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Tough Love or Hostile Domination? Psychological Control and Relational Induction in Cultural Context

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The authors examined 2 forms of parental psychological control and how they related to child behavior problems in 2 cultural groups. A sample of 165 Hong Kong (HK) Chinese and 96 European American (EA) parents completed measures of parental control strategies, parental rejection, and child behavior problems. The use of hostile psychological control (criticism, interference, invalidation) was more strongly associated with the use of relational induction (guilt induction, shaming, reciprocity, social comparison) among EAs compared with HK parents. Psychological control was related to parental rejection across both groups, but it was only independently associated with child behavior problems for EA families. Relational induction, on the other hand, was not associated with child behavior problems in either group but was more strongly associated with parental rejection among EAs compared with HK parents. The findings suggest that there are distinguishable forms of psychological control that may have distinctive implications for parent–child relations and child behavioral adjustment depending on the cultural context.

Keywords: psychological control, culture, child behavior problems, shaming, guilt induction

Parental control has been central in family process research in recent years, with attention to both behavioral control and psychological control. Behavioral control concerns parental attempts to monitor and supervise children's behaviors in ways that bring behavior in accord with prevailing family or social norms and is seen as positive for children's development (e.g., Barber, 2002; Steinberg, 1990). On the other hand, psychological control refers to the process by which parents intrude into the emotions and self-expression of the child (Barber). It often involves tactics such as shaming and guilt induction, whereby parents manipulate their relationship with the child to achieve control over the child's conduct (Barber, Olsen, & Shagle, 1994). Such behaviors are regarded as negative because they interfere with the child's developing sense of identity and independence (Barber & Harmon, 2002) and have been associated with child internalizing symptoms such as depression and withdrawal (see Barber for a review).

However, the notion that certain types of parental control are uniformly deleterious to child well-being has been criticized as an ethnocentric view of parenting (e.g., Chao, 1994). Much of the research on parenting and child development has been conducted in Western cultural contexts where autonomy, assertiveness, and independence are emphasized as desired endpoints of child development (Greenfield, Keller, Fuligni, & Maynard, 2003). Open self-expression and the verbalization of internal states are generally encouraged among children in independence-oriented cultures. In this context, psychological control is thought to be harmful as it intrudes into children's emotional autonomy and thwarts the prioritized developmental task of individuation. However, interdependent traditions prominent in many East Asian cultures place a greater priority on accommodating to others in the social environment and, thus, emphasize emotional restraint and self-control (e.g., Kim & Sherman, 2007; Matsumoto, Yoo, & Nakagawa, 2008). Socialization practices help children to regulate their personal desires and to inhibit individual self-expression in the service of maintaining family and social order (e.g., Eisenberg, Zhou, Liew, Champion, & Pidada, 2006). Reliance on some aspects of psychological control may, thus, be congruent with prevailing socialization goals in the East. For example, H. Fung (1999) described Taiwanese parents' reliance on shaming to evoke negative affect in children to foster the development of children's awareness and sensitivity to moral values and social rules.

Evidence suggests that strategies emphasizing parental control and authority may be adaptive in Asian and Asian American familial contexts in ways not observed among European American (EA) families. Although forms of restrictive parental control have been associated with lower levels of parental acceptance in EA families (Garber & Flynn, 2001), similar control strategies may be associated with parental warmth and acceptance in Japan (Kornadt, 1991) and Korea (Rohner & Pettengill, 1985). High levels of parental control have also been found to be associated with warmth, cohesion, and lower levels of conflict in Asian American

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families (e.g., Nomura, Noguchi, Saito, & Tezuka, 1995). Depending on the system of local meanings, certain forms of psychological control may be indicative of parental concern and investment rather than parental hostility or rejection.

Empirical studies, however, have generated equivocal findings with regard to whether the child outcomes associated with the use of psychological control strategies differ in East Asian versus Western contexts. Some studies support the culture-general hypothesis that parental psychological control is negatively associated with child adjustment across contexts (Barber, Stolz, & Olsen, 2005; Q. Wang, Pomerantz, & Chen, 2007). Barber et al. (2005) compared parents and adolescents from Africa, China, India, Bangladesh, and Germany and found that psychologically controlling parenting was associated with adolescent depression and antisocial behaviors across all cultural groups. In their prospective study of parents and adolescents in the United States and China, Q. Wang et al. (2007) found that parental psychological control predicted lower levels of life satisfaction and self-esteem over time in both cultures.

Yet other studies have revealed that culture moderates the association between psychological control and child adjustment (e.g., Olsen et al., 2002; Rudy & Halgunseth, 2005). Olsen et al. assessed psychological control in samples of Russian, Chinese, and American mothers of young children. Overall, psychological control was related to externalizing and internalizing problems in the American sample, externalizing problems in the Russian sample, but it was not related to child behavior problems in the Chinese sample. Another study reported that psychological control was related to greater anger, conduct problems, and drug use among EA but not among CA adolescents, though the effects on depression and anxiety symptoms were similar (Chao & Aque, 2009).

