Chapter 8

Accommodating the External Environment

8.1 Introduction

China and the Western countries have different historical traditions in terms of the relations between school and community. The Chinese educational historians have a summary of Chinese school education in ancient times, which is called XUE-ZAI-GUAN-FU [education never takes place out of official compound]. This saying is based on three fundamental characteristics of school education during initial stage of school education in ancient China (the period of time so-called the Chinese society with slave system). The first characteristic is that school education is exclusively the experience of the children from royal and noble families, and never allowed to extend to common man. Secondly, the school house is set in the royal palace or an official residence, in which a certain official or a couple of officials take the role of teachers. To be more exactly, these officials are only part-time teachers, since they also take other governing responsibilities in central or local governments. So, it is known as GUAN-SHI-BU-FEN [there is no explicit role boundary between officials and teachers]. Thirdly, there is no separated educational administrative organ, and the educational administration is only one of sections of civil administration. On the other hand, a school is not only the place for teaching and learning, but also the venue for government ritual activities such as sacrifices. Moreover, the ritual activities themselves are regarded as a part of the content of school education. Thus, it is known as ZHENG-JIAO-HE-YI [education is integrated into general governance] (Mei, 1995, pp. 59-60; Wu and Feng, 1998, p.50). In this case, it is not surprising that Chinese schools isolated from local communities at the time. In modern China, although the modern school education was no longer confined to the saying “education never takes place out of official compound”, either government schools or private schools, including the Christian-funded schools still had little substantive connection with local communities since a Chinese school house was usually surrounded by high wood fence or concrete barrier, and there was little interaction between people inside and outside the school wall. Moreover, a Chinese school, an urban school in particular, for a long time in the past, was built in a community didn’t mean that its students were necessarily the children from the families of the community (Feng, 2008). This phenomenon of alienation between Chinese schools

and local communities may be different from that of the European and North American countries. For example, local public schools in the United States have kept close relations with local communities, and a large portion of school revenues have come from local property taxes for a long time (Urban and Wagoner, 2009, pp. 133-134).

Although the bridge of school-community communication was gradually built after the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the substantive change in traditional relations between schools and communities did not occur in China until the mid-1980s with progress of educational reform (Chen and Feng, 1998, p.1). The pioneering practices in building up closer relationship between the schools and local communities emerged in 1986 in Shanghai and Nanjing, the capital city of Jiangsu Province. The typical way to do so was to establish a type of coordinating body called Education Committee of the Community (ECC) which co-chaired by the school principal and the community head as well as enterprises and business leaders to coordinate local resources to provide the school with possible technical and financial support. Concomitantly, the school tried to meet the local needs in school enrolment and sharing school sports ground and facilities on weekends (Ye, 1990; Yue, 1994). These cases exerted influence on more and more schools in other cities of China soon, and the ECCs mushroomed in the following years across the country. Chinese educational policy makers welcomed and encouraged the practice of building closer relationship between schools and communities, and even wider society because they realized that it was conducive to promoting the *quality-oriented education*. The CCCPC and the State Council made a clear statement in 1993 that the central government encouraged primary and secondary schools to work with local enterprises, institutions, neighborhood committees or villagers committees to establish community-based education organizations with coordinating functions in order to pool up resources from all sectors of society to support school construction, participating in school management, optimizing the educational environment, and exploring appropriate forms of connecting school education to society in line with the characteristics of primary and secondary schools (CCCPC and State Council, 1993). In the *Decision of State Council on the reform and development of basic education* released in 2001, the State Council called for schools to further improve communication and cooperation with local community, made full use of community resources to provide students with a variety of activities beneficial to them, and create a community environment to blossom students into well-prepared and socially-engaged

