

Summary

A Cross-Cultural and Within-Culture Comparison of Child-Rearing Practices and Their Correlates

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The present study examines young adults' perceptions of their parents' child-rearing styles as they vary across two nations (U.S. and Turkey), and across geographical/cultural regions within one of the nations (Turkey) according to demographic characteristics and individual endorsement of cultural orientations (horizontal and vertical individualism and collectivism).

Individualism and collectivism have been found to influence or be associated with a wide range of behaviors and psychological processes, including child-rearing practices (e.g., Greenfield, Keller, Guligni, & Maynard, 2003). The two countries included in this study (Turkey and the U.S.) have consistently been found to differ on these dimensions, with the U.S. higher on individualism and Turkey higher on collectivism (Hofstede, 1980; 2001; Kağıtçıbaşı, 1982; 2007). A horizontal-vertical dimension has been suggested as a refinement to the individualism-collectivism dimension (Singelis, Triandis, Bhawuk, & Gelfand, 1995), where the vertical pole refers to an emphasis on hierarchy and authority, and the horizontal pole refers to an emphasis on equality and lack of hierarchical distinction. In the present study, the measure of individualism-collectivism, which was applied to participants in Turkey only, includes the horizontal-vertical dimension.

Much of the work on parenting style has used the categories of authoritative, authoritarian, permissive and neglecting styles, based on two major dimensions in child rearing proposed by Baumrind (1967) and Maccoby and Martin (1983). The first dimension is variously labeled warmth, acceptance, affection, or love, while the second dimension is generally labeled control. While there is little doubt that parental warmth is of vital significance to child outcomes all over the world (Khaleque & Rohner, 2002; Rohner & Britner, 2002), there is also little evidence that cultures differ greatly in parental warmth, whether they are individualistic or collectivistic. On the other hand, there is a great deal of evidence for cultural variation in the amount and style of control by parents. For example, many studies have shown that higher lev-

els of authoritarianism often characterize parents from collectivist cultural groups (see, e.g., Chao, 1994; Harwood, Schoelmerich, Schulze, & Gonzalez, 1999; Rudy & Grusec, 2001, 2006; Yağmurlu & Sanson, 2009).

However, the issue of the relationship of child-rearing styles to culture is controversial. Of particular interest in the current study is the suggestion by researchers such as Kağıtçıbaşı (2009), Rohner and Pettengill (1985), and Rudy and Grusec (2001) that "authoritarian" parenting, although typically defined by the combination of low warmth and high control, may operate differently in collectivistic cultures, such that children in an authority-oriented collectivistic culture do not associate high control with low warmth or rejection, but are just as likely as others to see their authoritarian parents as warm and accepting. In other words, the normative structure of the culture is argued to shape the child's expectations and interpretations of the parent's behavior.

The issue of cultural differences brings up the question of what happens when the culture undergoes rapid change. Will children growing up in a traditionally collectivistic society that is undergoing social and economic change in the direction of greater industrialization and urbanization continue to see their authoritarian parents as warm and accepting, or will they rather see authoritarian behavior as rejection? There is some evidence that the latter may be the case, at least under some circumstances (see Sunar, 2009). The design of the present study aims to provide some clarification on this issue, as it allows comparison of groups of young people living in different areas of Turkey with different levels of economic development and urbanization.

A second controversy concerns the definition of control. A number of researchers have suggested a distinction between a type of control that is characterized by rules, directiveness, and monitoring of the child's behavior, labeled as "firm control", contrasted with a type of control that is intrusive and manipulates the child's emotions (engendering anxiety, shame, and the like), called "psychological control" (see Barber, 1996; Grolnick & Pomer-

antz, 2009; Lau & Cheung, 1987). The instrument chosen to measure parenting styles in the present study was the CRPBI-30 (Schludermann & Schludermann, 1988), which takes into account the different types of control.

The issue of different aspects of control also suggests a cross-cultural question: Are different types of parental control preferred by individualistic versus collectivistic cultures? Perhaps individualistic cultures, with their emphasis on rules and laws, use more firm control, while collectivistic cultures, with their emphasis on harmony and sensitivity to others' needs and desires, make greater use of psychological control (see Çatay, Allen, & Samstag, 2008; Sunar, 2002). Or perhaps the two kinds of control vary together. The design of this study will take a modest step towards answering this question.

