

THE EFFECTS OF CULTURE ON THE PERCEPTION OF PARENTING STYLES

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Psychology
May 2025

Faculty Adviser: Dr. Rachel Hershberg

Essay completed in partial fulfillment of the requirements for graduation with Global Honors,
University of Washington, Tacoma


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Introduction

The way in which a child is parented greatly affects their future. Parenting is often assessed in research with measures of parenting styles, however, these measures are frequently based on research that was done initially with a predominantly white, American-based sample of parents, which continues to limit our understanding of how culture influences how parents parent (Chao, 2000). The lack of diversity in these samples often lead to diverse groups being labeled in inaccurate ways such as Asian parents being labeled as “Tiger parents” (Cheah et al., 2015). Parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, uninvolved) have been widely studied in psychology. In this paper, the main focus is around authoritarian parenting, which is when a guardian shows low warmth and high demand, and authoritative parenting, which is when a guardian shows high warmth and high demand (Lansford, 2022). However, these parenting styles do not take into account the variety of cultural contexts that parenting happens in. What one culture perceives as authoritarian parenting could fall into the authoritative parenting for a different culture. Because values and norms vary from culture to culture, it is possible that the same parenting behavior affects children differently depending on the culture they are in (Rohner & Pettengill, 1985). Because parenting styles were developed from research with participants who were of European descent, it was inherently built to assist people of the same cultural background (Chao, 2000). In this paper, associations between parenting styles and child outcomes will also be examined which will include focusing on studies of authoritative and authoritarian styles with specific attention to how culture may play a part in parenting practices and associated child outcomes.

The purpose of this thesis is to highlight the importance of cultural context in parenting and demonstrate how parenting resources and interventions are most effective when they incorporate cultural values (Reid et al., 2001). By recognizing that effective parenting cannot be confined to a single framework, this research seeks to promote a more inclusive and culturally responsive understanding of child-rearing practices, how they impact child outcomes, and the most effective parenting interventions.

This topic is significant because it shows how Diana Baumrind's parenting styles lack cultural humility, making it inapplicable to many people groups (Wang, 2019). The topic emphasizes the importance of having adaptable frameworks that can be useful for diverse cultures. Along with this, the concurrent research is informative on how to develop culturally sensitive parenting interventions, creating an opportunity for parents from any culture to be able to receive the support they need without the Eurocentric expectation being the guide in parenting resources (Chao, 2000).

Accordingly, in the sections that follow, I will provide the definitions of key terms, then will elaborate on the definitions of authoritative and authoritarian parenting. The next section explores examples of how different cultures may interpret and practice authoritarian and authoritative parenting, addressing common misconceptions and cultural stereotypes. Next, the paper examines the developmental outcomes of these parenting styles in adolescence and adulthood. The thesis then critiques the limitations of Baumrind's parenting style theory, which provided a foundation for parenting research that has occurred in the last half-century, but has not been sufficiently revised to address variability within and across cultures. The next section discusses strategies for promoting authoritative parenting across cultural contexts, drawing from evidence-based parenting interventions and studies of those interventions specifically. Finally,

the conclusion ties together the findings and suggests ways to foster more inclusive and culturally competent approaches to parenting research and intervention work.

Definitions

Authoritative parenting. Authoritative parents give a good amount of warmth and guidance for their child. This kind of parenting values the relationship between the parent and child, while also valuing the role discipline plays in the parent-child relationship (Lansford, 2022). This parenting approach will be described in more detail below.

Authoritarian parenting. Authoritarian parents also value the guidance that the parental role provides, but typically end up engaging in more controlling and demanding behavior along with harsher disciplinary practices rather than guiding behavior. This kind of parenting lacks warmth in the parent-child relationship (Lansford, 2022). This parenting approach will be described in more detail below.

Eurocentric. Eurocentric, or eurocentrism, is used to refer to how different concepts are viewed through the lense of European standards. An example of this would be how Eurocentric expectations have been placed on Asian parents, resulting in stereotypes being constructed about Asian parenting (Zhang & Wang, 2024)(Zhang et al., 2024).

Culture. Culture is a set of beliefs and behaviors that are used in daily living among a group of people. This can include a multitude of cultural identities and can include religion, nationality, ethnicity, and other groups (Bornstein, 2013). Studies show how parenting practices are formed by culture and can function differently at cross-cultural and intra-cultural levels (Chen et al., 1997).

Elaboration on Key Definitions

Because of the nature of the paper, clarity should be provided about what is meant when discussing authoritative and authoritarian parenting, including what parenting behaviors these include, and how they may differentially impact child outcomes.

Authoritative Parenting. Authoritative parenting includes warmth and a healthy amount of guidance for a child. Warmth could include showing care about academic performance, responding to mistakes with a controlled tone of voice (in comparison to over-emotional responses), comfort, and other ways of showing care and promoting healthy parent-child relationship. Guidance can include setting boundaries with the child, engaging in healthy and non-violent discipline, explaining why a child may not participate in an activity, and other ways of guidance that give an explanation while the parent engages in self-control (Lansford, 2022).

Authoritative parenting gives the opportunity for a child to explore the world around them without being afraid of how they might hurt their parent's feelings and they know that they, and whatever mistakes they make, will be received and guided with kindness and warmth. They also are aware that their parents will guide them. The child does not get to make their own rules but they are able to collaborate with their parents on rules when appropriate (Lansford, 2022). This parenting style creates consistency for the child where they know what to expect from their guardian. With this kind of parenting, a child typically is well guided and experiences a healthy closeness with their caregiver (Jabeen et al., 2013). Not only does authoritative parenting create a relationship between the parent and child that provides a sense of warmth and safety, but children are positively affected mentally and physically depending on the kind of parenting style they experience (Daines et al., 2021)(Sorkhabi & Mandara, 2013).

