

The Relationship of Parenting Style to Child Outcomes in Adoptive Families of Children from India: A Cross-National Perspective¹

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Abstract

Parents exert a major influence on the way children express personality characteristics and behaviors, regardless of whether the children are biological or adopted by the parents. A large part of parental influence is through parenting style which is often characterized as having the two components: structure and nurturance. A sample of 415 adoptive families from both India and Norway that had adopted Indian children were surveyed using the Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL) and Parenting Scale (PS). Results suggested that the Indian adoptive parents were more homogenous in their parenting styles than were Norwegian adoptive parents, and Indian adoptive parents reported higher scores for "clinical" behavior of their children (per the CBCL) than did Norwegian adoptive parents. Significant correlations between children's behaviors and difficult parenting styles were also detected for Indian families, but less so for Norwegian families. Children's behaviors, along with demographic variables, were also used to develop an exploratory, predictive model of adoptive parenting styles. The nature of the results is also discussed regarding the use of American-developed measures in other nations and cultures.

Key Words: India, Norway, adoptions, parenting-styles, child-behavior, measurement-reliability

Introduction

Parents exert a major influence on the way children express personality characteristics and behaviors. Even if parents (biological or adoptive) are limited in their ability to change basic personality traits or temperamental characteristics of their children (Bower, 1984), it is clear that from early in the child's life, parenting skills, parenting style, and the parent-child relationship are major factors that affect children's psychosocial development throughout most of childhood. Yet, we know very little about adoptive parenting or the association of adoptive parenting style to child outcomes. Given the unique situation of adults not biologically related to a child providing care, understanding more about the adoptive parenthood will perhaps increase our understanding of nonbiological factors associated with child psychosocial outcomes.

An Overview of Parenting

The most positive child psychosocial outcomes are associated with parental warmth, logical discipline, and consistency (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Parenting style has been conceptualized as consisting of two elements: nurturance (warmth, supportiveness, responsiveness) and structure (routines, behavioral control, demandingness) (Coloroso, 1989, 2002). One typology of parenting from these elements (Baumrind, 1991; Maccoby & Martin, 1983) categorizes the combination of high or low nurturance and high or low structure; the styles include indulgent or permissive parents (high nurturance, low structure), authoritarian parents (low nurturance, structure), authoritative parents (high nurturance and high structure), and uninvolved/underinvolved parents (low nurturance and low structure). Using these classifications, optimal outcomes are reported for children raised by authoritative parents (Baumrind, 1991; Weiss & Schwarz, 1996; Miller, Cowan, Cowan & Hetherington, 1993). Authoritative parents provide emotional support, set high standards, give appropriate autonomy, create a family atmosphere of open parent-child communication (Baumrind, 1991); in essence, they provide a balance of nurturance and structure. Authoritarian parents try to control their children's behavior and attitudes, and make them conform to an unchangeable and usually absolute standard of conduct. They value unquestioning obedience and punish children for acting against their standards. Children raised in this type of parenting environment tend to be behavior compliant and "do well in school"... "but have difficulties with depression, self-esteem and social skills" (Darling, 1999, p. 4). For example, Coplan, Hastings, Lagace-Sequin and Moulton (2002) report that authoritarian mothers were more likely to respond with greater anger and embarrassment when presented with various scenarios depicting a variety of children's behaviors.

In direct opposition, the permissive or indulgent parent makes few demands, allowing their children to regulate their own activities, considering themselves as resources and not as role models. They explain reasons for any existing rules and may be democratic in their decision-making. Conversely, uninvolved parents can either be rejecting or neglecting. Children from permissive or indulgent parents, across their life span, perform more poorly in all child domains if the parent is rejecting or neglectful.

Using Baumrind's original typology (authoritative, authoritarian and indulgent/permissive), research has been somewhat mixed in predicting child psychosocial outcomes. Nicholson, Phillips, Peterson, Candida and Battistutta (2002) report that young adults who had experienced authoritative parenting were least likely to have clinically significant adjustment problems. However, a confound in their study is that the population included blended families of young adults who had both biological parents and stepparents. On the other hand, Kawamura, Frost, and Harmatz (2002) found that authoritarian parenting styles were related to maladaptive components of perfectionism in Caucasian-American men and women, and in Asian-American women. Neal and Frick-Hornbury (2001) found that 92% of students with authoritarian parents had a secure pattern of attachment, suggesting that this style of parenting is related in a positive manner to parent-child relations. Larson (2000) reports that as authoritarian parenting decreases, there is improvement in parent-child relations. Kim and Rohner (2002) found that youth raised by authoritative and permissive fathers (but not mothers) performed better than youth raised by authoritarian fathers.

