

부모의 권위감과 양육행동이 청소년의 자율성에 미치는 영향:  
중국과 미국 청소년을 중심으로

**The Influence of Adolescent's Perceptions of Parental Authority and Parenting Behaviors on Teen's Autonomy in China and the United States**

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Abstract

Although parent-child relationships are fundamental aspects of human development across all societies, this relationship is also shaped in significant ways by culture. Therefore, the present study sought to determine whether adolescent autonomy was predicted in a similar or differential manner by several parent-adolescent variables consisting of parenting behavior, parental authority, and parents' educational attainment in samples of Chinese and American adolescents. The sample for this study included 418 Chinese adolescents and 226 American adolescents. Utilizing structural equation modeling, the results revealed that the effect of paternal authority on adolescent autonomy development is indirect, with the indirect effect being mediated by the authoritative parenting behaviors for both cultural groups. Therefore, the analyses for Chinese and European American youth generated similar association patterns, such that parenting behaviors served as a mediator in the relationship between paternal authority and adolescents' autonomy development. The significance of this present study is to contribute to existing knowledge in the field of adolescent development and to the literature on how parental behaviors and authority in collectivistic societies and individualist societies influence adolescent development.

Key Words : Parent-Adolescent Relationship, Autonomy, Adolescent Development, Parental Authority, Parenting Behaviors

## I . Introduction

Adolescence according to Arnett (2004) is a period of the life course between the time puberty begins and the time adulthood status is achieved. It is also the time young people take on the roles of responsibilities in their cultures. Although the family serves as the primary socialization agent for fostering socially competent outcomes in adolescents in most cultural contexts, culture shapes what behaviors and outcomes are considered to be socially competent (Triandis, McCusker & Hui, 1990; Triandis, 1995). That is,

culture also shapes the interaction between parents and children that serve to foster social competence. Researchers have found, for example, that parenting behaviors and parental authority influence adolescent self-concept, academic achievement, depression, and conduct problems among Asian-American and European-American adolescents (Bean, Bush, Mckenry & Wilson, 2003; Herman, 1997; Maccoby & Martin, 1983). However, previous studies of parent-child relationship have not examined the relationship across cultural groups.

Therefore, the present study sought to determine whether adolescent autonomy was predicted in a similar

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or differential manner by several parent-adolescent relationship variables consisting of dimensions of authoritative parenting behavior, parental authority, and parents' educational attainment in samples of Chinese and American adolescents. Investigators of Chinese and American socialization processes often use the general cultural orientations collectivism and individualism to characterize how socialization patterns (i.e., authoritative and authoritarian behavior) may differ across societies.

A prominent perspective in recent scholarship is that Asian socialization patterns differ substantially from North American patterns by being more collectivistic through cultural emphases on strong family bonds, parental authority, and a focus on conformity to the expectations of elders. This is thought to contrast with the frequently cited focus of American socialization on individualism, which involves a focus on the private self, individual choice, personal freedom, and autonomy as part of the socialization of adolescents (Triandis, 1995).

Although the actual circumstance may be some combination of individualism and collectivism in most cultures, the model examined in this paper tests the assumption that individualism (or a focus on autonomy) is more a product of American parent-adolescent relations than is true of China, often cited as a classic example of a collectivistic culture. Socialization process in Asia are commonly viewed as emphasizing family cohesion (i.e., familism) and as being group-focused rather than as placing a lot of emphasis on individual values, whereas North American and Western European societies, are thought to focus more on individualistic values, including personal agency and autonomy (Chao, 2001).

The significance of this present study, therefore, is to contribute to existing knowledge in the field of adolescent development and to the literature on how parental behaviors and authority in collectivistic societies and individualist societies influence adolescent development.

## II. Literature Review

### 1. Autonomy in Adolescence

As a part of the process of maturity, adolescents must

establish an independent identity even though one remains emotionally connected to significant others (Allison & Sabatelli, 1988). Autonomy has been defined as a developmental process through which one comes to see oneself as separate and distinct within one's relational (familial, social, cultural) context (Anderson, & Sabatelli, 1990). The degree to which autonomy has occurred is the degree to which the person no longer experiences him or herself as fusing with others in personal relationships.

