

Parental Involvement for Democratic Schooling: Conflicting Expectations and Common Sense Solutions

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Theories of change

- Belief model

- Human behaviors are driven by the beliefs they adopt

- Planned action model

- Human behaviors are shaped by norms and expectations

- Which is a better theory to explain parents' behaviors

The central issue

- Democratic education, social justice and equality of educational opportunity
- 'Allocation' of school place
- Allocation of secondary school place in Hong Kong
 1. Internal assessment
 2. Scaling test
 3. Ability bands
 4. Choice of parents

Impact on the system

- Drilling of students in primary schools
- Development – become a band 1 school
- Parental supervision of learning
- Labeling of students
- Equity of schooling

Education Reform

- Education Reform launched in 2001
- Short-term arrangement – 3 bands with scaling
- Long-term arrangement – 3 bands, no scaling
- Evaluation in 2003: 17.9% (parent), 11.6% (teacher), 8.4% (principal) supported the long-term arrangement

Is equity in schooling possible?

Given the fact that Hong Kong has improved the equity of the allocation mechanism by reducing the number of allocation bands, **what contribute to parents' support of this change?**

- Parent's beliefs ?
- Parental involvement ?
- Parent's expectations about consequences ?
- Level of resource support ?

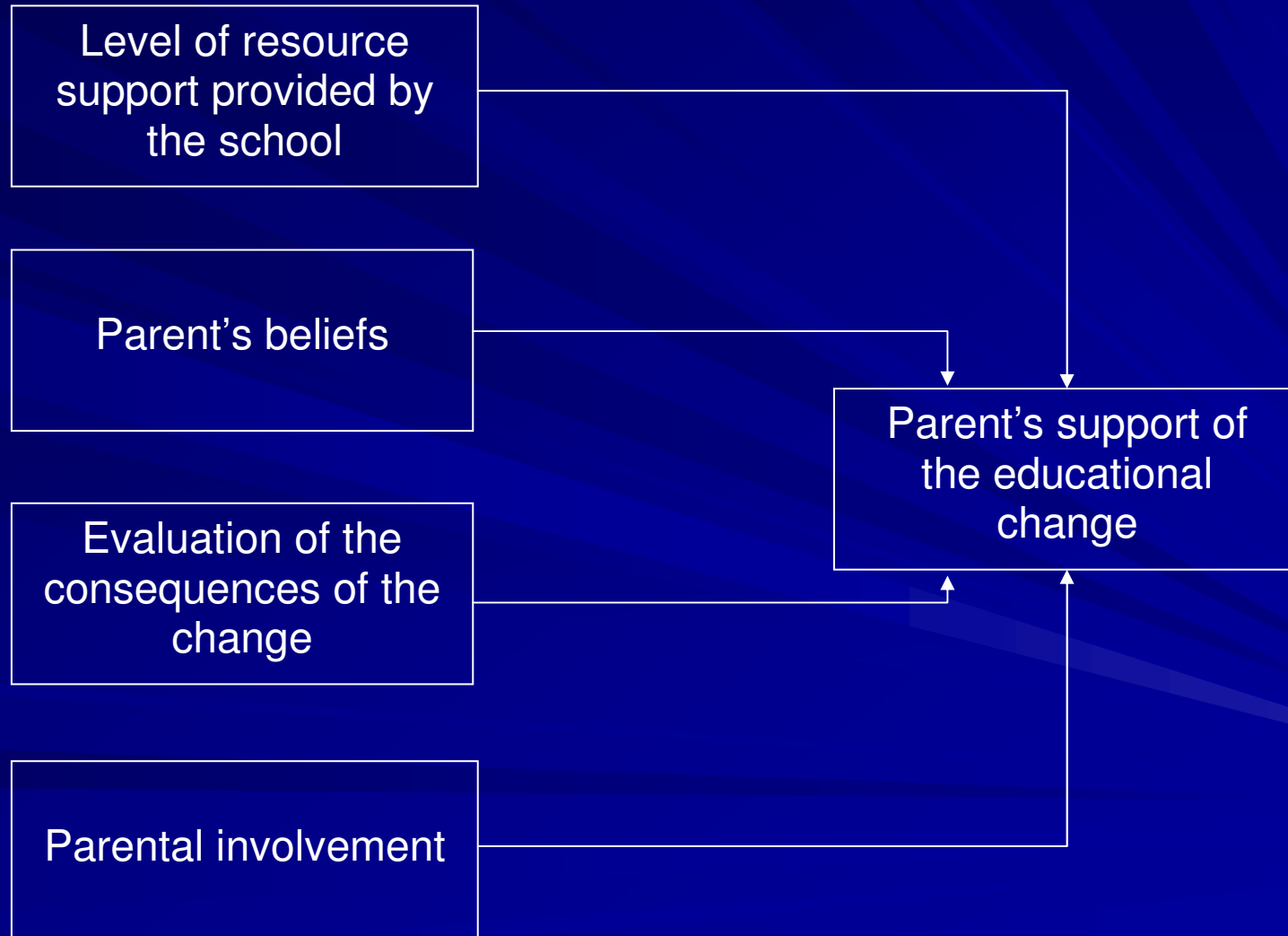
Involvement of Chinese parents

- Two types of parental involvement
 - home-based involvement (exclusive)
 - school-based involvement (inclusive)
- Involvement of Chinese parents
 - Mainly exclusive
 - Pragmatic and instrumental
- Contributes to social reproduction

