

# Family Socioeconomic Status and Ethnicity, Acculturation and Enculturation, and Parent Beliefs about Child Behavior, Learning Methods, and Parenting Roles

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## **Abstract**

*Relationships between family socioeconomic status and ethnicity, acculturation and enculturation, and parent beliefs about desired child behavior, child learning methods, and parenting roles in children's learning desired behavior were examined in a study of 207 parents of preschoolers from seven ethnic and cultural groups. Different subgroups of participants were identified from patterns of acculturation and enculturation. Family ethnicity, family SES, and acculturation were differentially related to the parent beliefs whereas enculturation and combinations of acculturation and enculturation were unrelated to beliefs. Findings are discussed in terms of the high degree of specificity in the relationships between the predictor variables and parent beliefs about child behavior, learning methods, and parenting roles. The results are consistent with an individual-oriented concept of culture. Cautions are therefore raised in terms of overgeneralizations about attributing traditional beliefs broadly to families from the same ethnic or cultural group.*

## **Keywords**

*parent beliefs, family ethnicity, family socioeconomic status, acculturation, enculturation*

## **1. Introduction**

People who share a common language, country of origin, heritage, lifestyle, and customs are generally described as belonging to a specific ethnic or cultural group. Ethnic labels such as African American, Hispanic or Latino, Native American, Asian American, EuroAmerican, and so forth are commonly used for describing membership in different ethnic and cultural groups in the United States. According to Mindel, Habenstein and Wright (1988a), "identification with and membership in an ethnic group has far reaching effects on both groups and individuals—controlling access to opportunities in life, feelings of well-being, and *mastery over the futures of one's children*" (p. 2, emphasis added).

It is generally recognized that within any particular ethnic or cultural group, there are many subgroups having both historically and culturally diverse roots. For example, Native Americans are members of more than 500 federally recognized (Reed & Zelio, 1995) and more than 100 nonrecognized (Porter,

1983; cited in John, 1988) tribes in the United States, with different tribes having similar and diverse customs, traditions, and languages (John, 1988). There are also many different subgroups of people described as Hispanic or Latino living in the United States (Bean & Tienda, 1987; Zambrana & Dorrington, 1998), with the different subgroups having diverse as well as similar cultural beliefs and practices despite sharing a common language (Zuniga, 1998). The same is the case for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (Barringer, Gardner, & Levin, 1993). Even among EuroAmericans there are as many subgroups as there are countries and languages in Europe (Mindel, Habenstein, & Wright, 1988b).

The extent to which people from the same ethnic or cultural group or subgroups share common beliefs, customs, and practices has been debated by anthropologists and psychologists for more than 100 years (e.g., Berry, Poortinga, Segall, & Dasen, 2011; Schwartz, 1978). An individual-oriented approach to culture (de Munck, 2000; Schwartz, 1978) suggests that within any ethnic group or subgroup there are variations in the degree to which members share the same beliefs, customs, and practices, where variations in beliefs and practices are shaped and influenced by many factors, including, but not limited to, contact with peoples, ideas, materials, and practices of other ethnic and cultural groups (e.g., Nanda, 1994).

### *1.1 Personal Beliefs and Practices*

Acculturation has been extensively studied in the United States as a factor influencing the beliefs and practices of people from different ethnic groups (e.g., Chun & Akutsu, 2003; Clark & Hofstess, 1998; Landrine & Klonoff, 1996; McAdoo, 1993). Acculturation refers to the extent to which people from one ethnic or cultural group come to assume or adopt the beliefs, customs, and practices of another ethnic or cultural group (Birman, 1994; Chun, Organista, & Marín, 2003). Acculturation has most often been used to describe the consequences of contact with Europeans where nonwestern societies were forced or drawn into contact with Eurocentric thinking and ways of life (Nanda, 1994). An extensive body of research indicates that acculturation not only influences changes in personal cultural beliefs, customs, and practices (e.g., Bornstein & Cote, 2013; Buriel & DeMent, 1997; Ghuman, 1997; Harris & Verven, 1998; Rivera-Sinclair, 1997), but also explains differences within ethnic groups or subgroups (Landrine & Klonoff, 1996).

In contrast to acculturation, enculturation refers to the processes and experiences leading to acquisition or maintenance of the cultural beliefs, customs, and practices of one's own ethnic or cultural group or subgroup (Gavelek & Kong, 2012; Laughlin, 1989; Little Soldier, 1985; Nanda, 1994). The term refers to the "extent to which individuals identify with their ethnic culture, feel a sense of pride in their cultural heritage, and participate in traditional cultural activities" (Zimmerman, Ramirez, Washienko, Walter, & Dyer, 1998, p. 296). The enculturation concept seems especially useful in studies of individuals from the same ethnic group who do and do not enmesh themselves in cultural traditions and customs, and how doing or not doing so is a factor explaining variations in personal beliefs, customs, and practices (Collins, 1989; LeVine, 1990; Poole, 1994).

Family Socioeconomic Status (SES) has also been found to be related to differences in personal beliefs, customs, and practices (Abell, Clawson, Washington, Bost, & Vaughn, 1996; Willingham, 2012) as well as related to measures of acculturation and enculturation (Negy & Woods, 1992; Yoon, Hacker, Hewitt, Abrams, & Cleary, 2012; Yurchak, 2004). As noted by Hill (2006), these particular personal and family characteristics are likely to be intertwined and related to one other in quite complex ways. Not surprisingly, family SES, family ethnicity, acculturation, and enculturation have all been identified as factors influencing personal beliefs, customs, and practices (Calzada, Brotman, Huang, Bat-Chava, & Kingston, 2009; McAdoo, 1993; Mindel et al., 1988b; Powell, 2003; Rohner, R. P. & Rohner, E. C., 1982).

