The Parenting of Immigrant Chinese and European American Mothers: Relations Between Parenting Styles, Socialization Goals, and Parental Practices

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Clarification of the cultural meaning of parenting for immigrant Chinese was determined, focusing on parenting style as well as socialization goals and practices. Although the cultural relevance of an alternative parenting style, training, has been demonstrated for Chinese parents, the broader-level cultural values or socialization goals and parental practices that may be related to training have not been examined. Immigrant Chinese (n = 95) and European American (n = 52) mothers of children in the first through third grades completed measures of Baumrind's parenting styles and Chao's training items, in addition to measures of socialization goals and practices (parental involvement in school). This study found that Chinese mothers endorsed the training, authoritarian, and permissive parenting styles, while also endorsing socialization goals for filial piety and structural parental involvement practices in comparison with European American mothers. However, additional analyses for examining ethnic group differences in the associations between training and the other parenting scales, these associations were similar for immigrant Chinese and European American mothers.

Baumrind's (1971) parenting style conceptualizations (i.e., authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive) have perhaps been the most extensively cited and researched construct in the study of parenting. In Baumrind's early landmark studies, she consistently demonstrated, for European American families, positive relationships between the authoritative parenting style and child outcomes, such as instrumental competence and academic success (Baumrind, 1967, 1971; Baumrind & Black, 1967). Although the beneficial effects of the authoritative style have consistently been

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demonstrated for European Americans, these effects have not always been found for ethnic minorities. Instead, Baumrind (1972) found in her study focusing on African American families that there was a positive relationship between the authoritarian parenting style and preschoolers’ prosocial maturity. Other more recent studies that include ethnic minority families have also demonstrated the differential effects of these parenting styles on child as well as adolescent outcomes (Baldwin, Baldwin, & Cole, 1990; Chao, 1994; Dornbusch, Ritter, Leiderman, Roberts, & Fraleigh, 1987; Lamborn, Dornbusch, & Steinberg, 1996; Steinberg, Dornbusch, & Brown, 1992; Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbusch, & Darling, 1992). These findings have led researchers to question whether our traditional conceptualizations of parenting style, as originally developed by Baumrind, work as well for ethnic minorities as they do for European Americans.

Findings involving the outcome of academic achievement are especially problematic. Studies including African American, Hispanic American, and Asian American high school students suggest very weak or inconsistent relations between Baumrind’s parenting styles and academic achievement, although for the European American students, consistent positive effects of authoritative parenting are routinely demonstrated. Moreover, Asian American adolescents in their studies were highest on the authoritarian parenting style and yet these students maintained the highest grades (Dornbusch et al., 1987; Steinberg, Dornbusch, et al., 1992; Steinberg, Lamborn, et al., 1992).  

To resolve the paradoxical findings reported for Asian American parenting and academic achievement, it has been argued that Baumrind’s conceptualizations for parenting style may not be culturally relevant or meaningful for Asian Americans, especially for immigrants (Chao, 1994). In this study, an alternative parenting style conceptualization (i.e., chiao shun or “training”) was offered and validated with immigrant Chinese mothers. Specifically, chiao shun involves training children early through guidance and continuous monitoring of their behaviors, while also providing parental involvement, concern, and support. Training does emphasize obedience and a set standard of conduct, just as Baumrind described for the authoritarian parenting style. Hence, the training concept may overlap with the authoritarian concept, explaining why Chinese and other Asian Americans score high on the authoritarian parenting style. However, there are also important differences between the authoritarian concept and the training concept.

Although training is also assessed by the two primary dimensions used to assess parenting style (i.e., demandingness and responsiveness), there are qualitative distinctions in how both these dimensions are defined or conceptualized for the training style in comparison with Baumrind’s authoritative and authoritarian styles. Often, measures of demandingness involve a restrictiveness or domination of the child that does not describe the essential features of training mentioned above. Instead, training involves a continuous monitoring and guidance of children. This continuous monitoring may actually function as a preventative technique for catching potential misbehavior or inappropriate behavior by children before such behaviors become more serious. Likewise, measures of responsiveness typically include an emotional and physical “demonstrativeness” (e.g., praising the child and hugging and kissing the child, respectively) that does not capture the primary features of
responsiveness for immigrant Chinese mothers, as well as perhaps other Asians. The responsiveness of immigrant Chinese mothers can be more accurately described as involvement and support through their prioritizing the caretaking and education of their children.

