The Role of Culture in Parental Mediation

Thesis

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Master of Arts in the Graduate School of the Ohio State University

Uttara Manohar, M.A
Graduate Program in Communication

The Ohio State University

2011

Thesis Committee:
Dr. Amy Nathanson, Advisor
Dr. David Ewoldsen
Abstract

The aim of this study was to test a model predicting parental mediation strategies from cultural dimensions and family communication patterns (FCP). Parents from India (n=57) and the United States (n=56) completed a survey for this study. It was proposed that cultural dimensions of individualism-collectivism, power distance and self-construal are related to family communication patterns. Also it was hypothesized that the effect of family communication patterns on various parental mediation strategies would be moderated by perceived risk of media exposure (PRME). The broad goal of the study was to establish FCPs as the mediators between cultural dimensions and parental mediation strategies. Results supported the association between cultural dimensions and family communication patterns. Also it was found that socio oriented parents with high PRME tend to use restrictive mediation. Concept orientation mediated the effect of individualism on active mediation and the effect of independent self-construal on active mediation.
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my advisor Dr. Amy Nathanson for her guidance and support throughout the last two years. I would also like to thank Dr. Dave Ewoldsen for his valuable suggestions and constant encouragement. I am grateful for all the insightful classes with all my professors and fellow graduate students at the School of Communication. Special thanks to my husband, my mother, my family and all my friends for supporting me and helping me get through this process.
Vita

2003……………………………………………………………..B.S. Microbiology, Pune University
2007………………………M.A. Journalism & Mass Communication, Amity University
2008 to present……………….M.A. Communication, The Ohio State University

Fields of Study

Major Field: Communication
Table of Contents

Abstract………………………………………………………………………………….ii
Acknowledgements……………………………………………………………………iii
Vita………………………………………………………………………………………iv
List of Tables……………………………………………………………………………vi
Introduction………………………………………………………………………………1
Chapter 1: Literature Review & Hypothesis…………………………………………5
Chapter 2: Research Methods…………………………………………………………41
Chapter 3: Results ………………………………………………………………………47
Chapter 4: Discussion……………………………………………………………………56
References………………………………………………………………………………71
Appendix A: Tables ……………………………………………………………………..89
Appendix B: Survey Questions…………………………………………………………92
List of Tables

Table 1 ......................................................................................................................... 84

Table 2 ......................................................................................................................... 85
**Introduction**

Parent-child communication is an important interpersonal phenomenon which has received a lot of attention in the areas of family communication patterns (e.g., Fitzpatrick & Ritchie, 1990; Lull, 1980), health-related parent-child communication (e.g., Clark, Scarisbrick-Hauser, Gautam & Wirk, 1999; Ennett, Bauman, Foshee, Pemberton & Hicks, 2001; Jackson & Henriksen, 1997; Newcomer & Udry, 1985), as well as parent-child communication about advertising and media (e.g., Caruana & Vassallo, 2003; Lachance, Legault & Bujold, 2000; Moschis, 1985; Nathanson, 1999; 2001). Taking care of children's health, developing their individual economical capabilities and socializing them to the culture around them can be termed as the universal goals of parenting (LeVine, 1988). Parents are responsible for enculturating the children by imbibing them with the values and characteristics of the specific culture in which they are growing up (Benedict, 1938). Research has validated the fact that parenting happens in the social context and that parenting styles themselves are heavily influenced by the social and cultural settings (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Bornstein & Cheah, 2006). Thus, while we can describe children’s physical and psycho-social well-being and development as the overarching universal goals of parenting – how parents choose to achieve that or even define ‘overall well-being’ might differ across cultures.

Today’s multimedia environment presents a challenging environment for the parents owing to the increased influence of media in children’s lives. While research has
documented several pro-social effects of media exposure on children, there exist various studies that have investigated numerous adverse media effects on children (for a meta-analytic review see Mares & Woodard, 2001). It is important to see if parents differ cross-culturally in the way they look at media’s influence on children or have even have different ways to combat negative media effects on their children through different communication styles.

Studies in interpersonal communication have documented the cross-cultural differences in parenting styles across different countries (Chao, 2000, Chen, Hastings, Rubin, Chen, Cen & Stewart 1998; Wu, P., et al., 2002). However, researchers have not yet investigated the different mechanisms that lead to cross-national culture differences in parent-child communication about media – often referred to as parental mediation. Nathanson (2001) describes parental mediation as the parent-child interactions about television. To date, parental mediation research has dealt with the conceptualization and effectiveness of various parental mediation techniques. Research has looked at which parent-child communication strategies work best when it comes to mitigating harmful media effects on children (Buijzen & Valkenburg, 2005). However there is relatively less literature dealing with what makes parents prefer certain mediation strategies over others.

