

EXPLORING THE CULTURAL ROOTS OF PARENTING:  
EUROPEAN AMERICAN AND MAINLAND CHINESE PARENTING  
BELIEFS, GOALS, AND PRACTICES

By  
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To the Faculty of Washington State University:

The members of the Committee appointed to examine the thesis of HUIHUA HE find it satisfactory and recommend that it be accepted.

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Abstract

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The primary goal of this study was to investigate the similarities and differences in cultural values, parenting beliefs and goals, and parenting practices between European American and Mainland Chinese parents, and the linkages among cultural values, parenting beliefs and goals and parenting practices in each group. Little research exists that explicitly connects to parents' cultural values to parenting cognitions and parenting practices. Further, research on Chinese parenting mainly uses Chinese-American and Taiwanese parents as samples rather than Mainland Chinese parents, who, it can be argued, more adequately represent traditional Chinese cultures. It was hypothesized that European American and Mainland Chinese parents would have different cultural values, parenting beliefs, goals and parenting practices. European American parents would value individualism, have individualistic goals, and express more nurturance, whereas Mainland Chinese parents would be more likely to value collectivism, have collectivistic goals, and express more control and training. It was also hypothesized that in each ethnic group: 1) cultural values would predict parenting beliefs and goals; and 2) cultural values, parenting beliefs and goals would predict parenting practices. The participants in this study were 96 Mainland Chinese mothers and 80 European American mothers of 4-6 years of children.

Results indicate that European American and Mainland Chinese parents differed in their cultural values, parenting beliefs, goals and parenting practices. Mainland Chinese parents reported themselves to be more individualistic and collectivistic; held more individualistic goals and collectivistic goals; and endorsed more beliefs about training than European American parents. Findings also suggested that in both ethnic groups, cultural values predicted parenting beliefs and goals, and taking together, cultural values parenting beliefs and goals were related to parenting practices.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

Most parents have hopes and dreams for their child (Hoffman, 1988; LeVine, 1988). Parents communicate these expectations through parent-child interactions in order to help their child achieve their parenting goals (Hastings & Grusec, 1998; McGillicuddy-DeLisi, 1992). One of the most important tasks of parenting is to help one's child achieve competence in a specific cultural context. As such, parenting and culture are intertwined. Considerable previous research has suggested that cultural values serve as an important source of parents' goals for their children and beliefs about the parenting process (McGuillicuddy-DeLisi, & Sigel, 1995) as well as the way that parents think about their children (Chao, 2002; Okagaki & Sternberg, 1991).

Many studies have sought to understand the relation between culture and parenting by comparing parents' beliefs and practices across different cultural groups. For example, in a cross cultural study of two hundred and fourteen mothers from seven countries, Bornstein and colleagues (1998) found marked cultural differences in parents' ratings of parenting competence, parental roles, and perceived influence that child practices had on parenting (Bornstein et al., 1998). They concluded that parenting beliefs are culturally shared values and constructed within a broader system of cultural values.

A cultural value dimension that has attracted much attention in the literature during the last few decades is the notion of individualism versus collectivism. In terms of cultural values of individuals in America and China, researchers have consistently found that European-American (EA) parents hold individualistic values and emphasize the importance of assertive

and independent child behaviors. Mainland-Chinese (MC) parents, on the other hand, tend to hold collectivistic values and emphasize the importance of socially unobtrusive and compliant child practice that maintains social harmony (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Cross-cultural comparison of parents has been suggested to be important in delineating the role of cultural ideologies in shaping parenting beliefs and goals (Cheah & Rubin, 2003).

Parenting beliefs and goals are related to parenting practices (Okagaki & Sternberg, 1991). Parenting practices can be conceptualized as parents' general approach to parenting, how parents respond to their child in specific situations, and the way in which they evaluate the effects that their parenting has on their child. Cultural variations in parenting beliefs and goals suggest that parents in different cultures may inherit or may incorporate different "ready-made schemas" or "culturally-packaged beliefs" about children and parenting into their parenting practices (Goodnow, 1995; Papousek & Papousek, 1995). Parents' employment of specific parenting practices is designed to socialize the child's behaviors to fit into culturally preconceived notions of how children should act. According to Cheah and Rubin (2003), "One of the major tasks of socialization is to acculturate children, which includes preparing them for socially accepted situations that are characteristic of the culture in which they are to survive and thrive" (Cheah & Rubin, 2003, p. 1). Therefore, parents' cultural values play an important role not only in shaping parenting beliefs and goals about raising children but also in translating these ideas into parenting practices. Further, parenting practices are important contributors to the child's development or internalization of parental cultural values.

To date, few research studies have explicitly explored the relation among parents' cultural values, parenting beliefs and goals, and parenting practices. In fact, many cross-

cultural studies fail to assess cultural beliefs at all. Rather, such examinations generally examine parenting practices or beliefs and then use culture as a post hoc explanation for why parents differ in this regard. A problem with this approach is that researchers may overgeneralize the effect that cultural values have on parenting beliefs and practices.

Another limitation to current literature is that previous research has overemphasized the use of Western psychological constructs, such as parenting style, to examine parenting in non-Western cultures. Recent research suggests that the Western psychological construction of parenting does not adequately capture Chinese parenting processes (Gorman, 1998).

Cultural research suggests that as a group, Chinese parents have different histories, socialization experiences, lifestyles, traditions, and value systems than parents in Western countries (Chao, 2002). For example, Chinese Confucian principles about family relationships emphasize parental control, child obedience, strict discipline, filial piety, respect for elders, family obligation, reverence for tradition, maintenance of harmony, and negation of conflict (Lin & Fu, 1990). These Chinese ideologies have been suggested to be significant in the way in which Chinese parents undertake the work of parenting (Chao, 2002).

Unfortunately, to date, little research has specifically measured Chinese cultural values, parenting beliefs and goals, and parenting practices respectively in order to link these three constructs.

The current study was designed to examine the relation among cultural values, parenting beliefs and goals, and parenting practices in MC and EA cultural contexts. As such, this study explored the relation among specific cultural values, parents' parenting goals and beliefs about being a parent, and parenting practices that promote these goals. The current study also explored cross-cultural differences, with attention to the ways in which cultural

values may shape the process of parenting, between EA and MC parenting beliefs and practices. Since European America and Mainland China emphasize distinct cultural values and heritages, with Chinese culture in general emphasizing more collectivist attitudes toward child rearing than mainstream American culture, I hypothesized that the cultural values, parenting beliefs and goals, and practices of MC and EA parents would differ.

To follow is a discussion of the theoretical perspective that provides the foundation for this study, and literature review of related studies. Lastly, specific research questions and hypotheses related to the purpose of this study will be detailed.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### Theoretical Framework: Ecological theory

Theory and research suggest that children's environments facilitate and influence their development. An environment consists of the totality of the physical, social, biological, economical, structural and cultural surroundings of individuals (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Ecological theory suggests that human development involves progressive and mutual accommodation between an active, growing human being and the changing properties of the environment in which the developing person lives (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). As such, the specific contexts or environments in which children are raised influence their concurrent practices as well as their subsequent development.

According to Bronfenbrenner, an ecological environment can be viewed as "a set of nested structures", which has four levels (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 3). The innermost level, the microsystem, is the developing person; the second level, the mesosystem, includes immediate settings, such as school, home, or neighborhood; the third level, the ecosystem, includes community, extended family, and workplace; and the most outside level, the macrosystem, includes cultures, values, laws and customs (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). That is to say, children's development is influenced by family, parenting, schooling, and community; and in turn, family, parenting, schooling and community are influenced by culture, economics and politics.

Seen through the lens of Bronfenbrenner's model, forces that affect children's development are both proximal in nature, such as those found within the home environment,

and distal, which impact the individual more indirectly, such as one's culture or religion. This model also emphasizes interaction among levels of the environment as well as a top down approach to influence. As such, one would expect that cultural values shape the culture of family work, particularly the process of parenting, which influences children's development. Following this reasoning, parents with different cultural ideologies may be assumed to have different ideas about what it means to raise children and these parental beliefs will be expressed by different parenting practices. In this perspective, examining children's development requires one to be cognizant of how distal environmental factors, such as culture, impact and provide a source for parents' ideas about raising children and their definition of childrearing goals and strategies.

## Culture

### *Defining culture*

An ecological perspective in studying development suggests that children and adults' experiences within their culture shape their behaviors. Research suggests that individuals behave in diverse ways with such diversity being derived from an individual's experiences within his or her culture. According to O'Hagan (1999):

Culture is the distinctive way of life of the group, race, class, community, or nation to which the individual belongs. It is the product of the values, ideas, perceptions, and meanings that have evolved over time. These values, ideas, perceptions, and meanings constitute the individual's knowledge and understanding of the world in which he or she lives, and they derive from, and are embodied in, the physical environment of birth and upbringing, in language, institutions, family and social relationships, child rearing, education, systems of belief, religion, mores and customs,

dress and diet, and in particular uses of objects and material life. Culture embraces all of these, and the individual may regard each of them, or any number of them, as culturally significant. (p. 273)

Cultural values shape an individual's perspectives of the world and permeate every aspect of daily life. As such, cultural values can guide individuals directly and indirectly. Culture can affect one directly by establishing cultural expectations regarding people's dress, their customs, their patterns of work, religious ceremonies, and leisure pursuits (Giddens, 1993). Indirectly, cultural values provide norms or expectations for such things as education and childrearing. Through education, people are taught how to act, how to communicate, and how to adapt to society, all of which are incorporated by cultural-based beliefs. Culture tells a person "how to view the world, how to experience it emotionally, and how to behave in it in relation to other people, to supernatural forces, to Gods, and to the natural environment" (Helman, 1994, p. 2).

### *Individualism and Collectivism*

During the last decade an increasing number of studies have examined culture from an individualism and collectivism perspective (Triandis, 1995). Individualism refers to the extent to which individuals view themselves as independent and suggests that individuals are motivated by their own preferences, goals, and rights. Alternatively, collectivism is defined as the extent to which individuals view themselves as inextricably connected to others with such individuals expressly motivated by the norms and values of their cultural or social group (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Cross-cultural studies have demonstrated that individualism and collectivism are useful constructs for understanding cultural variation in people's beliefs and



practices (Cote & Bornstein, 2003). Conceptually, individualism and collectivism map globally to Eastern and Western cultures, which differ in terms of history, values, and beliefs.

Traditionally, American culture is described as individualistic in that it conceives of the individual as an “independent, self-contained, autonomous entity who comprises a unique configuration of internal attributes and behaves primarily as a consequences of those internal attributes” (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; p. 224). In contrast, the cultures in many Asian countries, such as China, are described as collectivistic or interdependent in that they emphasize the fundamental connections of human beings to one another. Markus and Kitayama (1991) suggest that “experiencing interdependence entails seeing oneself as part of an encompassing social relationship and recognizing that one’s practices are determined, contingent on, and to a large extent organized by what the actor perceives to be the thoughts, feelings, and actions of others in the relationship” (p. 227).

Recent psychological research suggests that much of parents’ social cognition is socially and culturally organized (Cote & Bornstein, 2003; Harwood, Handwerker, Schoelmerich, Leyendecker, 2001). The concepts of collectivism and individualism may provide a useful framework for understanding parents’ beliefs and goals as well as their parenting practices. Increasingly, however, researchers have suggested caution regarding the practice of suggesting that cultures are monotheistic, homogeneous entities devoid of individual variation (Harwood, et al., 2001). It would be false, for example, to assume that individualistic cultures lack a concept of relatedness and that collectivistic cultures at some level fail to recognize the concept of personal choice (Kimmelmeier et al., 2003). This issue has been recently highlighted by a meta-analysis of existing studies on individualism and collectivism. In this examination of 50 existing cultural studies, Oyserman and colleagues

(2002) found that individualism and collectivism cannot be considered as opposing constructs. Rather, they appear to be statistically independent or orthogonal in nature. Hence, an individual doesn't necessarily have to be low in one dimension in order to be high in the other (Oyserman, Coon, Kemmelmeier, 2002). These findings highlight that individualism and collectivism are multifaceted dimensions that may coexist within a given culture. As such, they may be useful in describing differences and similarities among ethnic groups as well as providing a meaningful way to tie parenting beliefs and practices to a larger cultural context.

