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## Chinese American Parents' Acculturation and Enculturation, Bicultural Management Difficulty, Depressive Symptoms, and Parenting

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### Abstract

This study examined whether Chinese American parents' acculturation and enculturation were related to parenting practices (punitive parenting, democratic child participation, and inductive reasoning) indirectly through the mediation of parents' bicultural management difficulty and parental depressed mood. Data came from a two-wave study of Chinese American families in Northern California. Mothers and fathers were assessed when their children were in early adolescence and then again in middle adolescence (407 mothers and 381 fathers at Wave 1; 308 mothers and 281 fathers at Wave 2). For both waves, we examined cross-sectional models encompassing both direct and indirect links from parental cultural orientations to parenting practices. We also used individual fixed-effects techniques to account for selection bias in testing model relationships at Wave 2. At Wave 1, via bicultural management difficulty and depressive symptoms, American orientation was related to less punitive parenting and more inductive reasoning for both parents, and Chinese orientation was related to more punitive parenting and less inductive reasoning for fathers. The findings indicate that bicultural management difficulty and parental depressed mood are important mechanisms to be considered when studying the relation between Chinese American parents' acculturation/enculturation and parenting.

### Keywords

acculturation; enculturation; bicultural management difficulty; Chinese American; parenting

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Asian Americans are the second largest, and the fastest-growing, immigrant population in the U.S. (U. S. Census Bureau, 2008). Approximately 90% of Asian American children live with immigrant parents (Jamieson, Curry, & Martinez, 2001). Asian American parents must negotiate between American culture and their heritage Asian culture in the process of

parenting their children. Current literature on cultural orientations and parenting behaviors suggests that the relations between the two are influenced by contextual factors, such as cultural values and norms, and individual factors, such as parental stress (Chen *et al.*, 2013; Lau, 2010; Su & Hynie, 2011). Whereas several studies have explored the influence of mainstream cultural norms on parenting (Dumka, Roosa, & Jackson, 1997; Hill, Bush, & Roosa, 2003; Knight, Virdin, & Roosa, 1994), few studies have examined the simultaneous influences of both acculturation and enculturation. More importantly, the extant research has thus far overlooked the roles played by bicultural management difficulty (i.e., problems balancing two cultures) and resulting psychological distress (e.g., depressed mood) in the relation between cultural orientations and parenting behaviors.

At the psychological level, acculturation refers to individuals' socialization to mainstream cultural norms (i.e., values, attitudes, and behaviors), whereas enculturation refers to individuals' (re)socialization to ethnic cultural norms (B. S. K. Kim, 2007). Early research (e.g., Gordon, 1964) conceptualizes acculturation and enculturation as incompatible with one another. Current research (Berry, 2006; Gonzales, Fabrett, & Knight, 2009), however, acknowledges the possibility that individuals are able to participate in both host and ethnic cultures simultaneously. For this reason, recent studies have begun to examine immigrant parents' parenting behaviors in this bicultural context (Cheah, Leung, & Zhou, 2013). However, specific mechanisms through which a bicultural context affects parenting practices have not been explored. To fill this gap, the present study samples Chinese American mothers and fathers to test the relations between American and Chinese orientations and parenting practices, examining parents' bicultural management difficulty and depressive symptoms as mediators of these relations. This mediational hypothesis is based on the predictions of the stress paradigm (Conger & Conger, 2002; Conger *et al.*, 2002; Pearlin, Menaghan, Lieberman, & Mullan, 1981).

### **Extending the Stress Paradigm to Acculturation/Enculturation**

The stress paradigm provides a theoretical framework for examining acculturative stress. The stress process model (Pearlin, *et al.*, 1981) posits that life events or strains (primary stressors) impact the way people evaluate themselves (secondary stressors), which in turn leads to symptoms of psychological distress (mental health outcomes). Similarly, the Family Stress Model posits that a family's economic hardship (primary stressors) leads to economic pressure (secondary stressors), which influences the adults' emotional distress (mental health outcomes), which then is eventually related to disruptive parenting — including harsh, inconsistent, and uninvolved childrearing practices (Conger & Conger, 2002; Conger, *et al.*, 2002). Applying the stress paradigm to the acculturation/enculturation process, the experiences of acculturation and enculturation can be conceptualized as primary stressors, which may be associated with their bicultural management difficulty (a secondary stressor), which in turn may lead to depressive symptoms and eventually to disruptive parenting practices (e.g., more punitive parenting, less democratic child participation, and less inductive reasoning). Indeed, a recent study on Mexican American families applied the stress paradigm to acculturative stressors, and found that mothers' acculturative stress, as indexed by English language pressure, had a negative indirect effect on maternal warmth via maternal depression (White, Roosa, Weaver, & Nair, 2009). However, this study did not

address enculturation as a factor separate from acculturation; nor did it examine other secondary stressors, such as bicultural management difficulty.