Inconsistent findings in the extant literature may, in part, arise from differences in the conceptualization and measurement of parental psychological control. Stemming from earlier work by Schaefer (1959, 1965), Barber described psychological discipline as parental control and intrusiveness through appeals to pride and guilt, and it involves shaming, criticism, and expressing disappointment. However, his final measure of psychological control (Barber's 1996 Psychological Control Scale–Youth Self-Report [PCS-YSR]) included items that predominantly tap into constraining verbal expressions, invalidating feelings, and personal attacks of child, which may primarily denote parental hostility and rejection. Cross-national studies that found similar pattern of relations between psychological control and child outcomes tend to omit items that pertain to guilt induction and only assess the extent to which parents attacked, invalidated, or constrained the expression of the child (Barber et al.; Nelson & Crick, 2002). It is interesting to note that when Olsen et al. (2002) included items of guilt induction and love withdrawal, they did not find significant associations between psychological control and child behaviors among Chinese children. Item- and subscale-selection may have contributed to the mixed findings on cultural variation in correlates of psychological control.

Parental expressions of disappointment inherent in guilt induction and love withdrawal may exemplify a separate subclass of psychological control strategies that may have meanings and developmental outcomes that may be more variable depending on cultural context. Scholars have denoted this class of parenting strategies as inductive discipline, whereby parents draw children's attention to the effects of their misbehaviors on others. For example, Krevans and Gibbs (1996) argued that parental statements of how the child has disappointed them can be seen as a form of inductive discipline, as the parent is pointing out how the child's behavior has affected others; and in this case, how the behavior has affected the parent. By presenting themselves as victims of the fallout of the child's behavior, parents seek to elicit empathy in the child, which may be most powerful given a strong emotional bond between the parent and child. This is consistent with previous work that described the common practice among Japanese mothers to appeal for child's empathy by presenting herself as a victim of the child's misbehaviors (e.g., Zahn-Waxler, Friedman, Cole, Mizuta, & Hiruma, 1996).

Another related family process in more interdependent cultures is the emphasis on the respective roles and filial responsibilities within the hierarchical structure of the family wherein parental duty to nurture and teach their children is balanced by the child's debt of obligation to care for parents (Ho, 1996). The child is expected to gain an appreciation and understanding of their parents' perspective, as well as the many sacrifices and efforts parents put into promoting their well-being. This understanding will, in turn, drive the child to reciprocate through hard work and exemplify proper conduct to relieve the parent from worry and to contribute to the family.

Also in the service of role socialization, parents in Chinese cultural contexts have been noted to use upward social comparison to make salient models of well-mannered or filial children. H. Fung (1999) described Taiwanese mothers as making unfavorable comparisons of their child to the child's peers, siblings, and other relatives for the purpose of moral socialization. Social comparison is described as a prototypical shaming practice used in response to child behavioral transgressions (e.g., "Even your baby brother knows better"; H. Fung & Chen, 2001) and also in the context of '"opportunity education,'" when parents point out examples of greater achievements of a to-be-admired peer (Chao, 1994).

The use of strategies such as guilt induction, love withdrawal, social comparison and reciprocity demands, may be motivated by different reasons across cultural groups (Mason, Walker-Barnes, Tu, Simons, & Martinez-Arrue, 2004; Rudy & Halgunseth, 2005). Rudy and Halgunseth found that psychological control as measured by guilt induction is associated with different meaning and parental cognitions in individualist and collectivist groups. Within the individualist cultures, parents who are psychologically controlling tend to hold more negative perceptions about their children. On the other hand, collectivistic parents who score high on psychological control are concerned primarily with teaching their children to behave in ways that are consistent with collectivistic values. Rather than an unhealthy manipulation of the parent–child relationship, evoking guilt or inducing a focus on the parent's perspective helps the child acquire empathy and attunement to others' thoughts and feelings (Mascolo, Fischer, & Li, 2003). Likewise, the implications of shaming practices such as negative social comparisons cannot be understood outside the broader context of the ethos that organizes family interactions and moral socialization of children (H. Fung & Chen, 2001). Disparaging a child through contrasts to better-behaved children may be antithetical to the Western cultural imperative to protect and nurture children's self-esteem, but it may be consistent with an Eastern

self-improving orientation and the cultivation of an incremental view of the self (Heine, 2008).

In summary, the literature suggests that the meaning of parental psychological control may vary across East Asian and North American cultural contexts. We sought to distinguish two forms of psychological control: hostile psychological control that may have robustly deleterious developmental outcomes and *relational induction*, a form of control that may be adaptive in promoting indigenous child-rearing goals in Chinese contexts. Through relational induction, Chinese parents point out the effects of child's behavior on other people to promote the understanding of others' perspectives. Filial sacrifice and mutual obligations are also emphasized to instill affiliative competence in children. Upward social comparisons are used to provide concrete models of desirable child behavior toward which children can aspire. In the tradition of previous cultural analyses of parental control (cf. Chao, 1994), we argue that the extant literature on psychological control might have obfuscated important distinctions between hostile control and other types of indigenous control governed by interdependent cultural traditions. Many studies on parental control have largely focused on adolescent samples; however, we elected to focus on middle childhood. Early ethnography by Ho (1986) observed that prior to the "age of reason" Chinese parents are less controlling. Then there is a qualitative shift as children matriculate to formal schooling, where they are expected to display good conduct and self-control. Thus, the transition from early to middle childhood represents an ideal developmental period to examine child socialization processes in this cultural context.

