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ABSTRACT

This study compared standard conceptualizations for parenting style, parental involvement in school, and parents' socialization goals with alternative conceptualizations, in relation to children's academic achievement. Specifically, the study asked: (1) whether ethnicity is predictive of achievement scores when included in analyses involving the standard conceptualization of parenting style and an alternative conceptualization that recognizes a "chiao shun" ("training") style among immigrant Chinese mothers; (2) whether there are ethnic group differences in the relationship between the parenting concepts of the two conceptualizations and academic achievement; and (3) whether the alternative conceptualization is a better predictor of academic scores than the standard conceptualization. Subjects were European American parents, most born in the United States, and east Asian parents, most of whom were immigrants. Subjects completed the Parental Authority Questionnaire. Principal findings from the questionnaire are that: (1) East Asians score significantly higher on both the (standard) authorization style and the "chiao shun" and other alternative styles, with some correlation between standard and alternative concepts; (2) there are important aspects of East Asian parenting that cannot be entirely captured by the standard concepts; and (3) even after controlling for their scores on all the standard measures, the East Asians are still significantly higher on all the alternative measures. This study offers a more comprehensive and explicit way of conceptualizing and measuring, specifically for East Asians, the importance of culture in determining aspects of parenting such as parenting style, control, and practices, as well as parents' socialization goals. Contains 27 references. (EAJ)

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## Reconceptualization of the Authoritarian Parenting Style and Parental Control: Some Initial Items

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Reconceptualizing Parenting Style and  
Parental Involvement in School for East Asians

Baumrind's (1971a) original parenting style conceptualizations (i.e., authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive) have been explored in relation to a number of different child development outcomes. Studies with European Americans have consistently found positive relationships between the authoritative parenting style and child and adolescent outcomes, such as instrumental competence, psychosocial maturity, and academic success. However, studies (Steinberg, Lamborn, & Mounts, 1993; Dornbusch, Ritter, Leiderman, Roberts, & Fraleigh, 1987), including Baumrind's (1972), have also found that among ethnic minorities the effectiveness of authoritative parenting is much weaker, and that ethnic minorities are also much higher on the authoritarian parenting style, compared to European Americans. Specifically, Baumrind had found that for African American families there was a strong relationship between the authoritarian parenting style and preschoolers' prosocial maturity.

Also with the outcome of academic achievement, studies including African American, Hispanic American, Asian American and European American high school students found very weak or inconsistent relationships between Baumrind's parenting styles and academic achievement, although for the European American students they found a more consistent positive relationship between the authoritative parenting style and academic achievement (Steinberg et al., 1992; Dornbusch et al., 1987). Looking at the Asian American findings, this group was highest on the authoritarian parenting style and yet these students had the highest grades. In addition, with the area of parental practices related to schooling (i.e., parental involvement in school), Asian American parents were found to be the least involved in their children's schooling.

In order to resolve the paradoxical findings reported for Asian American parenting and academic achievement, I have argued (Chao, 1994) that Baumrind's parenting styles may not be culturally meaningful especially when applied to ethnic groups such as, Asian Americans, that are largely comprised of recent immigrants. In demonstrating that Baumrind's (1971a) original conceptualizations

were not relevant for capturing Asian American parenting, I had offered an alternative parenting style conceptualization (i.e., chiao shun or "training") that was tested on immigrant Chinese mothers. Specifically, chiao shun involves training children early to be self-disciplined and hard working, and providing children with a familial investment, concern, and support. This concept may also be relevant for other East Asians such as, Japanese and Koreans, because of their Confucius traditions and emphasis on filial piety. "Training" does emphasize obedience and a set standard of conduct, just as Baumrind has 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 chiao shun concept based on both of the dimensions Baumrind (1971a) had used for defining parenting style, parental control and parental warmth. Whereas Baumrind's distinction of parental control for an authoritarian parent involves a restrictive type of control, the chiao shun concept involves a more "family-based" control. This is a control for the purpose of maintaining family harmony and the integrity of the family unit, and not to dominate the child per se (Lau and Cheung, 1987). In addition, Baumrind's distinctions for parental warmth involve a physical, emotional, or verbal demonstrativeness, whereas the chiao shun concept involves a parental support defined by investment, concern, and involvement. Thus, although there may be some overlap between Baumrind's authoritarian concept and chiao shun, the authoritarian concept does not capture the most important features of the East Asian parenting style, and thus may be misleading.