Few adoption studies have used a parenting typology in research or focused on the relationship of parenting style or skills to children's psychosocial outcomes. The Baumrind typology may be useful in thinking about parenting skills but parenting is often more complicated than typologies. Even the relevance of these typologies for classification of parent styles has been questioned with diverse families. Race/ethnicity may interact with parenting styles differentially. Kim and Rohner (2002) found that the typologies did not fit about 74% of the Korean-American youth that they studied. Reine (2001) found different race patterns in her analysis of 212 parent questionnaires that had children in kindergarten and first grade in 6 urban areas, supplemented with 47 teacher reports. She reports that children of Caucasian permissive

mothers had the highest teacher ratings for the positive classroom behavior and peer relationships as well as negative relationships between positive classroom behavior and authoritarian Caucasian mother. For minority children, mother's use of an authoritarian style of parenting was associated with higher teacher ratings for positive classroom behavior and peer relationships. Her research suggests that parenting style operates differently for various subgroups of children based on race. Others have found that authoritative parenting produces different academic outcomes in European-American compared to Asian- and African-American youth (Chao, 1994; Dornbusch, Ritter, Leiderman, Roberts & Fraleigh, 1987; Steinburg, Mounts, Lamborn & Dornbusch, 1991). In summary, the research on parenting style has not been fully explored with diverse families (Darling & Steinberg, 1993)

As O'Connor (2002) points out, there is not a single or cohesive theory of how parental influence is understood, despite decades of research and studies finding specific components of parenting associated with specific child outcomes. O'Connor recommended further research into the aspects of parenting style that influence changes in the child, and how these changes mediate the relationship between parenting style and behavioral outcome (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). From this perspective, parenting style moderates the relationship between parenting practices and specific child psychosocial outcomes. For instance, parenting style operates on the way it affects and transforms the parent-child relationship, and the parent-child relationship is the factor that directly affects child psychosocial outcomes.

This present study focuses on a type of family not well studied in previous parenting style research: adoptive families. It also examine parenting style across two countries (Norway and India), one more homogeneous (Norway) and the other quite diverse (India), and is therefore, in essence, a comparison of international and domestic adoption. It examines the issue with a similar group of children, children adopted from India. While there might be some concern about applying Western models of parenting across Indian families, Goldbart and Mukherjee (1999) suggest that strong similarities exist between parents' beliefs in a sample of parents from Guyanese (West Bengal) and Western parents' expectations concerning parents' expectations of developmental milestones and skills, and parents' views on whether a subset of these skills was amenable to teaching. By studying adoptive families, we remove the influence of biology on child psychosocial outcomes because there is no genetic connection between children and parents. As part of understanding adoptive parents, it is important to have a general understanding of parenting in general in both countries included in this study.

Parenting: The Indian Context

It is important to recognize that there are wide cultural variations in how Indian parents think about their role. Naidu and Nakhate (1985) note three trends in Indian childrearing and parenting. First, families use what they term as orthodox, conservative, traditional, cultural, modern or mixed approaches in their parenting. Each approach affects child development differently. Two, methods of parenting are affected by caste, social class, education of the parents, and parental occupation. Three, the conditions of the environment at home, parent-child relationships, and parental personalities affect childrearing. While we are reporting some general impressions of Indian parenting, the fact is that it would be impossible to thoroughly describe the many variations in Indian families.

Radhakrishnan states, "the child is much nearer the vision of the self. We must become as little children before we can enter into the realm of truth..." (2002, p. vii) It is said that the wisdom of babies is greater than that of scholars. Vivekananda writes, "I am fully persuaded that a baby, whose language consists of unintelligible sounds, is attempting to express the highest philosophy" (1953, p. 210). These quotes highlight the mystical qualities some Indian families imbue to infancy and children.

The Indian family is in transition. The family structure, parental attitudes towards children and parenting methods are changing as there is emphasis among certain modern Indians on

breaking with traditions (Kakar, 1978). In traditional families, by and large, Indian parents tend to accede to their children's wishes and inclinations, rather than to try to mould or control them. Grandparents (mostly the fathers' parents) play a very significant role in bringing up a child in families that have three or more generations living under the same roof and in nuclear families that live in the same city. Both are common in India.

In traditional Indian homes, disciplinary methods are severe. A child is punished harshly for bad behavior with parents not uncommonly slapping the child on the cheek or back. Even in educated and higher social classes, this is prevalent. In addition, the father is often the main discipliner.

In traditional families, the mother has the most important parental role. However, in urban middle class families there is greater consciousness about the importance of fathers in raising children (Gore, 1978). The father's role in bringing up children seems to be more in terms of providing for the child financially, while the day-to-day primary care is the major responsibility of the mother. As more women work outside the home, some men, especially those living in nuclear families, have started to take on more of the child care role, but it is not as intensive or extensive as in the United States. The idea that the father would take a break in his career to look after a child while the mother works is an extremely rare phenomenon in India.

There are gender expectation differences in parenting. Girls are expected to help in the household; boys are expected to help the father. Both boys and girls get married early in life in some regions of India; in other regions they get married after 30 and immediately have children. Traditionally there is a strong preference for a male child to carry on the family name and to take on the profession/property of the father. Girls are stigmatized because they bring with them the liability of dowry, an Indian custom where the girl's parents have to give wealth to the boy's family at the time of marriage. While the use of a dowry has now become illegal and the practice is diminishing, the prejudices against the female child are far from being eradicated.