In Chao's study (1994), by controlling for mothers' scores on the authoritative and authoritarian scales, the salience of the training parenting style was demonstrated above and beyond the authoritative and authoritarian styles for immigrant Chinese mothers in comparison with European American mothers. Even after controlling for mothers' levels of authoritarian and authoritativenss, Chinese mothers were still higher on the training parenting style than European American mothers. Thus although there may be some overlap between Baumrind's authoritarian concept and chiao shun, the authoritarian concept does not capture all or even most of the important features of the Chinese parenting style and therefore may be insufficiently characterizing or underestimating the impact of Chinese mothers on their children's achievement.

Although the training concept incorporates cultural distinctions for the primary dimensions used to define parenting style (i.e., parental control/demandingness and warmth/responsiveness), the broader level culturally defined socialization goals or expectations that influence this parenting style have not been directly examined. In addition, how training is translated into actual parenting practices also must be determined. Socialization goals comprise parents' beliefs and attitudes, specifically their expectations for their children, and are proposed to influence both parenting style as well as parents' practices (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). Parents' practices, however, comprise the actual behaviors used to reach these socialization goals. In Darling and Steinberg's model of parenting style, each of these areas of parenting must be conceptually distinguished from each other to understand the effects of each parenting aspect on child outcomes, such as academic achievement. The current study attempts to explore the associations between parenting style and parents' socialization goals and practices for Chinese American parents as compared with European American parents. Specifically, the relations between the training parenting style and parents' socialization goals and practices are examined to understand Chinese parenting more fully.

Recognition of the influence of parents' socialization goals on parenting style as well as practices is essential for predicting child outcomes such as academic achievement, because these goals reflect the broader-level cultural values or prescriptions for parenting. For many Chinese parents, succeeding in school is regarded as the primary or most important socialization goal along with respecting parents (Chao, 1995a; Wu & Tseng, 1985). A parent's effectiveness is often judged according to how well their children perform in school. Also, performing well in school often involves an emphasis on the family in that familial obligation and respect are conveyed through exemplary performance in school (Bempechat, Graham, & Jimenez, 1996; Caplan, Choi, & Whitmore, 1992; Farver, Kim, & Lee, 1995; Kim & Chun, 1994). This emphasis placed on excelling in school along with the notions of respecting elders and honoring the family are part of a complex of values that others have defined as filial piety (Ho, 1994; Ho & Kang, 1984). These expectations for school success are thus part of a larger complex of values emphasizing notions
of filial piety and may be contrasted to values emphasizing the self or development of the child's sense of self (Chao, 1995a). In the study by Chao (1995a), both immigrant Chinese and European-American mothers were interviewed about their child-rearing goals or what is important to them in terms of child-rearing. European American mothers were concerned with making their children "feel loved," "building their self-esteem," "providing a stimulating and learning environment," and encouraging their children to be self-expressive (e.g., "talking about their feelings," "expressing their needs"). These goals thus emphasize a concern about the self as well as self-development and expressiveness that some researchers have argued are part of a more individualistic perspective (Greenfield, 1994; Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

Parents' practices are also important because they represent the instantiation of parents' socialization goals as well as parenting style. Although parenting style is thought of as a more global or stylistic variable reflecting the emotional tone or relational aspects between parent and child, parental practices comprise parents' actual behaviors (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). In addition, parenting style is regarded by Darling and Steinberg as a more stable complex of qualities, whereas parenting practices are more situation specific. For example, studies have examined parents' practices involving the specific domain of children's schooling (i.e., parental involvement in school). However, these studies have also yielded some contradictory results for Asian Americans.