citizens. The State Council also called on local governments to raise funds through various ways and build a range of local social practice bases for students (State Council, 2001a). Apparently, the government's position was shifting from generally encouraging closer relationship between schools and communities to making specific demands on how to make the relationship closer. Furthermore, the involvement of parents and community in school management and school evaluation was emphasized in *China's compendium of national medium and long term plan for educational reform and development (2010-2020)*. Two years later, the MOE required all schools to establish the Parent Committee and defined the role of committee in school management (MoE, 2012). In another development, a number of new communities around cities continuously increased with the scope of cities expanded to their surroundings in China's urbanization in the early 21st century. To meet the needs of school-age children from the families in newly built residential quarters to attend school nearby, Chinese Minister of Education called on in 2018 that compulsory education schools must be built for school-aged children in any new residential quarters (Chai and Liu, 2018). In fact, not a few provincial governments have recently required that it is necessary for any construction planning of new residential quarters to taken into account, as a part of construction of public services infrastructure, the construction of public schools in accordance with the State-set standards for school construction (PGHP, 2017; GOPGSP, 2018). The policy requirement has brought about an unprecedented picture, in which the construction of a new school and residential buildings are simultaneously completed in many new residential quarters in China. It means that a school and its local community are like twin brothers from very beginning, and there will be few barriers to communication between them. This phenomenon together with government initiatives in bridging schools with local communities has transformed each individual school into an open system in the society. Consequently, "accommodating the external environment" as one of key leadership practices was finally written in the professional standards for primary and secondary school principals (MOE, 2013; MOE, 2015a). On the other hand, school educators have come to realize that it is difficult for them to address all challenges in school education without assists from and cooperation with parents and community. For instance, most of principals and teachers, as noted in Chapter 5, agreed in *CSSLM2017-principals* and *CSTWCE2017-teachers* that the major obstacle to reduce students' excessive burden came from the parents and the society. At present, some enterprising school leadership practitioners have created

a variety of strategies and develop a range of programs to work with parents and local community to improve the effectiveness in moral and citizenship education for students as well as to expand the collaboration between school and wider society, some of which have been widely accepted and used as high frequency terms. These terms can be identified from government RHDs, school-developed management documents and school principal-written articles and books with the themes about “accommodating the external environment”. Among these widely used terms, the highest frequency ones include *Parent Committee* [JIA-ZHANG-WEI-YUAN-HUI], *Parent School* [JIA-ZHANG-XUE-XIAO], *Local Studies* [XIANG-TU-JIAO-YU], *Social Practice Base* [SHE-HUI-SHI-JIAN-JI-DI], *Opening of School Resource* [XIAO-YUAN-ZI-YUAN-KAI-FANG], *School Open Day* [XUE-XIAO-KAI-FANG-RI] and *University-School Collaboration* [DA-XUE-YU-ZHONG-XIAO-XUE-HE-ZUO]. It seems essential for international audience to know and understand these high frequency terms selected in this chapter if they would like to gain insight into real leadership practice of *accommodating the external environment* in China.

8.2 key terms

8.2.1 *Parent Committee* [JIA-ZHANG-WEI-YUAN-HUI]

The *Parent Committee* [JIA-ZHANG-WEI-YUAN-HUI] in China is a voluntary body comprised of elected parental representatives, which is intended to facilitate parental participation in school management, support school and family social interaction, promote open communication, understanding and cooperation between parents and school staff so as to create a more supportive learning environment for students (Zhang, 2016; Cao, 2018). The term was first used by an official document of the State Education Commission (SEC) in 1988 when the *Parent Committee* was regarded in the document as one of means to carry out the moral and citizenship education for students (Wen, 2015). In practice, the *Parent Committees* were established only in a small number of schools in the early 1990s, and its role was limited to support the moral and citizenship education for students by facilitating the ample communication between schools and families (Lin, 1992). To respond to the central government's policy that encourage schools to proactively cooperate with parents and local community, some local governments made relevant local policies to intensify the role of the *Parent Committee*, and viewed the *committee* as one of vehicles for optimizing school external environment in the 21st century. In Pudong New District of Shanghai,

