

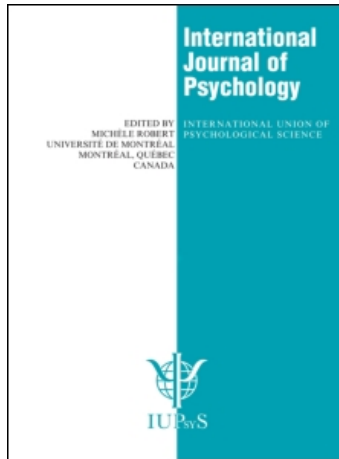
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# Maternal Child-rearing Practices in Hong Kong and Beijing Chinese Families: A Comparative Study

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The present study aimed to examine the child-rearing practices in Chinese families in Beijing and Hong Kong. The sample consisted of 89 mothers in Beijing and 45 mothers in Hong Kong. The mothers were instructed to respond to the Child-rearing Practice Report (CRPR) in Q-sort format. Some of the item clusters were combined to produce the authoritarian and authoritative disciplinary styles. The results indicated that mothers in Hong Kong were more likely to adopt an authoritarian child-rearing pattern than mothers in Beijing; however, the two groups did not differ in authoritative child-rearing style. The results also showed that mothers in Hong Kong controlled their children more than their counterparts in Beijing, and they were less inclined to show affection towards their children; mothers in Beijing emphasized their children's achievement much more than their Hong Kong counterparts. The findings suggest that Chinese parental disciplinary styles may be quite different in various regions of Chinese societies. Such variance across different geopolitical locations within the same cultural background has been ignored in past cross-cultural research.

Cette étude examine les pratiques éducatives dans des familles de Beijing et de Hong Kong. L'échantillon comprend 89 mères de Beijing et 45 mères de Hong Kong qui répondent au questionnaire intitulé Child-rearing Practice Report (CRPR). Certains groupes d'items sont combinés pour distinguer les styles despotique et autoritaire de discipline éducative. Les résultats montrent que les mères de Hong Kong ont plus tendance à adopter un style despotique que les mères de Beijing mais les deux groupes ne diffèrent pas quant au style autoritaire. Ils montrent aussi que les mères de Hong Kong exercent un contrôle plus serré de leurs enfants et qu'elles sont moins portées à manifester de l'affection envers leurs enfants; les mères de Beijing mettent plus l'accent sur les réalisations de leurs enfants que les mères de Hong Kong. Il semble que les styles disciplinaires parentaux chinois soient très différents selon les régions. Cette variabilité dans différentes localités géopolitiques qui partagent une expérience culturelle similaire a été jusqu'ici ignorée par les études interculturelles.

In the past decades, developmental psychologists have focused their attention on the impact of different parental disciplinary patterns on children's development. Existing research has shown that parental child-rearing practices play an important role in the development of children's social competence (Bryant & Crockenberg, 1980), prosocial behavior (see for review, Radke-Yarrow, Zahn-Waxler, & Chapman, 1983), moral development (Haan, Smith, & Block, 1968; Hoffman & Saltzstein, 1967; Leahy, 1981), and social status (Dekovic & Janssens, 1992; Putallaz, 1987; Putallaz & Heflin, 1990).

Parent-child relation studies have shown that there are two general dimensions characterizing parental behavior: nurturance and restrictiveness (Becker, 1964). Macoby and Martin (1983) have identified two primary

dimensions of child-rearing styles in terms of the degree of parental control and parental nurturance or acceptance, namely, authoritarian/restrictive and authoritative/democratic child-rearing styles. Generally speaking, parents adopting an authoritarian pattern require their children to follow rules without explanation, restrict their autonomy, and make decisions regardless of their children's opinions. In contrast, parents who prefer an authoritative disciplinary style may educate their children in a rational, issue-oriented manner by explaining the reasons for setting up certain rules. These parents recognize their children's individuality and consider their opinions in making decisions.

