levels were coded as elementary (Grade 1- 6), middle

(Grade 7 – 9), and high (Grade 10 -12) schools, which are consistent with the general status of Chinese schools. School leadership roles were identified as school administrators (in addition to teaching e. g., vice-principal, department leader, grade – level coordinator, subject – area coordinator, etc.).

Dependent variables

A number of measures have been examined to investigate accountability of teachers in China. A 58-point questionnaire was used to obtain information on retained variables that have been found to be predictive of various elements of accountability. Thirteen questions were constructed to assess levels of external (bureaucratic) accountability. The scale for external accountability consisted of four sub-dimensions: Setting goals/meeting standards; Reporting on performance; Transparency; and Evaluation and feedback. Internal (professional) accountability was sub-divided into the two dimensions; professional code and work ethic and data were gathered using seven questions. Teacher attitudes toward accountability were also measured by seven questions. Seven other questions were similarly used to gather data on teacher job autonomy and school support. Measures of school culture were obtained from thirty questions that looked at individualism, collectivism, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance.

The overall Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients are shown in Table 3.1. The coefficient of Section 1 (External accountability

(bureaucratic)) is .839; the one of Section 2 (Internal accountability (professional)) is .810; and those of the two parts (school administration and parents) of Section 3 (Attitudes towards accountability) are .818 and .840. All of them provide evidence that these scales are acceptable, since the coefficients are all greater than .70 (Nunnally, 1978).

One scale measured *external accountability*. This scale was made up of 13 questions.

In your work as a teacher, to what extent do you feel this your responsibility:

- 1) Make sure your students achieve high achievement scores
- 2) Meet expected standards
- 3) Be accountable for your students achievements
- 4) Report to school leadership on the way you perform your work
- 5) Report to other teachers on the way you perform your work
- 6) Report to parents on the way you perform your work
- 7) Allow your work in class to be transparent to school leadership
- 8) Allow your work in class to be transparent to other teachers
- 9) Allow your work in class to be transparent to parents
- 10) Be evaluated on the basis of your work achievements
- 11) Change your work according to feedback you get
- 12) Be held accountable when your work in the classroom does not meet expectations
- 13) Be acknowledged for the success of your classes.

The item scales ranged from *very little extent, little extent, neutral, large extent, to very large extent*. This scale was found to be reliable for all grades and had an overall reliability of .839. Higher scores for external accountability indicate that teachers feel higher levels being held externally accountable by others.

The second scale measured *internal accountability*. This scale was constituted by 7 items:

In your work as a teacher, to what extent do you feel that it is your duty to:

- 1) Achieve professional goals
- 2) Develop professionally (training sessions, workshops, conferences, etc.)
- 3) Learn from the work of outstanding colleagues
- 4) Be responsible for teaching in the best possible way
- 5) Be responsible for using professional knowledge in your work
- 6) Be accountable to your own inner moral standards
- 7) Be accountable to professional ethics

The item scales ranged from *very little extent, little extent, neutral, large extent, to very large extent*. This scale was found to be reliable and had an overall reliability of .810. Higher scores for internal accountability indicate that teachers hold higher levels of accountability.

The third scale measured *attitudes towards accountability – school administration*. This scale was made up of 7 items:

To what extent do you believe your work should include the following

behaviors and activities:

- 1) Strive to achieve set goals
- 2) Report on your performance regarding students' academic achievements
- 3) Report on performance regarding curriculum coverage
- 4) Report on performance regarding social climate (e.g., student behavior, discipline) in class
- 5) Show transparency in your work
- 6) Get formal evaluations on the results of your work
- 7) Get feedback on your teaching

The item scales ranged from very *little extent*, *little extent*, *neutral*, *large extent*, to *very large extent*. This scale was found to be reliable and had an overall reliability of .818. Higher scores for attitudes toward accountability indicate that teachers view they are being held accountable by school administration.

The fourth scale measured *attitudes towards accountability – parents*.

This scale was made up of 7 items:

To what extent do you believe your work should include the following behaviors and activities:

- 1) Strive to achieve set goals
- 2) Report on your performance regarding students' academic achievements
- 3) Report on performance regarding curriculum coverage
- 4) Report on performance regarding social climate (e.g., student behavior,

discipline) in class

- 5) Show transparency in your work
- 6) Get formal evaluations on the results of your work
- 7) Get feedback on your teaching

The item scales ranged from very *little extent*, *little extent*, *neutral*, *large extent*, to *very large extent*. This scale was found to be reliable and had an overall reliability of .840. Higher scores for attitudes toward accountability indicate that teachers view they are being held accountable by parents.

Table 3.1

Reliability Coefficients: Chinese Teacher's Accountability Variables

Scales	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
External accountability (bureaucratic)	13	.839
Internal accountability (professional)	7	.810
Attitudes towards accountability – School administration	7	.818
Attitudes towards accountability – Parents	7	.840

Table 3.2 shows the descriptive statistics for the dependent variables. The

skewness statistics are all in the range of -1 between 1, all close to zero

making the scales nearly normal. They give evidence that the data are normal.

Descriptive Data on the Chinese Teacher's 'Variables of Accountability

Scales	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Min-Max	Skewness
External accountability (bureaucratic)	275	3.68	.58	1-5	-.43
Internal accountability (professional)	284	4.14	.58	1-5	-.80
Attitudes towards accountability - Administrators	286	3.74	.65	1-5	-.56
Attitudes towards accountability – Parents	276	3.65	.75	1-5	-.50

Data Analysis

The analysis of data was conducted using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 22. The analyses conducted were means, Analysis of variance (ANOVA), and Pearson Chi-squares.

Means were employed to measure the individual items. ANOVAs were used to detect significance between group means and their associated procedures (DeCoster, 2006). Individual items were analyzed using Pearson Chi-squares to explore if there were differences with the independent variables.

In the following chapter, a description of the results of the data analysis will be put forward in three steps, first by providing the individual means for the four scales, then through analysis of variance, and finally by the significant difference between individual items within the independent variables.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

Introduction

The results of the analysis of the data collected for the study are reported in this chapter. The analysis is conducted around two questions:

- 1) What are Chinese teachers' perceptions toward external accountability (bureaucratic)?
- 2) What are Chinese teachers' perceptions toward internal accountability (professional)?

The three questionnaire sections are (1) accountability (bureaucratic); (2) Attitudes towards accountability – School administration; Attitudes towards accountability – Parents; and (3) Internal accountability (professional).

Tables consist of descriptive statistics, frequencies, and means. The analysis is based on several independent demographic variables: gender, age, geography, school level, teaching area, and leadership role, of the sample of Chinese teachers. The following statistical results are discussed: the results of the analysis of the variance of three questionnaire sections, and the cross tabulation and chi-square results of sections and individual items by independent variables.

Research Question 1

The first research question is: What are Chinese teachers' perceptions toward external accountability (bureaucratic)?

In order to answer this question, two sets of items within two sections were designed on the questionnaire and analyzed.