for example, the district education bureau launched a district-wide project in 2003 concerning the establishment of the *Parent Committee* in schools to explore the ways that *Parent Committee* participated in parts areas of school management (Yin, 2006). The Government of Shandong Province issued a provincial policy document in 2009 to call for all schools in the province to establish the *Parent Committee*. The result of a sampling survey in the province conducted in 2012 showed that both school staff and parents were generally satisfied with the work of the *Parent Committee* at schools (Lu and Zhao, 2013). In the early practices in Shanghai and Shandong in the first decade of the 21st century, the roles of the *Parent Committee* in different schools seemed almost same, but their specific responsibilities are not identical. In some cases, the *Parent Committee* was exclusively responsible for bringing parents' opinions and ideas to school leadership, sharing successful cases of parents-children interaction, and encouraging parental involvement in the programs of after school enrichment. Nevertheless, in some other cases, the *Parent Committee* involved in more substantive management matters (e.g. appraisal the performance of the form teachers, selection of student uniform style, selection of student lunch suppliers, etc.) (Yin, 2006, p. 307, pp. 414-416, p. 574; Lu and Zhao, 2013). In 2012, the MOE issued the *Guiding principles of the Ministry of Education on the establishment of Parent Committees in kindergartens and in primary and secondary schools*, in which three key duties of the *Parent Committee* were set out. According to this RHD of the MOE, the first duty of the *Parent Committee* is participation in school management, which includes making suggestions on school work plans and important decision-making, especially on matters of vital interest to students and parents, and overseeing school activities and events to help schools improve their work. The second duty of the *committee* is to support school education by coordinating additional resources and expertise from parents for school programs and activities, and sharing right ideas and practical skills in kid education among parents. The third duty of the *committee* is to be an effective channel of communication between the school and families by informing parents about school progress recently made and the school major initiatives or measures to be taken in the near future. Apart from the duties of *Parent Committee*, the MOE also required in the *Guiding principles* of 2012 that members of the *committee* must be elected through democratic procedure rather than directly designated by the school (MOE, 2012). However, the requirements of the MOE cannot be achieved overnight in all schools since the country is so large. Perhaps specific

responsibilities of the *Parent Committee* in schools in different parts of China would be never exactly the same, but one thing is clear that the *Parent Committee* in most schools at the moment does not interfere, based on the information drawn from the *CSSLM2017-principals*, in the school decisions regarding classroom teaching affairs (see Appendix A).

8.2.2 *Parent School* [JIA-ZHANG-XUE-XIAO]

Parent School [JIA-ZHANG-XUE-XIAO] does not refer to a type of brick-and-mortar schools, but the school-developed training program for parents, through which parents can acquire the knowledge and skills about the development of both parents and of their children and the relationship between them, and have opportunities to share practical cases and specific methods in addressing some of the most challenging issues confronting parents today in their interaction with their children. The primary purposes of the program are to improve parents' knowledge and skills in parenting, promote mutual understanding between parents and teachers, and strengthen cooperation between schools and parents (Yin, 2006, p.417, p. 571; Hong, 2017). Since most parents work on weekdays, the training courses or activities are usually scheduled for evenings or weekends. For parents, anyway, the training program is not compulsory, and whether they participate in the program is decided by parents themselves. There are three main reasons for the rise of *Parent Schools* in China in the past three decades. Because of the influence of Chinese traditional culture, "education (basically examination preparation) is viewed as the sole route for upwards social mobility, the only hope for an individual's future." (OECD, 2011, p. 84) a large number of Chinese parents attach great importance to their children's academic achievements, but neglect the cultivation of their children's civic quality and the development of their healthy personality. Obviously, this is contrary to the citizenship required in the 21st century (Fan, 2012). Secondly, the rapid development of science and technology and the increasingly use of Internet and social media, have a tremendous impact on adolescents' lifestyles. Some parents are often frustrated when interacting with their adolescent children. Others are busy with their business all day and have little time to be concerned about their children. these students are not short of money but lack of pastoral care from parents (Xie and Wang, 2012). Thirdly, the data from China's sixth census in 2010 showed that the average educational attainment of parents of juveniles (persons under the age of 18) was not high at the time (see Table 8.1). It suggested, to some extent, that some Chinese parents may lack of the competence to fulfill their parental role expected by