In this regard, autonomy is relatively more important during adolescence than any other developmental stage because adolescents struggle to individuate themselves from their families of origin and expand their network of intimate relationships with the outside world (Chun & MacDermid, 1997) and this can be considered the cornerstone of adolescent development (Bartle & Sabatelli, 1995).

Autonomy allows one to experience strong affect or shift to logical reasoning. That is, when circumstances dictate flexible, adaptable, and better able to cope with stress, more differentiated individuals operate equally well on both emotional and rational levels (Skowron, & Friedlander, 1998). Therefore, adolescents functioning in a more autonomous manner are less likely to develop symptoms during stressful periods (Harvey & Bray, 1991).

### 2. The Importance of Parental Roles in Adolescents

Adolescents, as they grow up and develop an identity, both influence and are influenced greatly by important agents of socialization such as parents, siblings, peers, teachers, and extended family members in their social environments (Dmitrieva, Chen, Greenberger, & Gil-Rivas, 2004). For many children, parents remain significant sources of influence in the lives of their children through many important roles (Dmitrieva, Chen, Greenberger, & Gil-Rivas, 2004).

Given the importance of parental roles in adolescents' outcomes, the two most common approaches for classifying and studying parental behaviors are the dimensional and typological approaches. The dimensional approach tends to focus on discrete parenting behaviors such as monitoring, support, and reasoning, whereas the typological approach involves complex collections of parenting behaviors

conceptualized as parenting styles (Barber, 1997; Darling & Steinberg, 1993).

The typological approach aggregates several main dimensions of parental behaviors into patterns or styles which were conceptualized by Baumrind (1991) as authoritative, authoritarian, neglectful, and permissive parenting. These four styles of parenting have been found to be based on certain dimensions of demandingness, and responsiveness (Arnett, 2004). Parental demandingness "is the degree to which parents set down rules and expectations for behavior and require their children to comply with them". Parental responsiveness on the other hand "is the degree to which parents are sensitive to their children's needs and the extent to which they express love, warmth, and concern for their children".

Some scholars, however have tended to have problems with the typological approach. According to Barber (1997), a major issue with this aggregated approach is that, the individual contributions of each parenting dimension cannot be single out and critically examined for effects on child/adolescent outcomes. For the dimensional approach, on the other hand, the three main aspects of parent's behavior namely support, behavioral monitoring and autonomy granting behaviors have been examined by researchers. It has also been argued that, it is only when these behavioral dimensions are studied separately that the individual effects of each or how it impacts on adolescent outcomes can be precisely determined (Bean, Bush, McKenry & Wilson, 2003).

Dimensional parental behaviors, such as monitoring, autonomy granting, support, and reasoning, and how they affect adolescent outcomes has been the focus of considerable research in the field of Adolescent Development within Western societies (Bean, Bush, McKenry & Wilson, 2003; Barber, 1997; Maccoby & Martins, 1983). For instance, Bean, Bush, McKenry and Wilson (2003) in their study of a sample of African American and European American adolescents found that the use of supportive behaviors by African American mothers towards their adolescent children resulted in the attainment of a higher self-esteem. Parental autonomy granting behaviors also were found to be a significant predictor of adolescent self-esteem in both samples, while parental monitoring also predicted adolescent self-esteem and academic achievement among the European Americans. Finally, parental

monitoring refers to the processes by which parents keep track of their adolescents' academic and social behavior. Research demonstrates that, monitoring is a strong deterrent to adolescent problem behavior during the period when teenagers increasingly spend more time with peers away from their parents. Moreover, parental monitoring of school-related activities is a significant predictor of positive school achievement (Maccoby & Martins, 1983).

Several studies examining the relationships between specific parental behaviors and child outcomes within diverse cultural groups have also found significant positive relationships involving parental support, behavioral control, and autonomy granting behaviors and such positive adolescent outcomes as positive self-concept (Bean, Bush, McKenry, & Wilson, 2003; Greenberger, Chen, Tally, & Dong, 2000). In a sample of European American and Asian American junior high school and college age students, Greenberger and Chen (1996) found that adolescents whose parents conveyed warm and caring attitudes also demonstrated lower levels of depressed moods. A similar result was also found for adolescents in China (Greenberger et al., 2000).