### *1.2 Parenting Beliefs and Practices*

Families from different SES and ethnic and cultural backgrounds have generally been found to differ in their beliefs about desirable child behavior (e.g., Bornstein & Bradley, 2012; Degotardi, Torr, & Cross, 2008; Kohnstamm, Halverson, Havill, & Mervielde, 1996; Leyendecker, Harwood, Comparini, & Yalçınkaya, 2005), beliefs about how children come to learn desired behaviors (e.g., Leyendecker & Lamb, 1999), and the parenting roles for promoting child acquisition of those behaviors (e.g., Rohner, R. P. & Rohner, E. C., 1982). According to Harkness and Super (1996a), the culturally regulated customs of child rearing and care, and the implicit theories parents use for rearing their children, contribute to variations in how parenting beliefs and practices are shaped and influenced. Numerous studies have demonstrated the role acculturation plays in influencing parenting beliefs and practices (e.g., Gutierrez, Sameroff, & Karrer, 1988; Patel, Power, & Bhavnagri, 1996; Thiel de Bocanegra, 1998). The influences of enculturation on parenting beliefs and practices are well recognized (Masten, 1999; Pachter & Harwood, 1996; Super & Harkness, 1997), although measures of enculturation are noticeably missing in the parenting beliefs literature, and therefore, the relationships between enculturation and parenting beliefs and practices.

### *1.3 Purpose of the Study*

The purpose of the study described in this paper was to ascertain the relationships between family SES, family ethnicity, acculturation, enculturation, and parent beliefs about desired child behavior, child learning methods, and parenting roles in promoting desired behavior. The study was conducted as part of a line of research and practice investigating young children's everyday learning opportunities (e.g., Dunst, Hamby, Trivette, Raab, & Bruder, 2000, 2002; Dunst & Raab, 2004), and how intrafamily and extrafamily factors, including, but not limited to, family SES, family ethnicity, acculturation, and enculturation contribute to variations in child learning and development (e.g., Dunst et al., 2001; Dunst, Bruder, Trivette, & Hamby, 2005, 2006; Trivette, Dunst, & Hamby, 2004).

The study differed from other investigations of parenting beliefs in a number of ways. First, in contrast to studies that have typically included families from only 2 or 3 ethnic or cultural groups, the study described in this paper included families from seven different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Second, measures of both acculturation and enculturation were used in order to determine their relationships

with parenting beliefs (Harkness & Super, 1996b; Sigel, 1985; Sigel, McGillicuddy-DeLisi, & Goodnow, 1992). Third, different kinds of parent beliefs were studied, permitting more explicit investigation as to whether SES, ethnicity, acculturation, and enculturation had like or unlike effects on different kinds of parent beliefs.

The investigation was guided by ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1992) which acknowledges the fact that beliefs and practices are multiply determined. These explanatory factors include, but are not limited to, the variables examined in this investigation. Our interest in sociocultural factors as determinants of parent beliefs is based on theory and research focusing on belief-behavior linkages between parenting attitudes, behaviors, and practices (García Coll et al., 1996; Sigel et al., 1992). The importance of parent beliefs as the focus of investigation is based on the observation that there is a “great deal of evidence that behavior can appropriately be seen as the expression of beliefs that are to a large extent culturally organized” (Harkness & Super, 1996a, p. 16).

## 2. Method

### 2.1 Participants

Participants were 195 mothers (94%) and 13 other family members (6%) rearing children birth to 6 years of age in seven United States (Alaska, California, Connecticut, Hawaii, North Carolina, New Mexico & Wisconsin). A purposive sampling procedure was used to insure as much variability as possible in terms of family ethnicity, family SES, child age, and place of residence (urban, rural & suburban).

The participants' ethnic and cultural backgrounds were: African American/African Descent (N = 35), Asian/Asian American (N = 19), Caucasian/White (N = 50), Hispanic/Latino (N = 49), Native American/Alaskan Natives (N = 30), Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian (N = 15), and peoples from the Middle Eastern region of the world (N = 9). The ethnicities of 85% of the participants' spouses or partners, or the family members with whom they resided, were the same as their own.

The ages of the participants ranged between 18 and 53 years (M = 32.33, SD = 6.72). The number of years of formal schooling completed by the participants ranged between zero and 24 (M = 13.12, SD = 3.42). Three-fourths of the sample were married or living with a partner (75%), whereas the other participants were single and never married (15%) or separated, divorced, or widowed (10%). Half of the participants worked outside the home either part-time (21%) or full-time (30%).

The participants' family SES scores (Hollingshead, 1975) ranged between 8 and 66 (M = 35.64, SD = 14.19), with nearly two thirds (63%) of the sample comprising the three lowest Hollingshead SES strata. An investigator-developed adequacy of financial resources scale developed from other measures (Bowman, 1993; McLoyd, Jayaratne, Ceballo, & Borquez, 1994) found that 26% of the participants' families reported difficulties meeting financial obligations and another 44% indicated they worried about their financial situations.

The respondents' children included 125 boys (60%) and 82 girls (40%). The children's average age was

37 months ( $SD = 20$ ). They ranged in age from 1 month to 107 months. The children included those with and without developmental delays and those receiving and not receiving specialized early childhood intervention.