### Culture and Parents' Social Cognitions

#### *Culture and Parenting Beliefs*

Cultural values that parents hold have been suggested to be tied to parents' social cognitions, which include parenting beliefs, goals and attitudes (Bingham & Okagaki, 2004; Sigel & McGillicuddy-DeLisi, 2002). In the past, the term "belief" has been used quite widely in research studies and as a result its use has at times become confused with other forms of social cognition, such as attitudes, perceptions, attributes, and even goals (Goodnow & Collins, 1990). Parenting beliefs can be defined as knowledge or ideas that are accepted as true (McGillicuddy-DeLisi & Sigel, 1995). Beliefs are statements of truth from the parents' point of view (Sigel, 1985) and they encompass parents' ideas and cognitions about raising children and being a parent.

The term "parenting attitudes" on the other hand refers to an internal state that biases or predisposes an individual to react favorably or unfavorably toward an entity, or an "attitude object" (Holden & Buck, 2002). Attitudes build on beliefs or cognitions and are a function of them because they take an idea and add an evaluative dimension to it that is based on the understanding of children and parenting. Consequently, beliefs represent truth from the

parents' point of view, where as attitudes are based on this knowledge or idea, but go beyond that information by evaluating it.

According to LeVine (1988), beliefs originate from individual experiences and vary with domains of knowledge inside and outside of the environments, and these resources of beliefs include the individual's culture. Beliefs enable individuals to organize their world in a psychologically consistent manner, make predictions, perceive similarities, and meet socio-cultural requirements and cognitive demands (Kelly, 1995). Culture has been suggested to play an important role in parents' development of beliefs about children (Super & Harkness, 1996). Recently, cultural values have also been suggested to be important to parents' beliefs regarding their effectiveness as parents.

#### *Culture and Parental Self-Efficacy*

Parental self-efficacy refers to the parent's expectations about the degree to which he or she is able to perform competently and effectively as a parent (Teti & Gelfand, 1991). According to the self-efficacy theory, parental self-efficacy should incorporate both the level of specific knowledge pertaining to the practices involved in child rearing and the degree of confidence in one's ability to carry out the designated role practices (Bandura, 1989). In other words, parenting self-efficacy means parents' overall confidence in their ability to act successfully in the parental role, which includes parents' cognitions of their ability to manage their child's behavior and to resolve problems with their child.

Research by Bornstein and colleagues (1998) explored the relation between culture and parents' efficacy. They found differences in parents' attitudes and parenting efficacy from a variety of countries. In one study, they recruited 214 mothers of 20-month-old children from the United States, Japan, Israel, Belgium, Italy, and Argentina. In all of these

countries, mothers reported that their own parenting abilities played a key role in the parenting process. At the same time, some cross-national differences were apparent. For example, Italian and Japanese mothers expressed less confidence in their childrearing skills as compared to mothers in Argentina, Belgium, France, Israel, and the United States. At the same time, Italian and Japanese mothers described themselves as being as willing, or more willing, to invest time and effort into their parenting than did mothers from the other nations. In contrast, French mothers did not consider effort to be very important when it comes to parenting success. They also had negative attitudes toward parent training, preferring to rely on the importance of parenting “intuition” (Bornstein et al., 1998).

Although Bornstein and colleagues did not measure culture directly, their patterns of findings appear to fall along an individualism and collectivism cultural perspective. On a global level, this study suggests that culture serves as an important source for parents’ cognitions about the parenting process. Further, the results highlight that parents in different cultures may inherit or may incorporate different “ready-made schemas” or “culturally-packaged beliefs” about children into their conceptualizations of their parenting process (Goodnow, 1995, Papousek & Papousek, 1995). However, given that Bornstein and colleagues did not measure cultural values, per se, and link them explicitly to parenting cognitions, additional research is needed to further explore these relationships.

### *Culture and Parenting Goals*

An important way that cultural values are transmitted to children is through the realization of parental childrearing goals and expectations (Power & Manire, 1992). Childrearing goals and expectations refer to the specific characteristics or traits that parents try to encourage or discourage in their children through specific childrearing interactions.

Cultural values are tied to parents' conceptualization of parenting goals. According to LeVine (1988), the ways in which these goals are operationalized (e.g., what skills are needed to survive economically within a given context) and which goals are most pressing depend upon the family's social, cultural, and economic context. For example, LeVine (1988) has attributed the differences in childrearing to environmental risks threatening the child's survival and self-maintenance. He suggests that parents share common goals for their children that include ensuring the child's health and survival, teaching the child skills that will promote economic security, and developing child traits that are consistent with locally defined virtues. In contexts in which parents' fundamental concerns for the physical and economic survival of their children have been addressed, parents are able to turn their attention to the development of character qualities or virtue (LeVine, 1988).

On the other hand, Hoffman (1988) suggests that parents rear their children so as to encourage the development of those qualities and attitudes needed for their expected roles. These expected roles are seen as differing across cultures because children satisfy different needs for their parents. In a cross national study of more than 10,000 parents from Indonesia, Korea, Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey, and the United States, Hoffman (1988) explored the relation between culture and parenting by examining the needs that parents report their children satisfying. Through semi-structured interviews, mothers were asked about the advantages and disadvantages of having children. Three of the most commonly cited needs that children meet for their parents are economic utility, the need for love and affection, and the need for stimulation and fun. With unique host cultural values, mothers' responses are different. For example, in countries where children tend to be valued for their economic utility (e.g., Turkey), parents were more likely to report that they wanted

their children to be obedient and less likely to want them to be independent. In countries where children are valued primarily because of the love and affection they give parents (e.g. the United States), parents desired their children to have personable qualities, such as being warm, outgoing, cheerful and good natured. Hoffman's theory suggests that general cultural values (i.e. the way a cultural group views children) influence parents' attitudes toward and goals for their children. Similar to previous research by Bornstein et al., (1996, 1998) among others, the large majority of previous work on the relation between cultural values and parenting goals has failed to explicitly link parents' goals to broader cultural values. Understanding how parents' cultural values relate to parenting goals appears to be an important, yet understudied, area of research.

#### Chinese and European-American Parenting Social Cognitions

Much of the previous research that has sought to understand cultural influences on parents' social cognitions and parenting behaviors has approached this problem by examining the similarities and differences in Chinese and American parents' beliefs and goals. The majority of this research has documented that these two groups differ in their parenting experiences. One of the explanations for these findings is that MC parents are more collectivistic in their conceptualization of parenting and their parenting practices whereas EA parents are more individualistic. Unfortunately, the vast majority of this research has failed to measure parents' cultural orientations (i.e. whether they do in actuality endorse either collectivistic or individualistic cultural values) expressively. Rather, culture appears to have been used as a post hoc explanation for why parents differ in beliefs and practices. For example, research has compared Chinese-American and EA parents' ideas about their children's academic competence, their parenting goals, and their parenting attitudes (Gorman,

1998; Hastings & Grusec, 1998). Although these studies are interesting, they provide little insight into how greater cultural values may “map on” to parents’ social cognitions. Being able to expressly link cultural values to parenting processes is important to understanding the origin of parents’ beliefs and practices. As many parenting interventions seek to change parents’ cognitions and behaviors, understanding what factors influence cognitions and behaviors is important.

### *Traditional Chinese and European-American Cultural Values*

To a great extent, parents’ cultural values and beliefs about parenting have been suggested to be an expression of the historical values held by a society. This appears to be the case for both Traditional Chinese and EA cultures. For example, Chinese views of childhood are influenced by the historical roots of Confucian sources, such as Mencius and Buddhism (Chao, 2000; Kojima, 1986). From this perspective, children are considered to be innocent, lacking in knowledge and have innate goodness (Boocoke, 1991). One of the most widely identified characteristics of Confucian philosophies is the emphasis Chinese parents place upon their children’s acquisition of academic skills (Huntsinger, Jose, Liaw & Ching, 1997). Another characteristic is the obligation to others rather than individual rights.

The emphasis on obligation to others can be seen in terms of one of the most important parent-child relationship principles, that of filial piety (Ho, 1994). According to Ho (1994), filial piety can be defined as a rigid system of age veneration and patriarchy, obeying and honoring one’s parents, providing for the material and mental well-being of one’s aged parents, performing the ceremonial duties of ancestral worship, taking care to avoid harm to one’s body, ensuring the continuity of the family line, and in general conducting oneself so as to bring honor and not disgrace to the family name. Parents and elders wield greater authority

and should be treated with respect and obedience and children often continue to seek their parents' advice and guidance throughout their adulthood. Filial piety strongly influences parenting, especially in how parents admonish and teach children to behave or orient themselves toward their parents and even ancestors (Okazaki & Bojczyk, 2002). Other identified Chinese Confucian principles include human malleability, persistence, self-improvement, restraint of emotion, and deference to the group (Chao, 1994; Chen & Uttal, 1988; Chiu, 1987; Lin & Fu, 1990).

With respect to the system of society, Chinese individuals are more likely to emphasize collectivism than to emphasize individualism (Okazaki & Bojczyk, 2002; Oyserman et al., 2002). Whereas EA parents often see the needs to encourage their child to be independent and unique, Chinese parents are more likely to encourage children to view themselves as part of the integrated whole of their family, community, and society, and not to emphasize their differences from others (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). As such, American children may learn to see the world strictly on an individual basis, whereas Chinese children may learn to see the world as a network of relationships.

#### *Chinese and European-American Parenting Beliefs and Goals*

Previous research highlights differences in Chinese and EA parenting social cognitions. Although these research studies have failed to explicitly link cultural values with parenting cognitions and practices, such studies are important in that they demonstrate similarities and differences between Chinese and EA parents. This next section is designed to expose the reader to a variety of parenting cognitions that have been studied across these two cultures. A connection between cognitions and larger cultural values will also be explored.



*Education and Schooling.* Cultural folk beliefs about children's development and learning have shaped how parents regard children's schooling and education. Confucian philosophies emphasize human malleability and self-improvement as a moral purpose (Chao & Tseng, 2002). The goals of learning are not only to seek self-improvement and virtue, but also to give back this learning to society in the form of meritorious service. A Chinese proverb states that "the sea of learning knows no boundary, only through diligence may its shore be reached". Under these values, one would expect that Chinese parents highly value achievement and more particularly the effort required to succeed in education. Previous research supports this assumption and suggests that Chinese parents have higher expectations for their children's educational attainments, and higher expectations for their children to get a college or professional degree than American parents (Okagaki & Frensch, 1998). In order to realize these expectations, Chinese parents provide a great deal of support for their children's academic achievements directly and indirectly. Consider the following examples.

Okagaki and Frensch (1998) examined the relations between parenting and the school performance of fourth- and fifth-grade children in 75 Asian American, 109 Latino, and 91 EA families. Parents were asked to complete a questionnaire which consisted of seven sections: (1) educational attainment, (2) grade expectation, (3) childrearing beliefs, (4) self-reported parenting practices, (5) parental efficacy, (6) perception of child's ability, and (7) demographic information. The results suggested that Asian-American parents had higher ideal expectations for their children's educational attainment than either EA parents or Latino parents. Asian-American parents ideally wanted their children to obtain a graduate or professional degree, and the minimum educational attainment they set for their children was college graduation. Moreover, Asian-American parents also reported being less satisfied with

grades of Bs and Cs than were other parents. These results highlight that Asian parents place a heavy emphasis on the importance of achievement in childhood. Such views are most likely a reflection of parents' cultural values and are important when considering the impact that parenting beliefs and goals have on children's developmental outcomes.

