

Parental Involvement and University Aspirations of Ethnic Korean Students in China



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Abstract Parental involvement in education is essential in enhancing university enrollment and maximizing the educational potentials for equality and excellence. This study utilized Perna's (2006) model of parental involvement as social capital in interplay with other types of capital and tested the influence of educational involvement of parents upon university-going aspirations among contemporary Korean youth. A quantitative questionnaire was administered to 298 university students of Korean origin in China. Data analysis revealed that social capital was positively associated with students' educational aspirations through parental interactions with the student and the school. The findings also confirm the value of economic and cultural capital in affecting the operation of social capital-embedded parental involvement, as manifested by the hypothesized intersecting relationship between social capital and other types of capital in this study. This study provides significant contributions to the prevalence of the interacting patterns between social capital and other types of capital, warranting continued work.

1 Introduction

A wealth of literature in university access and choice confirms that parental involvement determines the variation in university attendance, retention, and completion (Kim and Schneider 2005; Perna and Titus 2005). As such, promoting parental involvement becomes vital in university preparation programs and specifically in the development of underrepresented students' university aspirations. Today, it

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appears that globalization and subsequent massive mobility of population exert an impact upon the engagement of parents in education. China's ethnic Korean minority is not an exception. The Korean is the 14th largest non-Han minority nationality with a population of 1,830,929 in 2010 (NBSC 2011). Since China's economic marketization threatens the primarily agricultural-based Korean minority economy, a mass of the Korean adult population has moved toward urban areas of China as well as South Korea for job-seeking (Kim 2003). Subsequent to the increased mobility of the adult population is a growing Korean student population living with single parents (*Danqin*) or, in extreme cases, without parents (*Wuqin*) (Gao 2010). In spite of significant changes of household structure, however, the Korean minority still possesses the highest level of university attendance when compared with other ethnic groups, including Han majority (NBSC 2011). Traditionally, the Korean's accomplishments are attributed to high priority given to education that facilitates Korean parents' economic and sociocultural investment in education (Lee 1986). We thus ponder what challenges mobile Korean parents face in the practices of parental involvement and ask what models of involvement they adopt to sustain Korean children's university participation.

The current study aimed to test the influence of educational involvement of parents upon university-going aspirations among contemporary Korean youth. Educational aspirations are related to implicit and explicit ideas that an individual sets as goals or hopes for educational attainment. Hossler and Gallagher (1987) proposed a three-phase process of university choice, made up of predisposition, search, and choice. Among the three stages, predisposition is referred to as the process through which students primarily develop their own university aspirations or plans. Research literature has pointed to the correlation between parental involvement and university-bound students' development of educational aspirations (e.g., Hossler et al. 1999; Hossler and Stage 1992). In the current study, we concentrated particularly on the predisposition development and interrogated the two main questions: (1) To what extent do social capital-embedded parental involvement effects operate on Korean students' educational aspirations? (2) How does cultural and economic capital affect social capital? In the following sections, we first summarize findings from previous research on capital variables and university access and choice and acknowledge theoretical limitations of the studies and the need to better understand how different dimensions of social capital may interact with other types of capital. We then turn to the hypotheses in the study and discuss the data and methods used, followed by the study results. In the concluding section, the findings are discussed along with implications for future study, policy, and practice.

2 Capital and University Access and Choice

The existing literature in capital and university access and choice intertwines James Coleman's (1988) functionalist interpretation of social capital with Pierre Bourdieu's (1986) more critical sociological insights and often utilizes Perna's (2000, 2006) model. Within the model, parental involvement is primarily defined as social capital

and is conceptualized as a variety of the actual or potential university-relevant resources that can be obtained by parents' possession and maintenance of social networks. Such social capital-embedded parental involvement is comprised of the family-level relationship between a student and his/her parents, the community-level relationship between the student's parents and the parents of the student's friends, and the school-level relationship between the student's parents and school personnel (Coleman 1988).

Family-level social capital consists of (1) level of trust, mutual obligations, and expectations, (2) information channels, and (3) norms and sanctions. Empirical evidence has illustrated that the odds of enrolling in an undergraduate university program may increase with the frequency of parent-student discussions about education-related issues (Gao 2017; Perna and Titus 2005).

Community-level social capital captures parent-to-parent involvement as manifested by intergenerational closure. Studies have shown that parents who know their children's friends' parents have a positive impact on students' academic achievement (Pérez and McDonough 2008).

