CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTION OF
DESIRABILITY OF PARENTAL STYLE:
THE ROLE OF SEX AND AGE OF THE CHILD

by

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Abstract

The present study investigated the perceptions of emerging adults regarding desirable parental styles and sought to gain an understanding of whether cultural background, the age paradigm of the child being reared, and gender (of the respondent and child) were contributing factors. A modified version of the Parental Styles Questionnaire was used to measure the perceptions of desirable parental practices. The current study demonstrated that the democratic style of parenting was perceived as the favoured parental practice by both Chinese and Canadian respondents, that the permissive style of parenting was perceived negatively by both cultures (significantly more so by Canadians), and that authoritarian practices were perceived negatively by Chinese, while they were perceived positively by Canadian (when parenting both genders and significantly more so for boys). There were no significant differences in perceptions according to the age of the child or gender of the respondent.

Keywords

Perceptions of parental style; emerging adulthood; child characteristics; cultural differences; gender; age paradigm

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In dedication to my mother, Jacqueline Labonté

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Objective

The present exploratory study examined emerging adults' perceptions regarding desirable parental styles. The study further expanded this examination by seeking to gain a better understanding of whether cultural background is a contributing factor in the perception of favourable parental practices through the comparison of two cultural groups, Chinese and Canadians. Moreover, by conducting the study with emerging adults, this study considered changes that may be occurring in the perception of the future generation of parents. An understanding of the parenting perceptions of emerging adults from both groups studied helped gain a cross-cultural perspective as well as a better understanding of the perceptions of desirable parental practices, a prerequisite to understanding future initiation of parental practices.

Additionally, the current study focused on exploring the age paradigm of the child being reared, a factor that has generally been neglected in research on parental styles. The gender of the child being reared was also considered; although it has already been well established to be an influential factor on parenting practices, results are still unclear in the cross-cultural context.

Theoretical Context

History of Perceptions of Parental Practices and Evolution of Parental Style

Ideally, parenting involves rearing children to become well-adjusted, self-sufficient, and socially competent adults. As demonstrated by Dor and Cohen-Fridel (2010), there have been well-documented transformations regarding perceptions of the effectiveness of parental practices throughout the decades. Before the 1960's avoiding setting clear limits was perceived to foster self-confident, creative, and independent individuals (Farson, 1974; Holt, 1974). However,

starting in the 1960s, popular views began to change as studies began to reveal that low self-image, higher involvement in violent behaviour, dropping out of school and non-normative behaviour was associated with parents' avoiding the exertion of parental control (Baumrind, 1971, 1989, 1991a; Colemand & Hendry 1990; Karavasilis, Doyle & Markiewicz et al., 2003; Slicker & Thronberry 2002; Steinberg, Lamborn, Darling, Mounts & Dornbusch, 1994).

In turn, the need for parents to reclaim control, enforce clear standards, and impose discipline was recognized. From this need emerged Baumrind's (1971) categorical model of parenting styles, which was largely based on the concept of parental control. Parenting styles were differentiated and classified by the level of warmth and control applied by the parent. Its construct represents the standard strategies parents use in raising children, which is considered a complex activity that includes many specific behaviours that work individually and collectively to influence the child.

Baumrind's categorical model of parental styles (1971) identified two major variables centered on parenting styles and child outcomes (degree of parental warmth; degree of parental control), and delineated three parental styles:

1. Authoritarian
   - Characteristic of parents who are high in behavioural control and low in warmth.
   - Emphasizes rigid punitive behaviour toward the child.
   - Focuses on control of the child with an emphasis on obedience.

2. Permissive
   - Characteristic of parents who are low in behavioural control and high in warmth.
   - Encourage their children's autonomy and enable them to make their own decisions and regulate their own activities.

- They avoid confrontation and tend to be supportive parents and do not care to be viewed by their children as figures of authority.

3. Authoritative (which will be referred to as "Democratic" in this study in order to avoid confusion because of the similarity in wording to the authoritarian style such as often seen in literature,)
   - High in both behavioural control and warmth.
   - Practice nurturing skills and hence support the child emotionally, while setting limits using reasoning, positive reinforcement, detailed explanation, and conversation (verbal give and take).
   - Exercise moderate parental control to allow the child to become progressively more autonomous (children are not completely restricted and are allowed a reasonable degree of latitude in their behaviour).
   - This style is in the mid-ground between authoritarian and permissive styles.

Baumrind's typology expanded when it was criticized for presenting certain limitations; this criticism spurred the development of other models (e.g., Lewis, 1981). Summarizing the work of Baumrind and others, Maccoby and Martin (1983) proposed an extended model which included four patterns of parenting based on two dimensions (responsiveness/parental warmth; demandingness/parental strictness) with a four-way typology:

1. Democratic (responsive and demanding)

2. Authoritarian (demanding but not responsive)

3. Permissive Indulgent (responsive but not demanding)

4. Permissive Neglectful (neither responsive nor demanding)

Changes in Society: Evidence of Possible Shifts in Perceptions about Parenting

Evidence shows that perceptions of parental practices continue to shift; recent studies have highlighted the fact that the influence of traditional beliefs regarding degree of parental warmth

and parental control have waned, and that intergenerational shifts in ideas about parenting have occurred (Abott, Zheng & Meredith, 1992; Dwairy, 2004; Dwairy et al. 2006; Ho & Kang, 1984; Roa, McHale & Pearson, 2003). These changing beliefs may be explained by several influential factors, one of them being the globalizing views and concepts of Western culture. Western ideological influences are considered to have a powerful impact that especially encourages changes within families (e.g., arranged marriages; individuation). Although it is limited, there is empirical evidence that Western values do influence changes in parenting styles and child outcomes in other cultures (Ambert, 1994; Goode's, 1963).

This focus on Western ideas may be due to the fact that Western psychologists dominate in both numbers and influence. What is more, one cannot ignore the influence that the media and Western pop-culture has on other countries. Other possible influential factors are the significant changes that certain cultures are undergoing (e.g., changes in traditional systems; modernizations). These changes may be further exacerbated by government parenting initiatives (e.g., parenting schools). Moreover, the changes that have occurred in family structures over the last 20 years or so may also be a contributing factor in the changing views on parenting practices. Amongst others, these structural changes include increased divorce rates, single-parent households, smaller families, and intercultural relationships, etc.

Emerging Adulthood, a New Developmental Stage

These shifts in perceptions may be influenced by the emergence of a new developmental stage that is becoming well established in the literature; in the last decade, Arnett (2000, 2005) defined a new transition period from adolescence to adulthood and coined this developmental stage as *Emerging Adulthood*. Arnett maintains that Erikson's description of developmental stages was

suitable for adolescence up until the last decades of the twentieth century; however, he proposes that personal tendencies and self-identity experiences now set apart contemporary emerging adulthood from adolescence.

Emerging adulthood (those aged 18-30) is "characterized by a great degree of experimentation in matters of work, love, and worldview" (Arnett, 2000, 2004; Juang & Silbereisen, 2001; Shulman & Ben-Artzi, 2003; Shulman, Feldman, Blatt, Coken & Mahler, 2005). It is considered to be related to the extended period devoted to acquiring higher education, and the time when men and women begin to think about and prepare for long term commitments to work and family (Garcia & Garcia, 2009).

Although it is a relatively new concept in developmental stages, already, two studies demonstrate some departures from traditional views that result in changes in preferred/desired parental practices among emerging adults. For example, Indian and Arab emerging adults were found to have more permissive perceptions about parental practices than the traditional authoritarian view of that culture such as demonstrated in Dor and Cohen-Fridel (2010) and Barnhart, Raval, Jansari & Raval (in press).

Childrearing perceptions represent an important area of psychological inquiry because they play a large part in the transmission of parenting practices. Some studies have demonstrated that perceptions of a child's characteristics and functioning impact parental practices (Holden & Miller, 1999; Pinderhughes, Dodge, Bates, Petit & Zelli, 2000). Given that parenting style depends on the behaviour and attitude of parents, logically, we can conclude that perceptions are a prerequisite to understanding future initiations of parental practices. Therefore, a continuous effort should be made to understand the ever-evolving topic of parental perceptions. Emerging

adult participants provide a particularly interesting focus as emerging adulthood is considered a preparatory stage for parenthood. Information gathered during this developmental time period will therefore provide valuable information concerning future parental practices as it takes into account possible generational gaps and changes in perceptions of future parents. Results obtained have the potential to proactively contribute to an understanding of future parenting practices and clinical applications.

<div align="center">**Parenting Style in a Cross-Cultural Context**</div>

The Importance of Culture

Both the globalization and diversification of psychology have increasingly become factors that warrant specific consideration. As knowledge is spread, the challenge of how to accommodate different world-views and environmental influences arises. Furthermore, cultural variations are becoming a common challenge as societies become increasingly multicultural. For example, an increasing proportion of the population in Western societies come from non-Western cultures.

This growth can be explained by such factors as immigration, growth of ethnic sub-cultures, and globalization of the workplace (e.g., working in different cultures through travel). Proof of this is available by Statistics Canada. The *Immigration and Ethnocultural Diversity in Canada Analytical Document* of the 2011 National Household Survey indicates that, since the beginning of the millennium, Canada's population growth has mainly been driven by a growing number of immigrants. During the last ten years nearly 2 155 000 immigrants made Canada their home, and approximately 1 162 900 foreign-born people immigrated in Canada between 2006 and 2011. Immigrants now represent 20.6% of the total population in Canada and one out of five people in Canada's population is foreign-born. Moreover, the *Population Projections for Canada (2013 to*

2063), Provinces and Territories (2013 to 2038): Technical Report on Methodology and Assumptions proposes an overall immigration rate in 2038 of 8.2 immigrants per thousand.

Psychologists, and thus their ideas, are therefore found to be in more-frequent contact with people from diverse cultural backgrounds than ever before. As the population continues to grow, it becomes increasingly important that cultural differences are better understood. Understanding these differences is of even greater importance when core cultural variations (such those found between individualistic and collectivist cultures) are involved. The challenges psychologists face that are associated with cultural differences are complex; therefore, further knowledge is needed pertaining to the implications these differences may have.

Parenting Style Cross-Culturally

Evidence gathered has shown that parental style is an important determinant of several aspects of children's outcomes, such as academic achievement, optimism, confidence, motivation, externalizing problems, and attention problems, etc. (Gadeyne, Ghesquiere & Onghena, 2004; Gonzalez & Wolters, 2006; Lamborn, Mounts, Steinberg & Dombusch, 1991; Strage & Brandt, 1999). Despite the agreed impact of parenting practices on children's development, many questions about parenting style remain unanswered.

Vygotsky's Social Development Theory (1978) and Bronfenbrenner's Social Ecological Perspectives (1979) recognized culture as playing an important role in a child's development. These theories lead us to rethink parenting styles in a cultural context and to question how they may differ across cultural groups (Hill, 1995). Since, several studies have shown a relationship between parenting style and culture (Ang & Goh, 2006; Baldwin, Baldwin & Cole, 1990; Chao,

1994; Garcia & Garcia, 2009; Kagitcibasi, 2005; Leung, Lau & Lam, 1998; Steinber et al., 1994).

Core Cultural Variations

Culture is a "frame of reference that consists of patterns of traditions, beliefs, values, norms, symbols, and meanings that are shared to varying degrees by interacting members of a community" (Ting-Tooney, 1999). The world's cultures differ in many ways, including language, religion, as well as family structures and processes.

Through the administration of 116 000 attitudes and values questionnaires in 50 different countries with 66 nationalities, the very well-cited researcher Hofstede (1980, 1983, 1997) identified four major psychological dimensions along which cultures varied: power-distance, uncertainty-avoidance, masculinity-femininity, and individualism-collectivism. Hofstede demarcates the measure of concern for oneself (individualism) as opposed to concern for the collective to which one belongs (collectivist) as the most important dimension. This dimension examines how cultures differ in the extent to which they value autonomy versus interdependency and emphasizes the differences between the "I" as opposed to the "We" sense of consciousness. Major areas in which collective cultures differ from individualistic cultures are in their individuations, dependency, and intergenerational connectedness. According to Hulei, Zevenbergen & Jacobs (2006), these core cultural variations are propagated via socialization and childrearing since parental practices are rooted in cultural beliefs.

Evidence shows that in North America and Europe, autonomy and separation are far more valued than dependence and interdependence therefore, the sociocultural system is largely individualistic. Those of individualistic societies are more self-reliant and are expected to be

individuated from their families, not necessarily having the same attitudes and values as their parents as they develop (Hofstede, 1980; Tirandis, Bontempo, Villareal, Asai & Lucca, 1988). On the other hand, in such countries as Asia, Africa, and South America, where the sociocultural system is largely collectivistic, children are not encouraged to develop individually from their families and therefore their concept of self is not different from the familial self and identity (Dwairy & Van Sickle, 1996; Triandis, 1990, 1996). Generally speaking, in collectivistic cultures, individuals are less autonomous than their individualistic counterparts, are more dependent on and emotionally connected to their families, and submit to the family authority (Kagitcibasi, 2005; Markus & Kitayama, 1998; Triandis et al., 1988).

That being said, it seems that the relationship between individuation and functioning of the child are inconsistent across cultures. Consequently, since there are differences in socialization goals, differences in parental practices will correspond. For example, it has already been evidenced in certain studies that parenting style and individuation in individualistic societies differ from those in collective societies (Dwairy, 1997a,b., 1998a; Hill, 1995; Markus & Kitayama, 1998; Panagiotopoulou, 2002).

Cultural Differences in Parental Practices

It has been demonstrated that parenting styles are highly influenced by cultural norms and expectations (Forehand & McKinney, 1993; Julian, Mckerny & McKelvey, 1994; Korbin, 1991; Reyome, 1993). Thus far, research conducted in North America has consistently shown that North American parents more-frequently adopt a democratic parenting style (Lamborn et al., 1991; Leung et al., 1998) and this is significantly related to healthy childhood development (e.g., Steinberg, Mounts, Lamborn & Dornbusch, 1991). The children of North American and

democratic parents tend to score higher academically and exhibit more positive psychosocial development (as evidenced on measures) than those of authoritarian or permissive parents (Glasgow, Dornbusch, Troyer, Steinberg & Ritter, 1997; Jones, Forehand & Beach, 200; Steinberg et al., 1994). Democratic parenting style has also been associated with positive outcomes in terms of the child's psychosocial development (Steinberg, Dornbusch & Brown, 1992; Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbusch & Darling, 1992b; Steinberg t al., 1991). Conversely, they obtain a more negative outcome with authoritarian and permissive parenting. Several studies support that both authoritarian and permissive parenting (neglectful in particular) are associated with poorer psychosocial development and academic performance in children (Dorbusch, Ritter, Leiderman, Roberts & Fraleigh, 1987; Steinberg et al., 1992a; Stinberg et al., 1994) and are associated with negative psychosocial outcomes and problems in adulthood (Baumrind, 1991a; Bigner, 1994; Forward, 1989; Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Wenar, 1994; Whitfield, 1987); similar results have also been found in Europe. (e.g., Caplan, Whitmore & Choy, 1989; Kawamura, Frost, & Marmax, 2002; Nguyen, 1998; Pong, Hao, & Gardner, 2005; Zhou & Bankston, 1996).