The two sections are:

External Accountability (Bureaucratic): 13 items;

Attitudes toward Accountability (School administration and Parents): 7 items each.

External accountability (bureaucratic)

According to Rosenblatt (2013), teacher accountability can be manifested by external accountability and internal accountability. She defines that external accountability is namely based on a receiving audience outside to the focal individual, in which “external accountability would typically represent a response to expectations and demands of formal (e.g., superintendent, school principal) or informal (e.g., parents, colleagues, students) audiences”. A set of 13 items was designed in this section to test the definition and understanding as above. The 13 items include a range of responses from one (very little extent) to five (very large extent) on the questionnaire.

According to the means of these 13 items, all of them are higher than 3 (in 5) except Question 5 (Report to other teachers on the way you perform your work) (Table 4.1). Teachers are highly accountable for student achievements, scores, and expected standards; teachers’ work is transparent to school leadership, other teachers, and parents; teachers report their work to

school leadership, and parents, but they do not feel that they need to report to other teachers; teachers are evaluated, being held accountable, and acknowledged for their work, especially that they should change their work according to feedback they received (mean = 4.05).

Table 4.1

Item Statistics: External accountability (bureaucratic) (N=275)

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
<i>In your work as a teacher, to what extent do you feel that it is your responsibility to</i>			
Q1. Make sure your students achieve high achievement scores	3.91	.887	275
Q2. Meet expected standards	3.73	.768	275
Q3. Be accountable for your students achievements	3.91	.935	275
Q4. Report to school leadership on the way you perform your work	3.31	1.068	275
Q5. Report to other teachers on the way you perform your work	2.98	1.165	275
Q6. Report to parents on the way you perform your work	3.52	1.068	275
Q7. Allow your work in class to be transparent to school leadership	3.75	.989	275
Q8. Allow your work in class to be transparent to other teachers	3.61	1.120	275
Q9. Allow your work in class to be transparent to parents	3.60	1.117	275
Q10. Be evaluated on the basis of your work achievement	3.79	1.007	275
Q11. Change your work according to feedback you get	4.05	.837	275
Q12. Be held accountable when your work in the classroom does not meet expectations	3.81	.940	275
Q13. Be acknowledged for the success of your classes	3.84	.973	275

The means, standard deviations, and significant difference for responses made by gender, age, geography, school level, teaching area, and leadership role of the sample of Chinese teachers were calculated for the External Accountability (bureaucratic) section as a whole, the results of which are contained in Table 4.2. This was done to obtain an idea of the views of Chinese teachers in different categories towards external accountability (bureaucratic).

The means indicate that the teachers of all sorts of categories view that they are being held highly accountable for the dimensions of external accountability (Mean > 3).

An analysis of variance with a level of significance at .05 was completed on the section to determine if there were any significant differences between the means of groups, with regards to their views towards external accountability (bureaucratic).

Table 4.2

Analysis of Variance Results for External Accountability (Bureaucratic) by
Demographic and Teaching Variables.

		N	Mean	SD	MS	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Gender	Male	88	3.59	0.57	0.879	2.71	0.101
	Female	176	3.71	0.57	0.324		
Age	Up to 35	173	3.68	0.56	0.123	0.361	0.548
	36 and over	97	3.64	0.60	0.339		
Geography	Urban	158	3.70	0.59	0.048	0.135	0.714
	Rural	59	3.66	0.62	0.358		
School level	Elementary	36	3.58	0.68	0.355	1.04	0.355
	Middle school	45	3.62	0.63	0.341		
	High school	191	3.71	0.55			
Teaching area	Humanities, languages, and social studies	134	3.70	0.55	0.141	0.416	0.660
	Science, mathematics, and technology	115	3.68	0.59	0.339		
	Other	22	3.57	0.71			
Leadership role	School administrator	45	3.51	0.64	1.236	3.623	0.058
	Teacher	213	3.70	0.57	0.341		

The mean for the section as a whole was calculated by adding each response in the section and dividing the total by the number (13) of items. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 4.2. This analysis indicates that there are no significant difference (all $p > .05$) among the groups of each categories.

The analysis showed a significant difference ($p = .001$) in Question 13 which was stated as “be acknowledged for the success of your classes”. The large extent and very large extent of urban teachers’ was 74.3% (46% + 29.3%), which was much higher than the rate of rural teachers that was 53.1% (35% + 17.2%). Rural teachers’ chances of being acknowledged for the success of their classes were less than urban peers’.

Table 4.3

Q13. Be Acknowledged for the Success of your Classes by Geographic Location of School

	Urban	Rural	Total
Very little extent	2.3%	1.6%	2.1%
Little extent	2.9%	15.6%	6.3%
Neutral	19.5%	29.7%	22.3%
Large extent	46.0%	35.9%	43.3%
Very large extent	29.3%	17.2%	26.1%
Total	N=174	N=64	N=238
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Note. $\chi^2 = 18.085$, $df = 4$, $p = 0.001$

Attitudes towards accountability – school administration and parents

As the two main receiving audiences, school administration and parents play important roles in teachers' external accountability. A set of seven items regarding external accountability was developed to test teachers' attitudes concerning the degree of audit both on the dimensions of school administration and parents. The seven items reflect achieving goals, reporting performance (student achievements, curriculum, and social climate), transparency, being evaluated, and getting feedback, also include the range of one (very little extent) to five (very great extent).

Teachers' attitudes towards accountability are both strong on the aspects of school administration and parents, as the information in Table 4.4 and 4.5 below show since all means are higher than 3. In teachers' responses, they strongly strive to achieve set goals, report on performance (regarding students' academic achievements, curriculum coverage, and social climate), show transparency in their work, get formal evaluations on the results of their work, and get feedback on their teaching on both angles of school administration and parents.

In question 21 and 22, teachers' attitudes towards "striving to achieve set goals" and "reporting performance about student academic achievements" are stronger from the parents' perspectives than those of school administration.

Among all the measures, for Question 23 the parents' dimension is the

lowest (Mean=3.26), and the Std. Deviation is highest (SD =1.174) among the items of same group.

All the standard deviations of the school administration dimension are lower than 1 (Table 4.4). It means that there is not much divergence of teacher attitudes towards accountability on the school administration measures.

Table 4.4

Item Statistics: Attitudes towards Accountability – School Administration

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
<i>To what extent do you believe your work should include the following behaviours and activities</i>			
Q21. Strive to achieve set goals - School administration	3.80	.927	286
Q22. Report on your performance regarding students' academic achievements - School administration	3.62	.893	286
Q23. Report on performance regarding curriculum coverage - School administration	3.49	.980	286
Q24. Report on performance regarding social climate (e.g., student behavior, discipline) in class - School administration	3.68	.998	286
Q25. Show transparency in your work - School administration	3.79	.958	286
Q26. Get formal evaluations on the results of your work - School administration	3.79	.976	286
Q27. Get feedback on your teaching - School administration	4.02	.864	286

In contrast, there are five items for which the standard deviations of seven are higher than 1 (Table 4.5). Teachers' attitudes towards accountability on the parents' measure are not as concentrated as those on school administration dimension.