In addition to the collectivism-individualism dimension, demographic factors such as socioeconomic status (SES), parents' educational level, and occupation have important influences on child-rearing styles (e.g., authoritarian versus authoritative parenting). Research results from several countries have shown that authoritarian beliefs about child-rearing are negatively associated with SES and/or educational level of parents (Aunola, Nurmi, Onatsu-Arviolommi, & Pulkkinen, 1999; Barber, 1996; Campbell, Goldstein, Schaefer, & Ramey, 1991; Hoffman, 1987; Schaefer & Edgerton, 1985). Likewise, the values and beliefs associated with specific types of occupation may also influence child-rearing strategies (Hoffman, 1987; Sherman & Harris, 2012). Studies in Turkey have found congruent results (e.g., Çatay, Allen, & Samstang, 2008; İmamoğlu, 1987; Kağıtçıbaşı, Sunar, & Bekman, 2001; Pehlivanoğlu, 1998; Sunar, 2002). Since parents' (especially mothers') educational levels in Turkey vary within a much wider range than in most western countries, this provides an opportunity to investigate the effect of education on parenting styles.

In a large country like Turkey with distinct regions varying in level of economic development, traditions, mobility, and access to cultural resources, geographical location may also be expected to have an impact on parenting styles. In addition to comparisons between the U.S. and Turkey, in this study we examine the impact of geographical and attendant sub-cultural factors on parenting styles within Turkey.

Hypotheses regarding comparisons between Turkey and the U.S.

1. The two cultures will not differ on parental acceptance.
2. Turkish parents will be perceived as exercising greater control, both psychological and firm control.
3. In both the U.S. and Turkey, perceived parental control of both types will be negatively related to perceived parental acceptance.

Hypotheses regarding demographic and regional differences within Turkey

4. Vertical individualism, which requires greater rule orientation by the child, will be associated with perceptions of greater firm control by the parents.
5. Vertical collectivism, which requires greater conformity by children to demands for obedience and respect, will be associated with perceptions of higher psychological control by the parents.
6. Parents with lower educational attainment will be perceived as exercising greater control, both psychological and firm control.

Method

Participants

Participants were 921 university students from Turkey (491 female, $M = 19.8$) and the 271 from the U.S. (196 female, $M = 18.5$). Turkish respondents were recruited from three distinct regions: metropolitan Istanbul (219 students from Istanbul University and Mimar Sinan University), western Turkey (321 students from Ege University and Trakya University), and parts of central and eastern Anatolia (381 students from Van University and Niğde University). Only students reporting that they were born or raised in the specified regions were included in the sample. See Table 1 for parents' mean ages and years of education.

Measures

In addition to a demographic information form, two scales were utilized in the study: the short form of the Children's Report of Parent Behavior Inventory (CRPBI-30; Schludermann & Schludermann, 1988), and a measure of horizontal and vertical individualism and collectivism (Triandis, Chen, & Chan, 1998). Both scales were translated into Turkish using standard translation-back translation procedures.

The CRPBI-30. The Children's Report of Parent Behavior Inventory (CRPBI-30; Schludermann & Schludermann, 1988) consists of 30 identical questions describing mother and father and has three subscales: acceptance/rejection (acceptance), psychological control/autonomy (psychological control), and firm/lax control (firm control).

Responses of both samples to the CRPBI-30 were subjected to factor analysis. Four items that had very different factor loadings in the two samples were dropped. When comparing Turkish and American responses, only the items that had adequate factor loadings and item-total correlations in both versions were used. Cronbach's alpha coefficients are satisfactory for all three subscales with both mother and father targets in both samples.

Individualism-collectivism scale. The scale consists of 16 scenarios, each with four response choices representing horizontal individualism (HI), vertical individualism (VI), horizontal collectivism (HC), and vertical collectivism (VC) (Singelis, Triandis, Bhawuk, & Gelfand, 1995; Triandis, Chen, & Chan, 1998; Triandis & Gelfand, 1998). This measure was used only with the Turkey samples.

Procedure

Students completed the demographic information sheet and scales in classroom settings in their universities after receiving information about the measures and being assured of anonymity.

Results

Comparisons between Turkey and U.S. samples

As predicted by Hypothesis 1, no significant difference by country was found for acceptance.

As predicted in Hypothesis 2, on psychological control both Turkish mothers and fathers were rated higher than U.S. mothers and fathers, respectively. However, contrary to the hypothesis, on firm control, both U.S. mothers and fathers were rated higher than Turkish mothers and fathers, respectively. (All differences were significant at $p = .01$ or less.)