While this is evidenced in traditionally individualistic societies such as the United States and Europe, in traditionally collective societies such as Asian cultures, authoritarian parenting is the more common style (e.g., Caplan et al., 1989; Kawamura et al., 2002; Nguyen, 1998; Pong et al., 2005; Zhou & Bankston, 1996). Furthermore, although in traditionally individualistic societies authoritarian parenting is largely associated with negative psychosocial outcomes, studies have indicated that this is not always the case in traditionally collective-authoritarian cultures. Some studies among cultures that are considered collectivistic have shown that authoritarian parenting is associated with positive outcomes such as higher academic performance (Chao, 1994; Leung et al., 1998; Steinberg et al., 1992b).

Some explanations offered for these differences is that, parenting styles in traditionally collective societies are not necessarily perceived as negative parental practices by the child being reared (e.g., inflicting, undesirable, etc.) and it is only when it is negatively perceived, such as how authoritarian practices are viewed in traditionally individualistic cultures, that the outcome impairs development. Rohner (1999, 2005) believes that the perceived acceptance-rejection of the youth is the factor that contributes to psychological maladjustment. Two studies conducted by his colleagues in Turkey (Erkman & Rohner, 2006) and Jamaica (Steely & Rohner, 2006) found that parental punishment per-se had little effect on youths' psychological adjustment, but that the youth's perception of parental acceptance was what mediated the relationship between parental punishment and a youth's psychological adjustment. Similarly, as will be demonstrated below, in other cultures such as Arab (Dwairy et al., 2006), Turkish (Kagitcibasi, 2005), Chinese (Chao, 1994) and African American (Randolph, 1995) societies, studies indirectly support that certain cultures demonstrate positive views towards authoritarian parental practices and regard authoritarian style of punishment a duty of the parent.

Cultural Beliefs, Value Systems, and Perceptions of Parental Practices

Within a family, culture can define boundaries, expectations, rules for interaction, ways of defining problems, communication patterns, and specific coping skills (Thomas, 1998). Different cultures emphasize differing values and traditions, and these shape parental beliefs and practices (Keller et al., 2003; Leichtman, Wang & Pillemer, 2003; Ogbu, 1981). Consequently, variations in socialization goals follow (LeVine, 1974; Chao, 1995) and in turn, childrearing practices diversify. What is now becoming increasingly more apparent is that parental practices when applied may have different meanings and considerations in dissimilar cultures. For example,

parental warmth may be a universal concept but the meaning and significance of this belief varies between cultural groups.

The following studies offer diverse examples of how certain cultural views contrast with individualistic beliefs where democratic parenting practices are supported:

Al-Khawaja (as cited in Dwairy, 2008) indicates that Egyptian female students preferred "absolute submission" to parents and favoured children having the same character and morals as their parents.

Authoritarian style punishment is perceived as normal and the duty of parents in several studies conducted in Arab-Muslim cultures (Dwairy, 1997 a, b).

Authoritarian parenting is perceived as associated with positive attributes in parents in the following studies:

Chinese (Chao, 1994), African American (Randolph, 1995), Turkish (Kagitcibasi, 2005) and Arab (Dwairy et al., 2006) cultures associate it with caring and loving parents.

Chao and Sue (1996) claim that among Chinese families it is associated with devotion and willingness to make sacrifices for the child's wellbeing, close involvement with the child, and supportive parental control.

In Korea, parental strictness and control is associated with parental warmth and a low level of neglect (Rohner & Pettengill, 1985).

There is a growing understanding that cross-cultural investigations of parents' self-reported attitudes, values, and behaviours can provide important information about differences in parental

practices (Rubin & Chung, 2006). The previously mentioned studies demarcate core cultural differences and diversity in beliefs regarding parenting practices. It is therefore important to gain a better understating of how these are transmitted in parental practices and styles. As previously mentioned, before we begin to understand practices we must first understand the perceptions that shape them. A cross-cultural study could help identify whether there are differences in these perceptions in dissimilar cultures. By studying emerging adulthood, the present investigation will also take into account the perceptions of the future generation of parents. Comparing traditionally individualistic (Canada) and collectivistic (China) societies is a particularly attractive focus due to the sharp contrast between the orientations of these two cultures.

Gender and Demographics of the Respondent

Although there is much evidence that shows that culture plays a significant role in shaping parental practices, it should not be assumed that the primary correlates are related to culture. All too often, the source of differences is attributed automatically to culture without exploring other possible sources of variations. Some studies have stated that a person's gender can influence their perception. For example, Mussweiler & Forster (2000) demonstrated that women are more likely than men to perceive a behaviour as aggressive. Studies conducted regarding parental practices and preferred parental style support a variation between males and females (Dor & Cohen-Fridel, 2010; Varela et al., 2004). Further support of differential practices according to gender are offered in studies indicating differential parental roles between mothers' and fathers' and attitudes towards traditional parenting practices (Barry, Bernard & Beitel, 2009; Espiritu, 1999; Keller, 1997; Ogbu, 1981; Saraswathi & Pai, 1997). Consideration will therefore be given to the gender of respondents as it is believed to have important implications in the context of this study.

The Age Paradigm and Gender of the Child Being Reared

Although extensive studies have been conducted on parental practices, few have focused on differential practices according to the child's characteristics.

There is a need to explore the age paradigm in the context of cross-cultural parental practices; following Piaget's developmental stage theory, Levine (1974) proposed that differences in parenting practices may differ according to the child's developmental stage. A study by Varela et al. (2004) indicated that age was a significant contributing predictor of parenting practices. Furthermore, some studies have shown specific cultural parental beliefs attached to the age paradigm. For example, Ho (1986) studied Chinese beliefs about childhood and reported the belief that very young children are not yet capable of understanding and therefore parents are indulgent towards them until they reach the age of understanding (dongshi) at which point strict discipline is enforced. Similar views are also shared in India (Saraswathi & Pai, 1997; Sinha, 1997). Literature on Indian socialization suggests that childrearing practices vary according to the age and gender of the child (Saraswathi & Dutta, 1988; Saraswathi & Kaur, 1993). Despite suggestive evidence that maturation is an important determinant of parental practices (discipline), thus far the age of the child being reared has generally been neglected in the research pertaining to parental style.

Studies on parental practices and gender of child being reared are relatively more common. Largely, the literature supports that parents treat and socialize their children differently according to specific cultural gender roles (e.g., Diaz-Guerrero & Rodriguez de Diaz, 1993; Dwairy & Meshnar, 2006). Yet, it is still uncertain whether parents give preference to one parenting style over another based on the gender of the child (Buriel, 1993; Berndt, Cheung, Lau, Hau & Lew,

1992; Carson, Chowdhury, Perry & Pati, 1999; Samaniego & Gonzales, 1999), particularly in a cross-cultural context.

Relationships between parental practices and child gender have been somewhat unclear in traditionally individualistic and collectivistic societies (Berndt et al., 1992; Carson et al., 1999; Carter & Woitkiewiez, 2000). Furthermore, very little is known pertaining to how the age paradigm of the child being reared influences cross-cultural parental practices. Perceptions regarding desirable parental practices may be dependent upon the children's developmental stage; little is known about how the child's age may influence parental practices. However, the previously mentioned studies lead us to believe that there would be differences in the perception of desirable parental styles according to the age and the sex of the child. In considering these two factors, the study will attempt to shed light on the contributing factors of these weakly explored variables. Therefore, additional consideration will be given to gender and age of the child being reared as these are factors that warrant specific attention given both their implications and the fact that they have rarely been considered, especially in a cross-cultural context.

The Present Study

Purpose

Studying the perception of desirable parental style will help in not only providing theoretical information but may also shed some light on their practical and clinical implications. Psychologists would benefit from a deeper understanding of the implications of cultural differences associated with clinical practice given that societies are becoming increasingly more multicultural. This study gathered knowledge on cross-cultural perceptions of desirable parental practices and intended to help direct further research aimed at understanding how perceptions

regarding parenting may have clinical implications (e.g., assumptions, approaches, help in understanding how to better assist with particular parental practices while respecting differing cultural views, and a possible better understanding of how to foresee future parental practices). Studying a population of emerging adults was considered a useful resource to help in the development of well-founded enrichment and preparation programs that take into account different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Most of the available parental models are based on Western concepts that may not accurately reflect the processes and views of other cultures. "The Western culture's majority childrearing practices have served as the standard against which all other parenting practices have been compared" (Bonfenbrenner, 1985). Consequently, disappointing outcomes of implemented parenting intervention programs may reflect the fact that the programs do not consider the belief systems important to families of different cultures. Therefore, obtaining information about the perception of desirable parental practices would be beneficial, as perceptions are what shape actual parental practices. This could provide helpful information that may assist in developing parental models that more accurately represent the diversity of cultures.

In summary, the purpose of this study was to gather information that could assist in tailoring effective and culturally-sensitive interventions, thus enhancing the cross-cultural competence of our human service professionals.

Culture

For the purpose of this study cross-cultural differences were examined by comparing Chinese and Canadian participants. Sorkhabi (2005) found, after a review of previous studies, that all

three parenting styles were found in both collective and individualistic cultures. He thus concluded that Baumrind's typology is applicable across these cultures.

Collecting Canadian participant data allowed for insight into perceptions regarding parental practices in a traditionally individualist society. This information will be particularly useful as Canadian immigration rates are growing substantially; as a result, the country is rapidly diversifying culturally. In fact, Statistics Canada's The Daily indicates in Population Growth: Migratory Increase Overtakes Natural Increase that by 2031, migratory increase could account for more than 80% of Canada's population growth.

Chinese culture is considered to be particularly interesting for a study of this nature for a variety of reasons. Firstly, as commonly known, China represents a large proportion of the world's population; encompassing roughly a quarter of all inhabitants. Secondly, Asia (China in particular) represents a large source of immigrants. Statistic Canada's The Immigration and Ethnocultural Diversity in Canada Analytical Document of the 2011 National Household Survey indicates that Asia, as in the 2001-2005 Census, continues to remain Canada's largest source of immigrants, representing roughly 56.9% of those who settled in Canada between 2006-2011. Moreover, China was reported to be the second leading country of birth among people who immigrated to Canada between 2006 and 2011 and represented 10.5% of newcomers. Therefore, the predominance of Chinese, both as an overall population and as an immigrant population, increases the likelihood of interactions occurring between cultures and intensifies the importance of gaining a better understanding of the implications of cultural differences.

China may be considered particularly interesting as it is undergoing drastic changes (Chen, 2000; Quoss & Wen, 1995). It is considered to have "modernized" since 1949, after the People's

Republic of China was established, at which point the government made a great effort to change fundamental social relationships amongst individuals and the family, and other social systems through government policies and initiatives (e.g., one child policy, parenting schools). These changes have inevitably affected family interactions (e.g., changes in family composition, parent-child relationships). Furthermore, as previously mentioned, Western ideologies have had a significant impact on other countries, including China. In particular, ideologies pertaining to the value of individual freedom-of-choice may have a powerful effect within other cultures via the changes they encourage within families. Already, some studies support that the power structure of the Chinese family is moving from a patriarchal structure to a more equalitarian one (Tseng & Wu, 1985; Zhangling, 1990).

Lastly, there is evidence of sharp, contrasting perceptions regarding the socializing values and parenting beliefs in the Chinese culture. Chinese culture is considered to be a traditionally collectivist society and as previously mentioned, there are contrasting views (perceptions) regarding parenting in these societies in comparison to individualistic cultures. Studies indicating that Chinese Authoritarian practices are associated with caring and loving parents, close involvement with the child, devotion and willingness to make sacrifices for the child's wellbeing, and supportive parental control, are amongst those supporting these contrasting views (Chao, 1994; Chao and Sue, 1996). Further supporting differentiating views for China in particular, are those that support that Chinese childrearing is congruent with Confucian philosophy (a fundamental Chinese philosophy that has existed for centuries) (Tang, 2006). Confucianism is believed to influence childrearing practices and the qualities that parents instill in their children (e.g., authority; restraint in emotional expression; interdependency) (Ho, 1994; Tang, 1992). It is also believed to have a significant influence on Chinese family structures and

encourages the continuation of these traits to establish family harmony; expectations are that children will develop in accordance with its values (Ho, 1986; Ho, 1994). In congruence with Confucianism philosophy, there are beliefs associated with crucial stages in development such as the "age of understanding" (Ho, 1986; Wolf, 1978). This will be further discussed in the following sections.

Crucial Junctures in Child Development and Parenting

Some researchers have noted shifts regarding parenting at crucial junctures in child development. In congruence with Confucianism philosophy (the previously mentioned fundamental and centuries-old Chinese philosophy), researchers have noted a shift in parenting during a specific age that they call the "age of understanding". This shift has been observed to occur at approximately 4-6 years old. Before this juncture parents indulge their children (meeting physical needs and allowing freedoms) until they reach the age of understanding (Ho, 1986; Tang, 1992; Wolf, 1978); before this period (called ying-erh shih-ch'l) there is no systematic training or discipline. Following the age of understanding (once they have reached the age of being able to begin to comprehend strict discipline), Confucianism philosophy advises that parents should induce stricter cultural expectations and enforce strict discipline to teach impulse control and proper behaviour as well as familial duties (Ho, 1986). When they reach this age, children are considered ready to begin preparing to fulfill social obligations, adult family roles, and are taught filial piety (emphasizing the behaviour of obedience and how children should behave toward their parents and ancestors). Therefore, it is possible and some research support that parents demonstrate significant changes in childrearing behaviours after the "age of understanding" has been reached (Ho, 1986; Tang, 1992).

Similar conjunctures have been noted in individualistic cultures that coincide with the philosophical Chinese belief of "age of understanding". Winnicott (1960) said that children's needs should be met before a child reaches a certain understanding (before 4-6 years of age), and that if a mother is "good enough", as judged through the provision of adequate conditions for healthy development, then the child develops a "true self" (a unique and spontaneous sense of self). If these needs fail to be met, and the child is expected to follow the mother's direction, he will develop a "false sense of self". The development of a "false self" results in the child complying with the mother's wishes and consequently having to hide his or her own true self. Malher's theory of object constancy and developmental stage of separation-individuation is similar in the belief that parents should be attuned to the child before a certain age (Mahler, Bergman & Pine, 1975). If done successfully the child begins to form a more integrated mental representation of the mother once the period of object constancy has been reached, and the child will thus be able to self-comfort even in the absence of the parent. The child will become less dependent on the parent for nurturing and safety, and the memories of parenting will be reassuring and comforting when feelings of frustration or anger arise. After that, the parent's style should go from lenient to more strict; thus the child will begin to learn to restrict their behaviours and comply with parental standards (self-restraint).