What these findings indicate is that, irrespective of where adolescents live around the world and regardless of race, parental warmth and general knowledge of their children's activities leads to positive results. This point is buttressed by other cross cultural findings from Australia, United States, and Hong Kong, which links parental monitoring to lower adolescent involvement in a variety of problem behaviors such as anti-social behavior, school misconduct, and status violations (Feldman, Rosenthal, Mont-Reynaud, Leung, & Lau, 1999).

### 3. The Relationship between Parenting and Adolescent Autonomy

Researchers have argued that positive parental behaviors in the parent-adolescent relationship are the socialization techniques that frequently promote adolescent's healthy autonomy (e.g., Vazsonyi, 2003). That is, healthy autonomy results in adolescents becoming self-reliant and socially competent, and is attained with the support of parents. What this means, therefore, is that parents are very significant agents of socialization in the

lives of their children, with their roles in fostering children's positive or negative development outcomes being very crucial. In contrast, parents who are over protective and fail to grant adolescents sufficient autonomy to explore life often fail to function in a socially competent manner (Vazsonyi, 2003).

In a similar fashion, studies examining the different parenting styles and their impact on adolescent social adjustment also tend to demonstrate that authoritative parenting composed of reasoning, monitoring, support and closely related variables tend to be positive predictors of adolescent autonomy and positive social development (Deslandes & Bertrand, 2005; Minke & Anderson, 2005; Sheldon, & Epstein, 2005) in Western societies.

However, findings from other racial groups such as those for Asian and other cultures complicate the picture about the influence of authoritative parenting. Specifically, there is some evidence that the authoritarian parenting style instead of the authoritative style is a stronger positive predictor of some aspects of social development by some Asian adolescents. In a study using samples of Chilean and Equadorian adolescents for example, Ingoldsby, Schvaneveldt, Supple and Bush (2003) reported that, whereas parental positive induction and monitoring especially by fathers predicted positive development among adolescents in Ecuador, parental autonomy granting on the other hand was associated with lowered academic achievement which they stated was contrary to previous findings with US samples.

China, which is largely considered to be a collectivistic society in which a majority of parents are believed to favor the authoritarian style of parenting for raising children, studies are lacking that examine how authoritative parenting styles or behaviors predict adolescents' autonomy. Unfortunately in Eastern societies, the study of authoritative parental behaviors that influence adolescents social competence has been largely ignored, which makes it difficult to have a common base upon which to compare the experiences of adolescents in Eastern Societies to other adolescents elsewhere. In an attempt to remedy the paucity of research in this area, a study examining parenting behaviors and the development of autonomy among samples of Chinese adolescents and European American adolescents found some interesting results.

As patriarchal societies, fathers, in particular, are highly

respected in Asia. Also, fathers especially view any attempt or desire by adolescents to make their own choices or crave for independence as forms of rebellion and threats to their authority. Their authority cannot be challenged or questioned, especially by their adolescent children while mothers are generally considered by both male and female children to be friendlier than fathers in Eastern societies.

Therefore, to test the relationship among adolescents' perception of paternal authority, parenting behaviors (in the present study, these behaviors are measured by variables created based on the topology and dimensional approach of parental behaviors) and adolescent autonomy in samples of Chinese and American adolescents provides us with a great deal of fresh insight into understanding the relationship between parents and adolescents.

Specific research questions are as follows:

Research question 1: Is the impact of parental authority on adolescent autonomy is mediated by parenting behaviors for both Chinese and European American adolescents?

Research question 2: Is there any difference between Chinese Adolescent and European American Adolescents in the relationship among parental authority, parenting behaviors, and adolescent autonomy?

#### 4. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework guiding this study is based on the framework of individualism and collectivism. According to Arnett (2004) although all cultures tend to share similar socialization outcomes, cultures are also different in terms of their basic socialization beliefs. He argued further that a critical issue concerns whether or not a particular society values independence and self expression in socializing its young or emphasizes obedience and conformity in the socialization process. This difference in emphasis has led to the concepts of individualism and collectivism, which Triandis (1995) has been described as the most significant cultural distinction (Triandis, 1995). Greenfield (2000) also termed it the deep structure of cultural differences.