School-level social capital refers to parental involvement at school through attending parent-teacher associations (PTA), contacting school and teachers about students' performance in school, and engaging in volunteer activities. The extent of school-level parental involvement influences the amount of access that students have to resources occupied by institutional agents at school (Lin 2001; Stanton-Salazar 2004).

Perna's model posits that university entry can be attributed by the effects of multiple types of capital in an additive manner. The model absorbs the economic capital investment (Ellwood and Kane 2000) and sociological-cultural framework (St John and Paulsen 2001) and claims that a person's university enrollment decision varies as a result of calculations of expected costs and benefits (economic capital), as well as sociocultural factors (social and cultural capital).

Economic capital in this model is defined as a person's access to economic resources (e.g., income, wealth, and assets) (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990), which play a significant role in youth's decisions concerning university participation (Heller 1997). Cultural capital is relevant to parents' occupation of cultural knowledge, language skills, and dispositions, highly valued in a specific education system (Bourdieu 1986; De Graaf et al. 2000). Cultural capital is key to Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction. According to Bourdieu, schools privilege the cultural background of students from the dominant class; hence, underrepresented working-class and minority students might inherently be disadvantaged because their parents cannot offer the relevant attitudes and knowledge needed in university preparation and planning (McDonough 1997).

Studies using Perna's model confirm that these capital factors have the significant predictive power to models of university enrollment. For instance, Perna and Titus (2005) used data from the National Educational Longitudinal Study (NELS) and studied the relationship between parental involvement and university enrollment across racial/ethnic groups in the USA. Results unearthed that social capital facilitated university enrollment via parents' interactions with the student, the school, and other parents, net of the effects of other types of capital. And then,

independent of social capital, economic and cultural capital, to a certain degree, respectively, affected the likelihood of enrollment in university.

All in all, Perna's conceptual model and empirical evidence shed light upon the separate and additive contributions of various types of capital to the university choice process, yet failed to account for the interplay among various types of capital, a key in the analysis on capital and educational outcome.

Bourdieu (1986) and Coleman (1988) insist that though different types of capital are distinctive from one another, a type of capital is interconnected with other types of capital. Such interconnection is the basic strategy of capital reproduction. In this way, social capital-embedded parental involvement is a sole and robust predictor of students' university choice and entry (Perna and Titus 2005). What is equally important is that the possession of social capital per se is the result of an individual's possession of cultural capital and/or the investment in economic capital. That is, possession of cultural capital by parents enables effective communication between parents and school teachers as institutional agents (social capital). Rather, those families who are less exposed to the capacity to communicate in a cultural/linguistically competent way could rarely capitalize on their cultural/language resources to facilitate social capital for trusted university information. In the same vein, as opposed to high-income families, those economically less-advantaged families barely have privileged opportunities for shifting economic capital into valuable social networks for university-related resources. For Bourdieu (1986), the distribution of capital represents the inherent structure of a society, in which capital interaction embodies power relations, structural inequalities, and social reproduction.

Grounded in this theoretical context, this study aimed to explore the intertwining relationships between social capital and other types of capital in the process of university access and choice. Taking parental involvement primarily as social capital, this study hypothesized that social capital institutionalized as parents' effective communication with the student, the school, and other parents would be likely to immediately and directly affect Korean students' educational aspirations and the operation of social capital would be affected by economic and cultural capital. A look into the dynamic interplay among plural types of capital in the pursuit of university aspirations will allow us to evaluate the policy and institutional arrangement on a holistic basis.

3 Research Methodology

3.1 Participants

Two hundred and ninety-eight first-year Korean undergraduate students (78 males and 220 females) were recruited from a selective ethnic Korean university, located in *Yanji*, the capital city of the Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture, where more than 32% (736,991) Koreans resided (NBSC 2011). Participants were selected

based on the set criteria: (1) participants were China-born ethnic Koreans, (2) participants had attended China’s public education system (including both mainstream Chinese schools and schools with an overwhelming Korean student population) at least at senior secondary level prior to attending university, and (3) participants were first-year students enrolled on a degree course in the autumn of 2014, when the study commenced. The purpose was to ensure that the participants still held fresh memories of the university choice process. Table 1 lists the background information

Table 1 Demographic descriptive ($N = 298$)