Many Indian parents hold high expectations for their children. For example, many families want to toilet train the children before 2 years of age. They often compare their child to other children, and worry about the differences if another child walks earlier than their child. Parents tend to expect that the children will look after them in their old age. The other expectation is that the children will naturally follow the career path of the parent (mostly the father). Children who do not seem to have the required interest or abilities of the parent stand to be subjected to verbal abuse, and destined to bear the burden of the parent's unfulfilled expectations.

Most children grow up in joint families where there are other children to play with (or be compared to), and spend a lot of unstructured time with children of neighbors. Children of working parents are normally under the supervision of grandparents or other elders of the community emotionally close to the nuclear family. Single parenthood is rare; the single parent either gets married, remarries if they are widowed or divorced, gets taken in by some relative, or places her child for adoption.

Social class plays an important role in parenting in India. Brahmins, considered the highest class, tend to be more focused on education in keeping with their scholarly roles of the past. It is common to see people acquiring degree after degree, and then ending up in jobs lower than their qualifications would merit. The community (State) you belong too also plays a vital role, with Tamilians and Bengalis being more orientated to education and the arts, and Punjabis and Gujaratis more entrepreneurial in nature.

Of course, this analysis of parenting in India draws on many generalizations. India is a very diverse country and there is great diversity within ethnic communities as well as between ethnic communities. Still, the summary provides an overview of general issues in parenting in India.

Parenting: The Norwegian Context

Norwegians marry later in life, have a high divorce rate, and there is an increasing trend of cohabiting for long periods instead of marrying (Hyggen, 2002). Specifically, the mean age for first marriage, as well as the mean age for having the first child, continues to increase.

There is little information published in English that describes Norwegian parenting. Solheim (1982) had noted that, in general, the use of physical punishment is low in Scandinavia compared to other Western countries. A few other studies offer some indirect insight into Norwegian parenting. Lundeby (2006) found that in families where a child has a disability, it is mainly mothers who adapt their working lives to the situation, suggesting a more traditional gendered pattern in these Norwegian families. Folkvard and Thuen (2004) found more psychosocial problems among adolescents living with one parent compared to both parents. Adolescents living in the mother's custody had more problems compared to those in the father's custody. However, residence arrangement accounted for only a small proportion of the variance in the adolescents' psychosocial problems. Still, their findings suggest more difficulties in single parent families with adolescents.

Lastly, some comparative evidence of Norwegian parents and other European ethnic groups has been found. Cecilie, Rønning, and Heyerdahl (2004) compared Sami parents with Norwegian parents in a study of child-rearing practices. In the Northwestern part of Norway, Sweden, Finland and the Russian Kola Peninsula, the Sami people are the indigenous population (Borgos, n.d.). Norwegian parents were found to be less lenient and permissive in their child-rearing attitudes, as they tended to have more rules and regulations for children. However, physical punishment was not frequently used by either Norwegian parents or Sami families, although there was a tendency for more physical punishment in Sami families. Too, compared to Norwegian parents, more Sami parents would advise their child to retaliate if attacked by a peer. Children's temper tantrums and displays of jealousy among children was more tolerated in Norwegian families than Sami families. While these data tell us how Norwegian families compare to Sami families, they offer little description about Norwegian parenting in general. The general impression is that Norwegian parenting is similar to parenting in other Scandinavian countries, Western Europe and North America, with only subtle differences between these groups.

Summary

This study offers a unique perspective to study parenting in adoptive families. All the parents are caring for children born in India. However, adoptions in India are in-country adoptions and adoptions in Norway are inter-country adoptions. Families were all created the same way, through adoption. The purpose of this project was to provide research-based information about the experiences of both Indian and Norwegian families who adopted Indian children, comparing and contrasting parenting and child psychosocial outcomes. This study examines the following question: Does the influence of parenting style vary as a function of the cultural background of the adoptive parent?

Methodology

This project was part of a multi-site program evaluation. The methodology used with a variation of the ethno survey (Massey, 1987). Data were collected with a cross-sectional design and included multiple sites and multiple methods. Because we wanted to make sure the methodology was sensitive to working with diverse countries, one of the investigators lived and worked in India and Norway for several weeks while data were pre-tested and then gath-

ered. Living in these countries included staying with host families whenever possible, using social and professional relationships to discuss findings as they were gathered, using cultural consultants in research design, instrumentation, and analysis, working to collect data in-country with native speakers, reading extensively about the country both from professional writings as well as fiction, and reviewing results with community groups once projects were ended for verification of interpretation. It is beyond the scope of this article to give details for each site but some specific details about the sites are discussed below. This is the first time such an approach has been used in adoption research.

Sampling

In the last 20 years, BSSK, the agency involved in the initial study, has placed over a thousand Indian adoptive parents in India and has worked only in Norway and the United States for placing children internationally. The in-country breakdown used in this project was 1046 total in-country adoptions with 374 families in Pune City (location of the agency) and 672 families in other parts of India. In Fall 2001 a random sample of Indian adoptive parents were selected to take part in the study. The sample was stratified by location; the two locations were Pune and outside of Pune. One hundred and thirty eight (138) families from Pune invited to participate in an interview in their home or the agency office; the location of the interview was chosen by the family. Additionally, 273 families drawn from families living outside of Pune received a mailed survey. This final sample was 374 families, each with 1 child.