Following these conjunctures, perceptions of parenting practices may differ depending on whether they are considered desirable, which is likely to be a by-product of cultural differences (e.g., collectivist vs. individualistic societies). Some studies support a change in American-Chinese children's behaviour (less self-assertive and more interdependent) in association with Confucian philosophy (Tang, 2006). However, research is needed to examine whether changes occur in parental practices during the developmental process (Tang, 2006). This can begin to be

understood through the examination of whether a shift in the desirability of parental practices as children grow older and approach adulthood occurs. Examining and comparing children within the age (4-6 years old) as opposed to well beyond the age (adolescence) of this conjuncture is a way to understand whether there is an age paradigm associated with the perception of desirable parental practices.

Unique Contributions

Previous research has not focused on the <u>perception</u> of parental styles. The focus has mainly been on measuring <u>experiences</u> with parental style by obtaining information directly from the parent or from their children. Although understanding parental perceptions is a prerequisite to understanding parental practices, it has almost entirely not been examined (through an extensive literature search, only one study conducted on perception/attitudes of parental practices was found). Therefore, the proposed study is exploratory in nature and its unique contribution is that it examined <u>perceptions</u> of desirable parental practices as opposed to <u>experience</u> with parental practices.

Furthermore, the perception of the desirability of parental styles was examined in emerging adults; the aforementioned newly identified developmental stage. Understanding the perceptions of emerging adults may provide useful information about the future generation of parents and what kind of practices they are likely to implement. Since perceptions influence behaviour, it can be assumed that they will be more likely to implement practices that they perceive to be desirable and less likely to implement those they do not perceive as desirable.

Variations in perceptions of desirable parental style are also important to acknowledge because of their implications. There is a growing understanding that cross-cultural investigations

demarcate core cultural differences and diversity in beliefs regarding parenting practices. A cross-cultural study would help identify whether there are differences in these perceptions in dissimilar cultures. Comparing results between Canada and China is a particularly attractive focus of investigation due to the sharp contrast evidenced in literature between the traditionally individualist and collectivistic orientations of these two cultures (Gabrenya, Wang & Latane, 1985; Hui & Villareal, 1989).

Although there is evidence showing that culture plays a significant role in shaping parental practices, it should not be assumed that the primary correlates are related to culture. The sex of an individual has been shown to influence a person's perception and studies conducted regarding experience with parental practices support a variation between males and females. Consideration was therefore given to gender of respondents as it is believed to have important implications in the context of this study.

Relationships between parental practices and the gender of the child have been somewhat unclear in both individualistic and collectivistic society. Moreover, very little is known pertaining to how the age paradigm of the child being reared influences parental practices. The present study attempted to shed light on whether these weakly explored child characteristics are contributing factors. Therefore, additional consideration was given to gender and age of the child being reared as these factors warrant specific attention given their implications, and the fact that they have rarely been considered, especially in a cross-cultural context.

Hypotheses

Given the novelty of the present research topic (perceptions as opposed to actual practice), it was difficult to propose precise, directional hypotheses that can be supported by available empirical evidence. However, in the face of these challenges, it was plausible to hypothesize that the perception of desirability of parental practices would differ based on culture. Previous research supports differing socialization goals between these two cultures and it has been well established that traditionally individualistic and collectivistic cultures practice different parental styles. The only study found to examine the perception of desirability of parental practices indicates that the views of some traditionally collectivistic cultures are fading from what has been traditionally practiced in that culture. Therefore, it was hypothesized that a similar trend may be observed where Chinese emerging adults are likely to perceive less traditional parental practices as desirable.

It was also hypothesized that the differences in perceptions of desirable parental practices would be dependent on the child's characteristics and would vary cross-culturally. It is postulated that in the midst of the previously mentioned developmental conjunctures, participants of both cultures would perceive it to be desirable to be indulgent towards younger children, leaning towards the permissive style of parenting for children who are closer in age to a time in development where the child most profits from being cossetted. However, as they grow older and approach adulthood, children are considered ready and are expected to reflect the values of their culture. Therefore, there may be a higher desirability to carry-out parental practices supporting the socialization goals and childrearing practices valued by their culture.

As per what has been established by previous research, North Americans traditionally rear their children according to democratic practices, while in China, authoritarian practices are more common. Therefore in Chinese culture, it was hypothesized that the preferred parental style for adolescents would be that of authoritarian practices given that it is what has been traditionally practiced in that culture. Furthermore, it coincides with the centuries-old Confucian philosophy that supports the importance of strict discipline in order to prepare children to fulfill their social obligations and adult family roles, it is also a time where they are taught filial piety (emphasizes the behaviour of obedience and how children should behave toward their parents and ancestors). In contrast, it was hypothesized that for Canadian participants, the preferred parental practices for adolescents would be that of the traditional democratic parental practices. Research has shown that the democratic style is consistently practiced in individualistic cultures where autonomy, separation, self-reliance, and individuation from the family are valued.

Furthermore, previous research supports that parents treat and socialize their children differently according to specific cultural gender roles. It was therefore predicted that certain parental practices would be favoured over others based on the gender of the child. It was also predicted that this may vary cross-culturally.

Lastly, it was postulated that results would vary according to sex of the participant. Studies have demonstrated that gender influences perceptions and supports variations between genders regarding attitudes towards traditional parenting practices as well as parental roles.

Methodology

Participants

The participants for this study were students recruited from universities in China and Canada. The majority of participants were obtained through in-class recruitment, wherein a researcher introduced the study and questionnaire to the classroom. Participants from China were from Tongji University and the classrooms approached were those that offered an English course; this avoided translation issues and limited problems regarding language proficiency. Most of the Canadian participants were from Laurentian University, a northern rural University. Obtaining the proposed number of male Canadian participants proved to be a challenge; therefore, a small number of participants (10 males) were recruited from the University of Ottawa, an southern urban Universtiy through the use of a poster advertising the study, and by asking interested participants to contact the researcher.

Only participants who were born and raised in one of the two specific cultural groups, either Chinese or Canadian, and who fit the description of emerging adults (those aged 18-30) were retained. A total of 225 emerging adults participated: 63 Canadian female, 41 Canadian male, 61 Chinese female and 60 Chinese male. Upon agreement to participate in the study, participants were distributed one of the four versions of the Parental Questionnaire (the content of the questionnaire is described in the measure section below).

Measure

Baumrind's three parental styles were used in the study: authoritarian, democratic, and permissive. Buri (1991) explains that Baumrind's model is the most efficient for gathering

empirical evidence because of its precise typology and multidimensional characteristics. Hence, Maccoby and Martin's (1983) fourth parental style, permissive neglectful, was not included in this study.

Participants' perceived desirable parental styles were measured using a Likert scale; they were asked to select the degree to which they agree or disagree with each statement they read (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3= neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree). A high score on this measure signified that the parental style was perceived as favourable; in contrast, a low score signified that the parental style was not perceived as favourable. The parental questionnaire employed was a modified version of one used in the Assessment of the Validity of Parenting Constructs Using the Multitrait-Multimethod Model (Villar, Luengo, Gomez-Fraguela & Romero, 2006). The questionnaire was first altered by Judy-Anne Goudreault (2007) and suits the purpose of this study as it had been modified to measure the perception of desirable parental style as opposed to one's personal experience regarding parental practices (not necessarily what someone does or has experienced, but what they perceive to be "best practice").

Judy-Anne Goudreault (2007) first modified the questionnaire to have an equal number of items per parental style (3 items per style) given that the original questionnaire by Villar et al. (2006) contained an unequal number of items per style. The Villar et al. (2006) questionnaire contained 4 items for the permissive parental style, 2 items for the democratic style, and 3 items for the authoritative style (Appendix A). One of the items pertaining to the permissive parental style of the Villar et al. (2006) questionnaire was therefore excluded so that the study could include an equal number of items for each parental style (3 items per style). An additional item pertaining to the authoritarian/democratic style was derived from the Parental Authority Questionnaires (PAQ)

(Buri, 1991) and added to the Villar et al. (2006) questionnaire so that it would include 3 items as opposed to only two items; the item used from the PAQ is item 12 (Appendix B).

Additionally, slight modifications to the wording used by Gaudreault (2007) were made in order to fit the purpose of the current study; the questions were modified to factor in the sex and age of the child. The following is an example to better explain the modified version of the parental questionnaire. For Item 2 of the Villar et al. (2006) questionnaire: "My mother (father) is always threatening me with punishments that in the end she (he) doesn't carry out". The item was modified to introduce the sex and age of the child: "The parents of a 5 year old boy sometimes threaten him with punishments and in the end, they do not carry out". All 9 items were altered in the same way by either including the word "boy" or "girl" and by including the age of "5" or "16". Furthermore, the wording of items 4, 5, and 8 were changed from a positive slant to a negative slant (REVERSE coding). For example, the item reading "When a 5 year old boy and his parents do not agree, the parents let him do what he wants" was modified to "When a 5 year old boy and his parents do not agree, the parents **do not** let him do what he wants". The purpose of this modification was to ensure that the participants read every item attentively and did not answer the questionnaire mechanically. Item 3 already had a negative slant in the Villar et al. (2006) original questionnaire.

Lastly, the instructions and the items of the questionnaire were altered and names for the child were added in order to make the questionnaire more personable and applicable to a real life setting. In order to minimize the impact of meaning in given names, they were chosen among the ten most common names for that cultural group (Canadian surnames were chosen from the Today's Parent website and the Chinese surnames were chosen from the Chinesenames.org. website). For example the previous instructions were as follows: "Read each statement carefully.

Circle the number that represents best your opinion regarding the behaviour of the parent (1 represents strongly disagree and 5 represents strongly agree). The statements 1 to 9 involve a situation with a 16 year old boy and his parents". The altered version used in this study had the following: "Liam/An is a 16 year old boy. The following are statements of how Liam/An's mother and father handle raising their teenage son. Based on your own opinion, rate the degree to which you are in agreement or disagreement with their parental practices (1 being strongly disagree to 5 being strongly agree)". Names and descriptive adjectives were also added to the 9 items. For example, item 1 "The parents of a 5 year old girl sometimes threaten her with punishments and in the end, they do not carry out" was changed to "Emma/Bi's mother and father sometimes threaten their little girl with punishments and in the end, they do not carry them out".

The first page of the two page questionnaire contained demographic questions where the participant was to provide their sex, age, the culture they identify with, the country they were born in, whether they were born and raised in the country in which they completed the questionnaire (Canada or China) and if not, how many years had they been living in that country, number of years of post-secondary education, whether they themselves were parents, and what type of home they were raised in (e.g., nuclear, lone families, etc.).

Instructions on how to complete the questionnaire were provided at the top of the second page. They were the same for every questionnaire but the name, age, and sex of the child varied. The instructions varied in the following way: "*X_1 is a X_2 year old X_3. The following are statements of how X_1's mother and father handle raising their X_4 X_5. Based on your own opinion, rate the degree to which you are in agreement or disagreement with their parental practices (1 being strongly disagree to 5 being strongly agree)*" The bolded information was changed in order to

include: X_1 name of the child either Emma/Bi, Olivia/Ai, Ethan/Bo or Liam/An, X_2 either **5 year old** or **16 year of old; X_3** either **boy** or **girl; X_4** either **little** or **teenage;** and **X_5** either **boy/son** or **girl/daughter**. Following the instructions were the nine items, with each item accompanied by a 5 point Likert scale. The 9 items that followed were also presented in four versions to include both categories of gender and age. See Appendix C for the parental questionnaire with the first page containing the demographic questions followed by the four versions of the second page.

Procedure

A total of 225 participants were included in the study. Most participants were approached in a classroom setting (215 total). For classroom administration, questionnaires were given collectively to all students who had shown interest. However, given the challenges met in obtaining the required number of male Canadian participants, 10 of the participants from that category were administered the questionnaire individually after they expressed their interest in participating via email; these participants obtained the email address from the advertisement posters.

All 225 participants followed the same procedure. Name, age, and sex of the child were the only aspects of the questionnaire that varied, and this was to include both categories of the child's characteristics (gender and age). The researcher in Canada and China (an English professor at Tongji University) followed the same instructions (the examiner in China was given a letter of instructions on how to introduce the study to the class, see Appendix E). All participants signed a consent form (Appendix D) before completing their randomly assigned version of the questionnaire (Appendix C). They began by filling in the demographic information on the first page. Participants then read the instructions on the top of the second page and responded to each

of the following 9 items by selecting the degree to which they agreed to the statement on the

Likert scale. The following is an example of one of the items of the questionnaire.

> Olivia/Ai's mother and father must establish some basic rules that must be respected by their teenage daughter.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

Experimental Design and Variables

For this study, the dependent variable was the perception of desirability of parental style as measured by a Likert Scale of all 9 items of the Parental questionnaire. There were 5 independent variables, four of which are between subject factors: Culture of the respondent (Canadians living in Canada, Chinese living in China), Sex of the respondent, Sex of the (target) child and Age of the (target) child. The parental style is a 3-level, within-subject factor: Authoritarian, Democratic, and Permissive. It is therefore a 2x2x2x2x3 experimental design.

Results

Table 1 *Means (and standard deviations) of perception scores according to the parental style, the age, and country of the respondent and sex and age of the target child*

	Sex and Age of the Target Child			
	Boy		Girl	
	5 years	**16 years**	**5 years**	**16 years**
China				
Male				
Authoritarian	2.22 (.75)	2.0 (.56)	2.31 (.66)	2.04 (.7)
Democratic	4.31 (.32)	4.18 (.52)	4.18 (.6)	4.18 (.62)
Permissive	2.76 (.53)	2.69 (.7)	2.76 (.64)	2.56 (.54)
Female				
Authoritarian	2.0 (.56)	1.84 (.63)	2.15 (.71)	2.13 (.64)
Democratic	4.13 (.57)	4.24 (.6)	4.23 (.43)	4.13 (.78)
Permissive	2.67 (.53)	2.53 (.57)	2.58 (.61)	2.69 (.48)
Canada				
Male				
Authoritarian	3.53 (.36)	3.18 (.38)	3.03 (.92)	3.1 (.59)
Democratic	4.2 (.42)	4.06 (.29)	4.07(.52)	4.2 (.39)
Permissive	2.1 (.55)	2.18 (.35)	2.2 (.53)	2.53 (.57)
Female				
Authoritarian	3.53 (.57)	3.27 (.61)	3.11 (.77)	3.02 (.84)
Democratic	4.43 (.42)	4.36 (.43)	4.07 (.46)	4.56 (.36)
Permissive	2.14 (.6)	2.13 (.45)	2.33 (.62)	2.13 (.44)

An ANOVA 2x2x2x2x3 (country *by* sex of the respondent *b*y age of the child *by* sex of the child *by* parental style) was computed on the rating scores, with repeated measures for parental style. Levene's Test showed that for each of the three parental style perceptions, the error variance was equal across all level combinations of the between-participants factors: $F(15, 209) = 1.10$, $p = .35$ for authoritarian style , $F(15, 209) = 1.26$, $p = .23$ for democratic style, and $F(15, 209) = .76$, $p = .73$ for permissive style. Box's homogeneity tests indicated that the observed covariance

matrices of the dependent variables were equal across groups: Box's M = 117.11, $F(90, 27290)$ = 1.18, $p = .12$. Mauchly's test showed that sphericity can be assumed for the within-subject factor Parental Style: Mauchly's W = .98, $X(2) = 2.66$, $p = .26$.

