

## Parental style and consumer socialization among adolescents: A cross-cultural investigation

By: [Zhiyong Yang](#), Chankon Kim, Michel Laroche, and Hanjoon Lee

Yang, Zhiyong, Chankon Kim, Michel Laroche, and Hanjoon Lee (2014), "Parental style and consumer socialization among adolescents: A cross-cultural investigation," *Journal of Business Research*, 67, 228–236. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2013.05.008>



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License](#).

### Abstract:

The paper examines how parental style affects consumer socialization in a cross-national context, focusing on family communication orientation, adolescents' use of influence strategies, susceptibility to peer influence, and impulse buying tendency. Multiple-informant data from each family (i.e., father, mother, and adolescent) are used in the analysis. The findings suggest that Chinese adolescents, compared with their Canadian counterparts, use less bilateral influence strategies (reasoning, bargaining), but more unilateral influence strategies (playing on emotions, stubborn persuasion); they are also less susceptible to peer influence, and have less impulse buying tendency. Across both cultures, authoritarian parents are more socio-oriented than authoritative, permissive, and neglectful parents, whereas authoritative and permissive parents are more concept-oriented than authoritarian and neglectful parents. Furthermore, adolescents with authoritative and permissive parents more likely use bilateral influence strategies than those with authoritarian parents, while adolescents with neglectful parents use more unilateral influence strategies than those with other parental styles. These findings provide novel insights on market segmentation and international marketing practices.

**Keywords:** parental style | socialization | influence strategies | family communication orientation | susceptibility to peer influence | impulse buying tendency | cross-national

### Article:

#### 1. Introduction

Consumer socialization is the processes through which consumption-related skills, knowledge, and attitudes are transferred from one generation to another (Ward, 1974). These processes encompass socialization agent–learner relationships and modes of learning. Prior socialization studies mainly associated parental style with consumer socialization outcomes among children, including children's consumption independence, role in family decision-making, television viewing, advertisement puffery filtering, and substance use (Carlson and Grossbart, 1988, Rose, 1999, Yang and Schaninger, 2010).

There are several gaps in the literature. First, few examined the association between parental style and children's use of influence strategies. Less is known about adolescents' use of influence strategies (Palan & Wilkes, 1997). The type of influence strategy adolescents use reflects how successful they are as influence agents in family decision making (Bao, Fern, & Sheng, 2007). For John (1999), children's use of influence strategies is affected by the type and quality of parent-child interactions. However, no attempt has been made to test this proposition among children or adolescents. A better understanding of the link between parental style and adolescents' use of influence strategies helps marketers to: (1) determine whether to target parents or adolescents, and (2) segment the market according to parental style and develop effective marketing campaigns.

Second, prior socialization research primarily focused on the US marketplace. Little research on consumer socialization is conducted in other countries. Consumer socialization, as a profile of social realities, is a cultural process (Laroche, Yang, Kim, & Richard, 2007). Understanding cross-national difference in consumer socialization provides marketers with a global competitive advantage. Finally, previous studies examining parental influence on consumer socialization were disproportionately based on data from one informant per family (i.e., mothers). This practice created a gap in understanding the: (1) differences in parental styles between mothers and fathers, and (2) differences in parental styles practiced with boys versus girls.

To address these gaps, we examine parental style and adolescents' use of influence strategies cross-nationally (Canada vs. China). Canadians and Chinese are different in their core values and cultural dimensions, suggesting cultural differences in child-rearing practices and socialization processes. To get a holistic view of national differences in socialization, in addition to adolescents' use of influence strategies, other relevant variables are also examined, including susceptibility to peer influence, impulse buying tendency, and family communication orientation.

Marketing researchers find susceptibility to peer influence to affect adolescents' substance use (Yang, Schaninger, & Laroche, 2013). Developmental psychologists suggest that adolescents' susceptibility to antisocial peer pressure such as shoplifting is affected by parental styles (Fuligni & Eccles, 1993). Extending these studies, we examine the effect of parental style on susceptibility to peer influence on consumption-related issues. Impulse buying tendency is another outcome variable of interest for its potential links to parental style. It is associated with poor decision making and excessive unplanned spending (Kim, Yang, & Lee, 2009). Besides, we examine the possible links between parental style and family communication orientation, an aspect of parent-adolescent interaction which was associated with adolescents' influence in family purchases, consumption autonomy, attitudes toward advertising, and use of alternative shopping channels (Carlson, Grossbart, & Walsh, 1990).

## **2. Theoretical background**

### **2.1. Cross-national socialization differences**

Socialization is rooted in the sociocultural soil. Culture guides the direction and trend of socialization goals and parental behaviors. The goal in Western cultures is to develop an individual sense of identity and self-sufficiency away from family members (Triandis, 1995).

With this foundation, teenagers are well-prepared for adulthood and make decisions for themselves with less reference to family expectations. Even with family expectations, a sense of honor and integrity is attached to those who are able to follow their own initiatives and achieve their goals. By contrast, the socialization in Eastern cultures is to: 1) help adolescents learn to control individualistic acts and reduce unique individual characteristics; 2) develop collectivistic ideology and cooperative skills and behavior including obedience, conformity and interdependence; 3) become part of the larger group and make contributions to the achievement and welfare of the collective (Chen, 2000, Triandis, 1995).

Socialization goal differences are manifested through cultural dimensions, including collectivism–individualism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and sex-role orientation. Compared to Canada, China has more collectivism, power distance, less uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity (Hofstede, 1983). Culture significantly affects advertising and consumer goods, and exerts great impact on socialization processes and outcomes (Laroche et al., 2007). For example, collectivism drives Asians to exhibit high-context communication patterns, whereas Canadians prefer low-context styles due to their individualism. This explains why advertisements in Canada use explicit codes, whereas Chinese ads are implicit and indirect. Therefore, it is theoretically significant and managerially important to understand how socialization goal differences are transferred to consumption-related behaviors among adolescents' use of influence strategies, susceptibility to peer influence, and impulsive buying.

### *2.1.1. Adolescents' use of influence strategies*

One facet of socialization involves learning ways of becoming successful agents of influence through the use of sophisticated influence and negotiation strategies (John, 1999). Kim, Lee, and Hall (1991) identified five influence strategies adolescents use: persuasion, stop eating, act stubbornly, approach the other parent, and playing on emotions. Palan and Wilkes (1997) identified seven influence strategies: bargaining, stubborn persuasion, playing on emotions, request, expert, legitimate, and directive. The literature suggests that these strategies can be classified into two categories: unilateral and bilateral strategies (Bao et al., 2007, Offerman and Schrier, 1985). The former is one-sided; the latter is bidirectional and dynamic (Cowan & Avants, 1988). Typical unilateral strategies include direct request, stubborn persuasion, stop eating, and playing on emotions, whereas exemplar bilateral strategies are reasoning, bargaining, sweet talk, and coalition (Bao et al., 2007, Offerman and Schrier, 1985).

We expect Chinese adolescents to use less bilateral but more unilateral strategies than Canadian adolescents. Bilateral strategies are more likely used when parents and adolescents have an egalitarian relationship. In Western societies, individuals are responsible for their own progress in the social hierarchy. It is acceptable and encouraged that adolescents negotiate with their parents to get their way. However, compared to Canada, China has greater power distance and a hierarchical relationship between parents and children (Hofstede, 1983). It is uncommon for parents to share power with children in making decisions; rather, obedience and conformity are the most important virtues in Chinese culture (Yang & Laroche, 2011). Therefore, after parents say “no”, the negotiating door is often closed, leaving little room for the adolescents to use bilateral strategies.