Within individualistic societies, people are socialized to be autonomous and independent from their in-group which could be family, tribe or ethnic group. Also, individuals are trained to give priorities to their personal goals and

interests over the group's interest and generally to behave primarily and importantly based on their attitudes rather than the norms of their groups (Triandis, 2001). People in Western societies such as the United States, Canada, Western Europe, Australia, and New Zealand are generally considered to be individualistic cultures, with the U.S. frequently considered as being the most individualistic (Suh, Diener, Oishi & Triandis, 1998).

Individuals who live in societies considered to be collectivistic, on the other hand, are generally socialized to be interdependent within their group, commonly in the form of the family, tribe or nation. Other important characteristics emphasized in collectivistic societies includes giving priority to group purposes over self-interest to ensure harmony, respect for authority, regard for the elderly, and shaping one's behaviors in terms of group norms. Societies or cultures that could be classified as collectivistic include most Eastern cultures such as Japan, China, Korea, Hong-Kong, Taiwan, African countries and other traditional societies (Arnett, 2004; Triandis, 1995).

For instance, because collectivistic societies are quite hierarchical in structure with social interactions often strongly defined by age and gender, adolescents within such cultures are less likely to be asked by adults and even their own parents to formulate and share their opinions or to freely talk about what they are learning in school. According to Delgado-Gaitan (1994), such a situation is as a result of the fact that, the role of sharing opinions and knowledge is strictly reserved for people with higher status. Children are taught to respect elders as the sources of knowledge. Again, the kind of self expression adolescents within the American society and other western societies commonly exhibit towards other adults including their teachers in their classrooms for instance could be interpreted as a lack of proper respect within a collectivistic society like Asia. This and a culmination of other factors in play within Eastern societies does not motivate adolescent children to open up and ask questions in school, explore other learning alternatives outside the class room on their own and generally pursue their academic dreams and aspirations.

In writing about individualism and collectivism as concepts in describing differences in cultural orientation values, Arnett (2004) importantly reminds us that, the two concepts are not mutually exclusive. That is not all people in individualistic societies have all the characteristics as

enumerated and not everyone living in a collectivistic culture ascribe to the characteristic values or principles of this approach to life. Instead, each society tries to strike a balance between these two belief systems mainly as a result of globalization and other factors.

### III. Methodology

The present study is based on a cross-sectional survey design using self-report data from adolescents. There is no conditions or groups assigned by researchers. The only groupings that is examined are those naturally occurring such as gender and cultural group membership. Male and female adolescents along with both mothers and fathers were recruited. Cultural group membership is regulated by the researchers to the extent that the cultural groups of interest (Chinese, and European-Americans) is recruited by selecting geographical areas and institutions (e.g., high schools) that contain high proportions of students belonging to these three cultural groups. Structural equation modeling was used to evaluate the relationships between parenting, and adolescent outcomes. More specifically, the variables of interest in the study are: Adolescent autonomy; parenting behaviors, parents' authority; and an education attainment level.

#### 1. Sample

The sample for this study included 418 Chinese adolescents (246 female, 158 male, and 14 missing values) and 226 American adolescents (114 female, 111 male, and 1 missing value). Adolescents reported on their behavior (e.g., autonomy) as well as perceptions of both their mothers and fathers (e.g., parental authority and parenting behaviors). This particular analyses only includes perceptions of fathers, however, future work will include analyses of mothers. Descriptive analyses indicated no significant differences in terms of the demographic characteristics of these two sub-samples except father's education level ( $\chi^2 = 100.42$  with  $df = 2$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The sample ranged in age from 13 to 18 (mean = 15.56,  $SD = 1.1$  for Chinese adolescents, and mean = 15.69,  $SD = 1.6$  for

American adolescents) and these youth all came from two-parent households.