There was a strong and significant main effect for Style $F(2, 418) = 538.09$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .72$. The multiple comparisons with Bonferroni adjustment showed that all the comparisons were significant at $p < .001$. As Figure 1 shows, the democratic style is perceived as the most desirable while the authoritarian style is perceived as less desirable, and the permissive style even least desirable.
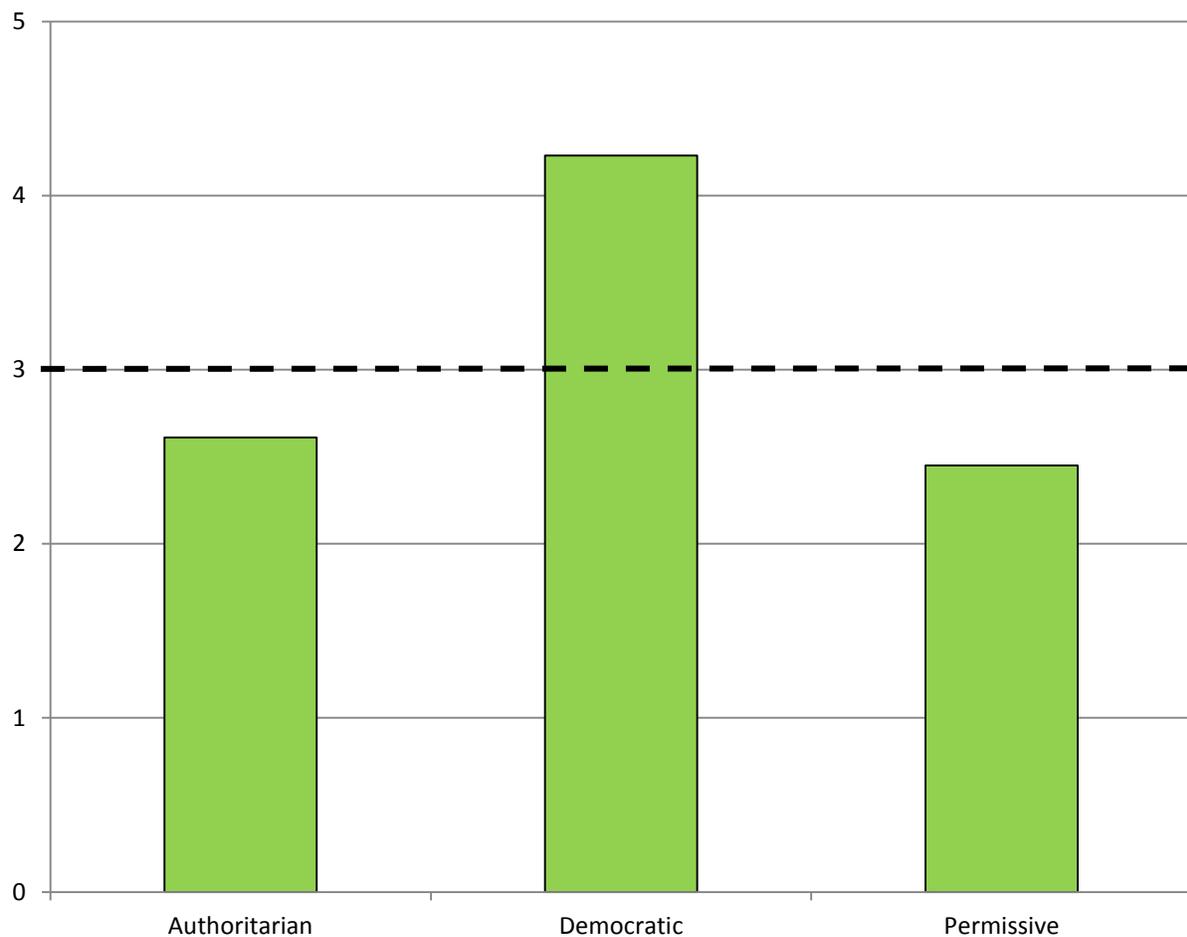
Figure 1 *Mean comparison of the perception of desirability of parental styles.*

There was a weaker significant main effect for Country, $F(1, 209) = 43.79$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .17$.

Table 2 shows the means of perception scores of parental styles for country of the respondent.

Table 2 *Means (and standard deviations) of perception scores of parental styles for country of the respondent*

	Authoritarian	Democratic	Permissive
China	2.09	4.2	2.65
Canada	3.22	4.24	2.22

However, because Country is a relational factor and our samples are not representative, it is not interesting to interpret its main effect. It is the interaction between this factor and other factors that is important. All the other main effects were not significant and these non-significant main effects statistics are presented in Appendix F.

There was a moderate significant 2-way Style*Country interaction, $F(2, 418) = 91.87$ $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .31$, and a weak 3-way Style*Country*Sex (of the child) interaction, $F(2, 418) = 3.73$, $p = .025$, $\eta^2 = .02$. All the other interactions were not significant and these Non-Significant Interactions statistics are presented in Appendix G.

The following simple effect analyses were carried out for the significant interactions.

The Simple Effects of the Style*Country Interaction

The simple effect analysis of Country

The analysis showed that the difference between the two countries was significant for the authoritarian style, $F(1, 209) = 160.78$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .44$ and for the permissive style $F(1, 209) = 33.69$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .14$, but not for the democratic style, $F(1, 209) = .43$, $p = .52$.

As Figure 2 shows, on a 5-point scale with the middle point being 3, both Chinese and Canadians rated the democratic style as the most positive and they both rated the permissive style more negatively, with the Canadians rating it even more negatively than the Chinese. Moreover, the Chinese rated the authoritarian style more negatively then the Canadians.
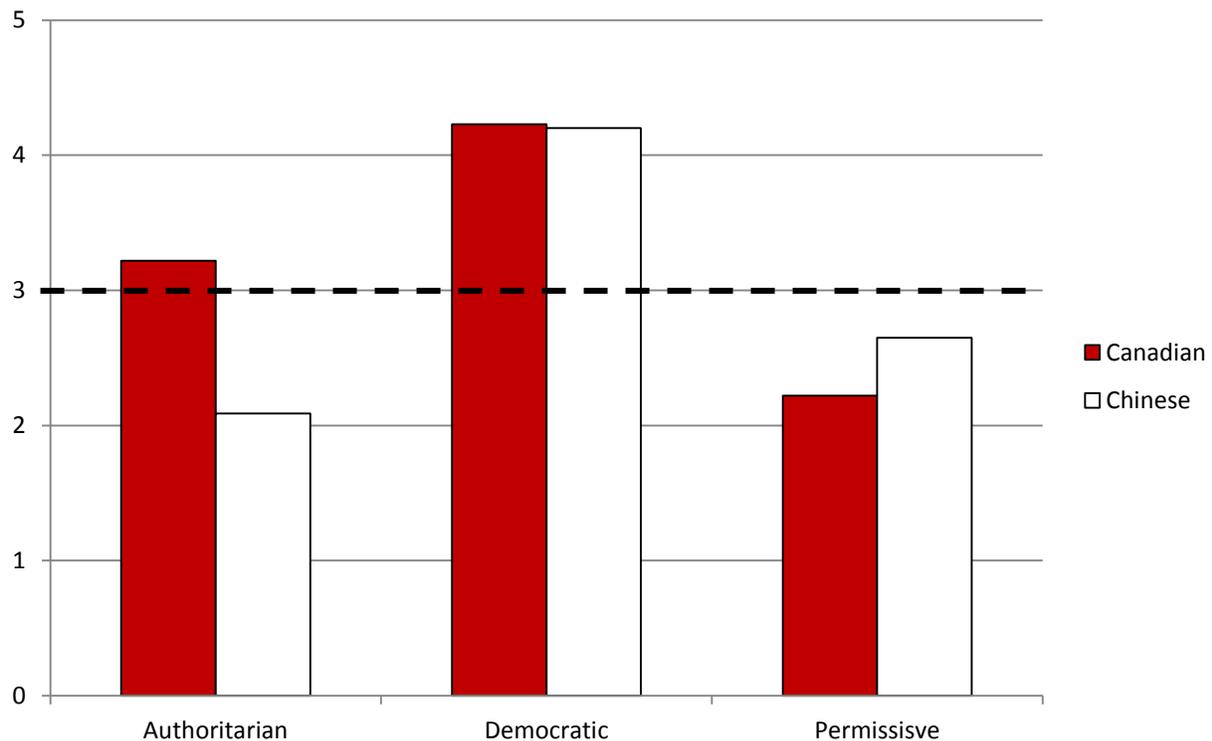
Figure 2 *Mean comparison of the desirability of practices between cultures for each parental style.*

The simple effect analysis of Style

The simple effects of Style were significant for both Chinese and Canadian participants. All the multiple comparisons with Bonferroni adjustment ($p < .01$) were significant. As Figure 3 shows, the Canadians rated both the democratic and the authoritarian styles as more desirable, with the democratic style being significantly more desirable, while the Chinese participants rated the democratic style the most desirable, but they rated both the authoritarian and the permissive styles more negatively, with the authoritarian style being even more negative.
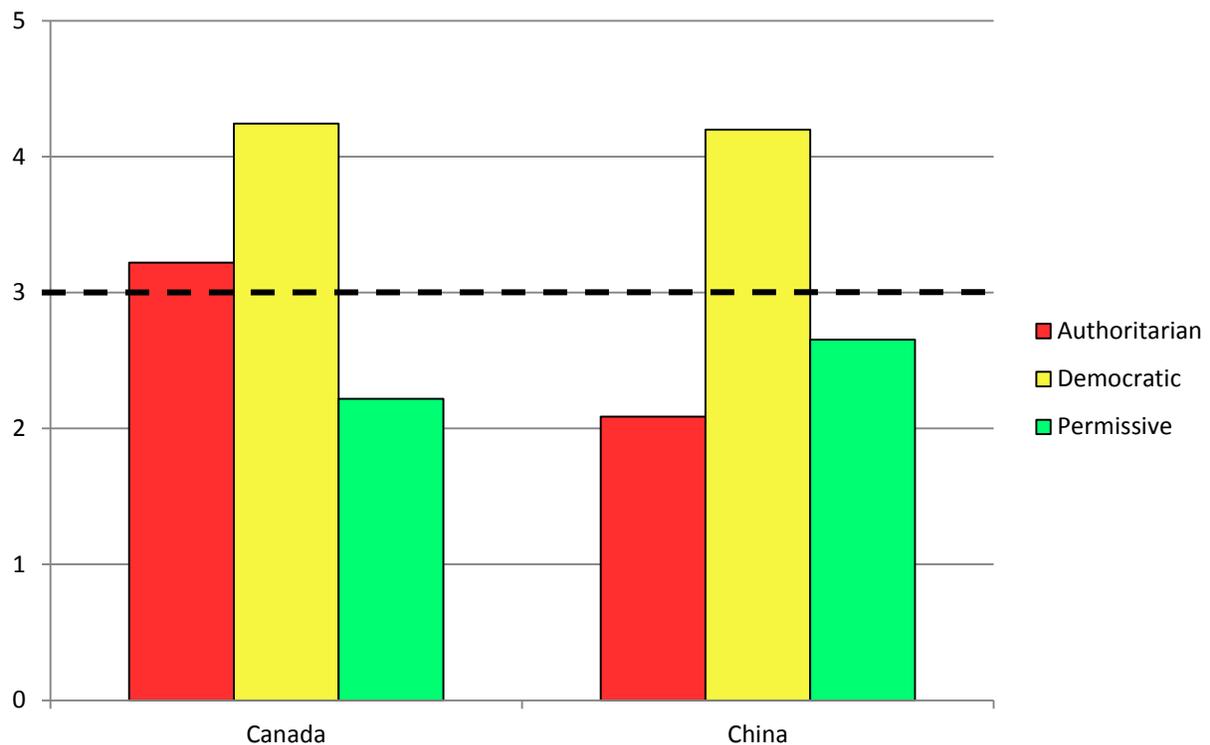
Figure 3. *Mean comparison between the perception of desirability of parental styles for each culture.*