Another resolution to this paradox involves a model offered by Darling and Steinberg (1993) for clarifying the relationship between parenting style and other important areas of parenting for explaining child development outcomes, including academic achievement. Specifically, Darling and Steinberg argue that parenting style must be "disentangled" from other important aspects of parenting and they differentiated three aspects of parenting--the socialization goals,

parental practices used to reach those goals, and the parenting style. Parenting style is regarded as having a mediating effect on the relationship between parents' practices and outcomes such as academic achievement. The socialization goals are differentiated from both parenting style and parenting practices in that the goals comprise parents' beliefs and attitudes, and are proposed to influence both parenting practices and parenting style.

Recognition of the influence of the socialization goals on parenting practices as well as parenting style in Darling and Steinberg's model (1993) is essential for predicting child outcomes like academic achievement. I (1995) had found in a study including both European American and immigrant Chinese mothers that for the Chinese, succeeding in school was regarded as the primary or most important socialization goal along with respecting parents and having a good character (i.e., being honest and good to others). Studies with Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans have demonstrated that these academic expectations are related to a more collectivist orientation in which individuality and self-expression are deemphasized over sensitivity to and cooperation with others, especially the family. Familial obligation and respect are often conveyed through exemplary performance in school (Bempechat, Graham, & Jimenez, 1996; Caplan, 1992; Farver, Kim, & Lee, 1995; Kim & Choi, 1995).

The other area of Darling and Steinberg's (1993) model, parents' practices related to children's academic achievement (i.e., parental involvement in school), has also been studied and just as with parenting style, has yielded some very contradictory results for Asian Americans. Steinberg et al. (1992) and Ho and Willms (in press) have reported that Asian American parents were not as involved in their children's schooling as European American parents. Other studies have generally reported very high involvement of Asian American parents (Hieshima and Schneider, 1994; Shoho, 1994; Schneider and Lee, 1990; Mordkowitz and Ginsburg, 1987; Yao, 1985). These contradictory findings are telling. Specifically, the studies by Steinberg et al., and Ho and Willms had found that Asian American parents were not as involved in working directly with children as tutors or "managers" of their schooling (e.g., helping them with homework) or as

participators in school programs. However, Ho and Willms had also found that Asian Americans had higher levels of parental supervision of after-school time.

This clarification by Ho and Willms (in press) points to similar distinctions found in other studies for the parental involvement of East Asians. That is, studies have also found that East Asian parents are offering a variety of more indirect types of support or involvement such as controlling their children's use of time outside of school, providing a desk or study area, assigning extra homework problems or purchasing extra workbooks, enrolling them in supplemental courses including private music, language, or arts courses, hiring a tutor or arranging for someone to help with homework--in general, monitoring the child, and providing a stable and educationally nurturing home environment (Hieshima and Schneider, 1994; Ho and Willms, 1996; Mordkowitz and Ginsburg, 1987; Schneider and Lee, 1990; Shoho, 1994; Yao, 1985). These studies point out that such indirect types of practices may be more important for describing East Asian parental involvement than the type of support in which parents act as managers of their schoolwork (i.e., directly tutoring them), or as participators in school programs or other activities, such as sports.

These qualitative distinctions of parental involvement in school as well as parenting style are necessary for capturing the parenting of East Asians and are largely determined by the socialization goals that parents hold, as Darling and Steinberg (1993) have stressed. In addition, because a great deal of the educational socialization of East Asian children takes place in the early elementary years, studies need to focus on children in early elementary school rather than adolescents in high school. Therefore, this study will involve parents with children in the second and third grades. The purpose of the study will be to compare standard conceptualizations for parenting style, parental involvement in school, and parents' socialization goals with alternative conceptualizations for this model and to compare these sets of conceptualizations in relation to the outcome of children's (i.e., second and third graders') academic achievement scores. Specifically, the "standard" conceptualizations for this model involve the authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive parenting

styles (i.e., Baumrind's, 1971a, conceptualizations), managerial parental involvement in school (i.e., Steinberg et al.'s, 1992, involvement), as well as the individualistic socialization goals (i.e., the goals emphasized by European American mothers in Chao, 1995). The alternative conceptualizations for this model involve the training parenting style, the indirect parental involvement in school, and the collectivistic socialization goals (i.e., emphasized by the immigrant Chinese mothers in the study by Chao, 1995). In addition, the specific domain of parental control was also included in this study in order to test the family-based parental control described earlier.

