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Relations Among Parental Acceptance and Control and Children's Social Adjustment in Chinese American and European American Families

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Parental acceptance and control are the 2 dimensions of parenting that have been investigated most; however, little is known about their cross-cultural expressions. This longitudinal study examined acceptance, control, and R. Chao's indigenous Chinese notion of control—*chiao shun* (training)—in 35 immigrant Chinese American (CA) and 38 European American (EA) families. Data were collected when children were in preschool and kindergarten (T1); first and second grades (T2); and third and fourth grades (T3). Within couples, CA mothers and fathers reported similar levels of acceptance and control, whereas EA mothers and fathers did not. CA fathers' and mothers' and EA mothers' acceptance and control exerted a positive influence on their children's psychological adjustment. CA fathers' training negatively predicted their children's problem behaviors 4 years later.

Keywords: parental acceptance, parental control, children's social adjustment, immigrant Chinese, cross cultural

Parenting dimensions of acceptance and control have been shown to influence children's social development. Parental warmth and acceptance have been found to predict children's positive social behavior, whereas, parental intrusive control has been linked to maladaptive behavior in children (e.g., Hart, DeWolf, Wozniak, & Burts, 1992; Russell & Russell, 1996). Because much of the research in this area has been conducted with adolescents from majority populations in the United States, it is important to examine younger children in diverse contexts to determine the universality of these influences.

For the past 4 decades, researchers have investigated the dimensions of parenting (e.g., Aunola & Nurmi, 2005; Barber, Olsen, & Shagle, 1994; Baumrind, 1971; Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Warmth/acceptance/responsiveness, control/demandingness, and autonomy granting have been identified as three important dimensions of parenting in Western societies. Many investigations have utilized Baumrind's (1971) parenting typologies: authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive. *Authoritative* parents are warm and accepting of their children while setting clear, consistent expectations for their children's behavior. *Authoritarian* parents exhibit high levels of control (often harsh), are punitive, and show low levels of affection to their children. *Permissive* parents express affection to their children but show low levels of behavioral control. Authoritative parenting has been associated with positive adjustment, whereas both authoritarian and permissive parenting have been found to be related to maladjustment among children and adolescents in the United States.

Chinese parents in the United States have been described by several researchers as authoritarian in their parenting (e.g., Dornbush, Ritter, Liederman, Roberts, & Fraleigh, 1987; Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbusch, & Darling, 1992) and higher on restrictive control and hostility (e.g., Chiu, 1987; Fuligni, 1998; Lin & Fu, 1990). Chao (1994) agreed that Chinese parents score higher on authoritarian measures, but she asserted that they do so with the goal of training their children to behave appropriately and to achieve academically. D. Baumrind (personal communication, April 3, 1995) originally described the small number of Chinese American (CA) parents in her study as "harmonious" (Baumrind, 1971). Harmonious parents had control of their children, but they did not exercise overt control. "Instead they focused on achieving a quality of harmony in the home and upon developing principles for resolving differences and for right living" (Baumrind, 1971, p. 99).

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Traditionally, the ancient Confucian dictum that Chinese mothers must be kind, gentle, and nurturing and that fathers must be strict and stern (Berndt, Cheung, Lau, Hau, & Lew, 1993; Ho, 1987) led to closer mother–child relationships and more distant father–child relationships (Wu, 1996). However, recent research has described growing agreement that Chinese fathers in Chinese societies do show loving, tender care to their children as well (Jose, Huntsinger, Huntsinger, & Liaw, 2000; Sun & Roopnarine, 1996). Unfortunately, most of the research on Chinese and CA populations has assessed mothers but not fathers (e.g., Chao & Tseng, 2002; Wu et al., 2002; Zhou, Eisenberg, Wang, & Reisner, 2004).

Immigrant CA mothers in Chao's (1995) study reported that loving the child was the first priority of parents and that love was important for fostering close family relationships (group emphasis). Love and respect are two of the most important aspects of filial piety and child rearing, and they form the foundation for developing harmonious relationships (Sung, 1995). In China, maternal acceptance has been found to contribute significantly to children's social competence, and maternal rejection has been found to predict maladaptive child functioning (Chen, Rubin, & Li, 1997). Chinese mothers have been found to score lower than U.S. mothers in warmth/acceptance (Wu et al., 2002), but this may be due to the definition of acceptance. Chinese mothers show acceptance through support, involvement, and making their child's education a priority (Chao & Tseng, 2002). European American (EA) mothers view loving the child as important for building the child's self-esteem and positive feelings (individual emphasis; Chao, 1995). EA conceptualizations of warmth include emotional (praising the child) and physical (hugging and kissing) demonstrations (Chao & Tseng, 2002).