School Administrator's Dilemma

- The reform is policy driven, administrators have no choice but to implement
- The policy will likely create conflicts among parents, reduce interest of involvement, adding pressure on teachers
- If not handled carefully, a good policy intention could turn out to be a policy disaster, destroying valuable social capital within the education sector

Conceptual framework



Research Method

- 3,834 parents from 65 schools whose children study in secondary one or two
- Survey conducted in July, 2003
- 2 focused groups were conducted before the survey

Survey instruments

- Beliefs in equity scale
- Beliefs against equity scale
- Parental involvement scale
- Expected consequences scale
- School measures scale
- Democratic education scale

Belief in equity

Support mechanisms

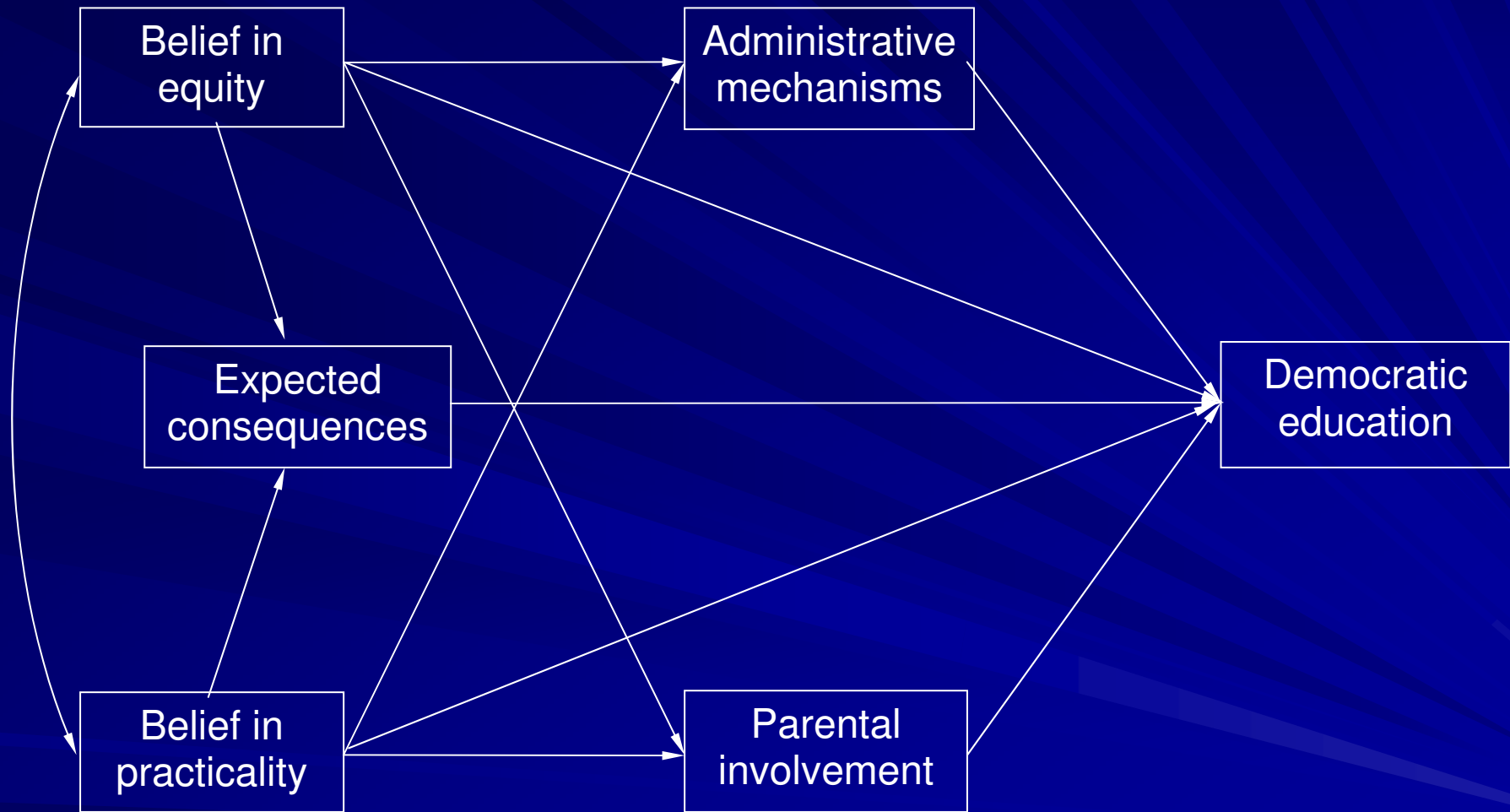
Expected consequences

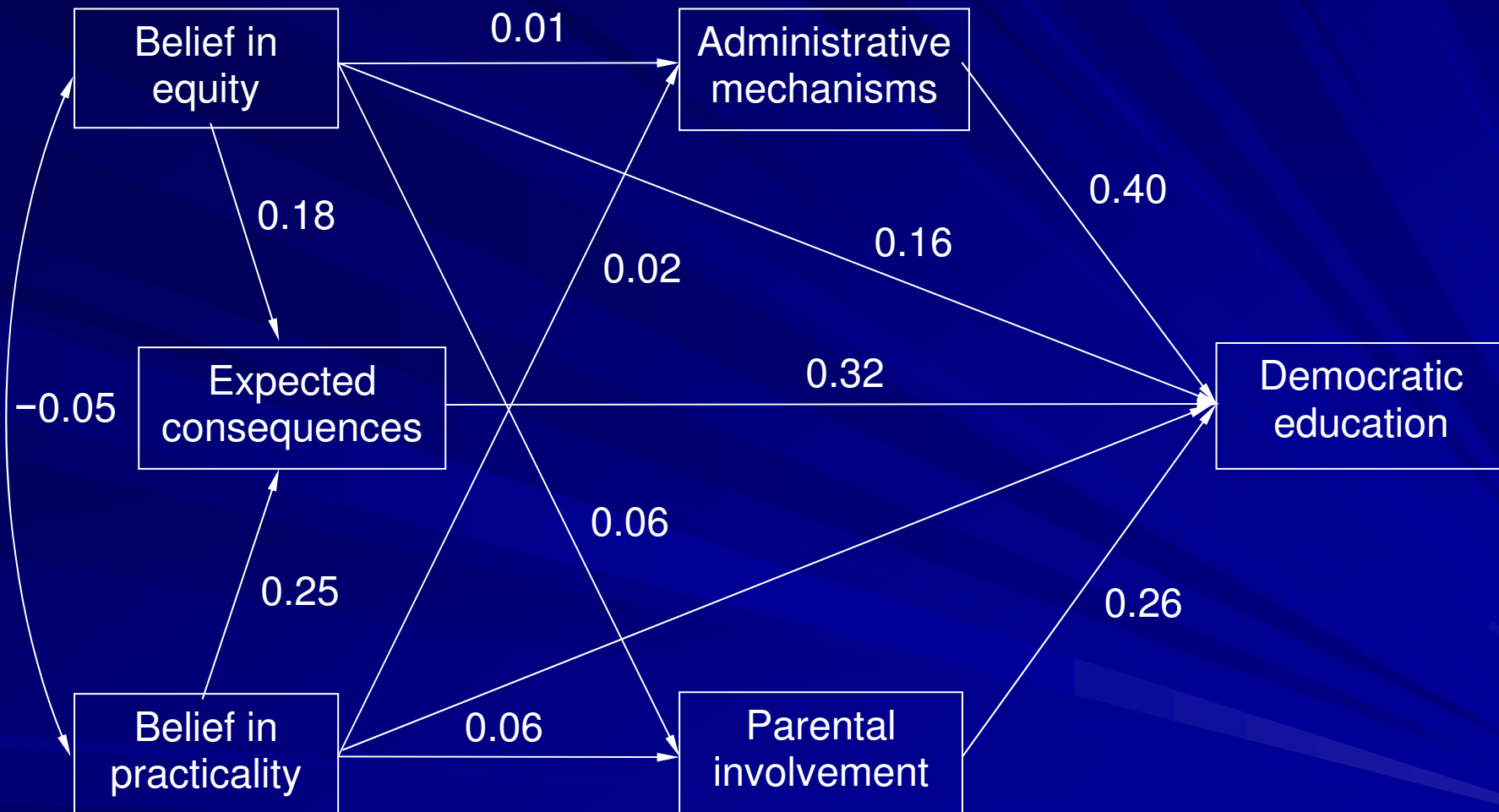
Democratic education

Belief ag. equity

Parental involvement







Model statistics: Chi square = 7.94; degrees of freedom = 4, $p = 0.094$; GFI = 0.999; AGFI = 0.996; CFI = 0.996; RMSEA = 0.016.

Findings

- 4 most important determinants
 - Number of school support mechanisms (0.40)
 - Expected consequence (0.32)
 - Parental involvement (norm) (0.26)
 - Belief in equity (0.16)
- Expectancy as a mediating factor between belief and outcome
- Parental involvement contributes independently

Recommendations

- What parents believe only play a minor role
- Explain to parents the impacts of change – both positive and negative
- Adequacy of school support
- Spill over effect of parental involvement – the development of a norm