In this study, we had four objectives. First, we tested and evaluated the factor structure of a new culturally grounded measure of relational induction, indicated by the parent behaviors of love withdrawal, guilt induction, reciprocity, and social comparison. Second, we examined the relationship between relational induction and hostile forms of psychological control (i.e., criticism, interference, erratic behaviors, and invalidation). We expected stronger associations between the two constructs among EA as compared with Hong Kong (HK) Chinese parents (cf. Rudy & Halgunseth, 2005). Third, we examined the relationship between the two forms of psychological control and parental rejection. We hypothesized that psychological control would be related to parental rejection across groups but that the positive relationship between relational induction and parental rejection would be stronger among EA than HK families. This is supported by past literature that suggests that indigenous forms of parental control may reflect parental concern and involvement rather than hostility and rejection in interdependent cultural contexts (e.g., Chao & Tseng, 2002). Fourth, we examined the relationship between psychological control and child behavior problems. We predicted that psychological control would be related to child internalizing and externalizing behavior problems for both cultural groups, whereas relational induction would be related to behavior problems among EAs but not among HK families.

Method

Participants

The sample consisted of 165 HK Chinese parents (89.9% mothers; *M* age = 38.89 years of age) and 96 EA parents (87.7% mothers; *M* age = 42.35 years of age) whose children are between 7 and 10 years old. HK parents were on average 41.58 years of age (*SD* = 6.25 years) and EA parents were 42.35 years of age (*SD* = 4.96 years). The majority of the EA parents reported having attained a college degree (80.1%), compared with minority of the HK parents (18.5%). The mean age of the target child was 8.89 years (*SD* = 1.03 years) in the HK sample and 7.67 years (*SD* = 1.17) in the EA sample. The target children included 93 (56.4%) boys in HK and 45 (46.9%) boys in the U.S. families were recruited from public schools in HK and the greater Los Angeles area. Recruitment was facilitated by staff at the school sites who distributed a letter to parents whose children were between second and fifth grade. The letter contained information about the project as well as a return slip for parents to provide their contact information if they were interested in being contacted to participate in the project. The consent forms and questionnaire packets were then distributed to parents who indicated interest. A total of 540 letters were sent out to three schools in Hong Kong, and we received 198 return slips (36.7%), of which 165 parents (30.6%) completed the questionnaires. From the 360 letters we sent out to two schools in Los Angeles, we received 107 return slips (29.2%) and 96 parents (26.7%) completed the study. As a form of compensation, parents chose to receive a $15 (HK $100) gift card or donate that amount to the school PTA. The instrument included several measures with previously established reliability as well as newly developed scales to assess salient processes for which there were no available measures.

Measures

Psychological Control Scale (PCS; Barber, 1996). Parents indicated their use of psychological control by responding to 12 items that complete the sentence, "I am a parent who. . . ." Parents indicate how true each item was of themselves (1 = *not at all true*; 3 = *very true*). To measure hostile forms of psychological control, we used three items on constraining verbal expression (e.g., "changes the subject whenever the child has something to say"; $\alpha = .68$ for EA, $\alpha = .60$ for HK), three items on invalidating feelings (e.g., "is always trying to change how the child feels or thinks about things"; $\alpha = .68$ for EA, $\alpha = .50$ for HK), three items on personal attack (e.g., "blames the child for other family members' problems"; $\alpha = .58$ for EA, $\alpha = .62$ for HK), and three items on erratic emotional behavior (e.g., "goes back and forth between being warm and critical"; $\alpha = .65$ for EA, $\alpha = .72$ for HK). The overall scale has been shown to have good internal consistency in a U.S. sample ($\alpha = .83$) and in a Chinese sample ($\alpha = .72$; Barber, Stolz, & Olsen, 2005; Q. Wang et al., 2007). In this study, the overall scale had good internal consistency for the U.S. sample ($\alpha = .82$) and the Chinese sample ($\alpha = .75$).

Relational induction. Using the same format as the PCS, items were developed to measure relational induction, an indigenous form of parental psychological control, thought to represent a class of child-rearing practices observed in East Asian cultures intended to help children develop self-regulation. Fifteen items were used to measure guilt induction (e.g., "I might say, 'if you really care for me, you will not do things that cause me to worry'"; 6 items, $\alpha = .83$ for EA, $\alpha = .81$ for HK), reciprocity (e.g., "I make my child aware of how hard I work to provide for him/her"; 4 items, $\alpha = .82$ for EA, $\alpha = .75$ for HK), love withdrawal (e.g.,

"I give my child the cold shoulder when he or she has let me down"; 3 items, α = .67 for EA, α = .70 for HK), and social comparison (e.g., "I openly compare him/her to other children who are better behaved"; 2 items, α = .73 for EA, α = .75 for HK). The overall scale yielded good internal consistency with alphas of .85 for the HK sample and .87 for the EAs sample in this study. Table 3 presents the relational induction test items with factor loadings for each cultural group. See results for further information on scale development and factor structure.