In recent research (e.g., Aunola & Nurmi, 2005; Barber, 1996; Steinberg, 1990) parental control has been disaggregated into two constructs: behavioral control and psychological control. Behavioral control can facilitate children's development, whereas psychological control seems to inhibit children's development in an independence-oriented society (Steinberg, 1990). Psychological control includes constraining children's verbal expressions, invalidating feelings, attacking the child personally, inducing guilt, withdrawing love, and behaving erratically (Barber, 1996). Behavioral control includes providing rules and limits and monitoring and supervising the child's activities (Barber et al., 1994).

The meaning of parental control is influenced by cultural context (Kağitçibaşi, 1996). The same behavior on the part of parents conveys different meanings to children in different cultures. It is important to consider the role of culture and to examine indigenous notions of parenting, rather than rely on Western definitions of parenting, when researching immigrant families in the United States. Chao (1994, 1995) has explained two culturally based concepts of parental control: *chiao shun* and *guan*. *Chiao shun* means "training children in appropriate behaviors" (Chao, 1994; Chao & Tseng, 2002). *Guan* literally means "to govern" (Chao, 1994; Chao & Tseng, 2002). *Guan* has a very positive connotation for Chinese because it also can mean "to love" or "to care for." Children interpret parents' firm control as an expression of their parents' care and concern. Chinese mothers and fathers implement consistent approaches in responding to their child's misbehavior to promote group harmony (Fung, 1999).

Research has demonstrated that Chinese parents are directive and controlling in their parenting style, reflecting rigorous and responsible teaching of and high involvement with their children (e.g., Chao, 1994; Huntsinger & Jose, 1995; Jose et al. 2000; Lin & Fu, 1990; Wu et al., 2002). Psychological control has been found to be more often used by Chinese mothers than by EA mothers (Olsen et al., 2002), probably because of its link to Confucian ideology. Chinese parents are more protective with their young children (Chen et al., 1998; Wu et al., 2002), which is consistent with the Confucian directive to keep one's body from harm (Ho, 1996).

Although Chinese parents make use of shaming to teach children right from wrong (Fung, 1999; Olsen et al., 2002; Wu et al., 2002), it has not been found to be associated with verbal hostility or love withdrawal as it has been for EA mothers (Wu et al., 2002). Expressions of aggression are prohibited on the basis that aggression will destroy family harmony; Chinese parents encourage modesty and cooperation in children to enhance interpersonal harmony (Wu et al., 2002).

Some aspects of Chinese parenting, specifically protectiveness and shaming, are viewed negatively in Western societies. Parental overprotectiveness and overinvolvement have been linked to anxiety and depression in children in the West (e.g., Stark, Humphrey, Crook, & Lewis, 1990). Parental shaming in Western literature has been linked to children's withdrawal from task situations and poor self-evaluations (Alessandri & Lewis, 1993).

Research with young children has considered shyness, withdrawal, anxiety, sadness, loneliness, somatic complaints, and low self-esteem as internalizing behaviors (Achenbach, Howell, Quay, & Conners, 1991; Hart, Olsen, Robinson, & Mandleco, 1997) and acting out, emotional expression, and aggressiveness as externalizing behaviors (Achenbach et al, 1991; Barber, Olsen, & Shagle, 1994). Accordingly, we included measures that assessed child functioning across both internalizing and externalizing domains.

The three major purposes of this study were to assess (a) whether CA and EA third- and fourth-grade children differed in their psychosocial adjustment; (b) whether immigrant CA parents and EA parents differed on Western measures of acceptance and control and a Chinese measure of training"; and (c) whether parents' reports of training, acceptance, and control were related to indices of children's adjustment.

Although psychosocial adjustment differences have been found in comparisons involving CA and EA adolescents (e.g., Huntsinger & Jose, 2006), there is a paucity of research on the psychosocial adjustment of CA elementary school children. We predicted that CA and EA children would report similar levels of adjustment (Hypothesis 1).

Consistent with research cited earlier, we predicted that CA parents would more strongly endorse Chao's Chinese training items at Time 1 (Hypothesis 2); EA parents would rate themselves higher in warmth/acceptance (Hypothesis 3); and CA parents would rate themselves higher in control (Hypothesis 4). In addition, we predicted that mothers would rate themselves higher in acceptance than would fathers (Hypothesis 5). On the basis of previous research, we expected that parental acceptance would be negatively related to children's internalizing difficulties (Hypothesis 6; Chen et al., 1997) and that parental control would be negatively related to children's problem behaviors (Hypothesis 7; e.g., Aunola & Nurmi, 2005), Last, we expected that Chao training scores at Time 1 would be predictive of positive child outcomes at Time 3 but only for CA families (Hypothesis 8).