Steinberg, Lamborn, et al. (1992) and Ho and Willms (1996) have reported that Asian American parents were less involved in their children's schooling than European American parents. In contrast, other studies have generally reported very high involvement for Asian American parents (Hieshima & Schneider, 1994; Shoho, 1994; Schneider & Lee, 1990; Mordkowitz & Ginsburg, 1987; Yao, 1985).

These contradictory findings can be explained according to the ways that parental involvement in school was defined. Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbusch, and Darling (1992) and Ho and Willms (1996) conceptualized parental involvement in terms of (a) working directly with children as tutors or "managers" of their schooling (e.g., helping them with homework) and (b) participating in school programs. This managerial type of involvement emphasizes a more hands-on participation in the child's schooling. However, the studies reported above found that Asian American parents offered more indirect types of support in terms of how the home was structured to support learning. This support encompassed a range of aspects, such as controlling children's use of time outside of school, mentioned above, purchasing extra textbooks and assigning extra homework from these textbooks, enrolling them in music or language lessons, and arranging for someone else to help with homework (Hieshima & Schneider, 1994; Ho & Willms, 1996; Mordkowitz & Ginsburg, 1987; Schneider & Lee, 1990; Shoho, 1994; Yao, 1985).

These other structural or indirect forms of parental involvement may be more important for describing Chinese parents than the more managerial type. Also, for the Chinese, this range of structural support may be more apparent during the child's early elementary or even preschool years, as opposed to later high school years. Studies have shown that East Asian parents (Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans) exert a more intensive educational socialization during the child's early school years
with this socialization decreasing as children become older (Chao, 1996; Choi, Bempechat, & Ginsburg, 1994; Shoho, 1994).

This study provides clarification of the cultural meaning of parenting for immigrant Chinese, focusing on parenting style, particularly training, as well as parents’ socialization goals and practices. Although the cultural relevance of training has been initially demonstrated for Chinese parents (see Chao, 1994), the broader-level cultural values or socialization goals that may be associated with training as well as the actual behaviors or parental practices associated with training have not been examined. Also, different conceptualizations for parents’ socialization goals as well as for practices are included in this study to determine which conceptualizations are more culturally relevant for Chinese American parents as compared with European American parents.

Two approaches were undertaken in this study for demonstrating whether a parenting concept has cultural meaning or relevance for Chinese. The first focuses on the endorsement (i.e., comparisons involving mean differences) of a particular parental goal, practice, or style. This endorsement reflects the salience of one particular parenting concept over another for Chinese relative to European Americans. The second approach focuses on the relationships (i.e., correlational) between parenting style and the socialization goals and practices as well as between goals and practices. The specific goals and practices that are related to training are identified in order to elaborate on the conceptual meaning of training for Chinese relative to European American parents. Training may mean something very different for Chinese than for European Americans in that it is driven by different socialization goals and also is manifested in different parental practices.

The following hypotheses are tested with regard to the first approach examining the relative endorsement of the parenting scales:

1. Chinese parents will use training and authoritarian parenting styles more than the European Americans.
2. They will endorse socialization goals for filial piety more than European Americans and goals for self-development less than European Americans.
3. They will practice structural parental involvement in school more than the European American parents and managerial involvement less than European Americans.

Then the following hypotheses are tested with the second approach examining the relations among the parenting concepts:

1. Training is more strongly related to socialization goals emphasizing filial piety among Chinese than European Americans.
2. Training is also more strongly related to structural parental involvement in school among Chinese than European Americans.

Predictions involving the relations between the socialization goals and parental practices cannot be precisely specified, although overall, the socialization goals emphasizing filial piety should be more strongly related to parents’ practices (i.e., parental involvement in school) among Chinese than European Americans, because
these are the socialization goals that are valued by Chinese (Chao, 1995a; Wu & Tseng, 1985).

**Method**

**Sample**

The sample was comprised of 52 European American mothers and 95 immigrant Chinese mothers with children in either the first, second, or third grade. This sample comprises roughly 20% of the original sample of mothers who were contacted through the mail. Roughly 64% of the Chinese mothers had been living in the United States for more than 10 years, 21% for 5 to 10 years, whereas only 15% had been living in the United States for 5 years or less.