## **Bicultural Management Difficulty and Depressive Symptoms as Mediators**

As Asian American parents navigate between two distinct cultures, they are faced with constant challenges (Cheah, et al., 2013). For example, they may find it difficult to balance the two cultures, feel forced to choose between them, or have trouble determining when to be “more Chinese” and when to be “more American”. LaFromboise, Coleman, and Gerton (LaFromboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993) have put forward a multi-faceted theoretical model of bicultural competence. One important domain of the model is bicultural efficacy, which they define as the confidence that one can live comfortably in two cultures with an integrated sense of identity. Orientation toward the mainstream culture has been found to be adaptive for immigrants (Costigan & Koryzma, 2011; Hwang & Ting, 2008; Ryder, Alden, & Paulhus, 2000), which suggests that insufficient endorsement of the American culture may result in a lack of bicultural efficacy, or in other words, more bicultural management difficulty. As for the relation between orientation toward the heritage culture and adjustment, however, there have been inconsistent findings across studies (e.g., Birman & Taylor-Ritzler, 2007; Ryder, et al., 2000), and even across two parents in the same family (Costigan & Koryzma, 2011). Given the importance of bi-dimensional assessment of cultural orientations, the current study explores the relation between acculturation/enculturation and bicultural management difficulty.

Bicultural management difficulty, in turn, may be related to psychological maladjustment, such as depressive symptoms. A recent study found that bicultural college students’ perceived bicultural self-efficacy was related to better life satisfaction and lower levels of anxiety and depressive symptoms (David, Okazaki, & Saw, 2009). Moreover, bicultural competence has been found to protect against depressive symptoms, even after controlling for perceived general stress and minority stress (Wei et al., 2010). Therefore, it is possible that bicultural management difficulty, as operationalized in the current study, may be positively correlated with immigrant parents’ depressive symptoms.

There has been much documentation of the relation between parental depressive symptoms and maladaptive parenting behaviors. Parents with elevated levels of depressive symptoms often exhibit higher levels of constricted behavior, hostility and negativity, and coercive control toward their children (Cummings & Davies, 1994; Downey & Coyne, 1990). Moreover, parents’ depressive symptoms have been found to be significantly related to disruptive parenting practices, such as less inductive reasoning, less monitoring, and more harsh discipline (Kim & Ge, 2000). Based on these findings, the current study selects three dimensions of parenting behaviors that have been used to distinguish among various parenting typologies for Chinese American parents (S. Y. Kim, Wang, Orozco-Lapray, Shen, & Murtuza, 2013) — punitive parenting, democratic child participation, and inductive reasoning — to capture both positive and negative parenting, as well as the quality of parent-child communication. It is hypothesized that a heightened incidence of depressive symptoms in parents relates to more punitive parenting, less democratic child participation, and less inductive reasoning.

## Invariance among Mothers versus Fathers

Given the different roles played by mothers and fathers within immigrant families — with the father seen as the breadwinner and head of the family (Roer-Strier, Strier, Este, Shimoni, & Clark, 2005) and the mother as the heritage culture transmitter (Boehnke, 2001; Davey, Fish, Askew, & Robila, 2003; Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind, & Vedder, 2001) — it is possible that acculturation and enculturation experiences are associated with parenting behaviors in different ways depending on parent gender. Indeed, mothers and fathers in immigrant Chinese families have been found to differ in terms of the relation between heritage cultural orientation and psychological adjustment: this relation was positive for mothers and unrelated for fathers (Costigan & Koryzma, 2011). Moreover, Chinese American mothers and fathers also differ in their parenting behaviors during different developmental periods: mothers are more likely to use restrictive control when children are in early adolescence, and fathers are more likely to adopt this strategy when children are in later adolescence (S. Y. Kim, et al., 2013). This study thus explores whether and how relations among acculturation/enculturation, bicultural management difficulty, depressive symptoms, and parenting practices vary for mothers and fathers in Chinese immigrant families across children's early and middle adolescence.

### The Present Study

This study uses two waves of data to examine relations among Chinese American parents' American and Chinese orientations, bicultural management difficulty, depressive symptoms, and parenting practices (punitive parenting, democratic child participation, and inductive reasoning). The first goal is to evaluate bicultural management difficulty and depressive symptoms as sequential mediators of the relations between Chinese and American orientations and parenting practices. It is expected that, at both waves, a lower American orientation will be associated with more bicultural management difficulty, which will then be associated with more depressive symptoms, which in turn will be associated with problematic parenting practices (more punitive parenting, less democratic child participation, and less inductive reasoning). However, no *a priori* hypothesis is made regarding the indirect effect of Chinese orientation, as the literature suggests inconsistent relations between immigrants' Chinese orientation and their psychological adjustment. The second goal is to examine the invariance of the aforementioned models for mothers versus fathers. The comparison between mothers and fathers in this study is merely exploratory, as the mechanisms of the relation between American/Chinese orientations and parenting practices have not yet been explored by parent gender.

### Method

#### Participants

Participants were mothers and fathers from Chinese American families residing in Northern California. Two waves of data spaced four years apart (during 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade at Wave 1 and during 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> grade at Wave 2) were collected on target adolescents, mothers, and fathers from each participating family.