Regarding fathers' education levels for the Chinese sample, 53% reported 'less than high school degree', 26% reported 'completed high school degree', and 20% of the sample reported 'some post-secondary education' as their fathers' education level. For the American sample, 13% reported 'less than high school degree', 49% reported 'completed high school degree', and 38% reported 'some post-secondary education' as their fathers' education level. Fathers' education level was included in the main data analysis as a control variable since a significant group difference was found. Also, there were significant differences in the mean levels of the studied variables across groups, with the exception of parental reasoning behaviors. The two group means and standard deviations for each indicator by culture are presented in Table 1.

## 2. Procedures and Measures

The project questionnaire was administered by project members in public or government sponsored secondary schools. The survey asked adolescents to report their perceptions of both their fathers' and mothers' parenting behaviors separately on a number of domains and other characteristics such as familism, academic achievement and self-efficacy. Socio-demographic information such as age, gender, ethnicity, religious affiliation, household composition, parental occupational status and parental educational background were also assessed in the questionnaire.

For this present study, the parenting variables consisting

of parental monitoring, parental support and parental reasoning were assessed with the Parent Behavior Measure (PBM). This is a self-report instrument that measures adolescent's perceptions of several supportive and controlling dimensions of socialization behavior that parents direct at adolescents (Peterson, Bush, & Supple, 1999).

Also, adolescents' perceptions of parental authority were measured by a 23 item revised version of a previously developed measure of parental power bases and authority (Peterson et al., 1999) This scale assesses adolescents' perceptions of their parents' interpersonal resources and was composed of items measuring referent, expert, legitimate, reward, and coercive authority. The participants responded to the items in terms of a four-point Likert scale which varies from "Strongly Agree" (4 points) to "Strongly Disagree" (1 point). With the negative valence items reverse coded, the items within each subscale are summed for a total score in reference to each parent, with higher scores indicating higher levels authority. For the present study, only legitimate authority (i.e., the perceived "right" to control circumstances and/or exercise influence based on social norms) and expert authority (i.e., the perception that a parent has credible expertise which is useful for the adolescent) were included in the data analyses after controlling for the paternal education level.

Measures of adolescents' autonomy were assessed by Likert-type scales measuring the extent to which the young were either responsive to or autonomous from their parent's expectations for leisure time activities, friends, educational plans, and career plans. These measures were composed of items having a lengthy history in the study of parent-child/adolescent relations and were developed from

<Table 1> Means and Standard Deviation of Indicators by Culture

	Chinese ( <i>n</i> = 418)		American ( <i>n</i> = 226)	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Expert Authority***	20.68	3.97	24.09	4.90
Legitimate Authority***	16.88	3.12	18.18	4.04
Supporting***	11.35	2.34	13.35	3.17
Reasoning	14.85	2.77	14.94	4.36
Monitoring***	16.01	3.71	17.83	4.44
Autonomy***	30.01	5.05	32.81	6.46

\*\*\**p* <.001

previous factor analytic studies. For the Chinese questionnaire, the technique of back translation was used in which the survey was translated from English to Chinese and back again to English. Cronbach's alpha for these scales ranged from .69 to .90.

### 3. Data Analyses

In order to explore the characteristics of the sample, analyses of demographics including mean, standard deviation, and frequencies and percentages were performed first (See the sample section). In addition, two structural equation models (one for Chinese youth and one for European American youth) were performed to test for the relationship among parental authority, parental behaviors and adolescent autonomy after controlling for the paternal education levels. That is, the hypothesis that parental behavior mediates the relationship between paternal authority and adolescent autonomy development, as well as to test for potential differences in these relationships as a function of culture.

The conceptual model specified four exogenous variables (i.e., 2 education level variables, paternal authority, and parenting behaviors) and one endogenous variable: adolescent autonomy. For this model, a covariance matrix of eight indicators was entered as the input matrix. Education variable 1 is a dummy variable to indicate "high school degree" as a paternal education level, and education variable 2 is a dummy variable to indicate "some post secondary education experience" as a paternal education level. The reference group for the education level variables is the group of fathers having "less than high school" as their educational levels. For the paternal authority latent variable, there were two indicators that were labeled "expert authority", and "legitimate authority". For the parenting behaviors (more specifically, authoritative parenting), there were three indicators that were labeled "reasoning", "support", and "monitoring."