Additional sample information consisted of the number of siblings, the mother’s education level, as well as the father’s education level. t tests were conducted across the ethnic groups on the sample information. Based on an alpha level of .05, there were significant differences between the groups on mothers’ educational levels only: European American mothers ($M = 3.65, SD = 1.20$) had higher education levels than the Chinese mothers ($M = 3.02, SD = 1.25$), with a score of 3 indicating “some college” and 4 indicating “completed college” ($t(145) = 2.98, p = .003$). There were no significant differences across ethnicity on the father’s education or on the number of the child’s siblings.

**Measures**

**Parenting Styles.** The Parental Authority Questionnaire by Buri (1989) was used to measure the three parenting styles—authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive—with 10 items comprising each scale. The Parental Authority Questionnaire assesses the dimension of demandingness/control and another dimension also used by some researchers to assess parenting style, psychological autonomy granting (Steinberg, Lamborn, et al., 1992). However, this measure does not assess parental responsiveness/warmth, one of the primary dimensions used by Baumrind (1972). This questionnaire was designed to reflect children’s perspectives of their parents’ behaviors with respect to their parenting style (i.e., retrospective perceptions of their parents). Thus for the current study, the wording of the items was changed slightly to reflect parents’ evaluations of themselves in place of the perspective of the children. Examples of an authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive item consist of “I take the children’s opinions into consideration when making family decisions, but I would not decide something simply because my child wants it,” and “I do not allow my child to question any decisions that I make,” and “I allow my child to decide most things for himself/herself without a lot of direction from me,” respectively. This measure has been found to demonstrate good test–retest reliability (.81, .86, and .78 for the permissive, authoritarian, and authoritative scales, respectively) and good internal consistencies (Chronbach’s alphas) for each of the scales (.85, .82, and .75) for the authoritarian, and authoritative, and permissive scales, respectively (Buri, 1991). Additional tests conducted by Buri (1991) for criterion-related validity involving a measure of parental nurturance (i.e., the Parental Nurturance Scale)
Parents must begin training children as soon as they are ready.
For children to learn, parents should continuously monitor and correct their behavior.
Parents must train children to work very hard and be disciplined.
A parent’s most important concern involves taking care of the children.
Children should be in the constant care of their mothers or other family members.
Parents need to do everything for the child’s education and make many sacrifices.

Table 1. Training Parenting Style Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents must begin training children as soon as they are ready.</td>
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<tr>
<td>For children to learn, parents should continuously monitor and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>correct their behavior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents must train children to work very hard and be disciplined.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A parent’s most important concern involves taking care of the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children should be in the constant care of their mothers or other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>family members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents need to do everything for the child’s education and make</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>many sacrifices.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

yielded correlations consistent with Baumrind’s conceptualizations of parenting
style. That is, the authoritarian style was negatively related to nurturance \( r = -0.36 \)
and the authoritative style was strongly and positively related to nurturance
\( r = 0.56 \). However, the permissive style was unrelated to \( r = 0.04 \) nurturance.

Additional items originally derived by (Chao, 1994) were used in this study to
capture the training style (e.g., “Parents must train children to work very hard and
be disciplined”, and “A parent’s most important concern involves taking care of
the children”). Based on factor analyses from pilot samples, a revised set of 6 items
taken from the original 13 formed the final set of items (Chao, 1995b). These items
are listed in Table 1. For all of the above items, a 5-point Likert-type response
scale was used with 1 as “strongly disagree” 3 as “neutral,” and 5 as “strongly
agree.” Separate scale scores were then derived using the mean scores for each set
of parenting style items (i.e., authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and training).
This study also found that the internal consistencies (using Chronbach’s alpha) for
the authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive scales to be somewhat adequate
for authoritarian and authoritative only (.68, .69, and .61, respectively, for the
overall sample; .69, .67, .49, respectively, for European Americans; and .70, .71, .64,
respectively, for Chinese). In addition, the internal consistency for the training
parenting style scale was somewhat adequate, although less so for the European
American sample (.65 for the overall sample, .52 for European Americans, and .63
for Chinese).