Table 4.5

Item Statistics: Attitudes towards accountability – Parents

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
<i>To what extent do you believe your work should include the following behaviours and activities</i>			
Q21. Strive to achieve set goals – Parents	4.03	.904	276
Q22. Report on your performance regarding students' academic achievements - Parents	3.78	.994	276
Q23. Report on performance regarding curriculum coverage – Parents	3.26	1.174	276
Q24. Report on performance regarding social climate (e.g., student behavior, discipline) in class – Parents	3.61	1.131	276
Q25. Show transparency in your work – Parents	3.70	1.030	276
Q26. Get formal evaluations on the results of your work – Parents	3.55	1.089	276
Q27. Get feedback on your teaching - Parents	3.62	1.053	276

The means, standard deviations, and significant difference for responses made by gender, age, geography, school level, teaching area, and leadership role of the sample of Chinese teachers were calculated for the attitudes towards accountability- school administration section as a whole, the results of which are contained in Table 4.6 as below. This was done to obtain an idea of the view of Chinese teachers from various backgrounds towards Attitudes towards accountability- school administration.

The means indicate that the teachers of all sorts of categories views that they are being held highly accountable for the attitudes towards accountability- parents (Mean > 3).

An analysis of variance with a level of significance at .05 was completed on the section to identify if there were any significant difference by demographic and teaching experience between the means of groups, with regards to their views towards attitudes towards accountability- school administration. The mean for the section as a whole was calculated by adding each response in the section and dividing the total by the number of items. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 4.6 below. This analysis indicates that there is no significant difference (all $p > .05$) among the groups of each categories.

Table 4.6

Analysis of Variance Results for Attitudes towards Accountability – School Administration by Demographic and Teaching Variables.

		N	Mean	SD	MS	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Gender	Male	89	3.87	0.58	0.713	1.673	0.197
	Female	186	3.78	0.69	0.426		
Age	Up to 35	179	3.77	0.65	0.692	1.636	0.202
	36 and over	103	3.67	0.66	0.423		
Geography	Urban	166	3.81	0.61	0.314	0.786	0.376
	Rural	62	3.73	0.69	0.400		
School level	Elementary	42	3.65	0.65	0.242	0.563	0.570
	Middle school	45	3.79	0.70	0.430		
	High school	196	3.75	0.65			
Teaching area	Humanities, languages, and social studies	146	3.77	0.60	0.198	0.463	0.630
	Science, mathematics, and technology	115	3.73	0.73	0.428		
	Other	24	3.64	0.60			
Leadership role	School administrator	47	3.69	0.66	0.131	0.306	0.580
	Teacher	223	3.75	0.65	0.428		

The means, standard deviations, and significant difference for responses made by gender, age, geography, school level, teaching area, and leadership role of the sample of Chinese teachers were calculated for the attitudes towards accountability- parents section as a whole, the results of which are contained in Table 4.7 below. This was done to obtain an idea of the views of Chinese teachers in different backgrounds towards Attitudes towards accountability- parents. The means indicate that the teachers of all categories view that they are being highly accountable for the attitudes towards accountability- parents (Mean > 3).

An analysis of variance with a level of significance at .05 was completed on the section to identify if there was any significant difference between the means of groups, with regards to their views towards attitudes towards accountability parents. The mean for the section as a whole was calculated by adding each response in the section and dividing the total by the number of items. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 4.7 below. This analysis indicates that, among all the groups of each categories, there is only one significant difference ($p = .009$), which shows at the category of gender. The mean of female teachers' attitudes (Mean = 3.71) is higher than the one of male teachers (Mean = 3.46) toward parent dimension. It indicates that female Chinese teachers care more than male teachers on parent accountability.

Table 4.7

Analysis of Variance Results for Attitudes towards Accountability - Parents by Demographic
and Teaching Variables.

		N	Mean	SD	MS	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Gender	Male	86	3.46	0.77	3.877	6.905	0.009
	Female	180	3.71	0.74	0.562		
Age	Up to 35	173	3.63	0.70	0.073	0.130	0.719
	36 and over	99	3.66	0.83	0.567		
Geography	Urban	163	3.62	0.76	0.046	0.081	0.776
	Rural	58	3.66	0.75	0.572		
School level	Elementary	41	3.82	0.73	1.078	1.890	0.153
	Middle school	46	3.50	0.87	0.570		
	High school	186	3.65	0.73			
Teaching area	Humanities, languages, and social studies	141	3.65	0.76	0.053	0.093	0.911
	Science, mathematics, and technology	113	3.66	0.70	0.574		
	Other	20	3.58	0.99			
Leadership role	School administrator	46	3.66	0.69	0.073	0.128	0.721
	Teacher	214	3.62	0.76	0.566		

Comparing the two tables above (Table 4.6 & 4.7), most means for the school administration measure, among the groups of each category, are higher than those for the parent measure. This implies that school administration impacts teachers' attitudes stronger than parents, even though both of them are strongly auditing teachers' accountability. Only the elementary group of the school level category is different from the others. The mean of elementary teachers on the parents' measure (Mean = 3.82) is higher than school administration measure (Mean = 3.65). It indicates that the influence from parents impacts elementary teachers more than the influence from school administration.

Conclusion for Research Question 1

The first research question is: What are Chinese teachers' perceptions toward external accountability (bureaucratic)?

As the findings showed above, Chinese teachers are being held externally accountable for their performance. They are being held highly accountable for student achievement, scores, and expected standards; teachers' works are transparent to school leadership, other teachers, and parents; teachers report their work to school leadership, and parents, but they do not report to other teachers; teachers are evaluated, being held accountable, and are acknowledged according to their performance, and they are expected to change their work according to feedback they received.

Chinese teachers, regardless of gender, age, school level, teaching area, and leadership role, view that they are being held highly accountable from an external accountability perspective. There is no significant difference among the groups of each category, except female Chinese teachers care more than male teachers on parent accountability. However, in terms of the comparisons of specific questions, rural teachers' opportunities of being acknowledged for the success of their classes were less than their urban peers' status. The two main external audiences, school administration and parents both hold Chinese teachers highly accountable for their teaching performance. In most parts, teachers are being held more accountable by school administration than by parents. Teachers' are not as concerned about accountability to parents as they are about accountability to school administrators. Among demographic indicators such as gender, age, school level, teaching area, and leadership role, only the influence from parents impact elementary teachers (in the school level category) more than the influence from school administration.

Research Question 2

The second research question is: What are Chinese teachers' perceptions toward internal accountability (professional)?

In order to answer this question, one set of items within one section was designed on the questionnaire and analyzed. The section is: Internal Accountability (Professional) and contains 7 items.

