

## Beyond Parental Control and Authoritarian Parenting Style: Understanding Chinese Parenting through the Cultural Notion of Training

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CHAO, RUTH K. *Beyond Parental Control and Authoritarian Parenting Style: Understanding Chinese Parenting through the Cultural Notion of Training*. CHILD DEVELOPMENT, 1994, 65, 1111-1119. This study addresses a paradox in the literature involving the parenting style of Asians: Chinese parenting has often been described as "controlling" or "authoritarian." These styles of parenting have been found to be predictive of poor school achievement among European-Americans, and yet the Chinese are performing quite well in school. This study suggests that the concepts of authoritative and authoritarian are somewhat ethnocentric and do not capture the important features of Chinese child rearing, especially for explaining their school success. Immigrant Chinese and European-American mothers of preschool-aged children were administered standard measures of parental control and authoritative-authoritarian parenting style as well as Chinese child-rearing items involving the concept of "training." After controlling for their education, and their scores on the standard measures, the Chinese mothers were found to score significantly higher on the "training" ideologies. This "training" concept has important features, beyond the authoritarian concept, that may explain Chinese school success.

This study proposes that the concepts often used to describe Chinese parenting (i.e., "authoritarian," "controlling," or "restrictive") have been rather ethnocentric and misleading. Scoring high on "authoritarian" and "controlling" may have entirely different implications for Chinese than for European-Americans due to their different cultural systems. These concepts are embedded in a cultural "tradition" for European-Americans that Chinese do not necessarily share. Therefore, these concepts have a different meaning for the Chinese. While the focus of this study is on the Chinese, this review of the research has been broadened to include Asians in general since Chinese have certain commonalities with Japanese, Koreans, Vietnamese, etc. (i.e., similar values around Confucian principles such as respect for elders and an emphasis on the family).

Descriptions of Chinese parenting present somewhat of a paradox, particularly for predicting children's school achievement: Much of the psychology literature has depicted Chinese parenting as "restrictive," "controlling" (Chiu, 1987; Kriger & Kroes,

1972; Lin & Fu, 1990; Sollenberger, 1965; Yee, 1983), or "authoritarian" (Dornbusch, Ritter, Leiderman, Roberts, & Fraleigh, 1987; Steinberg, Dornbusch, & Brown, 1992), as well as rejecting or hostile (Chiu, 1987; Lin & Fu, 1990; Yee, 1983). While these styles of parenting have been found to be associated with poor school achievement in European-American samples, many Asian students, including the Chinese, have been performing quite well in school, even above European-American students (Kim & Chun, in press; Sue & Abe, 1988; Suzuki, 1988).

Dornbusch et al. (1987) provide an explicit example of this paradox. They asked high school students to score their own parents according to the three parental control styles originally derived by Baumrind (1971)—"authoritative," "authoritarian," and "permissive." The Asian student sample rated their parents higher on the authoritarian style (i.e., reflecting unquestioning obedience to parents) and lower on the more "optimal" authoritative style (i.e., reflecting parental expectations for mature behavior and encouragement of open two-way communications between parents and children),

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the opposite of the European-American student sample. Therefore, across the sample as a whole, Asians were the highest on *authoritarian* parenting style, but they had the highest grade-point averages. Dornbusch et al. (1987, p. 1256) concluded that "Asian children in our public schools cannot be adequately explained in terms of the parenting styles we have studied."

In a large follow-up study to Dornbusch et al. (1987), Steinberg et al. (1992) proposed, as a resolution to this paradox, that the parental influences are not appropriate predictors of school success for Asian youngsters. They found that parental influences were effective in predicting school success among white and Hispanic youngsters, whereas *peer* influences were more effective for Asian youngsters. However, to conclude that Asian parental influences are not as important for predicting school success may be too hasty. Instead, this paradox may be explained by the fact that the parenting concepts "authoritarian" and "restrictive" are not very relevant for Asians, although they may be important for understanding European-American parenting. Indeed, these concepts are more pertinent to American parenting values in which "strictness" is sometimes equated with manifestations of parental hostility, aggression, mistrust, and dominance (Kim & Chun, in press; Rohner & Pettengill, 1985). For Asians, parental obedience and some aspects of strictness may be equated with parental concern, caring, or involvement. Just as important, for Asians parental control may not always involve "domination" of children per se, but rather a more organizational type of control for the purpose or goal of keeping the family running more smoothly and fostering family harmony (Lau & Cheung, 1987). Thus, these concepts may have very different implications when considered in light of the culture, and may not be as useful for understanding Asian parenting. Therefore, this study offers an alternative concept (i.e., *chiao shun*, or "training") derived directly from an appreciation of Asian culture.