Parental Socialization Goals. Seven items were developed for this study to
capture parental socialization goals. Of these items, four were designed to capture
perspectives emphasizing self-development (i.e., “having a high self-esteem”;
“being very unique, their own individual”; “being self-expressive and verbal”;
“being very explorative and adventurous”), and three were intended to measure perspectives
emphasizing filial piety that includes family honor and respect as well as being the
top student (i.e., “honoring the family”; “respecting their elders”; and “being the
top student”). These items were derived from the findings mentioned earlier by Chao
(1995a) that assessed the child-rearing goals of immigrant Chinese and European
American mothers. Response scales for all of the items involving the socialization
goals were also coded on a 5-point Likert-type scale with 1 as “not at all desired”
and 5 as “strongly desired.” Scale scores for each of the two sets of socialization
goals were also derived using mean scores. The internal consistencies of the scales
(using Chronbach’s alpha) for self development and filial piety were found to be
somewhat low, perhaps because of the small number of items in each scale (.67
and .67, respectively, for the overall sample; .58 and .68, respectively, for European Americans; .64 and .64, respectively, for Chinese).

**Parental Practices (Involvement in School).** This measure was composed of seven items from a scale developed and used by Steinberg, Lamborn, et al. (1992). These items focused on *managerial* parental involvement in school (e.g., “I check my child’s homework when asked” and “I watch my child in sports or other extracurricular activities”). Also, seven additional items were created to capture *structural* parental involvement in school (e.g., “I purchase extra workbooks or outside materials for my child”; “I structure my child’s after-school time”). These items were derived from the findings mentioned earlier describing the parental involvement of Asian American families (Heshima & Schneider, 1994; Mordkowitz & Ginsburg, 1987; Schneider & Lee, 1990; Shoho, 1994; Yao, 1985). The responses for the parental involvement items were also 5-point Likert-type scales with 1 as “never or rarely” and 5 as “almost always.” Scales scores for the items comprising the managerial and structural parental involvement were also derived using mean scores. The internal consistencies for the scales comprising the managerial and structural parental involvement in school were adequate, although less so for the European American sample (.80 and .65, respectively, for the overall sample; .61 and .44, respectively, for the European Americans; .79 and .71, respectively, for Chinese).

**Translation of Measures into Chinese.** All of the above measures were also translated into Chinese using the following back-translation method. First, all measures were translated into Chinese by a Mandarin-speaking translator; this Chinese version was then translated back into English by another Mandarin-speaking translator; both translators along with the researcher then compared this back-translated English version with the original version to resolve any discrepancies in the two versions; on resolving these discrepancies, changes were then made to the Chinese version.

**Procedure**

European American and Chinese parents of first, second, or third grade children were recruited from the same four school districts in the Los Angeles area. Two of these school districts were primarily comprised of Asian (mostly Chinese) and Latino students, and the other two school districts were primarily comprised of European American students. All the parents were mailed the parenting survey packet consisting of the measures described below. However, those Chinese parents who, according to school records, identified that they spoke Chinese in the home were sent the survey packet in Chinese.