The different cultural traditions between Western and Chinese societies lead cross-cultural researchers to exam-

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Both Dr Alice Cheng Lai and Dr Zhi-Xue Zhang are psychologists in the fields of developmental and social psychology.

ine the difference between parental disciplinary styles in the West and Chinese societies. Lin and Fu (1990) found that Chinese and immigrant Chinese parents rated higher on parental control, encouragement of independence, and emphasis on achievement than Caucasian-American parents. Chiu (1987) found that Chinese mothers were more restrictive than both Anglo-American and Chinese-American mothers, Chinese-American mothers were more likely to approve the expression of hostility than Chinese or Anglo-American mothers, and Chinese-American mothers were more democratic than Chinese and Anglo-American mothers. These findings suggest that Chinese parents are more authoritarian or restrictive than their American counterparts. Based on a thorough review of the existing literature, Ho (1986) summarized the major findings derived from studies regarding the Chinese child-rearing practices: (1) Chinese parents generally are highly lenient or even indulgent in their attitudes towards infants and young children, but they usually impose very strict discipline on children when they reach the age of 4 to 6 years; (2) Chinese parents place great emphasis on obedience, proper conduct, moral training, and the acceptance of social obligations, in contrast to their lack of emphasis on independence, assertiveness, and creativity; (3) parents in Chinese societies are commonly highly concerned with impulse control, and they discourage their children's adventurous activities and prohibit their aggressive behaviour.

Different regions of Chinese societies differ greatly in political-social environments although they share the same Confucian ideology; therefore, Chinese people in different locations may have different parenting practices in their families due to the great impacts of social institution and social policies on family functioning. Unfortunately, previous cross-cultural researchers have generally ignored the difference of family practices among different geopolitical locations. As a result, their findings based on one specific location in Chinese societies may be biased. Ho (1986) remarked that investigators should consider both variance versus invariance across geopolitical locations and continuity versus change over a period of time. Ho remarked that there are undeniable variations in socialization between Chinese people in mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and overseas, and these variations arise from the great differences of the political-cultural context, especially the differences of ideological objectives and the goals of socialization. For this reason, researchers should consider the impact of contexts of history/culture/society on people's minds and behaviour when carrying out psychological research (Yang, 1993).

Although there are plenty of studies of parenting styles in Western and non-Western societies and of cultural variations among families, knowledge about child-rearing values, attitudes, and behaviour among Chinese families in different political systems is limited. Hong Kong became a Special Administrative Region (SAR) of China in 1997. Hong Kong society has gone through 150 years of British sovereignty and rapid urbanization, producing a mixture of traditional and modern values.

Many teachings of Confucianism and Western ideas of democracy, competition, individualism, and human rights have become the social norms governing people's social activities in Hong Kong society. Therefore, there are similarities and differences between Hong Kong and mainland China in many domains of social life. Since no research has been conducted to compare the parents' perception of their child-rearing practices in mainland China and Hong Kong, we wanted to examine the similarities and differences of the child-rearing practices between mothers in the two regions. Results of this study could not only provide knowledge about patterns of socialization among Chinese families, but also reveal the variations in socialization among different geopolitical locations in Chinese societies.

Hong Kong has experienced a rapid industrialization, modernization, and economic growth in the past decades. Nowadays, as more and more women in Hong Kong receive higher education, the opportunity for them to work has increased tremendously. As over half of the mothers go out to work, the roles and functions of the family members have changed. Children are cared for in day-care centres or other social service institutions. Many families employ Filipino domestic helpers to care for their children. Many families in Hong Kong face a high level of stress and life pressure. Recently, there have been many family tragedies such as suicide, homicide, child abuse, divorce, and mental illness, and some of these problems may be related to the excessive life stress imposed on the families. The housing shortage is one major stressor in Hong Kong. The price of a private house has risen by at least 300% from 1989 to 1997. More than 40% of the population who cannot afford to buy their own apartment have to live in public housing with limited space. Cuccaro, Holmes, and Wright (1993) reported that correlations between children's behaviour problems and parental stress ranged from .44 to .64. Hadadian and Merbler (1996) stated that lower maternal stress contributes to positive mother-child attachment relationships. These findings suggest that the level of stress parents experience may influence their child-rearing practices.

Mainland China has also undergone radical change in the past half-century. Socialist institution has been implemented since 1949. A series of ideological campaigns were launched in which Chinese people had to remould themselves, and change their attitudes and habits in order to become acceptable members of the new society. In particular, during the 10 years' Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, people in mainland China were forced to overthrow the old ideology and culture, and to abandon many traditional old customs and habits. People who were considered to be linked with the past were humiliated and paraded in the streets. These campaigns have had a substantial influence on the values of Chinese people. After this "destruction of the old and establishment of the new" movement, many traditional ethics disappeared, and the majority of Chinese people changed their attitudes and values in many spheres of social life (Butterfield, 1982; Chu, 1985;

Schoenhals, 1996). After China opened up to the world in the late 1970s, young people were characterized by anti-tradition for a long period. They clung firmly to Western values, and many of them believe that Chinese traditional culture is bad but everything from the West is good. In short, during the past 30 years, many traditions have been destroyed in mainland China.