Because the data used in the present study are cross-sectional and not longitudinal, one of the basic requirements for casual ordering of variables is not satisfied. Thus, our findings are not meant to imply causal relationships.

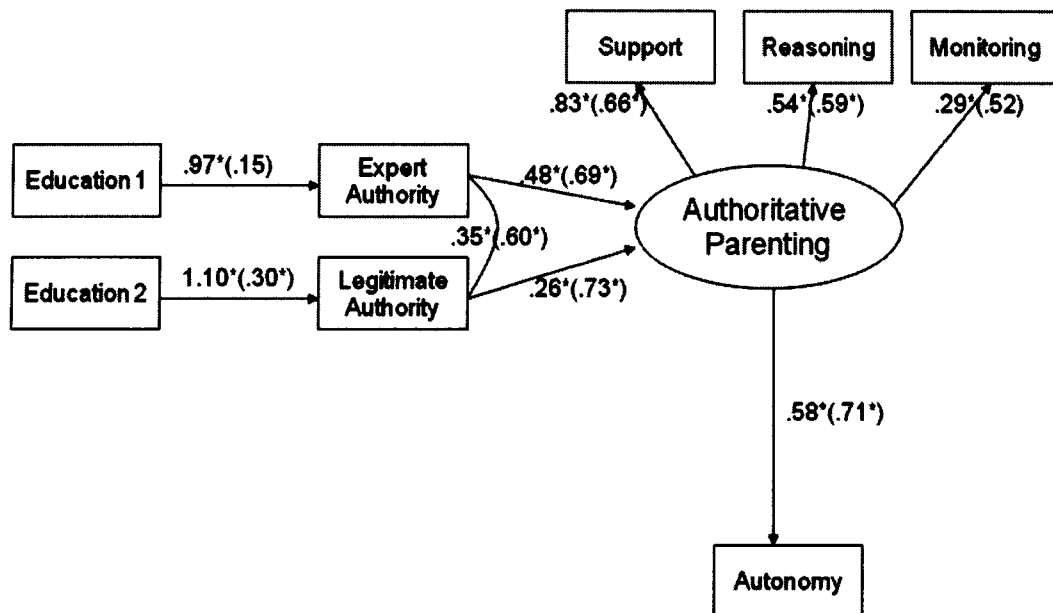
## IV. Results

The proposed research involves an examination of the relationships among variables associated with adolescents' perceptions of paternal authority (i.e., expert authority, and legitimate authority), components of authoritative parenting (i.e., supportive parenting, reasoning, and monitoring behaviors), and adolescent autonomy, as well as potential similarity and differences in these relationships as a function of culture. In order to accomplish these objectives, structural equation modeling (SEM) with maximum likelihood estimation was used. The data were analyzed with LISREL 8.3 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993).

The results of structural equation modeling procedures supported the proposed structural relationship among the fathers' parenting authority, authoritative parenting behaviors, and adolescents' autonomy. The model structure held for both Chinese adolescents and American adolescents with slight variation. Although examination of the measurement model revealed that the proposed relationships between the observed variables and the latent construct were valid for both Chinese adolescents and American adolescents, subsequent analyses for the structural model did indicate slight differences in these samples.

For both samples, the findings consistently indicated a good model fit. The RMSEA of the American sample model was .085 (CI: 0.05, 0.12) which is considered to be a reasonable fit (RMSEA interpretive guidelines: .between .05 and .08 is a reasonable fit (Browne & Cudeck, 1992). The chi-square test for the model fit was significant ( $\chi^2 = 38.14$  with  $df = 15$ ,  $p < .001$ ), the value of NNFI did indicate good fit (i.e., NNFI = .95) and Comparative Fit Index (CFI) was .96. For the Chinese sample, the RMSEA of the model was .08 (CI: 0.05, 0.10), the chi-square test of the model fit was significant ( $\chi^2 = 54.80$  with  $df = 15$ ,  $p < .001$ ), the value of NNFI did indicate good fit (i.e., NNFI = .91) and Comparative Fit Index (CFI) was .95. Also, an examination of the structural model revealed that all hypothesized main paths were significant for both samples except a path regarding one of control variables (i.e., education level) for the American sample (see figure 1).