**Results**

**Analyses for Examining Mean Differences on Parenting Scales**

In examining differences in mean levels on the parenting styles, socialization goals, and parental involvement in school, three separate one-way multivariate analyses of covariance were conducted on the scales for parenting style, socialization
goals, and then the scales for parental involvement in school. Mother’s education was included as a covariate, because significant differences were found between the two ethnic groups on this variable. Then post hoc analyses of covariance were conducted, also including mother’s education as a covariate to determine the specific parenting scales that were significant. The means and standard deviations for each ethnic group are presented in Table 2. For the results of the first multivariate analysis of covariance, involving the parenting styles, the overall model was significant \((F(4,141) = 9.32, p = .0001)\). Chinese mothers were significantly higher on the training parenting style \((F(1,146) = 30.82, p = .0001)\), but were not significantly higher on the authoritative style \((p = .12)\) and were only marginally higher on the authoritarian style \((p = .06)\). In addition, Chinese parents were significantly higher on the permissive style \((F(1,146) = 9.27, p = .01)\). Then for the second hypothesis addressing the socialization goals endorsed by each ethnic group, the overall model was significant \((F(2,143) = 38.69, p = .0001)\). Chinese mothers were significantly higher on the socialization goals involving filial piety \((F(1,146) = 23.56, p = .0001)\), whereas the European American mothers were significantly higher on the socialization goals for self-development \((F(1,146) = 27.02, p = .0001)\). Finally, with the hypotheses addressing the practices engaged in by each ethnic group, the overall model was significant \((F(2,139) = 41.17, p = .0001)\). Chinese mothers were significantly higher on the structural parental involvement in school \((F(1,142) = 6.83, p = .01)\), whereas European American mothers were significantly higher on the managerial involvement in school \((F(1,142) = 37.68, p = .0001)\).

### Analyses for Training in Relation to Other Parenting Styles, Socialization Goals, and Parental Involvement in School

To examine whether there were ethnic group differences in the relations between training and the other parenting styles, parents’ socialization goals, and parental involvement in school, a series of regression analyses were conducted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parenting Style</th>
<th>Chinese Mean</th>
<th>European American Mean</th>
<th>Chinese SD</th>
<th>European American SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Authoritarian*</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritative</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permissive***</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training***</td>
<td>4.51</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Development***</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>4.64</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filial Piety***</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Practices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managerial***</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>4.54</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structural**</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\* *p < .10; **p < .05; ***p < .01.
Mother's ethnicity was coded as a dichotomous variable with Chinese as the reference group. Mother's ethnicity, education, training, and an interaction term for ethnicity and training were used as predictors in each of the regression analyses. Table 3 presents the regression coefficients and standard errors for the coefficients. In all of the above analyses, the interaction terms for ethnicity and training were not significant. Thus there were no ethnic group differences in the associations between training and the other parenting styles and between training and socialization goals, and involvement in school. The coefficients displayed in Table 3 for training represent the effect for Chinese, because they are the reference group. There were a number of significant associations between training and the other parenting scales for the Chinese. Specifically, training was significantly and positively related to the authoritarian ($b = .48, p = .0001$) as well as authoritative parenting styles ($b = .44, p = .0001$), but was was not related to the permissive style ($b = .16, p = .21$). Also, training was not related to socialization goals for filial piety ($b = .19, p = .11$), as well as to socialization goals for self-development ($b = .12, p = .28$). Finally, training was significantly and positively related to structural involvement in school ($b = .34, p = .01$), but was only marginally related to managerial involvement ($b = .22, p = .05$).

Analyses for Socialization Goals in Relation to Parental Involvement in School

Regression analyses were also conducted to examine whether there were ethnic group differences in the association between mothers' socialization goals and their involvement in school. Once again, mother's ethnicity and education were used as predictor variables in addition to the socialization goals (i.e., filial piety and self-development) and the interaction term for each of the socialization goals and mother's ethnicity. Table 4 presents the regression coefficients, standard errors for the coefficients, and the standardized coefficients for each of the predictor variables on parental involvement. In all of the above analyses, the interaction terms for ethnicity and socialization goals were not significant. Once again, the coefficients listed in Table 4 for associations between socialization goals and parental involvement represent the effect for the Chinese, even though these effects did not differ across ethnic group. Specifically, both the goals of filial piety and self-development were unrelated to structural involvement in school ($b = -.02, p = .88$; $b = .09, p = .46$). Also, the goals for filial piety were unrelated to managerial involvement ($b = -.03, p = .01$), but the goals for self-development were significantly and positively related to managerial parental involvement ($b = .28, p = .01$).

