

# Chinese vs. European American Parenting Style on Students' Academic Performance



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## Abstract

Parenting styles not only can influence children's identity, but they can also be a predictor of their academic achievement. Many hold a preconceived notion that one parenting style is better than the others. Chinese American students are usually viewed as the model minority, who often have achieved great success in academics due to being influenced by their authoritarian parents. However, studies have shown that each parenting style has its own positive impact on students' academic achievement due to the quality of the relationship between parents and children, different ethnic backgrounds, perceived socialization goals, and parenting attitudes. The purpose of this literature review examines the effects of European American and Chinese American parenting styles that influence students' academic performance in school. Chao (2001) showed that the quality of the relationship between parents and students does have an impact on school performance, but how parents make their connections with children varies by culture. Moreover, Li (2010) found that parenting style can form a positive association between perceived maternal socialization goals and academic self-efficacy. While Chinese American students perceive more positive effects from filial piety socialization goals (the intention of bringing honor to the family through academic achievement), European American students are more prone to the self-development socialization goals (emphasis on independence and self-esteem, which develops children's interest in learning). In conclusion, not a single parenting style can fit all the children because it depends on a complex interplay of the aforementioned factors.

## The Influence of the Quality of Parent-Adolescent Relationship on Academic Performance

European American parents are generally more authoritative

- Spending more time with their children that helps them to respond quickly to children's needs
- teaching their children to understand what is right or wrong.

Those factors all contribute to a well-developed parent-adolescence closeness.

Evidence: Chao (2001)'s study of adolescents' perception of parenting style showed an association between parent-adolescent closeness and authoritative parenting style, which has a positive effect on European children's school performance, proving by their school grades and effort.

\*However, this type of association does not apply to Chinese students.

Chinese American parents tend to be authoritarian.

-use of physical discipline included in this parenting style is often being regarded as parental care in Chinese culture and as a cultural norm

- Thus, it leads to a negative association between the commonness of using physical punishment and the negative impact on children.

Evidence: Since children are living under this culture, they are expected to deal with authoritarian parenting. Thus, it lessens the negative impact on them (Lansford et al., 2005), when Chinese parents are enforcing some physical disciplines for pushing their children to study hard.

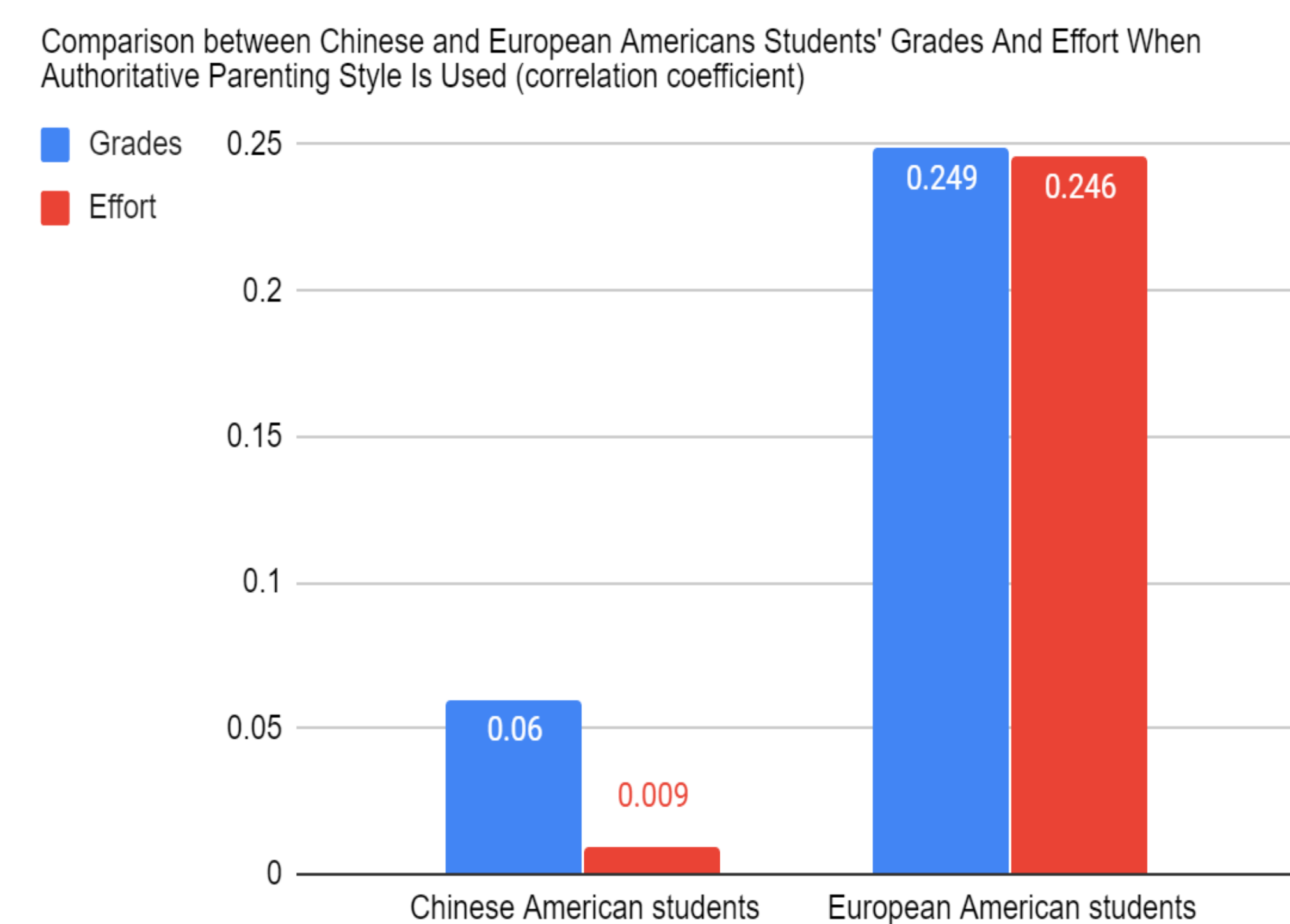
Besides the authoritarian parenting style, Chinese American parents also possess a training parenting style.