In 1979, the government of China initiated a one-child-per-couple policy that has been described as "one of the most significant social experiments ever attempted" (Ching, 1982). The effects of the one-child policy on parenting and children's behaviour have been examined by many researchers (Hare-Mustin & Hare, 1986; Ho, 1989; Jiao, Ji, & Jing, 1986; Poston & Yu, 1985). Many couples have spoiled their child in daily life by trying to satisfy all of his or her needs, which has contributed to negative traits. Jiao et al. (1986) compared the social characteristics of only children and children with siblings. They found that only children were more egocentric, less persistent, and less cooperative than children with siblings.

Based on this discussion, we predicted that variations in child-rearing practice between Hong Kong and mainland China are derived in part from the different social policies, values, and lifestyles of the family. This study was intended to provide empirical evidence for this point of view.

## METHOD

### Participants

Participants in this study were 89 mothers in Beijing and 45 mothers in Hong Kong. The mean ages of mothers of Beijing and Hong Kong were 35.79 ( $SD = 3.87$ ) and 35.66 ( $SD = 4.24$ ), and the levels of education of the groups of mothers were 10.28 years ( $SD = 2.00$ ) and 6.50 years ( $SD = 1.52$ ) respectively. Whereas all the Beijing mothers had only one child, the majority of the mothers in Hong Kong had two or more children, with a mean of 2.56 ( $SD = 1.12$ ). The children of the 89 mothers in Beijing were 47 boys and 42 girls, whereas the children of the 45 mothers in Hong Kong included 23 boys and 22 girls. The average ages of the children in Beijing and Hong Kong were 8.57 ( $SD = 1.66$ ) and 8.32 ( $SD = 1.47$ ). The children were all students of ordinary primary schools.

### Instrument and Procedure

The Child-Rearing Practices Report (CRPR) (Block, 1965), which is a 91-item Q-sort of child-rearing attitudes and behaviour, was used in this study. The items are phrased in the first-person form and concern parents' preferred disciplinary methods, behaviours, attitudes, and values of child-rearing. For example, "I want my child to be independent of me", "I am easy-going and relaxed with my child", "I have strict, well-established rules for my child", and "I believe it is

unwise to let children play a lot by themselves without supervision from grown-ups". It has been reported that CRPR includes 21 item clusters (Robert, Block, & Block, 1984). The CRPR is usually administered in a Q-sort format with a forced-choice, seven-step distribution, in which parents are instructed to sort all of the items into seven piles depending on how descriptive each statement is of the parents' attitudes. A mean test-retest reliability of .71 for the CRPR, as well as considerable construct validity, has been reported (Block, 1965; Block, Block, & Morrison, 1982). Some items of CRPR have been widely used to generate the authoritarian/restrictive and authoritative/democratic disciplinary styles by combining certain item clusters together. The instrument has been translated into several languages, including Chinese. In the present study, the Chinese version was used for the mothers in both Beijing and Hong Kong.

With assistance from the teachers in the primary schools, participants in both places were informed of the purpose of this study in advance and were asked to participate voluntarily. Each participant was given detailed written instructions for individual self-administration of the Q-sort. The instructions described the steps to be followed in completing the Q-sort and advised the mother to focus on a specified child in the family when responding to the item. If the mother had any questions, she could consult the research assistant. Each mother was given a set of 91 5cm  $\times$  10cm cards. They were asked to sort the 91 cards into 7 piles with 13 cards in each pile, ranging from "most descriptive" to "least descriptive". Based on mothers' sorting of the items into piles varying in their descriptiveness of the mothers' disciplinary pattern, each item was assigned a score of 1 (the most descriptive of the mother's child-rearing practices) to 7 (the least descriptive of the mother's child-rearing practices). In this way, the two groups of mothers indicated their opinions about bringing up children.

## RESULTS

Previous researchers reported that 21 different item clusters have been obtained from the CRPR (Robert et al., 1984). Table 1 displays the means and standard deviations of the mothers' scores on the 21 clusters in the CRPR. Independent-samples *t*-tests were performed to compare the two groups' mean scores on the 21 factors.