Variable	% of valid N
Gender	
Male	26.2
Female	73.8
	<i>M (SD)</i>
Age (range = 18–23)	20.17(0.88)
Single-parent (<i>Danqin</i>) family	
Yes	23.3
No	76.7
Living with father	56.7
Living with other male guardian	4.4
Living with mother	64.1
Living with other female guardian	17.8
Living with other adult relative(s)	14.8
Living with non-adult relative(s)	8.1
Chinese language proficiency	
Excellent	33.2
Good	32.8
Average	20.5
Fair	11.1
Poor	3.4
Korean language proficiency	
Excellent	27.3
Good	31.0
Average	18.9
Fair	10.4
Poor	12.4
Mother’s education	
Less than university degree	65.8
University degree	26.1
Postgraduate degree	8.1
Father’s education	
Less than university degree	61.1
University degree	31.1
Postgraduate degree	7.8

of the participants. Their mean age was 20.17 (range = 18–23). All but three participants (who did not report relevant information) completed senior secondary education in China. Ten participants reported that they have stayed in other countries for 1 year or more, but all of them had senior secondary education in China and resided in China at the time of testing. On a 5-point Likert scale (1 = excellent, 5 = poor), the difference in the average self-rated proficiency for Chinese and Korean languages (listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills) was statistically significant ($t(297) = 3.02, p < .01$), showing that the participants self-rated a higher proficiency in Chinese than Korean. None of them indicated difficulty in understanding the questionnaire given in Chinese. Furthermore, more than one-fifth (23.3%) of the participants lived in a single-parent (*Danqin*) household at the senior secondary stage. Around 38.9% of their fathers and 34.2% of their mothers received university education or above.

3.2 Instruments

The quantitative survey adopted multiple measures to test the three subscales: social capital, economic capital, and cultural capital. Some questions related to parental involvement in NELS were adapted to reflect the education system and culture in China. Additionally, the modifications have been made in accordance with both quantitative and qualitative feedback from pilot testing.

Social Capital Four dimensions were utilized to quantify social capital including (1) parent-student involvement, (2) parent-school involvement, (3) parent-parent involvement, and (4) disruptions to involvement (Perna and Titus 2005).

The parent-student involvement was measured by a single item about positive relationships between parents and the student and two sub-factors (parent-student discussions about education-related issues and parental monitoring of the student's behavior). The single item measured to what degree the student received emotional support from parents during the period of senior secondary school. The first sub-factor, namely, parent-student discussions, was measured by a composite of six variables that reflected the student-perceived frequency of discussions between the student and parents regarding (a) selecting courses in senior secondary school, (b) senior secondary school activities or events of particular interest to the student, (c) things the student had studied in class, (d) academic performance at senior secondary school, (e) plans and preparation for the university entrance examination, and (f) applying to universities after senior secondary school. The internal reliability of this sub-factor was excellent (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.87$). A composite score for parent-student discussions was obtained by averaging the response for each question. The second sub-factor, parental monitoring, was measured by three questions of whether the family had rules about (a) maintaining a certain average grade, (b) finishing homework on time, and (c) attending school every day. A composite score for parental monitoring was obtained by counting the number of rules present in a student's family.

The four sub-factors for parent-school involvement included (1) the frequency of parents' participation in PTA and volunteering work, (2) the parents' knowledge about academic requirements, (3) the frequency of parents' interactions with school personnel about the student's academic issues, and (4) the frequency of parents' interactions with school about the student's behavioral problems in school. Concerning the first sub-factor, that is, the frequency of parents' participation in PTA and volunteering work, a single item was administered to evaluate student-perceived frequency of parents' involvement in PTA and volunteering work. Concerning the second sub-factor, parents' knowledge about academic requirements, three items were used to indicate whether parents know (a) which courses the student was taking, (b) how well the student was performing in school, and (c) how well the student was preparing for the university entrance exam. A composite score for parents' knowledge was obtained by counting the variables of academic requirements the parents knew through interaction with the school. Concerning the third sub-factor, frequency of parents' interactions with school about the student's academic issues, four items were administered to measure student-perceived frequency of parents' contact with school about (a) academic performance (e.g., grades), (b) course for this year, (c) plans after leaving senior secondary school, and (d) course selection for entry into university or college after leaving senior secondary school. The internal reliability of this sub-factor was excellent (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.92$). A composite score was obtained by averaging the response for each question. For the frequency of parents' interactions with school about the student's behavioral problems in school, two items were administered to measure (a) the student's attendance record at school and (b) behavior in school. The internal reliability of this sub-factor was excellent (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.88$). A composite score was obtained by averaging the response for each question.

The indicator of intergenerational closure for parent-parent involvement was included and operationalized by the number of parents of the student's friends with whom parents maintained contact and talked about postsecondary plans and the number of student's friends who planned to attend a 4-year university or 2-year college.