For the Chinese, specifically, East-Asian researchers have attempted to provide indigenous descriptions of child rearing. Often the term "child training" has been used synonymously with "child rearing," and Chinese parental control involves this notion of training (Ho & Kang, 1984; Wu, 1985). *Chiao shun* is a Chinese term that contains the idea of training (i.e., teaching or educating) children in the appropriate or

expected behaviors. Wu and Tseng (1985, p. 11) stress that a central part of training focuses on the ability of children to perform well in school: "In the family, Chinese parents pay special attention to training children to adhere to socially desirable and culturally approved behavior. One way to measure the success of parental intervention is the ability of children to perform well in school."

Much of this child training literature involves perspectives or ideologies regarding child development and learning that combine a belief in the inherent goodness of the child with the role of the environment (Ho, 1986; Kojima, 1986). The significant others in the child's environment are responsible for early training by exposing the child to explicit examples of proper behavior and restricting exposure to examples of undesirable behaviors (Ho, 1986; Wu, 1985; Young, 1972). Training also involves an immense devotion and sacrifice on the part of the mother. In the child's early years, the mother provides an extremely nurturing environment for the child by being physically available and by promptly attending to the child's every need (Wu, 1985; Young, 1972). When children reach school age, the mother provides the support and drive for them to achieve in school and to ultimately meet the societal and familial expectations for success. This training, then, takes place in the context of a supportive, highly involved, and physically close mother-child relationship.

In order to more fully understand the relation between the notion of training and this type of supportive mother-child relationship, the concept of *guan* must be understood. Tobin et al. (1989) explain that this word literally means "to govern." They clarify that *guan* has a very positive connotation in China, because it can mean "to care for" or even "to love" as well as "to govern." Therefore, parental care, concern, and involvement are synonymous with firm control and governance of the child. In their analysis of preschools in the People's Republic of China, Japan, and the United States, Tobin, Wu, and Davidson (1989) point out that *guan* was most often used to describe the Chinese teacher's control and regimentation of the classroom: Teachers in China would continuously monitor and correct children's behaviors by appraising whether children were meeting the teacher's expectations or standards, and comparing children to each other in these appraisals; teachers also were very clear on

what they expected from the child, and what the child was not allowed to do. Control and governance, then, not only have very positive connotations for the Chinese, they are also regarded as the role responsibilities or requirements of teachers as well as parents.

Both the notions of *chiao shun* and *guan* have evolved from the role relationships defined by Confucius. Bond and Hwang (1986) summarize the three essential aspects of Confucian thought as the following: (1) a person is defined by his or her relationships with others, (2) relationships are structured hierarchically, and (3) social order and harmony are maintained by each party honoring the requirements and responsibilities of the role relationships. Confucian tradition accords certain relationships with special significance: These are relationships between sovereign and subject, father and son, older brother and younger brother, husband and wife, and friend and friend, with father and son being the most important. Because these relationships are structured hierarchically, the subordinate member is required to display loyalty and respect to the senior member, who is required to responsibly and justly govern, teach, and discipline.