Previous research has attempted to establish a relationship between general family communication patterns and parental mediation strategies (e.g., Fujioka & Austin, 2002). There have been studies that have dealt with cross-national comparisons of parental mediation choices (Hasebrink, Livingstone, Haddon & Olafsson, 2009; Kirwil, 2009; Rose, Bush & Kahle, 1998). However, these studies have not looked at the cultural
dimensions which could lead to the different parental mediation choices. It is important to acknowledge culture as an important influence that could lead to variations in parenting ideologies across different cultures.

Different areas in the field of communication include research that could be helpful if pulled together to study the role of culture in parental mediation. The current research brings together literature from three distinct communication domains (viz. intercultural communication, family communication patterns and parental mediation) to create a more holistic framework for understanding the role of culture in parental mediation. The aim of the current research is to understand and compare the influence of cultural variables - power distance and individualism-collectivism (Hofstede, 1980), as well as the individual level construct of self-construal (Singelis, 1995) on parental mediation via their influence on family communication patterns (Chaffee, McLeod & Wackman, 1973). Also the current study incorporates perceived risk of exposure to media as an important construct influencing the choice of parental mediation style.

This study is aimed at understanding parent populations in two culturally divergent countries – India and the United States. For the purpose of this study, parents of elementary school children were recruited from both India (n= 57) and the United States (n=56) resulting in a total sample size of 113 participants. Participants were asked to answer questions in a survey. The responses were analyzed to study the relationships between six constructs – individualism/collectivism, power-distance, self-construal, family communication patterns, perceived risk of media exposure and parental mediation.

The first chapter of this thesis traces the conceptualization of the related concepts in the literature review and lays down the hypotheses. This is followed by the second
chapter which is the methods section and the third chapter which is the results section.

The paper concludes with chapter four which is a discussion section that summarizes the results, highlights the drawbacks and proposes ideas for future research.
Chapter 1: Literature review and hypothesis

Differences in American and Indian Parenting

Research in areas like developmental psychology as well as family relations (Harrison, Wilson, Pine, Chan, & Buriel, 1990; Julian, McKenry & Mckelvey, 1994; Lin & Fu, 1990) supports the existence of differences in parenting styles across Indian and American culture. Before contrasting the differences in parenting styles found in both these countries, it is important to understand the nature of parenting as construed by culture in these two diverse populations.

Interdependence is an important value in Asian cultures that children are taught since early ages (Chao & Tseng, 2002). Seymour (1999) in her ethnographic research on socialization of children in India states that “the principal value children must learn is interdependence – the understanding that they are one of many, are not unique individuals” (p.71). The families in India have a strong patriarchal influence and conform to the joint family residential pattern (Roopnarine & Hossain, 1992). The joint family pattern, which is essentially generations within a family living together, personifies the collectivist values and importance of interdependence in the Indian culture. The extended family including aunts, uncles and cousins, plays an important role in the socialization of children in India (Sharma, 2000). The Indian parenting practices stress importance of familial bonds, dependence on and loyalties to the family, filial piety, obeying parents,
academic achievement, and discourage autonomy and/or detachment from family 

In Indian families, all elders including parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles and 
even elder siblings and cousins have authority over and are respected by the younger 
members of the family (Chao & Tseng, 2002). The parenting styles have emphasis on 
maintaining harmony in the family, filial piety (the child’s duty to respect and honor 
parents’ wishes and to care for them in old age), as well as interdependence and 
collectivism. Thus there is always an intrinsic power distance between the parents and the 
children that is ingrained within the cultural upbringing style in India.

As for the American parenting styles, there exist two distinct lines of research that 
separately investigate Caucasian American parenting and African-American parenting. 
Caucasian parenting is characterized by an authoritative style (Hamner & Turner, 1990). 
Caucasian parents teach their children to develop their individuality (Brooks, 1991) and 
stress material well-being and competition (Hamner & Turner, 1990; Spencer, 1990). On 
the other hand explicit racial socialization is one of the most important aspects of African 
American parenting (Julian, McKenry & McKelvey, 1994). In addition to the racial 
socialization goals, African American parenting also encourages children’s involvement 
in decision making, high level of parental support and open communication. While the 
major difference in the African American parenting style remains to be the ethnic 
socialization component, both Caucasian and African-American parenting styles stress on 
individualism and encourage autonomy. Thus the American style of parenting 
emphasizes respect for individuality of children and parents as well as encourages 
children to have their freedom from a very early age.
Considering the stark contrast between these core values in American parenting and the traditional Indian parenting – it is important to validate using empirical research, how these cross-national differences have an impact on the choice of parental mediation strategies and whether the self-construals contribute in predicting family communication patterns and parental mediation strategies. Researchers in the field of intercultural communication have taken into account the influence of culture on interpersonal relationships (Gudykunst, Ting-Toomey et.al, 1996). Although some studies look at influence of culture on styles of parenting (Chao, 2001; Russell, Hart, Robinson & Olsen, 2003), the specific relationship between culture and family communication patterns being related to parental mediation has not been investigated.