This study utilized the data on mothers and fathers. The final Wave 1 study sample included 407 mothers and 381 fathers; and the final Wave 2 sample included 308 mothers and 281 fathers. At Wave 1, the majority of mothers (90%) and fathers (87%) were immigrants. On average, fathers were 48 years old ( $SD = 6.18$ ) and mothers were 44 years old ( $SD = 4.51$ ). The mean age at the time of immigration was 30 years for fathers ( $SD = 10.17$ ) and 28 years for mothers ( $SD = 8.90$ ). Length of time in the U. S. was an average of 17.59 years for fathers ( $SD = 10.17$ ) and 15.73 years for mothers ( $SD = 8.34$ ). The median annual family income range was \$30,001 to \$45,000. Most of the parents had finished high school. The majority of the families were two-parent families ( $N = 395$ , 89%). Due to refusal to participate or loss of contact, about 21% of families in the Wave 1 sample did not participate at Wave 2. A bias analysis comparing the families participating in both waves and the families lost to the follow-up did not reveal differences in demographic characteristics (i.e., family income, parents' age, education, immigration status) or study variables (i.e., cultural orientation, bicultural management difficulty, depressive symptoms, parenting practices) with one exception. Specifically, boys were more likely to have dropped out than girls,  $\chi^2(1) = 15.18, p < .001$ .

## Procedure

At Wave 1, participants were recruited from seven middle schools (in which Asian Americans comprised at least 20% of the student body) in two consenting school districts in major metropolitan areas of Northern California. With the assistance of school administrators, the research staff identified Chinese American students and contacted their families. About two to three weeks after distributing questionnaires, research staff collected completed surveys. Of all eligible families who were contacted, 47% agreed to participate. Of these families, 76% completed surveys. At Wave 2, those families who returned surveys in Wave 1 were re-contacted for the follow-up study by phone or email. The Wave 2 data collection proceeded in the same way as the Wave 1 data collection. Questionnaires were available in both English and Chinese versions. The questionnaires were first translated to Chinese and then back translated to English. Inconsistencies between the two versions were resolved by two bilingual research assistants with careful consideration of culturally appropriate meaning of items. At both waves, over 70% of fathers and mothers completed the Chinese version.

## Measures

**Chinese orientation and American orientation**—Parents reported their cultural orientations using the Vancouver Index of Acculturation (Ryder, et al., 2000) which consists of 10 items on American orientation and 10 corresponding items on Chinese orientation. The two dimensions of VIA have been reliably measured in multiple ethnic groups including Chinese Americans, and have also been found to be related with measures of self-construal and adjustment (Ryder, et al., 2000). On a scale of 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*), the VIA items assess values, behaviors, traditions, and social interactions with regard to the cultures in question (W1, Chinese orientation,  $\alpha = .82$  to  $.83$ ; W1, American orientation,  $\alpha = .83$  to  $.84$ ; W2, Chinese orientation,  $\alpha = .86$  to  $.88$ ; W2, American orientation,  $\alpha = .85$  to  $.87$ ).

**Bicultural management difficulty (BMD)**—The BMD measure was created for the purpose of this study. Parents reported on their bicultural difficulty on a scale of 1 (*never*) to 5 (*always*). At Wave 1, BMD was assessed by using three items: “difficult to balance two cultures,” “do not like having to choose between two cultures,” and “difficult to know when I need to be more Chinese or American in a certain situation.” At Wave 2, another three items were added to the measure: “hard to juggle between Chinese and American values,” “difficult to select between the Chinese and American ways of doing things,” and “the American style contradicts the Chinese ways of thinking.” (W1,  $\alpha = .71$  to  $.74$ ; W2,  $\alpha = .85$ ). As BMD is a new measure, we need to assess its psychometric properties. One-factor confirmatory factor analyses were conducted separately for Wave 1 and Wave 2 BMD measures and separately for father and mother reports.

For the bicultural management difficulty (BMD) measure at Wave 1, all the items loaded well on the latent factor for both father and mother reports ( $\lambda_s = .51$  to  $.80$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Model fit indices were not available because both models were saturated. For the BMD measure at Wave 2, both father and mother models showed acceptable model fit ( $\chi^2(9, N = 271) = 33.15$ ,  $p < .001$ , CFI =  $.96$ , RMSEA =  $.10$ , SRMR =  $.04$  for father reports, and  $\chi^2(9, N = 294) = 23.20$ ,  $p < .001$ , CFI =  $.98$ , RMSEA =  $.07$ , SRMR =  $.03$  for mother reports). All the items loaded well on the latent factors ( $\lambda_s = .53$  to  $.87$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

**Parental depressive symptoms**—Using the 20-item Center for Epidemiologic Studies of Depression Scale (Radloff, 1977), which has been widely used, parents self-reported on levels of depressive affect, somatic activity, lack of positive affect, and interpersonal difficulties during the past week, on a scale of 0 (*rarely or none of the time*) to 3 (*most or all of the time*). An average of the 20 items was used, with higher scores reflecting more depressive symptoms ( $\alpha_s = .87$  to  $.88$ ).