These indigenous concepts of *chiao shun* and *guan* describe on a broader or more global level the *style* of Chinese parenting. Although the concept of "authoritarian" also describes global parenting style, this notion does not adequately capture Chinese parenting. Baumrind's (1971) original conceptions of the authoritarian parenting style emphasize a set standard of conduct, usually an absolute standard without explaining, listening, or providing emotional support. *Chiao shun* and *guan* also encompass a set standard of conduct enforced by both the larger society and the parents. However, the motivations or intentions for imposing these standards are not to dominate the child, but rather to assure the familial and societal goals of harmonious relations with others and the integrity of the family unit (Lau & Cheung, 1987). On the other hand, authoritarian child-rearing practices have been linked to an evangelical religious fervor (Smuts & Hagen, 1985) that is rooted in a more ambivalent view of the child. This view particularly stresses "domination" of the child, or the "breaking of the child's will," because of the idea of "original sin" (i.e., the concept of guilt attached to the infant by reason of deprivation of his original nature). Therefore, the concepts of *chiao shun* and "authoritarian" have very different

cultural roots, and thus very divergent implications.

As explained earlier, the notions of *chiao shun* and *guan* also imply for the Chinese a very involved care and concern for the child. But this is not implied in the notion of "authoritarian." Instead, the "authoritarian" concept is associated with hostile, rejecting, and somewhat uninvolved parental behaviors toward the child. The Chinese may score high on such concepts as "authoritarian" and "restrictive" because they are related to aspects of *chiao shun* and *guan* (i.e., both emphasize a set standard of conduct). However, there is an important difference in the meaning and implications of these two concepts involving (1) the motivations or goal intentions behind each concept, and (2) the fact that the Chinese concepts include an important feature, that of a highly involved concern and care for children.

To explain Chinese school success using Baumrind's (1971) parenting styles would not be adequate because Baumrind's conceptualizations are specific only to European-American culture, or European-American individuals. Other indigenous concepts capturing parenting style must be offered and also tested for their relevancy to Chinese culture or Chinese individuals. Therefore, this study investigated whether other important broad cultural concepts, such as *chiao shun* and *guan*, distinguish the Chinese from European-Americans *beyond* the concepts of "authoritarian" and "restrictive." The following hypotheses were tested: (1) immigrant Chinese mothers score significantly higher than European-American mothers on the standard measures of parental control as well as on authoritarian parenting style; (2) however, in addition, Chinese also score significantly higher on the Chinese child-rearing ideologies; and (3) after taking into account, or controlling for, both groups of mothers' parental control scores and their scores on the authoritative and authoritarian measures, Chinese score significantly higher than European-Americans on Chinese child-rearing ideologies reflected in the concepts of *chiao shun* and *guan*.

## Method

### Sample

Fifty immigrant Chinese mothers, mostly from Taipei, Taiwan, were recruited from preschools in the greater Los Angeles area. Their mean age was 34.92. All of the

Chinese mothers immigrated here as adults (i.e., 19 years was the youngest age at immigration). These mothers were English speaking, upper middle class, and fairly well educated, with at least a bachelor's degree (i.e., the mean number of years of education was 16.58). Their children were preschool-aged, ranging from 2 to 5 years, with a mean of 3.72 years. There were 27 girls and 23 boys.

Fifty European-American mothers of at least the third generation were recruited from various preschools in the west Los Angeles area. Their mean age was 37.14. All of these mothers were also upper middle class and fairly well educated. However, their mean number of years of education ( $M = 17.76$ ) was significantly higher than that of the Chinese mothers,  $t(1, 99) = 2.64, p < .01$ , although there was no significant difference between both groups on the father's mean number of years of education,  $p > .05$ . Their children ranged in age from 2 to 5 years, with a mean of 3.88 years, not significantly different from the Chinese,  $p > .365$ . The numbers of European-American boys and girls (i.e., 26 and 24, respectively) were very close to the Chinese numbers, also a nonsignificant difference,  $p > .05$ .

#### Measures and Procedures

*Block's Child Rearing Practices Report.*—After collecting demographic or background information, scales derived from Block's (1981) Child Rearing Practices Report (CRPR) were administered in English: the parental control factor (Lin & Fu, 1990) and the authoritative and authoritarian scales (Kochanska, 1990). Some examples of the items from the parental control factor were, "I have strict, well-established rules for my child," and "I believe that scolding and criticism help my child." Scale scores for parental control were derived by adding all the scores in the individual items, just as Lin and Fu (1990) had done.