In Chao's (1996) cross-cultural comparison of parents' beliefs, 48 immigrant Chinese and 50 EA mothers of preschool-aged children were asked to give responses on the role of parenting in their children's school success. The results suggested that immigrant Chinese mothers placed a higher value on education, offered higher investment and sacrifice, and a more direct intervention approach to their children's learning than EA mothers and had expressed a belief that they play a significant role in the success of their children. This was evident through Chinese mothers' endorsement of such items as "regard for the mother as teacher", "stressing consequences of not getting a good education", and "emphasis on reading and taking child to the library" (Chao, 1996). In contrast, EA mothers expressed less attention to their child's academic achievement, a less direct approach to encouraging academic instruction. On the other hand, EA mothers expressed a higher concern for building their children's self-esteem than Chinese mothers. These studies emphasize that some Chinese parents place a heavy emphasis on the importance of educating their child and with this importance being evident in parenting practices.

*Children's Self-esteem.* Chinese parents and EA parents hold different values regarding the importance of self-actualization and self-esteem. For example, Miller and colleagues (2002) compared EA and Taiwanese mothers' beliefs about childrearing and self-esteem. This study occurred in two large rural areas, one in the Midwestern United States and the other in Taiwan. In each site, 16 mothers ( $n = 32$ ) of 3-year-old children were asked to

participate in an in-depth, open-ended interview about childrearing beliefs and practices (Miller, Wang, Sandel & Cho, 2002). Results suggest that American mothers emphasize self-esteem earlier and paid more attention to building children's self-esteem than Taiwanese mothers. Given these findings, Miller et al. (2002) concluded that for American parents self-esteem is a central organizing childrearing concept that is believed to be crucial to many aspects of healthy development. In contrast, Taiwanese mothers placed little emphasis on the concept of self-esteem. Rather many of these mothers expressed a belief that having a fair amount of self-esteem creates psychological vulnerabilities in the child rather than strengths. This was evidenced by mothers expressing concerns that the child could develop too much self-esteem and stop trying his or her hardest to succeed. However, these conclusions may have the limitation of generalization since the small sample size.

*Children's Social Development.* Recent research has examined Chinese parents' perceptions of their children's social development. For example, Cheah and Rubin (2003) have explored the socialization beliefs of EA and MC mothers regarding preschoolers' social skills. One hundred and three EA and 100 MC mothers participated in this study. All mothers completed a questionnaire, which assessed beliefs about the development of three social skills: sharing, helping and emotion control. Mothers were asked to rate the importance of each skill, describe their causal attributions (what contributed to the practices) and socialization strategies they would use to promote these practices in their child. Their findings suggest that both EA and MC parents value high importance of the three social skills in children. Chinese parents' beliefs about the importance of social skills, however, differed from EA parents. In contrast to American parents, Chinese parents gave more conventional reasons for having social skills, made more external causal attributions regarding how the

skills were developed, and endorsed higher proportions of training and education strategies. For example, they have high parental expectations about standards of practices for their children, which are believed to help ensure that the family reputation is kept unharmed (Fung, 1999).

### Culture and Parenting Practices

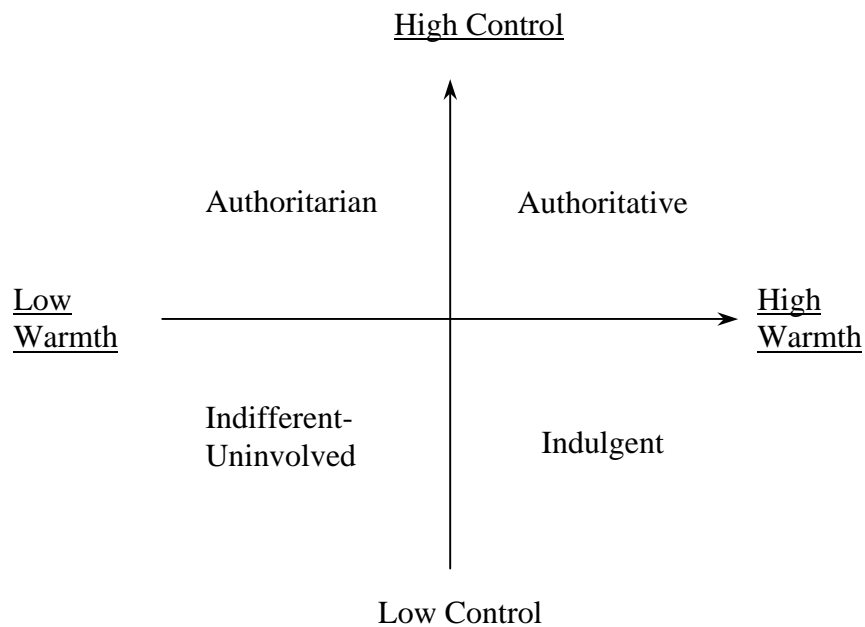
#### *Western Parenting Practice*

Parenting practices have been defined as a wide range of ways that parents elicit, inhibit, influence, or otherwise control their children's behavior during day-to-day interactions. They are more specific ways that parents achieve their parenting goals (Power & Manire, 1992). The majority of research on parenting practices has almost exclusively focused on parenting style in both Chinese and EA contexts. Parenting style can be seen as a series of parenting practices, which represent "general patterns of childrearing that characterize parents' typical techniques and responses" (Coplan, Hastings, Lagace-Seguin, & Moulton, 2002, p. 2). In Western context, research on the dimensions of warmth and control has yielded a comprehensive model of four types of parenting styles: authoritarian, authoritative, indulgent, and indifferent-uninvolved (Baumrind, 1971; see Figure 1).

#### *Chinese and European-American Parenting Practices*

However, Gorman (1988) suggest that western psychological construction of parenting practice does not adequately capture Chinese parenting. In this study he interviewed a small group of immigrant Chinese mothers of adolescents and asked them some open-ended questions about their Chinese cultural values, parental roles, parental perceptions on their adolescents, and parenting practices about social adjustment, academic adjustment, cultural adjustment (Gorman, 1998). The results suggest that immigrant Chinese mothers did

not characterize their expectations for their children as rules. Instead, these mothers spoke of their goals for their child in relation to their cultural values, such as being self-sufficient, fulfilling one's obligations, respecting elders, caring for others rather than simply looking out for oneself.



*Figure 1.* Western Parenting Styles

For the group of Chinese-American mothers in Gorman's study, they appeared to have different roles of parents in their parenting practice from mainstream American parenting. For example, these mothers suggested that American parenting was too lenient and afforded children too much autonomy. From these data, Gorman (1998) concluded that Chinese cultural values, particularly those regarding the importance of family, the responsibilities of parenthood, and the duty to raise competent and successful adults, seem to underlie parents' goals for their child and their parenting practices (such as the use of rules). These findings highlight that this group of mothers appeared to have a subtle and rational conceptualization

of the parenting practice that differed in style from EA mothers but did not appear to fit well with traditional concepts of authoritarian parenting. This stylistic difference, coupled with the difference in parenting philosophies, suggests that traditional concepts of authoritarian parenting may be inaccurate descriptions of Chinese childrearing practices and misrepresent their childrearing goals and practices.

These findings are similar to those reported by Chao (1994, 2000). In her research, Chao has suggested that one explanation for the characterization of Chinese parents as authoritarian can be explained by the Chinese concept of training a child (*jiao xun*). Chao suggests that that understanding how Chinese parents' "train" their children puts into doubt the conceptual usefulness of parental demand and responsiveness for studying Chinese populations. Training can be defined as "a continuous monitoring and guidance of children" (Chao, 2000, p. 234). She suggests that training is an essential Chinese parent form of nurturing. The nurturing aspect of training is reflected in parental involvement and support but it does not include overt demonstrations of the parents' affection for the child, which are often emphasized by Western cultures.

In a study of immigrant Chinese American mothers and EA mothers of preschoolers, Chao (1994) examined the application of the Chinese view of training a child. Immigrant Chinese and EA mothers of preschool-aged children were administered standardized measures of parental control and authoritative-authoritarian parenting style as well as Chinese child-rearing items involving the concept of "training". Fifty immigrant Chinese mothers and fifty EA mothers were sampled from various preschools and parents completed Block's Child Rearing Practice Report and the "training" questionnaire (Block, 1981). Her results suggest that Chinese American mothers more strongly agreed with training than did EA mothers. The

concept of training appeared to reflect the Chinese parents' beliefs regarding good parenting, especially for Chinese school success. In contrast, the findings suggested that EA parents better matched the Western model of parenting than the Chinese notion of training.

These studies highlight the need to examine parents' cultural values as a way of examining the connection between parenting beliefs and practices. However, when examining the connection among culture, parenting beliefs and parenting practices, researchers should acknowledge that not all parents from traditionally collectivistic societies hold the same beliefs. For example, Jose and colleagues examined parental values and practices relevant to young children's social development in Taiwan and the United States (Jose, Huntsinger, Huntsinger & Liaw, 2000). In this study of 120 parents of Kindergarten children (40 from each group: Chinese in Taiwan, first-generation Chinese in the United States, and European Americans in the United States), parents reported their parenting goals and childrearing practices while teachers reported and observed children's social skills. To assess parents' values or goals, parents were given a list of personality traits that children might possess and were asked to indicate which traits were most important to promote in children. The questionnaire was specifically designed with eight traditionally collectivistic traits (e.g. dependable, hard working), and eight traditionally individualistic traits (e.g. independent).

Jose and colleagues found, as expected, that immigrant Chinese parents more strongly endorsed the importance of cultivating traditional Chinese collectivist traits in their children. However, contrary to expectations, Taiwanese parents and American parents did not differ in their endorsement of collectivistic traits. Rather, it was only immigrant Chinese parents who rated persistence, politeness, calmness, neatness, concentration and precision as significantly more important than did American parents. For parenting practice, immigrant Chinese

parents also reported exerting more parental control over their children than EA parents. Although immigrant Chinese parents were more directive in their parenting practices than EA parents, there was no differences in the warmth that parents reported expressing to their children. These results highlight the complexity of studying parents' cultural orientations and parenting practices when not measuring cultural orientation expressively.

### *Gender differences*

Previous research suggests that parents often socialize girl and boy children very differently (Leaper, 2003). For example, studies of mothers' interactions with their children suggest that mothers are more likely to respond contingently to emotional expression from sons than from daughters (Malatesta & Haviland, 1982). One explanation of these findings is that boys are socialized to control their emotions, whereas girls are encouraged to express their emotions. Others research has found gender differences in the amount and type of talk that occurs between parents of boy s and parents of girls (Crowley, Callanan, Tenebaum, & Allen, 2001; Leaper, Anderson & Sanders, 1998).

However, few cross-cultural studies have explored gender differences in parenting beliefs and practices. Some research that has included gender as a predictor variable in cross cultural studies has generally found little to no differences in socialization patterns for boys and girls. For example, Kelly and Tseng (1992) examined the gender difference in child-rearing behaviors between immigrant Chinese mothers and EA mothers. The results suggest that were no difference in Chinese or EA parents parenting beliefs or practices that related to a child's gender. However, their conclusions were limited because of the sample size of each group of parents was relatively small ( $n = 38$ ). Also, given that there study was based on immigrant Chinese mothers and not mothers from mainland China, these mothers may have



been less traditional in their socialization practices. Given that Chinese parents have a long tradition (as well as EA parents to some extent) of favoring boy children and given previous research suggesting that parents may have different goals and parenting practices as a result of child gender, it seems important to examine gender as a contributor to parents' beliefs, goals, and practices for both EA and MC parents.

### Summary

Previous research and theory suggest that parents' cultural values play an important role in shaping their parenting beliefs, parenting efficacy, and their goals for their child's well-being. These parenting cognitions in turn impact parents' practices and socialization strategies when parents interact with their child. Understanding the connection between parents' cultural values, their social cognitions and the expression of these cognitions through parenting practices is important to unpacking ways in which parents contribute to children's development.