Chinese society in the 21st century (Zhang, 2012). In 2001, the State Council released the *Outline for the Development of Children in China* (2001-2010), in which the central government called for the *Parent School* should help parents to establish right concepts of education and mastering scientific knowledge and methods of parental influence on their children by providing parenting training programs (State Council, 2001b). In 2004, the CCCPC and the State Council reiterated in *Opinions of the CCCPC and the State Council on Further Strengthening and Improving the Ideological and Moral Education of Juveniles*, that *Parent Schools* should make efforts to popularize parenting knowledge, disseminate successful experience in parenting practice and improve the ability of parents to educate their children (CCCPC and State Council, 2004). In the *Guiding Principles of the Ministry of Education on Strengthening Parental Education* released in 2015, the MOE required all primary and secondary schools to plan and organize the programs of the *Parent School* as a part of school necessary work, and the inputs of the school leader in charge of student moral education, the director of the Office for Moral Education and the form teachers' into the *Parent School* program would be recorded as school's workload (MOE, 2015b). For most schools, the main work for the *Parent School*, at present, includes two aspects. One is to build up a human resource network composed by the school leader in charge of student moral education, the director of the Office for Moral Education, the form teachers, the parents with distinguished talent in parental education, and parenting educators and other volunteers from outsider. And the other is to develop the training programs and organize workshops for parents (Yin, 2006, pp.417-420; Yu, 2014). In some districts, the district education bureaus work with local communities to establish the human resource pool at district level, so as to keep balanced development of all *Parent Schools* across the district school system (Diao and Jiang, 2016). Generally speaking, *Parent Schools* have been widely established in China's schools, and the information drawn from *CSSLM2017-principals* also shows that majority of *Parent Schools*, at the moment, are able to provide regular training activities for parents (see Appendix A). Nevertheless, not all schools can ensure the quality of the training program of the *Parent School* since the resources allocated for *Parent Schools* (funds, professional force, management maturity, and so on) is different from urban areas to rural areas in China (Xie and Wang, 2012; Xu and Li, 2018).

Table 8.1 The proportion of juveniles' parents with different educational attainments in China

Age	Illiteracy (%)	Primary (%)	Lower Secondary (%)	Upper Secondary (%)	Junior College (%)	Undergraduate (%)	Postgraduate (%)
25-29	0.76	8.56	52.18	17.92	11.07	8.28	1.22
30-34	1.08	12.87	53.27	17.56	8.76	5.66	0.80
35-39	1.42	18.09	55.04	14.81	6.45	3.75	0.44
40-44	1.94	23.60	53.92	12.82	4.64	2.80	0.28
45-49	2.46	23.94	49.13	17.42	4.43	2.36	0.26

Source: Zhang, H. (2012).

8.2.3 Local Studies [XIANG-TU-JIAO-YU]

Local Studies [XIANG-TU-JIAO-YU] refers to the school-developed and local community-focused learning program for students, which usually falls into the category of school curriculum in China's three-level curricular system (national, local, and school). The *Local Studies* is the comprehensive and project-based learning program, through which students learn to use the integrated knowledge from multiple fields (e.g. history, geography, political science, economics, statistics, etc.) to understand the historical events, the social and economic status quo, the natural landscape and features of local geography, and identify the most challenging issues confronting the local community today. The aim of the *Local Studies* is not only to intensify students' knowledge about local community, but also to foster students' affection for local community and the sense of social responsibility (Pei, 2010; Huang, 2012). Moreover, schools can draw on the practice of *Local Studies* as an opportunity to establish or maintain close connection to local community, so as to improve their external environment. Since the frequently adopted learning approaches in *Local Studies* are the field visitation and the study accompanied with literature review, interview and questionnaire survey which are seldom used in teaching and learning of conventional subjects, the students' experience of *Local Studies* seems to be helpful in developing their higher-order thinking skills, such as critical thinking and problem solving skills. Although remarkable progress has been made in practice of *Local Studies* in China in the past two decades, there are still some challenges for its further development. These challenges encompass the issues of the sufficient fund to assure the implementation of the *Local Studies*, the

development of quality teaching materials for the *Local Studies*, preparation of more teachers who are qualified both for conventional subjects and *Local Studies* (Pei, 2010; Li and Shi, 2016; Mao and Zheng, 2017; He and Wang, 2017).