A study by Jabeen et al (2013) showed that authoritative parenting styles showed positive effects for a child's ability to emotionally regulate themselves. Guardians who engage in authoritative parenting are also more prone to engage in emotional regulation. When parents show warmth and affection to their child, as seen in authoritative parenting, the child is less likely to believe conflicts happening around them are their fault and are likely to develop a secure attachment style with the parent who is showing warmth and affection (Jabeen et al., 2013). Another study found that parents' authoritative parenting styles could also disrupt feelings of aggression that a child would experience (Chen et al., 1997). These two studies and outcomes showcase how the parenting style affects not just how a child reacts behaviorally, but also how they engage with emotions internally, leaving a lasting effect on the child's well-being (Chen et al., 1997)(Jabeen et al., 2013).

Authoritarian Parenting. In authoritarian parenting, there are a few main components. There is a lack of warmth given to the child, which results in the parent and child reporting feelings of having a distanced relationship (Jabeen et al., 2013). The parent attempts to provide guidance, but tends to become controlling, with less opportunities for children to participate in decision making and develop and practice autonomy. This type of parenting typically results in a child being more heavily monitored by their parents and at times experiencing a sense of distance and even fear due to the parenting (Jabeen et al., 2013). Additional parenting behaviors that are described as reflecting this style include lack of encouragement and nurture, shouting, or using the phrase, or something like it, "because I told you so." Rather than collaborating with their child, or providing explanations when asked, these parents have a point of view where they are the one in charge, so they should not be questioned. Authoritarian parenting is focused on trying to get the child to do what the parent wants them to do, rather than being willing to explain the

“why” behind their ask and are not willing to have open communication. Parents are more concerned with the child respecting and following their rules rather than helping the child to understand the importance of what is being reinforced and why. When someone parents in an authoritarian manner, disciplinary practices may include corporal punishment such as spanking, pinching, or pulling a child, but could also include withholding love and affection, expecting obedience without question, and tend to include confrontational or punitive strategies (Baumrind, 1997).

Just as with authoritative parenting, there are common mental and physical outcomes when a person experiences authoritarian parenting. It has been found that when parents use an authoritarian parenting style, the child experiences more shyness and social incompetence (Chen et al., 1997). Along with this, Riem et al. (2013) found that regions of the brain that benefit and react to the release of oxytocin can be harmed when a person has experienced common disciplinary tactics seen in authoritarian parenting, such as the withholding of love and affection, at an early age. This can affect social cognition, how the posterior cingulate cortex (PCC), brainstem interact, cerebellum, and postcentral gyrus interact, sensitivity to oxytocin, and a person’s ability to engage in self-referential processes (Riem et al., 2013). Because of the nature of authoritarian parenting, children tend to get more stressed out in general. Children in this setting will have a higher release of cortisol than what would be released in an authoritative household.

Culture. Across a variety of cultures, authoritative parenting styles have been shown to be most beneficial for children and, contrary to popular belief, it is common for families of diverse cultures to use what would be considered authoritative parenting in their culture (Lansford, 2022). There has been a misunderstanding of the concept of authoritative parenting. In previous

research, this construct has been treated as if it should be the same across cultures. It is better for researchers to consider culture and use it alongside the authoritative parenting that they are encouraging. Researchers should not use the authoritative parenting style as a checklist where if a parent engages in specific parenting techniques, then they are an authoritative parent. Rather, it is better for culture to be the guiding factor and the authoritative framework to act as a support (Lansford, 2022). Children can experience authoritative parenting while growing within their cultural context; these two concepts are not opposites. Not only is this possible, but parents can parent in a culturally significant way that is beneficial for both the child and parents (Lansford, 2022).

Another important aspect to consider is how different cultures may view authoritative and authoritarian parenting, and what the differences could be between cultures. Traits in specific cultures could be seen as authoritarian, but are acceptable and even desirable within another culture. Attributes should be viewed within their culture. Research has found that the attributes valued from culture to culture differ. This impacts parent's attitudes about values they attempt to instill in their children (Lansford, 2022). Shyness is considered an undesirable trait in the United States, so people who engage in the United States' culture may raise their children to not be shy (Chen et al., 1997). This is an example of a measure used in how a child is being parented and what parenting style is being utilized. However, in Chinese culture, shyness is a desired attribute, which would likely affect how parenting would be measured in China (Chen et al., 1997). Because shyness is a desirable trait in China, it would not make sense to use the same measurements for a family in China and a family in the United States. Different attributes are valued in different cultures, so different parenting styles—that are associated with those attributes—are valued in different cultures. Because of this, the way in which we measure

parenting styles has to be specific to the culture, otherwise it will not be accurately assessed or compared (Cheah et al., 2015)(Zhang et al., 2024). Another example is how being blunt in communication, or directiveness, in American culture is correlated with punitive and non-reasoning parenting, but does not have a correlation with these things in Chinese culture. Directiveness is used differently in each culture showing how it is key to view these attributes within their culture (Wu et al., 2002).