Previous research regarding how MC cultural values relate to parenting beliefs, parenting goals, and parenting practices is still in its infancy. Although some studies have examined similarities and differences in parents' cognitions and behaviors from China and the United States or Canada, little research exists that explicitly connects parents' cultural values to parenting cognitions, and parenting practices. A further limitation of current research on Chinese families is that much of the data has been generated from Chinese-American and Taiwanese parents. Although studying Chinese American and Taiwanese parents is important, it is possible that they differ from MC parents. One possible reason for such differences may be the acculturation process. Chinese mothers who live in Taiwan or who have immigrated to the United States may have adopted more Western views of parenting. For example, research

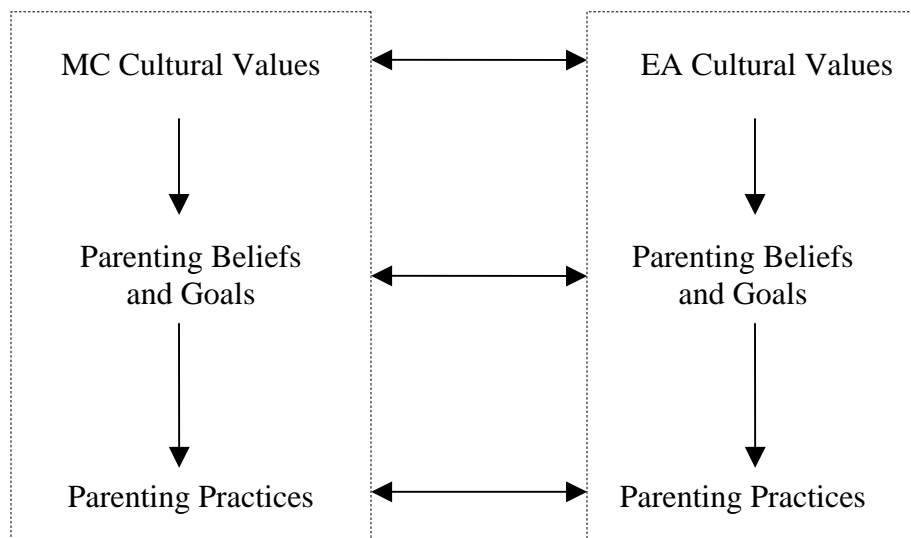
by Bornstein and Cote (2004) has suggested that acculturation experiences contribute to a change in parenting attitudes and beliefs. Given that little research has examined mainland Chinese parents' cultural values and parenting beliefs, additional research is needed in this area.

Another question that needs to be addressed is why it is important to compare child socialization values in the United States and China? The answer lies in the fact that these two countries represent distinct social systems and cultures and have been found to be different in terms of individuals' collectivistic and individualistic values (Oyserman et al., 2002). As the world's largest economy, the United States is an advanced capitalist society that serves for many as the prototype of "Western" thought. As a pillar of "Western thought" and an influential global economy, the United States appears to be impacting others' cultural belief systems (Cao & Edwards, 2002). China, on the other hand, is an industrializing socialist society, traditionally thought of as representing "Eastern" thought. However, with the invention of the internet and growing trade and commercial opportunities between China and the United States, Chinese parents have more opportunities to understand and interact with Western cultures, including Western ideas about parenting. Undertaking a comparison of these two countries will enhance our knowledge about where the two cultures and social systems converge and diverge. At a deeper level though, as the world becomes more global and increasingly interdependent, knowledge and understanding of other cultures become more vital to success in both competition and cooperation (Xiao, 1999).

#### Research Questions & Hypothesis

The main goal of the current study was to examine how culture relates to parents' social cognitions and parenting practices. As such, this study seeks to examine the relations

among cultural values, parenting beliefs and goals and parenting practices, and the difference between EA and MC parents. Two broad research questions were examined and several specific hypotheses were derived from each research question. Figure 2 provides a graphic representation of how MC and American parents' beliefs, goals and practices were compared, and it also elucidates the need to understand the impact that the cultural values of each group may have on parenting beliefs and practices.



*Figure 2.* Research Questions and Hypotheses

Q1: Do differences exist in cultural values, parenting beliefs and goals, and parenting practices between EA and MC parents?

H1: EA and MC parents will have different cultural values. EA parents will value individualism whereas MC parents will be more likely to value collectivism.

H2: EA and MC parents parenting beliefs and goals will differ. Chinese parents will more strongly endorse collectivistic goals and the importance of training while American parents will more strongly endorse the importance of individualistic goals.

H3: EA and MC parents will report that their parenting practices differ. EA parents will express more nurturance and consistency than MC parents.

Q2: For both cultural groups, do parents' cultural values relate to parents' social cognitions and parenting practices?

H4: In both EA and MC group, cultural values will significantly correlate to parenting beliefs and goals.

H5: Cultural values, parenting beliefs and goals will significantly correlate to parenting practices.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### Sample

A total of one hundred and ninety-one parents of children between the ages of 4 and 6 were recruited for this study. One hundred and six MC parents were recruited from Shanghai, China, and 85 EA parents were recruited from Pullman, Washington, United States. Eight of the 191 parents who completed the questionnaires were fathers. Because fathers and mothers have been suggested to have different goals and beliefs about their children, fathers were excluded from subsequent analyses due to their under representation in the sample. Four American mothers were excluded from further analyses given that these mothers were of Asian ancestry. Also, one of MC mothers' scores on parenting and cultural value scales was considerably below that of the other mothers. Little to no variation existed on this mothers' survey. In general, it appears that she answered almost all of the items as "extremely important" or "not important at all." This mother was deleted from the final sample. Finally, 2 of MC were dropped from the final sample because they were missing large portions questionnaire data on their surveys. These mothers skipped several pages of their questionnaire. These mothers' demographic information did not appear to be very different from the mothers retained in the final sample. As a result of the previously described data reduction, the final sample consisted of 176 mothers, 96 MC and 80 European American.

An examination of gender of children revealed a similar pattern across ethnic groups. For both MC and EA children, 47% were boys while 53% are girls (see Table 1). The mean age for Chinese children was 4.85 years old and for American children was 4.71 years old.

The majority of both EA and MC mothers appeared to be middle class and in a two-parent family (see Table 1). As expected, an examination of family size revealed that on average MC mothers reported having only one child while EA mothers reported having an average of two (see Table 1).

In general, mothers reported high education attainment. Using the same scale for each survey, 1 = some high school to 5 = Graduate degree, Chinese mothers reported on average that they had some college while American mothers reported that they had a college degree (see Table 1). In terms of family income, I asked EA parents to report their yearly income by choosing one item of 7-point scale from 1 = \$0-10,000 to 7 = \$ 70,001 or greater. I asked MC mothers report their monthly income by choosing one item of 7-point scale from 1 = ¥ 0-1000 to 7 = ¥7001 or greater. It is difficult to compare family income precisely because American dollars and Chinese yuan use quite a different scale and currency. Also, the purchase price of merchandise in each country is also quite different. A middle class family in a big city like Shanghai, Mainland China would make ¥ 2000-3000 a month. Given this, it appears that both MC and American mothers in this sample can be said to have middle or upper middle class socioeconomic status.

#### Procedure

EA and MC mothers were recruited from preschool and kindergarten programs. Principals and program directors were contacted initially in person and explained the project in some depth. A letter inviting mothers to participate and a consent form were distributed through children's preschool or kindergarten programs. Mothers, who agree to participate in this study, signed the consent form, completed a questionnaire packet, and returned these to their child's preschool or kindergarten teacher. Both MC and EA mothers were asked to

respond to questions regarding their cultural values, parenting beliefs and parenting practices. After completed questionnaires were obtained, mothers were sent a thank you letter and a small gift. In China, this gift was a toy while in the United States, mothers were given a \$4 gift certificate to the WSU Ferdinands' Dairy.

Table 1

*Demographic Comparisons of MC and EA Parents and Children*

Characteristics	Ethnic group			
	MC		European American	
	M	SD	M	SD
Age of child	4.85	0.79	4.71	1.00
Number of children in family	1.01	0.11	2.21	0.90
Mother's age	32.45	4.00	34.36	5.49
Mother's education attainment	3.09	1.08	4.11	0.84
Family income	5.20	2.42	4.77	2.13

The majority of questionnaires were initially developed in English. Mothers in Washington were distributed questionnaires in English while mothers in Shanghai were given questionnaires that had been translated into Chinese. Some questionnaires were previously translated into Chinese by other researchers, such as ICITCS and PDI. For questionnaires that have not been previously translated into Chinese, such as the Individualism/Collectivism Scale (Triandis, 1995), a forward and then back translation method were utilized. In this method, I translated the questionnaires into Chinese and a native Chinese speaker back

translated the questionnaires into English. This method of forward and back translation has been shown to be an acceptable method for ensuring that questionnaires are translated correctly across languages (Kelly & Tseng, 1992).

### Measures

In this study, the following three main domains were assessed: cultural values, parenting social cognitions, and parenting practices. All reported measures were obtained through self-report.

#### *Cultural Values*

The Individualism/Collectivism Scale (INDCOL; Triandis, 1995) was employed to assess mothers' cultural values. This measure is designed to examine mothers' endorsement of collectivistic versus individualistic ideologies. This measure asks participants to rate on a 7-point Likert-type scale, from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), how much they agree with 32 statements reflecting individualism and collectivism values. The 32 items form two subscales: individualism (16 items) and collectivism (16 items). Examples of individualistic ideologies are "Without competition it is not possible to have a good society" and "Being a unique individual is important to me." Examples of collectivistic statements include: "It is my duty to take care of my family, even when I have to sacrifice what I want." and "To me, pleasure is spending time with others." Individualism and collectivism scores were calculated by taking the mean of mothers' ratings on the items for each domain respectively. In previous research, construct validity and internal consistency have been demonstrated (Triandis, 1995). Reliabilities for these two subscale have been shown, in general, to be acceptable, ranging from  $\alpha = .54$  to  $\alpha = .84$  (Triandis, 1995). In this study, the



reliabilities of both individualism and collectivism for EA and MC sample were also acceptable, ranging from  $\alpha = .60$  to  $\alpha = .83$  (see Table 2).

### *Parents' Social Cognitions*

Mothers were asked to complete three questionnaires designed to assess their parents' social cognitions. Given previous research, the social cognitions that were of most interest included parents' goals for their children, their childrearing beliefs, and their parenting self-efficacy.

### *Individualist and Collectivist Traits*

The Importance of Collectivist and Individualist Traits in Child Scale (ICITCS, Jose, Huntsinger, Huntsinger & Liaw, 2002) was used to assess parenting goals concerning their child's desired personality traits. In response to the question "How important do you think it is to encourage the following personality traits in your child?", parents rated eight stereotypical individualist traits (e.g., sociability, creativity, self-confidence, and independence) and eight stereotypical collectivist traits (e.g., persistence, obedience, politeness, concentration, respect, and precision) on a seven-point scale (1 = not at all important to 7 = extremely important). These traits were obtained from various studies on traditional individualism or collectivism (Stevenson et al, 1990; Ho, 1986; Yang, 1986; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1989). Parents received an average score for the two clusters separately, a high score for a cluster indicated that the parent highly endorses that particular cultural value for their child. According to previous research focusing on EA parents and Chinese American parents, the internal consistency of these two subscales are acceptable ( $\alpha = .76$  and  $.78$ ; Jose, Huntsinger, Huntsinger, & Liaw, 2000). In this study, the

reliabilities of both individualistic traits and collectivistic traits for both EA and MC sample were also acceptable, ranging from  $\alpha = .71$  to  $\alpha = .83$  (see Table 2).

### *Child Rearing Ideologies*

Parents' child-rearing beliefs were assessed by the Chinese Child-Rearing Ideologies Questionnaire (CCIQ; Chao, 1994). This 12-item scale asks respondents to indicate the degree to which they agree or disagree with each item on a seven-point scale, from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree. Chao's scale of twelve items forms two subscales, ideologies of child development and learning and ideologies of the mother-child relationship. Sample items from the ideologies of child development and learning subscale are: "Children are by nature born innocent", "Mothers must begin training child as soon as ready", and "Children can improve in almost anything if they work hard". Sample items from the ideologies of the mother-child relationship subscale are "mothers primarily express love by helping child succeed, especially, in school", and "a child should be in the constant care of their mothers or family". Although Chao has not provided reliability for this scale, a recent study of European-American and Chinese-American parents indicated that the total CCIQ has acceptable internal consistency for Chinese American parents ( $\alpha = .71$ , Jose, Huntsinger, Huntsinger, & Liaw, 2000). In this study, these two subscales were combined together as a global parenting beliefs scale because of the reliability for each scale for EA parents was not acceptable. In terms of the global parenting beliefs scale, the reliability for both EA ( $\alpha = .73$ ) and MC ( $\alpha = .62$ ) sample are also acceptable (see Table 2).