Internal accountability (professional)

Rosenblatt (2013) quotes the Schlenker and Weigold (1989) introduction of the notion of self-accountability, which pertains to internal mechanisms such as personal values and ethics. Rosenblatt indicates these mechanisms provide inner standards and goals for individuals, who serve in this situation as both a reporting party and a receiving audience. “The internal aspect is represented by the efficacy of the concept of the self as an audience, and is, in fact, a subjective interpretation of external cues and demands” (Rosenblatt, 2013, p. 6). Compared to external accountability, “internal accountability would typically represent a response to the professional wisdom and ethics of the educators themselves” (Rosenblatt, 2013). The 7 items that include a range of responses from one (very little extent) to five (very large extent) in this section are consistent with the definition and used to test that as above. A set of 7 items was designed to be consistent with the understanding and to test the definition as above. The 7 items include a range of responses from one (very little extent) to five (very large extent) on the questionnaire.

In the professional accountability part, teachers are held highly accountable for all the aspects of these questions (Mean >3), that teachers are accountable to achieve professional goals, develop professionally, learn from colleagues, teach in the best possible way, use professional knowledge, and be accountable to teachers’ own inner moral standards and professional ethics, especially inner moral standards and professional ethics (Mean >4.5) (Table

4.8). Most participants chose “agree” or “strongly agree” to answer Question 19 “be accountable to your own inner moral standards” and Question 20 “be accountable to professional ethics”. That the standard deviation of these two questions ($SD = .700$ and $SD = .724$) are less than those of other items, means teachers’ answers for these two items are more concentrated and their opinions are less divided.

Question 17 that “be responsible for teaching in the best possible way” is the third highest item ($Mean=4.42$) among these questions of Section 2, and the standard deviation is also concentrated ($SD = .764$).

Compared with other items, Question 13 (that “develop professionally (training sessions, workshops, conferences, etc) was recognized lower than other items ($Mean=3.36$), and its Standard Deviation is most dispersive in this part ($SD = 1.062$).

Table 4.8

Item Statistics: Internal Accountability (Professional) N=284

	Mea	Std.	
Items	n	Deviation	N
<i>In your work as a teacher, to what extent do you feel that it is your duty to</i>			
Q14. Achieve professional goals	3.92	.906	284
Q15. Develop professionally (training sessions, workshops, conferences, etc)	3.36	1.062	284
Q16. Learn from the work of outstanding colleagues	3.99	.886	284
Q17. Be responsible for teaching in the best possible way	4.42	.764	284
Q18. Be responsible for using professional knowledge in your work	4.27	.836	284
Q19. Be accountable to your own inner moral standards	4.54	.700	284
Q20. Be accountable to professional ethics	4.51	.726	284

Table 4.9

Analysis of Variance Results for Internal Accountability (Professional) by
Demographic and Teaching Variables.

		N	Mean	SD	MS	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Gender	Male	88	4.12	0.48	0.081	0.246	0.621
	Female	183	4.16	0.61	0.328		
Age	Up to 35	181	4.11	0.61	0.541	1.593	0.208
	36 and over	98	4.20	0.53	0.340		
Geography	Urban	163	4.18	0.59	0.403	1.191	0.276
	Rural	63	4.09	0.56	0.339		
School level	Elementary	43	4.07	0.72	0.485	1.450	0.236
	Middle school	43	4.27	0.46	0.334		
	High school	195	4.14	0.57			
Teaching area	Humanities, languages, and social studies	144	4.17	0.59	0.360	1.065	0.346
	Science, mathematics, and technology	114	4.15	0.55	0.338		
	Other	22	3.97	0.65			
Leadership role	School administrator	46	4.06	0.60	0.400	1.216	0.261
	Teacher	220	4.16	0.57	0.329		

The means, standard deviations, and significant differences for responses made by gender, age, geography, school level, teaching area, and leadership role of the sample of Chinese teachers were calculated for the Internal accountability (professional) section as a whole, the results of which are contained in Table 4.9. This was done to obtain an idea of the views of Chinese teachers in different categories towards internal accountability (professional). The means indicate that the teachers of all categories view that they are being held highly accountable for the dimensions of internal accountability (Mean > 3).

An analysis of variance with a level of significance at .05 was completed on the section to identify if there was any significant difference between the means of groups, with regards to their views towards internal accountability (professional). The mean for the section as a whole was calculated by adding each response in the section and dividing the total by the number of items. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 4.9. This analysis indicates that there is no significant difference (all $p > .05$) among the groups.

The means for internal accountability (professional) are higher than those of external accountability (bureaucratic) among different groups in each category. Only the mean of one sub-category, which is the “other group” of teaching area is less than 4 (Mean = 3.97), but it is still higher than that mean of the same group in the external accountability section. High school teachers thought they should be responsible for using professional knowledge in their

work more than elementary teachers. According to the information of Tables 4.8 and 4.9, teachers' responses to Question 18 are different by level of schooling.

There is significant difference between elementary school and high school data ($p=0.002$) (Table 4.10). Question 18 is "be responsible for using professional knowledge in your work". The rate of large extent and very large extent of elementary teachers' choices is 74.5% (41.9% + 32.6%), but the rate of those of high school teachers is 85.5% (34.0% + 51.5%). The rate of high school is higher than that of elementary school. Although most elementary teachers thought they should be responsible for using professional knowledge in their work, only a few high school teachers thought they should be responsible for that to a "little extent" and "very little extent". However, there is no significant difference between the data of middle school and high school toward this question (Table 4.11).

Table 4.10

Q18. Be Responsible For Using Professional Knowledge in Your Work by School Levels

	Elementary School	High School	Total
Very little extent	2.3%	.0%	.4%
Little extent	11.6%	1.9%	3.6%
Neutral	11.6%	12.6%	12.4%
Large extent	41.9%	34.0%	35.3%
Very large extent	32.6%	51.5%	48.2%
Total	N=43	N=206	N=249
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Note. $\chi^2 = 17.314$, $df = 4$, $p = 0.002$

Table 4.11

Q18. Be Responsible For Using Professional Knowledge in Your Work by School

Levels

	Middle	High	Total
	School	School	
Little extent	--	1.9%	1.6%
Neutral	13.3%	12.6%	12.7%
Large extent	44.4%	34.0%	35.9%
Very large extent	42.2%	51.5%	49.8%
Total	N=45	N=206	N=251
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Note. $\chi^2 = 2.649$, $df = 3$, $p = 0.449$

Conclusion for Research Question 2

The second research question is what are Chinese teachers' perceptions toward internal accountability (professional)?

Chinese teachers are accountable to achieve professional goals, develop professionally, learn from colleagues, teach in the best possible way, use professional knowledge, and be accountable to teachers' own inner moral standards and professional ethics. Especially, they are highly accountable to their own inner moral standards and professional ethics. The item of "be responsible for teaching in the best possible way" has the third highest mean after the two items of "inner moral standards" and "professional ethics" among those seven specific questions in the internal accountability (professional) section. In contrast, "develop professionally (training sessions, workshops, conferences, etc.) is recognized less accountably than other items by teachers. Among those categories, which are gender, age, school level, teaching area, and leadership role, there is no significant difference on teachers' views. However, in terms of the means of specific questions, elementary teachers view their responsibilities for using professional knowledge in their work as being lower than high school teachers, but the means are similar between middle school teachers and high school teachers on this measure. In sum, the means of internal accountability (professional) are higher than those of external accountability (bureaucratic) among different groups in each category of Chinese teachers.