Parental rejection (CRPBI; Schaefer, 1965). The 16-item rejection subscale of the Parent Report of Parenting Behavior Inventory was used to assess parents' perceptions of their own parenting behaviors (e.g., "I was not very patient with my child."). Parents rate, on a 3-point scale, how each item is like themselves (1 = *not like me*; 2 = k*ind of like me*, and 3 = *like me*). The subscales have yielded good internal consistency with alphas of .88 for Chinese Americans and .89 for EAs in previous research (C. Wu & Chao, 2005) and in this study (α = .86 for EA and α = .80 for HK).

Child behavior problems (CBCL; Achenbach & Rescorla, 2001). Parents were presented with a list of 118 behavioral and emotional problems and indicated whether each item is 0 (*not true*), 1 (*somewhat or sometimes true*), or 2 (*true or often true*) for their child based on the preceding 6 months. The measure yields broadband factor scores for internalizing and externalizing problems. Extensive evidence has been presented for the reliability and validity of the CBCL in American samples (Achenbach & Rescorla, 2001). The Chinese version has good internal consistency (α = .80 and .83 for the Internalizing and Externalizing subscales; Yang, Soong, Chiang, & Chen, 2000) and test–retest reliability (Leung et al., 2006). Internal consistency in this sample was good for the Internalizing (α = .79 for HK; α = .81 for EA) and Externalizing (α = .80 for HK; α = .83 for EA) subscales.

Results

Scale Development and Confirmatory Factor Analysis

An initial pool of 17 items concerning relational induction were generated from qualitative interviews conducted by the first author intended to elucidate parenting practices indigenous among HK Chinese (J. Fung, 2011), with an additional three items being selected from existing measures (Barber, 1996; Olsen et al., 2002). These 20 items were thought to represent four components of relational induction, including *guilt induction* (drawing child's attention to the effects of their misbehavior on others), *reciprocity* (emphasizing filial obligations and individual contributions to family well-being), *love withdrawal* (withdrawing attention or expressing disappointment toward child), and *social comparison* (comparing the child against a well-behaved child or sibling). Data from our sample were subjected to a confirmatory factor analysis to assess fit of the four-factor solution. On the basis of these results, five items were dropped because of low factor loadings (<.40) or low R^2 values (<.10).

The 15-item measurement model was then examined using multiple-group CFA using Mplus, version 5.0 (Muthén & Muthén, 2004), using the weighted least squares with adjusted *M*s (WLSM) as our estimation method given that our measured variables were ordered categorical rated on a 3-point scale. A constrained model, in which parameters were held constant across the two cultural groups, was compared with an unconstrained model, in which parameter estimates were allowed to be freely estimated. Single degrees of freedom Satorra-Bentler scaled chi-square difference tests were used to determine whether there was a significant difference between the parameter estimates for the two groups. Results of the multigroup CFA indicated that this model fit adequately to the data, comparative fit index (CFI) = .91, root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA) = .07, and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) = .09. Following T. A. Brown's (2006) procedures for assessing cross-group invariance, we found that factor loadings were not invariant, $\chi^2(10) = 29.79$, $p < .05$. Specifically, the factor loading for guilt induction was lower for the EA sample (λ = .620, $p < .01$) compared with the HK sample (λ = .756, $p < .01$), $\chi^2(1) = 4.143$, $p < .05$; there were no other significant differences in the factor structure.

Although the factor structure was not invariant across groups, we decided to retain all four factors intact in our subsequent analyses. Three considerations supported the notion that guilt induction was a meaningful indicator of the relational induction construct across groups. First, the factor loadings for guilt induction on relational induction exceeded .60 for both samples. Second, the guilt induction subscale correlated moderately with the rest of the three subscales (bivariate correlates were in the .40 range) for both cultural groups. Third, all the items loaded highly onto guilt induction (λ > .50) for both cultural groups. These considerations coupled with the good model fit in the multigroup CFA, we retained the guilt induction subscale. Table 1 shows the final 15 items and the factor loadings for each item by group. In support of concurrent validity, the total relational induction score scale was positively correlated with the shaming subscale ($r = .61$) of the Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ; P. Wu et al., 2002; e.g., tells child that he or she should be ashamed when he or she misbehaves), a measure designed to assess dimensions of parenting practices common in China and has been commonly used among Asian (Nelson, Hart, Yang, Olsen, & Jin, 2006) and EA (Russell, Hart, Robinson, & Olsen, 2003) samples.

Preliminary Analyses

Table 1 displays means and standard deviations for main study variables. As would be expected, after controlling for child age, gender, and parent education, HK parents reported greater use of psychological control and relational induction ($M = 20.81$, $SD = 3.94$; $M = 25.14$, $SD = 6.02$) than EA parents ($M = 16.98$, $SD = 3.90$; $M = 18.78$, $SD = 4.58$). HK parents also reported higher levels of rejection ($M = 1.57$, $SD = .31$) than EA parents ($M = 1.32$, $SD = .30$). Last, HK parents reported higher levels of internalizing ($M = 54.07$, $SD = 11.76$) and externalizing problems ($M = 55.74$, $SD = 10.43$) than EA parents ($M = 47.20$, $SD = 9.31$; $M = 45.49$, $SD = 9.69$).