**Parenting**—Parents reported on dimensions of punitive parenting and democratic child participation using items adapted from Block’s Child-rearing Beliefs and Practices Report (Robinson, Mandleco, Olsen, & Hart, 1995). Punitive parenting was measured on a scale of 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*), using four items such as “discipline first and ask questions later” (W1,  $\alpha = .65$  to  $.69$ ; W2,  $\alpha = .69$  to  $.71$ ). Democratic child participation was also measured on a 5-point scale and included four items, such as “encourage child’s free expression” (W1,  $\alpha = .59$  to  $.73$ ; W2,  $\alpha = .72$  to  $.75$ ). Parents reported on the 5-point inductive reasoning scale through measures adapted from the Iowa Youth and Families Project (Conger, Patterson, & Ge, 1995) (e.g., “explain rules”; W1,  $\alpha_s = .73$ ; W2,  $\alpha = .77$  to  $.80$ ). These three dimensions — punitive parenting, democratic child participation, and inductive reasoning — have been used to study parenting among Chinese American families, and have been found to be predictive of children’s psychological adjustment (S. Y. Kim, et al., 2013).

**Covariates**—All analyses controlled for parental education, family income, and adolescent gender. Using a scale of 1 (*no formal schooling*) to 9 (*finished graduate degree*), parents reported on their highest education level. For both parents at both waves, the average education level was category 6, “finished high school” ( $SD = 1.7$  to  $1.8$ ). Parents reported on their family income before taxes during the past year using a scale divided into \$15,000



increments, ranging from 1 (*\$15,000 or under*) to 12 (*\$165,001 or more*). In this study, family income was indexed by the average of the father's and mother's reports in each household. Adolescent gender was measured as a dichotomous variable (0 = *boy*, 1 = *girl*).

## Results

Using Mplus 7.11 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998 – 2013), we tested structural models for both parents at both waves. Table 1 displays the descriptive statistics and zero-order correlations among study variables. First, for both waves, cross-sectional models encompassing both direct and indirect links from parental cultural orientations to parenting practices were examined for mothers and fathers separately. Second, we used individual fixed-effects techniques within an SEM framework to test model relationships at Wave 2. Cross-sectional studies are subject to the possibility of an endogeneity problem, which occurs when the observed relationships between independent variables and dependent variables are actually due to the correlations between “unobserved” variables and the independent variables (Duncan, Magnuson, & Ludwig, 2004). Individual fixed-effects strategy addresses this bias by controlling for Wave 1 study constructs in the Wave 2 model, thus adjusting for the influence of time-invariant individual-level unmeasured variables on the independent and dependent variables (Duncan, et al., 2004). Finally, we conducted structural invariance tests to determine whether the strength of relationships in the path models differed across mothers and fathers.

### Testing Direct Model Effects

Figures 1 and 2 present the results for the structural models linking parents' cultural orientations to parenting practices at Waves 1 and 2, respectively. All of the models demonstrate a good fit to the data. The detailed fit statistics are shown in the notes to Figures 1 and 2.

**Wave 1**—For both mothers and fathers, whereas Chinese orientation was not significantly related to parenting variables, higher levels of American orientation were related to more use of inductive reasoning (mothers,  $\beta = .18, p < .001$ ; fathers,  $\beta = .19, p < .001$ ). Higher levels of American orientation were also associated with lower levels of punitive parenting for mothers ( $\beta = -.12, p < .05$ ), and higher levels of democratic child participation for fathers ( $\beta = .23, p < .001$ ).

**Wave 2**—For fathers, Chinese orientation was negatively related to democratic child participation ( $\beta = -.13, p < .05$ ). For both mothers and fathers, higher levels of American orientation were related to higher levels of inductive reasoning (mothers,  $\beta = .19, p = .001$ ; fathers,  $\beta = .20, p = .001$ ) and democratic child participation (mothers,  $\beta = .24, p < .001$ ; fathers,  $\beta = .13, p < .05$ ).

### Testing Indirect Model Effects

Inferences for the indirect effects were based on the Mplus estimation of indirect effects, which uses delta method standard errors (Muthén & Muthén, 1998 – 2013). Indirect effects are displayed in Table 2.

**Wave 1**—For both parents, higher levels of American orientation were related to less punitiveness and more inductive reasoning through the mediating factors of less bicultural management difficulty and fewer parental depressive symptoms. Moreover, for fathers, higher levels of Chinese orientation were related to more punitiveness and less inductive reasoning via higher levels of bicultural management difficulty and depressive symptoms.

**Wave 2**—Mothers' higher levels of Chinese orientation were related to more punitive parenting because of higher levels of bicultural management difficulty and depressive symptoms.

### Testing Individual Fixed-Effects Models for Wave 2 Data

We tested an individual fixed-effects model for Wave 2 data by autoregressing Wave 2 constructs on Wave 1 constructs (Figure 3). The results are nearly identical to the results in Figure 2, in which Wave 1 variables were not controlled, with a few exceptions. The significant relation between mothers' Chinese orientation and bicultural management difficulty disappeared. Also, the significant relationship between fathers' American orientation and democratic child participation was reduced to a marginally significant relationship.