Discussion

Although the findings focusing on differences in levels of parenting seemed to support the cultural distinctions in parenting that were hypothesized earlier, the associations between training and parents' socialization goals and practices were similar across ethnic groups. With the findings focusing on differences in the levels of parenting, this study demonstrated that the training parenting style, socialization goals emphasizing filial piety, and parental practices comprising structural involve-
Table 3. Multiple Regressions of Ethnicity, Education, Training, and An Interaction Term for Ethnicity and Training on Parenting Styles, Socialization Goals, and Parental Involvement in School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Parenting Styles</th>
<th>Socialization Goals</th>
<th>Parental Involvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Authoritarian</td>
<td>Authoritative</td>
<td>Permissive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>SE_B</td>
<td>β</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity (European)</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity × Training</td>
<td>-.26</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>-.77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * p < .10; ** p < .05; *** p < .01.
Table 4. Multiple Regressions of Ethnicity, Mother’s Education, Socialization Goals, and Interaction Terms for Ethnicity and Socialization Goals on Parental Involvement in School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Structural</th>
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<th>Managerial</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>SE_B</td>
<td>β</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity (European American)</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>1.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals (Filial Piety)</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals (Self-Development)</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity × Filial Piety</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity × Self-Development</td>
<td>-.45</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>-1.48</td>
<td>-.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * p < .10; ** p < .05; *** p < .01.

ment were more important for immigrant Chinese parents than European American parents, as predicted. In addition, as found in previous studies (Chao, 1994; Steinberg, Lamborn, et al., 1992; Dornbusch et al., 1987), Chinese were also somewhat higher on the use of the authoritarian parenting style than the European Americans. However, Chinese were also higher on the use of the permissive style than European Americans, whereas both groups were similar on the authoritative style. However, although the immigrant Chinese mothers were higher on the permissive style relative to the European American mothers, the mean levels on the permissive style were quite low (i.e., below the "neutral" point of the response scale) for both groups of mothers. Indeed, the mean levels were also quite low for both groups of mothers on the authoritarian scale, with immigrant Chinese mothers primarily at the "neutral" point and European American mothers just below the "neutral" point. Thus both immigrant Chinese and European American mothers appear neither to agree nor to disagree with the authoritarian items and primarily disagree with the permissive items.

The findings for parents’ practices or parental involvement in school were also supported. Although the European Americans were higher on the managerial parental involvement in school, as predicted, the Chinese were higher on the structural involvement in school. Steinberg, Lamborn, et al. (1992), in their study involving high school students, also found that European American students reported the highest level of managerial parental involvement in comparison with Asian American, African American, and Hispanic American students. Thus, together with Steinberg et al.’s findings, the findings of the present study suggest that European American parents are offering more managerial involvement throughout their children’s schooling (i.e., during both the early elementary as well as high school grades) in comparison with other ethnic groups. However, in attempting to examine other types of involvement that may be more relevant for Asian Americans, this study was able to demonstrate that immigrant Chinese parents do provide more structural types of involvement than European American parents.

Because the sample of Chinese in the present study was comprised of immigrant
parents, providing managerial involvement would be particularly difficult, especially
can be less able to
help their older, more advanced children with schoolwork and participate in school
activities because of both language and cultural barriers (Chao & Sue, 1996; Shoho,
1994). The study by Shoho (1994) examining generational differences in parents’
involvement among Japanese American families demonstrated these difficulties.
He found that Issei parents (i.e., first generation immigrants) were, overall, the
least involved in their children’s schooling in comparison with Nisei (both second
generation and first American born) and Sansei (third generation) parents. Specifi-
cally, both Nisei and Sansei parents were more directly involved in their children’s
schooling than Issei parents, through such actions as helping with children’s school-
work as well as being involved in their extracurricular activities. The immigrant
parents reported that the primary obstacles to their involvement were: first, the
inability to communicate in English; second, the “cultural distance” between them
and the school system; and third, their unfamiliarity with the operation of American
schools. However, Shoho reported that these immigrant parents do appear to be
offering some indirect support to their children in terms of providing “a stable and
educationally nurturing environment (p. 309),” although these reports are unclear
as to whether the immigrant parents offered more of this type of support than second
or third generation parents. Further studies involving Asian American parents are
needed to determine whether immigrant parents are more likely than second or third
generation parents to provide indirect, structural types of parental involvement.