Based on the findings of the two research questions, Chapter 5 will contains a discussion of the understandings of Chinese teachers' perceptions toward teacher accountability.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter discusses the understandings of Chinese teachers' perceptions toward external accountability (bureaucratic) and internal accountability (professional). Two parts are addressed:

1. Understandings about Chinese teachers' perceptions toward external accountability (bureaucratic).
2. Understandings about Chinese teachers' perceptions toward internal accountability (professional).

Understandings of the Chinese Teachers' Perceptions toward External

Accountability (Bureaucratic)

Students' achievement and scores

Student achievement, especially the achievements on public examinations are very important within Chinese teachers' responsibilities.

Public exam systems

Public examinations play pivotal and selecting roles in Chinese society (Marton, 2006; Dello-Lacovo, 2009). The college entrance examination (Gaokao) is widely seen as *the baton of education* (Dello-Lacovo, 2009), which happens at the end of Grade 12. Zhongkao, another examination that

plays both the role of high school entrance and the graduation of junior secondary education, happens at the end of Grade 9, also impacts the student and teacher school lives of middle and elementary schools. Only the students who receive eligible scores on the Gaokao (CEE) examination may be given the chance to receive higher education; and the admissions to universities are generally positively correlated with the score levels of students, which means that the higher scoring students gain admission to the most reputable and more highly sought after universities. Similarly, only the students who get higher scores on the Zhongkao examination can enroll for high school education, especially in the reputable high schools. Thus, success in examinations is of critical importance to students' future living standards and remains the principal and basic condition of assessment of teacher and school performance (Dello-Lacovo, 2009; Marton, 2006). The basic goal for most teachers is to teach so that their students achieve good marks on exams (Marton, 2006), and teachers' salaries are also related to students' exam results (Dello-Lacovo, 2009).

Traditional exam culture

Chinese society historically has relied on high-stake examinations to select qualified people (Walker, Qian, & Zhang, 2011). The imperial civil service examination, which originated from the Sui Dynasty (606 A. D.), was used to select scholar-officials for public administration; this produced a

profound impact on Chinese education (Gu, 2006). People believe the concept of *Officialdom as the natural outlet for good scholars*. A good person is one who obtains good scores because the results of the examinations reflect the quality and worth of the person (China Civilisation Center, 2007; Li, 2009; Pong & Chow, 2002; as cited in Brown, Hui, Yu, & Kennedy, 2011).

Students with good scores on examinations always make their parents feel proud. Those teachers or schools whose students have high exam scores are always honored by others and society as a whole. Every year, many high schools or even junior high schools would post up their good exam scores of students as their advertisements to attract people's attention. The Zhuangyuan (The Number One Scholar) of a province in the annual Gaokao and his/her school would become the top story of all sorts of media. Certainly, the achievement of cultivating a Zhuangyuan would cause the teacher to be honored for many years throughout life.

Social equity function of examination

There are some social problems with inequalities in current Chinese society associated with development of the country, such as the inequalities among rural and urban areas, regions, and gender. Those social problems or inequalities make people live in different social levels and experience different qualities of life. However, public examinations can prevent corruption and collusion in the selection of meritorious candidates in light of limited

resources (Brown, Hui, Yu, & Kennedy, 2011). Passing the public examinations to get a good education experience is an effective way for youth, who are from disadvantaged groups such as rural areas or undeveloped regions, to change their lives, since they might get a good job in a city or a developed region, or have the ability to contribute to their family or hometown after they graduate from university. Since Gaokao is comparatively equal in the standard requirements and schedule, even though the process of learning of students may be not equal, it has received respect from parents and other people. The Gaokao system of examinations is supervised strictly, such as the procedures of setting test papers, organizing examinations, and grading marks. Gaokao is a valuable social policy approach which plays an important role in maintaining social stability and transcending the simple functions as a sorting examination. Teachers who teach students how to be successful on the Gaokao examination are held in high regard socially and are rewarded for their students being successful.

Multiple external audits

Findings from this study show clearly that Chinese teachers should be accountable for their students, they much report their work to school leadership and parents, and their work is transparent to school leadership, other teachers, and parents. It is consistent with the definition of Rosenblatt (2013). She defines that external accountability is “based on receiving

audience outside to the focal individual” (p. 6), in which external accountability would reflect a response to expectations and demands of the outside audience, such as school leadership, parents, colleagues, and students. In addition, Chinese teachers should also live up to the expectations of stakeholders and be responsive to public opinion. Many schools have to seek their own stakeholders who make up for the shortfall in funding, since government has not resolved the financial shortage in schools (Lin & Zhang, 2006). Most of the school stakeholders might be student parents, but they have more powerful influence on teachers and schools than parents in general.

In Chinese traditional culture, intellectuals, especially teachers who educated others, should have better morals and have higher expectations for more socially acceptable behaviour. If is any topic or issue related to teachers, they would be given more attention by people and society. Since public opinions are always critical to teachers, teachers have to be cautious in their social behaviour including both inside the classroom and outside the classroom. It can be concluded that students, school leadership, other teachers, and parents are all external audiences to Chinese teachers when considering accountability.

Chinese teachers, as a provider of service (Ahearn, 2000), actually meet various audits from multiple external agents which have power to monitor their performance and various behaviours (Rosenblatt, 2013). Liu and

Onwuegbuzie (2012) point out that Chinese teachers take multiple job stresses which originate from several sources, such as students, parents, society, and policies. They describe that teachers are paying too much attention to expectations from society, and they might not get much support from society and parents. Therefore, the external accountability of Chinese teachers is a mixed audit system. Teachers' behaviours are restricted and impacted by many agents or individuals.

The reality of being evaluated

Findings in this study suggest that Chinese teachers feel that they are evaluated to a high degree. Teachers have a strong feeling that they should change their work according to the feedback they get, while they should be held accountable when their work does not meet expectations and be acknowledged when their students are successful. As indicated by Brown, Hui, Yu, and Kennedy (2011), accountability in China is about controlling schools, teachers, and students, rather than simply determining how good they are.

Evaluation is always an effective tool for sanctioning teachers who do not meet the expected standards, and to reward those who meet expectations. The success of these teachers can stimulate other teachers to imitate them. The reality is that evaluation in China has been practised mainly to reward and

punish teachers based on their past performance (Walker, Qian, & Zhang, 2011).