8.2.4 *Social Practice Base* [SHE-HUI-SHI-JIAN-JI-DI]

As noted in Chapter 6, the latest curriculum reform launched in 2001 has led a range of significant changes regarding curriculum system and teaching and learning approach in primary and secondary schools in China. As one of policy initiatives in the curriculum reform, a new type of curriculum, so-called *integrated hands-on curriculum* [ZONG-HE-SHI-JIAN-HUO-DONG-KE-CHENG] was set out by the MOE and included in the curriculum system of primary and secondary schools in 2001(MOE, 2001). This cross-subjects new type of curriculum aims at developing student capacity to solve comprehensive problems by using of the knowledge integrated from various conventional subjects (e.g. Mathematics, Science, History) and cultivating student sense of creativity and hands-on skills. For this end, the role of teachers in the *integrated hands-on curriculum* needs to change from “instructor” to “organizer”, “guider”, and “facilitator”, and the appropriate learning approach of students in the *integrated hands-on curriculum* will be “learning by doing” (MOE, 2017). Moreover, the *integrated hands-on curriculum* is usually conducted as a series of theme-specific learning programs, and often needs to be done in the learning environment with some special facilities in terms of different themes. It is difficult, too often times, for the *integrated hands-on curriculum* to be conducted in regular classrooms and conventional science laboratories in schools. Consequently, the *Social Practice Base* [SHE-HUI-SHI-JIAN-JI-DI] emerged in the early years of the 21st century as the times require.

The *Social Practice Base* refers to a kind of off-campus learning platforms for primary and secondary school students, in which the *integrated hands-on curriculum* or moral and citizenship education activities for school students can be exercised (Gu, 2009; Yin, 2011). Initially, most of the learning activities in *Social Practice Bases* were jointly created by schools and local public institutions (e.g. museums), industrial enterprises and farms. A *Social Practice Base* in this context is like a public institution (e.g. museum)-based program. In this pattern, the institution provide the ad hoc learning venue with the facilities to meet the needs of student learning activities, and the professionals of the institution act as consultants in student learning when necessary. The State

Council, the MOE and the cultural and science administrations of central government have issued a couple of RHDs recent years to require public institutions and industrial enterprises to work with schools in construction of *Social Practice Bases* (MOE, 2011; NCHA and MOE, 2015; State Council, 2016). However, the resources provided by different communities for the construction of *Social Practice Bases* are unbalanced. To address the challenges caused by resource unbalance in different communities, some local governments have recently raised funds and allocated land to set up large-sized *Social Practice Bases*. In Jiangsu Province, for instance, nine large-sized *Social Practice Bases* were completed during 2013 to 2014, which costed over RMB 700 million (about USD 105 million) (Dai, 2015). A second instance is that the city government of Fuzhou invested RMB 470 million (about USD 70.5 million) in 2016 to build a large-sized *Social Practice Base* (Wang, 2016). These newly established large-sized *Social Practice Bases* are designed as a simulated social environment with industrial workshops, farms, shops, banks, post offices, courts, hotel, business center, emerging science and technology laboratories and creative workshops, in which the full-time teachers paly the roles of guide, coach, advisor, consultant, facilitator for student learning activities. Compared with the *bases* jointly created by schools and public institutions, such large-sized *Social Practice Bases* have more diverse functions to meet the needs of various programs of *integrated hands-on curriculum* or moral and citizenship education activities, and they are usually shared by schools in various communities.

8.2.5 Opening of School Resource [XIAO-YUAN-ZI-YUAN-KAI-FANG]

Opening of School Resource [XIAO-YUAN-ZI-YUAN-KAI-FANG] refers to primary and secondary schools to provide local community residents with the opportunity to share campus resources after school on weekdays as well as on weekends and school holidays. The “campus resources” here mainly include school libraries, sports ground and facilities, and human resource as on-site coaches or guardians. Historically, the public libraries and the infrastructures for public sports in China were, on the whole, insufficient and unevenly distributed. Most public libraries were located in urban centers, and so were public sports facilities. The residents of suburban and rural communities hardly used the public libraries and sports facilities because the communities in which they were living were too far away from these public resources (Wang, 2005). The utilization rate of school libraries and sports facilities, in the meantime, was pretty low. For instance, it is estimated in 2001 that the utilization rate of books in school libraries is about 20%