Table 2 presents bivariate correlations among the study measured variables. Results show that psychological control was correlated with relational induction for HK ($r = .46$, $p < .01$) and EA families ($r = .74$, $p < .01$). A chi-square difference test was used to determine whether there was a significant difference between the constrained and unconstrained model, such that a significant change in chi-square value between the two models indicated that

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics on Child Age, Gender, and Parents' Levels of Education

Variable	European American (n = 96)	Hong Kong Chinese (n = 165)	$F(4, 255)$
Psychological control			
Constrain	4.03 (1.21)	4.13 (1.20)	*ns*
Invalidation	4.83 (1.54)	6.28 (1.39)	56.24**
Attack	3.72 (1.02)	5.42 (1.52)	83.76**
Erratic behavior	4.39 (1.31)	4.98 (1.66)	10.64**
Total	16.98 (3.90)	20.81 (3.94)	54.78**
Relational induction			
Guilt induction	6.96 (1.96)	10.09 (3.02)	69.51**
Reciprocity	5.82 (1.95)	6.75 (2.24)	5.15*
Love withdrawal	3.56 (0.96)	4.95 (1.48)	49.72**
Social comparison	2.49 (0.93)	3.36 (1.42)	35.69**
Total	18.78 (4.58)	25.14 (6.02)	64.49**
Parental rejection	1.32 (0.30)	1.57 (0.31)	34.43**
Internalizing problems			
Anxious–Depressed	53.11 (5.08)	55.25 (7.17)	3.75*
Withdrawn	52.07 (4.00)	58.77 (8.51)	45.16**
Somatic complaints	53.62 (5.26)	56.67 (7.75)	8.47**
Total	47.20 (9.31)	54.07 (11.76)	17.80**
Externalizing problems			
Rule breaking	52.48 (4.40)	57.25 (7.82)	26.63**
Aggressive	52.55 (4.55)	57.77 (8.05)	36.25**
Total	45.49 (9.69)	55.74 (10.43)	58.13**

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

the parameter estimate differed between groups. Although both correlations were significant and positive, this correlation was significantly larger among EA' than among HK parents ($z = 3.39$, $p = .0003$). Psychological control and relational induction were significantly associated with parental rejection for EA ($r = .51$, $p < .01$, and $r = .54$, $p < .01$) and HK families ($r = .61$, $p < .01$, and $r = .35$, $p < .01$). Correlation analyses also showed that psychological control and relational induction were positively correlated with internalizing ($r = .31$, $p < .01$, and $r = .28$, $p < .01$, respectively) and externalizing problems ($r = .44$, $p < .01$, and $r = .32$, $p < .01$) for EA families. Results showed a similar pattern with HK families in which psychological control and relational induction were positively correlated with internalizing ($r = .19$, $p < .01$, and $r = .18$, $p < .01$) and externalizing problems ($r = .27$, $p < .01$, and $r = .20$, $p < .01$). Given that child age and parental education were different between the two cultural groups and child gender was correlated with various independent, mediator, and dependent variables, they were included as covariates in subsequent SEMs.

Multigroup Structural Equation Model

A multiple-group structural equation model (SEM) was used to determine whether the hypothesized relationships among the study variables were equivalent between HK and EA families. In this model, the constructs of psychological control and relational induction were included as measured variables rather than latent variables. This was necessary because the strong positive correlation between psychological control and relational induction for the EA sample resulted in difficulties in attaining model convergence with the latent variable measurement models once the endogenous variables were included in the structural model. We elected not to fit a model with measured variables for the four relational induction subscales loading onto relational induction latent factor in the model for two reasons. First, these subscales are best considered as indicators of the broader construct rather than as standalone measures. Second, such modeling would encompass the estimation of a large number of free parameters that would not be supported by the sample size in this study. Although not depicted in the figure, demographic variable (child age and gender) and parental education were also included as measured variables in the model as covariates.

Models were fit using the Mplus statistical program, Version 5.0 (Muthén & Muthén, 2004). Multiple-group SEM with WLSM estimation compared two nested models (Byrne, 1994). Single degrees of freedom Satorra-Bentler scaled chi-square difference tests were used to determine whether there was a significant difference between the constrained and unconstrained model. Results from the multiple-group SEM are depicted in Figure 1. The fit of the model was good, CFI = .958, RMSEA = .065, and