**H1a.** Adolescents' use of bilateral influence strategies is lower in Chinese than in Canadian families.

**H1b.** Adolescents' use of unilateral influence strategies is higher in Chinese than in Canadian families.

### *2.1.2. Adolescents' susceptibility to peer influence*

It is defined as individuals' tendency to look for standards from peers in developing their own motivations, attitudes, and behavior (Bearden, Netemeyer, & Teel, 1989). Peer influence is especially important during adolescence, a time when individuals are susceptible to ideas and trends popular among their peers (Yang & Laroche, 2011). Since Canadian adolescents are socialized to be independent and self-reliant, while Chinese adolescents are socialized to be interdependent and value harmonious relationships with others, Canadian adolescents should have a less degree of susceptibility to peer influence than their Chinese counterparts.

**H2.** Susceptibility to peer influence is lower for Canadian than for Chinese adolescents.

However, some literature suggests the opposite, i.e., Canadian adolescents may be more susceptible to peer influence than Chinese adolescents. Canadian adolescents are expected to decide for themselves on a variety of issues, such as choice of a boyfriend/girlfriend, marriage, and career. They are responsible for any adverse consequence arising from these decisions. So, they are “freely” influenced by their peers. Yet, Chinese adolescents are not encouraged to make decisions on these life events. According to Confucius, it is immoral for Chinese adolescents to choose a mate or decide on a career path without parental consent (Yang & Laroche, 2011). Parents protect, govern, teach and discipline their children and have the last say in their life decisions. Thus, when adolescents fail in their life or careers, they are not blamed; rather, their parents must take responsibility for their failures (Chen, 2000). Consequently, Chinese parents expect their children to have earlier independence in task-oriented caretaking activities and academic work, but later in social and self-initiated tasks (Rose, 1999). Forced compliance is accepted and self-sacrifice is expected from a filial person. In such environments, although Chinese adolescents are willing to sacrifice their personal goals for good relationships with others, they less likely follow their peers in doing things that their parents may disapprove. Peers are at the same level of the social ladder, whereas parents are in a higher position than children. Society grants parents the power to provide guidance to their offsprings and punish them for any inappropriate conduct.

**H2alt.** Susceptibility to peer influence is higher for Canadian than for Chinese adolescents.

### *2.1.3. Impulse buying tendency*

It is consumers' likelihood to make unplanned, immediate, and unreflecting purchases (Rook & Fisher, 1995). We expect Canadian adolescents to have higher impulse buying tendencies than their Chinese counterparts. Early on, Canadians are socialized toward consumerism—the tendency to identify with products and brands. Adolescents are at a stage of establishing self-

identity. Canadian adolescents may view impulse buying as means of self-expression, because indulgence is valued, not blamed in Western cultures. But this is not so for the Chinese, as impulsivity is a hedonic desire and adolescents are encouraged to suppress it (Kim et al., 2009). Further, Chinese parents exhibit greater control over their children than Canadians (Chen, 2000). Children are urged to “do things right”, such as making purchases based on deliberate information search and evaluation and buying items parents are happy with (Kim et al., 2009).

**H3.** Impulse buying tendencies are higher for Canadian than for Chinese adolescents.

## 2.2. Parental style

It is “a constellation of attitudes toward the child that are communicated to the child and that ... create an emotional climate in which parent's behaviors are expressed” (Darling & Steinberg, 1993, p. 488). Research identified two parental style dimensions: *demandingness*, the extent of parents showing maturity demands, supervision, disciplinary efforts and willingness to confront the child who disobeys; *responsiveness*, the extent of parents showing affective warmth, acceptance, and involvement (Baumrind, 1991). The combined dimensions yield a four-fold classification of parental styles.

*Authoritative* parents (demanding, responsive) are warm and supportive, but exert firm control. They value children's autonomy but expect disciplined conformity. *Authoritarian* parents (demanding, not responsive) maintain high levels of control over their children and limit children's autonomy. They judge and evaluate children's conduct by standards endorsed by higher authorities. They enforce rules, favor children's obedience, and punish willful behavior (Baumrind, 1991, Carlson and Grossbart, 1988). *Permissive* parents (responsive, not demanding) view children as having adult rights but few responsibilities (Baumrind, 1991). They show emotional warmth and support and avoid confrontations, allowing their children to do what they want. *Neglectful* parents (neither demanding nor responsive) provide no structure and little or no monitoring of children's behavior. They see children as having few rights or responsibilities that require parenting attention (Carlson & Grossbart, 1988), and do not encourage their children's self-regulation or impose control on children's behavior (Baumrind, 1991).

This typology is used extensively to examine the role of parental style in adolescent development. Many found authoritative parenting to be the most effective style for socialization outcomes, such as pro-social behaviors, psychological competence, school achievement and self-esteem; in contrast, authoritarian parenting is associated with more negative outcomes, such as internalized distress, problem behavior, and drug use (Lamborn, Mounts, Steinberg, & Dornbusch, 1991). Researchers (Carlson and Grossbart, 1988, Rose, 1999) also associated parental styles with consumption-related behaviors. They found that authoritative and permissive parents grant more consumption independence to children and engage in more intergenerational communication about consumption than authoritarian parents. A majority of studies involving diverse Western and non-Western cultures have shown support for the universal application of these parental styles (see Chen, 2000 for a review). Although countries may differ in the prevalence of a particular parental style, the effect of that parental style on adolescents' socialization outcomes should be similar. Thus, we do not expect culture to interact with parental style.

## 2.3. Parental style and consumer socialization

### 2.3.1. Parental style and family communication orientation

For McLeod and Chaffee (1972), family communication patterns are the frequency, types, and quality of communication among family members. Two dimensions characterize family communication. *Socio-orientation* produces social deference to parents and fosters harmonious relationships at home. *Concept-orientation* encourages children to develop their own consumer skills and competencies.

We expect authoritarian parents to be socio-oriented, and authoritative and permissive parents to be concept-oriented. Authoritarian parenting engenders cooperation, proper conduct, impulse control, and acceptance of social obligations, whereas authoritative parenting promotes independent reasoning and skills, self-reliance, and assertiveness in children by using reasoned control and encouraging them to be self-expressive (Rose, 1999). Permissive parents grant autonomy to their children early on, but provide little guidance (Baumrind, 1991). Therefore, authoritative and permissive parents should be less socio-oriented but more concept-oriented than authoritarian parents. We further expect neglectful parents to be lower in both socio- and concept-orientation than other parents. Compared with others, neglectful parents show little monitoring of their children's behavior as well as low interaction with them (Carlson & Grossbart, 1988).

**H4a.** Authoritarian parents are more socio-oriented than authoritative, permissive, and neglectful parents.

**H4b.** Authoritative and permissive parents are more concept-oriented than authoritarian and neglectful parents.

### 2.3.2. Parental style and adolescents' use of influence strategies

We expect children of authoritative and permissive parents to use more bilateral influence strategies than those of authoritarian parents. A common attribute underlying authoritative and permissive parenting is high parental responsiveness, which provides a fertile soil to nourish adolescents' autonomy-seeking, including freedom of self-expression and personal dignity (Yang & Schaninger, 2010). When parents and children disagree, adolescents are encouraged by responsive parents to dialogue and defend their own viewpoints. However, authoritarians don't think adolescents are mature enough to make right decisions. For them, training centers on dependency, conformity, modesty, self-suppression, self-contentment, and parent-centeredness. When parents and children disagree, authoritarian parents expect adolescents to unquestionably follow their decisions (Paulson, 1994). This involves one-way conversations more often than open dialogues or two-way conversations.

**H5a.** Adolescents with authoritative and permissive parents more likely use bilateral influence strategies than authoritarian parents.

However, adolescents from neglectful families may use more unilateral strategies than those from other families. Neglectful parents are unresponsive and not providing structure or monitoring their children's behavior. In many cases they neglect parenting responsibilities altogether (Bednar & Fisher, 2003). Parent–child communications in these families are infrequent and negative. Children's misbehavior is more often ignored than addressed; in situations when misbehavior is addressed, yelling is used and neglectful parents do not care about outcomes (Lamborn et al., 1991). Adolescents in these families have lower emotional understanding, less effective coping strategies, and fewer skills in emotion regulation compared with others (Shipman et al., 2005). They are less socially competent and have more psychological and behavioral problems (Lamborn et al., 1991).