(Liu, 2001). This reality was obviously not in line with the goal of building a learning society proclaimed by the 16th National Congress of the CPC in 2002 (Jiang, 2002). On the other hand, the data drawn from a nation-wide survey on sports facilities revealed that of the 850,080 existing public sports infrastructures (stadiums and gymnasiums), more than 50% belong to primary and secondary schools, and the utilization rate of the sports infrastructures in schools was not high (Tu, 2016). Chinese central government has issued a series of policies and initiatives to address the challenge of shortage and uneven distribution of public libraries and sports facilities since the beginning of the 21st century. The examples include the *Regulations for Primary and Secondary School Libraries (Revised Edition)* issued in 2003 and the *National Fitness Ordinance* promulgated in 2009. The former encourages primary and secondary school libraries to open to local community residents (MOE, 2003), while the latter clearly demand that public schools should proactively make the thing of “opening sports facilities to the public” happen (State Council, 2009). These policies are generally referred to as the requirement for *Opening of School Resource*. The libraries and sports facilities in most schools have opened to community residents from then on. In practice, some schools not only open libraries and sports facilities to community residents, but also organize theme-specific reading activities and sports events, through which the relationship between schools and communities has been strengthened and the reputation of schools in the local communities has been enhanced. Moreover, the school students can also reap the benefits by *Opening of School Resource* because of the opening of school libraries and sports facilities during long and boring summer and winter vacations (Wang, 2005; Li, 2011; Li and Liu, 2011; Xia and Li, 2014). However, the *Opening of School Resource* has also created pressure on school management. Research conducted in Beijing, Zhejiang, Guangdong, Hubei, and Sichuan provinces showed that the foremost pressure created by the *Opening of School Resource* to school management is about campus peacefulness and safety. In fact, the campus tranquility has been largely lost and school staff and parents has been, more or less, assailed by emotional insecurity since the *Opening of School Resource* was carried out. Secondly, the *Opening of School Resource* increases the workload of school management. Although schools management can often be assisted by the volunteers from local community during the time that school libraries and sports facilities open to community residents, the final responsibility of school safety management can

never be taken by community volunteers (Lü, 2007; Li and Liu, 2011; Li, 2011; Xia and Li, 2014; Mu, et al., 2015; Tu, 2016; Li, 2018).

8.2.6 School Open Day [XUE-XIAO-KAI-FANG-RI]

School Open Day [XUE-XIAO-KAI-FANG-RI] as a term is almost synonymous in China and in Western countries (such as the United Kingdom). In China, a typical *School Open Day* is that the school organizes, on a scheduled day, a variety of open events to provide children (some of them could be future students of the school) and their parents as well as community members who are concerned about the school's status quo and future development with an opportunity to see what a typical school day is like there by taking a tour around the campus, watching the classroom instruction and student learning process in science laboratories, and experiencing sports and extra-curricular activities (Sun, 1999; Zhang, 2013). *School Open Day* was first used as a term by school leadership practitioners in the late 1980s, when schools were encouraged to establish closer relationships with parents and local communities than ever before. *School Open Day* was a new thing at the time in leadership practice in China, and only a small number of schools tried to do it (Du, 1996). Thirty years later, however, the *School Open Day* has become one of routine communication channels between schools and their external stakeholders. According to *CSSLM2017-principals*, 54.1 percent of the respondents STRONGLY AGREED with “*school open day* is an important way for schools to communicate with parents and local community.” while 30.5 percent of respondents AGREED with the item. Furthermore, the *School Open Day* in some cases has been used as one of the leadership strategies to accommodate and optimize school external environment (BMSE, 2017; SMEC, 2019).

The *School Open Day* in China can be roughly grouped into the following four types in terms of its specific intentions:

1) It aims, by holding *School Open Day*, to show the achievements of school education in a school district or even in a city to the society. For example, the educational authority of a city once organized a city-wide *School Open Day*. All primary and secondary schools in the city's school system held a variety of open events on the same day, and it was said that one million parents participated in it (Sun, 1999). Nevertheless, such a huge and unified *School Open Day* with strong administrative will and propaganda intentions has been rarely seen in China nowadays.

2) The intention of the *School Open Day* focuses exclusively on one of specific themes of school education. A primary school in Guangdong Province, for instance, invited parents and professionals from local community to participate in a theme-specific *School Open Day* titled “Light Burden, High Quality, Vivid Teaching and Learning”. During the *School Open Day*, every participant had chance to watch (observe) two classes and each teacher in various subjects delivered one lesson openly. The intention of the *School Open Day* was to introduce the school’s dedicated educational ideal and innovative methods in teaching and learning, and collect feedback from parents and community professionals as well (Liu, 1991).