Table 2
Bivariate Correlations of Study Variables (Bottom Left: United States; Top Right: Hong Kong)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Constrain	—	.25**	.23**	.38**	.64**	.18*	.26**	.17*	.13	.25**	.52**	.17*	.14
2. Invalidation	.52**	—	.25**	.15	.58**	.08	.20**	.06	.11	.15*	.18*	−.01	.15
3. Attack	.54**	.37**	—	.49**	.74**	.35**	.19*	.39**	.47**	.50**	.41**	.19*	.15
4. Erratic Behavior	.50**	.33**	.49**	—	.77**	.14	.18*	.37**	.31**	.35**	.53**	.16*	.27**
5. Psychological control	.82**	.76**	.74**	.75**	—	.27**	.29**	.37**	.39**	.47**	.61**	.19*	.27**
6. Guilt induction	.43**	.40**	.57**	.37**	.53**	—	.45**	.28**	.47**	.76**	.17*	.17*	.13
7. Reciprocity	.60**	.46**	.51**	.43**	.64**	.40**	—	.20*	.37**	.68**	.13	−.01	.10
8. Love withdrawal	.57**	.49**	.65**	.41**	.68**	.52**	.58**	—	.35**	.64**	.39**	.18*	.13
9. Social comparison	.40**	.24*	.57**	.28**	.46**	.49**	.34**	.48**	—	.79**	.31**	.16*	.21**
10. Relational induction	.65**	.50**	.73**	.46**	.74**	.74**	.77**	.84**	.75**	—	.35**	.18*	.20*
11. Parental rejection	.47**	.31**	.40**	.41**	.51**	.41**	.48**	.49**	.27**	.54**	—	.28**	.31**
12. Internalizing problems	.34**	.18	.11	.30**	.31**	.16	.29**	.21**	.17	.28**	.23**	—	.66**
13. Externalizing problems	.35**	.18	.32**	.53**	.44**	.15	.30**	.30**	.20	.32**	.32**	.50**	—

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 3
Relational Induction Subscales and Items With Factor Loadings by Cultural Group

Variable	EA	HK
Guilt induction		
1. Tells my child that his/her behavior affects how other people think of me	.70	.61
2. Might say, when you don't listen, that shows you don't care about me	.67	.58
3. Tells my child he/she shouldn't do anything that makes me ashamed	.67	.82
4. Might say, "when you misbehave, people think I am a bad parent"	.63	.75
5. Tells my child I feel humiliated when he/she misbehaves	.72	.51
6. Might say, "if you really care for me, you will not do things that cause me to worry"	.64	.48
Reciprocity		
7. Might say "I take good care of you, so you should listen to me"	.88	.61
8. Tells my child that he/she needs to think about how much I have done for him/her	.71	.63
9. Makes my child aware of how hard I work to provide for him/her	.55	.45
10. Often conveys how hard it is to raise a child, so he/she appreciates me more	.75	.81
Love withdrawal		
11. Gives my child a cold shoulder when he/she has let me down	.60	.62
12. Tells my child that I don't like him/her when s/he doesn't listen	.51	.76
13. Will avoid looking at my child when he/she has disappointed me	.93	.55
Social comparison		
14. Openly compares my child to other children who are better behaved	.74	.71
15. Might say, "why can't you be more like _____" (name of a well behaved child)	.64	.60

Note. EA = European American; HK = Hong Kong Chinese.

SRMR = .050. The model indicated that psychological control was correlated with relational induction for HK ($\beta = .46$, $p < .01$) and EA families ($\beta = .75$ $p < .01$), but the association was significantly larger among EA than among HK parents, $\chi^2(1) = 10.767$, $p < .001$. In addition, the model results indicated that psychological control was positively associated with rejection for HK ($\beta = .60$, $p < .01$) and EA families ($\beta = .35$, $p < .01$), and the magnitude of association did not differ between the two cultural groups. On the other hand, relational induction was positively associated with rejection for EA ($\beta = .67$, $p < .01$) and HK families ($\beta = .35$, $p < .05$), but the association was significantly larger among EA than among HK families, $\chi^2(1) = 4.765$, $p < .05$. There were significant main effects of rejection on internalizing ($\beta = .29$, $p < .01$ for EA; $\beta = .22$, $p < .01$ for HK) and externalizing problems ($\beta = .32$, $p < .01$ for EA; $\beta = .22$, $p < .01$ for HK). Finally, there were significant direct effects of psychological control on internalizing ($\beta = .35$, $p < .01$) and externalizing problems ($\beta = .37$, $p < .01$) for EA families, but these relationships were not significant for HK families.

Discussion

This study aimed to disentangle hostile psychological control from other types of indigenous parental control (relational induction) and understand how there may be both universal and culturally unique associations with child emotional and behavioral adjustment. We found that relational induction and psychological control were positively correlated for both cultural groups. However, culture moderated this relationship, such that the positive association between psychological control and relational induction was significantly stronger for EA families compared with HK families. Psychological control and relational induction had a shared variance of 55% for EA families compared with that of 21% for HK families. In other words, relational induction is linked to other dimensions of more hostile psychological control, and models suggested that they may best be considered a unitary construct for EAs. On the other hand, relational induction was a related but distinguishable construct from more hostile forms psychological control for HK Chinese parents. This supports the notion that a subset of the psychological control strategies may carry a different meaning in a more interdependent cultural group that emphasizes maintaining harmony in within hierarchical parent–child relationships.