## 2.2 Measures

Participants completed an *Acculturation and Enculturation Questionnaire* (AEQ) and a *Parent Beliefs Questionnaire* (PBQ). Both scales were developed specifically for this study. The AEQ items are derived from measures of acculturation (Cuellar, Harris, & Jasso, 1990; King, 1992; Kumable, Nishida, & Hepworth, 1985) and enculturation (Wilbert, 1976; Zimmerman, Ramirez-Valles, Washienko, Walter, & Dyer, 1996) in the published and unpublished literature. Questionnaire content and wording were modified so as to be applicable to participants from the ethnic and cultural backgrounds in the study. The PBQ includes three sections assessing parent beliefs about: (1) behaviors considered important for children to learn, (2) how children come to learn desired behavior, and (3) parenting roles in promoting child acquisition of those behaviors. The content of the scale as well as the measurement procedures are modifications of methods used extensively in cross-cultural research on child development and parenting roles and styles (Chao, 1994; Garc á Coll, 1990; Garc á Coll, Meyer, & Brillon, 1995; Lin & Fu, 1990; McGillicuddy-DeLisi, 1982; Okagaki & Divecha, 1993; Sigel, 1986). Both the AEQ and PBQ were administered in interview formats in the participants' preferred languages.

### 2.2.1 Acculturation and Enculturation Questionnaire

This scale includes 13 items measuring three dimensions of acculturation (language preference/use, affiliate behavior/preferences, and contact with people from the respondents' family place of origin) and 7 items measuring different dimensions of enculturation (image, affinity, pride, etc.). The scale also includes a series of questions for ascertaining a respondent's ethnic and cultural group and subgroup membership.

The language preference/use items assess the extent to which a respondent's ethnic or nonethnic language was used for speaking, reading, writing, and thinking. A single item measured a respondent's preferred language. The affiliate behavior/preferences items assess the extent to which the ethnicities of a respondent's peers and friends growing up, when socializing, at school or at work, and at religious or spiritual gatherings, are the same or different from their own. The family place of origin items assess the extent to which a respondent and his/her parents were reared in their country of origin (or on tribal lands for Native Americans) and visited or had contact with people/family from the respondent's country of origin. The items were all scored on 5-point Likert rating scales where higher scores indicated a greater degree of acculturation. A principal components factor analysis of the acculturation items with oblique rotation produced a three factor solution ( $\alpha = .93$ ) where a second-order factor analysis yielded a single acculturation score that justified summing the item scores to obtain a total scale score (Spector, 1992).

The enculturation items assess the extent to which a respondent shows pride in his/her ethnicity or culture, the accomplishments of peoples from his/her ethnic or cultural background, participates in and

maintains practices associated with his/her ethnicity, talks with and learns from others (family members, elders, etc.) of the same ethnic or cultural background about his/her heritage, openly communicates about the respondent's ethnicity or culture with people from other ethnicities, and maintains a sense of pride regarding his/her cultural identity. The items were scored on 5-point Likert rating scales where higher scores indicated a greater degree of enculturation. A principal components factor analysis of the 7 enculturation items ( $\alpha = .83$ ) produced a single factor solution.

### 2.2.2 Parent Beliefs Questionnaire

This scale assesses parent beliefs about behavior respondents indicate children should learn as they become older, the methods and ways children come to learn those behavior, and parenting roles in helping children learn desired behavior. Twenty child behavior, 16 methods of child learning, and 17 parenting roles were identified from the child development and cross-cultural literature with an explicit emphasis on child behaviors, learning methods, and parenting roles identified as important and valued by parents from the seven ethnicities of the study participants. Two child behavior (Being popular and having lots of friends; Modesty or showing humility), one child learning method (Being criticized or punished), and one parenting role (Criticizing/punishing child) were identified so infrequently as important beliefs that they were not included in any analyses. Abbreviated lists of the three sets of parent beliefs used in the study are included in the Appendix.

Each section of the PBQ is administered separately using the same format. The different child behavior, learning methods, or parenting roles were presented to the parents on separate cards randomly placed on a table in front of the participants. A two-step process was used for identifying parent beliefs considered important by the participants. First, participants selected from all the cards in each category, the ones they considered important behavior for children to learn, the best ways children learn desired behavior, and the important ways parents help children learn. Second, for all the cards selected as important in each category, the participants were asked to identify the one belief they considered most important, second most important, third most important, and so forth until eight child behavior, eight learning methods, and eight parenting roles were selected. The order of the selected beliefs was scored so that those selected first were assigned a score of 8, those selected second were assigned a score of 7, and those selected third were assigned a score of 6, and so forth, until the remaining belief was assigned a score of 1. These scores for each parent belief in each category were the dependent measures in the analyses described next.

### 2.3 Methods of Analysis

An iterative data analysis process was used to ascertain the relationships between family ethnicity, family SES, acculturation, enculturation, and parent beliefs. We first ascertained for all participants combined the particular beliefs in each category that were ranked the highest to the lowest to determine if certain beliefs were identified as more important than others. We then performed a number of analyses on the belief scores to ascertain the relationships between the predictor and dependent measures.

K-means clustering of cases (Dixon, 1992) was used to partition participants into groups (clusters) using acculturation and enculturation scores for cluster assignment. AEQ scores were standardized for conducting the K-means clustering. An Ethnic Group X Cluster Group chi-square analysis was used to ascertain if patterns of acculturation and enculturation were similar or different for ethnicity.

A series of seven between group ANOVAs was used to determine if ethnic and cultural group membership was related to differences in the parent belief measures. A series of between K-means cluster group ANOVAs was used to determine if different cluster groupings were related to differences in the parent belief measures. We then examined the correlations between family SES, acculturation, enculturation, and parent beliefs to ascertain if particular patterns of relationships could be detected.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1 Parent Beliefs

The parent beliefs selected as desired child behavior, child learning methods, and parenting roles were first examined to determine the percent of beliefs selected as important (1 to 8), the percent of beliefs selected at or above the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile (5, 6, 7, 8), and the percent of beliefs selected at or above the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile (7 or 8). The three percentages are indicators of beliefs considered important, very important, and extremely important by the study participants.