This study will first try to replicate the findings of Dornbusch et al. (1987) and Steinberg et al. (1992) involving the standard conceptualizations, as well as the findings by Chao (1994) involving the alternative conceptualization for parenting style (i.e., involving "training"). These alternative and standard parenting concepts will then be tested against the outcome of the children's (i.e., second and third graders') academic achievement. Initially, this study will first address whether ethnicity will be predictive of achievement scores when included in both analyses involving the alternative and standard measures. This study hypothesizes that with both the standard and alternative parenting measures, ethnicity will be significant in predicting achievement scores. The second research question will involve the interactions between ethnicity and the parenting variables to determine whether there will be ethnic group differences in the relationship between the parenting concepts and academic achievement. This study hypothesizes that there will be significant ethnic group differences, especially involving the alternative parenting concepts, because these concepts were designed to capture the cultural distinctions of East Asians. Then the third research question will involve tests for the combined coefficients (i.e., involving the interaction terms and the terms for the parenting measures), representing East Asians, to determine whether the alternative parenting concepts will predict achievement scores more than the standard parenting concepts. This study then predicts that for East Asians, more of the alternative parenting concepts will predict academic achievement than the standard parenting concepts.

## Method

Sample

<b>Parents:</b>	European Americans (n=68)	44 mothers (65%)	24 fathers (35%)
	East Asians (n=255)	159 mothers (62%)	96 fathers (38%)
<b>Born U.S.:</b>	European Americans (all born in U.S. except 4)		
	East Asians	228 immigrants (89%)	27 born U.S. (11%)

Means(standard dev.)

**Child's age:** significant  $t(1,321)=3.61, p<.000$

European Americans 8.74( .78)

East Asians 8.36( .78)

**Number of siblings:** not significant  $p>.073$

European Americans 1.51(1.10)

East Asians 1.26( .74)

**Younger siblings:** not significant  $p>.303$

European Americans .48( .75)

East Asians .58( .67)

**Older siblings:** significant  $t(1,303)=2.93, p<.004$

European Americans 1.01( .96)

East Asians .68( .80)

**Parent's age:** not significant  $p>.149$

European Americans 40.16(5.58)

East Asians 39.11(4.12)

**Parent's education:** significant  $t(1,318)=3.15, p<.002$

European Americans 3.99(1.38)

East Asians 3.39(1.38)

Measures and Procedure

Standard measures. (1) The Parental Authority Questionnaire by Buri (1989) was used as the measure for the three parenting styles, authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive. There were 10 items created for each style and scales were created using mean scores. Also, this questionnaire was designed to



reflect the children's perspective of their parents (i.e., retrospective perceptions of their parents). Thus, for the current study, the wording of the items were changed slightly to reflect parents' evaluations of themselves, instead of from the perspective of the children. Examples of an authoritative and an authoritarian item consist of "I take the children's opinions into consideration when making family decisions, but I would not decide something simply because my children want it", and "I do not allow my child to question any decisions that I make", respectively. (2) In addition, Steinberg et al.'s (1992) items for parental involvement in school were used for capturing parental behaviors related to the child's schooling (e.g., "I check my child's homework when asked" and "I watch my child in sports or other extra-curricular activities"). (3) Although the individualistic socialization goals are also to be included as part of the standard measures, they are listed below as part of the alternative measures until the data reduction analyses, reported later, have determined whether these items do cluster separately from the collectivistic goals.

Alternative items. (1) Six items depicting the alternative parenting style, training reported in Chao (1994) were used in this study. (2) Ten items were also constructed to depict the idea of a more family-based parental control for East Asians as opposed to a more domineering or authoritarian parental control; this idea of "family-based" parental control is related to Lau and Cheung's (1987) study stressing a more "organizational control", mentioned earlier. (3) Nine items were created to capture the indirect parental involvement in school mentioned earlier. (4) Eight items were created to capture the cultural distinctions between individualistic and collectivistic socialization goals. These distinctions were based on the study by Chao (1995), mentioned earlier, in which European American and immigrant Chinese mothers were interviewed regarding their child-rearing goals.

## Results

### Summary of Replication of Past Studies

\* East Asians, in comparison to European Americans, scored significantly

higher on Baumrind's authoritarian parenting style and significantly lower on the managerial parental involvement from Steinberg et al.

- \* On the hand, East Asians also scored significantly higher on the training parenting style, as well as the family-based parental control and the indirect parental involvement in school.
- \* There is some relationship or correlation between the standard concepts and the alternative.
- \* Although there may be some conceptual overlap between the standard and alternative concepts, there are also important aspects of East Asian parenting that cannot be entirely captured by the standard parenting concepts. Even after controlling for their scores on all the standard measures, the East Asians were still significantly higher on all the alternative measures.

#### Predicting Achievement Scores

Means and standard deviations for the math achievement scores were 82.67 and 21.16, respectively, for the East Asian students and 61.78 and 29.94, respectively, for the European American students. A majority of the scores for the East Asians (i.e., 86 out of 150 or 57%) were clustered at 90 and above, out of a potential range from 0 to 100. In order to compare the standard with the alternative measures, two separate sets of analyses were conducted on the whole sample regressing each set of parenting measures, as well as the demographic variables comprising parent's education and the number of older siblings, on the math achievement scores. The parenting measures as well as the two demographic variables were entered together.