In Norway, working with BSSK's partner Children of the World-Norway, a census of families who adopted over the last 10 years was used; 276 adoptive families were sent a mailed, confidential and anonymous questionnaire in October 2003 from the local agency. These families contained 398 children. Reminder notices were sent to families to prompt them to return the questionnaires; they were mailed 30 days after the questionnaires were mailed. The sample included in this study was 192 Norwegian adoptive families who participated only in a mailed survey.

Measures

Standardized measures included the Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL) and the Parenting Scale (PS). The CBCL is a standardized measure for child behaviors that also have norms of children referred for clinical services and children that are "non-clinical" against which to compare scores. The CBCL has a reliability of .90 (Achenbach, 1991; Achenbach & Edelbrock, 1983). The CBCL provides measures that contain 5 subscales assessing internalizing problems plus a summative Internalizing Scale, and 3 subscales assessing externalizing problems plus a summative Externalizing Scale. Over a one-year period, the mean r was .75; over a two-year period, the mean r was .71. For this analysis, we used only the summary scales of Internalizing, Externalizing and Total Problems. Scores on the subscales can be classified as in the clinical range – similar to scores for children receiving outpatient mental health services – and the nonclinical range that is akin to the typical child.

The Parenting (PS) Scale (Arnold, O'Leary, Wolff, & Acker, 1993) is a 30-item instrument developed to assess problematic discipline practices. The PS comprises 3 subscales: laxness, over-reactivity, and verbosity. The PS has good internal consistency with alphas for the total scale of 0.84, 0.83 for laxness, 0.82 for over-reactivity, and 0.63 for verbosity. It has good test stability with a test-retest correlation of 0.84 for the total scale, 0.83 for laxness, 0.82 for over-reactivity, and 0.79 for verbosity. It has also good concurrent and discriminant validity. That is, the PS distinguishes between mothers attending a behavior clinic to improve their child management skills and non-clinic mothers. These two groups are designated as "Clinic Mothers" and "Nonclinic Mothers." Nonclinic Mothers are akin to the typical mother. Clinic

mothers are those getting services for child and family related problems. Clinical designations are significantly correlated with the CBCL (see also Irvine, Biglan, Smolkowski, & Ary, 1999).

Analytical Techniques

Missing data on various items of the PS provided a barrier for the calculation of the three subscales and overall parenting scales, especially for the Norwegian adoptive families. We employed a Missing Values Analysis (MVA) technique that has been used to estimate missing items that are combined to form scales (Proctor, Groza, Tracy, Coulton & Settersten, 2006). This technique has been used before with good results. Data were divided between Indian and Norwegian adoptive parents, and items within each subscale were used for the MVA estimates and replacement values of any missing item in that subscale. That is, for a case where there was a missing value for item 9 ("When my child misbehaves, I give him/her a long lecture"), items used along with item 9 to form its respective subscale, Over-reactivity Subscale (items 3, 6, 9, 10, 14, 17, 18, 22, 25 and 28), were used to form its estimate rather than the entire 31 items.

For the Child Behavior Checklist, a similar method was employed. Rather than compute the missing values estimates on the entirety of all the CBCL items for each case, we computed the estimates within each Subscale. That is, if a response to one item that was to be combined with ten to eleven other items to form a Subscale was missing, its estimate was calculated based on these "partnered" ten to eleven other items. It was reasoned that this would be accurate, for if a parent responded in a similar way to other items within the Subscale, the missing item would be more similar to these "Subscale partners" than to other items not used in the Subscale calculation.

Results

The overall response rate for the Indian adoptive families was 56% and 48% for the Norwegian adoptive families. Mangione (1995) and Salant and Dillman, (1994) raise concerns about the quality of data when response rates are 60% or lower. In contrast, Babbie (1973) indicates that a response rate of 50% is adequate for analysis and reporting, a rate if 60% is good, and a rate of 70% or more is excellent. Visser and colleagues (2000) indicate that the response rate for mailed surveys is often less than 50% and techniques to increase rates are complex and costly, seeming to indicate that responses of less than 50% are not problematic. Thus, there are multiple ways to evaluate the response rates.

The response rates appeared to be quite good in both countries for several reasons. First, in India, this is the first time this approach has ever been used in this community and so it was innovative for both the agency and the families. Answering mailed surveys and participating in interviews is not a cultural norm and likely affected response rates. Many families who received a reminder post card indicated that they never received the survey, so another survey was mailed to them. The estimate of the number of families successfully contacted is probably exaggerated, which would mean that the response rate of successfully contacted families is higher. However, this is no way to determine the exact number of families that did receive a questionnaire.

In Norway, the response rate issue was different. There are several Norwegian scholars examining adoption issues. However, this was also the first time non-Norwegian researchers conducted a study of Norwegian adoptive families, which might have influenced some parents about their participation. There is some indication from adoption workers that adoptive families have research fatigue – they feel that they have been studied too much. As such, some chose not to participate.