##### 3.1.1 Child Behavior

Table 1 shows the results for those child behaviors ranked from the highest to the lowest. Learning to be honest and truthful was identified as important for a child to learn by 82% of the respondents, but only half of the respondents ranked the belief as very important, and only 22% identified the behavior as extremely important. As can be seen in Table 1, as the percent of beliefs identified as important for a child to learn decreases, so does the percent of beliefs judged very important and to a lesser extent extremely important. The low percents indicate that there was considerable variability among respondents in terms of the particular behavior they considered important for a child to learn.

**Table 1. Parent Beliefs about Child Behavior Considered Important for Children to Learn**

Rank Child Behavior	Percent of Respondents <sup>a</sup>		
	Ranked 1-8	Ranked 5-8	Ranked 7-8
1. Honest and Truthful	82	50	22
2. Knows Right from Wrong/Obeys Rules	70	48	21
3. Belief in God or Belief in Greater Spirit	64	57	50
4. Respect for Elders and Adults	63	32	17
5. Responsible/Loyal to Others	61	22	7
6. Confident and Self Assured	60	28	15

**Table 1, continued**

7.	Shows Self-Control/Patience	51	19	6
8.	Connected and Obligated to Family	50	34	19
9.	Hard Working/Tries to do Best Possible	47	18	7
10.	Polite and has Good Manners	44	13	2
11.	Happy and Even Tempered	38	19	9
12.	Kind and Considerate	36	12	5
13.	Shares with Others/Demonstrates Giving	33	10	3
14.	Smart and Successful	28	13	4
15.	Helpful and Cooperative	21	6	1
16.	In Harmony with Nature/Spiritual Wellness	20	11	9
17.	Creative or Inventive	12	2	1
18.	Competitive or Ambitious	10	3	1

<sup>a</sup> 1 to 8 = Important, 5 to 8 = Very Important, 7 or 8 = Extremely Important.

In addition to learning to be honest and truthful, there were five additional behaviors identified as important for children to learn by 60% to 70% of the respondents. These included knowing right from wrong/obeys rules, a belief in God or a Greater Spirit, respect for elders and adults, being responsible and demonstrating loyalty to others, and learning to be confident and self-assured. Only one child behavior (Belief in God/Greater Spirit) was judged as extremely important by 50% of the respondents. Close examination of the child behaviors judged very important and extremely important shows considerable variability in the parents' responses. This is an indication that there is a large degree of specificity in terms of the particular behavior judged most important as evidenced by the responses of the study participants.

There were a handful of beliefs that were not considered either very or extremely important for a child to learn. These included learning to be competitive or ambitious, creative or inventive, in harmony with nature, and helpful or cooperative. These findings, together with those for the beliefs listed in Table 1 as more important, provide a picture of the relative importance of parent beliefs about child behavior for all respondents taken together.

### 3.1.2 Child Learning Methods

The learning methods identified as important for child acquisition of desired behavior are shown in Table 2. Three learning methods (following directions, providing a child interesting toys or materials, and a child asking for help or assistance) were considered important by 75% of the respondents, but only 34% to 43% considered the practices very important learning methods and only 15% to 26% considered the practices extremely important. Three child learning methods (Providing a child interesting toys or materials, child play, and believing in God or a Greater Being) were judged as extremely important by at least 25% of the respondents. The pattern of beliefs judged very and extremely important for the other learning methods, was similar to that found for child behavior. As the

percent of learning methods identified as important decreases, so do the percents of methods judged very important or extremely important (with the exceptions noted above). This again is an indication of considerable variability among respondents in terms of the relative importance attributed to the learning methods.

**Table 2. Parent Beliefs about the Most Effective Child Methods of Learning**

Rank Learning Methods	Percent of Respondents <sup>a</sup>		
	Ranked 1-8	Ranked 5-8	Ranked 7-8
1. Follows Directions	76	37	18
2. Providing Child Interesting Toys and Materials	75	43	26
3. Child Asking for Help or Assistance	75	34	15
4. Child Playing	70	46	27
5. Listening to Others Tell Stories/Share Experiences	70	28	10
6. Child Thinking About Things	68	32	8
7. Child Figuring Things Out On One's Own	67	22	9
8. Child Repeating Behavior Over and Over	66	32	15
9. Observing Others Behavior	53	30	15
10. Believing in God or Greater Being	52	34	29
11. Controlling Ones Own Behavior/Actions	44	13	5
12. Having Lots of Successes	43	19	10
13. Maturing/Getting Older	36	6	3
14. Being Told/Instructed What to Do	31	16	6
15. Imitating Others Behavior or Actions	19	8	5

<sup>a</sup> 1 to 8 = Important, 5 to 8 = Very Important, 7 or 8 = Extremely Important.

As was the case for child behavior, certain parent beliefs about child learning methods were considered less important than other methods. Imitating other children's behavior was considered the least important learning method followed by being told or instructed how to engage in desired behavior, getting older (maturing), and having lots of successes. The results indicate that most participants did not attribute much importance to these particular learning methods.