Researchers need to be careful in separating out parental behaviors from attitudes, beliefs, and values about parenting if they want to capture the array of cultural influences that shape parenting practices and child outcomes. It is known that attributes that are valued within a culture shape how parents parent and how kids are affected by certain outcomes. Across cultures, what is deemed as authoritative parenting within that culture actually is better for kids. Authoritative parenting that honors the culture assists the children to understand how to operate within their culture. When a person is parented in an authoritative manner, they also experience better mental and physical health outcomes (Daines et al., 2021)(Sorkhabi & Mandara, 2013). What is deemed as authoritarian parenting within a culture has adverse outcomes such as anxiety, increased risk for heart conditions, obesity, and more (Zhang et al., 2024).

While these things might be true, there is also evidence that the way parenting styles are defined is not culturally significant. A child sees the way they are being parented through a cultural lens, which is termed as cultural normativeness. Because cultural normativeness affects how a child sees the way they are parented it makes the use of authoritarian parenting styles applicable and healthy in some cultures (Zhang et al., 2024). Because the construct of authoritative parenting has been developed under the influence of European culture, it cannot be used in the same way for other cultures because it is not culturally significant for all cultures.

This is why some cultures are seen as authoritarian. When looking at them from the perspective of these parenting styles they are authoritarian, but only from the European, culturally nonsignificant point of view (Zhang et al., 2024).

When it comes to parenting, there is not a one-size-fits-all method. Though it has been shown through a number of studies that authoritative parenting is best for children no matter the culture, some researchers insufficiently attend to cultural differences in authoritative parenting and child outcomes, which may lead to miscategorising and unfairly critiquing parenting practices that have the same or similar function of authoritative parenting in Eurocentric contexts.

Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Parenting Styles

Importance of Culture in Parenting. Because culture varies so widely, positive parental behaviors cannot be held to a specific set of actions. There are a variety of approaches to parenting, all of which are influenced by culture. In order for interventions to be effective for parents, the interventions need to address parents' attitudes and reasons for engaging in specific parenting behaviors and how culture is influencing them (Bornstein, 2013). Despite this reality, the standards for parenting that have been pushed by researchers and accepted by parents tend to be Eurocentric; expecting people from all cultures to prioritize and respond to children's needs in a particular manner that coincides with the European way of parenting (Bornstein, 2013). An example of a Eurocentric expectation would be to show warmth in parenting by showing the child physical affection or praise (Cheah et al., 2015). This expectation lacks cultural humility and does not take into account the difference that patterns of beliefs and behaviors have on the way a person may parent. This is an important concept, not just to be able to understand why a

person is parenting the way they are, but the kind of parenting a person engages in prepares their child for the culture they are likely to be moving into themselves (Bornstein, 2013). Trying to remove or replace the culture of a parent is harmful to the child and leaves them with not as many tools as they would have if the parents were encouraged to continue to raise them in a way that is culturally significant and aligns with their identity (Bornstein, 2013). Here is an example of the importance of parenting that is suitable for culture: a European American mother is likely to give a suggestion to her child as to what they should do rather than telling them straightforward while a Puerto Rican American mother is likely to tell her child straightforward what to do rather than saying the command like a suggestion. Though each mother is American, they have different cultural identities that affect how they communicate, and therefore affect the ways they parent their children (Bornstein, 2013). Overall, what has been deemed as ‘good parenting’ has been defined by Eurocentric expectations and measured by using parenting styles despite the fact that different cultures and contexts have positive outcomes with what would be considered authoritarian parenting.

Authoritative and Authoritarian Parenting Across Cultures. When it comes to parenting specifically in China and parenting in the United States, there are obvious differences. In China, parents tend to be more protective of their children than American parents. Shyness in Chinese culture is desirable because of how it keeps focus towards the group rather than towards an individual person, while in the U.S., shyness is seen as being socially immature (Wu et al., 2002)(Chen et al., 1997). Because shyness, as an example, is a desirable trait in China, parenting will look different in comparison to the U.S. This kind of desired behavior will be taught to children, which could be seen as an authoritative parenting style because of how it shows care for the child to succeed in Chinese culture. Meanwhile, a parent intentionally teaching their child

to be shy in the U.S. would not be seen as authoritative because American culture does not see shyness as desirable since the U.S. is a culture where people value independence. Another example of these differences at play: In Japan, interdependence is an important and valuable trait. In Europe, independence is an important and valuable trait. A Japanese mother is likely to have her baby facing her in order to foster interdependence while a European mother is likely to have her baby facing an object to foster independence. One might look at these two mothers and criticize that the Japanese mother is self-focused or the European mother is negligent, but both behaviors prepare the baby for the society they will be entering into, helping the child to function well in their world (Lansford, 2022).

Research also shows that some behaviors that are seen as authoritarian from a European point of view are considered authoritative and desirable (i.e., “good”) in other cultures. Parents in Asian cultures are often stereotyped as being a “Tiger parent.” However, the practice of monitoring and correcting a child’s behavior is met with nurturance and support, building a healthy and strong bond between the parent and child. Parenting in this way does not show negative outcomes associated with European American authoritarian parenting (Zhang et al., 2024). Furthermore, while Asian parenting typically appreciates teaching and training their children, emotional needs are often still met and there is a large focus on keeping the children safe while also fostering good mental health, discipline, learning through their own experiences, and other positive behaviors. Along with this, Asian parents show a belief that a child should be informed on why what they are doing is desirable or undesirable. The intricate balance of these important values is rarely mentioned in research, but control and lack of warmth are often the stereotypes that are focused on (Zhang et al., 2024).

According to Wu et al. (2002), there have been significant findings that show how parents from a variety of cultures meet their child's needs in an authoritative way. This connection is made by using the concept of cultural normativeness. Cultural normativeness explains how common practices of discipline within a culture are considered normal and are culturally accepted (Lansford, 2022). Having a sense of cultural normativeness provides a barrier for the feeling of rejection for children because others in their culture view it as normal and within reason (Zhang et al., 2024).