From Table 1, we can see that out of the 21 Q-sort clusters, the 2 groups of mothers differed on 9 factors. Mothers in Hong Kong gave lower ratings than mothers in Beijing on the following five factors: control, control by anxiety induction, worry about child, negative affect, and protectiveness. These results indicated that, compared to mothers in Beijing, mothers in Hong Kong were more likely to dominate their children, to control their children by anxiety induction, to worry about their children, to show negative affect towards their children, and to protect their children. Mothers in Beijing had lower ratings than their counterparts in Hong Kong on the following four factors: openness to experience,

TABLE 1  
Summary of the Comparison between Mothers in Hong Kong and Beijing Based on the 21-item Clusters of the Child-rearing Practices Report

Item Clusters	<i>Beijing</i>	<i>Hong Kong</i>	<i>t</i> (132)
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	
Encouragement of independence	3.18 (0.72)	3.25 (0.56)	-0.54
Expression of affect	3.39 (0.64)	3.63 (0.70)	-1.98
Rational guidance	2.44 (0.96)	2.38 (0.79)	0.36
Openness to experience	2.51 (0.84)	2.91 (0.69)	-2.78*
Emphasis on health	2.52 (0.96)	3.53 (1.29)	-5.12**
Emphasis on early training	4.31 (0.99)	4.36 (1.04)	-0.25
Investment in child	4.84 (0.78)	4.97 (0.89)	-0.83
Enjoyment of child	4.17 (0.98)	4.04 (0.88)	0.46
Emphasis on achievement	2.54 (0.72)	3.15 (0.77)	-4.56**
Parental independence	4.37 (0.95)	4.47 (0.97)	-0.59
Control	4.75 (0.65)	3.96 (0.63)	6.64**
Control by anxiety induction	4.78 (1.29)	3.91 (1.15)	3.82**
Control by guilt induction	4.62 (1.03)	4.47 (1.16)	0.72
Worry about child	3.53 (1.19)	2.81 (1.27)	3.25**
Suppression of aggression	3.48 (0.91)	4.04 (1.01)	-3.24*
Suppression of sex	4.43 (1.24)	4.86 (1.12)	-1.93
Negative affect	5.43 (1.05)	4.82 (0.98)	3.24**
Protectiveness	4.19 (0.75)	3.64 (0.95)	3.61**
Supervision	4.45 (1.22)	4.30 (1.29)	0.66
Inconsistency	4.73 (1.16)	4.66 (1.40)	0.33
Nonphysical punishment	5.51 (1.18)	5.24 (1.06)	1.27

Lower scores indicate higher degrees of the mothers' endorsement on certain attributes.

\* $P < .01$ ; \*\* $P < .001$ .

TABLE 2  
Summary of the Comparison between the Two Disciplinary Styles

Maternal Disciplinary Style	<i>Beijing</i>	<i>Hong Kong</i>	<i>t</i> (132)
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	
Authoritarian/Restrictive	4.71 (0.54)	4.00 (0.50)	7.35**
Authoritative/Democratic	3.13 (0.49)	3.25 (0.40)	-1.37

Lower scores indicate higher degrees of the mothers' endorsement on certain attributes.

\*\* $P < .001$ .

emphasis on health, emphasis on achievement, and suppression of aggression. These results indicated that mothers in Beijing were more likely to encourage children to have their own thoughts and feelings, were much concerned about their children's health, were more likely to expect their children to do better than others, and suppressed their children's aggressive behaviour towards others to a greater degree.

Past researchers have generated certain scale scores by summing up the scores on some item clusters from CRPR based on either a conceptual framework (Kochanska, Kuczynski, & Radke-Yarrow, 1989; Lin & Fu, 1990; Trickett & Susman, 1988) or the results of statistical analysis (Deal, Halverson, & Wampler, 1989; Jones, Rickel, & Smith, 1980). Kochanska et al. (1989) produced authoritarian and authoritative disciplinary styles from some items of CRPR on a conceptual basis. Following their procedure, some item clusters of CRPR were combined into two categories: authoritarian or restrictive style and authoritative or democratic style. The item clusters that involve mothers' attitudes pertaining to everyday control and discipline have been identified in existing literature as the components of

child-rearing patterns (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). The following Q-sort factors were regarded as the prototypical components of the authoritarian pattern: control (a set of items endorsing strict rules and physical punishment, verbal reprimands, prohibitions, discouragement of the child's emotional expression), supervision of the child (when they are playing), and control by anxiety induction (by warning them about bad things). The factors that constituted the authoritative pattern included: encouragement of independence (respect for the child's opinion and rights in the family, fostering the child's individuality), expression of affect (establish comfortable and relaxed relationships with child), and rational guidance (emphasis on inductive methods rather than coercive ones)<sup>1</sup>. Computing the mean score on all the items in each style produced the values for the two parental disciplinary styles. More specifically, the total scores for each person were first obtained by adding up their scores on the above-mentioned item clusters, and