Method

Participants

At Time 1 (1993), 40 CA (mean age = 5.67 years, *SD* = 0.618) and 40 EA (mean age = 5.60 years, *SD* = 0.619) preschool and kindergarten children and their well-educated mothers and fathers were recruited from the suburban Chicago area to participate in this longitudinal study. The CA children, who were all born in the United States, ranged in age from 4.58 to 6.75 years; EA children's ages ranged from 4.50 to 6.58 years. Each ethnic group comprised 10 preschool girls, 10 preschool boys, 10 kindergarten girls, and 10 kindergarten boys. The CA parents were born in Taiwan (31 couples), the People's Republic of China (4 couples), Hong Kong (4 couples), and the Philippines (1 couple). All but 1 family spoke a Chinese dialect at home, and 40% were Buddhist, 40% were Christian, and 20% were nonreligious. Eight families had grandmothers living with them, and 2 families had live-in Chinese nannies.

All EA parents, with the exception of 2 fathers (i.e., Austria and Canada) were born in the United States. All families spoke English in the home, and 90% were Christian. No families had grandparents living with them, and 1 family had a European au pair. Parents in both groups were similar in age, educational attainment, and Hollingshead social status scores. Most of the CA parents had emigrated to pursue graduate degrees in scientific and technical areas at universities in the United States. Children were similar in age and length of preschool attendance.

Ninety-four percent (36 CA, 40 EA) and 91% (35 CA, 38 EA) of the original families participated at Times 2 and 3, respectively. (See Table 1 for specific characteristics at Time 3.) Four of the original CA families had moved back to Taiwan or Hong Kong, and one family decided to stop participating. Also, two EA families decided not to participate at Time 3. Three of the EA children's parents had become separated or divorced by Time 3; however, both fathers and mothers were actively parenting their children and participated in the Time 3 data collection. This study reports data from Time 1 when children were in preschool and kindergarten and Time 3 when children were in third and fourth grades.

Procedure

At Time 1, children and their parents were recruited for the 4-year longitudinal study from private and public preschools and kindergartens as well as weekend Chinese schools. Because we knew the CA immigrant parents in the suburban areas had emigrated to pursue their graduate degrees, we stipulated that we were recruiting two-parent families in which at least one parent had a graduate degree. Time 2 data collection took place 2 years later when children were in first and second grades. When children were in third and fourth grades, parents were informed about the Time 3 data collection by letter and follow-up telephone calls. After parents returned the consent forms signed by parents and children, we scheduled appointments for joint in-home interviews with mothers and fathers. We contacted school principals to schedule appointments for collecting data from the children. Questionnnaires were mailed to the mothers and fathers of the children and were picked up at the time of the parent interview. Questionnaires assessing the child's behavior in school were given to teachers to complete and return by mail.

Time 1 Measures

Parent background information. Parents provided the following background information: parents' education at-

Table 1
Sample Demographics at Time 3

Demographic	Chinese American			European American		
	n	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*
Age of child		9.75	0.34		9.70	0.32
Boys in sample	17			18		
Girls in sample	18			20		
No. of children in family		2.21	0.55		2.41	0.71
Mother's age		41.38	2.88		40.88	4.40
Father's age		43.77	3.09		43.62	4.84
Mother's educational attainment		16.73	1.94		17.18	1.32
Father's educational attainment		18.23	2.21		17.68	1.81
Hollingshead status score		59.83	6.81		60.77	4.63

Note. There are no significant differences on any of the sample characteristics.

tainment levels, universities attended, college majors, careers, income level, religion, years of residence in the United States, country of birth, language spoken in the home, family composition, family members' ages, and target child's birth date and preschool experience.

Chinese Child-Rearing Ideologies Questionnaire. Chao (1994) constructed an inventory of 13 items reflecting the indigenous concept of training among Chinese parents. This inventory was included in the parent questionnaire, which was completed individually by all mothers and fathers at Time 1. We modified Chao's inventory slightly by changing the word "mother" to "parent" because we asked both mothers *and* fathers to complete the questionnaire. Using a different sample, Jose et al. (2000) found test–retest reliabilities to be similar for CAs ($r = .64$) and EAs ($r = .61$). In the present data, internal consistency was good for CA mothers and fathers (αs = 0.76 and 0.82); and lower for EA mothers and fathers (αs = 0.58 and 0.57). Items (e.g., "Parents primarily express their love by helping their children to succeed, especially in school") were rated on a scale of 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

Time 3 Measures

Child self-report measures. At Time 3, children completed 20 items from the Children's Depression Inventory (CDI; Kovacs, 1985), which is a measure used to assess symptoms related to depressed mood in grade-school children. Children chose one sentence out of each group of three that described their mood over the previous 2 weeks. Scores range from 0 (*not depressed*) to 40 (*very depressed*). This measure has been demonstrated to be reliable and valid when used with Chinese children (Chen & Li, 2000).