**H5b.** Adolescents with neglectful parents more likely use unilateral influence strategies than those with other parental styles.

### *2.3.3. Parental style and susceptibility to peer influence*

We anticipate adolescents with permissive and authoritative parenting to be more susceptible to peer influence than those of authoritarian parents. Authoritarian parenting is associated with high conformity and obedience. Strict parental control and parental monitoring make it hard for adolescents to follow peers' opinions in making purchase decisions. However, permissive parenting and authoritative parenting promote adolescents to develop their own skills and views, which allows them to be “free” to be influenced by their peers (Yang & Laroche, 2011).

**H6.** Adolescents with permissive and authoritative parents have higher susceptibility to peer influence than those with authoritarian parents.

However, children of authoritarian parents may shift allegiance from parents to peers (i.e., rebelling against parents' straightjacket style). Adolescents who perceive their parents as psychologically controlling more likely resist parental influence, and are more oriented toward their peers' opinions than their parents' (Fuligni & Eccles, 1993). In homes that rely on punitive behaviors, adolescents fail to develop a healthy autonomy–connectedness balance with parents and frequently manifest defiance behaviors (Yang & Schaninger, 2010). If this is the case, we expect no difference across parental styles in susceptibility to peer influence:

**H6alt.** There is no difference in susceptibility to peer influence across parental styles.

### *2.3.4. Parental style and adolescents' impulse buying tendency*

We expect adolescents of permissive and neglectful parenting to have higher impulse buying tendencies than those of other parental styles. Impulsivity is caused by lack of self-control or self-regulation. Parenting plays an essential role in teaching children self-control and self-regulation skills. Copeland (1985) found that impulsive adolescents received fewer parental suggestions, indicating a possible relationship between impulsivity and lack of parental guidance. Teenagers of permissive parents are immature, have poor impulse control, and are disobedient when faced with an undesirable request (Lamborn et al., 1991). These problems are also shown among adolescents from neglectful environments. Neglectful parents may not

proactively or prosocially regulate their children's negative behaviors; as a result, they fail to learn basic rules of reciprocal social interactions and show problems of self-control (Bednar & Fisher, 2003).

**H7.** Adolescents with permissive and neglectful parents have higher impulse buying tendencies than those with other parental styles.

#### 2.4. Control variables

Household income, adolescent age, number of siblings, birth order, monthly allowance, and part-time jobs are treated as covariates, as they might affect our focal variables. Household income may affect parents' use of parental styles. Low-income families may more frequently use harsh parenting than high-income families (Yang & Schaninger, 2010). Age and wealth have negative relationships with impulse buying tendencies (d'Astous, 1990). Thus, monthly allowance and part-time jobs may affect adolescents' socialization. Since power distance is an important cultural dimension, we expect that in places where individuals rely more on ingroups (China), adolescents rely more on power figures (i.e., parents, older siblings). Consequently, birth order and number of siblings may affect our focal variables.

### 3. Method

#### 3.1. Sample and procedure

The sampling frame is families (i.e., father, mother, and adolescent child) in Canada and China. With approval from school boards, high school teachers handed out survey packages to students in Grades 8–12. Each package contained three questionnaires, one filled out by students in class (all responses were collected by the end of the class) and two taken home for the parents to complete. As incentives, Canadian schools were given \$15/\$10, and Chinese schools ¥30/¥20 for each completed set of family triadic/dyadic data.

The Chinese version was translated from the English version. Back translation was used to ensure idiomatic equivalence of the two versions. Two judges unaware of the research purpose compared the original and back-translated English versions. Based on their suggestions, we made minor modifications to the Chinese version. We pre-tested the self-administered questionnaires with nine Canadian and eight Chinese families that met the sample selection criteria to ensure clarity, comprehension and ease of completion.

500 and 820 sets were distributed in Shijiazhuang (China) and Toronto (Canada). Shijiazhuang is the capital of Hebei province. Toronto and Shijiazhuang are similar in weather, size, and industrialization. In China, 305 sets were returned, and 5 were excluded because of missing data, yielding a 60.0% response. All families are *Han* ethnic Chinese. In Canada, 285 sets were returned. To control for possible ethnicity confound, only families with European or North American descent (i.e., both parents were born in Europe, or North America) were kept. Thus, 21 families in the Canadian sample were excluded, for a 32.2% response.

The age profile of Chinese adolescents ( $M_{\text{age}} = 15.5$  years, 14 to 18 years) was similar to that of Canadian adolescents ( $M_{\text{age}} = 15.8$  years, 14 to 18 years). Single-parent households made up 15.5% of the Chinese and 20.1% of the Canadian sample. 58.6% of Chinese and 10.7% of Canadian families had only one child.

### 3.2. Measures

Fathers and mothers self-reported their own parental styles, family communication orientation, and adolescents' use of influence strategies toward them. Adolescents self-reported their levels of susceptibility to peer influence and impulse buying tendencies.

#### 3.2.1. Parental style

Paternal and maternal demandingness and responsiveness were measured by Paulson's (1994) Demandingness Scale (e.g., "I would describe me as a strict mother/father") and Responsiveness Scale (e.g., "I expect my child to tell me when he/she thinks a rule is unfair"), using a five-point scale (1 = "strongly disagree" to 5 = "strongly agree"). These measures are reliable ( $\alpha = .84/.85/.80$  for fathers' responsiveness in the total/Chinese/Canadian samples;  $\alpha = .71/.70/.78$  for fathers' demandingness;  $\alpha = .84/.85/.81$  for mothers' responsiveness;  $\alpha = .72/.75/.71$  for mothers' demandingness).

#### 3.2.2. Family communication orientation

Fathers and mothers self-reported their degree of concept-orientation (e.g., "I ask my child for advice about buying things") and socio-orientation (e.g., "I tell my child what things he/she should or shouldn't buy") both with 6-item measures, using a five-point scale (1 = "never" to 5 = "very often"). These measures or modified versions were used in consumer socialization research (Carlson et al., 1990) and are reliable in our total/Chinese/Canadian samples ( $\alpha = .87/.79/.88$  for fathers' socio-orientation,  $\alpha = .82/.72/.83$  for fathers' concept-orientation,  $\alpha = .80/.73/.81$  for mothers' socio-orientation,  $\alpha = .78/.70/.74$  for mothers' concept-orientation).

#### 3.2.3. Adolescents' use of influence strategies

Influence strategies were measured by a 19-item instrument adopted from prior research (Cowan and Avants, 1988, Kim et al., 1991, Palan and Wilkes, 1997). This measure, anchored at 1 = "never" and 5 = "very often," contained 5 items for adolescents' use of bargaining strategy ( $\alpha = .78/.71/.79$ ; e.g., "My child says that he/she will pay for all or part of it") and 4 items to capture their use of reasoning strategy ( $\alpha = .75/.70/.76$ ; e.g., "My child reasons with me by explaining why he/she should have the product"), which are of the bilateral type. Of the remaining 10 items, 5 items measured adolescents' use of the stubborn persuasion strategy ( $\alpha = .86/.78/.88$ ; e.g., "My child begs me again and again until I agree to it") and 5 items measured the playing on emotions strategy ( $\alpha = .88/.81/.88$ ; e.g., "My child stops talking to me for a while in protest"), which are of the unilateral type. We calculated adolescents' use of the unilateral (bilateral) type by averaging the use of stubborn persuasion and playing on emotion (bargaining and reasoning) strategies (Bao et al., 2007, Offerman and Schrier, 1985).

### 3.2.4. Adolescents' susceptibility to peer influence

We used Yang and Laroche's (2011) measure, which is an adapted version of Bearden et al. (1989) normative component of the Consumer Susceptibility to Interpersonal Influence Scale (e.g., "It is important that my friends like the products and brands I buy"), using a five-point scale (1 = "strongly disagree" to 5 = "strongly agree";  $\alpha = .77/.88/.72$ ).