<sup>1</sup> Based on the intercorrelations among the subscales of CRPR, Deal, et al. (1989) adopted very similar combinations to generate two parental styles: positive parenting and authoritarian control.

then the means were calculated to represent every individual's scale scores on restrictive style and democratic style. Table 2 displays the means and standard deviations of the two groups of mothers' scores on the two disciplinary styles. Independent-samples *t*-tests revealed that mothers in Hong Kong adopted a restrictive child-rearing style in their family practices much more than the mothers in Beijing, but the two groups did not differ on democratic child-rearing style.

## DISCUSSION

The results showed that mothers in Hong Kong were more likely to dominate their children, to control them by anxiety induction, to worry about them, to show negative affect towards their children, and to protect their children than the mothers in Beijing. These findings suggest that families in Hong Kong may have more strict and well-established rules for their children, so that the mothers believe that criticism, scolding, and even physical punishment may be helpful for children's development, and their family practice is to control their children. Mothers in Hong Kong were more likely to express negative affect towards their children, which suggests that the relations between mothers and their children in Hong Kong are less relaxed and comfortable than those in Beijing. We may attribute such a difference to the different levels of stress experienced by the two groups of mothers. As mentioned earlier, parents in Hong Kong experience a higher level of stress due to the highly competitive nature of Hong Kong society and a shortage of private housing.

Mothers in Beijing were found to have higher degrees of endorsement than their counterparts in Hong Kong on the following four parenting attributes: openness to experience, emphasis on health, emphasis on achievement, and suppression of aggression. After the "one-couple-one-child" policy was implemented, Chinese parents care for their only child very much. After a child's birth, the mother usually leaves her job for about 6 months to breast-feed her baby. When the child grows up, parents are still very concerned about what their children eat at home and school. They generally have more time for outdoor pursuits such as sport activities with children. Accordingly, mothers in Beijing indicated higher degrees of endorsement on these parenting practices.

In addition, the results showed that mothers in Beijing are more likely to suppress their children's aggressive behaviour towards others, and to emphasize their children's achievement to a greater degree than their counterparts in Hong Kong. From Chinese traditional ethics, children's aggression should be absolutely prohibited at both home and school (for review, see Ho, 1986). But we wondered why mothers in Beijing suppress children's aggression much more than mothers in Hong Kong. We provided the following explanation: in new China, moral education is highly stressed, and it is important to

teach children what kind of behaviour is accepted and what is not accepted in the society. Every student is required to be a person with good moral characters, and prosocial behaviour is considered to be a component of good morality. Well-known people or national heroes who show prosocial behaviour are prescribed as models for both adults and children to follow. Aggression has widely been regarded as showing bad moral character. Accordingly, both parents and school teachers have attempted to suppress children's aggressive behaviour.

It is interesting that mothers in Beijing emphasized their children's achievement to a greater degree than mothers in Hong Kong. Past research indicated that modern Chinese parents place great emphasis on the achievement of their children (Ho & Kang, 1984). It was also documented that Chinese and immigrant Chinese parents tended to emphasize their children's achievement much more than parents from other cultural backgrounds (Lin & Fu, 1990). However, there is no research directly comparing parents' attitudes on children's achievement in different regions of Chinese societies. The reason why parents in mainland China are extremely concerned about their children's achievement is due to their particular experience. Some mothers in Beijing under investigation in this study had to leave school when the Cultural Revolution began in 1966. Most of them had to go to either remote areas or factories to work. These parents usually forced their children to do their best in every aspect so that their own lost aspirations could be compensated for. Most parents believe that going to university is the best way for their child to have a bright future. Therefore, parents exert great pressure on their children when they enter primary school. They help their children to do their homework, give them additional assignments, and prompt them to read widely about the subjects they study in school. Many parents require their children to show excellent school performance. Children have always been encouraged to strive with their classmates and to do better than others. Parents generally are honoured by their children's success and excellent performance. In Hong Kong, there are more job opportunities for young people, and thus studying at university is not the only way for young people to get a good position. Moreover, young people are generally more independent of their parents. For this reason, mothers in Beijing had higher degree of endorsement on "emphasis on achievements" than their counterparts in Hong Kong.