Another aspect of authoritative parenting, warmth, is often expected to be met in a specific way. Expressions of warmth such as hugging and being told "I love you" are typically the expectation when it comes to expressions of warmth (Cheah et al., 2015). However, research shows that there are practices of warmth that are unique to each culture. In Asian cultures, one way parents tend to show warmth in a culturally unique way is by engaging in functional aspects of caretaking like making the child's favorite food. Researchers have noted that because of the way warmth is usually measured in research, culturally diverse expressions of warmth are often overlooked especially in Western measures (Cheah et al., 2015)(Zhang et al., 2024). It is popular in Asian cultures to express warmth through showing devotion to taking care of their child's daily needs. Chinese American youth have confirmed this idea by recognizing how their guardians have sacrificed for the betterment and support of the youth's education. The ways Asian parents show warmth is associated with Asian culture valuing interdependence, especially within the family. This is another example of how parenting is influenced by culture and once again shows the importance of culturally significant parenting (Cheah et al., 2015). Seeing the difference between Asian and European expressions of warmth highlights how there is cultural meaning in the ways parents show love and care to their child (Cheah et al., 2015).

When examining parenting from a scholarly lens that is culturally sensitive and attuned, it becomes clear that children across cultures are provided with physical caregiving, cognitive stimulation, warmth, control and guidance, and discipline, albeit in different ways (Lansford, 2022). Children can experience effective parenting while growing within their cultural context; and such parenting may include examples of how authoritative *and* authoritarian parenting have been described in some of the prominent research about parenting that has been conducted in the West (Lansford, 2022).

Childhood Experiences and Adulthood Outcomes Associated with Authoritative and Authoritarian Parenting

Having a more culturally informed perspective about what parenting practices are associated with what child outcomes, in specific contexts is especially important, as we know that some parenting practices can have detrimental impacts on child and adolescent outcomes. Indeed, there is significant research about how parenting practices can be associated with assessments of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE), which is when a person 18 years of age or younger has difficult experiences particularly within their household. This includes experiences like drug use in the home, having an incarcerated guardian, or a guardian who struggles with mental health (Bryan, 2019).

Research supports the perspective that people who have been parented with an authoritarian parenting style with aspects such as corporal punishment and lack of communication being used, are more likely to be shy and have more difficulty when it comes to being socially competent and are also more likely to struggle with their self-esteem in comparison to adolescents who are parented with an authoritative parenting style (Chen et al., 1997). People who experienced authoritarian parenting are more likely to struggle with obesity

and binge eating, showing the association between a person's psychological outcome and how that may manifest physically (Kwon et al., 2017). Children who are parented with an authoritarian parenting style also have a lower quality of life (Rezai Niaraki & Rahimi, 2013).

An outcome of being parented in an authoritarian manner is having an increased adverse childhood experience (ACE) score. Higher ACE scores are correlated with poor health outcomes such as, depression, anxiety, obesity, poor cardiovascular health, cancer, and more. Bryan (2019) covers a variety of adverse health outcomes due to higher ACE scores. Long term impacts of ACEs can include challenges with employment and even an inability to hold a job. This can lead to unstable income and living in dangerous neighborhoods and with poor housing quality, food insecurity, and lack of health insurance (Daines, et al., 2021). Children who have been parented in an authoritarian manner also have more difficulty in school whereas children parented in an authoritative way tend to adjust to schooling well (Chen et al., 1997).

Parents who have unresolved emotional trauma from childhood are likely to develop a disorganized attachment style with their child (Daines et al., 2021). When an adult has a high number of positive childhood experiences, they are more likely to have the ability to develop healthy and stable relationships, self confidence, and stress management skills, leading to an ability to create healthy family dynamics. This was found to be true even if a person had adverse childhood experiences (Daines et al., 2021). These kinds of experiences are often found in authoritative parenting. Positive childhood experiences can have a reversing effect on a person who has a higher ACE score (Daines et al., 2021). The higher an ACE score someone has, the more likely they will experience hardship when it comes to communicating, emotionally connecting, processing their own emotions, and supporting others in their emotions (Daines, et al., 2021).

In contrast, those who have experienced an authoritative parenting style more frequently report having successfully adapted to social and academic settings (Chen et al., 1997). It has also been found that children who were raised with the Eurocentric definition of authoritative (defined in this study as having a good balance of nurturance and control) parenting had better mental health outcomes across ethnic backgrounds (Sorkhabi & Mandara, 2013).

The health of a family system or a family as a whole refers to the family's ability to promote belonging, caring, and task completion. These characteristics can promote the health of the individual members and the family as a whole. These variables affect how a child develops through childhood and into adulthood (Daines et al., 2021). Authoritative parenting is also significantly correlated with a child's ability to handle disruptions that would typically come from feelings of aggression (Chen et al., 1997). Children raised in an authoritative manner appear to have the lowest amounts of behavioral issues and simultaneously a heightened ability to self-regulate (Sorkhabi & Mandara, 2013).

Critiquing Baumrind's Theory

Some of the research reviewed here has shown that children of parents who experience some dimensions of what Baumrind deemed authoritarian parenting—and a generally harmful parenting style experience positive outcomes such as high academic performance or care for other people's experiences within a group (Forehand and Kotchick, 1996). This suggests that Baumrind's theory was leaving out some important aspects of cultural context.