Teachers meet multiple evaluations since they have to meet multiple audits. Generally, students evaluate their teachers through questionnaires, which are designed and managed by school administration in a formal way. School administrators evaluate teachers in many ways. This includes students' scores, behaviours, comments, and evaluation; observations of teachers' teaching, grading of students' homework, and teachers' performance in seminars, meetings, or conferences; and listening to or collecting parents' opinions about teachers. Parents' evaluations of teachers are usually presented informally, but the evaluations are powerful. In terms of the findings of "teachers' attitudes toward accountability", parents impact strongly teachers' views in many aspects. The fact is that the survival and development of schools depend on the support of parents. Chinese parents can choose the school that their children attend based on school performance, the reputations of teachers, and tuition levels.

In addition, teachers are evaluated by governments. The educational departments of government organize some kinds of teaching competition for teachers. They use their rules and requirements to measure teachers' performance among the competitions, and then they will reward the winners. Generally, they do not punish the losers. However, their rules or requirements

of the competitions would become the standards or models for teachers'

teaching, which stimulate and encourage teachers to do what they have been instructed to do by the government. In summary, teachers are evaluated by students, parents, school administration, and government.

A consideration of collaboration and competition among co-teachers

In terms of the findings of this study, teachers report their work to school leadership and parents, but they do not report their work to other teachers, even though their work is transparent to other teachers. Teaching is team work that is collective rather than solely an individual behavior (Valli, Croninger, & Walters, 2007). Additionally, teachers can also benefit from and contribute to the public conversation, such as the weekly meeting of lesson preparation groups, teaching research groups, and class head groups (Paine & Fang, 2006). .

The relationships among Chinese teachers seem to be parallel collaboration and competition.

The disparity between urban and rural areas

Based on the comparison findings of the specific item, there are significant differences between rural teachers and urban teachers when they are being compared. Rural teachers' chances of being acknowledged for the success of their classes are less than their urban peers. Firstly, rural teachers'

salaries are less than urban teachers' (Liu & Onwuegbuzie, 2012). Sometimes a rural teacher's salary is just half or less than an urban teacher's salary.

Similarly, the bonuses for rural teachers when they excel in teaching are also much less than urban teachers. It is related to the fact that educational funding and resources are unequal in China between rural and urban areas, being understood that the educational provision and support of rural areas are lacking when compared with urban areas (Cheng, 2009; Dello-Lacovo, 2009; Liu & Onwuegbuzie, 2012; Lin & Zhang, 2006).

Secondly, education policies are recognized with a strong urban bias in the educational domain (Yang, 2000; as cited in Cheng, 2009; Liu & Onwuegbuzie, 2012). Urban teachers have more opportunities to attend public conferences on teaching, consequently increasing their probability of winning those teaching competitions. Most top schools are located in cities. The teachers who work in those top schools have better students when considering academic performance. Urban students also have more chances to attend some other educational institutions availing of more learning activities to assist their studies, thus providing better conditions for them to achieve more learning outcomes than rural students. Thus, urban teachers would feel a greater sense of achievements regarding students' outcomes than rural teachers.

Thirdly, rural teachers likely do not get as much moral support from parents as what urban teachers get (Liu & Onwuegbuzie, 2012). Generally, urban parents have better educational contexts than rural parents. They have higher levels of family education and usually have higher levels of support for learning. Urban parents would usually like to communicate with teachers more to know how their children are performing, and then they could collaborate with teachers on how to best educate their children. Further, many young rural people work in cities now, but they still keep their children in their hometown with grandparents or other relatives. To meet the needs of students of these absentee parents, rural teachers have to take on a greater workload but without not much acknowledgement and encouragement from parents, because it is not easy to meet the parents who work in cities far away. As a rural teacher complained in the study of Liu and Onwuegbuzie (2012) “.....I do not get much support from parents. It seems that students study only for me.” (p.164).

Since rural teachers are not acknowledged as much as their urban peers, it is easy to understand the fact that the educational quality of rural areas (Liu & Onwuegbuzie, 2012) and student achievements (Cheng, 2009) are not as good as urban status. Since rural teachers are not acknowledged as much as they should be, there would not be enough impetus to stimulate them to work hard and innovatively on student achievement or else, and the shortage of such

acknowledgements would not be attractive enough for those excellent teachers to become involved in rural education. Educational inequality is still a problem among those social problems in current China.

Administrative power

Administrative impact is always powerful in the educational domain, as in any other domain in China. Since, in China, there is only one ruling party (CCP), and Chinese education has been widely charged by political situations (Hawkins, 1983), administration of government, including the administration of public schools with government funding, which is all controlled by the ruling party, is naturally strong and powerful. The educational system of contemporary China consists of three hierarchical levels, the national level, provincial level, and district level (Liu & Onwuegbuzie, 2012). The administrative system of schools mostly contains a principal (high) level, a department (middle) level, and a grade or research group (basic) level. Teachers are managed by those hierarchical systems both inside and outside schools.

In terms of the findings of this study, Chinese teachers are being held accountable by school administration higher than parents, even though teachers' views are impacted strongly by both of them. To some degree, the targets of school administration and parents' general expectations are consistent, they are all for student growth and development. However, the

parents' expectation is more individual and personal. School administration is always professional and general, and they can see the bigger picture, also, school administration should be responsible for more aspects, such as government, political situations, social developments, and teacher development.

Teachers are evaluated and managed by school administration in many ways, as has been previously discussed. Most importantly, school administration can decide the teachers' position and the level of salaries and bonus, as the result of evaluations. Teachers' unions are not strong enough to play an important role protecting teachers' benefits.

Understanding the Perceptions toward Internal Accountability (Professional)

The professional sense of achievement and happiness as a teacher

The mean for internal accountability for Chinese teachers is higher than the mean for external accountability. Rosenblatt (2013) summarizes that internal accountability would typically be reflected as professional values, wisdom, and ethics of the educators themselves. Chinese teachers feel highly accountable from an internal accountability perspective and this is likely related to the fact that they have a strong professional sense of achievement and happiness. People teach because they believe that teaching is valued by society (Day, 2002). In China, teachers are referred to as "Engineers of the

Human Soul”, an indicator of how highly respected it is as a profession.

Teachers have their own “Teachers’ Day” which is held annually on September 10. Students, parents, and other people always send their best wishes to teachers in order to express their acknowledgement and gratitude. If a teacher teaches for many years and gets many teaching achievements, people always describe her/him as *having the blooms of peaches and plums all over the world* which means *having many excellent students everywhere*. People, especially those outstanding ones, usually mention and remember those positive influences from their teachers when they were young. *Honouring the teacher and respecting his/her teaching* is an important social principle among Chinese people. *Filial piety* has always been valued in Chinese traditional culture. People also say *a teacher of one day is a father of a lifetime* which means a teacher is as important and respectable as a father for a person.