The results indicated that mothers in Hong Kong disciplined their children in a more authoritarian/restrictive way than mothers in Beijing, but the two groups of mothers did not differ in their authoritative/democratic style. Previous researchers have expounded that Chinese parents tend to adopt an authoritarian, rather than an authoritative, child-rearing style (Ho, 1986), and our results supported such a proposition. Mothers in Hong Kong differed significantly from those in Beijing in restrictive child-rearing style, which suggests that parents in Hong Kong keep more traditional elements in their

child-rearing practices. Our findings indicated that mothers in Hong Kong are more likely to control their children, to show negative emotions towards their children, and to protect their children, all of which are characteristics of a traditional disciplinary style. Chinese traditional culture emphasizes parental control over children, e.g. parents set up strict rules for children, do not allow their children to have privacy, and do not allow children to oppose their parents' decisions in the family, etc. In this sense, people in Hong Kong seem to keep the traditional cultural values to a greater degree than those in mainland China. As mentioned earlier, the chaotic turmoil during the Cultural Revolution destroyed many traditions of Chinese culture. Since the old ideology, traditions, and customs were removed from people's minds, and because of the radical social and economic transformations, the traditional patterns have declined and no longer dominate people's social life in contemporary China. However, people in Hong Kong do not have the same experience, and thus they may keep the traditional thoughts to a greater degree. This is an interesting phenomenon that demands further investigation.

It is noteworthy that mothers in Beijing do not adopt a more authoritative disciplinary style than their Hong Kong counterparts despite their adoption of a less restrictive child-rearing pattern. These findings imply that Beijing mothers do not adopt a democratic disciplinary style in their families. This seems to contradict the results that mothers in Beijing tend to have a higher degree of endorsement on some attributes of the authoritative style. We attempted to give the following explanation: since all couples in urban areas of mainland China have only one child, they generally direct intensive attention on that child. For example, they devote more time to play with them, to take them to visit parks, gardens, or other recreational centres, they provide many opportunities for their child to enjoy new experiences, and some of them even spoil their only child by satisfying their every need. The indulgent parents usually become tender when they face their demanding, domineering, and defiant single children. We suspected that Beijing mothers' emphasis on children's health and openness to experience may be the consequence of rearing a single child. Such an explanation seems to be validated by the findings in past research, which indicated that single children are more picky and selective in their food, less physically punished by their parents, and are always accompanied by one parent if, for example, the other parent is not at home (e.g. Jiao et al., 1986; Tao & Chiu, 1985). It was documented that parents may have leniency, indulgence, and physical proximity in their child-rearing practices, but they are not necessarily sensitive to their children's affective needs (e.g. Kagan, Kearsley, & Zelazo, 1978; Ryback, Sanders, Lorentz, & Koestenblatt, 1980). Ryback et al. (1980) reported that among six cultural groups, Chinese responses to a questionnaire ranked first on whether the mother was near the young child most of the time, but last on whether the child was made to feel loved and on whether the father and

mother were usually sensitive to the child's needs. Therefore, we conclude that the Beijing mothers' higher degree of endorsement on some attributes in the authoritative style is probably because they rear only one child rather than because they really have less authoritarian values regarding child-rearing in their minds.

Due to practical limitations, the two groups compared in this study were not exactly matched in demographic characteristics. This constituted one drawback of our study. Although past research indicated that occupation and educational background of Chinese parents are not decisive in determining children's behavioural qualities (e.g. Jiao et al., 1986), our conclusions should be more rigorous if the participants from the two locations were exactly comparable in education, number of children, and income. For this reason, the conclusions should be interpreted with caution. In future studies, we should identify two groups of parents that are more equivalent so that the possible confounding effects of some demographic characteristics can be controlled.

In conclusion, since Hong Kong shares the same cultural tradition with mainland China, the parenting practices in both Hong Kong and the Chinese mainland are characterized as restrictive. However, this does not mean that the parents of mainland China and Hong Kong share the same child-rearing style. Since subculture and the social system have a great influence on parents' values, parents in Hong Kong and mainland China differ in specific child-rearing practices. It is misleading for cross-cultural researchers to base their conclusions on the data obtained from one region of Chinese society. Not only the cultural context, but also the political-social context under the same cultural environment must be considered in psychological research.

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