For disruptions to parental involvement, an indicator of the family's geographic mobility was included and was operationalized by the number of times that the student's family had moved since his/her senior secondary education.

Cultural Capital Four items were used to measure cultural capital (Downey and Powell 1993; Jeynes 2003; Schmid 2001), consisting of (1) parents' educational level, (2) parental educational expectations on the participants, (3) frequency of communication in Chinese at home, and (4) parents' organization of the student's participation in university-bound cultural classes.

Economic Capital A three-item instrument developed by Paulsen and St. John (2002) was adopted to tap economic capital, including (1) family income, (2) perceived ability to pay "fixed" university costs (e.g., tuition fees), and (3) perceived ability to pay "controllable" costs (e.g., living expenses). Perceived ability to pay

“fixed” costs was measured by whether a student reported that university expenses and financial aid were very important to attend university. Perceived ability to pay “controllable” university costs was tapped by whether a student reported that living at home to attend university was very important.

Educational Aspirations A retrospective item was administered to students evaluating their desired educational attainment during senior secondary education. Responses were anchored on a three-point scale ranging from (1) less than university degree, (2) university degree, and (3) postgraduate degree.

Other Demographic Information Apart from the key constructs on social, economic, and cultural capital, demographic data were also recorded for reference. These included participants’ age, gender, family structure (e.g., whether the participant lived in a single-parent family or not), and Chinese and Korean language proficiency (see Table 1).

3.3 Procedures

In May 2015, the potential sample students were approached, and written informed consent was obtained from students who agreed to participate in this research. The participants were subsequently invited to complete a paper-and-pencil survey, containing questions evaluating parental involvement levels on different types of capital and educational aspirations and questions pertaining to their demographic characteristics and background information. In order to assure the data collection quality, the researchers were present to answer any queries concerning the survey questions. Participants were encouraged to complete all questions, but they could skip questions if they did not feel comfortable to answer. They were also allowed to consult their parents if there was any uncertainty about questions (e.g., family income). Eventually 298 valid questionnaires were collected.

3.4 Analysis

Statistical analyses were conducted to evaluate whether the data obtained supported the abovementioned hypotheses. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used when assessing the relationship between categorical (e.g., educational aspirations) and continuous variables of capital (e.g., degree of emotional support from parents). Pearson’s correlation was used when assessing the relationship among continuous variables. A Chi-square test was used when assessing the relationship among categorical variables.

4 Results and Discussion

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

As Table 2 shows, the mean monthly family income among the participants was RMB 6416, slightly higher than the average family income in China (RMB 6087). Only 4.0% and 6.7% of Korean participants reported, respectively, that financial aid and university expenses were very important in university choice, and 8.4% reported that living at home was very important in decision-making. Cultural capital, as measured by parental educational expectations, showed that 88.8% of participants reported that their parents expected them to attain a university degree or above. In addition, 55.7% of the participants indicated that their parents always or often communicated with them in Chinese. This might have facilitated parents' assistance in the university application process. Nearly half of the participants (44.4%) reported that they had joined university-bound cultural classes that were encouraged and paid by their parents. The measures of economic and cultural capital, to some degree, reflect ethnic Koreans' conventional priority given to and investment in children's education (Lee 1986).

Parent-student involvement was first measured by the frequency of parents' emotional support. In Table 2, 25.1% and 42.7% of the participants reported that they always and often received emotional support from parents. The participants also reported that there was a moderate to high level of parent-student discussions about education-related topics ($M = 3.13$, $SD = 0.88$). On a five-point Likert scale of six items, the most frequently discussed topics were related to university application ($M = 3.59$) and plans and preparation for the university entrance examination ($M = 3.46$). In terms of parental monitoring, over 80% of the Korean parents were reported to have family rules about maintaining a certain average grade, doing homework, and attending school regularly.

For parent-school involvement, about one-third of student participants (34.4%) reported that their parents had participated in three or more school activities such as PTA and volunteering work. Around 85% or more participants revealed that their parents knew which courses they were taking, how well they were doing in school, and their progress for preparing university applications. In addition, there was a moderate level of parent-school communication about students' academic issues and behavioral problems in school. On a five-point Likert scale of four and two items, the average ratings for academic and behavioral issues were 2.91 and 2.89, respectively. The most frequently communicated topics referred to course selection for entry into university ($M = 2.99$) and plans after leaving senior secondary school ($M = 2.96$).