### Model Invariance across Mothers and Fathers

Our strategy for model invariance testing is similar to conducting a moderation test using multiple group analyses within the SEM framework. For each wave of data, both parents were modeled in the same covariance matrix to account for the dependence between mothers' data and fathers' data. The tests were conducted stepwise. First, we estimated a base model in which all model parameters were freely estimated; then we added a series of increasingly restrictive constraints on the parameters and observed whether the additional constraint led to a significant decrease in the overall model fit on the basis of omnibus tests. The stepwise method allowed us to pinpoint whether any difference existed, and if so, where in the model it was located. In both waves, the relationship between American orientation and democratic child participation differed for mothers and fathers (at w1,  $\chi^2(1) = 4.84, p < .05$ ; at w2,  $\chi^2(1) = 6.68, p < .01$ ). Specifically, at Wave 1, whereas mothers' American orientation was not related to their democratic parenting, fathers who reported higher levels of American orientation reported higher levels of democratic child participation; at Wave 2, for both parents, higher levels of American orientation were related to more democratic child participation. However, the positive relationship between American orientation and democratic child participation was stronger for mothers than for fathers.

## Discussion

Extending the stress paradigm to evaluate consequences of acculturation/enculturation, this study aimed to understand how parental acculturation and enculturation were related to parenting behaviors in a sample of Chinese American families. Overall, the study results provided evidence that acculturation and enculturation may be associated with parenting practices indirectly through the mechanism of parents' bicultural management difficulty and depressive symptoms, particularly when children are in early adolescence. The longitudinal



nature of the study design allowed for a test of the individual fixed-effects, which provided some assurance that the observed relationships were not subject to unobserved error bias.

Although the stress paradigm (e.g., Conger & Conger, 2002; Conger, et al., 2002; Pearlin, et al., 1981) has been widely used to explain the consequences of stressful life events, few studies have applied this framework to acculturation/enculturation research. Identifying acculturation/enculturation as the primary stressor and bicultural management difficulty as the secondary stressor, this study extends the current literature not only by applying the stress paradigm to the relations between cultural orientations and parenting, but also by examining enculturation as a separate factor from acculturation. The results suggest that when the children are in early adolescence, mothers' and fathers' American orientation was associated with supportive parenting (less punitive parenting and more inductive reasoning) via decreased bicultural management difficulty and fewer depressive symptoms; fathers' Chinese orientation, on the other hand, was associated with unsupportive parenting (more punitive parenting and less inductive reasoning) via increased bicultural management difficulty and depressive symptoms.

It is worth noting that, in general, significant residual direct effects of American orientation on positive parenting behaviors remained for both parents, even after controlling for the mediating effects of bicultural management difficulty and depressive symptoms. This suggests that processes other than stress triggered by bicultural management and resulting psychological distress may also mediate the relation between parents' American orientation and parenting behaviors. Future studies may focus on identifying other potential mechanisms of this association.

The significant indirect effects no longer held at Wave 2, after controlling for the individual fixed-effects (Figure 3). This was mainly due to the weakened link between acculturation/enculturation and bicultural management difficulty. This finding suggests that, for Chinese American parents, the association between cultural orientation and bicultural management difficulty may become weaker the longer they reside in the U.S. With longer residence, parents may become more effective at managing both cultures, which may mean that parents' endorsement of a specific cultural orientation does not have as much of an effect on bicultural management. It is worth mentioning that, whereas the negative link between American orientation and bicultural management difficulty was relatively stable, the link between Chinese orientation and bicultural management depended on time and parent gender. The variable relation between heritage culture orientation and bicultural management difficulty provides a possible explanation for the inconsistent relations between heritage culture orientation and psychological adjustment documented in the literature (Birman & Taylor-Ritzler, 2007; Ryder, et al., 2000).

In both waves of the current study, Chinese American parents' bicultural management difficulty was significantly related to their depressive symptoms, suggesting that bicultural management difficulty may serve as a possible psychological risk factor for Chinese American parents. Although the idea of bicultural efficacy has been put forward for two decades (LaFromboise, et al., 1993), it was not until recently that scholars have attempted to operationalize and quantitatively measure the extent to which immigrants do or do not

exhibit bicultural efficacy. (David, et al., 2009). Since the beginning of quantitative investigation into bicultural self-efficacy, one important lingering question has been the directionality among constructs of bicultural management difficulty, acculturation/enculturation, and psychological adjustment (David, et al., 2009). The current study provides some initial evidence that immigrant parents' cultural orientations, and American orientation in particular, can be protective antecedents of bicultural management difficulty, which in turn can be related to psychological maladjustment. Future replications are needed to verify the temporal orderings among these constructs.