### 3.2.5. Adolescents' impulse buying tendency

We used Rook and Fisher's (1995) 9-item scale (e.g., "I often buy things spontaneously"; 1 = "strongly disagree" to 5 = "strongly agree";  $\alpha = .88/.75/.88$ ).

## 4. Analysis and results

### 4.1. Measurement purification and invariance tests

Despite procedures to ensure sample equivalence, the two samples may differ in aspects other than the selected dimensions. To minimize this influence, we followed Kim and Lee's (1997) procedure for item purification and obtained a similar factor pattern across the two samples. Subsequent analyses on Chinese and Canadian samples confirmed the factor structure and the measure reliabilities (all Cronbach's alphas above 0.70).

We used four methods to assess construct convergent and discriminant validities in each sample. First, the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) of all constructs was larger than all other cross-correlations. Second, all AVEs were above 0.50. Third, the correlations among all constructs were below .90, i.e. all constructs were distinct from each other. Fourth, all items loaded highest on their intended constructs with all factor loadings greater than 0.70 (all  $t$ -values were significant). These suggested adequate convergent and discriminate validities.

Following Byrne (1994), we introduced measurement-level constraints (i.e., configural, metric, factor covariance, and error variance invariances) to test the equality of the measurement models across both samples. The results indicated that the measurement model has at least the same factor patterns, factor structure, and factor covariances across both samples.

### 4.2. Identification of parental styles

Following Carlson and Grossbart (1988), and Rose (1999), parental style was determined through a cluster analysis, using the full sample from both countries. The family is the unit-of-analysis and four measures of parenting – fathers' self-reported paternal responsiveness and demandingness, mothers' self-reported maternal responsiveness and demandingness – were used as indicators. A latent class (LC) cluster analysis was conducted using MPlus. The results indicated that a four-cluster solution minimizes the Bayesian Information Criterion and therefore best fits the data. The group means on the four clustering variables (demandingness and responsiveness for each parent) supported the four a priori parental styles (Table 1). The authoritative parental style (high responsiveness and demandingness) occurred for most families ( $n = 185, 32.7\%$ ), followed by the authoritarian style (high demandingness, low responsiveness;

n = 177, 31.4%). The third group (n = 122, 21.7%) showed features of permissive parents (low demandingness, high responsiveness). The smallest group (n = 80, 14.2%) represented the neglectful parental style (low on demandingness and responsiveness).

**Table 1.** Parental styles and socialization processes—combined sample.

	Neglectful (n = 80)	Authoritarian (n = 177)	Permissive (n = 122)	Authoritative (n = 185)
Parental style				
Responsiveness (father)	3.33 (.62) <sub>bcd</sub>	3.89 (.55) <sub>acd</sub>	4.37 (.45) <sub>ab</sub>	4.40 (.52) <sub>ab</sub>
Responsiveness (mother)	3.02 (.32) <sub>bcd</sub>	3.93 (.27) <sub>acd</sub>	4.67 (.28) <sub>ab</sub>	4.69 (.28) <sub>ab</sub>
Demandingness (father)	2.84 (.61) <sub>bcd</sub>	3.44 (.57) <sub>abc</sub>	2.42 (.46) <sub>abd</sub>	3.16 (.56) <sub>acd</sub>
Demandingness (mother)	2.94 (.60) <sub>bcd</sub>	3.75 (.54) <sub>abc</sub>	2.67 (.52) <sub>abd</sub>	3.16 (.53) <sub>acd</sub>
Cluster profile				
Chinese (n)	61	114	46	79
(%)	20.3	38.0	15.4	26.3
Canadian (n)	19	63	76	105
(%)	7.2	24.0	28.9	39.9
Influence strategies toward fathers				
Bilateral (father)	2.78 (.59) <sub>cd</sub>	2.71 (.65) <sub>c</sub>	2.33 (.76) <sub>ab</sub>	2.56 (.68) <sub>a</sub>
Bargaining	2.89 (.68) <sub>cd</sub>	2.74 (.76) <sub>c</sub>	2.52 (.68) <sub>ab</sub>	2.65 (.74) <sub>a</sub>
Reasoning	2.66 (.70) <sub>d</sub>	2.60 (.82) <sub>c</sub>	2.30 (.69) <sub>ab</sub>	2.46 (.76)
Unilateral (father)	2.67 (.72) <sub>bcd</sub>	2.43 (.81) <sub>ac</sub>	1.94 (.65) <sub>abd</sub>	2.25 (.72) <sub>ac</sub>
Stubborn persuasion	2.77 (.76) <sub>cd</sub>	2.65 (.87) <sub>c</sub>	2.26 (.81) <sub>ab</sub>	2.48 (.84) <sub>a</sub>
Playing on emotions	2.57 (.86) <sub>bcd</sub>	2.21 (.99) <sub>ac</sub>	1.63 (.61) <sub>abd</sub>	2.01 (.79) <sub>ac</sub>
Bilateral–unilateral (father)	.10 (.56) <sub>cd</sub>	.24 (.76) <sub>c</sub>	.46 (.61) <sub>ab</sub>	.31 (.59) <sub>a</sub>
Influence strategies toward mothers				
Bilateral (mother)	2.71 (.63)	2.76 (.71)	2.51 (.65) <sub>b</sub>	2.64 (.66)
Bargaining	2.79 (.72)	2.85 (.77) <sub>c</sub>	2.61 (.75) <sub>b</sub>	2.72 (.78)
Reasoning	2.63 (.70)	2.67 (.80) <sub>c</sub>	2.41 (.74) <sub>b</sub>	2.56 (.71)
Unilateral (mother)	2.64 (.69) <sub>acd</sub>	2.39 (.77) <sub>acd</sub>	1.85 (.60) <sub>abd</sub>	2.18 (.76) <sub>abc</sub>
Stubborn persuasion	2.80 (.74) <sub>cd</sub>	2.67 (.80) <sub>c</sub>	2.41 (.74) <sub>abd</sub>	2.46 (.89) <sub>ac</sub>
Playing on emotions	2.49 (.79) <sub>bcd</sub>	2.12 (.86) <sub>acd</sub>	1.56 (.54) <sub>abd</sub>	1.91 (.84) <sub>abc</sub>
Bilateral–unilateral (mother)	.07 (.62) <sub>bcd</sub>	.37 (.64) <sub>ac</sub>	.66 (.65) <sub>abd</sub>	.45 (.71) <sub>ac</sub>
Susceptibility to peer influence	2.55 (.75)	2.53 (.74)	2.42 (.76)	2.44 (.73)
Impulse buying tendency	2.87 (1.05)	2.66 (1.02)	2.75 (1.08)	2.69 (1.06)
Communication orientation				
Socio-oriented (father)	2.49 (.63) <sub>bcd</sub>	3.13 (.71) <sub>a</sub>	2.92 (.67) <sub>a</sub>	2.96 (.74) <sub>a</sub>
Socio-oriented (mother)	2.79 (.65) <sub>bcd</sub>	3.42 (.67) <sub>acd</sub>	3.05 (.66) <sub>ab</sub>	3.06 (.61) <sub>ab</sub>
Concept-oriented (father)	2.86 (.64)	2.79 (.65) <sub>c</sub>	2.99 (.53) <sub>b</sub>	2.90 (.65)
Concept-oriented (mother)	2.96 (.57) <sub>cd</sub>	3.15 (.55)	3.28 (.62) <sub>a</sub>	3.27 (.62) <sub>a</sub>

Note: Subscripts for parental styles indicate significant differences between groups at the .05 level, a = neglectful, b = authoritarian, c = permissive, d = authoritative.