The authoritative scale consisted of the factors Encouragement of Independence (e.g., "I usually take into account my child's preferences in making plans for the family"), Expression of Affection (e.g., "I express affection by hugging, kissing, and holding my child"), and Rational Guidance (e.g., "I talk it over and reason with my child when he misbehaves"). The authoritarian scale consisted of the factors Authoritarian Control (e.g., identical to the parental control factor used by Lin & Fu, 1990—"I believe that scolding and criticism help my child," and "I do not allow my child to question my de-

cisions"), Supervision of the Child (e.g., "I make sure I know where my child is and what he is doing at all times"), and Control by Anxiety (e.g., "I control my child by warning him about the bad things that can happen to him"). These were all factors originally derived by Block (1981). However, the specific factors used to make up the authoritative and authoritarian dimensions were conceptually derived by Kochanska (1990) and are consistent with Baumrind's conceptualizations: "authoritarian" comprises high demands and firm enforcement *without* democratic give-and-take and parental support or warmth, and "authoritative" comprises high demands and firm enforcement with both democratic give-and-take as well as fostering the child's independence, and parental support.

The items used by Kochanska (1990) to capture the authoritative and authoritarian dimensions were also conceptually consistent with those items used by Dornbusch et al. (1987). The authoritarian measure by Dornbusch et al. included "family communication" items that emphasized high demands, but without democratic or open communication (i.e., "in your family communication, your parents tell you that they are correct and should not be questioned"). This measure also included items that emphasized a firm enforcement of rules, but without parental support (i.e., "as a response to poor grades, the parents get upset/reduce the youth's allowance/ground the youth"). For the authoritative measure, Dornbusch et al. also used items that emphasized high demands and firm enforcement along with encouragement of the child's independence and individuality, open communication between parents and children, encouragement of verbal give-and-take, and recognition of the rights of both parents and children (i.e., "in your family communication your parents emphasize that everyone should help with decisions in the family," and "as a response to poor grades, they take away freedom/encourage the student to try harder/offer to help").

Scale scores for both the authoritarian and authoritative dimensions were derived by adding the scores from the individual items comprising the factors for each dimension. The internal consistencies of these scales were computed using Cronbach's alpha, and were quite low. For the European-Americans, alphas were .45 for the authoritarian scale and .53 for the authoritative scale, whereas the alphas for the Chinese

were slightly higher, .67 for the authoritarian scale and .60 for the authoritative scale. These low alphas were due to the restricted ranges of scores, especially for the European-Americans: For instance, with a potential range of 13 to 65 on the authoritarian scale scores, the European-American scores were from 17 to 40 with only four scores above 32. The Chinese had a larger range of 24 to 54 with only four scores below 32. With the authoritative scale scores (potential range from 14 to 70), the European-American scores were from 54 to 68 (i.e., a 14-point range), while the Chinese scores were from 53 to 70 (i.e., a 17-point range).

The same 5-point Likert-type scale used by both Kochanska (1990) and Lin and Fu (1990) was used in this study (i.e., each item was rated on a scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). Both the scores from the parental control scale and the authoritative and authoritarian scales were used to (1) have a more "orthodox" control measure for further comparisons to be made with the Chinese child-rearing ideologies and (2) test whether this study replicates past studies in which Chinese have scored significantly higher than European-Americans on these standard measures.

*The "training" questionnaire items.*—Thirteen "training" questionnaire items were then administered by the researcher in English. The same 5-point Likert-type scale described above was used. The training questionnaire covered two areas, "ideologies on child development and learning" (involving seven items) and "ideologies on the mother-child relationship" (involving six items), that were derived from the concepts of *chiao shun*, or training, and *guan*, discussed earlier. The first area has been derived from the literature on Chinese child rearing and involves the following items: (1) the nature of the child as inherently good (Ho & Kang, 1984; Kojima, 1986); (2) the earliest possible introduction of training (Ho, 1986); (3) the promotion of training through exposing the young child as much as possible to the adult world (Ho, 1989; Wu, 1985) and through (4) explicit example, or comparison to other children (Tobin et al., 1989). The second area, "ideologies on the mother-child relationship," has also been derived from the literature and involves such ideas as the child being in constant care of the mother, being taken everywhere with the mother, sleeping with the mother, being the sole interest and concern of the mother (Wu,

1985), and the mother making great sacrifice for the education of her child (Ho, 1986; Stevenson & Lee, 1990; Wu & Tseng, 1985).