According to the model invariance test, at Wave 1, the relationship between American orientation and democratic child participation existed for fathers but not for mothers; at Wave 2, this relationship was stronger for mothers than for fathers. As children move from early adolescence to later adolescence, it becomes increasingly important for them to develop a sense of autonomy, which means that democratic child participation in parent-child interaction may become increasingly necessary (Steinberg & Silverberg, 1986). At Wave 1, when the children in this sample were in early adolescence, their sense of autonomy was just emerging and thus might not have been as salient. At Wave 2, they had reached middle adolescence, a time when children may require more independence and autonomy. As Chinese mothers might be more involved in child rearing than fathers (Chao & Tseng, 2002), the lack of association between American orientation and democratic child participation for mothers at Wave 1 and the stronger association between the two measures for mothers relative to fathers at Wave 2 may be due to mothers being more sensitive than fathers to children's developmental needs. At Wave 2, mothers with greater American orientation might be more likely to be aware of this developmental need for greater independence and thus to grant adolescents a greater degree of democratic participation in parent-child interactions.

These findings have important clinical implications. First, Chinese American parents may experience difficulty in maneuvering through their diverse cultural environment, and these experiences might compromise their psychological well-being and thus negatively impact parenting practices. Therefore, training parents to develop bicultural management skills will be helpful for fostering their positive adjustment. For example, cognitive intervention programs can help Chinese American parents to realize that they do not have to choose between the two cultures and that they can embrace both cultures at the same time. In addition, Chinese American parents' American orientation may protect against bicultural management difficulty, especially when their children are in early adolescence. This suggests that parents with lower levels of American orientation may be especially at risk, and for this reason, identifying this group of parents early on, and promoting their understanding and appreciation of American culture, may be beneficial. By designing and implementing these interventions, the counseling community can facilitate the adjustment of immigrant parents and promote positive parenting practices.

There are important future research implications as well. First, the current findings demonstrate the usefulness of the new measure of bicultural management difficulty in describing and explaining the conflicted nature of Chinese Americans' bicultural experience. Although this study has identified some precursors and consequences of bicultural

management difficulty, other correlates of this construct need to be identified. Second, recent quantitative investigations of bicultural competence/efficacy have used different measures, such as bicultural identity integration (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005) and bicultural self-efficacy (David, et al., 2009). Future studies may work on identifying similarities and distinguishing among these constructs, in terms of their relations with cultural orientations and mental health outcomes. Third, the relations among acculturation/enculturation, bicultural management difficulty, and psychological adjustment still need to be tested across different samples — different age groups, different generations of immigrants, and different racial/ethnic groups. A previous study has found that, for second or later generation minority college students, stronger enculturation to one's heritage culture was protective for bicultural management efficacy (David, et al., 2009), which is not the relationship suggested by the current study. This suggests that the relation between cultural orientations, particularly the heritage culture orientation, and bicultural management difficulty is context-specific (e.g., minority college students vs. immigrant parents).

This study's results should be considered in the context of its limitations. First, the study sample was drawn from metropolitan areas of Northern California, in which there is a large population of Chinese Americans. In areas with a lower density of Chinese, parents may have greater exposure to American culture and American parenting practices. As such, the results may not be generalizable to regions that are more rural or have fewer Chinese in the community. Second, this study used parental self-reports for all variables of interest. Therefore, the observed relations may be inflated by respondent bias. Future studies should be conducted using measures from different reporters to provide cross-reporter validation of the relationships found.

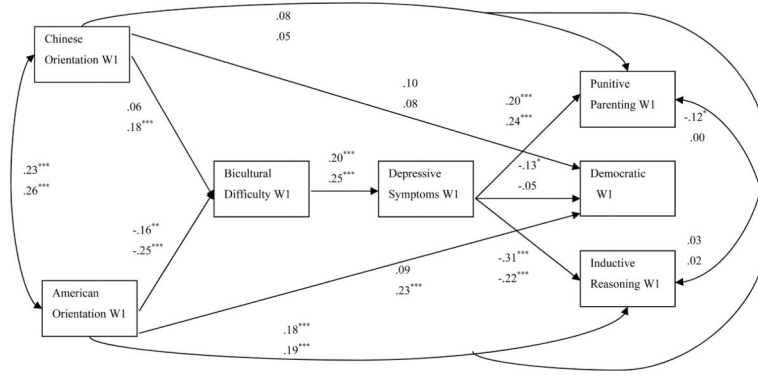
Keeping these caveats in mind, this study indicates that, as suggested by the stress paradigm, Chinese American parents' acculturation and enculturation can potentially impact their parenting via bicultural management difficulty and related depressive symptoms. The present study contributes to the current literature on acculturation and enculturation, and highlights some potential foci for prevention and intervention efforts aimed at improving Chinese American parents' adjustment and positive parenting.

