

Chinese Immigrant mothers' acculturation, parenting beliefs and parenting behaviours

Introduction

The practices of Chinese parents, representing the world's largest ethnic and national group, have attracted increasing amounts of attention, with considerable focus on migrants trying to maintain their heritage while adjusting to host cultures. However, Chinese immigrants to the UK have been studied very little despite their numerical prominence.

Immigrants' attitudes towards their sending and receiving cultures can affect many aspects of their lives, but few studies have included both self-report and observational data. The goal of this study was to further our understanding of Chinese immigrant mothers' parenting using both observation and self-report data, and to assess how patterns of acculturation affected their parental behaviour.

Current Study

Sample:

30 first-generation Chinese immigrant mothers and their 5- to 7-year-old children (15 boys and 15 girls) in and around Cambridge, United Kingdom. Mothers (rather than fathers) were children's main carers in all families. Maternal education level: 4 (13.3%) with doctorates, 11 (36.7%) with master's degrees, 13 (43.3%) with undergraduate degrees, 2 (6.7%) with secondary school educations. 26 (86.7%) originally came from China (P.R.C.), 1 (3.3%) from Hong Kong, 1 (3.3%) from Malaysia, 1 (3.3%) from Taiwan and 1 (3.3%) from Vietnam.

Measure:

- **Parenting Style and Dimension Questionnaire** (Wu et al., 2002)
Mother's self-report 5-point scale
Measuring parenting style and 11 parenting dimensions
- **General Ethnicity Questionnaires English and Chinese version** (Tsai & Ying, 2000)
English version to assess attitudes toward **receiving** culture ($\alpha = .92$)
Chinese version to assess attitudes toward **heritage** culture ($\alpha = .92$)
- **Parent Child Interaction System** (PARCHISY, Deater-Deckard et al., 1997)
Assessing parenting behaviours and mother-child dyadic dynamics

Research Questions

1. What are Chinese immigrant mothers' acculturation strategies?
2. How do Chinese immigrant mothers parent their children, assessed using both self-report and observation measures?
3. How are Chinese immigrant mothers' attitudes to English and Chinese culture associated with their reported and observed parenting styles?



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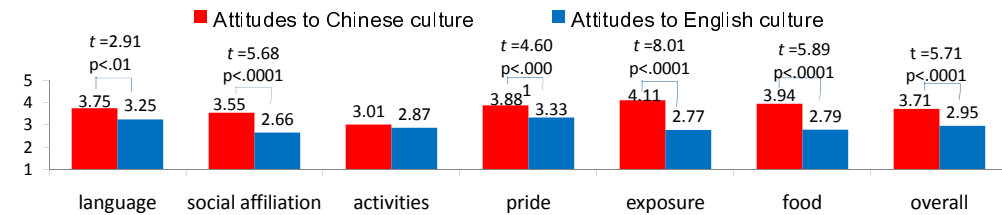
Results

1. Acculturation

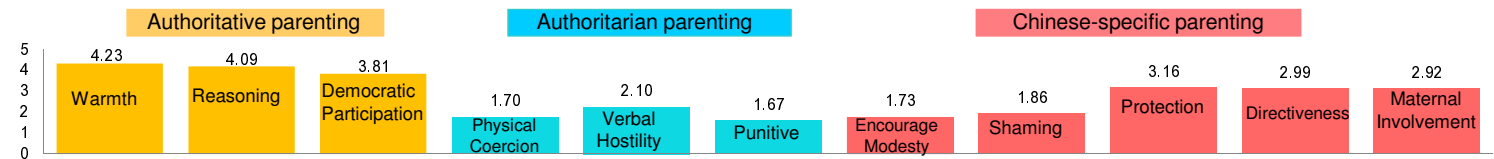
Acculturation styles of Chinese immigrant mothers

Acculturation style	Number (%)
Assimilation	4 (13.3%)
Integration	11 (36.7%)
Separation	13 (43.3%)
Marginalization	2 (6.7%)

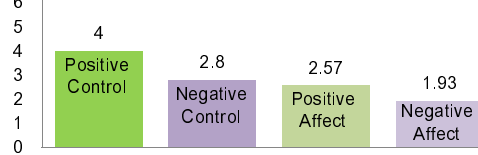
Chinese immigrant mothers' attitudes towards Chinese and English culture in 6 aspects



2. Self-reported parenting



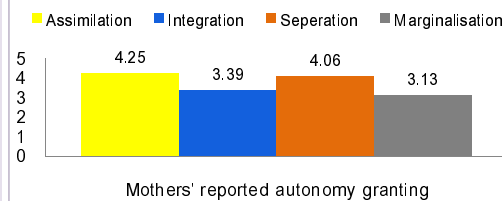
3. Observed parenting



4. Significant correlations amongst self-reported, observed parenting and attitudes toward Chinese & English cultures

	Observed Positive Control	Reported Authoritarian	Attitude to Chinese culture
Observed Negative Control	Pearson's $r = -.488^{**}$ $p < .01$	Pearson's $r = .466^{**}$ $p < .01$	
Reported Chinese Parenting	Pearson's $r = -.408^*$ $p < .05$		Pearson's $r = .454^*$ $p < .05$

5. Acculturation style and parenting



*Multivariate analysis of variance revealed significant effect of **Acculturation style** on mothers' **reported autonomy granting** ($F(3,25) = 3.202, p < .05$), but no significant effect on observed parenting.

***Length of living in the UK** was significantly correlated with mothers' **reported punitive parenting** ($F(1,25) = 5.601, p < .05$), and **observed negative control** ($F(1,25) = 4.478, p < .05$).

Correlations with length of living in the UK

	Observed Positive Control	Observed Negative Control	Reported Authoritarian
Length of living in the UK	Pearson's $r = .371^*$ $p < .05$	Pearson's $r = -.364^*$ $p < .05$	Pearson's $r = -.393^*$ $p < .05$

Conclusions

1. Most (80%) Chinese immigrant mothers in the UK retain strong links to their heritage culture. The length of time they have been living in the UK does not seem to influence their attitudes toward Chinese or English culture.
2. Chinese immigrant mothers reported high levels of both authoritative and Chinese style parenting, but low levels of authoritarian parenting. Similar trends were found in their observed parenting: they engaged more in positive than in negative control, and expressed more positive than negative affect.
3. The different acculturation strategies of Chinese immigrant mothers affected their reported autonomy granting, and their overall attitude towards Chinese culture was associated with their reported Chinese specific parenting.

References

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- Tsai, J. L., Ying, Y. W., & Lee, P. A. (2000). The meaning of "being Chinese" and "being American": Variation among Chinese American young adults. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 31*, 302-322.
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