In terms of parameter estimates, adolescent reported significantly higher respect for father's authority when



Note. Estimates in parentheses indicates results for European American Sample  
 \*  $p < .01$

[Figure 1] The Proposed Model with Standardized Estimates for Chinese and European American Youth

fathers have higher levels of education attainment for both cultural groups. Also, paternal authority was a significant predictor of authoritative parenting behaviors (.48 and .26 for Chinese youth and .69 and .73 for European American youth) for both cultural groups while authoritative parenting behaviors was a significant predictor of adolescent autonomy for both group (.58 for Chinese youth and .71 for European American youth).

Taken together, these results indicate that the effect of paternal authority on adolescent autonomy development is indirect, with the indirect effect being mediated by the authoritative parenting behaviors for both cultural groups. Therefore, the analyses for Chinese and European American youth generated similar association patterns, such that parenting behaviors served as a mediator in the relationship between paternal authority and adolescents' autonomy development.

## V. Discussion and Conclusion

Based on the results after testing the proposed model, this research study has come up with some interesting

answers and ideas regarding the impact of paternal authority, and authoritative parenting behaviors on the development of autonomy. Some of the results in many respects confirm what has been found in previous similar studies with samples in Western societies or cultures. It also uniquely shed light on the nature of parent-adolescent relationships within Asia as shaped by values, perceptions, traditions or culture.

Considering the fact that parents remain significant sources of influence in the lives of their children through many important roles (Dmitrieva, Chen, Greenberger, & Gil-Rivas, 2004), positive parental behaviors are expected to predict higher level of autonomy. Analyses conducted in the present study generated support for the hypothesis that adolescents would display higher level of autonomy when they received authoritative parenting from their fathers regardless of culture. Also, the authoritative parenting behaviors did in fact mediate the relationship between parental authority and autonomy for both the Chinese and European American adolescents. This finding is consistent with the results of previous research conducted with samples in Western societies (Yau & Smetana, 2003).

Also, results in this study indicated that authoritative parenting including all of paternal monitoring, support, and



reasoning was a significant predictor of autonomy among adolescents. What this results means is that parents who do a good job of knowing what their kids are doing in school, where they are after school, the type of friends their child hang around with and generally conveys feelings of love and being there for their adolescents always leads to positive social competences. This finding also goes to reinforce earlier studies by (Bean, Bush, McKenry & Wilson (2003) who using a sample of European American and African American adolescents found that, the use of supportive behaviors by parents towards their children resulted in the attainment of a higher self-esteem. This point is also buttressed by Maccoby and Martins (1983) who found that effective parental monitoring of school related activities was a significant predictor of positive social adjustment. The important point which this study and other previous studies have found is that, irrespective of where adolescents live around the world and regardless of culture, parental warmth and general knowledge of their children's activities leads to positive results.

There are certain limitations that must be kept in mind regarding these results, of course. First, the entire sample consisted of adolescents from only two countries, limiting our ability to generalize results to samples from other geographic regions. Further limitations include the fact that random sampling was not utilized, and all data on these adolescents involved self-report information.

Despite the limitation mentioned above, the present study generally indicated support for the idea that authoritative parenting behaviors (i.e. a combination of parental support, reasoning and monitoring) play a central role in adolescent's autonomy development within both the American and Chinese samples (Yau & Smetana, 2003). At the same time, the present findings regarding the differential predictions within the Chinese and American models also suggest the importance for a more culturally sensitive approach to the factors contained within this model.

The significance of this present study is to contribute to existing knowledge in the field of adolescent development and to the literature on how parental behaviors and authority in collectivistic societies and individualist societies influence adolescent development. Also, inclusion of two national groups, Chinese and European-Americans, which have been suggested by previous research to vary in the extent of adherence to

cultural values (i.e., individualism and collectivism), will assist in establishing a baseline of normative interaction in parent-adolescent relationships in these two cultures.

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