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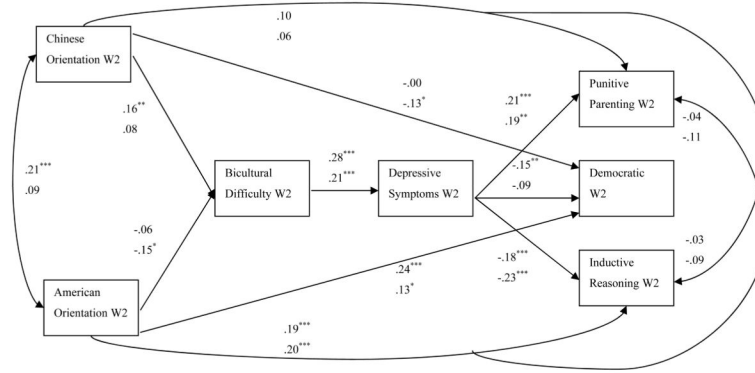
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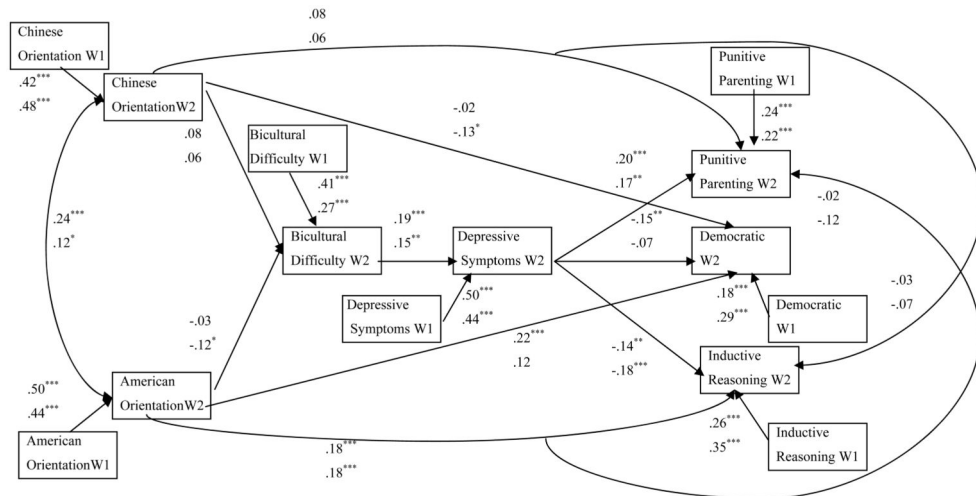


**Figure 1.** Path Models Testing Associations among Mothers’ and Fathers’ Reports of Cultural Orientations, Bicultural Management Difficulty, Depressive Symptoms, and Parenting at Wave 1. The models controlled for family income, parental education, and adolescent gender. Standardized coefficients are reported. Estimates on the top are mother-report coefficients, and estimates on the bottom are father-report coefficients. Bicultural difficulty = Bicultural management difficulty. Democratic = Democratic child participation. Model fit statistics for the mother-report model:  $\chi^2(5, N = 407) = 11.15, p = .05$ ; CFI = .98; RMSEA = .05; SRMR = .02. Model fit statistics for the father-report model:  $\chi^2(5, N = 381) = 13.45, p = .02$ ; CFI = .98; RMSEA = .06; SRMR = .02. \*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .





**Figure 2.** Path Models Testing Associations among Mothers’ and Fathers’ Reports of Cultural Orientations, Bicultural Management Difficulty, Depressive Symptoms, and Parenting at Wave 2. The models controlled for family income, parental education, and adolescent gender. Standardized coefficients are reported. Estimates on the top are mother-report coefficients, and estimates on the bottom are father-report coefficients. Bicultural difficulty = Bicultural management difficulty. Democratic = Democratic child participation. Model fit statistics for the mother-report model:  $\chi^2(5, N = 308) = 10.71, p = .06$ ; CFI = .98; RMSEA = .06; SRMR = .03. Model fit statistics for the father-report model:  $\chi^2(5, N = 281) = 13.04, p = .02$ ; CFI = .96; RMSEA = .07; SRMR = .03. \*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .



**Figure 3.** Individual Fixed-Effects Models Testing Associations among Mothers’ and Fathers’ Reports of Cultural Orientations, Bicultural Management Difficulty, Depressive Symptoms, and Parenting at Wave 2. The models controlled for family income, parental education, and adolescent gender. Standardized coefficients are reported. Estimates on the top are mother-report coefficients, and estimates on the bottom are father-report coefficients. Bicultural difficulty = Bicultural management difficulty. Democratic = Democratic child participation. Model fit statistics for the mother-report model:  $\chi^2(47, N = 308) = 89.92, p = .00; CFI = .93; RMSEA = .05; SRMR = .04$ . Model fit statistics for the father-report model:  $\chi^2(47, N = 281) = 49.99, p = .36; CFI = .99; RMSEA = .01; SRMR = .04$ . \*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables

Variables	Bivariate Correlations														M	SD
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14		
1. Chinese orientation (W1)	-	.24**	.14**	-.04	.02	-.14**	.07	.49**	.00	.18**	.05	-.09	-.09	.04	3.82	.45
2. American orientation (W1)	.20**	-	-.29**	-.19**	-.01	-.27**	.25**	-.06	.46**	-.16*	-.20**	-.01	-.10	.21**	3.48	.44
3. Bicultural difficulty (W1)	.04	-.25**	-	.31**	.15**	.03	-.13*	.15*	-.21**	.34**	.22**	.01	-.01	-.11	2.62	.85
4. Depressive symptoms (W1)	-.06	-.20**	.29**	-	.19**	.10	-.27**	.02	-.18**	.23**	.46**	.04	.08	-.14*	.57	.38
5. Punitive parenting (W1)	.02	-.11*	.11*	.16**	-	.12*	-.21**	-.02	.01	.04	.07	.24**	.11	-.15*	1.95	.75
6. Non-democratic parenting (W1)	-.12*	-.12*	-.02	.14**	.17**	-	-.45**	-.00	-.03	-.02	.08	.06	.31**	-.26**	2.38	.79
7. Inductive reasoning (W1)	.09	.28**	-.21**	-.36**	-.25**	-.39**	-	-.06	.12	-.11	-.14*	-.09	-.24**	.42**	3.67	.76
8. Chinese orientation (W2)	.41**	.05	.21**	.05	.04	-.12*	.02	-	.05	.10	.03	.03	.10	-.08	3.85	.51
9. American orientation (W2)	.02	.57**	-.17**	-.14*	-.04	-.10	.13*	.17**	-	-.19**	-.27**	-.13*	-.10	.25**	3.39	.50
10. Bicultural difficulty (W2)	.10	-.26**	.44**	.26**	.07	-.04	-.11	.18**	-.08	-	.25**	.08	-.04	-.10	2.80	.74
11. Depressive symptoms (W2)	.07	-.13*	.14*	.55**	.06	.05	-.19**	.02	-.15*	.33**	-	.20**	.11	-.28**	.61	.40
12. Punitive parenting (W2)	.08	-.01	.05	.17**	.27**	.14*	-.18**	.07	-.01	-.01	.19**	-	-.03	-.22**	1.77	.68
13. Non-democratic parenting (W2)	-.06	-.16**	-.01	.11	.09	.27**	-.24**	-.06	-.24**	-.04	.18**	-.02	-	-.50**	2.58	.81
14. Inductive reasoning (W2)	.08	.21**	-.10	-.21**	-.21**	-.29**	.39**	.03	.26**	.02	-.20**	-.20**	-.47**	-	3.58	.83
M	3.86	3.45	2.62	.61	1.95	2.25	3.81	3.85	3.36	2.71	.63	1.73	2.53	3.85	-	-
SD	.47	.47	.87	.40	.70	.69	.74	.50	.49	.76	.38	.64	.87	.75	-	-

Note: W1 = Wave 1, W2 = Wave 2. Bicultural difficulty = Bicultural management difficulty. Correlations and descriptives below the diagonal are for mother reports; correlations and descriptives above the diagonal are for father reports.

\*  $p < .05$ .

\*\*  $p < .01$

**Table 2**

Tests of Indirect Effects for the Structural Models for Wave 1 and Wave 2

Path	Total	Direct	Indirect
Wave 1			
Mothers' American Orientation → Parenting			
American orientation → bicultural difficulty → depress → punitive parenting	-.129*	-.123*	-.006*
American orientation → bicultural difficulty → depress → democratic	.089	.085	.004
American orientation → bicultural difficulty → depress → inductive reasoning	.190***	.181***	.010*
Fathers' Chinese Orientation → Parenting			
Chinese orientation → bicultural difficulty → depress → punitive parenting	.062	.052	.010*
Chinese orientation → bicultural difficulty → depress → democratic	.073	.075	-.002
Chinese orientation → bicultural difficulty → depress → inductive reasoning	.009	.019	-.010*
Fathers' American Orientation → Parenting			
American orientation → bicultural difficulty → depress → punitive parenting	-.014	.001	-.015**
American orientation → bicultural difficulty → depress → democratic	.229***	.226***	.003
American orientation → bicultural difficulty → depress → inductive reasoning	.201***	.187***	.014**
Wave 2			
Mothers' Chinese Orientation → Parenting			
Chinese orientation → bicultural difficulty → depress → punitive parenting	.106	.098	.009*
Chinese orientation → bicultural difficulty → depress → democratic	-.011	.004	-.007
Chinese orientation → bicultural difficulty → depress → inductive reasoning	-.033	-.025	-.008
Fathers' American Orientation → Parenting			
American orientation → bicultural difficulty → depress → punitive parenting	-.120	-.114	-.006
American orientation → bicultural difficulty → depress → democratic	.130*	.127*	.003
American orientation → bicultural difficulty → depress → inductive reasoning	.204***	.197***	.007

Note: Bicultural difficulty = Bicultural management difficulty. Depress = Depressive symptoms. Democratic = Democratic child participation. Because mothers' Chinese orientation at Wave 1 and American orientation at Wave 2, and fathers' Chinese orientation at Wave 2, were unrelated to bicultural management difficulty, the indirect effects of these variables on parenting were not tested. Mothers at Wave 1,  $n = 407$ ; Fathers at Wave 1,  $n = 381$ ; Mothers at Wave 2,  $n = 308$ ; Fathers at Wave 2,  $n = 281$ .

\*  $p < .05$ .

\*\*  $p < .01$ .

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