Cross-national comparisons indicated that the most prominent parental styles in Canada were authoritative (39.9%), and permissive parenting (28.9%). By contrast, the most prevalent ones in China were authoritarian (38.0%), and authoritative (26.3%). These results are consistent with the socialization goals of each society. Also, consistent with expected parental style differences, the permissive families occurred more often in Canada (28.9%) than in China (15.4%), whereas the Chinese sample had a significantly larger proportion of authoritarian families (38.0%) than

the Canadian sample (24.0%). The result that 20.3% of the Chinese sample (compared to 7.2% of the Canadian sample) are neglectful parents is not surprising considering both fathers and mothers in most Chinese families have to be breadwinners. In many families, the childcare responsibility is left to grandparents.

### 4.3. Testing hypotheses

ANCOVA analyses and follow-up contrasts were conducted to test H1a–H7, using six covariates: household income, adolescent age, number of siblings, birth order, monthly allowance, and part-time job status.

#### 4.3.1. Testing hypotheses H1a–H3

H1a posited adolescents' use of bilateral influence strategies to be lower in Chinese than in Canadian families. In Table 2, there are significant differences in adolescents' use of bilateral influence strategies toward both fathers ( $M_{\text{Chinese}} = 2.52$  vs.  $M_{\text{Canadian}} = 2.70$ ,  $F_{1,562} = 10.3$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and mothers ( $M_{\text{Chinese}} = 2.56$  vs.  $M_{\text{Canadian}} = 2.78$ ,  $F_{1,562} = 14.7$ ,  $p < .001$ ) in favor of Canadian adolescents. These differences were determined by the Canadian adolescents' heavier use of the bargaining strategy toward their fathers ( $M_{\text{Chinese}} = 2.56$  vs.  $M_{\text{Canadian}} = 2.86$ ,  $F_{1,562} = 22.5$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and their mothers ( $M_{\text{Chinese}} = 2.61$  vs.  $M_{\text{Canadian}} = 2.90$ ,  $F_{1,562} = 20.7$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and the reasoning strategy toward their mothers ( $M_{\text{Chinese}} = 2.51$  vs.  $M_{\text{Canadian}} = 2.66$ ,  $F_{1,562} = 5.1$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Also, both boys and girls exhibited a similar pattern. H1a was supported.

H1b predicted a higher use of unilateral influence strategies in Chinese than in Canadian families. Consistent with H1b, Chinese adolescents used more unilateral strategies to their mothers than their Canadian counterparts ( $M_{\text{Chinese}} = 2.33$  vs.  $M_{\text{Canadian}} = 2.16$ ,  $F_{1,562} = 7.3$ ,  $p < .01$ ), including the use of stubborn persuasion ( $M_{\text{Chinese}} = 2.60$  vs.  $M_{\text{Canadian}} = 2.42$ ,  $F_{1,562} = 5.9$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and playing on emotions ( $M_{\text{Chinese}} = 2.07$  vs.  $M_{\text{Canadian}} = 1.90$ ,  $F_{1,562} = 5.7$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The difference in adolescents' use of unilateral influence strategies toward fathers was as hypothesized, but was not statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ). These results were replicated with boys and girls separately. H1b was partially supported.

H2/H2<sub>alt</sub> proposed that adolescents' susceptibility to peer influence would be lower/higher in Canadian than in Chinese families. Supporting H2<sub>alt</sub> but rejecting H2, a significant difference between Chinese and Canadian adolescents was found in their susceptibility levels ( $M_{\text{Chinese}} = 2.34$  vs.  $M_{\text{Canadian}} = 2.64$ ,  $F_{1,562} = 23.9$ ,  $p < .001$ ). This cross-national difference in susceptibility levels emerged for both girls and boys.

H3 specified adolescents' impulse buying tendencies to be higher in Canadian than in Chinese families. Consistent with H3, Chinese adolescents had significantly lower impulse buying tendencies than for Canadian ones ( $M_{\text{Chinese}} = 2.50$  vs.  $M_{\text{Canadian}} = 3.04$ ,  $F_{1,562} = 39.4$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Separate analyses in the two samples found the same patterns for boys ( $M_{\text{Chinese}} = 2.32$  vs.  $M_{\text{Canadian}} = 2.79$ ,  $F_{1,266} = 15.0$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and girls ( $M_{\text{Chinese}} = 2.66$  vs.  $M_{\text{Canadian}} = 3.30$ ,  $F_{1,295} = 29.4$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

**Table 2.** Cultural and gender differences in consumer socialization.

	Chinese (n=300)	Canadian (n=263)	Male		Female	
			Chinese (n=136)	Canadian (n=131)	Chinese (n=164)	Canadian (n=132)
<b>Parental styles</b>						
Responsiveness (father)	4.06 (.72)	4.09 (.55)	4.04 (.73)	4.04 (.59)	4.08 (.72)	4.13 (.52)
Responsiveness (mother)	4.13 (.75)*	4.27 (.50)	4.10 (.78)	4.20 (.55)	4.16 (.72)*	4.33 (.44)
Demandingness (father)	3.11 (.74)*	2.99 (.55)	3.13 (.67)	3.06 (.53)	3.09 (.78)*	2.93 (.56)
Demandingness (mother)	3.25 (.75)	3.19 (.58)	3.32 (.73)	3.20 (.61)	3.20 (.76)	3.18 (.55)
<b>Influence strategies toward fathers</b>						
Bilateral (father)	2.52 (.64)**	2.70 (.69)	2.60 (.66)*	2.78 (.64)	2.44 (.62)*	2.63 (.74)
- Bargaining	2.56 (.71)***	2.86 (.73)	2.66 (.72)**	2.95 (.67)	2.48 (.69)**	2.78 (.79)
- Reasoning	2.47 (.74)	2.54 (.80)	2.55 (.78)	2.61 (.77)	2.40 (.70)	2.48 (.82)
Unilateral (father)	2.33 (.71)	2.28 (.85)	2.43 (.71)	2.35 (.86)	2.25 (.70)	2.21 (.83)
- Stubborn persuasion	2.53 (.79)	2.54 (.92)	2.62 (.80)	2.59 (.87)	2.45 (.78)	2.49 (.96)
- Playing on emotions	2.14 (.81)	2.02 (.98)	2.25 (.83)	2.11 (1.06)	2.04 (.78)	1.93 (.90)
Bilateral-unilateral (father)	.18 (.59)***	.42 (.71)	.17 (.63)**	.43 (.78)	.19 (.55)**	.42 (.64)
<b>Influence strategies toward mothers</b>						
Bilateral (mother)	2.56 (.61)***	2.78 (.73)	2.63 (.65)*	2.82 (.74)	2.51 (.58)**	2.74 (.71)
- Bargaining	2.61 (.71)***	2.90 (.80)	2.70 (.75)*	2.91 (.84)	2.54 (.67)***	2.90 (.76)
- Reasoning	2.51 (.68)*	2.66 (.82)	2.56 (.71)*	2.72 (.94)	2.47 (.65)	2.59 (.80)
Unilateral (mother)	2.33 (.72)**	2.16 (.81)	2.40 (.74)*	2.20 (.87)	2.28 (.70)	2.12 (.74)
- Stubborn persuasion	2.60 (.84)*	2.42 (.90)	2.66 (.91)	2.43 (.94)	2.54 (.78)	2.40 (.86)
- Playing on emotions	2.07 (.78)*	1.90 (.89)	2.14 (.75)	1.97 (.99)	2.01 (.80)	1.84 (.79)
Bilateral-unilateral (mother)	.23 (.63)***	.62 (.69)	.23 (.67)***	.62 (.73)	.23 (.59)***	.62 (.65)
<b>Susceptibility to peer influence</b>						
	2.34 (.70)***	2.64 (.75)	2.48 (.74)**	2.75 (.78)	2.23 (.65)***	2.53 (.72)
<b>Impulse buying tendency</b>						
	2.50 (1.07)***	3.04 (.96)	2.32 (1.03)***	2.79 (.94)	2.66 (1.08)***	3.30 (.91)
<b>Communication orientation</b>						
Socio-oriented (father)	2.98 (.73)*	2.84 (.73)	3.09 (.69)	3.02 (.69)	2.88 (.75)*	2.66 (.72)
Socio-oriented (mother)	3.25 (.69)***	2.96 (.65)	3.27 (.73)*	3.04 (.69)	3.24 (.65)***	2.88 (.60)
Concept-oriented (father)	2.85 (.64)	2.93 (.61)	2.93 (.62)	3.03 (.63)	2.78 (.66)	2.83 (.57)
Concept-oriented (mother)	3.08 (.59)***	3.30 (.60)	3.03 (.60)**	3.22 (.60)	3.13 (.58)**	3.37 (.59)

\*\*\* p < .001.