We know that this theory was developed from observing those in Caucasian households and cultures. Because the study involved families of similar cultures, the validity of the study is accurate for families who are in these cultures. However, the validity of Baumrind's theory does

not translate over cultures. It has been found that the traditional parenting styles as Baumrind explains them do not have effective measures for parents who are of non-European backgrounds (Chao, 2000). Because Baumrind's parenting styles do not reflect cultural humility or knowledge of other cultural values with respect to parenting practices and child outcomes, it has created the same expectation for parents across the world and can be used to vilify parents who are doing their best to pass down cultural values, norms, and scripts. Because different cultures have different value systems, the ways some cultural groups are viewed when it comes to parenting is inaccurate (Sorkhabi & Mandara, 2013). Trying to use one culture's philosophy and outcomes as a measure for another culture's parenting success cannot yield accurate results (Sorkhabi & Mandara, 2013). Moreover, this approach can prevent parenting workshops and interventions from being effective for children and parents who are part of our culturally diverse society in the US and beyond.

Indeed, research shows that ethnic minority parents do not benefit as much when they participate in a program that was validated through trials with only Caucasian participants (Reid et al., 2001). It is also important to note that adolescents view parenting differently based on the culture they are growing up in, once again showing the importance of scholarship that explores culturally significant parenting styles, attitudes, and child outcomes (Sorkhabi & Mandara, 2013). Forehand and Kotchick (1996) explain that parenting training is significant only when cultural factors are able to be used in the parenting training because the parenting is already happening within the context of that culture (Sorkhabi & Mandara, 2013). Otherwise, there will be limited positive outcomes for parental behavior change, leading to a low outcome of child behavior change. Another significant aspect to consider is how ethnic minorities already have the challenge of holding onto their culture while trying to use the cultural strategies of wherever they

live (Forehand & Kotchick 1996). Having resources that cater to their cultural needs and understand pushes and pulls of acculturation on parenting and parent-child relationships is important.

How to integrate what is missing. Research shows that when parenting interventions incorporate parents' culture there are long lasting, positive outcomes (Reid et al., 2001). So, how does a person accomplish the task of integrating culturally significant values into parenting interventions? One example of how this was done is by the Positive Parenting Program. This program is culturally responsive to parents and assists parents in ways that are culturally significant for them and their children. Unlike some of the previous scholarship on parenting, these interventions take into consideration what cultures are being represented. Rather than creating a checklist of what makes a 'good' versus 'bad' parent, these programs create a curriculum alongside the parent in order for the curriculum to be culturally significant for each family. Programs like these have a significant impact on the parents' parenting skills (Reid et al., 2001). Partnering with parents in order to see the best outcomes, rather than the professionals taking all leadership roles, is imperative as parents are able to integrate their culture in a meaningful way (Forehand & Kotchick, 1996).

This shows how interventions do not have to be, and should not be, based around prominent Eurocentric norms or values. Rather, allowing parents to create a framework and goals they want to work toward that is meaningful to them reaps better and more fruitful outcomes because it is culturally significant to them (Reid et al., 2001). Not only does this benefit the children, but the parents experience less stress and more confidence within parenting when interventions are done in a culturally significant way (Fujiwara et al., 2011). Culturally significant interventions do not stop at parenting interventions. It is important to acknowledge

culturally appropriate techniques in therapy and other aspects of parent training. A way of doing this would be by creating an awareness around how culture affects parenting and development, and of how dominant Eurocentric perspectives in the parenting and child development field have previously dominated much of the scholarship in this field (Forehand and Kotchick, 1996).

When parenting is looked at within its cultural context, the way parents respond is able to be seen in a way that is more significant. This lens of cultural context also gives the ability to see how a parent is meeting the needs of their child and what parenting style the actions fall under in a culturally significant way (Yim, 2022). Only when a person chooses to look with a culturally significant perspective can the way a parent chooses to interact with their child begin to make sense.

Although parenting research has begun to take into account nuances in how parenting styles may show up across cultures, researchers still tend to refer to Baumrind's 1978 model of parenting styles and the public still sees these parenting styles in textbooks. Authoritative parenting, as defined in this model, is still often used as a proxy for good parenting, whereas what was initially defined as authoritarian parenting is often associated with bad parenting, and more concerning child outcomes (Baumrind, 1997). It is time to use a different framework that includes and is flexible to diverse cultures rather than a framework that emerged from research with only white participants. Recently, intervention research has done a better job at incorporating cultural humility and cultural responsiveness into their design and implementation.

Resources

Basic Resources. There are common ways people find guidance when it comes to parenting.

Options such as parenting classes, counseling or therapy for parents and children, online courses,

books, and pamphlets tend to be popular. These resources can be found in places like libraries, schools, and doctor's offices. While these basic resources are readily available, having a variety of resources that are applicable to the community is important. While research shows that these resources are helpful, there is a lack of resources that cater to diverse cultures and family systems. Forehand and Kotchick's (1996) study shows how the tools that have been validated as working for parents were validated with Caucasian participants. The same resources that worked for Caucasian participants did not show a significant impact on addressing the same issues with parents and children of ethnically diverse backgrounds.

Community-Based Interventions. Having access to resources within one's community is a way parents can engage with these resources in a way that is meaningful and gives them the opportunity to shift how they parent. Interventions such as the Positive Parenting Program are a prime example of integrating community into parent training. The Positive Parenting Program is a form of behavioral family intervention based on social-learning principles. Any in person class should include a community focused time where parents get to know each other and intentionally build relationships with each other. Because guardians are there, there is already a common factor: they have a child in their life they are trying to learn how to better care for. Not only does this give guardians the opportunity to build community, but research is strongly in favor of these kinds of parenting interventions as they are among the most effective approaches when it comes to preventing and lowering behavioral issues (Reid et al., 2001).