Even with the low response rates, this is a unique data set. No cross-national data has been collected with these countries. Comparisons can lead to a deeper understanding of issues around adoptive parenting. They can lead to the identification of gaps in knowledge and may point to possible directions that could be followed not previously explored. Cross-national comparisons can identify and illuminate similarities and differences in adoptive parenting, particularly if the parents are raising the same type of child.

Parenting Scale

As noted, the authors of the parenting scale provide comparison data for two groups of American families. For comparison to norms, only the scores from mother reports from India and Norway are used. Prior to conducting the analyses, reliability analyses were conducted on the subscales and total scales with both populations. The two subscales and the total scale have good internal consistency with alphas for laxness of 0.66, 0.77 for over-reactivity, and 0.74 for the total scale. The alpha for the verbosity subscale was modest with an alpha of 0.38 and could not be strengthened by eliminating any item. Factor analysis failed to confirm the historical three-factor solution as proposed by the authors, and interpretation based on Eigen values of 1 or greater suggested a 10 factor solution. Nonetheless, in the absence of theory to guide us for a new analysis, the three subscales and total scale as proposed by the authors were used in the analysis.

Analysis

Sample Demographics

Overall there were more male adopted children by Norwegian families, and they were slightly older than Indian adopted children. Too, the majority of children adopted by Indian families were female. The age at placement, regardless of country, was very similar, as was the age of the adopted mother at the time of the study. Table one shows the demographic variables of the adoptive families by country of adoption.

Table 1
Demographics of Respondents

	Mean age of adopted child*	Mean age at placement	Modal percent of child's gender	Mean age of mother*
Indian Adoptive Families (N = 223)	7.7 years	1.5 years	52.9% (female)	43.6 years
Norwegian Adoptive Families (N = 192)	10.1 years	2.1 years	69.1% (male)	43.3 years

* (At time of study)

Parent Scale

The following table provides the mean, with standard deviations in parenthesis. Using independent t-tests, Norwegian adoptive mothers scored significantly higher on Laxness, Verbosity

and the Total Parenting scale than the Indian adoptive mothers. There was no difference, however, in Over-reactivity between Indian and Norwegian adoptive mothers.

Table 2

Scores on Parenting Scales, Norms Compared to Indian and Norwegian Mothers

Parenting Scale (Subscale)	Clinic Mothers	Nonclinical Mothers	Indian Mothers	Norwegian Mothers
Laxness Subscale	2.8 (1.0)	2.4 (0.8)	*2.4 (0.96)	*†3.6 (0.76)
Over-reactivity Subscale	3.0 (1.0)	2.4 (0.7)	*†2.5 (0.89)	*†2.5 (0.83)
Verbosity Subscale	3.1 (1.0)	2.6 (0.6)	*†3.3 (0.96)	*†4.2 (0.75)
Total Scale	3.1 (0.7)	2.6 (0.6)	*†2.9 (0.63)	*†3.4 (0.54)

* significance from clinical score, $p < .05$; † significance from nonclinical score, $p < .05$

Using a one-sample t-test, the scores for Indian mothers are statistically significantly higher than American clinic and nonclinic mothers on all scales except the Laxness scale for clinic mothers (and not statistically different from nonclinical mothers). Results suggest that India adoptive mothers are more verbose and over-reactive than clinic and nonclinic American mothers, and score lower than clinic mothers on over-reactivity. Overall, they score more similar to American clinic mothers than nonclinic mothers on parenting skills.

The mean scores for Norwegian mothers are statistically significantly higher than American clinic and nonclinic mothers on the Laxness subscale, Verbosity subscale, and overall Parenting Scale. However, the, mean scores for Norwegian mothers appear to be significantly lower than American clinic mothers in over-reactivity, yet significantly higher than non-clinic Mothers.

Caution should be used in these interpretations, however, since the Parenting Scale was normed with American mothers. Any differences could be due to cultural differences between mothers from India and Norway compared to the United States rather than any difficulty in parenting skills.

Table 3

Correlations between demographic variables and Parenting Scale dimensions

Indian Families	Laxness	Over-reactivity	Verbosity	Total Parenting Scale
Child's age at study	0.08	0.13	0.13*	0.15*
Placement age	-0.07	-0.02	-0.10	-0.06
Female (dummy variable)	0.07	0.067	0.05	0.06
Age of adoptive Mother	0.05	0.06	0.07	0.08
Norwegian Families	Laxness	Over-reactivity	Verbosity	Total Parenting Scale
Child's age at study	0.28**	0.17*	0.23**	0.28**
Placement age	0.01	-0.01	0.04	0.05
Female (dummy variable)	0.05	0.08	-0.02	0.05
Age of adoptive Mother	-0.06	-0.10	-0.001	-0.05

* significance at $p < .05$; ** significance at $p < .01$

In this article, we do not describe scores on the various subscales. Detailed results can be found in other publications (see Groza, Kalyanvala, Boyer, & Nedelcu, 2003; Groza, Kalyanvala, & BSSK Research Team, 2003; Groza, Chenot, & Holtedahl, 2005). Rather, we wanted to examine the relationship between parenting styles and various aspects of the child and family. Table 3 presents the correlations between parenting styles and selected child and parent demographics.