### 3.1.3 Parenting Roles

Table 3 shows the results for the parenting roles identified as important for promoting acquisition of desired child behavior. Whereas the majority of respondents identified answering a child's questions (90%) and praising or rewarding desired child behavior (88%) as important parenting roles, only about half of the respondents considered these two roles as very important, and only one-fourth to one-third

of the respondents judged these parenting roles as extremely important. Two-thirds to three-fourths of the respondents judged providing a child assistance or help, modeling desired behavior, asking a child to make decisions or choices, and setting limits as important parenting roles. One-fourth to one-third of the respondents, however, considered these parenting roles very important but only 12% to 17% considered the parenting roles as extremely important with the exception of setting limits which was considered extremely important by 27% of the respondents. Thereafter, fewer and fewer of the parenting roles were judged as very important or extremely important by the respondents. The pattern of results in Table 3 is again an indication of considerable variability among the respondents in terms of attributing high degrees of importance to particular parenting roles.

**Table 3. Parent Beliefs about Parenting Roles for Promoting Child Learning**

Rank Parenting Roles	Percent of Respondents <sup>a</sup>		
	Ranked 1-8	Ranked 5-8	Ranked 7-8
1. Answering a Child's Questions	90	53	26
2. Praising or Rewarding Child's Behavior/Actions	88	55	33
3. Providing a Child Assistance or Help	74	32	13
4. Modeling Desired Behavior	72	38	17
5. Asking Child to Make Choices or Decisions	67	27	12
6. Setting Limits/Establishing Rules	66	44	27
7. Child Observing Others	64	30	20
8. Repeated Practice	61	24	7
9. Telling Stories Having a Lesson	50	13	7
10. Getting Child to Figure Things Out	49	16	9
11. Providing a Child Fun Activities	48	20	9
12. Providing a Child Interesting Toys or Materials	43	15	8
13. Getting Child to Self Reflect on His/Her Behavior	43	12	1
14. Asking a Child to Try Different Things	41	12	2
15. Telling a Child What to Do/How to Behave	21	5	4
16. Getting Another Child to Show How to Behave	12	3	1

<sup>a</sup> 1 to 8 = Important, 5 to 8 = Very Important, 7 or 8 = Extremely Important.

The parenting roles considered least important include ones that are directive (telling a child what to do, getting a child to try different things), and introspective (getting a child to self-reflect on his/her behavior). Getting another child to show or demonstrate how to behave or act was the parenting role identified as the least important for a child learning desired behavior.

### 3.2 Between Ethnic Group Analyses

The series of 7 Between Ethnic Group ANOVAs with the parent belief scores as the dependent measures produced significant between group differences for three child behaviors, six child learning methods, and four parenting roles.

The number of between ethnic group differences was fewer than expected, based on findings from previous studies, and indicate that there were more similarities than differences in parent beliefs among the respondents in the different ethnic and cultural groups.

#### 3.2.1 Child Behavior

Between ethnic group differences were found for competitiveness,  $F(6, 200) = 2.49, p = .0240$ , being polite and having good manners,  $F(6, 200) = 2.91, p = .0097$ , and honesty and trustworthiness,  $F(6, 200) = 2.67, p = .0162$ . African American respondents considered competitiveness more important compared to Hispanic/Latino respondents. African American respondents considered being polite and having good manners more important compared to Caucasian and Native American/Alaskan Native respondents. Caucasian respondents considered honesty and trustworthiness more important compared to Hispanic/Latino respondents.

#### 3.2.2 Child Learning Methods

There were between ethnic group differences for a child asking for help or assistance,  $F(6, 200) = 2.27, p = .0386$ , being told what to do or how to behave,  $F(6, 200) = 2.55, p = .0211$ , following directions,  $F(6, 200) = 5.33, p = .0000$ , having lots of successful accomplishments,  $F(6, 200) = 2.64, p = .0176$ , listening to others,  $F(6, 200) = 2.46, p = .0258$ , and observing others,  $F(6, 200) = 4.06, p = .0007$ . Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian respondents considered asking for help more important than Middle Eastern respondents. Hispanic/Latino respondents considered being told what to do more important than Caucasian respondents. Asian American respondents considered lots of successful accomplishments more important compared to Native American/Alaskan Natives. Both Caucasian and Native American/Alaskan Native respondents considered listening to others more important compared to African American respondents. Caucasian respondents considered observing others as more important compared to both African American and Hispanic/Latino respondents.

The largest number of between ethnic group differences was found for following directions. African American respondents considered this learning method more important compared to Caucasian, Asian American, Native American/Alaskan Native, and Hispanic/Latino respondents.

#### 3.2.3 Parenting Roles

There were between ethnic group differences for asking a child to look at his/her own actions,  $F(6, 200) = 2.54, p = .0218$ , praising or rewarding child behavior,  $F(6, 200) = 3.61, p = .0020$ , setting limits,  $F(6, 200) = 2.28, p = .0373$ , and showing or telling a child to do things in different ways,  $F(6, 200) = 4.07, p = .0007$ . Middle Eastern respondents considered asking a child to look at his/her own actions as more important compared to Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian and Caucasian respondents. Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian, Asian American, and Caucasian respondents considered rewarding or

reinforcing child behavior more important compared to Middle Eastern respondents. African American respondents considered setting limits as more important compared to Hispanic/Latino respondents. Middle Eastern respondents considered showing or telling a child how to do things in a different way as more important compared to all other respondents except Asian American respondents.

### 3.3 Cluster Analysis

Comparisons of the  $F$ -like ratios for 3, 4, and 5 cluster solutions indicated that the  $F$ -tests for the four cluster solution were maximized for both acculturation,  $F(3, 203) = 232.30, p = .0000$  and enculturation,  $F(3, 203) = 211.41, p = .0000$ . Examination of the cluster profiles indicated a 2 X 2 group solution with high and low combinations of acculturation and enculturation scores. Cross tabulating final cluster membership with ethnicity produced a significant association with the cluster group variables,  $\chi^2 = 91.29, df = 18, p = .0000$ . The results are shown in Table 4.