3) The intention of the *School Open Day* is to provide parents with first-hand picture about the school life in order that parents can understand what and how their children are doing at school. This type of *School Open Day* is usually used by newly established schools because one of priorities for them is to gain parents’ trust (The Journalist, 1999).

4) The intention of the *School Open Day* is to introduce to potential students and parents the school’s philosophy and spirit, regular curriculum and featured programs, teacher quality, student achievements and routine management system by a variety of open events and the interaction between the visitors and school staff and students. This type of *School Open Day* is somewhat similar to school marketing, and mainly serves for enrollment (SMEC, 2019).

8.2.7 University-School Collaboration [DA-XUE-YU-ZHONG-XIAO-XUE-HE-ZUO]

University-School Collaboration [DA-XUE-YU-ZHONG-XIAO-XUE-HE-ZUO] refers to a kind of project-based collaborative mechanism between a university and a primary or secondary school with an end that both sides can benefit from it. However, the specific objectives of the *University-School Collaboration* depend on the themes of the collaborative project, which are usually different from case to case (Yang, 2009; Li and Li, 2017). As a term used in China, *University-School Collaboration* seems to be almost synonymously with the term *school-university partnership* used by Western scholars (cf. Goodlad, 1988, or Fullan et al., 1995), but there are still some differences between the two terms since the practices of *University-School Collaboration* and *school-university partnership* are brought about in different political and socioeconomic contexts. Historically, the practice of collaboration between universities and primary or secondary schools was rare in China because of different visions, missions and aims of higher education sector and basic education sector. However, the initial need for *University-School*

Collaboration gradually emerged after Chinese government initiated educational reform in 1985. The researchers of normal universities, for instance, would like to understand, by field investigation, what practitioner knowledge and skills matter for student teachers in order to conduct appropriate reform in teacher preparation. The second wave of momentum to make the needs of *University-School Collaboration* rapidly increasing is the China's curriculum reform of basic education launched in 2001. With the progress of the curriculum reform, the school leaders and teachers recognized that the societal expectation for the role of a school teacher changed greatly, that is, the role of the teacher has been intensified from an educator (the traditional expectation) to the educator-plus, such as the learner (e.g. to learn how to develop school curriculum), the explorer (e.g. to explore constructivism teaching methods to change the chalk and talk pattern in their classroom instruction) and the researcher (to engage with unprecedented subject-based scientific research) (Feng, 2003). On the other hand, the traditional leadership style and approach in schools were challenged dramatically when the *school development planning* was regarded as one of school leadership priorities in late 1990s, and the curriculum leadership was become one of most important parts of school leadership capacity in the early years of the 21st century (see 3.2.1 and 5.2.9). Hence, school principals seek to draw on research-based knowledge, evidence-informed leadership strategies, and even the latest findings from cutting-edge research to improve leadership and classroom teaching practice in their schools by collaboration with university researchers. Concomitantly, the universities with teacher education or teacher training programs would like to introduce the practitioner knowledge and skills into their teacher preparation programs by inviting and appointing talented subject teachers from primary and secondary schools to work in universities as part-time lecturers or adjunct graduate student advisors, and by jointly developing student teachers' practicum courses with school teachers. Consequently, *University-School Collaboration* has become a common phenomenon in China's education sector over past two decades, through which the public schooling renewal and teacher education improvement have occurred simultaneously (Kong and Bin, 2014; Yuan, et al., 2015; Qi, et al., 2018; Wu, 2018). The *University-School Collaboration* in China takes a variety of forms, ranging from a single research team headed by a professor collaborating with one school or a school system of a school district to a department/college of a university collaborating with a school system of a district, a county or a city and so on. Nevertheless, no matter what form of the