### *Parenting Practices*

The Parenting Dimensions Inventory (PDI; Slater & Power, 1987) was used to assess parenting practices. This questionnaire assesses a number of dimensions of parenting. For

this investigation, two of these dimensions were utilized, parenting nurturance and parenting consistency. To assess these dimensions parents responded to 13 items using a 6-point Likert-type scale. A sample item for consistency includes: “I encourage my child to talk about his or her troubles”. An example of a sample item for consistency is: “I always follow through on discipline for my child, no matter how long it takes. The PDI has been used in research on immigrant Chinese parents and was translated into Chinese by Kelly & Tseng (1992). I utilized their translation of this scale into Chinese.

Extensive previous research on this instrument reveals that this instrument has good reliability and validity (Slater & Power, 1987). Across various ethnic groups, research reveals that Cronbach’s alphas range from .55 for consistency to .95. In previous research conducted with immigrant Chinese and EA mothers, Kelly and Tseng (1992) reported mean Cronbach’s alphas of .79, and .76 respectively. As for validity, the PDI has been shown to predict parent ratings of child social competence. In these studies, parent ratings on the Child Practices Checklist were successfully predicted from PDI scores (Slater & Power, 1987). In another two studies involving multiple ratings of child and mother practices (Boggio, 1987; Sharp, 1988), mothers’ scores on the PDI were significantly correlated with both fathers’ and best friends’ ratings for maternal practices. In a larger study (Sharp, 1988), the mean correlation between mother and father rating across categories was .52 and the mean mother-best friend correlation was .43.

In the current study, nurturance and consistency subscales were used and the reliabilities for them range from  $\alpha = .51$  to  $\alpha = .79$  (see Table 2). Although the consistency of discipline parenting subscale did not evidence acceptable levels of reliability for the Chinese sample, we felt that it was theoretically important to examine how it relates to parenting

beliefs and cultural values. However, it should be noted that interpretations of the results including this scale for Chinese parents should be done with much caution.

Table 2

*Reliability for All Measures*

Measures	Cronbach's Alphas	
	Mainland-Chinese	European-American
INDCOL <sup>a</sup> - Individualism	.83	.72
INDCOL - Collectivism	.69	.60
CCIQ <sup>b</sup>	.62	.73
ICITCS <sup>c</sup> - Individualistic	.77	.71
ICITCS - Collectivistic	.78	.83
PDI <sup>d</sup> - Nurture	.69	.79
PDI - Discipline-consistency	.51	.67

*Note.* a: INDCOL= Individualism/Collectivism Scale

b: CCIQ= Chinese Child-Rearing Ideologies Questionnaire

c: ICITCS= The Importance of Collectivist and Individualist Traits in Child Scale

d: PDI=Parenting Dimensions Inventory

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS

The results are presented in three parts. First, I present a description of each measure and examine its relationship with other measures. Second, I compare the similarities and differences between EA and MC parents in their cultural values, parenting beliefs and goals, and parenting practices. Finally, I examine the relations among cultural values, parenting beliefs and goals, and parenting practices for each ethnic group.

#### Descriptive Statistics

All of the previously described scales (The Individualism/Collectivism Scale, The Importance of Collectivistic and Individualist Traits in Child Scale, Chinese Child-Rearing Ideologies Questionnaire) yield interval level data. Given this, the primary form of analysis consisted of correlation, Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA), and multiple regressions. Each variable was examined for missing data, kurtosis, skewness, and outliers. This examination revealed two outliers in the EA sample on cultural values (more than 3 standard deviations from the mean). These two cases were deleted from subsequent analyses. A summary of the means and standard deviations of each variable can be found in Table 3.

#### Correlations

Correlations among each subscale and parents' education and income were calculated separately for MC parents and EA parents by using Pearson  $r$  correlations (see Table 4 and Table 5, respectively). In general, a similar pattern of results emerged from the data for each group. For example, for both groups endorsement of collectivistic values appeared to relate

more strongly to parenting beliefs, goals, and practices than an endorsement of individualistic values.

TABLE 3

*Mean and Standard Deviation of All Measures*

Measures	Ethnic group			
	Mainland-Chinese		European-American	
	M	SD	M	SD
INDCOL <sup>a</sup> – Individualism	5.45	.60	5.13	.59
INDCOL – Collectivism	4.65	.60	4.28	.51
CCIQ <sup>b</sup>	5.03	.53	4.45	.77
ICITCS <sup>c</sup> - Individualistic	5.93	.67	5.43	.78
ICITCS - Collectivistic	5.58	.76	5.93	.70
PDI <sup>d</sup> - Nurturance	5.14	.56	5.25	.61
PDI - Consistency	3.10	.63	2.57	.64

*Note.* a: PDI=Parenting Dimensions Inventory

b: CCIQ= Chinese Child-Rearing Ideologies Questionnaire

c: ICITCS= The Importance of Collectivist and Individualist Traits in Child Scale

d: INDCOL= Individualism/Collectivism Scale

Although we did not compare the differences between the two correlation matrixes, it would appear that EA and MC mothers did not respond in the same pattern to questions relating to cultural values and parenting goals. For Chinese mothers, individualistic and collectivistic cultural values were moderately related ( $r = .505, p < .01$ ). However, for EA parents, this was not the case ( $r = .063, p > .05$ ). EA and MC mothers also seemed to

approach their endorsement of goals differently. For MC mothers, individualistic goals and collectivistic goals are highly related ( $r = .855, p < .01$ ). Apparently, for this group of mothers, individualistic goals and collectivistic goals are very similar constructs. In contrast, for EA mothers they also related but not as highly ( $r = .243, p < .05$ ), suggesting that European mothers saw them as different constructs. As a result, for MC parents, a global parenting goals scale was created for further regression analyses. In terms of parenting beliefs and goals, for both EA and MC mothers, parenting beliefs (CCIQ) were related to their collectivistic goals. However, for Chinese mothers only, parenting beliefs were also related to their individualistic goals ( $r = .378, p < .01$ ).

For MC parents, nurturance styles were related to their reported beliefs in the CCIQ, collectivism cultural values and both individualistic and collectivistic goals, while for EA parents, nurturance is only related to mothers' individualistic goals. In addition, consistency for EA parents is related to CCIQ, cultural values and collectivistic goals, while Chinese parents' consistency is only related to their CCIQ. The results also indicated that the income of EA parents is related to their education and CCIQ as well. Interestingly, for Chinese mothers, income and education are not related to mothers' cultural values, parenting cognitions or parenting practices.

Table 4

*Correlations of Measures for MC Parents*

N = 96	Cul_collec	Cul_indivi	CCIQ	Goal_collect	Goal_indivi	Nurturance	Consistency	Education	Income
Cul_collect	1								
Cul_indivi	.328*	1							
CCIQ	.393**	.093	1						
Goal_collect	.35**	.246*	.337**	1					
Goal_indivi	.328**	.231*	.378**	.855**	1				
Nurturance	.23*	.097	.230*	.252*	.282**	1			
Consistency	-.022	.109	-.314**	-.193	-.106	.112	1		
Education	-.120	.066	-.127	.189	.103	-.019	.035	1	
Income	.109	.035	.163	.130	.142	.126	-.100	.190	1

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$



Table 5

*Correlations of Measures for EA Parents*

N = 80	Cul_collec	Cul_indivi	CCIQ	Goal_collect	Goal_indivi	Nurturance	Consistency	Education	Income
Cul_collect	1								
Cul_indivi	.063	1							
CCIQ	.528**	.268*	1						
Goal_collect	.522**	.149	.491**	1					
Goal_indivi	.071	.215	-.071	.243*	1				
Nurturance	.145	.029	-.065	.120	.485**	1			
Consistency	-.330**	.062	-.234	-.250	.168	-.056	1		
Education	-.034	-.029	-.215	-.080	.166	.067	.036	1	
Income	-.207	-.043	-.238	-.169	-.055	-.146	.004	.318*	1

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$

## Test of Hypotheses

### *H1-Comparison of Cultural Values*

In order to compare the cultural values between EA and MC parents, a MANOVA was conducted with cultural group and child gender as independent variables and individualism and collectivism subscales of INDCOL as dependent variables. This MANOVA revealed a significant overall group effect of group, but not for gender (Wilks'  $\lambda = .914$ ,  $F(2, 161) = 7.57$ ,  $p < .01$ ). It suggested that EA and MC parents differed in terms of their cultural values. Follow-up univariate analyses indicated that MC parents rated themselves as both more individualistic ( $F(1, 163) = 15.22$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and more collectivistic ( $F(1, 163) = 7.92$ ,  $p < .01$ ) than EA parents (see Figure 3).

### *H2-Comparison of Parenting Beliefs and Goals*

To compare MC and EA parents' parenting beliefs and goals, a MANOVA was conducted. For this analysis, similar to H1, cultural group membership and child gender served as the independent variables while parents' childrearing beliefs (i.e., CCIQ) and individualistic and collectivistic goals (i.e., ICITCS) were the dependent variables. The results indicated that there was a significant effect of ethnic group (Wilks'  $\lambda = .62$ ,  $F(3, 160) = 33.15$ ,  $p < .01$ ). This suggests that EA and MC parents differ in terms of their parenting beliefs and goals. Follow-up univariate analysis indicated that MC parents more strongly held beliefs about the importance of training their children ( $F(1, 163) = 35.29$ ,  $p < .001$ ). MC parents also rated both individualistic and collectivistic goals to be more important to them

than EA parents ( $F(1, 163) = 11.66, p < .01$ ;  $F(1, 163) = 26.36, p < .001$ , respectively; see Figure 3).

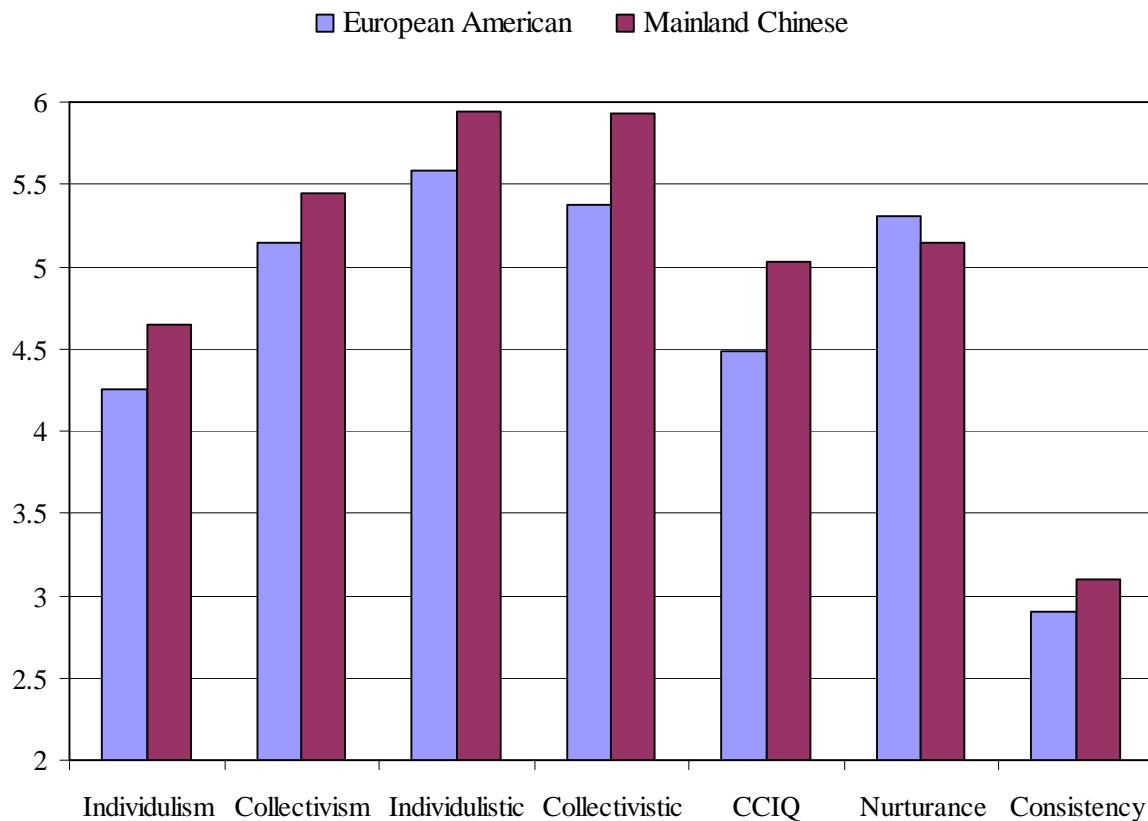
### *H3-Comparison of Parenting Practices*

To examine the difference of MC and EA parents' reported parenting practices, another MANOVA was conducted with cultural values and gender serving as independent variables and nurturance and consistency as dependent variables. Consistent with the hypothesis, there was significant difference between EA and MC parents in terms of their parenting practices (Wilks'  $\Lambda = .94, F(2, 162) = 4.866, p < .01$ ). Follow up univariate analyses revealed that this difference existed only for the consistency subscale ( $F(1, 163) = 8.25, p < .01$ ) but not for nurturance. Similar with the previous results, gender had no effect on nurturance or consistency (see Figure 3).