**Table 4. Percentage of Participants According to Ethnicity and Patterns of Acculturation and Enculturation Scores**

Ethnicity	Low Acculturation		High Acculturation	
	Low Enculturation	High Enculturation	Low Enculturation	High Enculturation
African American	3	9	31	57
Caucasian	2	4	56	38
Asian/Asian American	26	42	10	21
Hispanic/Latino	29	39	10	22
Middle Eastern	33	44	11	11
Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian	40	40	0	20
Native American/Alaskan Natives	7	47	23	23

#### 3.3.1 Cluster Groupings

Both the African American and Caucasian participants each clustered primarily into two subgroups characterized as highly acculturated but differing according to their degree of enculturation. A larger percentage of African American participants indicated greater cultural affinity and pride compared to highly acculturated Caucasian participants.

Approximately 40% of the Asian American, Hispanic/Latino, and Middle Eastern participants each clustered into subgroups primarily characterized as minimally acculturated and highly enculturated. Participants from the same ethnic backgrounds each also clustered into subgroups characterized by both low acculturation and low enculturation. These participants for the most part had recently immigrated to the United States, where more traditional customs, traditions, and practices were already

a part of their lifestyles.

The Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian participants clustered into two subgroups characterized by low acculturation and either low or high enculturation. The two groups differed primarily in terms of their explicit expressions of cultural identity and pride. The Native American/Alaskan Native participants clustered into one dominant subgroup (low acculturation, high enculturation) and two secondary subgroups (high acculturation and either low or high enculturation). Participants in the dominant subgroup were primarily residing on Native American reservations, tribal lands, or villages where traditional cultural practices were a way of life.

### 3.3.2 Between Cluster Group Analyses

The three sets of 4 Between Cluster Group ANOVAs produced only two significant between group differences for the child behavior measures; one for knows right from wrong/obeys rules,  $F(3, 203) = 3.38, p = .0192$ , and the other for being smart or successful,  $F(3, 203) = 4.11, p = .0074$ . Highly acculturated respondents (regardless of enculturation) considered knowing right from wrong as more important compared to low acculturated/low enculturated respondents. Low acculturated/low enculturated respondents considered being smart and successful as more important than respondents in each of the other three cluster groups.

There was only one significant between cluster group difference for child methods of learning. Highly acculturated/low enculturated respondents considered listening to others tell stories more important than highly acculturated/highly enculturated respondents,  $F(3, 203) = 3.56, p = .0151$ .

There were two significant between cluster group differences for parenting roles. Low acculturated/low enculturated respondents considered rewarding or reinforcing child behavior as less important compared to participants in each of the other three cluster groups,  $F(3, 203) = 7.53, p = .0001$ . Highly acculturated/low enculturated participants indicated that engaging a child in fun and interesting activities was more important compared to low acculturated/low enculturated respondents,  $F(3, 203) = 3.80, p = .0111$ .

The results from the cluster group analyses shed little light on how acculturation and enculturation influence parent beliefs as evidenced by the small number of between cluster group differences. These two sociocultural constructs, at least as measured in this study, proved to have very little explanatory value in terms of factors influencing parent beliefs about desired child behavior, learning methods, and parenting roles.

### 3.4 Correlation Analyses

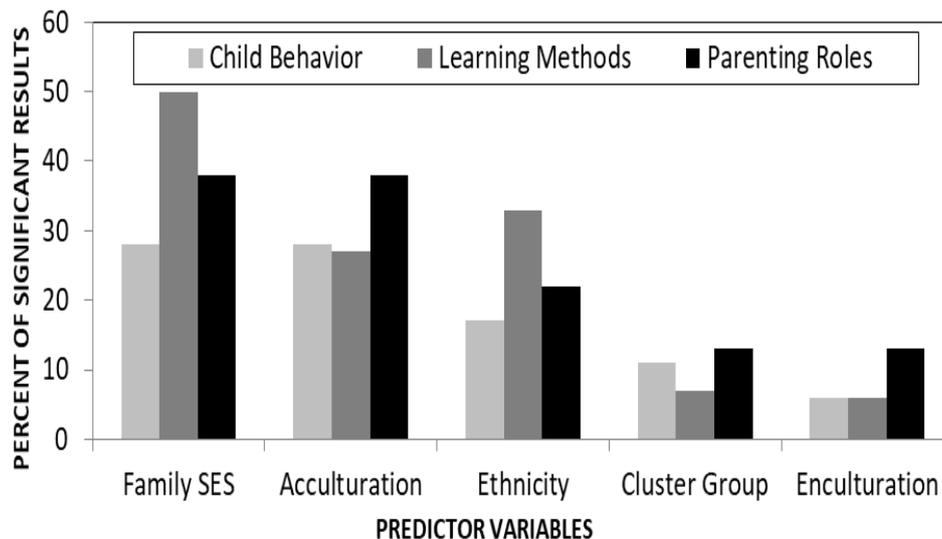
The fact that the cluster comparisons produced so few between group differences and the between ethnic group comparisons for child behavior and parenting roles also produced fewer than expected between group differences led us to examine the zero-order correlations between family SES, acculturation, enculturation, and parent beliefs. The three predictor variables were related to one another as would be expected. Family SES was positively related to acculturation,  $r = .23, p = .0009$ , but was not related to enculturation,  $r = .10, p = .1517$ ; and acculturation was negatively related to

enculturation,  $r = -.36$ ,  $p = .0000$ .