The Analysis of the Style*Country*Sex of the Target Child Interaction

The simple effects of Country

The simple effect analysis for Country showed that when the target child is a girl, the difference between the two countries was significant for the authoritarian style, $F(1, 209) = 51.01$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .20$ and for the permissive style, $F(1, 209) = 10.68$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .05$, but not for the democratic style, $F(1, 209) = .21$, $p = .65$. As Figure 4 shows, both the Canadians and the Chinese rated the democratic style as the most positive, but the Canadians rated the authoritarian style as more positive, while the Chinese rated it as more negative. Both Canadians and Chinese rated the permissive style as a more negatively, with the Canadians being somewhat more negative than the Chinese.
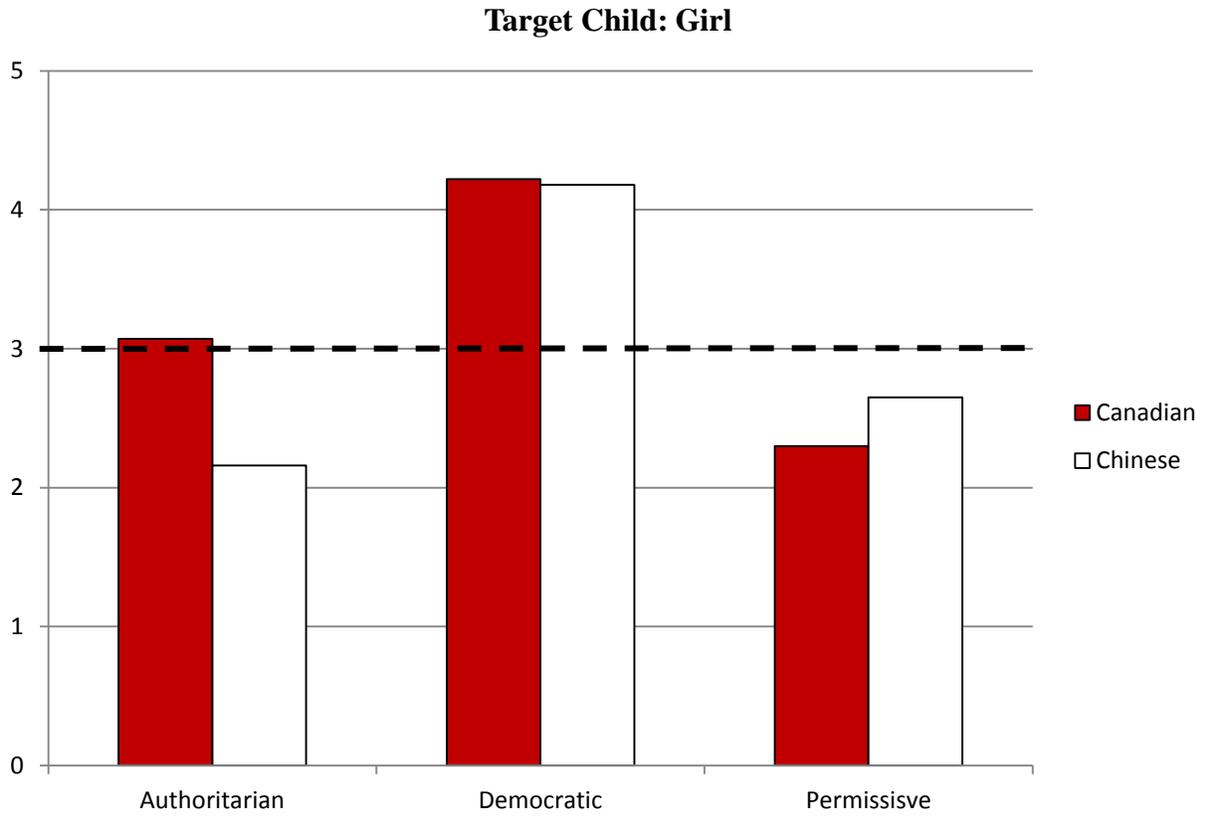
Target Child: Girl

Figure 4 *Girl target child mean comparison of desirability of parental practices between cultures for each parental style.*

When the target child is a boy, the difference between the two countries was significant for the authoritarian style, $F(1, 209) = 116.59$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .36$ and for the permissive style, $F(1, 209) = 24.48$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .11$ but not for the democratic style, $F(1, 209) = .63$, $p = .64$. As figure 5 shows, both the Canadians and the Chinese rated the democratic style as the most positive, but the Canadians rated the authoritarian more positively than the Chinese participants. Both Canadians and Chinese rated the permissive as more negatively, with the Canadians being more negative than the Chinese.
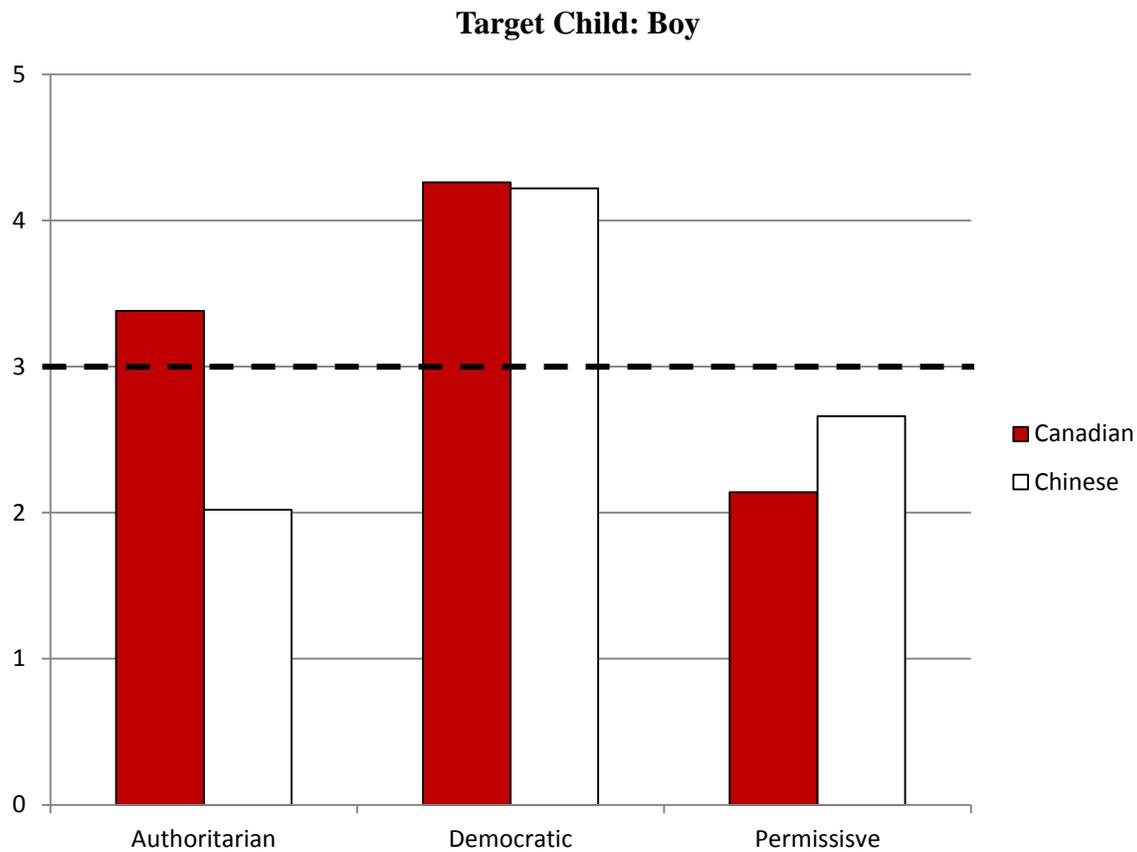
Figure 5 *Boy target child mean comparison of desirability of parental practices between cultures for each parental style.*

The simple effects of the Sex of the Target Child

The analysis of the simple effect for the sex of the target child shows that for Canadian participants, there was a significant difference in the rating of authoritarian style for boys and girls, $F(1, 209) = 5.56$, $p = .02$, $\eta^2 = .03$, but not in the rating of the democratic style $F(1, 209) = .14$, $p = .71$, nor in the rating of the permissive style, $F(1, 209) = 2.06$, $p = .15$. As Figure 6 shows, Canadians rated the democratic style as the most positive and the permissive style as more negative both for boys and girls, but they rated the authoritarian style significantly more positive for boys than for girls.
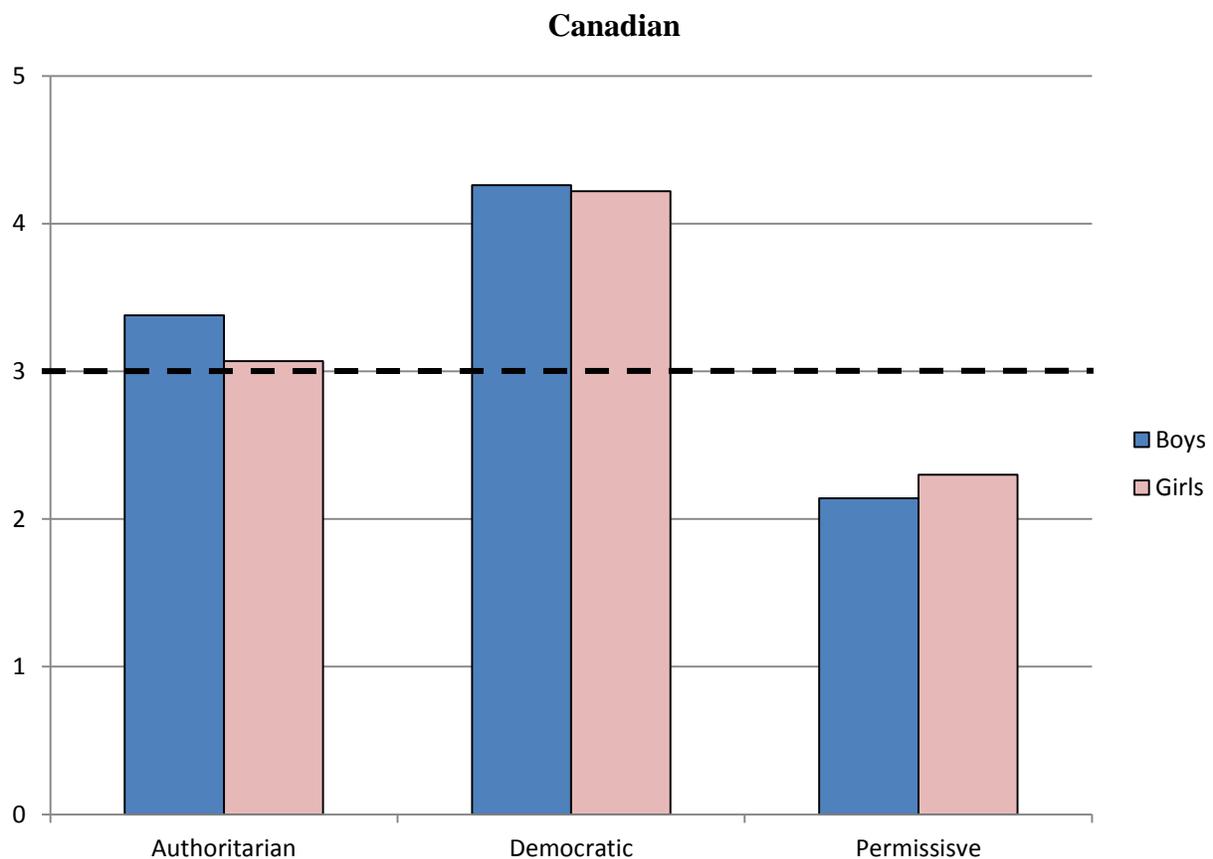
Figure 6 *Canadian mean comparison of the desirability of practices between the sex of target child for each parental style.*

For the Chinese participants, there was no significant difference between the ratings for boys and for girls for the authoritarian style, $F(1, 209) = 1.40$, $p = .24$, nor for the democratic style $F(1, 209) = .16$, $p = .24$, nor for the permissive style, $F(1, 209) = .02$, $p = .88$. As Figure 7 shows, the Chinese rated the democratic style as the most positive, and the authoritarian style and the permissive style as more negative for both boys and girls.
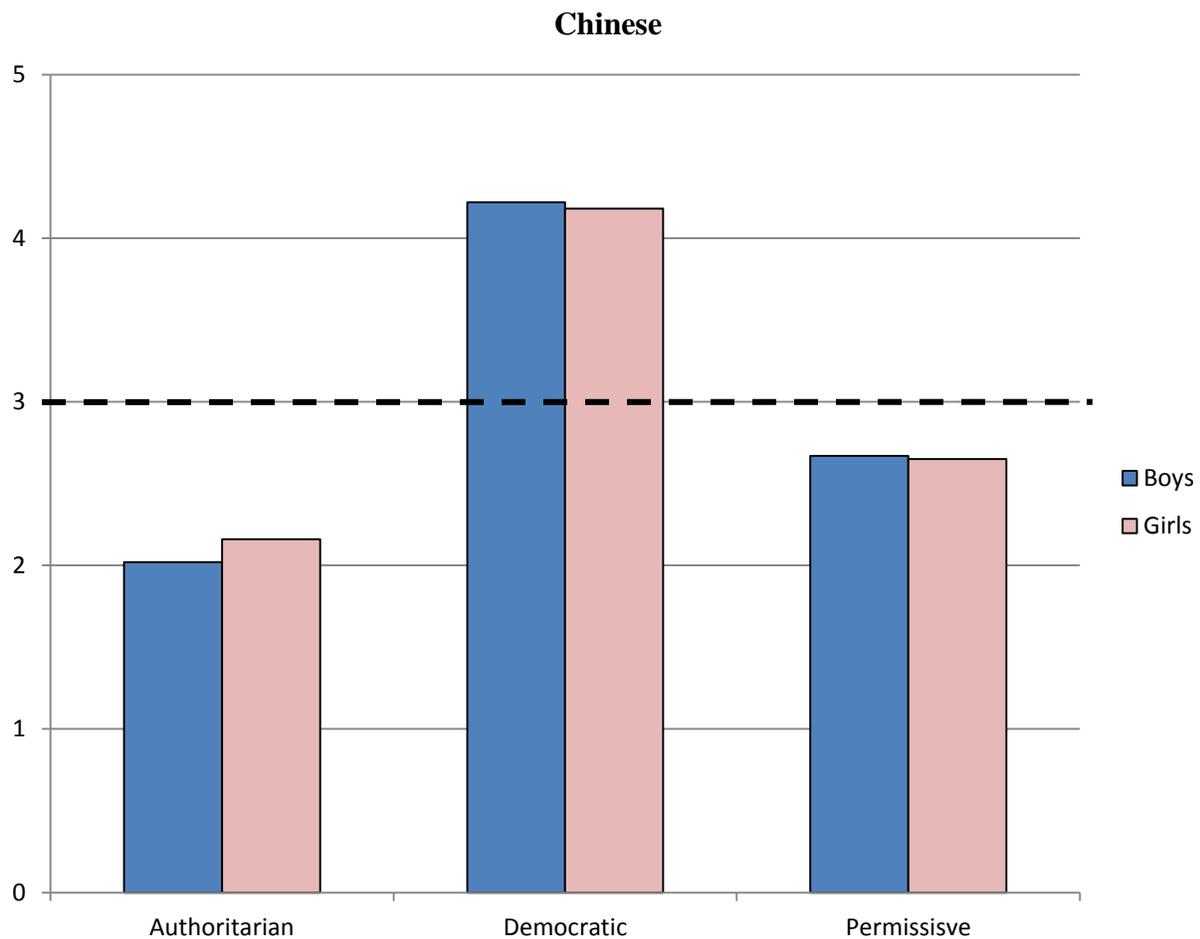
Figure 7 *Chinese mean comparison of the desirability of practices between the sex of target child for each parental style.*