Another community centered support could be online forums. These spaces could be created for parents so they can ask questions that come up throughout the week and be able to discuss with other parents without giving out personal information such as phone numbers. This

forum could create an opportunity for parents to also organize get togethers, if they desired to build the community aspect.

Culturally Sensitive Approaches. No matter what parenting intervention is being run, the space should reflect the diversity in cultures that people attending the intervention reflect. This could mean bringing in and working with people who are familiar with the cultures represented.

Creating a learning environment that is culturally appropriate for those attending: food, drink, decor, seating should all be culturally appropriate for those attending. Providing packets to refer to or any homework assigned should be reflective of each participant's culture. There can be an invitation to parents to create their own homework, which would naturally incorporate their culture. Forehand and Kotchick (1996) back up this perspective of incorporating culture as allowing the family unit to be the expert and educator brings in the often missing cultural perspective, making the intervention accessible to all. If the parent training is not addressed in a way that considers parents' cultures, then the outcome for changed parental behavior will be limited.

Accessibility. Having promotions for parenting resources should occupy a large number of spaces such as coffee shops, doctor's offices, grocery stores, schools and daycares, parks, and mail. These resources should be planted in all neighborhoods, rather than targeting high income neighborhoods. Other ways to create accessibility could include creating an online course for people to complete on their own timeline or creating a handbook with all the information for those who do not have access to computers or internet. Making it as accessible as possible could also include providing transportation, cards to use for public transportation, or having free childcare, especially since free childcare has been rated as the most valuable part in previous parental interventions (Reid et al., 2001).

Promoting Culturally Significant Authoritative Parenting

Challenges in Promoting Culturally Significant Authoritative Parenting. Parents in different cultures may face different challenges should they wish to shift from authoritarian parenting to authoritative parenting. When a guardian experiences societal pressure to parent in a specific way, they may expect someone who is providing a parental resource to affirm this pressure (Bornstein, 2013). If this is the case, then it gives the population of people who this expectation fits to receive the resources, missing a large population of people. Another challenge includes how parenting styles as theorized by Baumrind do not have an outlook where diverse cultures are taken into account, thus leaving the measures of what is considered authoritative and authoritarian ineffective for those outside of European cultures (Chao, 2000). This research also shows how adolescents across cultures view the same parenting style in different ways due to the value systems in the culture and the cultural context the parenting style is being observed in (Sorkhabi & Mandara, 2013). The difference in perspectives across cultures further shows how Baumrind's theory has trouble reaching across cultures. Because Baumrind's theory is not relevant to many cultures, this can create a difficulty for parents to accept the standard set by the theory.

For some, barriers include lack of providing information in a way that is culturally significant, having limited access due to money, transportation, time, or childcare needs. A more major barrier can be a lack of trust for the person teaching the course or offering guidance, likely due to cultural differences or otherwise. Because of the diversity in culture, it can be difficult for professionals to engage with a parent who has a different cultural background from them in a way that is significant (Forehand & Kotchick, 1996). While there are trainings a professional can attend to become more capable of assisting people of diverse backgrounds, this does not make up

for how ethnic minorities in the United States have had to learn how to balance honoring and engaging in their culture while also adopting the culture of European Americans that are often associated with success (Forehand & Kotchick, 1996). Other barriers could be due to parents having an issue with recognizing and acknowledging how their parenting is damaging to their child. This could be due to feeling shame about the parenting techniques used, and therefore not admitting issues with it, or it could be because of a lack of education on how a parent's actions affect their child.

Unmet Parental Needs. While there are some resources offered, many only dig into the basics of health for children and parenting concerns. But what about when a parent is facing a difficult situation that they no longer know how to handle? The information offered often does not cover the variety of topics parents need help with. Not only do these kinds of resources not cover topics in depth, they tend to be Eurocentrically centered. Parents who are a part of a minority group do not benefit as much when they participate in a program that was validated through trials with Caucasian participants, showing the need for parental resources that are culturally diverse (Reid et al., 2001).

Another potential challenge is the doubt that any change in parental actions will not work. While it can be overwhelming to attempt to move parenting styles, there have been studies that show that parenting interventions work, and they make a long lasting change in the ways people parent. In a study where parents went through a parenting program there was a 40% reduction in child maltreatment (Fujiwara et al, 2011). This program gave parents access to educational resources that provided opportunities to develop problem solving skills, gave them access to resources, and informed them on child health and development. This information was key for the parents to manage the undesirable behavior seen in their child. This study also

showed significant outcomes for when parenting education and family preservation was sought out in a therapy setting (Fujiwara et al, 2011).

Because of the history of abuse of ethnic minorities in the United States, some parents who are of ethnic minority groups may view parenting interventions as another way society is attempting to create a white establishment. There tends to be hesitancy to go through training that may shape a parent or child who is a minority because of how interventions might be seen as a way to conform behavior to fit with the mainstream. This skepticism is valid, as even the parenting styles discussed are Eurocentrically centered. It is long overdue for these interventions to be culturally sensitive and responsive in order to accept and benefit those in ethnic minority populations (Forehand & Kotchick, 1996).