Then focusing on the relations between the training parenting style and parents’
goals and practices, contrary to the predictions, the associations were similar for
both ethnic groups of mothers. These unexpected findings, however, require further
examination. Although significant differences across ethnic groups were not found,
there appear to be some substantive distinctions in the pattern of associations across
ethnic group that are noteworthy. That is, although training appears to be positively
associated with the authoritarian style for Chinese, this association was somewhat
weaker for European Americans (i.e., by more than one third of a standard devia-
tion). Likewise, although training was positively associated with structural involve-
ment for Chinese, it was also somewhat weaker for European Americans (i.e., by
almost one third of a standard deviation).

Although most of the associations were consistent with the overall pattern
predicted above, a few unexpected associations were found. First, with the parenting
style measures, training was positively related to the authoritarian style, as predicted,
but was also related to the authoritative style. Thus for both groups of parents, the
concept of training has some conceptual overlap not only with the authoritarian
style, as argued in Chao (1994), but also with the authoritative style.

The findings for the relations between training and the socialization goals
indicate that training was related to the goals for filial piety and not the goals for
self-development, as expected. Additionally, mother’s education was related to the
goals for self-development such that the higher the mother’s education, the more
likely mothers were to endorse self-development. With the findings involving the
associations between training and parental involvement in school, training was
related to both the structural and the managerial types of parental involvement.
This unexpected association between training and managerial involvement may indicate that mothers who are more likely to endorse a more directive parenting style, such as training, may also be more likely to engage in a range of different parental involvement practices.

Then focusing on the relations between parents’ socialization goals and their involvement in school, contrary to the predictions, once again the associations were similar for both ethnic groups of mothers. Thus the pattern of associations between socialization goals and involvement in school for European American mothers are similar to those reported above for immigrant Chinese mothers. Specifically, the goals for self-development were positively related to managerial involvement, whereas the goals for filial piety were unrelated to both structural and managerial involvement.

Differences in the cultural meaning of parenting have been only partially supported for immigrant Chinese and European American mothers. Support for cultural distinctions in parenting was primarily demonstrated through examinations involving differences in levels of parenting. That is, for those concepts designed to capture the cultural distinctions of Chinese parenting, Chinese mothers tended to endorse these distinctions more so than European American mothers. These cultural differences were apparent above and beyond any differences resulting from social class (i.e., mother’s education). However, differences in the relative endorsement of parenting do not tell the whole story. What is perhaps more telling is that for both ethnic groups, there was some similarity in the associations between the training parenting style and socialization goals as well as parental involvement in school. Nonetheless, training appears to have some validity for both ethnic groups in that the pattern of associations between training and socialization goals and involvement in school were mostly supported. However, additional studies are still necessary because of the potential for sample bias in this study resulting from the somewhat limited number of mothers who responded to the questionnaires relative to the total number of mothers to whom questionnaires were sent.

This study has been able to offer a more comprehensive and explicit way of conceptualizing and measuring, specifically for Chinese, the importance of culture in determining aspects of parenting such as parenting style and the socialization goals and practices related to parenting style. Ultimately, explanations for ethnic-group differences in the relationship between parenting and developmental outcomes must include a thorough appreciation of the role of culture. This appreciation must also begin to tackle ways of conceptualizing and measuring the specific cultural values that are embedded in parenting and that ultimately influence developmental outcomes such as academic achievement. The cultural relevance of these alternative concepts for parenting can be established both through examining the endorsement of these concepts across ethnic group as well as examining the relationships of these concepts to each other across ethnic groups.

NOTE

1. Some caution is in order with the over-generalization of “Asian American,” particularly with the outcome of academic achievement. Researchers have reported great disparities in achievement for the different ethnic subgroups with Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans (i.e., designated below as “East Asian”) performing better than Southeast Asians and Filipinos (Bradby & Owings, 1992; Olson, 1988).
REFERENCES