The relative importance of the predictor variables (and those for ethnic and cluster groups) was determined by the percent of statistically significant relationships with the three sets of parent beliefs measures. The results are shown in Figure 1. Several discernible patterns emerged from the analyses. First, family SES was most associated with parent beliefs, followed by acculturation and then family ethnicity. Second, family SES, acculturation, and family ethnicity were most associated with beliefs about child learning methods followed by parenting role beliefs and then beliefs about child behavior. Third, neither cluster group membership nor enculturation proved important in terms of the relationships between the predictor variables and parent beliefs.

### 3.4.1 Child Behavior

The pattern of relationships between family SES, acculturation, and child behavior beliefs were quite dissimilar. Whereas family SES was positively correlated with creativity,  $r = .24$ ,  $p = .0005$ , happiness,  $r = .16$ ,  $p = .0184$ , and hardworking,  $r = .15$ ,  $p = .0302$ , acculturation was not related to any of these child behaviors,  $r_s = -.05$  to  $.01$ ,  $p_s = .4922$  to  $.9010$ . In contrast, acculturation was positively correlated with honesty,  $r = .22$ ,  $p = .0014$ , being kind to others,  $r = .18$ ,  $p = .0085$ , and knowing right from wrong,  $r = .19$ ,  $p = .0061$ , whereas family SES was not related to any of these beliefs,  $r_s = .03$  to  $.06$ ,  $p_s = .3542$  to  $.6941$ . In contrast, family SES and acculturation were both negatively related to being polite,  $r = -.22$ ,  $p = .0014$ , and  $r = -.18$ ,  $p = .0094$ , respectively, and respect for elders and adults,  $r = -.30$ ,  $p = .0000$ , and  $r = -.14$ ,  $p = .0442$ , respectively.



**Figure 1. Percentage of Significant Relationships between the Different Predictor Variables and Parent Beliefs**

*Note.* The percent of significant results for family ethnicity and cluster groups are for the between group ANOVAs.

### 3.4.2 Child Learning Methods

The pattern of relationships between family SES, acculturation, and parent beliefs about child learning methods were both similar and different. For example, family SES and acculturation were both negatively related to telling a child what to do or how to behave,  $r = -.20$ ,  $p = .0032$ , and  $r = -.19$ ,  $p = .0051$ , respectively, and maturation,  $r = -.21$ ,  $p = .0029$ , and  $r = -.17$ ,  $p = .0169$ , respectively. In contrast, family SES was positively related to child playing,  $r = .31$ ,  $p = .0000$ , whereas acculturation was not related to this learning method,  $r = .11$ ,  $p = .1228$ . The same was the case for the relationships between family SES and observational learning,  $r = .24$ ,  $p = .0004$ , repeating behavior or actions,  $r = .15$ ,  $p = .0354$ , asking for help,  $r = -.28$ ,  $p = .0000$ , following directions,  $r = -.25$ ,  $p = .0004$ , and self-directed learning,  $r = -.17$ ,  $p = .0122$ . In contrast, acculturation was not related to any of these child learning method beliefs,  $r_s = -.04$  to  $.12$ ,  $p = .0878$  to  $.5867$ . Whereas, acculturation was positively related to trial and error learning,  $r = .16$ ,  $p = .0232$ , family SES was not related to this belief,  $r_s = .08$ ,  $p = .2822$ .

### 3.4.3 Parenting Roles

The pattern of relationships between the predictor variables and parenting role beliefs were also both similar and different. Both family SES,  $r = .21$ ,  $p = .0029$ , and acculturation,  $r = .18$ ,  $p = .0110$ , were positively related to rewarding and reinforcing child behavior, and both family SES,  $r = .16$ ,  $p = .0241$ , and acculturation,  $r = .19$ ,  $p = .0052$ , were also positively related to modeling desired child behavior. Both predictor variables were negatively related to providing a child assistance,  $r_s = -.24$  and  $-.22$ ,  $p_s = .0005$  and  $.0018$ , respectively. In contrast, family SES was positively related to providing a child fun and interesting activities,  $r = .20$ ,  $p = .0038$ , whereas acculturation was not related to this parenting role,  $r = -.05$ ,  $p = .4770$ . Acculturation was positively related to setting limits,  $r = .19$ ,  $p = .0068$ , and negatively related to storytelling,  $r = -.14$ ,  $p = .0442$ , whereas family SES was not related to either parenting role belief,  $r_s = -.02$  and  $.10$ ,  $p_s = .7574$  and  $.1397$ , respectively.

## 4. Discussion

Family SES, acculturation, and family ethnicity proved to be the most important covariates of variations in parent beliefs about desired child behavior, child learning methods, and parenting roles. In contrast, neither enculturation nor a combination of acculturation and enculturation (cluster analysis) were related to the largest number of belief measures.

At least for the particular kinds of parenting beliefs investigated in the study, results indicated that there was considerable variability in parents' beliefs about the relative importance of behavior deemed important for children to learn, how children come to learn these behaviors, and parent roles in promoting child learning as evidenced by the fact that not a single belief was identified as extremely important by a majority of respondents (Tables 1, 2, & 3) and the small number of significant relationships between the predictor variables and belief measures (Figure 1). These findings raise cautions about broadly attributing "traditional" beliefs to all or most parents from the same ethnic or

cultural group. The descriptive literature often characterizes people from specific ethnic or cultural groups in terms of traditional customs, beliefs, and practices (e.g., Lynch & Hanson, 2004), where these characterizations are most often intended to depict the ways peoples from the same ethnic group or culture are similar, and how the beliefs, customs, and practices of particular groups differ from other groups. Such descriptions are implicitly based on a group-oriented concept of culture (Schwartz, 1978) that assumes little or no variation in beliefs among individuals from the same ethnic or cultural group. It also assumes little or no influence of other factors both within and outside the ethnic or cultural group for variations in beliefs.