In terms of our second hypothesis, we found evidence that culture appeared to matter in understanding the relationships between the two forms of parental control and parental rejection. Hostile psychological control was positively associated with parental rejection for both cultural groups. Consistent with findings from previous research (e.g., Dix, 1992; Hastings & Grusec, 1998), parents who said they belittled, blamed, or showed disinterest in the child also tended to display more negative affect, lower levels of warmth, and hold more negative views about their child irrespective of cultural context.

A positive but weaker association between relational induction and parental rejection for HK families may suggest that indigenous forms of parental control may show less correspondence with hostility and may be driven by other motives perhaps reflective of parental concern in interdependent cultural context (e.g., Chao & Tseng, 2002). We had posited that for HK families, relational induction may reflect parental commitment to encouraging children to attune to the feelings, needs, and perspectives of others. In cultures guided by interdependence values, relational induction may be more distinct from other more hostile forms of psychological control and may not always be linked with cold or unaffectionate parenting. This is in line with previous findings that guilt induction was associated with more negative cognition about the child and parental rejection in families from individualist backgrounds, but not among families from collectivist backgrounds (Rudy & Halgunseth, 2005).

Third, in examining the relations between parental control and child behavior problems, the findings supported the cultural dissimilar perspective in which the negative effects of parental psychological control on child development were not apparent in HK families compared to EA families. We had posited that hostile forms of psychological control that include criticism and blaming would be directly associated with child behavior problems universally. Among EA families, the association between psychological control and child behavior problems held even after we controlled for parental rejection. This was consistent with previous findings

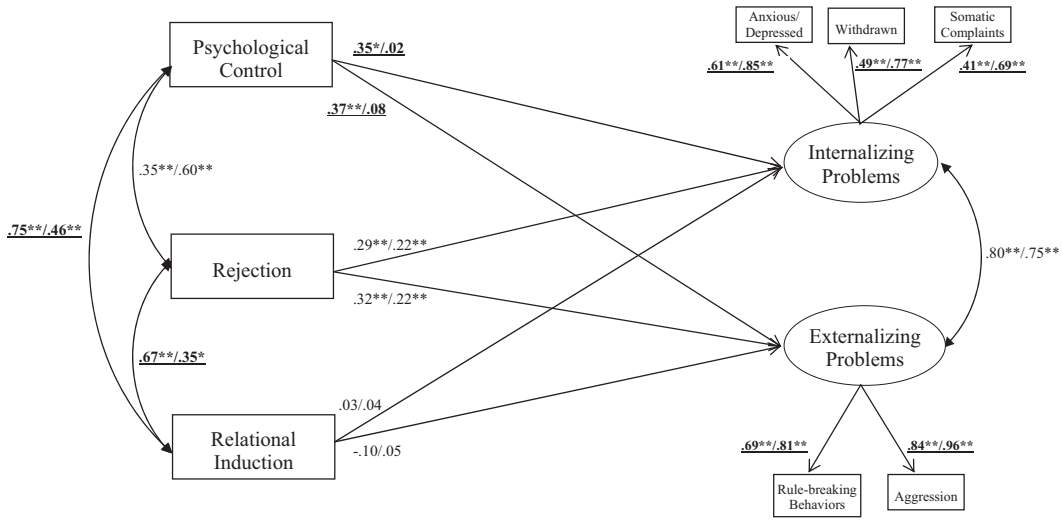

Figure 1. Multigroup structural equation modeling of the direct effects of psychological control, relational induction, parental rejection on child internalizing and externalizing problems. The path coefficients correspond with European American/Hong Kong (EA/HK) families, respectively. Boldfaced and underlined paths and associated arrows denote significant moderation by cultural group. Child age, gender, and parent education are not depicted in the diagram. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

suggesting the deleterious effects of psychological control on child development in North America (Barber, 1996, 2002; Silk, Morris, Kanaya, & Steinberg, 2003). In contrast, the negative association between psychological control and child adjustment in the HK families was not significant after covariation with parental rejection was partialed out. The lack of association for the HK sample differed from some previous studies that found psychological control to be positively associated with child behavior problems in Chinese samples (e.g., Barber, Stolz, & Olsen, 2005; Q. Wang, Pomerantz, & Chen, 2007) but is similar to other studies that, likewise, reported null associations among Chinese (e.g., Chao & Aque, 2009; Olsen et al., 2002).

These differences in findings across Chinese samples may be explained by differences among contexts in the Chinese diaspora. Evidence suggests that cultural values and parenting are changing rapidly in mainland China in an individualistic direction with parents exerting less control and granting greater autonomy to their children owing to conditions of social change (Chen, Bian, Xin, Wang, & Silbereisen, 2010), with some variation in values explained by birth after the institution of the one-child policy (Zhan, 2004). Research that contrasts parenting in mainland China and Chinese societies that have not undergone changes in family policy or recent rapid economic growth suggest that mainland Chinese parents exert less control than their HK and Taiwan counterparts (Berndt et al., 1993; Lai et al., 2000). Findings that suggest negative effects of psychological control on child adjustment in Chinese contexts have emerged with samples from mainland China (e.g., Barber et al., 2005; Q. Wang et al., 2007).