The simple effects of the parental Style

The analysis of the simple effects of the parental style showed that the Canadians rated the three parental styles differently for girls $F(2, 208) = 131.87$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .56$, and for boys, $F(2, 208) = 161.35$, $p <. 01$, $\eta^2 = .61$. All the multiple comparisons with Bonferroni adjustment ($p < .01$) are significant. As Figure 8 indicates, for girls, the Canadians rated the democratic style as the most positive, followed by the authoritarian style, and they rated the permissive style more negatively. The ratings are similar for boys.
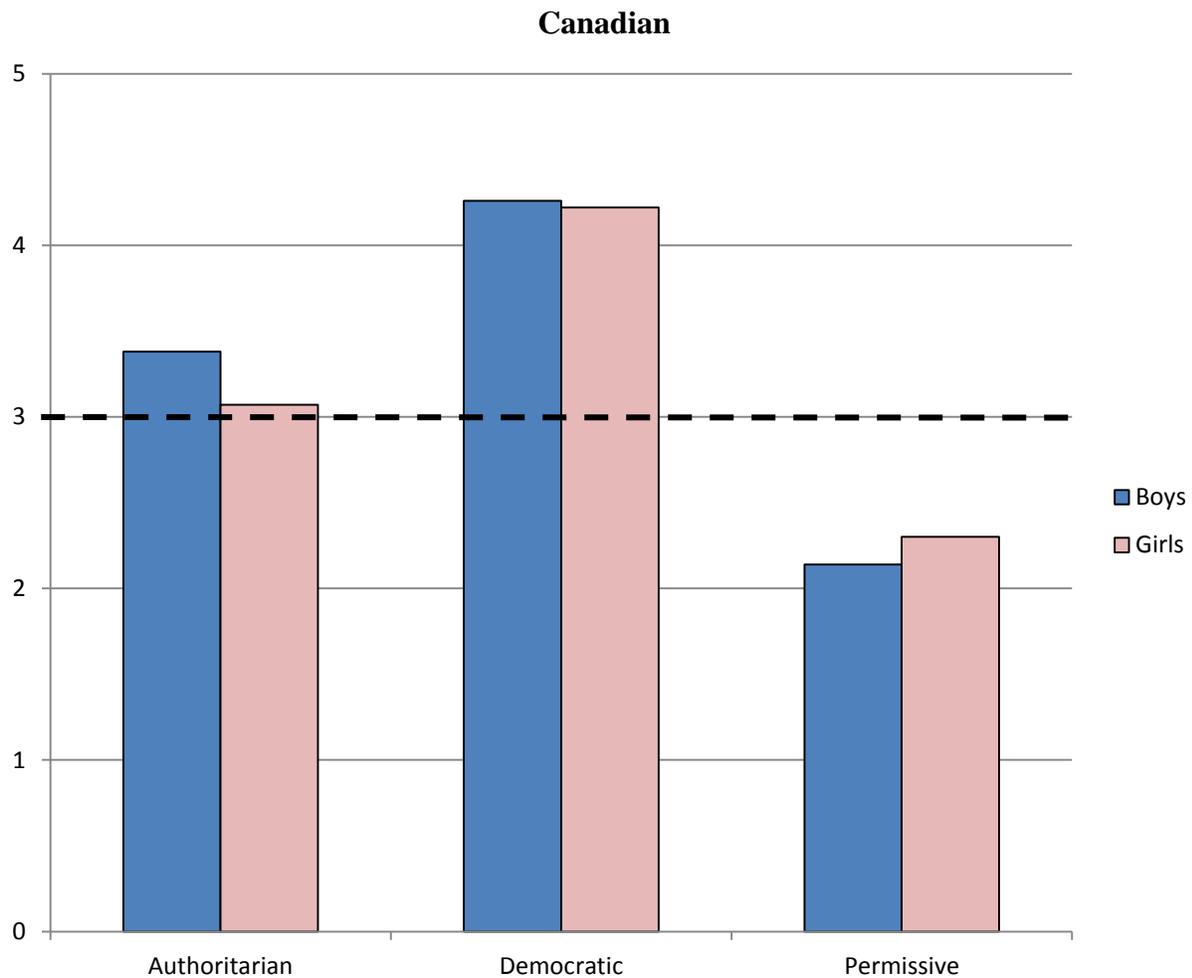
Canadian

Figure 8 *Canadian mean comparison between the desirability of practices and the sex of target child.*

The Chinese also rated the three parental styles differently for girls $F(2, 208) = 192.50$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .65$, and for boys, $F(2, 208) = 216.06$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .68$. All the multiple comparisons with Bonferroni adjustment ($p < .01$) were significant. As Figure 9 indicates, for girls, the Chinese rated the democratic style as the most positive, but they rated the permissive style more negative, and the authoritarian style even more negative. The ratings are similar for boys.
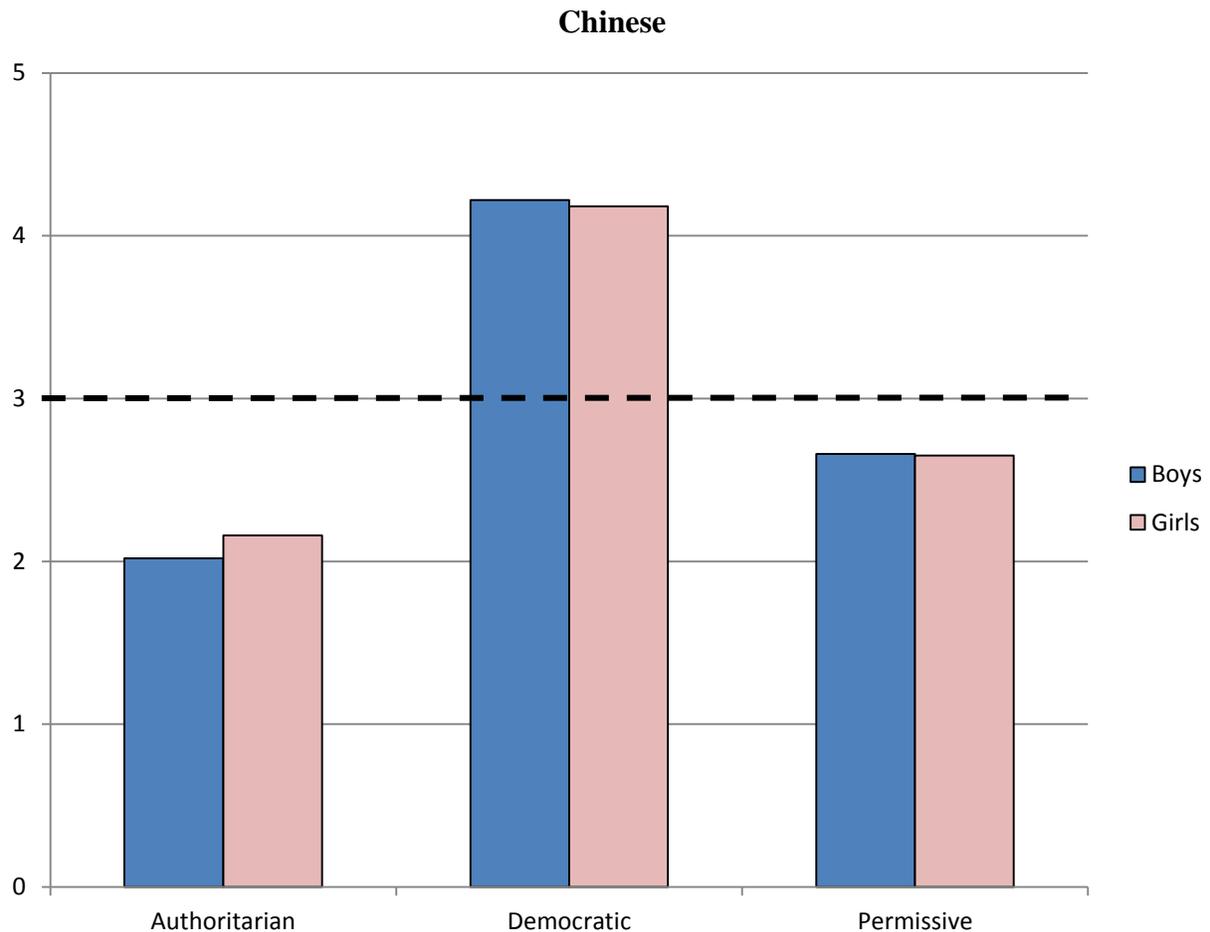
Chinese

Figure 9 *Chinese mean comparison between the desirability of practices and the sex of target child.*

Discussion

This study investigated emerging adults' perceptions regarding desirable parental styles. Additionally, the study sought to gain a better understanding of whether cultural background is a contributing factor, it focused on exploring the age paradigm of the child being reared, and also considered the gender of the respondent as well as that of the child. In order to address the research hypotheses, a new questionnaire was created and used that contained items from the Parental Styles Questionnaire with similar content but altered wording to include specific child characteristics to measure perceptions of desirable parental practice (as opposed to actual parental practice).

Cultural Differences in Perceptions of Parenting Style

It has been well established that traditionally individualistic and collectivistic cultures practice different parental styles; the bulk of previous research supports that differing socialization goals exist between Canadian and Chinese cultures (e.g., Caplan et al., 1989; Dwairy & Van Sickle, 1996; Forehand & McKinney, 1993; Hofstede, 1980; Julian et al., 1994; Kawamura et al., 2002; Korbin, 1991; Lamborn et al., 1991; Leung et al., 1998; Nguyen, 1998; Pong et al., 2005; Reyome, 1993; Triandis, 1990, 1996; Tirandis et al., 1988; Zhou & Bankston, 1996). Therefore, it was hypothesized that (similar to studies examining parental practice) perceptions regarding desirability of parental practices would also differ based on culture. The results of the present study support varying cultural perceptions of parental practices. However, these cultural differences were only found in regards to the authoritarian and permissive parental styles and were not found for the democratic parental style.

It is well documented in the literature that democratic-style parenting has been a predominant practice in individualistic cultures, including North America (e.g., Lamborn et al., 1991; Leung et al., 1998) and that in more collectivistic cultures, including China, an authoritarian style of parenting is mainly what has been reported as practiced (e.g., Caplan et al., 1989; Kawamura et al., 2002; Nguyen, 1998; Pong et al., 2005; Zhou & Bankston, 1996). In the current study, participants from both cultures (Canada and China) equally perceived democratic style parenting as the most positive. Contrary to previous studies on parental practices (indicating that collectivistic cultures practice authoritarian styles of parenting), in the current study the democratic parenting style was perceived by both Chinese and Canadian participants as the most desirable practice over other parental styles (authoritarian and permissive). Given that perceptions likely represent notions about parenting, and examine norms of parenting styles, the current study lends support to the idea that, contrary to what has conventionally been practiced in the traditionally collectivistic Chinese culture (authoritarian style), there may be a move in perceptions towards a desired democratic style of parenting. This speculation is further supported by recent research (also exploring preferred/desired parental styles) indicating that some collectivistic cultures' traditional views (Indian, Arabic) are fading and moving away from what has been conventionally practiced in that culture (Barnhart et al., in press; Dor and Cohen-Fridel, 2010). Results obtained in the current study suggest and support a similar trend in that, emerging adults' perceptions within collective societies are fading from authoritarian notions, specifically moving towards democratic notions for Chinese participants.

Contrary to findings of the democratic parenting style, cultural differences were found between perceptions of desirable parental practices for the authoritarian and permissive styles of parenting. Although both cultures perceived permissive style parenting more negatively,

Canadian participants perceived the style as significantly more negative than did Chinese participants. Furthermore, Canadian participants perceived authoritarian parenting as a significantly more positive practice in comparison to their Chinese counterparts who perceived it as a more negative practice. And so, similar to previous research that showed that parents treat and socialize their children differently according to specific cultural roles (e.g., Diaz-Guerrero & Rodriguez de Diaz, 1993; Dwairy & Meshnar, 2006; Keller & Otto, 2009), the current study suggests that perceptions of desirable parental practices do vary cross-culturally. However, given that some studies have demonstrated cross-cultural variations in parental styles between rural and urban populations (Dwairy and Meshnar, 2006), consideration should be given to the fact that a vast majority of Canadian participants were from a rural community and that all Chinese participants were from an urban community.

One explanation as to why Chinese participants perceive permissive practices as less undesirable than their Canadian counterparts may be explained by the similarities and differences the three parental styles share regarding the level of parental warmth and parental control. Authoritarian and democratic styles are both high in parental control while permissive style is low in parental control. On the other hand, democratic and permissive styles are both high in parental warmth while authoritarian style is low in parental warmth. Therefore, although permissive and democratic styles differ in control, they share similarities regarding parental warmth. As noted by Baumrind (1971), both the democratic and permissive styles relate to practices that are emotionally supportive and responsive to children's needs and wishes. Unlike authoritarian parenting, permissive parenting (like democratic parenting) is responsive, nurturing, and involved. These similarities could lend further support to the previously mentioned possibility of traditional authoritarian views fading within collectivistic Chinese cultures, moving toward the

democratic parenting style. Furthermore, this may be better explained by changing views regarding parental warmth.

Cross-cultural differences and similarities may also be related to the process of globalization. Barnhart, Raval, Jansari & Raval (in press) propose that, "much of the existing cross-cultural literature may be dated due to the increasing rate of globalization and modernization". There is empirical evidence that Western values do influence changes in parenting styles and child outcomes in other cultures (Ambert, 1994; Goode's, 1963). Specifically, a study by Patel-Amin and Power (2002) found that the modernization of India (a traditionally collectivistic culture) led to changing attitudes in parenting, including individualistic values. This focus on Western ideas may be due to several factors such as exposure to Western media, and the growing influence of Western culture through advancements in technology. Messages communicated through media may inadvertently emphasize parenting behaviours valued by individualistic cultures and thus influence the perceptions of effective parenting of the younger generation (compared to older generations that participated in previous cross-cultural research). Cross-cultural differences of the authoritarian parenting style will be discussed below.

Child Gender Differences in Perceptions of Parenting Style and Across Cultures

The current study also explored whether the perceptions of desirable parental practices varied depending on the characteristics of the child being reared. Previous research supports that parents treat and socialize their children differently according to specific cultural gender roles (e.g., Diaz-Guerrero & Rodriguez de Diaz, 1993; Dwairy & Meshnar, 2006). Therefore, it was predicted that there would be differences in the perception of desirable parental practices according to the child's gender, and that the results would vary cross-culturally. Results obtained

from the current study revealed that regardless of the gender of the child or culture, there were no significant differences in the perception of desirability for democratic and permissive styles of parenting. However, there were gender differences in the perception of desirability of the authoritarian style of parenting, and this finding did vary cross-culturally. Chinese participants perceived the authoritarian practice negatively regardless of the gender of the child, while Canadian participants perceived authoritarian parenting as a positive practice for both boys and girls. Furthermore, Canadian participants perceived the authoritarian parenting style as a significantly more desirable practice for boys than for girls.

Cross-cultural differences in children's socio-emotional functioning will first be discussed, as this topic parallels the discussion of the results obtained regarding gender differences in the perception of desired parental practice. Research has revealed that the socio-emotional functioning of children differs depending on culture and that parenting attitudes and practices vary accordingly; amongst these are important differences regarding self-regulation and externalization-internalization behaviours. For example, according to Chen et al. (1998) and Rubin & Chung (2006), Chinese and Korean toddlers exhibited more inhibition and higher internalized pervasive patterns such as fearful, vigilant, and anxious reactions than Australian, Canadian, and Italian toddlers. Chinese children also demonstrated more internalized control, self-regulation, and more developed executive function skills than North American children (Gartstein, Gonzalez, Carranza, Ahadi, Rothbart & Yang, 2006; Sabbagh, Xu, Carlson, Moses, & Lee, 2006). There is also evidence that cross-cultural variations in parental attitudes and practices are associated with self-regulation and externalization-internalization behaviours. Chen et al. (1998) found that children's wary and reactive behaviour was associated with parental

disappointment and rejection in Canada while it was associated with warm and accepting parental attitudes in China.