### *Research Question 2*

The primary purpose of this study was to examine the relation among parents' cultural values, their beliefs and goals, and their parenting practices, a number of multiple regression analyses were undertaken. According to the results of research question 1, there existed significant differences in cultural values, parenting beliefs and parenting practices. So, these analyses were undertaken separately for EA and MC mothers.

*MC Parents.* In order to examine the relations among parents' cultural values and their parenting beliefs and goals, two multiple regression analyses were conducted. For the first regression, collectivistic and individualistic cultural values (INDCOL subscales) served



*Figure 3.* Comparison of Parents' Cultural Values, Parenting Beliefs, Goals and Practices as independent variables and the CCIQ served as the dependent variable. The results revealed that parents' cultural values predicted parents' beliefs about training,  $R^2 = .17$ ,  $F(2, 93) = 9.471$ ,  $p < .01$ . The beta weights showed that collectivism cultural values positively predicted CCIQ scores (see Table 6;  $\beta = .41$ ,  $p < .01$ ) but individualistic cultural values were not related to Chinese parents' parenting beliefs.

To examine the relation between cultural values and parenting goals, a second regression analysis was conducted. Based upon the high correlated nature of the Chinese mothers' individualistic and collectivistic goals ( $r = .86$ ,  $p < .01$ ), these subscales were

combine to form a global goals scale. For the second regression, individualism and collectivism served as the IVs again and the total global parenting goal score served as the DV. The results suggested that parents' cultural values were related to parenting goals,  $R^2 = .13$ ,  $F(2, 93) = 7.00$ ,  $p < .01$ . The beta weights showed that collectivistic cultural values are positively related to parenting goals (see Table 6;  $\beta = .31$ ,  $p < .05$ ) but individualistic cultural values did not predict Chinese parenting goals.

To examine the relations among mothers' cultural values, their parenting beliefs and goals, and parenting practices, two hierarchical regression analyses were conducted. For these analyses, two blocks of independent variables were entered into the equation as predictors of parenting practices. Mothers' cultural values served as predictors in block one (individualism and collectivism), while mothers' beliefs and goals served as predictors for block two (CCIQ, global goals scale).

For the first regression, parents' nurturance scores served as the DV. The results suggested that cultural values were marginally related to parenting nurturance ( $R^2 = .05$ ,  $p < .1$ , see Table 8). In block two, as a whole model, cultural values, parenting beliefs and goals were related to their parenting nurturance ( $R^2 = .11$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\Delta R^2 = .05$ ,  $p < .1$ , see Table 8). Specific beta weight showed that parenting goals were marginally related to their parenting nurturance ( $\beta = .20$ ,  $p < .1$ , see Table 8).

Table 6.

*Summary of Regression Analyses of Cultural Values on Parenting Beliefs and Goals in MC Parents*

Variable	<i>Parenting Beliefs (CCIQ)</i>			<i>Parenting Goals</i>		
	$\beta$	t	Sig.	$\beta$	t	Sig.
Collectivistic Cultural Values	.46**	4.24	.000	.31**	2.73	.008
Individualistic Cultural Values	-.14	-1.29	.202	.09	.84	.404

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$

For the second regression, parents' consistency served as the DV. The results indicated that cultural values had no relations with parenting consistency. In block two, as a whole model, cultural values, parenting beliefs and goals were significantly related to their parenting consistency ( $R^2 = .13, p < .05, \Delta R^2 = .11, p < .01$ , see Table 9). Specific beta weight showed that CCIQ negatively related to their parenting consistency ( $\beta = .13, p < .05$ , see Table 9).

*EA Parents.* A similar pattern of regression analyses were conducted to examine the relations among cultural values, parenting beliefs and goals, and parenting practices for EA parents. To examine the relation between cultural values and beliefs, three multivariate regression analyses were conducted. According to the results of correlation analyses, EA parents' individualistic and collectivistic goals were not as highly correlated as MC parents. So, I decided to keep these goals separate for the regression analyses.

For the first of these analyses, individualism and collectivism subscales served as IVs while CCIQ served as the DV. The results suggested that cultural values are related to parenting beliefs in the importance of training their children,  $R^2 = .33, F(2, 77) = 19.31, p < .01$ . The beta weight showed that both individualistic and collectivistic cultural values positively predicted CCIQ scores (see Table 7;  $\beta = .52, p < .01$  for collectivism;  $\beta = .25, p < .05$  for individualism)

Table 7

*Summary of Regression Analyses of Cultural Values on Parenting Beliefs and Goals in EA Parents*

Variable	<i>Parenting Beliefs (CCIQ)</i>			<i>Collectivistic Goals</i>			<i>Individualistic Goals</i>		
	$\beta$	t	Sig.	$\beta$	t	Sig.	$\beta$	t	Sig.
Collectivistic Cultural Values	.51**	5.50	.000	.51**	5.34	.000	.06	.52	.607
Individualistic Cultural Values	.24**	2.53	.013	.12	1.21	.23	.21 <sup>+</sup>	1.90	.061

<sup>+</sup>  $p < .1$ , \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$



Table 8.

*Cultural Values and Parenting Social Cognitions as Predictors of Nurturance in MC Parents*

Predictors	B	R <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$
Step 1 (Independent variables)		.05 <sup>+</sup>	
Cul_Collectivism	.24*		
Cul_Individualism	-.03		
Step 2		.11*	.05 <sup>+</sup>
Cul_Collectivism	.13		
Cul_Individualism	-.03		
Parenting Beliefs_CCIQ	.11		
Parenting Goals	.20 <sup>+</sup>		

<sup>+</sup>  $p < .1$ , \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$

Table 9.

*Cultural Values and Parenting Social Cognitions as Predictors of Consistency in MC Parents*

Predictors	B	R <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$
Step 1 (Independent variables)		.02	
Culture/Collectivism	-.10		
Culture/Individualism	.16		
Step 2		.13*	.11**
Culture/Collectivism	.07		
Culture/Individualism	.13		
Parenting Beliefs (CCIQ)	-.32**		
Parenting Goals	-.09		

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<sup>+</sup>  $p < .1$ , \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$

A second regression equation was conducted to examine the relation between collectivistic and individualistic cultural values (IVs) and parents' collectivistic goals (DV). The results reveal that parents' cultural values are related to their collectivistic goals,  $R^2 = .29$ ,  $F(2, 77) = 15.42$ ,  $p < .01$ . The beta weights indicated that collectivistic cultural values were positively related to collectivistic goals (see Table 7;  $\beta = .52$ ,  $p < .01$ ), but individualistic cultural values were not related to collectivistic goals.

A final multiple regression was generated to examine the relation between cultural values and parents' individualistic goals. The results reveal that EA mothers' cultural values are not significantly related to their endorsement of individualistic goals,  $R^2 = .055$ ,  $F(2, 77) = 1.61$ ,  $p > .05$ .

Similar to the approach taken with Chinese mothers, two hierarchical regression analyses were conducted for EA mothers to examine the relations among mothers' cultural values, their parenting beliefs and goals, and parenting practices. For these analyses, two blocks of independent variables were entered into the equation as predictors of parenting practices. Mothers' cultural values served as predictors in block one (individualism and collectivism), while mothers' beliefs and goals served as predictors for block two (CCIQ, individualistic goals and collectivistic goals).

For the first regression, mothers' nurturance scores served as the DV. The results show that cultural values had no relation with parenting nurturance. In block two, as a whole model, cultural values, parenting beliefs and goals were related to their parenting nurturance ( $R^2 = .22$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\Delta R^2 = .16$ ,  $p < .05$ , see Table 10). Examine of beta weight indicated that

individualistic parenting goals were positively related to their parenting nurturance ( $\beta = .43, p < .01$ , see Table 10).

For the second regression, parents' consistency served as the DV. The results indicated that cultural values had no relations with parenting consistency (see Table 11). In block two, as a whole model, cultural values, parenting beliefs and goals were also not significantly related to the parenting consistency (see Table 11).

Table 10.

*Cultural Values and Parenting Social Cognitions as Predictors of Nurturance in EA Parents*

Predictors	B	R <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$
Step 1 (Independent variables)		.06	
Cul_Collectivism	.21		
Cul_Individualism	.09		
Step 2		.22*	.16*
Cul_Collectivism	.15		
Cul_Individualism	-.01		
Parenting Beliefs_CCIQ	.07		
Parenting Goals_Collectivistic	-.03		
Parenting Goals_Individualistic	.43**		

<sup>+</sup>  $p < .1$ , \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$

Table 11.

*Cultural Values and Parenting Social Cognitions as Predictors of Consistency in EA Parents*

Predictors	B	R <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$
Step 1 (Independent variables)		.01	
Cul_Collectivism	.05		
Cul_Individualism	.08		
Step 2		.08	.07
Cul_Collectivism	.19		
Cul_Individualism	.07		
Parenting Beliefs_CCIQ	.04		
Parenting Goals_Collectivistic	-.32*		
Parenting Goals_Individualistic	.04		

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<sup>+</sup>  $p < .1$ , \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION

#### Summary of Results

Cultural values have been suggested to be an organizing construct for parents' beliefs, goals and practices (Harkness & Super, 1996). This study was undertaken to examine this assertion. As such this study had two goals. The first goal was to examine the similarities and differences in cultural values, parenting beliefs and goals, and parenting practices between EA and MC parents. Second, this study sought to explicitly connect parents' cultural values to their parenting beliefs, goals, and parenting practices. Based upon previous research, I hypothesized that EA and MC parents would have different cultural values, parenting beliefs, goals, and practices. I believed that EA mothers' would endorse more individualistic cultural values, have more individualistic parenting beliefs and goals, and endorse more nurturing parenting practices than MC parents. Meanwhile, I expected that MC mothers would be more collectivistic, have more collectivistic parenting goals, believe more in the importance of training children and endorsed less nurturance parenting practices than EA mothers. For both groups, I hypothesized that mothers' cultural values would predict parenting beliefs and goals, and their cultural values, parenting beliefs and goals would predict their parenting practices.

Similar to my hypotheses, the results indicated that EA and MC parents differed in their endorsement of individualistic and collectivistic cultural values, parenting beliefs, goals, and parenting practices. However, the pattern of differences was not always in the expected direction. For example, although MC and EA mothers differed in their cultural values, unexpectedly, MC mothers more strongly endorsed both individualistic and collectivistic cultural values. Consistent with my second hypothesis, MC parents believed that children

should be trained early and that training was important for child development and achievement. However, inconsistent with my other hypothesis, MC parents reported that they endorsed both individualistic and collectivistic parenting goals more than EA mothers. Findings for parenting practices were mixed as well. Although MC mothers more strongly endorsed the notion of consistency in parenting than EA mothers, there was no difference in parents' reported nurturing practices among these groups.