The result appears to unearth a relatively higher level of educational involvement at home, rather than at school, and echoes the sociocultural and economic context in which the contemporary ethnic Koreans live. On the one hand, the Korean parents universally inherited the knowledge-oriented values, embedded in the Korean

Table 2 Descriptive statistics of the variables (*N* = 298)

	% of 141 <i>N</i>
	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)
Family monthly income (range = 100–100,000)	6416 (9566)
Importance of university expenses to attend university	
Very important	6.7
Somewhat important	41.8
Not important	51.5
Importance of financial aid to attend university	
Very important	4.0
Somewhat important	38.4
Not important	57.6
Importance of living at home to attend university	
Very important	8.4
Somewhat important	24.2
Not important	67.4
Parents expect student to earn	
Less than university degree	11.2
University degree	49.0
Postgraduate degree	39.8
Frequency of communication in Chinese at home	
Always	30.0
Often	25.7
Sometimes	23.3
Rarely	14.9
Never	6.1
Participate in university-bound cultural classes	
Two or more	18.1
One	26.3
None	55.6
Emotional support received from parents	
Always	25.1
Often	42.7
Sometimes	21.7
Rarely	8.1
Never	2.4
	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)
Discuss about education-related issues (from 1, <i>never</i> , to 5, <i>always</i>)	3.13 (0.88)
Monitor the student's behavior:	
<i>Maintaining a certain average grade</i>	
Yes	81.5
No	18.5
	% of valid <i>N</i>

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

	% of 141 <i>N</i>
	<i>M (SD)</i>
<i>Finishing homework on time</i>	
Yes	80.1
No	19.9
<i>Attending school everyday</i>	
Yes	90.6
No	9.4
Frequency of participation in PTA and volunteering work	
More than 4 times	17.2
3 or 4 times	17.2
Once or twice	42.4
None	23.2
Parent knows which courses student was taking	
Yes	89.8
No	10.2
Parent knows how well the student was performing in school	
Yes	87.5
No	12.5
Parent knows how well the student was preparing for university exam	
Yes	85.1
No	14.9
	<i>M (SD)</i>
Parent-initiated contact with the school about academic issues	2.91 (1.02)
Parent-initiated contact with the school about behavioral problems	2.89 (1.20)
Number of the student's friends' parents to whom parent talks	
Eleven–more	3.1
Six–ten	5.5
Three–five	27.6
One–two	30.7
None	33.1
Friends plan to attend 4-year university	
All of them	0.4
Most of them	3.7
Some of them	19.9
A few of them	48.1
None of them	27.9
Friends plan to attend 2-year college	
All of them	0.0
Most of them	3.0
Some of them	9.7

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

	% of 141 <i>N</i>
	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)
A few of them	25.3
None of them	62.0
	% of valid <i>N</i>
Number of times family moved	
3 or more times	3.0
2 times	9.7
1 time	25.3
None	62.0
Educational aspiration	
Less than university degree	25.9
University degree	47.5
Postgraduate degree	26.6

culture for over 500 years and resulting in their deep respect for school authority. As revealed by the prior literature, Korean parents believe that their role is to listen, respect, and follow the professional judgment of educators (Kim and Greene 2003). On the other hand, 23.3% of the participants came from single-parent families. *T*-tests indicated that in single-parent families, parents interacted significantly less with the participants ($t(288) = 3.38, p < 0.01$, Cohen's $d = 0.42$) and marginally less with the schools ($t(291) = 1.90, p = 0.058$, Cohen's $d = 0.28$). Specifically, 43.3% and 35.9% reported, respectively, that they did not live with their fathers and mothers during their senior secondary education. However, 66.9% of participants claimed that their parents talked with at least one of his/her friends' parents, who could be important sources of informational and emotional support. In addition, most of the participants (72.1%) reported that at least a few of their friends planned to attend 4-year university, in contrast to only 38.0% planning for 2-year college. Compared to more flexible channels in parent-student/parent-parent involvement, the findings concur with the arguments in prior studies, revealing the particularly negative effects of physical absence of parents upon the parent-school interaction (Gao 2010). Furthermore, 62.0% of the participants reported no geographic mobility during the senior secondary years so that social capital-embedded parental involvement was not disrupted.

The key outcome variable in this study – *educational aspirations* – revealed that 25.9% of the ethnic Korean participants reported educational aspirations of “less than university degree.” In comparison, 47.5% and 26.6% of them reported aspirations of attaining “university degree” and “postgraduate degree,” respectively, which reflected their parents' high expectations of children's education.