To assess stress in the children's lives, we had children complete the 30-item Life Events Scale for Children (LESC; Jose, Cafasso, & D'Anna, 1994). Children are asked to indicate whether each event has happened to them over the previous month, and if so, how stressful they felt it to be. Questions concerned peers, family, school, immigrant status, and body. Scores range from 0 (*no stress*) through 90 (*maximum stress*). Cronbach's alphas were 0.78 for CA children and 0.72 for EA children.

Children completed the Self-Perception Profile for Children (SPPC; Harter, 1985), which assesses a child's perceptions of himself or herself in five specific domains (athletic competence, behavioral conduct, scholastic competence, physical appearance, social acceptance) and global self-worth. Designed for children from ages 8 to 13 years, the SPPC uses a 4-point rating scale. The SPPC has been successfully used with Chinese children (Meredith, Abbott, & Zheng, 1992).

Teacher ratings of children's behavior. Teachers used two measures to rate the children's psychosocial adjustment. The Teacher–Child Rating Scale (T-CRS; Hightower et al., 1986) includes three 6-item problem subscales (acting out, shy/anxious, and learning problems) and three 6-item competence subscales (frustration tolerance, assertive social skills, and task orientation). Teachers rated children's problem behaviors on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*not a problem*) to 5 (*a very serious problem*) and children's competence on a similar 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*not descriptive*) to 5 (*very descriptive*). The T-CRS has been used in Chinese populations over the past decade by Chen and colleagues (e.g., Chen, Cen, Li, & He, 2005).

Teachers also rated the children on four subscales (Social Problems, seven items; Withdrawal, seven items; Somatic Complaints, seven items; and Anxiety/Depression, eight items) from the Teacher Report Form (TRF) of the Child Behavior Checklist/4-18 (CBCL; Achenbach, 1991). Ratings are made on a 3-point scale on which 0 = *not true*, 1 = *sometimes true*, and 2 = *often true of this child*.

Parent ratings of children's behavior. Mothers and fathers rated the children on four subscales (Social Problems, seven items; Withdrawal, seven items; Somatic Complaints, seven items; and Anxiety/Depression, eight items) from the CBCL (Achenbach, 1991). Ratings are made on a 3-point scale on which 0 = *not true*, 1 = *sometimes true*, and 2 = *often true of this child*. Analyses used subscale items from the TRF and the CBCL that are common to both forms. Wang, Chen, Chen, Cui, and Li (2006) have demonstrated that the items from the CBCL are appropriate and valid for use with Chinese children.

Parental acceptance. Mothers and fathers completed questionnaires which included seven items from the Warmth scale of the Parental Acceptance and Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ; Rohner, 1984). Responses were given on a 4-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*almost never true*) to 4 (*almost always true*). Sample items include, "I praise my child when s/he deserves it," and "I make my child feel what s/he does is important." Internal consistency of the scale in this study was good to acceptable ($\alpha = 0.80$ for CA mothers, 0.64 for EA mothers, 0.78 for CA fathers, 0.86 for EA fathers). The PARQ has been used in China by Chen et al. (1997).

Parental control. Eleven items assessing parental behavioral control were generated especially for this study. The items reflect parent behaviors gleaned from interviews with parents from 30 CA and 30 EA families in a previous study (Huntsinger & Jose, 1995). The behavioral control items involve supervision of the child's activities, rather than anger/hostility- or punishment-oriented disciplinary tactics. Mothers and fathers independently rated themselves on these items using the 4-point scale described earlier. Two items from the control scale were "I make sure my child has his/her homework done before s/he can play," and "I regulate the types of TV programs my child watches." Internal consistency of this scale was good to acceptable ($\alpha = 0.82$ for CA mothers, 0.54 for EA mothers, 0.71 for CA fathers, 0.68 for EA fathers).

Results

Child Outcome Variables at Time 3

Mean group difference results were obtained with one-way analyses of variance (ANOVAs [ethnic group]). No differences were found on reports of depressive symptoms or stress. A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA)

performed on the self-reported SPPC scores found a main effect for ethnic group, Wilks's $\lambda = 0.82$, $F(6, 66) = 2.49$, $p < .05$. EA children rated themselves higher overall on self-esteem than did CA children (see Table 2). Univariate results showed EA children rated themselves higher on athletic competence and social acceptance than did CA children. Further ANOVAs found that teachers and parents rated EA children higher on the Anxious/Depressed scales of the TRF and CBCL (see Table 3). No differences on the three other subscales (Social Problems, Withdrawal, and Somatic Complaints) or on the T-CRS were found. Children of the two ethnicities yielded fairly similar outcomes, which was consistent with the first hypothesis.