Authoritative Parenting Moving Forward. Acknowledging there is a lack within this framework is important, but what can be done about this lack? There are community based interventions, education and awareness, and policies that help to promote the move from authoritarian parenting to authoritative parenting in a more culturally inclusive and appropriate way. Through parenting interventions, parents are challenged with setting their own goals. Because parents get to set their own goals, the goals naturally include and are informed by the culture of the parent, rather than the European perspective of what the goal should be. The twist of having cultural adherence to the goal actually assists in reducing the undesired behaviors seen in children (Fujiwara et al., 2011). Parents who have participated in parenting classes have shown a decrease in feelings of stress and an increase in confidence after having gone through the intervention (Fujiwara et al., 2011). In a supervised parenting intervention, both European American and Asian American mothers felt the program was beneficial. By the end of the program, mothers tended to be less critical, more positive, more consistent, and displayed more

competency when it came to disciplining and interacting with their children. When the mothers were checked in on a year later, these results were still evident in their lives. (Reid et al., 2001).

The importance of having techniques that integrate culture in therapy and other aspects of parent training and guidance is mentioned by Forehand and Kotchick (1996). Creating an awareness of needs when it comes to the cultures a professional has guests of is a beginning step to grow cultural acceptance and engagement. While there has been a common misconception that cultural values inhibit parental training, research shows that culture enhances parental learning and the use of skills to shift a child's behavior (Forehand & Kotchick, 1996). Even though there is a lack of research when it comes to how culture integrated enhances parenting, it is still obvious with the current research that showing respect and honor for a person's cultural values is beneficial for all parties involved (Forehand & Kotchick, 1996). Making room for parents to partner with professionals in what goals are set and how they shift in their parenting can create a dynamic where the professional the parent is working with is able to input their knowledge while pairing it with what pieces of culture the parent has to contribute. This means that the professional will have to be willing to allow the parent to be an educator in a sense in order for the cultural aspect to be added in a way that is accurate and significant to the family. This takes some responsibility off the professional and creates a sense of ownership for the parents, which will better facilitate the experience for the parents (Forehand & Kotchick, 1996).

Conclusion

Parenting is arguably the most influential factor when it comes to a child's development, emotional abilities, cognitive abilities, and social behaviors. While the parenting styles theory can be a helpful tool, it is crucial to recognize how parenting practices are rooted in cultural

contexts. What one culture may see as highly demanding or strict (e.g., components of authoritarian parenting), another culture may view as an appropriate and effective way to parent. Baumrind's parenting styles theory does not capture the significance of culture in parenting.

This thesis has explored the differences between authoritative and authoritarian parenting and examined cross-cultural implications. It has shown the importance of culturally responsive parenting support programs and how these resources lead to better outcomes for both parents and adolescents, as both groups thrive in spaces that are culturally aligned with parents and children's cultures. Moving forward, there is a need for greater cultural humility in parenting research, and perhaps an incorporating of lessons learned from more culturally responsive parenting interventions. One important lesson is that parenting programs should be able to flex to fit parent and child needs while also implementing culturally sensitive frameworks in order to honor diverse cultures and parenting, and understand what beliefs and attitudes inform parenting behaviors. Those who have influence over support strategies for parents should work with parents in a collaborative way in order to best support the family unit.

By acknowledging the significance of culture in parenting, we can foster a more inclusive and accurate understanding of what it means to raise healthy children. The goal should not be to enforce the Eurocentric point of view, but to support parents in ways that best benefit them and their children while enhancing their cultural values and promoting the well-being of future generations. There is much to learn about how best to do our parenting scholarship, and in our increasingly global world, we must do our best to approach this work with an appreciation and awareness of the importance of cultural context.

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parenting? Perspectives from Chinese immigrant caregivers with low-income living in the greater Boston area. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 55(4), 386-408.

Appendix

Baumrind, D. (1997). The discipline encounter: Contemporary issues. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 2*(4), 321–335.

This article revisits Baumrind's foundational research on parenting styles and discipline. It discusses the importance of balancing authority with responsiveness in promoting healthy child development. This article provides theoretical grounding for distinguishing between authoritarian and authoritative parenting.

Bornstein, M. H. (2013). Cultural approaches to parenting. *Psychology Press*.

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Bornstein reviews parenting through a cross-cultural lens, highlighting how cultural contexts shape beliefs, behaviors, and developmental expectations. The text is useful for understanding the variability in parenting norms and practices globally.

Bryan, R. H. (2019). Getting to why: Adverse childhood experiences' impact on adult health.

The Journal for Nurse Practitioners, 15(2), 153–157.

Bryan connects early Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) to long-term health outcomes. This article shows the significance of trauma-informed parenting and prevention strategies in early childhood.

Chao, R. K. (2000). The parenting of immigrant Chinese and European American mothers:

Relations between parenting styles, socialization goals, and parental practices. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, 21*(2), 233–248.

Chao contrasts Chinese immigrant and European American parenting, challenging the Western

interpretation of authoritarian parenting. Her findings suggest different cultural meanings are attached to parenting practices.

Cheah, C. S., Li, J., Zhou, N., Yamamoto, Y., & Leung, C. Y. (2015). Understanding Chinese immigrant and European American mothers' expressions of warmth. *Developmental Psychology*, *51*(12), 1802.

This study investigates cross-cultural differences in emotional expressiveness. It finds that Chinese immigrant mothers display warmth differently, which may be misinterpreted in Western settings as emotional distance.

Chen, X., Dong, Q., & Zhou, H. (1997). Authoritative and authoritarian parenting practices and social and school performance in Chinese children. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, *21*(4), 855–874.

This article assesses how distinct parenting styles influence academic and social outcomes in Chinese children, suggesting that authoritative parenting tends to be most beneficial regardless of cultural context.

Daines, C. L., Hansen, D., Novilla, M. L. B., & Crandall, A. (2021). Effects of positive and negative childhood experiences on adult family health. *BMC Public Health*, *21*, 1–8.