\*\* p < .01.

\* p < .05.

**Table 3.** Parental styles and socialization processes—Chinese and Canadians.

	Chinese				Canadians			
	Neglectful (n = 61)	Authoritarian (n = 114)	Permissive (n = 46)	Authoritative (n = 79)	Neglectful (n = 19)	Authoritarian (n = 63)	Permissive (n = 76)	Authoritative (n = 105)
Parental style								
Responsiveness (fathers)	3.35 (.60)	3.80 (.58)	4.42 (.53)	4.48 (.54)	3.26 (.70)	3.97 (.50)	4.34 (.37)	4.27 (.43)
Responsiveness (mothers)	2.97 (.33)	3.87 (.30)	4.69 (.29)	4.71 (.30)	3.15 (.26)	3.99 (.22)	4.65 (.27)	4.64 (.25)
Demandingness (fathers)	2.78 (.64)	3.19 (.58)	2.37 (.57)	3.54 (.62)	3.03 (.49)	3.13 (.54)	2.46 (.35)	3.26 (.43)
Demandingness (mothers)	2.92 (.62)	3.15 (.56)	2.52 (.59)	3.81 (.57)	3.01 (.55)	3.17 (.50)	2.78 (.43)	3.64 (.47)
Influence strategies toward fathers								
Bilateral (father)	2.72 <sub>cd</sub>	2.56	2.33 <sub>a</sub>	2.45 <sub>a</sub>	2.96 <sub>c</sub>	2.77 <sub>c</sub>	2.47 <sub>ab</sub>	2.74
Unilateral (father)	2.66 <sub>cd</sub>	2.37	2.07 <sub>a</sub>	2.24 <sub>a</sub>	2.71 <sub>c</sub>	2.48 <sub>c</sub>	1.84 <sub>abd</sub>	2.26 <sub>c</sub>
Bilateral–unilateral (father)	.06	.19	.26	.22	.24	.29 <sub>c</sub>	.63	.48 <sub>b</sub>
Influence strategies toward mothers								
Bilateral (mother)	2.62	2.65	2.43	2.52	3.01	2.84	2.56	2.81
Unilateral (mother)	2.66 <sub>cd</sub>	2.40 <sub>c</sub>	2.07 <sub>ab</sub>	2.22 <sub>a</sub>	2.60 <sub>c</sub>	2.38 <sub>c</sub>	1.68 <sub>abd</sub>	2.13 <sub>c</sub>
Bilateral–unilateral (mother)	.03 <sub>bcd</sub>	.25 <sub>a</sub>	.36 <sub>ab</sub>	.31 <sub>a</sub>	.41 <sub>c</sub>	.46 <sub>c</sub>	.89 <sub>ab</sub>	.68
Susceptibility to peer influence	2.45	2.37	2.18	2.33	2.85	2.65	2.59	2.62
Impulse buying tendency	2.60	2.55	2.30	2.50	3.08	3.00	3.08	2.98
Communication orientation								
Socio-oriented (father)	2.45 <sub>bcd</sub>	3.18 <sub>a</sub>	2.92 <sub>a</sub>	3.04 <sub>a</sub>	2.52 <sub>bd</sub>	3.03 <sub>a</sub>	2.92	2.90 <sub>a</sub>
Socio-oriented (mother)	2.93 <sub>b</sub>	3.56 <sub>acd</sub>	2.99 <sub>b</sub>	3.19 <sub>b</sub>	2.67 <sub>bc</sub>	3.17 <sub>a</sub>	3.32 <sub>a</sub>	2.94
Concept-oriented (father)	2.92	2.82	2.86	2.82	2.67 <sub>c</sub>	2.76 <sub>cd</sub>	3.10 <sub>ab</sub>	3.05 <sub>b</sub>
Concept-oriented (mother)	2.85 <sub>d</sub>	3.09	3.11	3.20 <sub>a</sub>	3.32	3.19	3.43	3.41

Note: Subscripts for parental styles indicate significant differences between groups at the .05 level; a = neglectful, b = authoritarian, c = permissive, d = authoritative.

#### 4.3.2. Testing hypotheses H4a–H7

H4a predicted authoritarian parents to be more socio-oriented than other parents. ANCOVA showed that families with different parental styles differed in socio-oriented communication for both fathers ( $F_{3,559} = 18.0, p < .001$ ) and mothers ( $F_{4,559} = 21.9, p < .001$ ). Planned contrasts indicated that authoritarian fathers ( $M = 3.13$ ) were more socio-oriented than authoritative ( $M = 2.96$ ), permissive ( $M = 2.92$ ), and neglectful ( $M = 2.49$ ) fathers (Table 1). Similarly, authoritarian mothers ( $M = 3.42$ ) were more socio-oriented than authoritative ( $M = 3.06$ ), permissive ( $M = 3.05$ ), and neglectful ( $M = 2.79$ ) mothers. Consistent patterns emerged in both cultures. H4a was supported.

H4b posited authoritative and permissive parents to be more concept-oriented than authoritarian and neglectful parents. We found a marginally significant difference in fathers' concept-orientation ( $F_{3,559} = 2.3, p < .10$ ) and a significant difference in mothers' concept-orientation ( $F_{3,559} = 5.9, p < .01$ ) across parental styles. Permissive ( $M = 2.99$ ) and authoritative fathers ( $M = 2.90$ ) were more concept-oriented than authoritarian ( $M = 2.79$ ) and neglectful ( $M = 2.86$ ) fathers (Table 1). Similarly, permissive ( $M = 3.28$ ) and authoritative ( $M = 3.27$ ) mothers were more concept-oriented than authoritarian ( $M = 3.15$ ) and neglectful ( $M = 2.96$ ) mothers. The same patterns emerged in the Canadian sample and the Chinese mother data. However, the Chinese father data showed no significant difference in concept-oriented communication across parental styles. H4b was partially supported.

H5a specified adolescents with authoritative and permissive parents more likely use bilateral influence strategies than those with authoritarian parents. Results showed that while significant differences in the use of bilateral strategies (bargaining and reasoning separately, and the average of the two) existed among adolescents of different parental styles ( $p < .001$ ), the observed pattern of differences was in the opposite direction. As in Table 2, adolescents with authoritarian parents used bilateral strategies toward both their mothers ( $M_{\text{mother}} = 2.76$ ) and fathers ( $M_{\text{father}} = 2.71$ ) significantly more often ( $p < .01$  for mothers and  $p < .05$  for fathers) than adolescents with permissive and authoritative parents ( $M_{\text{mother}} = 2.51$  and  $M_{\text{mother}} = 2.64$ , for bilateral strategy use toward mothers and  $M_{\text{father}} = 2.33$  and  $M_{\text{father}} = 2.56$  for bilateral strategy use toward fathers). This unexpected finding called for an examination of adolescents' strategy use across the three parental styles. This revealed that adolescents with authoritarian parents more often applied all four influence strategies than adolescents with permissive and authoritative parents. Thus, it is not only the type of strategy use linked to parental style but also the intensity of strategy use. The greater intensity of influence strategy use by adolescents of authoritarian parents suggests that these children, compared to those of permissive and authoritative parents, may be driven by their relatively unresponsive and unsympathetic parents to use more influence attempts, including both bilateral and unilateral types.