Findings from this study as well as others (see especially Mindel et al., 1988a) are more consistent with an individual-oriented concept of culture (Schwartz, 1978) where variations in beliefs are the norm rather than the exception. This is not to say ethnicity and culture are not important. As noted by Spiro (1951), members of the same ethnic group or culture have a similar heritage, where the influences of this heritage can and often do vary individual by individual.

The fact that acculturation was not as important a factor in explaining variations in beliefs compared to family SES deserves comment in light of other evidence indicating its influence on attitudes and behavior (see e.g., Clark & Hofsess, 1998). The *Acculturation and Enculturation Questionnaire* (AEQ) was developed to be applicable to people from all the ethnic backgrounds included in this study. This was a special challenge, necessitating the loss of specificity in how acculturation was measured. We acknowledge this as a potential shortcoming of the study, and point out that caution is warranted in interpreting the findings indicating acculturation is a less important explanatory factor. As results from other studies suggest, acculturation most certainly is related to variations in parent belief systems (e.g., Buriel & DeMent, 1997; Griffith, 1993; Gutierrez et al., 1988; Harris & Verven, 1998; Harwood, 1992; Patel et al., 1996).

This study was conducted from an ecological systems perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) that considers variations in beliefs and behaviors to be multiply determined and complex. In addition to family ethnicity, acculturation, and enculturation, we examined the relationships between family SES and variations in parent beliefs, and found this family background variable to be more related to parent beliefs compared to the other predictor variables. By including this background variable in the analyses, we were able to show that this family factor in addition to sociocultural factors contributed to variations in parent beliefs. On the one hand, the findings pertaining to family SES highlighted the fact that the variations in parent beliefs are influenced by this family background characteristic. On the other hand, the findings make clear the need to carefully consider multiple factors when studying parent beliefs inasmuch as no single factor proved to be of primary importance as a predictor of parent beliefs. The same is the case when contemplating interventions in the parent/child system with families from different ethnic or cultural groups (e.g., Cowan, Powell, & Cowan, 1998).

There is at least one other potential shortcoming of the study that needs to be mentioned to place the results in proper perspective. Despite the fact that the majority of between ethnic group ANOVAs did

not yield significant differences, subtle differences may have been missed. One-way between groups ANOVAs for large number of group comparisons (as was the case in this study) may not be sensitive enough for detecting between group differences, where differences may in fact exist because of unequal variances between groups as was the case in some analyses. As a result, the influences of ethnicity on parent beliefs might have been underestimated.

#### *4.1 Implications for Practice*

Notwithstanding the limitations of the study, the results nonetheless have implications for practice. As noted in the Introduction, the study was conducted as part of a line of research and practice investigating young children's everyday learning and parenting roles engaging children in different kinds of learning activities (e.g., Dunst et al., 2001; Dunst et al., 2002; Trivette et al., 2004). The findings, taken together, are more consistent with an individual-oriented rather than a group-oriented orientation of culture for understanding within and between ethnic and cultural group differences (Coon & Kimmelmeier, 2001; Leung et al., 2002; Schwartz, 1978). The implications of an individual-oriented conceptualization of culture are not to make sweeping assumptions or attributions about parents' beliefs based solely on their ethnicity or cultural identities without taking time to carefully understand the extent to which particular beliefs are held by a parent and family. Doing so is at least one aspect of being a culturally competent practitioner (Hanson & Lynch, 2010; Klein & Chen, 2001; Malgady & College, 2011). On the one hand this means making a clear distinction between one's own beliefs and those of others, and taking the time to understand and accept the beliefs, customs, and practices of others. On the other hand this means understanding how each parent's personal beliefs influence child rearing and parenting practices and not making any a priori assumptions based on ethnicity or cultural group membership.

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## Appendix A

### Abbreviated Descriptions of the Parent Beliefs Questionnaire Items

Child Behavior	Child Learning Methods	Parenting Roles
Ambitious/Competitive	Asking for Help/Assistance	Answering Child's Questions
Belief in God/Greater Spirit	Being Told What to Do	Asking Child to Try Something New
Confident/Self Assured	Believing in God/Greater Spirit	Doing Things in Child's Presence
Connected/Obligated to Family	By Thinking About Things	Getting Another Child to Show How
Creative/Inventive	Controlling One's Own Behavior	Getting Child to Look at Own Actions
Happy/Even Tempered	Doing Things Over and Over	Giving a Child Help/Assistance
Hard Working/Does Best	Doing What Other Children Do	Having Child Figure Things Out on Own
In Harmony with Nature	Figuring Things Out on Own	Having Child Make Choices
Helpful/Cooperative	Following Directions	Praising/Rewarding Child
Honest/Truthful	Getting Older/More Mature	Providing Opportunities to Practice
Kind/Considerate	Having Interesting Toys	Providing Child Fun Activities
Knows Right From Wrong	Having Lots of Successes	Providing a Child Interesting Toys
Loyal/Responsible to Others	Listening to Others Tell Stories	Setting Limits/Rules
Patient/Self Control	Playing	Showing Child How to Do Something
Polite/Good Manners	Watching Other People	Telling Child What to Do
Respect for Elders/Adults		Telling Stories Having a Moral or Lesson
Shares with Others		
Smart/Successful		