## Results

### *Ethnic Differences on the Standard Measures and Chinese Child-Rearing Ideologies*

The findings reported by Lin and Fu (1990) for parental control were replicated in this study. A univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to test whether the Chinese would score significantly higher on the parental control factor. The results indicate that the Chinese were indeed significantly higher ( $M = 24.00$ ) than the European-American mothers ( $M = 15.24$ ) on parental control,  $F(1, 99) = 86.52, p < .001$ .

Another univariate ANOVA was used to test whether the Chinese mothers would also score significantly higher on the authoritarian scale. Again, the Chinese mothers were significantly higher ( $M = 39.90$ ) than the European-American mothers ( $M = 25.68$ ) on the authoritarian scale,  $F(1, 99) = 136.77, p < .001$ . However, the Chinese mothers ( $M = 63.26$ ) were not significantly higher than the European-American mothers ( $M = 62.92$ ) on the authoritative scale,  $p > .63$ . This finding for the authoritative scale indicates that Chinese mothers do not simply have a greater propensity to score high on everything.

An additional univariate ANOVA was conducted on the mothers' mean scores for the Chinese child-rearing ideologies to test whether Chinese mothers would endorse these items more than European-American mothers. Again, the Chinese mothers scored significantly higher ( $M = 57.62$ ) than the European-American mothers ( $M = 44.14$ ) on the Chinese child-rearing ideologies,  $F(1, 99) = 100.30, p < .001$ .

### *Differences on the Chinese Child-Rearing Ideologies after Controlling for Their Education and Authoritarian/Authoritative Scores*

Both groups of mothers' authoritarian scale scores, their authoritative scale scores, and their education were controlled for to test whether Chinese mothers would still score significantly higher than European-American mothers on the Chinese child-rearing ideologies, even after accounting for their scores on the standard measures. A one-way multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) was conducted using the covariates, the authoritarian and authoritative

TABLE 1

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF EACH ITEM FOR CHINESE AND EUROPEAN AMERICANS

	CHINESE		EURO-AMERICAN	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Ideologies of child development and learning:				
Children are by nature born good. ....	3.60	1.23	3.96	1.31
* Parents must begin training child as soon as ready. ....	4.48	.71	2.30	1.30
Children can improve in almost anything if they work hard. ....	4.32	.87	3.90	.95
* Mothers must train child to work very hard and be disciplined. ....	3.96	.99	2.36	1.12
* Mothers teach child by pointing out good behavior in others. ....	4.04	1.07	2.12	1.32
The best way child learns how to behave is to be around adults. ....	3.16	1.23	2.20	.88
* When child continues to disobey you, he/she deserves a spanking. ....	3.22	1.18	1.48	.97
Ideologies of the mother-child relationship:				
* Mothers primarily express love by helping child succeed, esp. in school. ....	4.04	.95	2.24	1.13
A mother's sole interest is in taking care of her child. ....	2.68	1.24	1.98	1.13
* Child should be in the constant care of their mothers or family. ....	4.00	1.05	2.26	1.24
Mothers should do everything for child's education and make many sacrifices. ....	4.06	1.00	3.56	.99
* Child should be allowed to sleep in mother's bed. ....	3.16	1.13	2.76	1.36
* Child should be able to be with mother and taken on errands and gatherings. ....	4.00	.81	4.42	.76

\* Indicates significant differences at  $p < .05$ .

scale scores. Because there was a significant difference found for mothers' number of years of education, this was also controlled for and included as another covariate. In this MANCOVA, the mother's ethnicity was used as the group to analyze the 13 Chinese child-rearing ideology items. The multivariate tests yielded significant effects for ethnicity after controlling for the covariates, mentioned above,  $F(13, 83) = 5.19, p < .000$ .