One can argue that differing perceptions of desired parental practices could be explained by noted cultural differences in children's behaviour, which in turn warrant different styles of parenting. Thus, the more prominent self-regulatory and externalization behaviours found in North American children could explain why authoritarian practices are viewed more positively by Canadian participants when compared to Chinese participants. Barnhart et al. (in press) suggest that authoritarian practices may imply a more explicit style of parenting (more parental control). As such, lower levels of explicit parental control (such as those found in permissive style) are possibly not perceived as effective practices in the management of self-regulatory and externalization behaviours; therefore, a plausible explanation as to why authoritarian practices are perceived as a desirable parental practice by Canadians could be that North American children present greater externalization behaviours and self-regulatory difficulties and thus more explicit childrearing practices and parental control are favoured.

Within these cross-cultural differences for authoritarian style parenting, the perceptions of Canadian participants were also found to differ according to the gender of the child, with authoritarian parenting being perceived as an even more desirable practice for boys than girls. These results coincide with research indicating that females (more than males) report their parenting experience as more democratic, while men (more than women) reported their parenting experience as more authoritarian (Conrade & Ho, 2001; Lytton & Romney, 1991; Someya, Uehara, Kadowaki, Tang & Takahashi, 2000). These findings may lend further support for the previously discussed speculation that authoritarian practices are favoured for children with greater self-regulation and externalization behaviours. A meta-analysis conducted exploring

gender differences in North American children's temperament revealed a greater incidence of externalizing disorders in boys than in girls (Else-Quest, Hyde, Goldsmith & Van Hulle, 2006). Therefore, as previously speculated, authoritarian practices may be perceived as an even more desirable practice for boys due to the fact that they present with even greater externalization behaviours and self-regulatory difficulties than girls. As such, more-explicit childrearing practices and parental control is favoured because of the perceived likelihood of behaviour management challenges associated with the childrearing of boys.

Emerging Adult Gender Differences in Perceptions of Parenting Style Within and Across Culture

In terms of gender, it was postulated that the results obtained from the current study would vary according to whether participants were male or female, given that previous research supports gender variations regarding attitudes towards parental roles and practices. (Barry et al., 2009; Dor & Cohen-Fridel, 2010; Espiritu, 1999; Keller, 1997; Mussweiler & Forster, 2000; Ogbu, 1981; Saraswathi & Pai, 1997; Varela et al., 2004). Despite supporting research and contrary to our prediction, the data did not support the hypothesis of gender differences in the perception of desirable parental practices. Research has increasingly been indicating that parenting responsibilities for mothers and fathers are transitioning into more shared roles (Steinberg, Kruckman & Steinberg, 2000; Tseng & Wu, 1985; Zhangling, 1990). This leads us to consider the possibility that gender differences regarding parental practices are diminishing comparably as a growing number of mothers and fathers are assuming shared parental roles. Thus, the social meaning of parenting is changing, and diminishing differential gender roles regarding childrearing may consequently lead to similar perceptions of desired parental practices between genders.

Age Paradigm

Lastly, it was hypothesized that perceptions of desirable parental practices would differ and coincide with the age of the child being reared. It was predicted that participants of both cultures would perceive permissive style parenting as more desirable for children of a younger age, given that this development stage is perceived by both cultures as a time where the child would most profit from being indulged (Ho, 1986; Malher, 1975; Tang, 1992; Winnicott, 1960; Wolf, 1978). However, as they grow older and approach adulthood, children are considered to be more prepared and are increasingly expected to reflect the values of their culture (Ho, 1986; Saraswathi & Pai, 1997; Sinha, 1997; Varela et al., 2004). Therefore, it was predicted that there would be a higher desirability to carry-out parental practices supporting the socialization goals and childrearing practices traditionally valued by their culture. For Chinese culture, it was postulated that the preferred parental style for adolescents would be that of authoritarian practices, given that they coincide with the centuries-old Confucian philosophy, and that this style of parenting has been traditionally practiced in that culture (e.g., Caplan et al., 1989; Pong et al., 2005; Zhou & Bankston, 1996). In contrast, it was postulated that for Canadian participants, the preferred parental practices for adolescents would be that of the traditional democratic parental practices, given that previous research has supported that this style is consistently practiced in individualistic cultures where autonomy, separation, self-reliance, and individuation from families are valued (e.g., Lamborn et al., 1991; Leung et al., 1998).

Contrary to what was postulated, the results obtained by the current study did not support the hypotheses regarding the age paradigm. A permissive style of parenting was not perceived as a more desirable practice for younger children by either culture. Furthermore, although this study (along with previous research) supports that Canadians favour a democratic style of parenting,

the results of the current study do not support the theory that this differs according to age. Moreover, contrary to the prediction that traditional practices (authoritarian style) would be perceived as desirable for adolescents by Chinese participants, Chinese participants preferred a democratic style of parenting, regardless of age. Therefore, the hypothesis that there would be a higher desirability to carry-out permissive practices with younger children (regardless of culture and parental practices traditionally valued by ones culture for adolescents) was not supported.

There is a paucity of published literature on perceptions of favourable parenting practices, let alone research that considers the age paradigm of the child being reared; therefore, one explanation as to why the perceptions of desired parental practices did not differ according to the age paradigm could be that this prediction was mostly based on theory and loosely based on actual research. Furthermore, it could be that the *experience* of parenthood is a contributing factor in the initialization of traditional parental practices. Emerging adulthood is considered a developmental stage where individuals are beginning to shape their thoughts and ideas (Arnett, (2000, 2005); therefore, it is possible that a parental blueprint instilled by their own parenting experience throughout childhood begins to emerge at the end of emerging adulthood and once they begin to experience parenthood themselves, and that this offsets ideals they had considered during emerging adulthood. It is unclear whether the perception of desired parental practices during emerging adulthood changes with the experience of parenthood, but this warrants some consideration given that there is research that supports that we are likely to adopt some of the same types of parental behaviours as our parents (Neppl, Conger, Scaramella & Ontai, 2009).

Limitations and Future Directions

Although the current study contributes to existing literature in the area of cross-cultural parental practices, the findings must be understood within the context of certain limitations. First and foremost, the limited research available on perceptions of desirable parental practices should be discussed. There is substantial research available on cross-cultural parenting practices; however, research on *perceptions* regarding practices is scarce, offering little comparison groups for interpretation purposes. Given the paucity of research documenting perceptions of parental practices, research aimed at replicating or building from the current study will provide a greater wealth of information to help establish more conclusive results. For this reason the current study should be considered an exploratory endeavour, lending supportive literature on cross-cultural parenting styles warranting further exploration.

Although the results seem to allude to an agreement that there are changing views within Chinese culture, and that there is arguably a move from traditional authoritarian views towards democratic style of parenting in some collectivistic cultures, at this time this is only speculation as there was no pre (baseline) measure employed. Building from the findings of the current study, future research can assist with a better understanding of perception of desirable parental practices, and the possibility of changing views in collectivistic cultures, by replicating the study with a comparison group. Comparing perceptions of emerging adults with the views of adults of an older generation could provide useful information concerning possible generational gaps regarding perceptions of desirable parental practices.

Undoubtedly, information gathered from emerging adult participants provides valuable information concerning notions about parenting and possible future parental practices. However,

it presents with certain limitations regarding actual practice. The perception of emerging adult's (with no parenthood experience) regarding desirable parental styles may be influenced by social desirability concerns. Such as previously mentioned, emerging adulthood is a time where individuals are beginning to shape their thoughts and ideas and thus, the experience of parenthood may change ones views and practices. Moreover, even though perception of desirability implies a likelihood of practice, this should not be assumed. Studies have shown some difficulties in predicting behaviour from attitudes (e.g., Eagly & Chaiken, 1998; Lord & Lepper, 1999) and that the relationship between attitude-behaviour varies according to social pressure and according to the behaviour (Wallace, Paulson, Lord & Bond, 2005). Given that prediction of behaviour based on attitudes is not solidly supported by research, the relationship between perceived desirability and actual parental practice ought to be investigated further. Ideally, a similar longitudinal study should be conducted measuring perceptions of participants first when they are emerging adults and once again following emerging adulthood (after the age of 30) once they have gained parental experience. This could provide some clarification regarding the speculation of changing parental views and practices in some collectivistic culture towards individualistic ones. Additionally, this would provide needed knowledge on perceptions and the transfer of desired parental style into actual practice.

Lastly, the participants of the current study were emerging adult university students. This represents a narrow population within a specific age range in an industrialized society where entry into adult roles is delayed (Arnett, 2000). Thus, the sample may not represent the same views as similar-aged persons of other socioeconomic statuses or geographic regions. Young people living in urban areas in Eastern cultures are more likely to experience the emerging adulthood life stage given the similarities they share to Western cultures, such as the desire to

obtain higher education (Arnett, 2000). Furthermore, as Dwairy and Meshnar's (2006) study revealed, there are some variations in parental styles between rural and urban populations. Hence, the generalizability of the results should be tested by including participants from a wider population. Conducting a comparable study that includes rural and urban populations from both cultures may provide clarifications. Moreover, within-culture comparisons of desired parenting style between rural and urban participants may clarify some questions regarding cultural shifting views about parenting as a function of modernization in China. A study of this kind may offer further support to whether the theory of changing opinions of parenting styles in some collectivistic cultures is applicable to a more general population, or if it is restricted to urbanized populations that are more likely to be exposed to modernization, etc.

Clinical Implications

While the results of the current study are considered exploratory, there may be merit in ascertaining how these findings can be translated into parenting and clinical applications. Perhaps the most important implication are those associated with findings indicating that the beliefs, perceptions, and cognitive appraisals of the parenting one has experienced are associated with developmental and psychosocial outcomes (Chao, 1994, Chen, 2014; Dwairy, 2004; Dwairy & Meshnar, 2006; Erkman & Rohner, 2006; Kagticibasi, 2005; Marchant, Paulson & Rothlisber, 2001; Randolph, 1995; Steely & Rohner, 2006,). As such, one could speculate that negative or positive developmental outcomes for the child depend on the child's perception of the parental practices. This gives rise to an interesting avenue of research with regards to applications. Developmental could be impacted if perceptions of desired parental practices start to wane from what is traditionally practiced within the Chinese culture. For example, if the authoritarian

parental style continues to be practiced within Chinese culture, and if the younger generation views it as a negative practice, it could possibly lead to negative developmental outcomes.

Overall, it is well documented that parental practices mediate the outcome of development (e.g., Baumrind, 1967, 1971; Lamborn et al., 1991; Leung et al., 1998; Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Rudy & Grusec, 2006). As with similar research undertakings, the current study continues to provide useful information, especially as there is growing evidence that suggests that traditional parenting beliefs are fading, and that an intergenerational shift in ideas about parenting may be occurring (Abott et al., 1992; Dwairy, 2004; Dwairy et al. 2006; Ho & Kang, 1984; Roa et al., 2003). Findings from the current study offer some new insight as to what future parents consider to be desirable childrearing practices, such as the favoured democratic style of parenting for participants in both cultures, and a more favourable perception of practicing an authoritarian style of parenting by Canadian participants (especially for boys). This type of information contributes to the development of culturally informed theories of parenting, and encourages us to consider the implications they may have on developmental outcomes. As such, the findings obtained by the current study, as well as future research in this direction, will continue to gather valuable information to enhance cross-cultural knowledge and the competency of our human service professionals.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study was intended to be a foundational base for future research on cross-cultural perceptions of parental styles. As such, the current study contributes to the existing literature by offering new insights regarding what future parents consider to be desirable childrearing practices. It demonstrated that a democratic style of parenting is the most favoured

practice for both Chinese and Canadian participants, that the permissive style of parenting is perceived more negatively by both cultures (significantly more-so by Canadian participants), and that authoritarian practices are viewed more negatively by Chinese participants while they are viewed more positively by Canadian participants (for both genders and significantly more-so for boys). Moreover, it has provided preliminary support of changing views, and suggests a moving trend within collectivistic cultures (specifically China) from an authoritarian style to a democratic style of parenting. Furthermore, this study has revealed cross-cultural gender differences regarding authoritarian practices, in that Canadians favour authoritarian practices significantly more so than their Chinese counterparts, and more so for boys than for girls. Contrary to supportive literature, there were no significant differences in perceptions according to the age of the child being reared, nor according to the gender of the respondent. In sum, the present study contributed to the lack of literature concerning cross-cultural perceptions on parenting style and offered insight on which practices are perceived as desirable by our future cohort of parents.

Appendix A

Questionnaire Items
(Villar et al., 2006)

Permissive Parenting
1. I know that if I don't do what my mother (father) asks me to, she(he) will end up doing it herself (himself).
2. My mother (father) is always threatening me with punishments that in the end she (he) doesn't carry out.
3. When my mother (father) and I don't agree, she (he) lets me do what I want.
4. When I break a family rule, my mother (father) makes sure I pay the penalty (REVERSED).

Authoritarian Parenting
1. At home, my mother (father) is the one that makes the rules that I must obey
2. When a problem arises between my mother (father) and me, what she (he) says goes

Authoritative Parenting
1. At home, we have some basic rules that must be respected
2. At home, we all take part in setting family rules
3. I know the consequences of not fulfilling my duties

Scale 1-5: 1= never, 2 = occasionally, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = always.

Appendix B

Parenthood Styles Questionnaire

Instructions: For each of the following statements, circle the number of the 5-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) that best describes how that statement applies to you and your parents. Try to read and think about each statement as it applies to you and your parents during your years of growing up at home. There are no right or wrong answers, so don't spend a lot of time on any one item. Be sure not to omit any items.

If your parents were separated or divorced before you reached age 12, think about the parent with whom you spent the most time when you answer the questions.