Only the child's age during the study appeared to be significantly correlated to any of the Parenting Scales, regardless of country of adoptive parent. For both Indian and Norwegian families, there is a "weak" positive relationship between children's age at the time of the study and verbosity, and the Total Parenting score; as children get older there is an increased use of verbal commands and an increase in their overall "problematic" parenting skills. For only the Norwegian families, however, these relationships between the children age at adoption and scores on all subscales are positively correlated; as children get older parents are more lax, use more verbal commands, react more and increase their overall "problematic" parenting skills.

An additional analysis examines to use the scores of the Parenting Scale to develop a "typology" of parenting. Baumrind typifies four "typologies" based on the interaction between parenting nurturance and structure, as discussed previously: Authoritarian, Authoritative, Permissive, and Uninvolved/Neglectful. After attempting to conceptualize the items of the Parenting Scale to Baumrind's four typologies, the authors found that the three subscales of Over-reactivity, Laxness and Verbosity were not conforming to a two-dimensional model that Baumrind suggests. If the three subscales were combined along a three-dimensional model, where the subject's Over-reactivity score were to along the X-axis, Verbosity score along the Y-axis, and Laxness score along the Z-axis, a model would appear similar to Figure 1:

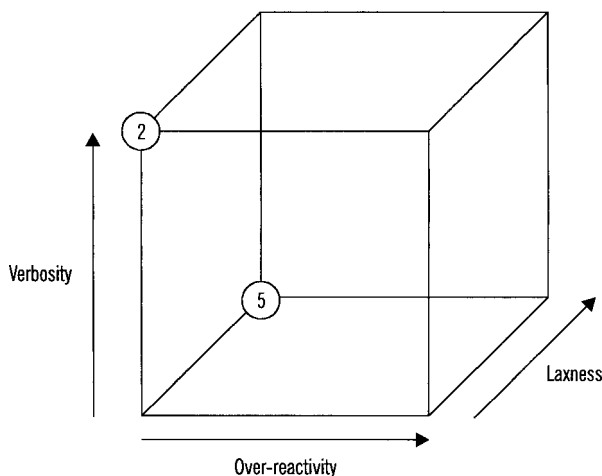


Figure 1
Three-dimensional Model of Parenting Subscales

Each "vertex" of the 3-D model represents an extreme type of parenting. For instance, the vertex noted on the Figure 1 that is denoted by the circled "5" would be Parenting Type "5" (low over-reactivity, low verbosity, and high laxness), which might be roughly equivalent to Baumrind's "Neglectful" type. However, the vertex located by the circled "2" would be Parenting Type "2" with highly verbal qualities (perhaps "yells a lot") but does not react or re-

spond (low over-reactivity, high laxness). Combining these subscales, there would appear to be eight parent skill types based on low or high Over-reactivity, Verbosity and Laxness. Table Four presents these eight types and the levels of their respective dimensions.

Table 4
Parenting types by parenting subscale dimensions

Parent scale types	Dimensions of parenting scale
Type one	Low Over-reactivity, Low Verbosity, Low Laxness
Type Two	High Over-reactivity, Low Verbosity, Low Laxness
Type Three	Low Over-reactivity, High Verbosity, Low Laxness
Type Four	High Over-reactivity, High Verbosity, Low Laxness
Type Five	Low Over-reactivity, Low Verbosity, High Laxness
Type Six	High Over-reactivity, Low Verbosity, High Laxness
Type Seven	Low Over-reactivity, High Verbosity, High Laxness
Type Eight	High Over-reactivity, High Verbosity, High Laxness

After graphing both the Indian and Norwegian cases along this 3-D model, Figure two shows how each case would be coordinated within the eight extreme types with each case expressed as its 3-D, Euclidian distance from a centroid (a median point between clinical and non-clinical cutpoints) for each of the three Parenting Subscales. Visual analysis indicated that both Norwegian and Indian adoptive parenting “types” fall mostly towards styles seven and eight. That is the parents utilized higher verbosity and higher laxness, yet there is a mixture of whether or not the parents over-react or not.

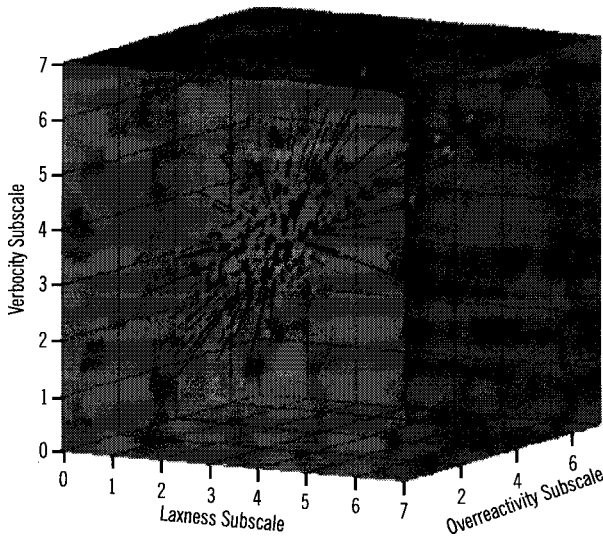


Figure 2
3-D Graph of Parenting Subscales Plot (by Case)

If the cases are separated by country of adoption, Table five shows the frequency and percentages of different parenting types. When the Norwegian parents are separated out from the Indian parents, the preponderance towards styles seven and eight disappears. Styles seven and eight account for approximately 85.6% of all cases for Indian adoptive parents but only 35.4% for Norwegian adoptive parents. Approximately 39.5% of Norwegian adoptive parent styles are accounted by styles three and four, followed by style one. This would indicate a more complex dispersion of styles for Norwegian parents, as a large percentage of styles utilize high verbosity, and low laxness with a mixture of the parent over-reacting or not.