4.2 Social Capital and Educational Aspirations

Table 3 illustrates that several measures of social capital-embedded parental involvement are related to educational aspirations. ANOVA revealed that students' educational aspirations increased with the extent of emotional support they received from parents ($F(2,291) = 3.19, p < 0.05$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.021$). Post hoc comparisons with Tukey correction noted that more emotional support was given to the student participants who aspired to attain the postgraduate degree than those with less than university aspiration ($p < 0.05$). Educational aspirations were also associated with the perceived frequency of parent-student discussions about education-related topics ($F(2,288) = 3.48, p < 0.05$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.024$). The result illustrated that parents tended to discuss more frequently with students who held the postgraduate aspiration than with those who aspired for a university degree ($p < 0.05$). Similarly, parental participation in PTA and other volunteer works in school was positively related to educational aspirations ($F(2,293) = 3.66, p < 0.05$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.024$). The statistically significant difference emerged between postgraduate and university degree aspirers ($p < 0.05$). Educational aspirations were also related to the frequency with

Table 3 Social capital and educational aspirations

	Less than university ($N = 77$)	University ($N = 141$)	Postgraduate ($N = 79$)
Emotional support	3.65 (0.89)	3.76 (0.99)	4.03 (1.03)
Parent-student discussions	3.12 (0.86)	3.01 (0.85)	3.34 (0.90)
Parental monitoring	2.56 (0.84)	2.43 (0.92)	2.65 (0.85)
Participation in PTA and volunteering	2.18 (0.95)	2.19 (0.91)	2.54 (1.19)
Knowledge about academic requirements	2.51 (0.98)	2.61 (0.77)	2.74 (0.77)
Parent-school interaction (academic)	2.97 (0.84)	2.75 (0.95)	3.10 (1.26)
Parent-school interaction (behavioural)	3.02 (0.99)	2.67 (1.15)	3.12 (1.41)
Contact with other parents ^a	0 = 30.3 1 to 2 = 27.6 3 to 5 = 30.3 6 to 10 = 5.3 11 or 20 = 6.5 20 or more = 0	0 = 35.7 1 to 2 = 33.6 3 to 5 = 22.9 6 to 10 = 5.0 11 or 20 = 2.1 20 or more = 0.7	0 = 30.4 1 to 2 = 27.8 3 to 5 = 32.9 6 to 10 = 5.1 11 or 20 = 1.3 20 or more = 2.5
Friends plan to study 4-year university	3.52 (0.90)	3.69 (0.80)	3.66 (0.94)
Friends plan to study 2-year college	2.11 (0.72)	1.97 (0.83)	1.99 (0.86)
Involvement disruptions	1.42 (0.70)	1.54 (0.80)	1.66 (0.86)

Note: ^aFrequency count (in percentage). Condition means are presented for other variables (SD in parentheses). One participant who did not report the level of desired educational attainment was excluded from this analysis

which parents initiated contact with school about academics ($F(2,292) = 3.20$, $p < 0.05$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.022$) and behavioral issues ($F(2,293) = 4.36$, $p < 0.05$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.029$). In both cases, post hoc comparisons with Tukey correction revealed that participants with postgraduate aspiration had parents who interacted more frequently with the school (both $ps < 0.05$) than participants with a university aspiration.

These findings should be interpreted with caution since statistically significant differences mainly emerge between aspirations for postgraduate and university degrees. According to the latest data reported by the People's Republic of China Ministry of Education in 2015, the overall gross university enrollment rate was 40%, whereas the net university enrollment rate for ethnic Koreans in the Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture reached 95%. The sample in this study manifests the fact that all the participants, at the time the study was undertaken, had successfully entered a 4-year university course. Hence, we argue that more nuanced analysis is needed in the value of capital associated with minority status as the increasing data show how Confucian heritage minorities are outperforming native populations in their host countries such as Australia, Canada, and the UK. Nevertheless, the study might be limited by omitted variables, particularly with regard to measures of selective and nonselective 4-year universities. Future research should add these variables for measuring Korean students' educational aspirations.

4.3 Social Capital and Other Types of Capital

In Table 4, Pearson's correlation coefficients revealed the significant correlation between family monthly income and the frequency of parent-school contact about academics. The finding demonstrated that parents with higher monthly income tended to initiate contact with the school more frequently ($r = 0.13$, $p < 0.05$). Furthermore, the importance of perceived ability to pay fixed costs of university education was related to the degree of emotional support received from parents ($F(2,292) = 7.51$, $p < 0.01$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.049$). Post hoc analyses with Tukey correction suggested that participants who stressed that university expenses were very important in the choice process received less emotional support from parents than those who indicated that university expenses were somewhat important ($p < 0.05$) and those who considered them not important at all ($p < 0.01$). The difference between the latter two groups was not statistically significant. This result indicated that the degree of parents' emotional support was positively related to the availability of economic capital, as measured by parents' perceived ability to pay fixed costs of university education.