Daines et al. expand on ACE research by also exploring positive childhood experiences (PCEs). The study emphasizes the protective role of nurturing parenting practices in fostering long-term family health.

Forehand, R., & Kotchick, B. A. (1996). Cultural diversity: A wake-up call for parent training. *Behavior Therapy*, *27*(2), 187–206.

Forehand and Kotchick advocate for culturally sensitive parent training programs, arguing that

Western based models may not translate effectively across diverse populations. This article supports culturally informed interventions.

Fujiwara, T., Kato, N., & Sanders, M. R. (2011). Effectiveness of Group Positive Parenting Program (Triple P) in changing child behavior, parenting style, and parental adjustment: An intervention study in Japan. *Journal of Child and Family Studies, 20*, 804–813.

This intervention study tests the Positive Parenting Program in a Japanese context, demonstrating its effectiveness. The findings suggest that evidence-based Western parenting programs can be successfully adapted to culture.

Jabeen, F., Anis-ul-Haque, M., & Riaz, M. N. (2013). Parenting styles as predictors of emotion regulation among adolescents. *Pakistan Journal of Psychological Research, 28*(1).

This study explores how parenting styles predict emotional regulation in adolescents. It reinforces the psychological benefits of authoritative parenting and shows cross-cultural relevance in Asian populations.

Kwon, K. A., Yoo, G., & De Gagne, J. C. (2017). Does culture matter? A qualitative inquiry of helicopter parenting in Korean American college students. *Journal of Child and Family Studies, 26*, 1979–1990.

This qualitative study explores the concept of helicopter parenting among Korean American students, showing how cultural values affect perceptions of overprotectiveness and autonomy.

Lansford, J. E. (2022). Annual research review: Cross-cultural similarities and differences in parenting. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 63*(4), 466–479.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/jcpp.13539>

Lansford synthesizes research comparing parenting styles across cultures, highlighting both

universal patterns and differences within contexts. The review is key in understanding globalization's impact on parenting.

Reid, M. J., Webster-Stratton, C., & Beauchaine, T. P. (2001). Parent training in Head Start: A comparison of program response among African American, Asian American, Caucasian, and Hispanic mothers. *Prevention Science, 2*, 209–227.

This study assesses parent training outcomes across diverse ethnic groups. Findings suggest differential responsiveness to interventions, reinforcing the need for cultural adaptation in parenting programs.

Rezai Niaraki, F., & Rahimi, H. (2013). The impact of authoritative, permissive and authoritarian behavior of parents on self-concept, psychological health and life quality. *European Online Journal of Natural and Social Sciences, 2*(1), 78.

The authors find authoritative parenting to be most supportive of children's self-concept and psychological well-being, a finding consistent across various cultures.

Riem, M. M., van IJzendoorn, M. H., Tops, M., Boksem, M. A., Rombouts, S. A., & Bakermans-Kranenburg, M. J. (2013). Oxytocin effects on complex brain networks are moderated by experiences of maternal love withdrawal. *European Neuropsychopharmacology, 23*(10), 1288–1295. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.euroneuro.2013.01.011>

This neuroscience study examines how maternal withdrawal influences brain activity in relation to the release of oxytocin. It provides biological evidence of how early caregiving impacts emotional processing.

Rohner, R. P., & Pettengill, S. M. (1985). Perceived parental acceptance-rejection and parental control among Korean adolescents. *Child Development, 56*, 524–528.

This classic study links parental acceptance and control to psychological adjustment in Korean adolescents, contributing to early understanding of culturally nuanced parenting effects.

Sorkhabi, N., & Mandara, J. (2013). Are the effects of Baumrind's parenting styles culturally specific or culturally equivalent?

This theoretical article debates the cross-cultural validity of Baumrind's model. The authors argue for a more sensitive understanding of parenting effects, especially in non-Western societies.

Wang, C. Y. (2019). What Parents Value Matters: Examining the Association Between Cultural Values, Parenting Styles/Practices, and Child Outcomes. *Brigham Young University*.

Wang's article explores how parental values influence parenting approaches and child outcomes across cultures. It offers data on cultural value transmission and developmental implications.

Wu, P., Robinson, C. C., Yang, C., Hart, C. H., Olsen, S. F., Porter, C. L., ... & Wu, X.

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<https://doi.org/10.1080/0165025014300043>

This comparative study of Chinese and U.S. mothers highlights shared goals in parenting but differing strategies. It supports the notion of common desires with culturally specific behaviors.

Yim, E. P. Y. (2022). Effects of Asian cultural values on parenting style and young children's perceived competence: A cross-sectional study. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 905093.

Yim investigates how Asian cultural values influence parenting and child self-perception. The study reinforces how deeply cultural beliefs affect early development and parenting choices.

Zhang, R., & Wang, Z. (2024). Effects of helicopter parenting, tiger parenting and inhibitory control on the development of children's anxiety and depressive symptoms. *Child Psychiatry & Human Development*, 1–12.

This study examines how culturally specific parenting styles influence children's mental health. It highlights the risks of intrusive parenting on emotional well being.

Zhang, X., Liu, J., Sopper, C., Wang, J. H., Yau, Y., & Scott, J. C. (2024). What is supportive parenting? Perspectives from Chinese immigrant caregivers with low-income living in the greater Boston area. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 55(4), 386–408.

The authors present findings on supportive parenting as conceptualized by Chinese immigrant families. This study contributes to understanding parenting in the context of immigration, socioeconomic status, and cultural values.