For the post-hoc analyses, separate univariate analyses of variance were conducted on each of the 13 items. Significant ( $p < .05$ ) ethnic differences were found on 8 of the 13 Chinese child-rearing items, with the Chinese mothers scoring higher on all but one of the 13 items. The means and standard deviations for each item by the mothers' ethnicity are presented in Table 1. The Chinese scored significantly higher than the European-American mothers on the asterisked items listed in Table 1, with one exception. Specifically, on the item "children should be able to be with their mothers and taken on errands, social calls, and social and family gatherings," the European-American mothers scored significantly higher than the Chinese.

### Discussion

Just as past studies have shown (Dornbusch et al., 1987; Lin & Fu, 1990; Stein-

berg et al., 1992), Chinese were significantly higher than European-Americans on the standard measures for parental control and authoritarian parenting style, but not for authoritative parenting style. They were also significantly higher on Chinese child-rearing ideologies. In addition, even after accounting for their scores on the standard measures (i.e., parental control and authoritarian/authoritative) and their education, the Chinese mothers were still significantly higher than the European-American mothers on the child-rearing ideologies described by the concept of "training." Thus, as predicted, even when accounting for both groups of mothers' scores on authoritarian, authoritative, and parental control, Chinese have important pronounced differences from European-Americans on the concept of "training." This finding indicates that this concept has distinctive features that more adequately describe the Chinese beyond the authoritarian concept, because this concept has evolved from a sociocultural context that Chinese do not necessarily share.

The "authoritarian" concept has evolved from an American culture and psychology that is rooted in both evangelical and Puritan religious influences. Throughout the 1700s and into the 1800s, both of these religious movements shared an in-

tense concern for the spiritual destiny of their children that resulted in harsh treatment of them. Both the notions of "original sin" and "breaking the child's will," mentioned earlier, constituted the views of early American child rearing. This point of view is said to have dominated both the advisory literature available to parents and the children's own reading for up to 2 centuries (Smuts & Hagen, 1985). Most historians in child development recognize that following World War II there was a distinct shift from authoritarian to more permissive modes of child rearing that emphasized a more "child-centered" and democratic approach. Because the permissive movement in child rearing was evidently a backlash against the harsh, ambivalent treatment of the past, the authoritarian concept received even more "notoriety" as the antithesis to the more "modern," democratic, and individualistic approaches. Although in developmental psychology Baumrind is recognized for her conceptualization of "authoritarian," this idea has been a fundamental preoccupation throughout American history, and thus is part of a larger context than the discipline of developmental psychology.

These highly charged negative "derivations" of authoritarian have been applied to describe the parenting styles of individuals who in no way share this same historical and sociocultural context. Scoring high on measures of "authoritarian" could not have the same meaning for Chinese as for European-Americans who have experienced this context. Perhaps for Chinese, scoring high on the "authoritarian" parenting style may indicate something more akin to their concepts of *chiao shun* and *guan* because both "authoritarian" and *chiao shun* accord parents with an authority that stresses a set standard of conduct. However, as the results indicate, even when both groups of mothers were, in a sense, "matched" on their authoritarian scores, there were still important differences apparent between both groups of mothers on the Chinese concepts. In other words, for the Chinese, the concept of training still holds some distinctive meaning that is not part of the authoritarian concept.

One distinctive feature of this concept of training for the Chinese involves the role or responsibility that parents have to be highly involved, caring, and concerned. Specifically, Chinese mothers in comparison to European-American mothers endorsed (1) a high level of maternal involvement for promoting success in the child, (2) being the

sole or central caretaker of the child, and (3) having the child physically close to the mother by sleeping with the mother. Therefore, the concept of training includes a type of high involvement and physical closeness that is not part of the authoritarian concept, and is quite distinctive in the Chinese.

The mother's relationship with the child is defined by specific role requirements that have evolved from the principles of Confucius. These Confucian principles require that children must show loyalty and respect to their elders, and also that the elders must responsibly teach, discipline, or "govern." Each party must fulfill these role requirements in order to maintain the social harmony, particularly in the family, that is also stressed under Confucian tradition. The concepts of "training" or *chiao shun* have been accorded very positive meanings or associations that were shaped by Chinese traditions, including but not limited to the Confucian influence.