As predicted in Hypothesis 3, acceptance scores were significantly negatively correlated with both psychological control and firm control scores, while both control scores were significantly positively correlated with one another for both the U.S. and Turkey samples (see Table 3). The same pattern of correlations was replicated in all three regions of Turkey as well. Inspection of the regional correlations reveals that the negative correlations between acceptance and both types of control, while significant, are somewhat lower in the central and eastern Anatolia regions than in the metropolitan and western regions.

Regional and other differences within Turkey

Six multiple regression analyses were carried out using the simultaneous entry method, one for each of the CRPBI-30 subscales separately for mother and father targets. The predictor variables were region (metropolitan, west, central-east), parent's education, parent's age, gender of respondent, horizontal and vertical individualism and collectivism scores, parent's occupation, and number of children in the family. Regions were coded as dummy variables, and the contrast in each analysis was with the western region.

Contrary to the predictions of Hypotheses 4 and 5, the horizontal-vertical dimension of individualism-collectivism explained little of the variance in perceived psychological and firm control. Vertical individualism

was not significantly related to either type of control for either parent in any of the regions. Vertical collectivism positively related to psychological control only for mothers, and to firm control only for fathers.

Hypothesis 6 was only partially supported; greater education for mothers was related to less psychological control, but the relation did not hold for fathers or for firm control for either parent.

The overall pattern of results is summarized in Table 5, which shows the direction of association between the predictor variables and scores on the three dimensions of parenting practices. Geographical region was strongly related to parenting practices, particularly for fathers, with the Western region being associated with greater acceptance and less control of both kinds for both parents, while the Metropolitan and Eastern regions showed the opposite pattern. Father's education was positively associated with greater acceptance, while mother's education was negatively associated with psychological control. Larger numbers of siblings predicted higher control of both kinds by fathers. Finally, vertical collectivism predicted higher psychological control by mothers and higher firm control by fathers. Female gender of participants predicted greater father acceptance and less father psychological control, and more firm control by both parents.

Discussion and Conclusions

In this study both sons and daughters perceived high levels of acceptance from their mothers across the two cultures and (with some variation) across regions within Turkey, while perception of acceptance from their fathers, although generally high, seems to be affected to a greater extent by factors such as region, educational level of the father, and sex of the child. Both parents' controlling behaviors are related to cultural and demographic factors, and to the sex of the child, but in different patterns. Living in the Western region of Turkey is associated with lower levels of control by both parents, but educational level affects mothers and fathers differently: fathers with more education are seen as higher in acceptance, while mothers with more education are seen as exercising less psychological control. Number of children has no impact on mothers' parenting styles (as measured by the CRPBI-30) but appears to push fathers to exercise more of both types of control. The only discernible effect of sex of the child on the mother is that she exercises more firm control over daughters, while fathers show more acceptance and use less psychological control, but more firm control, with daughters than with sons. In short, cultural and demographic factors have more effect on acceptance for fathers than for mothers,

and they have more effect on control of both types than they have on acceptance for both parents.

The findings regarding regional differences within Turkey, which betoken differences related to economic development, urbanization, exposure to globalizing influences, and value orientations, show that the impact of these processes on parenting operates mainly on the control dimension. Even the significant (but small) regional differences in acceptance must be interpreted in conjunction with regional differences in control (also significant but small), as they are mirror images of one another: where control is lower, acceptance is higher, and the reverse is also true. Differences in the size, but not direction, of the negative correlations between acceptance and control across regions suggest that higher levels of economic development along with the other regional differences are associated with a stronger tendency to regard parental control as lack of acceptance, thus offering tenuous support for the argument that the negative relationship may not hold in some cultural settings.

The most basic finding of the current study is that, despite wide discrepancies in economic development, educational level, and orientation to individualism-collectivism, child rearing practices, as reflected in young people's perceptions of acceptance and control, show

similar patterns between the U.S. and Turkey, but with greater variation in control than acceptance. Respondents in both countries, and in all three regions of Turkey, saw a negative relationship between acceptance and control. The limits to this relationship need to be further investigated.

Limitations of this research stem in part from necessity to drop items from the CRPBI-30, particularly the firm control subscale, in order to maintain cross-cultural equivalence. Further work on cross-cultural measurement of firm control is required. Another limitation stems from the cultural variability within and across different regions in Turkey which could not be captured in this study. Further research taking into account ethnic and religious identification could provide a more fine-grained picture of variations in childrearing attitudes and practices in Turkey.

Despite the need for better specification of the cultural characteristics of the geographical regions, the most important contribution of the study is the revelation of wide regional differences within Turkey, particularly in the factors that predict parental acceptance and control. Further exploration of these differences, and their potential shifts over time, will be an important challenge for social and developmental scientists studying parenting in Turkey.