Table 5
Frequency/Percent of Parenting "Types" by Country

Parenting Style Type	Indian Parents		Norwegian Parents	
Type One	6	2.7%	39	20.3%
Type Two	1	0.4%	5	2.6%
Type Three	19	8.5%	50	26.0%
Type Four	2	0.9%	26	13.5%
Type Five	3	1.3%	3	1.6%
Type Six	1	0.4%	1	0.5%
Type Seven	131	58.7%	24	12.5%
Type Eight	60	26.9%	44	22.9%
Total	223	100.0%	192	100.0%

Overall, results from classifying parenting types suggests that the Indian adoptive parents are more homogenous in their parenting typology than are Norwegian adoptive parents. That is, Indian families parenting type cluster around type seven and eight (both high verbosity and high laxness, but different levels of over-reactivity); these two styles comprise over 4/5 of all Indian adoptive parenting styles. The clustering was more diverse for Norwegian adoptive parenting types. The table highlights what are perhaps cultural variants between Norwegian and Indian adoptive families.

Child Behavior

Significant differences were found between the behavior of Indian-adopted and Norwegian-adopted children. Independent t-tests were conducted for each CBCL subscale between Indian and Norwegian adopted children. Equal variances could not be assumed for almost all but the Delinquent subscale and, thus, the pooled variance calculations were used. With the Somatic Problems Subscale as the only exception, Indian parents report their children as significantly higher in problematic behaviors on all seven subscales, as well as the summative internalizing and externalizing subscales. Table six shows the means of all eight CBCL subscales and two summative scales, as well as the t-test results.

Table 6

Comparison of Child Behavior Checklist Subscales Means between Indian and Norwegian Children

Child Behavior Checklist Subscale	Indian Children	Norwegian Children	t	d.f.	Sign.
Withdrawn Subscale Mean	1.833	0.966	*4.891	354.702	< 0.001
Somatic Problems Subscale Mean	1.212	0.875	*1.893	398.494	0.059
Anxiety/Depression Subscale Mean	3.152	1.804	*5.341	412.557	< 0.001
Social Problems Subscale Mean	2.764	1.402	*6.777	411.782	< 0.001
Thought Problems Subscale Mean	1.334	0.420	*7.364	375.009	< 0.001
Attention Problems Subscale Mean	4.161	2.602	*5.555	406.069	< 0.001
Delinquent Subscale Mean	2.039	1.067	5.164	413	< 0.001
Aggression Subscale Mean	7.916	4.707	*6.317	411.746	< 0.001
Internalizing Subscale Mean	6.115	3.582	*5.314	410.279	< 0.001
Externalizing Subscale Mean	9.955	5.775	*6.472	412.635	< 0.001

* Significant variance difference, $p < 0.05$.

The evaluation of behavior makes no assumption about psychopathology or problems. It highlights the differences between Indian and Norwegian adoptive parents' evaluation of their children in these behavior domains.

As a final analysis, the relationships between the children's behaviors and parenting skills were examined. We do not have a research design that confirms causality, so we were interested in detecting correlations and proposing an exploratory regression model that attempts to predict parenting styles based on childrens' behaviors.

Pearson correlations were conducted between the PS Subscales and the CBCL Subscales separately for Indian and Norwegian adopted families. For the Norwegian families, these relationships did not appear similar to the Indian families or even in the same direction. The data indicated that higher problematic child behaviors in anxiety/depression and aggression were correlated with higher over-reactive parenting behaviors. Additionally, higher problematic child behaviors labeled as thought difficulties or delinquency were inversely correlated with verbose parenting behaviors; in other words, parents were less verbose in families where children had more thought problems and delinquent behaviors.

Indian families' correlations demonstrated more complex relationships. High anxiety/depressive problems of the child were correlated with high scores for all three parenting styles (laxness, over-reactivity, and verbosity). If we were to interpret anxiety/depression as the most severe "internal symptom" of problematic child behaviors (see Achenbach, 1991), the "lesser" behaviors such as withdrawn, somatic problems, social problems and thoughts problems correlated to individual parenting styles. That is, anxiety/depression behaviors, withdrawn behaviors and thought problems were only correlated to parental laxness, while somatic problems were only correlated to parental over-reactivity.

In a similar style to "external" behaviors (see Achenbach, 1991), only one behavioral scale was correlated to all parenting styles; aggression behaviors were highly related to parental laxness, over-reactivity and verbosity. Attention problems were related to over-reactivity and verbosity, while delinquent behaviors were related to parenting laxness and over-reactivity. There did not appear to be any correlation between social problems and parenting styles. Table seven shows these analyses.