Parental Acceptance and Control

The second hypothesis proposed that CA parents would self-report higher levels of training (*chiao shun*) at Time 1. The third and fourth hypotheses proposed that EA parents would self-report higher levels of acceptance and lower levels of control than CA parents at Time 3. To test these ideas, we computed a repeated measures MANOVA with ethnic group as the between-subjects factor and gender of parent as the within-subject factor on the three dependent variables of training, acceptance, and control. A multivariate main effect was obtained for ethnic group, Wilks's $\lambda = 0.85$, $F(2, 69) = 5.14$, $p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .14$; and for gender of parent, Wilks's $\lambda = 0.83$, $F(2, 69) = 8.01$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .20$. The interaction tended toward significance, Wilks's $\lambda = 0.95$, $F(2, 69) = 2.07$, $p < .10$, partial $\eta^2 = .06$. Regarding scores on Chao's training measure at Time 1, the main effect for ethnicity was significant, $F(1, 64) = 25.24$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .28$; but neither the gender of parent nor the interaction proved to be statistically significant. CA parents reported higher training means ($M = 3.58$, $SE = 0.07$) than EA parents did ($M = 3.08$, $SE = 0.07$), supporting the second hypothesis.

EA parents ($M = 25.4$, $SD = 2.82$) rated themselves higher than CA parents ($M = 23.4$, $SD = 3.13$) on acceptance, $F(1, 70) = 11.21$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .14$, supporting the third hypothesis. Contrary to our expectations, no difference was obtained for self-reported control. In addition, mothers reported higher scores for both acceptance and control (*M*s = 24.7 and 34.9, *SD*s = 2.95 and 3.20, respectively) than did fathers (*M*s = 24.0 and 32.46, *SD*s = 3.25 and 3.44, respectively), *F*s(1, 70) = 3.94 and 15.84, *p*s < .05 and .001, partial η^2s = .05 and .19, respectively. Finally, a significant interaction was found for self-reported control, $F(1, 70) = 15.84$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .19$. CA mothers and fathers yielded similar levels, but EA mothers reported using more control than EA fathers.

Next, we examined whether mothers' and fathers' acceptance and control scores were correlated within cultural groups and across parental dyads. For EA parents, none of the six correlations reached statistical significance (*r*s = −.04 to .32, *ns*). In contrast, all six of the correlations for the CA parents reached statistical significance, ranging from .32 to .61, all *p*s < .05. These results suggest that EA mothers and fathers do not exhibit similar parental styles, whereas CA mothers and fathers do. Furthermore, among CA parents, acceptance and control were significantly related to each other, whereas among EA parents, this was not the case.

Do Parental Style Variables Predict Child Outcomes?

Our next step was to determine whether ethnic group status moderated the relationships between parental style variables and child outcomes. We predicted that gender and ethnicity of parent would have differential effects on child outcomes. We expedited the statistical analyses by consolidating the outcome variables. First, the two positively oriented variables (Harter and T-CRSPos) were reverse-coded. Then all seven outcome variables (TRF–CBCL, P-CBCL, T-CRSPos, T-CRSProb, Stress, CDI, and Harter self-esteem) were factor analyzed with principal-components analysis, and the analysis yielded two factors that we called *problem behaviors* and *internalizing behaviors*. Problem behaviors yielded the following item load-

Table 2
Ethnic Group Differences on Child Self-Report Measures of Adjustment at Time 3

Child outcome	Chinese American		European American		
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*F*
Depression (CDI) at Time 3	23.69	3.50	22.74	2.90	1.60
Total stress (LECS) at Time 3	6.89	7.10	6.18	6.08	0.21
Perceived competence (SPCC) at Time 3					2.49*
Athletic competence	2.75	0.65	3.18	0.70	7.41**
Behavioral conduct	3.27	0.55	3.43	0.52	1.64
Physical appearance	3.13	0.68	3.35	0.57	2.35
School competence	3.19	0.47	3.16	0.62	0.06
Social acceptance	2.80	0.65	3.16	0.61	6.15*
Global self-worth	3.40	0.50	3.57	0.39	2.76

Note. For Chinese American children, $n = 35$; for European American children, $n = 38$. CDI = Children's Depression Inventory; LECS = Life Events Scale for Children; SPCC = Self-Perception Profile for Children.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 3
Ethnic Group Differences on Ratings of Children's Adjustment at Time 3