University-School Collaboration, one of the pivotal prerequisites is that the schools or the local education authorities are able to allocate the sufficient extra funds to support the collaborative project. Hence, in terms of *University-School Collaboration* projects, economically developed parts of China obviously have more advantages than economically underdeveloped parts of the country, despite the central government, now and then, grant special funds to support the *University-School Collaboration* projects in the underdeveloped parts. This is regarded as one of the most challenging issues confronting the practice of *University-School Collaboration* today (Sun and Wang, 2016). Another identified challenge in the practice of *University-School Collaboration* is that how the different cultures held by university researchers and school educators can get along harmony with each other, given that, for instance, university researchers tend to seek the “publications”(e.g. the journal articles, research reports) while school leaders and teachers tend to seek “products”(e.g. the visible and invisible change and improvement in student learning) as the key outcome of a *University-School Collaboration* project (Kong and Bin, 2014; Yuan, et al., 2015; Sun and Wang, 2016). These challenges are still remained to be addressed in the practice of *University-School Collaboration* in the future.

8.3 Summary and Discussion

In this chapter, seven highest frequency terms used in China's school leadership practice of “accommodating the external environment” were selected to explore and interpret. By exploring these terms, the evolution of the relationship between schools and communities in China is presented. The ever-closer connection between schools and communities in China over the past three decades is the result of carrying out the *Quality-Oriented Education* advocated by the Chinese government and one of the outcomes of China's rapid urbanization process. Among the seven terms, some seem vaguely familiar to educators in other countries, such as *Parent Committee*, *School Open Day* and *University-School Collaboration*, but there are a lot of differences in detail. For example, the term *University-School Collaboration* used in China seems to be similar to the term *School-University Partnership* used in Western countries, yet the areas and themes encompassed by *University-School Collaboration* may be broader than those encompassed by *School-University Partnership*. In the practice of *University-School Collaboration*, apart from the collaboration in teacher preparation and development, the researchers from universities often play a critical role in developing school strategic plan, framing

school-based curriculum, building teachers' capacity for school-based scientific research, and improving student assessment scheme (Kong and Bin, 2014; Yuan, et al., 2015; Qi, et al., 2018). The *University-School Collaboration* has really made university researchers deeply involved in school education reform and amplified their impact on the practice of school education as well. For example, the book, *For the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation and the development of every student: Interpretation of the "Compendium for curriculum reform of basic education (for trial implementation)"* authored by Qiquan Zhong, professor of education at East China Normal University and his colleagues was first published in August 2001 (Zhong, et al., 2001). By March 2002, the book had been reprinted seven times and got a circulation of 135,000 copies with a very much high citation rate. If Professor Zhong's name is mentioned, it is no exaggeration to say that more than 80% of Chinese educators from regular primary and secondary schools know him. Given the number of the educators in regular primary and secondary schools in China is about 12 million according to China's educational statistics in 2017 (MOE, 2018), one can imagine what an influence this professor has on primary and secondary education. Some other terms explored in this chapter may seem to be unfamiliar to international educators, such as *Local Studies*, *Social Practice Base*, etc. Nevertheless, that's not exactly the case. For instance, some of the themes and methods of *local study* in China seem to be borrowed from the "Social Studies" program of the schools in the United States. Similarly, a part of the activities carried out in China's *Social Practice Base* may be the almost same as the training activities of Boy Scouts of America. Finally, one issue should be received attention in this chapter is unbalanced opportunities for school to obtain the resources from local communities and wider society. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, it is easier for the local education authorities in economically developed parts of China to raised extra funds in construction of *Social Practice Base* and supporting *University-School Collaboration* projects than those in economically underdeveloped parts of the country. In fact, the word "unbalanced" has been turned up lots of times in this book. As noted in Chapter 2, for instance, one of the MOE's RHDs regarding principal training, *Opinions of the MOE on further strengthening the training work for principals of primary and secondary schools* was especially concerned with the reality of unbalanced professional development of principals in different parts of China. A second instance is that *Commissioned Management* initially emerged as a government strategy to close the quality gap between city schools and the schools in rural areas (see 5.2.5 in

Chapter 5). A third instance is that “unbalanced” development of curriculum leadership practices between coastal cities and inland of China (see 6.2.9 in Chapter 6). It suggests that the condition of “unbalanced development” is and will be one of key characteristics of China’s school education and leadership, though Chinese government has made great efforts to address the challenges resulting from the reality of “unbalanced” development in the last decades.

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