Table 7

Pearson correlations between PS and CBCL Scale Dimensions

Indian Families	Laxness	Over-reactivity	Verbosity
Withdrawn Subscale	0.138*	0.123	0.093
Somatic Problems Subscale	0.021	0.182**	0.010
Anxiety/Depression Subscale	0.145*	0.136*	0.169*
Social Problems Subscale	0.060	0.129	0.053
Thought Problems Subscale	0.132*	0.102	0.060
Attention Problems Subscale	0.131	0.221**	0.167*
Delinquent Subscale	0.167*	0.160*	0.097
Aggression Subscale	0.171*	0.296**	0.184**
Norwegian Families	Laxness	Over-reactivity	Verbosity
Withdrawn Subscale	0.056	0.088	-0.046
Somatic Problems Subscale	0.087	0.056	-0.047
Anxiety/Depression Subscale	0.141	0.179*	-0.042
Social Problems Subscale	0.030	0.016	-0.085
Thought Problems Subscale	0.045	-0.065	-0.157*
Attention Problems Subscale	0.085	0.096	-0.080
Delinquent Subscale	-0.016	0.111	-0.158*
Aggression Subscale	0.023	0.198**	-0.129

* significance at $p < .05$; ** significance at $p < .01$

Table 9

Regression Models for Predicting Parenting Subscale Scores

Families Parenting Subscale	Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Stand. Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	S.E.	β		
Laxness Subscale	(Constant)	3.470	.072	—	48.217	.000
	"Norwegianness"	-1.142	.083	-.604	-13.735	.000
	CBCL Anxious-Depression Subscale	.043	.016	.116	2.646	.009
Over-reactivity Subscale	(Constant)	2.128	.101	—	21.102	.000
	CBCL Aggression Subscale	.051	.009	.379	5.800	.000
	Age of child (at study)	.026	.008	.168	3.171	.002
	CBCL Social Problems Subscale	-.069	.024	-.190	-2.937	.004
Verbosity Subscale	(Constant)	3.997	.087	—	45.827	.000
	"Norwegianness"	-1.047	.089	-.569	-11.704	.000
	Age of child (at study)	.031	.009	.167	3.443	.001

A linear regression model was developed using each of the Parenting Subscale scores as the dependent variable with demographic variables from Table two/three and the CBCL Subscales from Table six. Country for the adoptive parent was included as dependent variable as well. We merely suggest for exploratory purposes that childrens' behaviors could predict parenting style. The interpretation of the predictive models' causality is complex, however. The data indicate that the dummy variable of nationality (0 = India, 1 = Norway) of the adoptive parent may only – in part – predict parents' laxness and verbosity towards the child's behaviors. However, nationality of the adoptive parent as a predictive factor seems to depend on the anxious/depressive behaviors of the child (to predict laxness) and the age of the child for verbosity. The prediction of over-reactivity appears different: the age of the child is a factor but alongside how aggressive or socially difficult the child's behaviors are, and nationality does not appear to affect over-reactivity of the parent. Table eight shows the models and only the significant predictor variables.

Discussion

Several findings are useful for working with adoptive parents. First, with standardized parenting measures developed in the United States, Indian and Norwegian adoptive families have different parenting styles than two different groups of American families. It is important to recognize differences and not judge the difference as problematic. It also suggests that researchers using parenting style instruments developed from other countries need to interpret results within the cultural context. It is not unusual for adoptive families to function differently than other types of families (see Rosenberg, 1992; Groze & Rosenthal, 1991). Future research might focus on determining if there are parenting skills or parenting competencies that are universal or is all parenting culture-specific and every culture must determine what is good and problematic parenting.

An additional finding is that specific behaviors and certain aspects of the parent-child relationship are significantly associated with parenting. However, all predictors explain very little variance in parenting. Also, because the data were cross-sectional, we cannot assume cause and effect. The only conclusion that can be made is that some parenting skills and some children's behavior are significantly associated with each other. The cause and effect are not critical if a family system model is used to understand and work with adoptive families. From this perspective, intervention can focus on behavior, the parent-child relationship or parenting skill. Changing one component of the system will affect other components. In other words, working with adoptive parents to be less lax may result in a change in parent-child relationship. Conversely, focusing on parent-child communication may result in a change in parental laxness.

Limits of this study include the representativeness of the adoptions. We have a slight understanding of the cultural motivation for adoption by families from both countries, but not which families might be interested in participating in adoption research. Adoptive families that possess certain parenting skills or experience certain behaviors from their adopted children might be prone to participation, thereby providing a "picture" or profile of adoptive families that omits the influence on the data of families that would not respond to research. Perhaps this might be a cultural artifact towards social science in general.

Related to cultural differences, the measures for this study – the CBCL and PS – were developed in the United States. The idioms, particularly for parenting, that are common to North American parents might not have an equivalent metaphorical or symbolic representation to Indian or Norwegian parents. Additionally, behaviors, as assessed by the CBCL, may have different contextual meanings in India or Norway than the United States.

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