Apart from the effects of economic capital upon social capital, several measures of cultural capital were also related to social capital (Table 5). For instance, the frequency of parent-student communication in Chinese correlated significantly with parental monitoring and parents' participation in PTA and volunteering ($ps < 0.05$). The positive correlations suggested that the odds for parents to convey norms and

Table 4 Social capital and economic capital

	Income ^a	Fixed costs			Controllable costs		
		Very important	Somewhat important	Not important	Very important	Important	Not important
Emotional support	0.09	3.15 (1.04)	3.70 (1.00)	3.97 (0.92)	3.75 (0.94)	3.67 (0.99)	3.85 (0.98)
Parent-student discussions	0.02	2.85 (0.71)	3.13 (0.84)	3.17 (0.92)	3.11 (0.89)	3.24 (0.74)	3.10 (0.92)
Parental monitoring	0.02	2.30 (0.98)	2.59 (0.84)	2.50 (0.90)	2.60 (1.00)	2.47 (0.86)	2.53 (0.87)
Participation in PTA and volunteering	-0.02	2.35 (1.14)	2.07 (0.82)	2.45 (1.09)	2.21 (1.06)	2.26 (1.02)	2.30 (1.00)
Knowledge about academic requirements	0.06	2.47 (0.84)	2.59 (0.84)	2.65 (0.83)	2.75 (0.61)	2.66 (0.77)	2.58 (0.87)
Parent-school interaction (academic)	0.13*	2.96 (0.89)	2.89 (0.97)	2.92 (1.08)	2.80 (1.12)	3.07 (1.00)	2.86 (1.02)
Parent-school interaction (behavioural)	0.10	3.03 (1.25)	2.81 (1.13)	2.94 (1.26)	2.74 (1.36)	3.00 (1.19)	2.87 (1.19)
Involvement disruptions	0.05	1.55 (0.76)	1.52 (0.75)	1.56 (0.83)	1.72 (0.94)	1.58 (0.81)	1.50 (0.77)

Note: ^aPearson’s correlation coefficients with log-transformed monthly family income (*: $p < .05$). Conditions means are presented for fixed and controllable costs (SD in parentheses)

standards and attend school activities increased with the frequency of communication in Chinese. Parental educational level was also related to social capital. That is, father’s educational level was positively related to the frequency of parent-student discussions ($F(2,285) = 4.14, p < 0.05$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.028$), as well as the frequency of parent-school contact about academics ($F(2,288) = 5.67, p < 0.01$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.038$) and behavioral issues ($F(2,289) = 5.71, p < 0.01$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.038$). Similarly, mother’s educational level was positively related to the frequency of parent-student discussions ($F(2,286) = 8.08, p < 0.01$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.053$), volunteering in PTA and school activities ($F(2,291) = 4.92, p < 0.01$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.033$), and the frequency of parent-school contact about academics ($F(2,290) = 5.32, p < 0.01$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.021$) and behavioral issues ($F(2,289) = 3.76, p < 0.05$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.025$). Parents who had a higher expectation of students’ educational attainment offered more emotional support to students ($F(2,288) = 11.57, p < 0.01$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.074$). Higher expectation in education was also associated with more frequent parent-student discussions about education-related issues ($F(2,285) = 8.83, p < 0.01$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.058$) and a higher level of parent-school contact about both academic ($F(2,290) = 4.86, p < 0.01$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.032$) and behavioral issues ($F(2,290) = 5.22, p < 0.01$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.035$). Additionally, those parents who encouraged the student participants to go to university-bound cultural classes engaged in more frequent

Table 5 Social capital and cultural capital

	Frequency of communication in Chinese ^a	Father's educational level			Mother's educational level		
		Less university	University	Postgraduate	Less university	University	Postgraduate
Parent-student discussions	0.11	3.02 (0.89)	3.32 (0.90)	3.36 (0.47)	2.99 (0.88)	3.41 (0.89)	3.45 (0.56)
Parental monitoring	0.13*	2.52 (0.88)	2.50 (0.85)	2.70 (0.88)	2.47 (0.89)	2.60 (0.89)	2.63 (0.77)
Participation in PTA and volunteering	0.13*	2.18 (0.96)	2.46 (1.05)	2.44 (1.08)	2.17 (0.95)	2.59 (1.07)	2.25 (1.07)
Parent-school interaction (academic)	0.10 [^]	2.78 (1.04)	3.07 (0.97)	3.44 (0.96)	2.79 (1.02)	3.06 (1.00)	3.45 (1.04)
Parent-school interaction (behavioural)	0.06	2.74 (1.20)	3.07 (1.17)	3.52 (1.21)	2.78 (1.18)	3.01 (1.17)	3.46 (1.41)