The inner moral and professional ethic as a teacher

In this study, teachers have a pretty high response on “be accountable to own inner morals” and “be accountable to professional ethics”. It is consistent with the view that people teach because they believe in something (Day, 2002); these are called professional beliefs. As stated above, Day (2002) points out that much empirical research has indicated that many teachers work with a strong sense of moral purpose. In the traditional culture of China, the greatest educational objective of Confucianism was to cultivate sages and men

of virtue (Gu, 2006). Moral ethics had always been most important and highly valued in the traditional education of China (Gu, 2006), and it still plays a fairly important role in modern Chinese education. *To be a model of virtue of others* is the general and wide qualification for teachers on ethics in China. People are always more critical of a teacher's morals than others', because they respect a teacher very much. According to public opinion, teachers should become people of noble character before they educate others. Most importantly, Chinese teachers are self-disciplined to a very high degree. Since teachers educate students to have a positive attitude towards life, they are generally more positive than the general population. Since they teach students to follow rules and care for others, they are more law abiding and caring.

The professional development of Chinese teachers

In the study sample, teachers perceive that they are strongly accountable to their professional goals, are strongly responsible for teaching in the best way, and are accountable to learn from outstanding colleagues. Paine and Fang (2006) indicate that in present day China a new concept of teacher development has transformed accountability for being a good teacher in terms of students' learning outcomes to the present which holds teachers internally accountable for their own continued learning. Teachers are also responsible for their engagement in the self-improvement of their profession, while they are accountable for their teaching quality in a public and formal way. This

seems to be directly related in many respects to the high level of social and economic progress in past several decades. Concurrent with these economic and social advances, Chinese education has experienced dramatic development, especially in compulsory and higher education (Lin & Zhang, 2006). More and more graduates of higher education with undergraduate degrees or graduate degrees involve themselves in teaching careers. Those older teachers without degrees or with lower degrees naturally seek to improve themselves by enrolling in continuing education. Now, it is not uncommon that many teachers have master's degrees or doctoral degrees in a school, especially in a top high school.

Accompanying the new curriculum reform in the twenty-first century, more and more discussions and debates about how to best reform the educational system are initiated by teachers themselves. Teachers explore what is the better way to teach while they work to meet the reform goals. Those debates and discussions largely encourage teachers to re-examine their teaching and seek more and better teaching approaches with a stronger sense of professionalism. They set their professional goals not just as achieving high student test scores, but also as educator researching, problem posing, and through publishing their work. Effective use is made of the internet by many teachers as they disseminate their work and engage in academic discussions.

Teachers learn from fellow teachers by public conversation which is an effective vehicle to support and facilitate professional development (Paine & Fang, 2006). In some schools, novice teachers always have an instructor with an abundance of teaching experience. The opportunity to observe in a veteran teacher's class is an efficient way to learn how to teach for novice teachers, or even veteran teachers. Discussion of this class among the same subject teachers can promote teachers' innovation and the exchange of ideas.

However, not all teachers like this public discussion or conferencing to a high degree. According to the findings of this study, the response of teachers regarding the item "develop professionally (training sessions, workshops, conferences, etc.)" is lower than other items. As the research of Paine and Fang (2006) suggests, some Chinese teachers and principals who were surveyed were critical that some instructional development like these workshops, which were imposed by external sources, were superficial and had added more workload for them.

Professional knowledge of teachers and school levels

A statistically significant difference was observed between elementary and high school teachers on the item "be responsible for using professional knowledge in your work". Generally, three school levels are experienced in China prior to the higher education level: Elementary schools (Grade 1-6) — primary education; middle schools (or junior high schools, Grade 7-9)—junior

secondary education; high schools (Grade 10-12) --senior secondary education.

Education (Grade 1- 9) of elementary and middle school students is compulsory. As described previously, there are two public, selective examinations, which are Zhongkao and Gaokao (CEE) after Grade 9 and Grade 12. Especially, Gaokao (CEE) is described as “the baton of education” (Dello-Lacovo, 2009). But there are no public examinations between primary education and secondary education. This means that elementary teachers do not have to directly meet the standards of public examinations in their teaching. In contrast, those teachers of secondary education, especially high school teachers, have to meet the requirements of public examinations in order to ensure their students get good scores.

In addition, the standards of examinations and the curriculum content are increasingly harder from Grade 1 to Grade 12. To meet those requirements, the teachers of higher grades use more professional knowledge of education and teaching. For example, as an elementary math teacher, the candidate does not have to graduate from a mathematical program from a higher educational institution. However, the math teachers of high schools do have to graduate from a formal mathematical program of a higher educational institute. It is not therefore hard to understand why elementary teachers do not need to use professional knowledge as much as high school teachers.

Conclusion

Chinese teachers are highly accountable for their teaching performance in the distinctive Chinese social context. They are being held highly accountable from both an external accountability (bureaucratic) and highly accountable from an internal accountability (professional) perspective. They feel accountable for students' achievements and scores, expected standards, work transparency, evaluation results, and the modification of their work according to feedback. Achieving professional goals and developments, learning from other teachers, teaching using best practices, using professional knowledge, inner morals, and professional ethics are what they hold themselves accountable for internally. There are no significant differences among the groups within each category (gender, age, geography, school level, teaching area, and leadership role) on external or internal accountability, except that female Chinese teachers feel more accountable to parents than male teachers do. But there are some significant differences between the comparisons of categories on specific items. Teachers feel that they are being held more accountable by school administration than by parents.

The current study does not explore the social influence on Chinese teacher accountability in a comprehensive way, and only the first three sections (Item 1-27) of the questionnaire were used. The whole questionnaire contains five sections (58 items). In my doctoral studies, I would like to more

comprehensively inquire deeper and further, especially on the relationship between teacher accountability and social elements and contexts. It is also necessary to investigate differences among provinces, since the questionnaire data were already mainly collected in four provinces with different social situations and development levels.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Consortium for Cross-cultural Research in Education

A Survey of Teachers' Perceptions of their Work

Dear Teacher

Our Consortium is devoted to the study of teachers' perceptions of their work, and to comparisons between teachers from different cultures. We would appreciate it very much if you can spend a little time and answer the questions in the following pages.

Please be assured that research ethical restrictions are followed very strictly – the questionnaire is anonymous, and there is no way respondents may be identified.

Thank you for your help,

The research team:

Nora Arato, Hungary, US
Johan Booye, South Africa
Perry Den Brok, The Netherlands
Noel Hurley, Canada
Al Menlo, US
Zehava Rosenblatt, Israel
Mila Sainz-Ibanez, Spain
John Williamson, Australia
Theo Wubbles The Netherlands

- In your work as a teacher, to what extent do you feel that it is your responsibility to .A

		Very little extent	Little extent	neutral	Large extent	Very large extent
1	Make sure your students achieve high achievement scores	1	2	3	4	5
2	Meet expected standards	1	2	3	4	5
3	Be accountable for your students achievements	1	2	3	4	5
4	Report to <i>school leadership</i> on the way you perform your work	1	2	3	4	5
5	Report to <i>other teachers</i> on the way you perform your work	1	2	3	4	5
6	Report to <i>parents</i> on the way you perform your work	1	2	3	4	5
7	Allow your work in class to be transparent to school leadership	1	2	3	4	5
8	Allow your work in class to be transparent to <i>other teachers</i>	1	2	3	4	5
9	Allow your work in class to be transparent to parents	1	2	3	4	5
10	Be evaluated on the basis of your work achievements	1	2	3	4	5
11	Change your work according to feedback you get	1	2	3	4	5
12	Be held accountable when your work in the classroom does not meet expectations	1	2	3	4	5
13	Be acknowledged for the success of your classes	1	2	3	4	5