Finally, we had predicted that other variants of psychological control intended to inculcate emotional attunement to others through guilt induction and love withdrawal and highlight role expectations through social comparison and reciprocity demands would show culturally variant associations with child behavior problems. Instead, we found that these practices were neutral in predicting behavior problems across both groups once parental rejection was controlled. Consistent with parental acceptance–rejection theory (Khaleque & Rohner, 2002), parental rejection was consistently related to child behavioral and emotional maladjustment for both cultural groups. Although indirect effects are not formally tested in our model, it stands to reason that there is a greater risk that relational induction may be associated with behavior problems to the extent it relates to parental rejection.

In sum, this study provides empirical evidence that there are distinguishable forms of psychological control that have different relevance across cultures: hostile forms of psychological control versus relational induction, which may be more common in East Asian cultural socialization contexts. The former type of control may be universally related to parents' rejecting behaviors since it may mark parents' negative attitudes and feelings toward their children, thus, undermining relationship security and child well-being (Barber & Harmon, 2002). However the effects of this form of control on child adjustment appear to be culturally bound in which it is uniquely associated with child behavior problems within a more independent cultural worldview. In contrast, relational induction presents as a distinct but related set of disciplinary approaches in the East Asian context, whereby the parent encourages children to be cognizant of the thoughts and feelings of others and to inhibit their self-expression to achieve interpersonal harmony. In an interdependent context where parents aim to socialize their children to achieve affiliative competence, relational induction may be seen as parental duty and is less related to parental rejecting behaviors. It is interesting that this milder form of psychological control was not associated with child maladjustment in both cultures after we controlled for parental rejection.

Finally, limitations of our study must be acknowledged. First, because the study was cross-sectional we cannot be confident in any inferences about causal effects or directionality. There were mean group differences on internalizing and externalizing behav-

ior problems between the two cultural groups, and it is possible that resultant group differences in parental rejection and psychological control may be evoked by child behavior. Longitudinal studies would help examine the bidirectional influences between children behavioral problems and parental rejection and psychological control. Furthermore, the factor loadings on internalizing and externalizing problems were different between the two groups. For example, certain aspects of internalizing problems such as somatic complaints and withdrawn behaviors appeared to be more salient for HK families. Thus, we cannot rule out the possibility that the observed group differences in the structural path estimates may be in part because of measurement differences in the behavior problem latent variables. Similarly, certain measure subscales (i.e., psychological control subscales of invalidating feelings for the HK sample, and personal attack for the EA sample) had low internal consistencies in this study, which poses some concerns about whether these items appropriately tap the intended construct in these cultural groups. For example, it is possible that invalidating feelings items may have divergent meanings for the HK sample. Emotion socialization strategies in East Asian groups generally include more parental control over children's emotion expression (Eisenberg et al., 2006), some of these items may denote different culturally sanctioned processes whereas others may be more openly rejecting or hostile. Similarly, given their independent tradition of socialization, blaming the child for other family members' problems and bringing up the child's own past mistakes may contain different meaning for the EA families. However, because the measure of psychological control was treated as an overall scale in this study, we do note that internal consistency for the overall scale is comparable ($\alpha < .75$) with that published previously (e.g., Barber et al.).

Second, our measures were limited to parents' self-reports. Recent work suggests that mother and adolescent perceptions of maternal psychological control may differ substantially and may have distinct antecedents (Laird, 2011). Future research should examine child reports of parenting behaviors to unpack the extent to which child adjustment is related to how they experience parental control strategies. The impact of fathers' parenting practices on child development needs to be explored in future research as well, especially because recent studies revealed that Chinese paternal parenting predicted child outcomes above and beyond maternal parenting styles (Nelson et al., 2006). Furthermore, although we controlled for child age, gender, and parental education, parental occupational status was not assessed and may have contributed to the group differences we found.

In addition, although we found significant group differences in associations between constructs despite a relatively small sample size, replication is needed to support our conclusions about cultural variability in the relationships between parental control and child adjustment. Furthermore, in this study we were not able to incorporate the measurement model of relational induction and psychological control into the structural model. Future studies of larger sample sizes can also examine the structural model in which the subscales are loaded onto the overarching constructs of psychological control and relational induction, and how they relate to other parenting and child outcomes. Further research is required to document the validity of the distinction between hostile forms of psychological control and relational induction. In addition, we included a relatively wide age range (7 to 10 years) in our study and did not assess the extent to which there may be distinct developmental patterns of associations across age groups. Last, we used a cross-national comparison as a proxy for culture in this study. Future studies should examine more proximal cultural dimensions, such as socialization goals and the extent to which they may moderate the relationships between psychological control and child adjustment.

Nonetheless, the study provides new data on the role of culture in patterning the relations between parental control and child adjustment and indicates that there may be both universal and culturally unique associations with child behavior problems. These findings and a growing number of studies support a more nuanced view that the associations between some forms of parenting and child well-being may be culturally relative. What parenting is best depends on the extent to which approach fits within the ethos of the larger culture and society that shapes the resultant implications for the parent–child relationship and child well-being.

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