	Parental educational expectations			Participation in university-bound cultural classes		
	Less university	University	Postgraduate	Yes	No	No
Emotional support	3.18 (1.01)	3.73 (0.97)	4.06 (0.92)	3.86 (1.00)	3.71 (0.97)	3.71 (0.97)
Parent-student discussions	2.72 (0.82)	3.05 (0.80)	3.37 (0.93)	3.28 (0.84)	2.89 (0.90)	2.89 (0.90)
Parental monitoring	2.70 (0.59)	2.39 (0.96)	2.63 (0.83)	2.68 (0.75)	2.25 (1.00)	2.25 (1.00)
Knowledge about academic requirements	2.59 (0.91)	2.55 (0.90)	2.70 (0.73)	2.69 (0.76)	2.49 (0.92)	2.49 (0.92)
Parent-school interaction (academic)	2.64 (0.77)	2.80 (0.92)	3.14 (1.18)	3.06 (1.04)	2.66 (0.965)	2.66 (0.965)
Parent-school interaction (behavioural)	2.58 (0.84)	2.74 (1.10)	3.16 (1.36)	3.02 (1.22)	2.66 (1.16)	2.66 (1.16)

Note: ^aPearson's correlation coefficients with frequency of communication in Chinese ([^]: $p < .1$; *; $p < .05$). Conditions means are presented for parents' education levels (SD in parentheses)

Note: Conditions means are presented (SD in parentheses)

discussions with the participants ($t(289) = 3.77, p < 0.01$, Cohen's $d = 0.46$), set up more norms and standards ($t(294) = 4.18, p < 0.01$, Cohen's $d = 0.50$), had a better understanding of participants' academic requirements ($t(289) = 2.08, p < 0.05$, Cohen's $d = 0.25$), and interacted more frequently with the school about academic ($t(293) = 3.23, p < 0.01$, Cohen's $d = 0.39$) and behavioral issues ($t(294) = 2.54, p < 0.05$, Cohen's $d = 0.31$).

5 Conclusion

The findings from this study address the two research questions. First, this research supports Perna's (2000, 2006) model of parental involvement as a form of social capital that promotes university enrollment, as measured by students' educational aspirations. Several measures of social capital-embedded parental involvement were related to the development of university aspirations. The analyses concluded that social capital was positively associated with students' educational aspirations through parental interactions with the student and the school. That is to say, the general correspondence between social capital-embedded parental involvement and a student's educational aspiration might reflect not only the benefits of parent-student involvement at home but also the ways in which parents interacted with the school and school agents. The result revealed that families were typically perceived as a primary source of social capital for Korean students, especially in relation to their education (cf. Coleman 1988). When compared with parent-student involvement, there was a limited involvement at school and in the community in their importance. The study thus calls on school personnel and university outreach programs to plan positive and creative ways to strengthen parental initiation in parent-school and parent-parent partnerships, specifically to ensure success of the less advantaged students. Schools and tertiary institutions may also partner with Korean community organizations in running university-going workshops and activities.

Second, the findings confirm the value of economic and cultural capital in affecting the operation of social capital-embedded parental involvement, as manifested by the hypothesized intersecting relationship between social capital and other types of capital in this study. The result indicated that parent economic and cultural capital significantly affected social capital. The preliminary analyses provide significant contributions to the prevalence of the interacting patterns between social capital and other types of capital, warranting continued work. Follow-up research can extend the statistical findings to qualitatively explore the patterns of interaction among various types of capital. Additionally, future research may take actual university enrollment including enrollment in selective and nonselective 4-year degree programs relative to non-enrollment into account and examine how the Korean students lacking in one or more types of capital navigate the university choice process.

Although data analyses manifested a relatively high-quality involvement of Korean parents in children's education, this study found that with an increased number of Korean families falling into the category of *Danqin* and even *Wuqin*, Korean

parents might become increasingly weak in parent-student, parent-school, and parent-parent involvement. Therefore, efforts to develop university preparation programs are vested in addressing the continued mobility of Korean adults and their potential underrepresentation in the university choice process (Gao 2017).

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