1 = Strongly disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Neither agree nor disagree
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly agree

1. While I was growing up my parents felt that in a well-run home the children should have their way in the family as often as the parents do.
2. Even if their children didn't agree with them, my parents felt that it was for our own good if we were forced to conform to what they thought was right.
3. Whenever my parents told me to do something as I was growing up, they expected me to do it immediately without asking any questions.
4. As I was growing up, once family policy had been established, my parents discussed the reasoning behind the policy with the children in the family.
5. My parents have always encouraged verbal give-and-take whenever I have felt that family rules and restrictions were unreasonable.
6. My parents has always felt that what children need is to be free to make up their own minds and to do what they want to do, even if this does not agree with what their parents might want.
7. As I was growing up my parents did not allow me to question any decision they had made.
8. As I was growing up my parents directed the activities and decisions of the children in the family through reasoning and discipline.
9. My parents have always felt that more force should be used by parents in order to get their children to behave the way they are supposed to.
10. As I was growing up my parents did not feel that I needed to obey rules and regulations of behaviour simply because someone in authority had established them.
11. As I was growing up I knew what my parents expected of me in my family, but I also felt free to discuss those expectations with my parents when I felt that they were unreasonable.
12. My parents felt that wise parents should teach their children early just who is boss in the family.
13. As I was growing up, my parents seldom gave me expectations and guidelines for my behaviour.
14. Most of the time as I was growing up my parents did what the children in the family wanted when making family decisions.

15. As the children in my family were growing up, my parents consistently gave us direction and guidance in rational and objective ways.
16. As I was growing up my parents would get very upset if I tried to disagree with them.
17. My parents feel that most problems in society would be solved if parents would not restrict their children's activities, decisions, and desires as they are growing up.
18. As I was growing up my parents let me know what behaviour they expected of me, and if I didn't meet those expectations, they punished me.
19. As I was growing up my parents allowed me to decide most things for myself without a lot of direction from them.
20. As I was growing up my parents took the children's opinions into consideration when making family decisions but they would not decide something simply because the children wanted it.
21. My parents did not view themselves as responsible for directing and guiding my behaviour as I was growing up.
22. My parents had clear standards of behaviour for the children in our home as I was growing up, but they were willing to adjust those standards to the needs of each of the individual children in the family.
23. My parents gave me direction for my behaviour and activities as I was growing up and she expected me to follow their direction, but they were always willing to listen to my concerns and to discuss that direction with me.
24. As I was growing up my parents allowed me to form my own point of view on family matters and they generally allowed me to decide for myself what I was going to do.
25. My parents have always felt that most problems in society would be solved if we could get parents to strictly and forcibly deal with their children when they don't do what they are supposed to as they are growing up.
26. As I was growing up my parents often told me exactly what they wanted me to do and how they expected me to do it.
27. As I was growing up my parents gave me clear direction for my behaviours and activities, but they were also understanding when I disagreed with them.
28. As I was growing up my parents did not direct the behaviours, activities, and desires of the children in the family.
29. As I was growing up I knew what my parents expected of me in the family and they insisted that I conform to those expectations simply out of respect for their authority.
30. As I was growing up, if my parents made a decision in the family that hurt me, they were willing to discuss that decision with me and to admit it if they had made a mistake.

Appendix C

Parental Questionnaire

Please circle or fill in the appropriate answer

Sex of participant	Female	Male		
Age of participant	_____			
Culture	Canadian	Chinese	American	Other (specify) _____
Were you born and raised in this country?	Yes	No		
If not, how many years have you lived in this country?	_____			
What type of home were you raised in?	Nuclear Home	Lone-parent Home	Other (specify) _____	
Are you a parent yourself?	Yes	No		
Number of years of post-secondary education?	_____			

Version A

Emma/Bi is a 5 year old girl. The following are statements of how Emma/Bi's mother and father handle raising their little girl. Based on your own opinion, rate the degree to which you are in agreement or disagreement with their parental practices (1 being strongly disagree to 5 being strongly agree).

1) **Emma/Bi's mother and father sometimes threaten their little girl with punishments and in the end, they do not carry out.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

2) **Emma/Bi's mother and father must establish some basic rules that must be respected by their young girl.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

3) **When Emma/Bi breaks a family rule, her mother and father make sure that their little girl pays the penalty.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

4) **Emma/Bi's mother and father feel that wise parents of a little girl should not teach their children just who is the boss in the family.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

5) **Emma/Bi's mother and father should not let their little girl take part in setting family rules.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

6) **When a problem arises between Emma/Bi and her parents, what her mother and father say to their little girl goes.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

7) **Her mother and father should teach their little girl Emma/Bi the consequences of not fulfilling her duties.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

8) **When Emma/Bi and her parents do not agree, her mother and father do not let their little girl do what she wants.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

9) **At home, Emma/Bi's mother and father are the ones that make the rules and their young daughter must obey.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

Version B

Olivia/Ai is a 16 year old girl. The following are statements of how Olivia/Ai's mother and father handle raising their teenage daughter. Based on your own opinion, rate the degree to which you are in agreement or disagreement with their parental practices (1 being strongly disagree to 5 being strongly agree).

1) **Olivia/Ai's mother and father sometimes threaten their teenage daughter with punishments and in the end, they do not carry out.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

2) **Olivia/Ai's mother and father must establish some basic rules that must be respected by their teenage daughter.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

3) **When Olivia/Ai breaks a family rule, her mother and father make sure that their adolescent daughter pays the penalty.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

4) **Olivia/Ai's mother and father feel that wise parents of an adolescent girl should not teach their children just who is the boss in the family.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

5) **Olivia/Ai's mother and father should not let their teenage daughter take part in setting family rules.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

6) **When a problem arises between Olivia/Ai and her parents, what her mother and father say to their teenage daughter goes.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

7) **Her mother and father should teach their adolescent daughter Olivia/Ai the consequences of not fulfilling her duties.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

8) **When Olivia/Ai and her parents do not agree, her mother and father do not let their teenage girl do what she wants.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

9) **At home, Olivia's mother and father are the ones that make the rules and their teenage daughter must obey.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

Version C

Ethan/Bo is a 5 year old boy. The following are statements of how Ethan/Bo's mother and father handle raising their little boy. Based on your own opinion, rate the degree to which you are in agreement or disagreement with their parental practices (1 being strongly disagree to 5 being strongly agree).

1) **Ethan/Bo's mother and father sometimes threaten their little boy with punishments and in the end, they do not carry out.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

2) **Ethan/Bo's mother and father must establish some basic rules that must be respected by their young boy.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

3) **When Ethan/Bo breaks a family rule, his mother and father make sure that their little boy pays the penalty.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

4) **Ethan/Bo's mother and father feel that wise parents of a little boy should not teach their children just who is the boss in the family.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

5) **Ethan/Bo's mother and father should not let their little boy take part in setting family rules.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

6) **When a problem arises between Ethan/Bo and his parents, what his mother and father say to their little boy goes.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

7) **His mother and father should teach their little boy Ethan/Bo the consequences of not fulfilling his duties.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

8) **When Ethan/Bo and his parents do not agree, his mother and father do not let their little boy do what he wants.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

9) **At home, Ethan/Bo's mother and father are the ones that make the rules and their young son must obey.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

Version D

Liam/An is a 16 year old boy. The following are statements of how Liam/An's mother and father handle raising their teenage son. Based on your own opinion, rate the degree to which you are in agreement or disagreement with their parental practices (1 being strongly disagree to 5 being strongly agree).

1) **Liam/An's mother and father sometimes threaten their teenage son with punishments and in the end, they do not carry out.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

2) **Liam/An's mother and father must establish some basic rules that must be respected by their teenage son.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

3) **When Liam/An breaks a family rule, his mother and father make sure that their adolescent son pays the penalty.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

4) **Liam/An's mother and father feel that wise parents of an adolescent boy should not teach their children just who is the boss in the family.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

5) **Liam/An's mother and father should not let their teenage son take part in setting family rules.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

6) **When a problem arises between Liam/An and his parents, what his mother and father say to their teenage son goes.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

7) **His mother and father should teach their adolescent son Liam/An the consequences of not fulfilling his duties.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

8) **When Liam/An and his parents do not agree, his mother and father do not let their teenage boy do what he wants.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

9) **At home, Liam/An's mother and father are the ones that make the rules and their teenage son must obey.**

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

Appendix D

Consent Form

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Miss Josée Labonté, student in the Applied Psychology Master's program and Dr. Run-Min Zhou, professor of psychology at Laurentian University. Results obtained will contribute to the completion of a thesis and possibly the publication of research articles.

The purpose of the study is to better understand a young adult's perception on parenting styles. Information obtained will not provide direct benefits to you but will contribute to the advancement of knowledge for society regarding current beliefs and values of parenting practices.

If you volunteer to participate in this study, your participation will essentially consist of filling out a demographic questionnaire, reading 9 statements regarding parental practices and expressing your opinion on a scale of 1 to 5. The questionnaire should take no longer than 10 minutes to complete.

You can choose whether to be in this study or not and there will be no future repercussions following your decision. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without penalties or consequences of any kind. The content of the questionnaire is not considered as posing any greater threat to harm as other situations you may encounter in aspects of your everyday life. However, if you are uncomfortable with any particular question, you may refuse to answer and still remain in the study. Should you decide to withdraw your participation you can do so by returning the questionnaire to the administrator. You may also exercise the option of removing your data from the study by email the researcher or her supervisor (email addresses provided below).

Your personal answers will be kept anonymous and the information you will share will remain strictly confidential. Only the researcher and the supervisor will have access to your consent form and questionnaire (you are asked not to provide your name on the questionnaire). There are two copies of this consent form, one which the researcher keeps and one which you will keep. The questionnaires will be destroyed two years following the end of the study.

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through Laurentian Universities Research Ethics Board. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact:

Research Ethics Officer   Telephone: 705-675-1151 ext 2436
Laurentian University Research Office   E-mail: ethics@laurentian.ca
935 Ramsey Lake Road
Sudbury, ON, Canada P3E 2C6

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Miss Labonté via email at josee_labonte3@hotmail.com or Dr Run-Min Zhou at (705)-675-1151, extension 4276 or rzhou@laurentian.ca

I have read the information provided for this study as described herein, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

_____
Name of Participant (please print)

_____   _____
Signature of Participant   Date

☐ **I wish to receive a summary of the results of this study which will be available in December 2013, at the following email address:** _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

The following is a list of available resources that you may contact for support/counseling:

Health & Wellness Services
Single Student Residences
Room G-23
935 Ramsey Lake Road
Sudbury ON P3E 2C6
Tel: 705.673.6546
Fax: 705.675.4521

Ontario Mental Health Help Line
Free Health Services Information
1-866-531-2600

Lifeline Shanghai
Helpline number 021-6279-8990
Lines are open from 10am to 10pm, 7days a week

Shanghai Community Center
136-3631-7474
Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm

Appendix E

Letter of Instruction

Dear _____,

I would like to begin by expressing my sincere appreciation that you have agreed to participate in the recruitment of English students at Tongji University.

I have provided you with this letter with instructions on how to present the study to the class and the information that needs to be shared to students prior to obtaining their consent to participate in the study. This is to ensure a voluntariness and informed consent from the participants and that they understand they can opt-out or withdraw from the study without any repercussions. Furthermore, this will ensure that the same instructions are provided to all students in order to minimize external influencing factors on results.

First, the study should be introduced at the end of the class to the students by someone other than their teacher. The assigned person should address the classroom in the following way by explaining that:

- they were asked to recruit students to participate in a study conducted by Josée Labonté, a 2nd year student in the Applied Psychology Master's program and her supervisor, Dr. Run-Min Zhou, Professor at the Psychology Department, Laurentian University, Canada.
- they are being invited to participate in this study in which the objective is to gain a better understanding of a young adult's perception on parenting styles and that their participation will contribute to the advancement of knowledge on on current beliefs and values of parenting practices.
- their participation will take no longer than 10 minutes and will essentially consist of filling in a demographic questionnaire, reading 9 statements regarding parental practices as well expressing their opinion on a scale of 1 to 5.
- the content of the questionnaire is not considered as posing any greater threat to harm than situations they may encounter in aspects of their everyday life. However, should they feel uncomfortable at any point they can refuse to answer certain items or withdraw from participating in the study by simply returning the questionnaire to the administrator.
- their rights to participate, or not, in the study are respected and their decision will not be reflected in their grades nor will it have any future repercussions; their participation is strictly voluntary, there will be absolutely no penalty should they choose not to participate and they are free to withdraw from the study at any moment.
- prior to completing the questionnaire they are required to sign a consent form. This process is meant to emphasize Respect for Persons and that before accepting, participates are informed of what their participation entails and what their rights are.
- their answers will be kept anonymous and confidential. Students should not include their name on the questionnaires. Only the researcher as well as the supervisor will have access to the consent form and questionnaires. Questionnaires will be destroyed two years following the end of the study.

After having shared the above information, the following instructions should be followed:

1. Ask that all students who are interested in participating in the study remain in their seats and that all others are permitted to leave the classroom.
2. Randomly distribute a package to every student who shows interest in participating.
3. Have all interested students read the consent form and sign two copies of it.
4. Ask the student to hand one of the two copies of the signed consent forms and seal them in the provided envelops labelled 1. Note: The consent form should be kept separately (from the questionnaire) so that the participants cannot be identified via names on the consents.
5. Tell the students to carefully read the instructions provided at the top of the pages questionnaires before completing it (there are variations in the instructions for every version of the questionnaire, therefore, they cannot be read collectively in front of the class)

Following the administration of the questionnaire, seal the questionnaires in the provided envelope labelled 2. Lastly, send both the consent forms and questionnaires in the pre-addressed envelope.

Should you have any questions please feel free to contact me, Josée Labonté via email at josee_labonte3@hotmail.com or Dr Run-Min Zhou at (705)-675-1151, extension 4276 or rzhou@laurentian.ca

Once again, thank you for your participation.

Josée Labonté

Appendix F

Non-Significant Main Effects

Sex of Participant $F(1, 209) = 0.31, p = .86$

Age of the Child $F(1, 209) = 1.47, p = .23$

Sex of the Child $F(1, 209) = 0.198, p = .66$

Appendix G

Non-Significant Interactions

Parental Style * Sex of the Participant	$F(2, 418) = 1.19, p = .31$
Parental Style * Age of the Child	$F(2, 418) = 1.53, p = .22$
Parental Style * Sex of the Child	$F(2, 418) = .92, p = .4$
Parental Style * Sex of the Participant * Country	$F(2, 418) = .55, p = .58$
Parental Style * Sex of the Participant * Age of the Child	$F(2, 418) = .53, p = .59$
Parental Style * Sex of the Participant * Sex of the Child	$F(2, 418) = .05, p = .95$
Parental Style * Country * Age of the Child	$F(2, 418) = .18, p = .83$
Parental Style * Age of the Child * Sex of the Child	$F(2, 418) = .25, p = .78$
Parental Style * Sex of the Participant * Country * Age of the child	$F(2, 418) = .73, p = .48$
Parental Style * Sex of the Participant * Country * Sex of the Child	$F(2, 418) = .02, p = .98$
Parental Style * Sex of the Participant *Ages of the Child * Sex of the Child	$F(2, 418) = 0, p = 1.00$
Parental Style * Country * Age of the Child * Sex of the Child	$F(2, 418) = .53, p = .59$
Parental Style * Sex of the Participant * Country * Age of the Child * Sex of the child	$F(2, 418) = 1.28, p = .28$

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