Examinations of the relation among cultural values, parenting beliefs, goals, and practices revealed that cultural values are important to parents' beliefs and goals, but not necessarily to their parenting practices. Findings revealed that in terms of MC parents, their collectivistic cultural values, but not individualistic cultural values, positively predicted their beliefs about training and their global parenting goals. MC parents' cultural values, parenting beliefs and goals were related to their self-reported nurturing and consistency practices.

In terms of EA parents, their individualistic and collectivistic cultural values positively predicted their parenting beliefs in the importance of training while their endorsement of collectivistic cultural values positively related to their collectivistic goals but not individualistic goals. In addition, EA parents' individualistic goals positively related to their nurturing parenting practices but were not significantly related to self-reported consistency in parenting practices. Taken together, their cultural values, parenting beliefs, individualistic and collectivistic goals were also significantly related to nurturance in parenting practices rather than consistency.

## Discussion

Ecological theory and previous research suggest that culture plays an important role in parenting processes. The findings from this study affirm this notion and suggest that many of parents' beliefs, goals, and practices appear to some extent, to be culturally organized. However, the findings from this study are different from previous examinations of parenting of Chinese and American parents in a number of important ways. First, previous research that has examined similarities and differences in parenting in EA and Chinese contexts has suggested that great differences in parenting practices exist as a result of parents' cultural values (Kelly & Tseng, 1992; Chao, 1994; 1996, 2002).

The results of this study are also in contrast to the research that suggested that Chinese or Chinese immigrant individuals possess less of an individualistic orientation than European Americans. For example, in their examination of cultural values using a collectivistic and individualistic perspective, Oyserman and colleagues (2002), found that of the 20 countries sampled, Chinese and EA individuals looked the most different, with Chinese individuals reporting more collectivistic and less individualistic values. However, given that this sample was based largely on individuals, who were not parents, it is limited in its ability to generalize to the larger population. Given that little previous research has measured parents' cultural values explicitly, it is difficult to come to a strong conclusion about such findings. In addition, little research has studied the cultural process of parenting with MC parents. The results of the current study suggested that MC parents were both more collectivistic and individualistic than EA parents.

Why are Chinese parents higher in individualism and collectivism than parents in the United States? One explanation for the difference in cultural orientations may have to do with



how these constructs have been defined. In the past, researchers have conceptualized individualism as the opposite of collectivism (Hui, 1988), especially when contrasting EA and East Asian cultural frames (Chao, 1994). In 1995, however, Triandis suggested that collectivism and individualism should be considered as orthogonal rather than opposite constructs: they are statistically independent. This perspective is also supported by recent cross-cultural research (Cotes & Bornstein, 2003; Oyserman et al., 2002). This assertion suggests that individuals can possess differing levels of individualistic and collectivistic values and that the variation in the difference between the two is statistically independent. For example, an individual may possess both a high degree of connectedness to his family but still value the importance of being independent to them.

Likewise, an individual's endorsement of collectivistic and individualistic traits may vary depending on his or her particular context. For example, an individual may endorse strong collectivistic values towards his immediate family members but weak collectivistic values towards his co-workers. This view was originally supported by Triandis (1995) who suggested that both individualism and collectivism are not monotheistic constructs, but rather, each can be conceptualized into two separate dimensions, vertical and horizontal. In this perspective, an individual's endorsement of collectivistic and individualistic values should be divided into vertical and horizontal collectivism or vertical and horizontal individualism. The vertical dimension reflects a cultural trait that accepts inequalities among group members while horizontal dimension reflects the emphasis on sameness in terms of social rank. For example, a sample item for horizontal collectivism is "My happiness depends very much on the happiness of those around me"; while vertical collectivism is "Children should be taught to place duty before pleasure." A sample item for horizontal individualism is "I often do my

own thing” while vertical individualism is characterized by wanting to get ahead: “Winning is everything”.

I attempted to use both vertical and horizontal classifications in the current study. However, when I split out the collectivism and individualism subscale into four dimensions (e.g., vertical collectivism, horizontal collectivism, vertical individualism, horizontal individualism) none of the four subscales had acceptable reliability. Consequently, the decision was made to treat them as global subscales. Had I been able to utilize horizontal or vertical framework, I may have found different results in regards to similarities and differences between the MC and EA parents.

Another explanation for the finding that Chinese mothers more highly endorsed both individualistic and collectivistic cultural values, lies in the nature of the current sample. It is important to recognize that this sample is a convenience sample, in which both EA and MC parents were drawn from areas close to the researcher. As such, these parents’ may not represent typical or traditional Chinese or American cultures. Moreover, the samples were drawn from very different regions in each country. For example, the MC parents come from the biggest city in China, Shanghai. As a result, these individuals live in a very urban, modernized part of China, are well educated and are considered to be from middle to upper middle class backgrounds. As such, these mothers have frequent opportunities to interact with the modern world and know Western cultural values and conceptions of parenting through their use of the internet, their educational opportunities, exposure to diverse foods, and opportunities to meet and associate personally with those of different cultures. Given this, it does not seem so surprising that these individuals would endorse more individualistic

cultural values than their elder generations. Meanwhile, these parents' agreement with collectivistic values suggest that they have not lost their collectivistic cultural heritages.

The issue of parents' cultural values also became important when examining parents' ratings of collectivistic and individualistic goals. Recall that Chinese parents more highly endorsed both collectivistic and individualistic goals than EA parents. On the surface, this suggests a similar trend to cultural values. An inspection of the correlation between these two types of goals, however, revealed a very strong correlation ( $r = .86, p < .001$ ) for MC parents but not EA parents ( $r = .24, p < .05$ ). This suggests that MC parents did not make a distinction between individualistic and collectivistic type goals while EA parents did. This finding implies that Chinese more strongly believed in having goals for their child in general than EA parents did.

An explanation for why MC parents more highly endorsed all goals for their child than EA parents may relate to current social policy in China and the fact that the majority of MC parents only had or will have one child. During the 1970s, Mainland China developed a new policy for the family called the "one-child" policy (Hui, 1988). This policy limited the number of children that each family should have to one child. Previous research has suggested that the one-child policy has had a dramatic impact on children's outcomes compared to children in a families with siblings (Rosenberg & Jing, 1996). Economic and social change is occurring at a rapid pace in Mainland China. So, in terms of parenting and family life, it makes sense that parents' child-rearing practices may also be changing, especially in urban areas. Although some parenting values may maintain the essential character of traditional child-rearing perspectives, changes in family structure and economic circumstances may have an effect on child-rearing beliefs and practices.

This policy may have affected parents' beliefs, goals, and even cultural views in two ways. First, because of the social and economic pressures of the need to mandate a limit in family size, individuals who were born during this time had limited higher education opportunities. Despite such limits, however, Chinese society places a high value on the importance of education and achievement. In fact, the reputation of families has been suggested to be dependent on a child's academic achievements. It may be assumed that as a result of this policy and historical and economic pressures, that even though Chinese culture still highly valued traditional collectivistic orientations, individuals were encouraged, and almost forced, to compete with each other for limited university slots, family honor, and job security. Such pressure and sense of competition may have brought about dual cultural values for Mainland Chinese mothers: both individualism and collectivism. In this regard, mothers may strongly believe in the importance of being connected to one's family and friends, but they may also endorse individualism as well because they recognize that their child needs to compete and succeed in the larger society.

Second, in terms of cultural difference in parenting beliefs, Chao (1994) suggested that immigrant Chinese had higher parenting beliefs about training than European Americans. Jose, Huntsinger, Huntsinger and Liaw (2000) suggested that Chinese American parents were significantly different with Taiwanese parents and EA parents in their reported CCIQ score. Consistent with them, this study also found that MC parents were significantly higher than EA parents on parenting beliefs about training. In addition, in both groups, cultural values were significantly related to their parenting beliefs on CCIQ.

Training is a typical aspect of traditional Chinese parenting practice. It can be regarded as very positive and can be interpreted to mean a stricter or more rigorous teaching, educating,

or inculcating (Chao, 1994). According to these results, the concept of training in parenting beliefs evolved from a cultural tradition valuing family and achievement.

Over several centuries, Confucian philosophy regarding filial piety has shaped parenting within China and its neighboring societies, particularly Japan, Korea, and Vietnam (Ho, 1994). Filial piety strongly influences parenting around issues of family interdependence, especially in how parents admonish and teach children to behave or orient themselves toward their parents. Children's filial behaviors include treating parents with great respect, being obedient, caring for parents materially and emotionally, bringing honor and glory to the family, making sacrifice for the family and seeking parental advice and guidance. Parents monitor or guide their children through training based on these typical collectivistic cultural values and beliefs.

In terms of parenting practices, Kelley and Tseng (1995) suggested that EA mothers scored higher on nurturance and consistency than immigrant Chinese mothers. Inconsistent with these findings, this study indicated no difference in nurturance between EA and MC parents and MC parents scored higher consistency than American parents. First of all, it is important to point out that the reliability of MC parents' consistency scores did not reach an acceptable level in this study. Another possibility of why we found a different pattern of results from Kelly and Tseng (1995) is relates to differences in the samples of these two studies. Kelly and Tseng used immigrant Chinese parents who had a larger range in children ages from the present study (3-8).

It can be assumed that Chinese American parents are different with MC since they are living in United States and influenced by western culture to some degree. Acculturation is a process in which individual or group cognitions and behaviors change as a result of contact

with other cultural groups (Berry, 1990). More specifically, acculturation is the degree to which mothers identify themselves as belonging to their culture-of-origin or their host culture or view themselves as bicultural. Researchers who study parenting and child development among immigrant families have found that mothers' acculturation is related to their parenting beliefs and behaviors and to their children's development at the individual level (Bornstein & Cotes, 2003; Farver & Lee-Shin, 2000). Thus, Chinese American parents may possess more western cultural values and parenting processes based on their environment which is quite different with MC parents.

In sum, there are many reasons why the results of this study appear to be inconsistent with previous research. Many of these reasons revolve around issues of the sample and method used for the current study. Others include the need to consider the economic and educational change and development in Mainland China, especially in urban areas. Several caveats also should be noted with regard to our sample and method, which will be discussed in the limitations section.

Although it is important to consider why parents differed on cultural values and parenting cognitions, a more pressing issue is the importance of examining how cultural values related to parenting goals, beliefs and parenting behaviors. Despite the fact that MC parents were higher on both individualism and collectivism, when it came to which values were most important in predicting parenting social cognitions, it is clear that MC mothers collectivistic values were more important. The results from this study suggest that MC parents' collectivistic cultural values were related to their goals and their endorsement in the importance of training young children. This finding is consistent with previous research and my hypothesis.

Meanwhile, the results suggest that both collectivism and individualism were important in predicting EA mothers' endorsement of the training young children. Similar to MC mothers, EA mothers' collectivistic cultural values also positively related to their endorsement of collectivistic goals. Contrary to expectations, EA mothers' individualistic cultural values did not predict their individualistic goals. As noted above, according to Triandis (1995), individuals' endorsements of different cultural values and the importance of getting along with different people may vary from context to context. Although European Americans have individualistic cultural values, when it comes to predicting their parenting beliefs and goals from such values, it appears that these mothers' beliefs in connection and sociability with others becomes important.

Inconsistent with the hypotheses, cultural values, parenting beliefs, goals were significantly related to nurturance only for EA mothers and related to consistency only for MC parents. These results suggest that the relations among cultural values, parenting beliefs, goals and practices have evidence a different pattern for EA mothers and MC mothers. For EA parents' neither cultural values or beliefs and goals were able to significantly predict mothers' parenting consistency. In contrast, mothers' beliefs, in particular their endorsement of individualistic goals, was positively related to mothers' self-reported nurturant behaviors. Meanwhile, for MC mothers, cultural values and parenting beliefs and goals as a group predicted nurturant behaviors. Mothers' goals also appeared to be the most important in this equation. Mothers' cultural values and beliefs and goals were also important in predicting consistency. However, in this analysis, it was mothers' endorsement of the importance of training young children that negatively related to an parenting consistency.