The first regression analysis for each set of measures included the variable for ethnicity, along with the parenting measures and two demographic variables, in order to determine whether the achievement scores would differ for the two ethnic groups (i.e., ethnic group differences in the intercepts). The overall model for the standard measures was significant,  $F(8, 247) = 6.07$ ,  $p = .000$  ( $r^2 = .17$ , adjusted  $r^2 = .14$ ), as well as for the alternative,  $F(8, 241) = 7.59$ ,  $p = .000$  ( $r^2 = .20$ , adjusted  $r^2 = .17$ ). For both the analyses involving the

standard parenting measures as well as the alternative, ethnicity ( $B = 18.14$ ,  $SE_B = 4.14$  and  $B = 20.56$ ,  $SE_B = 3.67$ , respectively) was significant,  $p < .000$ .

Then also, for each set of measures (i.e., the standard and alternative), another regression was conducted that included the interaction terms comprised of ethnicity, represented by a dummy variable (e.g., "0" for European Americans and "1" for East Asians), and each parenting measure (i.e., the cross-products of both variables). All the variables entered together and successive regression analyses were conducted, dropping non-significant interaction terms, until a final model for each of the standard and alternative measures, was found. These interaction variables were used to determine whether the relationships between the parenting measures and achievement scores differ for the two ethnic groups (i.e., ethnic group differences in the regression coefficients). Ultimately, these analyses should also address whether these ethnic group differences are especially apparent with the alternative parenting measures. Then also, based on the final regression models, individual F-tests on the combined regression coefficients for East Asians (i.e., when the dummy variable for ethnicity equals "1") will also be conducted in order to determine whether the parenting measures, particularly the alternative measures, will be significant in predicting achievement for the East Asians. The alpha level used for all of the following analyses was .05.

Standard measures. The final regression model involving the standard measures was significant,  $F(9, 247) = 6.00$ ,  $p = .000$  ( $r^2 = .18$ , adjusted  $r^2 = .15$ ). Then looking at the specific parenting variables that were significant, only the interaction term for the permissive parenting style was predictive of achievement scores. That is, only the permissive parenting style differed for the two ethnic groups. Specifically, for the European Americans (i.e., looking at the coefficient for permissiveness or when the dummy variable for ethnicity is "1"), higher permissiveness was related to lower achievement, and for the East Asians was somewhat related to lower achievement. However, this last finding (involving the combined coefficients) for East Asians was not significant,  $p = .802$ . The significance levels and coefficients for the final model involving the

standard parenting measures are presented in the top portion of Table 3 (refer to Table 3). In addition, for the findings involving the whole sample overall, or the non-interaction terms, the managerial parental involvement in school was the only standard parenting measure that was predictive of achievement and this was a negative relationship. That is, for the whole sample, the more directive or managerial a parent was in the child's schooling, the lower the child's achievement. The permissive parenting style was also significant but this is already explained by the significant interaction term, described above. Also, for the whole sample, parent's education was positively predictive of achievement.

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Insert Table 1 about here

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Alternative measures. The final model involving the alternative measures was also significant,  $F(12, 249)$ ,  $p = .000$  ( $r^2 = .31$ , adjusted  $r^2 = .27$ ). With the question looking at whether there would be any ethnic group differences in the relationship between the alternative parenting measures and academic achievement, all of the interaction terms with the exception of the family-based control, Concern for Family Involvement, were predictive of achievement. The significance levels and coefficients for the final model involving the alternative parenting measures are presented in the bottom portion of Table 3 (refer to Table 3). In interpreting the ethnic group differences, for the European Americans, being higher on the training parenting style is related to lower achievement, and for the East Asians there is somewhat of a negative relationship between training and achievement. However, the additional significance test involving the combined regression coefficients, indicated that this relationship was not significant for East Asians,  $p = .794$ . Then for the family-based control comprising, Concern for Family Honor and Success, with European American parents, higher scores on this type of family-based control related to lower achievement in the children; whereas with the East Asian parents, higher scores related to higher achievement. In addition, the