To control for the intensity of influence attempts while testing H5a, we computed an index of adolescents' relative use of bilateral influence strategy (the difference between bilateral and unilateral strategy scores) for each parental style—a greater score indicating a greater relative use of bilateral (vs. unilateral) strategies by adolescents in situations of disagreement with parents. In Table 1, between-group comparisons on the index of relative bilateral strategy use showed significant differences ( $p < .001$ ). Permissive ( $M_{\text{father}} = .46, M_{\text{mother}} = .66$ ) and

authoritative ( $M_{\text{father}} = .31$ ,  $M_{\text{mother}} = .45$ ) parents had higher levels of adolescents' relative use of bilateral strategies than authoritarian parents ( $M_{\text{father}} = .24$ ,  $M_{\text{mother}} = .37$ ). Hence, when the relative levels for each strategy type are considered, the bilateral type is more heavily used by adolescents of permissive and authoritative parents, supporting H5a. These patterns emerged in Chinese and Canadian samples.

According to H5b, adolescents of neglectful parents more likely use unilateral influence strategies than those of other parental styles. ANCOVA showed a significant difference in adolescents' use of unilateral influence strategies across parental styles ( $p < .001$ ). Consistent with H5b, adolescents' use of unilateral strategies was higher with neglectful parents ( $M_{\text{father}} = 2.67$ ,  $M_{\text{mother}} = 2.64$ ) than with permissive ( $M_{\text{father}} = 1.94$ ,  $M_{\text{mother}} = 1.85$ ), authoritative ( $M_{\text{father}} = 2.25$ ,  $M_{\text{mother}} = 2.18$ ), or authoritarian ( $M_{\text{father}} = 2.43$ ,  $M_{\text{mother}} = 2.39$ ) parents. A further comparison of the specific strategies indicated that adolescents with neglectful parents more frequently used both stubborn persuasion and playing on emotions ( $ps < .001$ ) than those with other types of parents. As was done to test H5a, we computed the index of relative bilateral/unilateral strategy use to control for potential confound of the intensity of influence attempts. Here, a smaller score indicated a greater relative use of unilateral strategies (vs. bilateral strategies) by adolescents in situations of disagreement with parents. ANCOVA showed a significant difference in adolescents' relative use of unilateral influence strategies across parental styles ( $p < .001$ ). Adolescents' relative use of unilateral strategies was higher with neglectful parents ( $M_{\text{father}} = .10$ ,  $M_{\text{mother}} = .07$ ) than with authoritarian ( $M_{\text{father}} = .24$ ,  $M_{\text{mother}} = .37$ ), permissive ( $M_{\text{father}} = .46$ ,  $M_{\text{mother}} = .66$ ), or authoritative ( $M_{\text{father}} = .31$ ,  $M_{\text{mother}} = .45$ ) parents. These findings occurred in both countries. Thus, H5b was supported based on the relative score.

H6 predicted that adolescents with permissive and authoritative parents would have a higher level of susceptibility to peer influence than those with authoritarian parental styles. The results showed no significant difference in adolescents' susceptibility across these parental styles (Table 2). To examine if culture masked these effects, we split the sample into Chinese and Canadians. In each culture, there was no significant difference in the level of susceptibility across parental styles (Table 3). H6 was not supported, whereas these results were consistent with H6<sub>alt</sub>.

Finally, H7 envisioned adolescents with permissive and neglectful parents to have higher impulse buying tendencies than those with other parental styles. ANCOVA on the combined sample did not support this hypothesis. Analyzing the two samples separately did not find significant differences across the parental-style clusters either. H7 was not supported.

## 5. Discussion

Our purpose was to examine the effects of parental style on adolescents' socialization process, focusing particularly on their use of influence strategies. Adolescents with neglectful parents use more unilateral influence strategies than those with other parental strategies, whereas adolescents in authoritarian families use higher levels of unilateral and bilateral strategies to get their way. The level of use of influence strategies also differs between Chinese and Canadian adolescents. Canadian adolescents use less bilateral strategies (bargaining toward both fathers and mothers;

reasoning toward mothers) than their Chinese counterparts. In contrast, Chinese adolescents use more unilateral strategies (stubborn persuasion and playing on emotions toward mothers) than Canadian adolescents.

The finding that adolescents raised by authoritarians use more unilateral and bilateral strategies is opposite to the conventional wisdom that they “should” use more unilateral but *less* bilateral strategies than those with authoritative and permissive parents. This finding is important, as when studying adolescents' use of influence strategies across different families, we must consider the type *and* the intensity of strategy use. Only when the intensity of strategy use was controlled, did adolescents from authoritarian families show higher relative use of bilateral strategies. Therefore, the conclusions drawn from studies on children's use of influence strategies (Bao et al., 2007, Kim et al., 1991, Palan and Wilkes, 1997) may be incomplete, as they focused only on the type of strategies used, without considering their intensity.

We also contribute to the socialization literature by examining communication patterns across parental styles. We found that authoritarian parents used more socio-oriented communication patterns than authoritative and permissive parents, whereas the opposite was true with concept-oriented communication patterns. However, analyzing separately the Chinese and the Canadian samples showed an asymmetric pattern. In Table 3, significant differences in mothers' socio-oriented communication patterns occurred primarily in the Chinese sample, whereas those in fathers' concept-oriented communication patterns occurred in the Canadian sample. These results indicate the important role of culture in family communication patterns and parental styles. Generally, children's socialization is focused toward cultural priorities. Culture-driven attitudes and beliefs provide the context within which the salience of parental influence is played out (Yang & Laroche, 2011).

From a methodological perspective, the use of multiple-informant family data represents a departure from approaches relying on single-informant data (often the mother). Multiple-informant family data reduce the common method bias in investigations of substantive relationships, and allow to examine the: (1) differences in parental styles between mothers and fathers, and (2) differences between the parental styles practiced with boys versus girls. For Meyers-Levy (1989), females are relationship/nurturing oriented, whereas males are agentic oriented. We expected fathers to be higher in demandingness than mothers, and the reverse should be true for responsiveness. In addition, Chinese parents should be more demanding but less responsive than their Canadian counterparts, given that sex-role distinctions are more pronounced in traditional societies (Hofstede, 1983). Consistent with these expectations, we show that Chinese parents (averaging mothers' and fathers' responses) are more demanding but less responsive to their adolescents than Canadian parents (demandingness:  $M_{\text{Chinese}} = 3.18$  vs.  $M_{\text{Canadian}} = 3.04$ ,  $p < .05$ ; responsiveness:  $M_{\text{Chinese}} = 4.09$  vs.  $M_{\text{Canadian}} = 4.20$ ,  $p < .05$ ). This is driven by Chinese fathers' higher level of demandingness ( $M_{\text{Chinese}} = 3.11$  vs.  $M_{\text{Canadian}} = 2.99$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and Chinese mothers' lower level of responsiveness than their Canadian counterparts ( $M_{\text{Chinese}} = 4.13$  vs.  $M_{\text{Canadian}} = 4.27$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

Within each country, mothers are more responsive than fathers (Canada:  $M_{\text{mothers}} = 4.27$  vs.  $M_{\text{fathers}} = 4.09$ ,  $p < .01$ ; China:  $M_{\text{mothers}} = 4.13$  vs.  $M_{\text{fathers}} = 4.06$ ,  $p = .15$ ). However, the argument that fathers are more demanding than mothers is not supported. In fact, in both

countries mothers are more demanding than fathers (Canada:  $M_{\text{mothers}} = 3.19$  vs.  $M_{\text{fathers}} = 2.99$ ,  $p < .01$ ; China:  $M_{\text{mothers}} = 3.25$  vs.  $M_{\text{fathers}} = 3.11$ ,  $p = .09$ ). These results are consistent with findings with American families (Forehand & Nousianen, 1993). A plausible reason is that adolescence is a time of self-discovery and a period of preparing for higher education, and mothers pay attention to their adolescents—the recent hot debate on “tiger mom” lends anecdotal evidence.