Measure	Chinese American		European American		
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*F*
Teacher Rating Form of the CBCL at Time 3					
Social problems	2.03	2.24	1.34	1.36	2.55
Withdrawal	1.11	1.49	1.58	1.62	1.62
Somatic complaints	1.03	1.48	1.21	2.07	0.18
Anxiety/depression	2.00	2.03	3.34	2.21	7.27**
T-CRS Problem subscale scores at Time 3					
Acting out behaviors	7.97	3.36	8.29	3.62	0.15
Shy/anxious behaviors	9.26	4.33	9.08	3.22	0.04
Learning problems	8.14	4.42	8.68	4.49	0.27
T-CRS Competence subscale scores at Time 3					
Frustration tolerance	46.94	7.74	46.76	6.69	0.01
Assertive social skills	27.20	6.18	28.42	4.64	0.92
Task orientation	35.29	6.82	35.08	6.42	0.02
Parents' CBCL ratings at Time 3					
Social problems	2.31	2.54	1.47	1.39	3.14
Withdrawal	1.09	1.44	1.58	1.62	1.87
Somatic complaints	1.03	1.48	1.21	2.07	0.67
Anxiety/depression	2.69	2.42	4.50	2.67	9.20**

Note. For Chinese American children, $n = 35$; for European American children, $n = 38$. T-CRS = Teacher–Child Rating Scale; CBCL = Child Behavior Checklist/4-18.
** $p < .01$.

ings: TRF–CBCL (.911), P-CBCL (.962), T-CRSPos reverse-coded (.897), T-CRSProb (.940), and all other loadings < .30. Internalizing behaviors yielded the following item loadings: CDI (.904), Harter reverse-coded (.894), and all other loadings < .30. Stress did not load on either factor. Cronbach's alphas for problem behaviors and internalizing behaviors yielded adequate reliability indices: 0.95 and 0.77, respectively. The two factors did not significantly correlate with each other, $r(73) = .19$, $p = .10$.

To examine moderation, we performed a series of hierarchical multiple regression analyses. The particular parental style variable (e.g., father's self-reported control) was entered first, the dummy-coded ethnic group variable was entered second (0 = CA, 1 = EA), and the interaction term (e.g., Father Control × Ethnic Group) was entered third. In this way, we systematically examined whether parental style variables exerted a main effect influence on the two outcome variables separately and whether these relationships varied significantly by ethnic group status. In total, eight regressions were performed. Because we computed a number of regression analyses, we used a Bonferroni correction to adjust for the higher risk of Type II errors: we adopted a more stringent *p* value of .005.

The two regressions for mother acceptance yielded a significant main effect for acceptance on problem behaviors, $\beta = -0.391$, $R^2 = .15$, $p < .005$; and a main effect approaching significance on internalizing behaviors, $\beta = -0.300$, $R^2 = .09$, $p < .025$. EA and CA mothers who reported higher levels of acceptance had children who yielded lower levels of maladjustment.

In contrast, no main effect predictors emerged for fathers. However, in three of the four regressions, significant interactions indicated that fathers' effects on children varied by ethnic group status. The first interaction was father acceptance on problem behaviors, $\Delta R^2 = .07$, $p < .001$. We used ModGraph (Jose, 2004) to graph this figure, and it is depicted as Figure 1. Follow-up simple slope computations by ModGraph showed that the CA participants yielded a slope statistically significantly different from zero (slope = −.13, $t = -4.01$, $p < .001$), whereas the EA participants did not yield a slope different from zero (slope = .03, *ns*). The other two interactions, which were marginally significant (father acceptance on internalizing behaviors and father control on problem behaviors) yielded comparable patterns. Similarly, the CA participants yielded significant negative slopes (for internalizing behaviors and problem behaviors, −.08 and −.09, *t*s = −1.96 and –2.34, *p*s < .05 respectively), and the EA participants' slopes were nonsignificant. These results suggest that CA fathers, like mothers of both ethnicities,

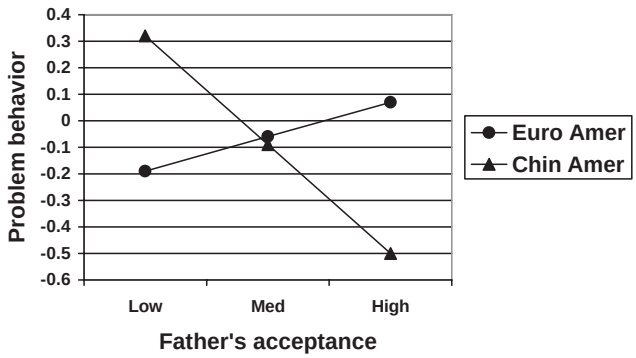


Figure 1. Moderation by ethnic group on the relationship between father's acceptance and problem behavior.

exerted a positive influence on their children's adjustment, but EA fathers' reports of acceptance and control did not appear to be related to the child outcomes measured.