In your work as a teacher, to what extent do you feel that it is your duty to - .B

		Very little extent	Little extent	neutral	Large extent	Very large extent
14	Achieve professional goals	1	2	3	4	5
15	Develop professionally (training	1	2	3	4	5

	sessions, workshops, conferences, etc)					
16	Learn from the work of outstanding colleagues	1	2	3	4	5
17	Be responsible for teaching in the best possible way	1	2	3	4	5
18	Be responsible for using professional knowledge in your work	1	2	3	4	5
19	Be accountable to your own inner moral standards	1	2	3	4	5
20	Be accountable to professional ethics	1	2	3	4	5

To what extent do you believe your work should include the following behaviors and activities (1=to very little extent, 2=to little extent, 3=neither little nor much, 4= to a great extent, 5=to a very great extent).

		School administration					Parents				
21	Strive to achieve set goals	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
22	Report on your performance regarding students' academic achievements	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
23	Report on performance regarding curriculum coverage	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
24	Report on performance regarding social climate (e.g., student behavior, discipline) in class	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
25	Show transparency in your work	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
26	Get formal evaluations on the results of your work	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
27	Get feedback on your teaching	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

In the next items, please indicate how do you feel about your work .D

		definitely true	True	Neither true nor false	Not true	Not true at all
28	What I teach in my class is determined for the most part by myself	1	2	3	4	5
29	The content taught in my class are those that I select myself	1	2	3	4	5
30	My teaching focuses on goals and objectives that I select myself	1	2	3	4	5
31	I select myself the teaching materials that I use with my students	1	2	3	4	5
32	I am free to be creative in my teaching approach	1	2	3	4	5
33	My job does not allow for much discretion on my part	1	2	3	4	5
34	In my class I have little control over how classroom space is used	1	2	3	4	5

		strongly disagree	disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	agree	strongly agree
35	My school administration strongly support my goals and values	1	2	3	4	5
36	My school administration values my contribution	1	2	3	4	5
37	My school administration takes pride in my accomplishments at work	1	2	3	4	5
38	My school administration really cares about me	1	2	3	4	5
39	If given the chance, my school	1	2	3	4	5

	administration would take unfair advantage of me					
40	My school administration is willing to help me when I need a special favor	1	2	3	4	5
41	If I asked, my school administration would change my working conditions if at all possible	1	2	3	4	5
42	My school administration would ignore any complaint from me	1	2	3	4	5

The following items refer to your values and attitudes toward work and life in .E
general

		strongly disagree	disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	agree	strongly agree
43	I'd rather depend on myself than others	1	2	3	4	5
44	I rely on myself more than others most of the time	1	2	3	4	5
45	I often do "my own thing"	1	2	3	4	5
46	My personal identity, independent of others, is very important to me	1	2	3	4	5

		strongly disagree	disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	agree	strongly agree
47	If a fellow teacher gets an award, I would feel proud	1	2	3	4	5
48	The well-being of my fellow teachers is important to me	1	2	3	4	5
49	I take please in spending time with others	1	2	3	4	5

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50	I feel good when I cooperate with others	1	2	3	4	5
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		Strongly disagree	Disagree	either disagree or agree	Agree	Strongly agree
51	I believe that a person's influence is based primarily on one's ability and contribution to the society, and not on the authority of one's position	1	2	3	4	5
52	I believe that followers are expected to obey their leaders without reservation - rather than question their leaders when in disagreement	1	2	3	4	5
53	I believe that people in positions of power try to increase their social distance (hierarchical space) from less powerful individuals	1	2	3	4	5
54	I believe that rank and hierarchical position should go with special privileges	1	2	3	4	5

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	either disagree or agree	Agree	Strongly agree
55	I find orderliness and consistency more important than experimentation or innovation	1	2	3	4	5
56	I tend to lead highly structured life with few unexpected events	1	2	3	4	5
57	When I have to do something, I prefer to receive instructions that are spelled out in details so I know what I am expected to do	1	2	3	4	5
58	I like to live with laws that cover almost all situations (rather than	1	2	3	4	5

	very few situations)					
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F. Demographic background

59. Gender: 1. Male 2. Female

60. Age: ____ (yrs)

61. Experience as a teacher: ____ (yrs)

62. Tenure (permanent position): yes/no/not relevant

63. Do you hold school leadership position (in addition to teaching, e.g., vice-principal, grade-level coordinator, subject-area coordinator, etc). yes/no

64. Teaching area :
 1. ____ Humanities, languages and social studies
 2. ____ Science, mathematics and technology
 3. ____ Arts, sport
 4. ____ other

65. Size of school in number of students: ____

66. School location: 1. Urban, 2. Suburban, 3. Rural, 4. Other ____

67. School level:
 1. ____ Elementary/primary
 2. ____ Middle
 3. ____ High/secondary

68. School religion: 1. ____ Secular, 2. ____ religious

Appendix B Ethics Review Letter



**Interdisciplinary Committee on
Ethics in Human Research (ICEHR)**

Office of Research Services
St. John's, NL, Canada A1C 5S7
Tel: 709 864 2561 Fax: 709 864 4612
www.mun.ca/research

ICEHR Number:	20131160-ED
Approval Period:	February 14, 2014 – February 28, 2015
Funding Source:	
Responsible Faculty:	Dr. Noel Hurley Faculty of Education
Title of Project:	<i>An exploration of the nature of individual accountability in principals' and teachers' work across different cultures</i>

February 14, 2014

Dr. Noel Hurley
Faculty of Education
Memorial University of Newfoundland

Dear Dr. Hurley:

Thank you for your email correspondence of February 11, 2014 addressing the issues raised by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research (ICEHR) concerning the above-named research project.

The ICEHR has re-examined the proposal with the clarification and revisions submitted, and is satisfied that the concerns raised by the Committee have been adequately addressed. In accordance with the *Tri-Council Policy Statement on Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2)*, the project has been granted *full ethics clearance* to February 28, 2015.

If you need to make changes during the course of the project which may give rise to ethical concerns, please forward an amendment request with a description of these changes to Theresa Heath at icehr@mun.ca for the Committee's consideration.

The *TCPS2* requires that you submit an annual status report on your project to the ICEHR before February 28, 2015. If you plan to continue the project, you need to request renewal of your ethics clearance, including a brief summary on the progress of your research. When the project no longer requires contact with human participants, is completed and/or terminated, you need to provide the final report with a brief summary, and your file will be closed. The annual update form is on the ICEHR website at <http://www.mun.ca/research/ethics/humans/icehr/applications/>.

We wish you success with your research.

Yours sincerely,

Gail Wideman, Ph.D.
Vice-Chair, Interdisciplinary Committee on
Ethics in Human Research

GW/th