-parents invest time and bring support to the children when they are leading and teaching their children to behave in appropriate manners to pay parental respect

-a type of parental responsiveness different from the quality of relationship possessed by European American parents and kids

-a major impact of influencing their children's performance in school by emphasizing hard work and self-discipline in school (Chao 1994 & Li 2010).

However, the training parenting style does not bring positive outcomes to European American children because this may hinder their development of independence and self-esteem in academic performance as the advantage of authoritative parenting style (Li 2010).



There is a stronger, positive correlation between grades and authoritative parenting style for European American students ( $p=0.249$ ) than Chinese American students ( $p= .06$ ).

## An Association between Socialization goal and Academic Efficacy

Socialization goals indicate parents' expectations on ideal child development, varying with their ethnic backgrounds. Two of the socialization goals relating to the Chinese and European American parenting styles are self-development socialization goals and filial socialization goals that influence their academic self-efficacies.

Li (2010)'s study found that European American students are more susceptible to self-development goals (emphasis on independence and self-esteem), leading by their parents under the individualistic culture. Having high self-esteem is important because students with low self-esteem tend to have academic difficulties in school (Love and Thomas, 2014).

-a relationship between self-development goals and the authoritative parenting style: Since self-development goals emphasize the importance of independence and self-esteem, it correspond with the features of an authoritative parenting style.

Chinese American students are prone to the effect of filial socialization goals under collectivistic culture, combining with exposure to authoritative and training parenting. This is because the features of filial piety socialization goal also correspond with the belief of collectivistic culture, where individuals emphasize obedience within the group and respect to the elders. parents who endorse filial socialization goals are most likely going to implement training parenting, and this combination leads to a great approach of educating children for performing well in academics. And, authoritarian and training parenting helps to achieve filial piety socialization by emphasizing the parental authority and child obedience, which pressures the children to work hard in school for improvement in academic-self efficacies. However, this concept does not apply and may bring negative outcomes to the European American children because, under an individualistic culture, people emphasize independence and personal potentials, which is the opposite of the intentions of filial socialization goals and training parenting styles (Li 2010).

## Ethical background Influencing Parenting Attitude

(Jambunathan, Burts, Pierce 2000) conducted a study on parenting attitudes that provide results for European Americans:

-European American parents tend to show appropriate or moderate level in four attitudes: expectations, empathy, corporal punishment, and role reversal. All these factors all contributes to children's academic performance.

In particular, one of the features, empathy, even plays a major role in helping their children as an emerging adult to have better academic adjustment in college because a study shows that parents still play an important role as assistant for children in college.

The word to describe the relationship between parents and emerging adults is called "shared agency", which means that students' goals are being supported by their parents. And, this study proves that authoritative parenting style is a suitable one for helping to fulfill European American students' academic satisfaction (Chang, et al, 2010).

Conversely, Chinese American parents tend to have higher expectations for their children.

This can be explained by one of the adaptive strategies of biculturalism:

Since many of these parents are immigrated from China, who would want their kids to fit into both cultures (Jambunathan, Burts, Pierce 2000), this can be one of the reasons why Chinese American parents would tend to pressure their kids to do well in school in order to be fit within society.

In addition, many of the Chinese American parents believe in the traditional Confucianism values:

This value correlates with the filial piety socialization goal because it emphasizes parental control and demand for child obedience. Therefore, the combination of educational attainment and the Confucianism value really improved the Chinese American children' academic self-efficacy since these children are willing to follow their parents' expectations by working hard to earn good grades as an honor to their family (Ho, 1986 & Leung et al, 1998).

## Conclusions

By examining the quality of the relationship between parents and children, different ethical backgrounds, perceived socialization goals, and parenting attitude, European and Chinese Americans both take a very different approach to influence their children's school performance. Although each of them takes a different way of nurturing their children, they both are trying to bear children in a suitable way that helps them to succeed in school. The purpose of this study to show that each parenting style has its own positive impact on students' academic achievement, and no one parenting style is better than another. However, there may be other factors that have not been included in the analysis. These factors may be the parent's educational level and socioeconomic status.

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