Prediction of Outcome Variables from Mothers' and Fathers' Time 1 Training Scale Scores

The last prediction was that ethnic group status would moderate the effect of Time 1 Chao's training scale scores on the two outcome variables at Time 3. A hierarchical regression was computed in which internalizing behavior and problem behavior were regressed individually on mothers' and fathers' training scale scores. Mothers' and fathers' scores were treated in separate regressions to avoid multicollinearity problems. Ethnic group status was entered in the second step, and the interaction term was entered third.

Only the interaction term, Ethnicity × Fathers' Training Scale Scores on problem behavior, was statistically significant, $\beta = 2.441$, $R^2 = .11$, $p < .005$. Figure 2 reveals the pattern obtained for the fathers. CA fathers yielded a statistically significant slope, slope $= -.053$, $t = 5.30$, $p < .0001$, whereas EA fathers did not, slope $= .04$, *ns*. This pattern suggests that CA fathers at Time 1 who endorsed higher levels of training had children at Time 3 who were described by teachers and parents as lower on problem behavior.

No significant relationship of any kind was obtained for EA parents and children. CA mothers' and fathers' agreement on Chao's training scale was only .42, $p < .05$, which shows that CA mothers and fathers endorsed somewhat different beliefs regarding their children. This may help explain why CA mothers' and fathers' effects on their children diverged somewhat.

Discussion

Several notable findings from the present study deserve comment. CA and EA children were found to be fairly similar in psychological adjustment. No differences were found on children's self-reports of depressive symptoms and stress. Teachers and parents (both CA and EA) rated children as similar on the Social Problems, Withdrawal, and Somatic Complaints scales; however, teacher and parent ratings for EA children were higher on the Anxious/Depressed scale of the CBCL. EA parents may be more sensitive to the symptoms of depression and anxiety in their children.

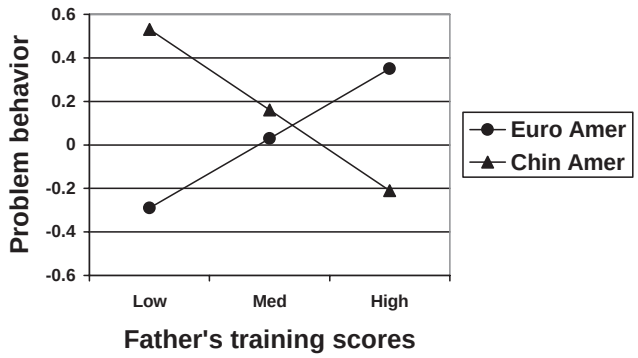


Figure 2. Moderation by ethnic group on the relationship between father's training scores and problem behavior.

CA children rated themselves lower on athletic competence and social acceptance. The lower ratings of athletic competence could reflect the fact that CA children spent considerably less time on team sports (e.g. Huntsinger, Jose, Larson, Krieg, & Shaligram, 2000; Schneider, Hieshima, Lee, & Plank, 1994). The lower self-ratings on social acceptance may be influenced by the fact that the children's immigrant parents expected their children to spend more time on academic pursuits and music practice, which left them less time for interaction with peers (e.g., Huntsinger et al., 2000; Schneider et al., 1994). Weekend Chinese school made them less available for mixed-ethnic group activities on weekends. In addition, subtle forms of discrimination may be occurring. The common teacher belief that CA children are likely to be high achievers may provoke envy on the part of EA classmates (Schneider et al., 1994). CA children may be less likely to be chosen by EA children as best friends because of their cultural background.

EA parents rated themselves as being more accepting of their children than did CA parents. EA parents have been found to be more permissive (Jose et al., 2000) and may be more likely to give their children unconditional positive regard. Since the 1970s, educated parents in the United States have been conscious of their role in building their children's self-esteem (e.g., Katz, 1993; Owens, 1995). On the other hand, immigrant Chinese parents have been influenced by Confucian-based principles regarding emotional expression and filial piety. For example, one traditional belief is that fathers who expressed affection for their sons were inviting a breakdown of the respect and obedience required in filial piety (Russell & Yik, 1996). Another possibility is that the measure of acceptance reflects more strongly the American values regarding expression of acceptance.