We also found gender differences in parent–child interactions across countries. Canadian fathers were more demanding on boys than on girls, whereas Canadian mothers were more responsive to girls than to boys. In the Chinese sample, fathers and mothers were more responsive to girls than to boys, but they had similar levels of demandingness on boys and girls. This may be attributed to the Chinese single-child policy: parents may have the same expectations for boys and girls, and exert the same level of strictness and control over their behavior.

Managerially, a better understanding of the impact of parental styles on adolescent consumer socialization process is important. Parental styles are meaningful segmentation variables (Rose, 1999). Knowing the strategies children use to persuade their parents and the communication patterns in each segment helps marketers design ads that best reflect their target's communication styles. For example, if marketers of teenagers' educational products target the authoritative segment, they should direct marketing communications to both child and parents since the two-way, concept-oriented communication is likely in authoritative families. Authoritative parents tend to promote an open parent–child communication and allow their children greater consumption autonomy and influence in family purchases.

This study also provides useful information to international marketers. Since Chinese adolescents are less susceptible to peer influence than Canadian ones, marketers should place stronger emphases on targeting parents for children's merchandise in China than in Canada. This is further supported by cross-national differences in family communication orientations: Chinese parents were found to be less concept-oriented (for mothers only) and more socio-oriented (for both mothers and fathers) than their Canadian counterparts. Thus, compared to their Canadian counterparts, Chinese parents less likely engage in open exchanges of ideas with their children and allow them much decision influence.

Our findings must be interpreted in the context of the study limitations. First, the focus was on the mainstream families in Canada and China. Although the use of such samples allows us to rule out alternative explanations caused by majority/minority status, this sampling does not reflect the whole population in each nation. Further research should test these findings with more representative samples. Another limitation is that cultural orientations were not measured; thus, the findings might be due to factors other than culture. Although the findings (e.g., difference in socio- vs. concept-oriented communications across the two countries) do not support the alternative explanation, and ensuring invariance in measurement models further minimizes such concerns, it would be fruitful to directly measure cultural differences in socialization goals and values and pin down which cultural dimension(s) drive our research findings. Finally, social influences (parental, peer) have greater effects on publicly-consumed than on privately-consumed products. Due to our research focus, we did not test the moderating role of product categories. Future research can further examine how product type may set up boundary

conditions for the linkages between parental and peer influences. It is possible that the products often consumed among peer groups, such as clothes and cell phones, may be less subject to parental influence, whereas the reverse would be true for the products consumed at home.

## **Acknowledgments**

The authors gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

## **References**

- Bao, Y., Fern, E. F., & Sheng, S. (2007). Parental style and adolescent influence in family consumption decisions: An integrative approach. *Journal of Business Research*, 60, 672–680.
- Baumrind, D. (1991). The influence of parenting style on adolescent competence and substance use. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 11, 56–95.
- Bearden, W. O., Netemeyer, R. G., & Teel, J. E. (1989). Measurement of Consumer Susceptibility to Interpersonal Influence. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 5, 473–481.
- Bednar, D. E., & Fisher, T. D. (2003). Peer referencing in adolescent decision making as a function of perceived parenting style. *Adolescence*, 38(152), 607–621.
- Byrne, B. M. (1994). *Structural Equation Modeling with EQS*. : Sage Publications.
- Carlson, L., & Grossbart, S. (1988). Parental style and consumer socialization of children. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 15, 77–94.
- Carlson, L., Grossbart, S., & Walsh, A. (1990). Mothers' Communication Orientation and Consumer Socialization Tendencies. *Journal of Advertising*, 19(3), 27–38.
- Chen, X. (2000). Growing up in a collectivist culture: Socialization and socioemotional development in Chinese children. In A. L. Comunian, & U. P. Gielen (Eds.), *International perspectives on human development* (pp. 331–353). Lengerich, Germany: Pabst Science.
- Copeland, A. P. (1985). Self-control ratings and mother–child interaction. *Journal of Clinical Child Psychology*, 14(2), 124–131.
- Cowan, G., & Avants, S. K. (1988). Children's influence strategies: Structure, sex differences, and bilateral mother–child influence. *Child Development*, 59, 1303–1313.
- Darling, N., & Steinberg, L. (1993). Parenting Style as Context: An Integrative Model. *Psychological Bulletin*, 113(3), 487–496.
- d'Astous, A. (1990). An inquiry into the compulsive side of “normal” consumers. *Journal of Consumer Policy*, 13(1), 15–31.
- Forehand, R., & Nousianen, S. (1993). Maternal and paternal parenting: Critical dimensions in adolescent functioning. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 7, 213–221.

- Fuligni, A. J., & Eccles, J. S. (1993). Perceived parent-child relationships and early adolescents' orientation towards peers. *Developmental Psychology*, 29, 622-632.
- Hofstede, G. (1983). National Cultures in Four Dimensions: A Research-Based Theory of Cultural Differences among Nations. *International Studies of Management & Organization*, 13(1/2), 46-74.
- John, D. R. (1999). Consumer socialization of children: A retrospective look at twenty-five years of research. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 26, 183-213.
- Kim, C., & Lee, H. (1997). Development of family triadic measures for children's purchase influence. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 34(3), 307-321.
- Kim, C., Lee, H., & Hall, K. (1991). A study of adolescents' power, influence strategy, and influence on family purchase decisions. In T. L. Childers (Ed.), 1991 AMA Winter educators' conference proceedings (pp. 37-45). Chicago: American Marketing Association.
- Kim, C., Yang, Z., & Lee, H. (2009). Cultural differences in consumer socialization: A comparison of Chinese-Canadian and Caucasian-Canadian children. *Journal of Business Research*, 62, 955-962.
- Lamborn, S.D., Mounts, N.S., Steinberg, L., & Dornbusch, S.M. (1991). Patterns of competence and adjustment among adolescents from authoritative, authoritarian, indulgent, and neglectful families. *Child Development*, 62, 1049-1065.
- Laroche, M., Yang, Z., Kim, C., & Richard, M. -O. (2007). How culture matters in children's purchase influence: A multi-level investigation. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 35(1), 113-126.
- McLeod, J., & Chaffee, S. (1972). The construction of social reality. In J. T. Tedeschi (Ed.), *The social influence process* (pp. 50-99). Chicago: Aldine-Atherton.
- Meyers-Levy, J. (1989). Gender differences in information processing: A selectivity interpretation. In Tybout, & Cafferata (Eds.), *Cognitive and affective responses to advertising* (pp. 219-260). Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.
- Offerman, L. R., & Schrier, P. E. (1985). Social influence strategies: The impact of sex, role, and attitude toward power. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 11(3), 286-300.
- Palan, K. M., & Wilkes, R. E. (1997). Adolescent-parent interaction in family decision making. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 24, 159-169.
- Paulson, S. E. (1994). Relations of parenting style and parental involvement with students' achievement. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 14(2), 250-267.
- Rook, D. W., & Fisher, R. J. (1995). Normative influences on impulsive buying behavior. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 22, 305-313.
- Rose, G. M. (1999). Consumer socialization, parental style, and development timetables in the United States and Japan. *Journal of Marketing*, 63, 105-119.

- Shipman, K., Edwards, A., Brown, A., Swisher, L., & Jennings, E. (2005). Managing Emotion in A Maltreating Context: A Pilot Study Examining Child Neglect. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 29, 1015–1029.
- Triandis, H. C. (1995). *Individualism and collectivism*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Ward, S. (1974). Consumer socialization. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 1, 1–14.
- Yang, Z., & Laroche, M. (2011). Parental responsiveness and adolescent susceptibility to peer influence: A cross-cultural investigation. *Journal of Business Research*, 64, 979–987.
- Yang, Z., & Schaninger, C. M. (2010). The Impact of parenting strategies on child smoking behavior: The role of child self-esteem trajectory. *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, 29(2), 232–247.
- Yang, Z., Schaninger, C. M., & Laroche, M. (2013). Demarketing teen tobacco and alcohol use: Negative peer influence and longitudinal roles of parenting and self-esteem. *Journal of Business Research*, 66(4), 559–567.