significance test for the combined regression coefficient indicated that this positive relationship between Concern for Family Honor and Success was also significant for East Asians,  $F(1, 237) = 4.42, p = .037$ . For the indirect parental involvement in school, with the European Americans, this type of parental involvement was positively related to children's academic achievement, but for the East Asians was negatively related to achievement. The test involving the combined regression coefficients also indicated that this negative relationship for East Asians was significant,  $F(1, 237) = 19.10, p = .000$ . Lastly, the same relationships were also found with the socialization goals described as collectivistic. That is, for the European Americans, the collectivistic goals positively predicted achievement, and for the East Asians negatively predicted achievement. However, the additional test involving the combined regression coefficients indicated that this negative relationship for East Asians was not significant,  $p = .186$ . Finally, the non-interaction terms, involving the whole sample, that were predictive of achievement involved the two demographic variables, parent's education and the number of older siblings. Specifically, overall, parent's education was positively related to children's academic achievement; whereas the number of older siblings in the family was negatively related to children's achievement. The family-based control comprising, "Concern for Family Involvement", was not predictive of achievement for the whole sample.

#### Discussion

The alternative parenting concepts must also be able to predict the child outcome of academic achievement with this study focusing on the early academic achievement of second and third grade children. Although with both sets of parenting measures, the standard as well as the alternative, ethnicity was predictive of achievement, ethnicity by itself was no longer important in the final models that included the interaction terms for ethnicity. In the final models for the alternative and standard parenting concepts, first, there were more ethnic group differences in the alternative measures than the standard. The alternative measures indicated more ethnic group differences because these

measures were designed to capture the cultural distinctions of East Asian parenting. More importantly, for the East Asians, there were also more alternative parenting concepts that were predictive of achievement than standard parenting concepts. In fact, there were no standard parenting measures that predicted East Asian children's academic achievement.

In looking more closely at the findings for the alternative parenting concepts, there appear to be important ethnic group differences in the relationship between these parenting concepts and academic achievement. Almost all of the parenting concepts appeared to differ across ethnic group with the exception of the family-based parental control described as Control for Family Involvement. With respect to the family-based control described as Control for Family Honor and Success, although for European American parents endorsing this control is negatively associated with academic achievement, for East Asians being more controlling for family honor and success is positively related to achievement. However, the opposite is true for the indirect parental involvement in school. For European Americans, some involvement of a less directive type, was predictive of higher academic achievement, and for East Asians more indirect involvement was associated with poorer achievement. Both the family-based parental control, Control for Family Honor and Success, and the indirect parental involvement in school were predictive of achievement for East Asians. Thus, the findings for parental involvement in school indicate that for all parents, the directive, managerial involvement perhaps is regarded as necessary only when the child is having difficulty; whereas, for European Americans only, being indirectly involved with the child's schooling may enhance the child's school performance. With East Asians, even this indirect type of involvement is apparent only when children are having difficulties.

This study has been able to offer a more comprehensive and explicit way of conceptualizing and measuring, specifically for East Asians, the importance of culture in determining aspects of parenting such as parenting style, control, and practices, as well as parents' socialization goals. 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 begin to also tackle ways of conceptualizing and measuring the specific cultural values that are embedded in parental styles and practices and that ultimately influence developmental outcomes such as academic achievement. For East Asians, the cardinal cultural values emphasizing family harmony and cohesiveness as well as societal harmony permeates all three aspects of parenting included in this study -- parents' socialization goals, parenting style, and parental practices related to schooling.

Table 1.

Unstandardized Regression Coefficients (B), Standard Errors,  
for Multiple Regressions Involving Whole Sample

Predictors	Interaction with ethnicity	
	B (SE B)	B (SE B)
<u>Standard Measures</u>		
Ethnicity	-13.05 (15.07)	
Authoritarian	- 4.10 (4.64)	n.s.
Authoritative	- 6.84 (7.44)	n.s.
Permissive	-15.09** (6.27)	14.23* (6.62)
Managerial Involvement	- 7.65** (2.63)	n.s.
Individualistic Goals	.63 (3.24)	n.s.
Demographic variables:		
Parent's education	2.92** (1.18)	n.s.
Number of older siblings	- 2.86 (2.03)	n.s.
<u>Alternative Measures</u>		
Ethnicity	3.99 (28.96)	
Training	-27.16*** (5.47)	26.14*** (6.57)
Control: Family Involvement	- .84 (3.02)	n.s.
Control: Family Honor	- 8.70* (4.10)	14.09** (4.84)
Indirect Involvement	5.70 (5.57)	-16.73** (6.12)
Collectivistic Goals	18.44*** (4.20)	-21.68*** (4.92)
Demographic variables:		
Parent's education	3.50*** (1.08)	n.s.
Number of older siblings	- 4.67** (1.86)	n.s.

\*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

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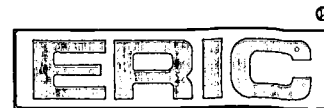
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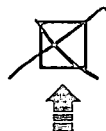
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