Parents' ratings on behavioral control did not differ. Because the Chinese response style tends to be more moderate, rather than at the extremes of a scale (Chen, Lee, & Stevenson, 1995), it may be that CA parents actually do exert more control over their children. According to Ho (1996), the guiding principle of filial piety "justifies absolute parental authority over children" (p. 156). Wu (1996) has found that CA parents in Los Angeles "adhere to parental strictness and discipline that support parents' rights and position of authority" (p. 154).

Within couples, CA mothers' and fathers' indices of acceptance and control were significantly correlated, which may indicate that their children are getting a more consistent parenting message, thus supporting Fung's (1999) findings. EA mothers' and fathers' indices of acceptance and control were not correlated, which may indicate that the children are not receiving a consistent parenting message from mothers and fathers. Parents in individualistic cultures probably have developed individual ideas about parenting, which they express in how they parent.

CA fathers' and mothers' and EA mothers' acceptance and behavioral control predicted outcomes in their children.

For CA and EA mothers and CA fathers, higher levels of acceptance predicted lower levels of internalizing behaviors, consistent with previous research (e.g., Rohner, 1986). Acceptance and control (especially regarding children's academic achievement) have been found to be blended in Chinese parents (e.g. Chao, 1994; Zhang, 1997); CA fathers, particularly, and CA mothers who were warmer were also more strict. This blending of acceptance and control may reflect the interdependence (involvement) fostered among family members from a collectivist culture. Second-generation CA children are closely connected to their parents. For example, parents rarely get babysitters for their children, as they tend to do things as a family (Jose et al., 2000). Therefore, children may have more opportunities to absorb their parents' values and expectations, which appear to be more homogeneous than those of EA parents.

Neither acceptance nor control on the part of EA fathers appeared to be linked to behavior in their children. Why didn't the measures in this study capture the contributions that EA fathers make to their children's development? EA fathers have been described as often fulfilling a playmate role with their younger children (e.g., Parke, 1996; Power & Parke, 1982), whereas CA fathers may function to a greater extent in an authority role. EA fathers' interactions with their children have been observed to be more humorous, warmer, and more patient than those of CA fathers (Huntsinger & Jose, 1995; Huntsinger, Jose, Rudden, Luo, & Krieg, 2002). Another possibility is that, because females in the United States have been encouraged to be assertive and independent since the 1970s, mothers in many middle-class EA families may make more of the decisions and do more of the supervision involving children than do fathers.

Chao's training scale seemed to be relevant only for CA families, as predicted. CA fathers' greater endorsement of training at Time 1 was related to lower levels of children's problem behavior as reported by parents and teachers. This finding is consistent with previous literature, showing that parental behavioral control is a good strategy for preventing external problem behaviors (e.g., Aunola & Nurmi, 2005). We found a trend for CA mothers' greater endorsement of training being related to higher levels of internalizing behaviors in their children. Future research with larger samples should explore the relationship of training to children's internalizing behaviors. All these findings underscore the importance of examining the constructs of parental acceptance and control within diverse populations.

Several limitations to our study should be noted. First, our sample is relatively small and overrepresents well-educated individuals in both the CA and EA populations. Future studies should examine larger, more diverse groups of CA and EA parents and their elementary school children. Second, the design would have been enhanced had we obtained data on all measures at all three time points, as this would have allowed us to track intraindividual changes over time. Third, our sample was too small to examine relationships among mothers' and fathers' parenting variables, ethnicity, and child gender. Fourth, the low alphas for EA mothers on the acceptance (0.64) and control (0.54) scales may influence the interpretation of the results.

This study also has several strengths. First, children's outcomes were reported by four sources: children themselves, their fathers, their mothers, and their teachers. Second, we obtained parenting self-reports from both mothers and fathers rather than from mothers only, or, as is commonly done, derived only from children's perceptions of parents. Very little data exist regarding immigrant CA parents of school-age children, particularly involving CA fathers (Chao & Tseng, 2002). Third, we used indigenous notions of parent control as well as Western notions. Fourth, the study is longitudinal and reports relationships between parent endorsement of Chao's training scale when children were in preschool and kindergarten on children's outcomes 4 years later.

In conclusion, the findings from this study showed that (a) CA and EA elementary school children exhibited fairly similar levels of adjustment; (b) CA parents rated themselves as similar to EA parents on control but lower on acceptance; (c) CA mothers' and fathers' self-ratings of acceptance and control were more similar than EA mothers' and fathers' ratings; (d) for CA mothers and fathers and EA mothers, higher acceptance and greater control was linked to their children's more positive psychosocial adjustment, whereas for EA fathers, acceptance and control did not predict children's outcomes; and (e) *chiao shun* (training) endorsed by CA fathers at Time 1 negatively predicted their children's problem behaviors 4 years later.

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