On the other hand, European-Americans do not share the sociocultural traditions and values that have shaped the child-rearing concepts of *chiao shun* or "training." For the European-American mothers in this study, the word "training" itself often evoked associations such as "militaristic," "regimented," or "strict" that were interpreted as being very negative, whereas for the Chinese mothers this word did not evoke such associations, and was instead interpreted to mean a stricter or more rigorous "teaching," "educating," or "inculcating" that was regarded as being very positive. Because this concept of training has also evolved from a sociocultural tradition that is not shared by European-Americans, this concept would also not be relevant for these individuals.

Along the same lines, the training concept may be quite important for explaining the school success of Chinese children, but not so for European-American children. Chinese training and the control that Chinese parents exert are motivated by their intense concern for their children to be successful, particularly in school. Sometimes this may involve driving children when their own motivation is not adequate. Oftentimes training children fairly early to work very hard and be disciplined would be one way to foster their self-motivation. Chinese children are also given very extensive experiences of what's expected of their behavior in general. From a young age they are exposed to ex-



PLICIT models or examples of proper behavior and to many aspects of the adult world. These training goals for school success and proper behavior are also promoted in conjunction with a high maternal involvement and closeness with the child. This maternal relationship may afford the type of support necessary for the child to achieve the parents' goals and expectations, and is therefore crucial to understanding Chinese child-rearing methods.

Thus, both the concepts of *chiao shun* and "authoritarian" have their own sociocultural "traditions" that have shaped how these concepts are defined. When these concepts are taken out of their sociocultural context and applied to individuals of differing traditions, they can be quite misleading. In fact, the parenting style paradox found for the outcome of Asian school achievement is just one example. The findings by Dornbusch et al. (1987) and Steinberg et al. (1992) are important and telling in that the strength of the positive relation between the optimal parenting style (i.e., authoritative) and school achievement for European-Americans is quite weak or unclear for Asians.

The findings in the present study indicate that the global parenting concept of training or *chiao shun* should be used in future studies that include Asians. Further studies must also explore how this training measure is related to other indicators of maternal behavior, such as involvement in the child's schooling, or to family variations such as acculturation level. This parenting concept must also then be tested against the outcome of school achievement to explain the Asian paradox found by Dornbusch et al. (1987).

Ultimately, researchers must be able to appreciate and be aware of how the larger theoretical frameworks or disciplines that they adhere to are also influenced by culture. The developmental psychology framework is part of a North American "psychology" or culture that has been immensely preoccupied with "individualism" and "independence," stressing freedom, individual choice and self-expression, separateness, and uniqueness. For instance, the childhood development perspective in the United States has revolved around a more "child-centered" and "stage theory" approach, stressing where each individual child is at in his or her developmental process and encouraging parents to provide the appropriate environment to fulfill the child's emerging

sense of "self" and independence from his parents. In fact, Baumrind's (1971) conceptualizations for parenting style directly reflect this developmental framework: The more "optimal" authoritative parenting style is distinguished from the authoritarian style by both warmth (i.e., emotional support and affection) and a democratic type of "firm control." Parents with this democratic control, while demanding responsible and independent behavior (i.e., the aspects of firm control), also explain, listen, and provide emotional support. A more democratic parent then values both expressive conformity along with autonomous self-will. Thus, even with Baumrind's "firm control," the child's independence and self-expression must necessarily be maintained.

In order to offer conceptualizations for describing individuals from other cultures or sociocultural contexts, researchers must not simply offer reformulated or alternative conceptualizations from within the same theoretical discipline or framework. Because the developmental psychology framework in the United States represents a more individualistic perspective, this framework would not be useful for formulating conceptualizations that are intended to be applied to other cultures. More culturally viable concepts can be offered from a framework based on an indigenous or native appreciation of Chinese culture that does not involve an individualistic interpretation of childhood socialization and development. This study is important because it offers more than just a reformulation of Baumrind's parenting styles relevant to Asians. Instead, this study offers *indigenous* concepts that were formulated entirely outside of North American psychology: The Chinese concepts were derived from a cultural framework based on Confucian traditions emphasizing the individual's role responsibilities for maintaining harmonious relations with others.

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