In summary, these results, taken together, suggest that parents' cultural values are important contributors to parenting beliefs and goals for their children. It makes sense that parents endorsement of collectivistic values should positively relate to their collectivistic goals and beliefs in the importance of training. These results fit nicely with previous research on the connection between parents' beliefs and goals (Chao, 1994; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). What is less clear is why parents' cultural values and beliefs and goals predicted differing parenting practices for each ethnic group. The fact that EA parents' endorsement of individualistic goals positively related to their nurturing parenting practices appears to be consistent with previous research. Nurturance has been suggested to be Western construct that adequately reflects EA parents' parenting experiences (Kelly & Tseng, 1992). The negative relation between MC parents' CCIQ scores and their parenting consistency is less clear. However, it is important to note that the consistency parenting measure did not evidence acceptable reliability. Hence, this relationship should be interpreted with caution.

#### Limitations

There are a number of limitations that one should consider before drawing final conclusions from the results of this study. First, this study is limited in by nature of the sample. This sample is a convenient one that cannot be generalized to a larger population. In terms of EA parents, much of the sample is well educated and lives in a small college town. As a result of this context, their cultural values and parenting processes could be different than individuals from urban areas in the United States. In terms of MC parents, most of them are from very urban area, Shanghai, which is the biggest city of China. Shanghai is the economy center of Mainland China and the degree of modernization is high. As a result, many people have many of the same luxuriates as well-educated European Americans do.



The importance of documenting this about the sample is to highlight that there are huge regional differences within Mainland China. Urban Chinese and rural Chinese parents' experiences are quite different. Many of the Western regions in China are very poor with some provinces not having access to electricity. In these really poor areas, people tend to be more traditional in lifestyles because they have few opportunities to go out of their area and connect to new things. As a result, the parents' ideas and beliefs in the current sample may be very different from other Chinese parents in China.

The second limitation is methodology. To explore the relations among cultural values, parenting social cognitions and parenting practices, the current study has utilized parents' self-reports to measure all of these constructs. One problem inherent in a self-report approach to measuring parents' cultural values, social cognitions and parenting practices is that it may overestimate the relation between the variables being studied. This may occur as a result of parents' failure to adequately report their actual practices (Goodnow, 2002). Parents may, knowingly or unknowingly, report what they believe to be ideal parenting processes, which may strongly correlate with their cultural values or may not at all. Further, having parents respond to pre-determined lists of cultural values and parenting beliefs, goals and practices may lead parents to report values, beliefs, goals, and behaviors they do not have in real world or do not actually practice.

A second problem is shared method variance (Miller, 1987). While interpreting correlations based on parents' self-report of beliefs and behaviors, the correlations between two measures are always stronger when a single source reports on both measures than correlations between measures originating from different sources. The correlations among

mothers' cultural values, parenting social cognitions and parenting practices may be inflated or overestimated because all the information was collected by one parent in each group.

Third, it is important to note that people from different cultures may adopt different standards when evaluating themselves on subjective Likert scales (Greenholtz, 2002). Greenholtz suggests that comparing measures with subjective Likert-type response options make the cultural difference stronger just because these two groups use different standards to complete the survey. It should be noted that MC mothers may understand the items differently than EA mothers do. For example, in the current study, MC parents rated most subscale higher than EA mothers, which suggested that MC mothers might have different response pattern with EA mothers. Moreover, since the data are correlational in nature, causal inferences about the relationships between variables should be avoided.

#### Future Directions

There are several lessons that appear to have emerged from this study. First, in terms of studies of Chinese social science, special attention should be paid to population variation. Great differences have been suggested to exist in parents' experiences in rural versus urban settings in countries around the world. These differences should be examined and studied in order to better understand how cultural values, economic opportunities and rural versus urban communities impact parenting cognitions and practices. Further, as a result of the sample utilized for the current study, the results cannot be generalized to a larger population. For future research, it is important that studies recruit a more diverse group of parents from various walks of life and from urban versus rural settings.

It should be noted that large variability exists between urban areas versus rural areas in Mainland China (Zimmer & Kwong, 2003). Differences include family size, family structure,

relations between siblings, relatives and first-second generations. All of these factors may impact cultural values and parenting processes. For example, rural areas in China are more traditional than urban areas since their basic economic condition and quality of life preserves traditional work and gender roles. Meanwhile, individuals living in big cities have more opportunities to acknowledge and experience different cultural values, less traditional gender roles, and more modernized social systems than rural families. Clearly, additional research is needed to examine the relation between rural and urban Chinese parents' cultural values, parenting beliefs and practices.

Second, it is important for researchers to attempt to explicitly measure parents' cultural values in order to make sense and provide context for parenting experiences. The results of this study suggest that there is a substantial amount of variation in parents' cultural values, parenting cognitions and practices. It is unfortunate that these data were only collected through self-report measures. Future research should utilize multiple measures, including actual observations of parenting behaviors, in order to examine the relation among parents' cultural values and their parenting experiences. Further, to understand the cultural roots of parenting, it seems useful to have parents articulate their own beliefs and experiences through interviews rather than simply responding to close ended survey. Although self-report method can be very useful, a limitation of this approach is that asking parents to rate goals from a researcher-generated list induces parents to assign a rating of importance to a specific goal whether or not they ever previously considered or adopted the particular goal for their child. Interviews provide a way to hear parents' own conceptualizations of their childrearing goals and to explore the ways in which parents might link their goals to particular parenting behaviors or to their cultural values.

## Conclusions

As a general package, the findings from this study support the notion that parents' cultural values provide an important source for their parenting beliefs and goals. However, the results of this study are not completely consistent with traditional conceptualizations of cultural values in Chinese and American parents. Given this, additional research is clearly needed to examine how parents' cultural values influence their development of parenting beliefs and goals and parenting practices. This appears to especially be the case as the results from this study indicate that traditional thinking about the characteristics of Western cultures and Eastern cultures may not be applied in today's society, especially Mainland China. Mainland China is experiencing such a great change in their economic and societal institutions as result of globalization that it may be indirectly changing people's values and beliefs, including their views of individualism (Kohn, 1979; Kohn & Schooler, 1983).

In addition, although the results of the current study were not completely consistent with previous studies of EA and Chinese parenting, it would appear that measuring cultural values through collectivism and individualism is a useful perspectives for studying Western versus Eastern culture. However, it should be noted that individuals are not individualistic to the exclusion of collectivistic values or vice versa. Further, an individual's context may impact which values are most readily expressed. Hence, individuals may endorse different cultural values in different situation and with different people (e.g., such as being an employee versus being a parent). Additional refinement of individualism and collectivism may be needed to assess these contextual influences. Global individualism and collectivism might not adequately capture the specific aspects of cultural values due to large variability in individuals' cultural values and beliefs. Horizontal and vertical dimension could be a

valuable solution when measuring cultural values, but it appears to still needs further delineation and validation to be of use in the field.

Essentially, the findings of this study should remind researchers, practitioners, and teachers who work with parents or families to be aware of the cultural influences on parenting. This awareness will allow these individuals to be more culturally sensitive to parents and more cognizant of the need to help children develop successfully in different cultural environments. As one of the most important tasks of parenting is to help one's child achieve competence in a specific cultural context, individuals who work with parents can aid them in their parenting processes.

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**APPENDIX**

### Individualism/Collectivism Scale

*We want to know if you strongly agree or disagree with these statements. If you strongly agree circle a 9; if you strongly disagree, circle at 1; if you are unsure or think that the question does not apply to you, circle at 5.*

	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>						<b>Strongly Agree</b>
1. My happiness depends very much on the happiness of those around me (HC)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Winning is everything (VI)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I usually sacrifice my self-interest for the benefit of my group (VC)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. It annoys me when other people perform better than I do (VI)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. It is important for me to maintain harmony within my group (HC)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. It is important to me that I do my job better than others (VI)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. I like sharing little things with my neighbors (HC)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. I enjoy working in situations involving competition (VI)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. The well-being of my co-workers is important to me (HC)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. I often do "my own thing" (HI)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. If a relative were in financial difficulty, I would help within my means (HC)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. Competition is the law of nature (VI)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. If a co-worker gets a prize I would feel proud (HC)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. Being a unique individual is important to me (HI)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. To me, pleasure is spending time with others (HC)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. When another person does better than I do, I get tense and aroused (VI)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. Children should be taught to place duty before pleasure (VC)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. Without competition it is not possible to have a good society (VI)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. I feel good when I cooperate with others (HC)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. Some people emphasize winning; I am not one of them (VI) REVERSED	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21. It is important to me that I respect decisions made by my groups (VC)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. I would rather depend on myself than on others (HI)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

- |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 23. Family members should stick together, no matter what sacrifices are required (VC)          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 24. I rely on myself most of the time; I rarely rely on others (HI)                            | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 25. Parents and children must stay together, as much as possible (VC)                          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 26. My personal identity independent from others is very important to me (HI)                  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 27. It is my duty to take care of my family, even when I have to sacrifice what I want (VC)    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 28. My personal identity is very important to me (HI)  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 29. I am a unique person, separate from others (HI)  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 30. I respect the majority's wishes in groups of which I am a member (VC)                      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 31. I enjoy being unique and different from others (HI)  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 32. It is important to consult close friends and get their ideas before making a decision (VC) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

## ICITCS

(Importance of collectivist and Individualist Traits in Children Scale)

*How important do you think it is to encourage the following personality traits in your child?*

*Circle one number for each trait.*

		<b>Not at all important</b>		<b>Somewhat important</b>		<b>Very important</b>		<b>Extremely important</b>
1	Sociability	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	Neatness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	Creativity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	Persistence	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	Obedience	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	Self- confidence	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	Politeness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	Curiosity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9	Calmness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10	Assertiveness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11	Concentration	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12	Precision	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13	Independence	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14	Respect	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15	Kindness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16	Fairness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

### Chinese Child-Rearing Ideologies Questionnaire

		<b>Strongly disagree</b>		<b>Slightly disagree</b>		<b>Slightly agree</b>		<b>Strongly agree</b>
1	Children are by nature born innocent.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	Parents must begin training child as soon as ready.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	Children can improve in almost anything if they work hard.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	Mothers must train child to work very hard and be disciplined.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	Mothers teach child by pointing out good behavior in others.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	When child continues to disobey you, he/she deserves a spanking.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	Mothers primarily express love by helping child succeed.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	Child should be in the constant care of their mothers or family.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9	Mothers should do everything for child's education and make many sacrifices.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10	Children should bring honor to the family name.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11	Children should ensure the continuity of the family line.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12	Children should take care of aged parents financially and emotionally.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

### The Parenting Dimension Inventory

**The following statements represent matters of interest and concern to some parents. Not all parents feel the same way about them. Circle the number which most closely applies to you and your child.**

	<b>Not at all Descriptive of Me</b>	<b>Slightly Descriptive of Me</b>	<b>Somewhat Descriptive of Me</b>	<b>Fairly Descriptive of Me</b>	<b>Quite Descriptive of Me</b>	<b>Highly Descriptive of Me</b>			
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>			
1.	I encourage my child to talk about his or her troubles.			1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	I always follow my through on discipline for my child, no matter how long it takes.			1	2	3	4	5	6
3.	Sometimes it is so long between the occurrence of a misbehavior and an opportunity for me to deal with it that I just let it go.			1	2	3	4	5	6
4.	My child and I have warm intimate moments together.			1	2	3	4	5	6
5.	There are times I just don't have the energy to make my child behave as he or she should.			1	2	3	4	5	6
6.	Once I decide how to deal with a behavior of my child, I follow through on it.			1	2	3	4	5	6
7.	I encourage my child to be curious, to explore, and to question things.			1	2	3	4	5	6
8.	My child can often talk me into letting him or her off easier than I had intended.			1	2	3	4	5	6
9.	I find it interesting and educational to be with my child for long periods.			1	2	3	4	5	6
10.	I make sure my child knows that I appreciate what he or she tries to accomplish.			1	2	3	4	5	6
11.	I believe that once a family rule has been made, it should be strictly enforced without exception.			1	2	3	4	5	6

12. I respect my child's opinion and encourage him/her to express it. 1 2 3 4 5 6
13. My child convinces me to change my mind after I have refused a request. 1 2 3 4 5 6