**Defining Important Constructs: Cultural Dimensions, Self-construal, Family Communication Patterns and Parental Mediation**

Parent-child communication has been primarily studied in the communication field in the form of parenting styles (e.g., Baumrind, 1972; 1989; 1991; Maccoby & Martin, 1983), family communication patterns (e.g., Chaffee & Tims, 1976; Fitzpatrick & Ritchie, 1994; Lull, 1980; McLeod & Chaffee, 1972; McLeod, Fitzpatrick, Glynn & Fallis, 1982; Ritchie, 1991; Ritchie & Fitzpatrick, 1990) and parental mediation (e.g., Austin, 1993; Nathanson, 1999; 2001; Warren, Gerke & Kelly, 2002). While cross-cultural analyses in parent-child communication have always focused on differences in patterns, they have rarely investigated the cultural differences that might be the cause of these differences. This thesis is an attempt to establish specific cultural values as the reason for the differences in communication patterns. The current research will provide a holistic framework for understanding how cultural dimensions, family communication
patterns, parents’ self-construal and perceptions about risks of media influence the choice of parental mediation strategies.

In order to establish this multi-dimensional framework it is important to familiarize ourselves with the relevant concepts from three different communication domains: intercultural communication, family communication and parental mediation. This section of the paper will focus on defining and conceptualizing the six variables that will be used in the study: individualism-collectivism, power distance, self-construal, family communication patterns, parental mediation and perceived risk of media exposure.

In addition to defining these variables in terms of their conceptualization in previous literature, the following section will also describe how these constructs would be conceptualized in the context of the current research dealing with parent-child communication.

**Cultural Dimensions: Individualism and Power Distance**

Parenting is in many ways a cultural construction (Bornstein & Cheah, 2006). Every culture has their unique set of values and traditions that parents want to integrate in their children’s upbringing. Parents shape children’s environment and make day-to-day parenting choices based on their own cultural values that they think would be necessary for their children’s development (McNaughton, 1996; Ogbu, 1981).

This study compares parents from India and the United States and hence the cross-national comparison calls for operationalization of culture at a national level. While communication scholars have conceptualized the broad concept of culture in multiple ways, the most fitting conceptualization for this study remains to be Hofstede’s (1980) conceptualization of cultural dimensions.
Hofstede studied the manifestations of culture with paper-and-pencil surveys about culture specific values. These surveys were conducted in 67 countries around the world (Hofstede, 1983). The data collection helped obtain participant responses on the 32 value statements. Hofstede’s research (1983) provided four cultural dimensions on which each country could be positioned and compared with the others. These four cultural value dimensions were - power distance, individualism, uncertainty reduction and masculinity. These four cultural dimensions provide a framework to compare cultural systems between various countries.

Hofstede’s operationalization of culture might not completely capture the complexities and subtle cultural nuances however they certainly help us provide more information about the research participants from both the countries. This study is based on the assumption that Hofstede’s observations are falsifiable and can be used as a comparison standard against which new findings could be matched up. Hofstede’s research (1980) described the United States as an individualistic, low power-distance, low uncertainty avoidance, and moderately feminine culture, while India was categorized as collectivistic, high power distance, low on uncertainty avoidance, and moderately masculine culture.

These four cultural dimensions have been used in the context of general interpersonal relationships (e.g., Gudykunst, Yoon & Nishida, 1987; Kapoor, Hughes & Baldwin, 2003; Triandis, Bontempo, Villareal, Asai & Lucca, 1988) and hence can be effectively applied to investigate cultural differences in the parent-child communication patterns as well. However, while establishing a connection between cultural dimensions
and family communication patterns – it will be helpful to focus on the cultural dimensions that can be most directly applied to the context of parent-child relationships.

Previous research has validated that individualism and collectivism are important constructs that need to be acknowledged while studying interpersonal relationships (Hofstede, 1980; Triandis, 1989). Power has also been an important aspect of research dealing with interpersonal relationships (Spencer-Oatey, 1997). Also considering prior research that compares Eastern and Western styles of parenting, distribution of power between a parent and a child comes across as an important cross-cultural phenomenon. The majority of previous studies have used the concepts of individualism and power distance in the context of interpersonal communication behavior corroborating their importance in this context.

While uncertainty reduction can be associated with direct or indirect communication styles they might not necessarily be applicable to the parent-child relationship as they can be more readily be applied to look at the formal interpersonal relationships between people. Femininity-masculinity is also a separate issue that could be applied to differences in perception of gender within cultures. However since we are looking at general parenting behavior, it would be best to keep out the less-related concepts of uncertainty avoidance and femininity. Individualism-collectivism and power distance would be the two constructs which could be most effectively applied in the context of cross cultural comparison of parent-child communication.

**Individualism**

The term ‘individualism’ was coined during the French revolution and was used to describe the “negative influence of individual rights on the well-being of the
commonwealth” (Oyserman, Coon & Kemmelmeier, 2002, p.3). According to Kagitcibasi (1997) the roots of individualism and collectivism can be traced back to the times of Greeks when the Sophists propagated individualistic teachings while collectivistic elements can be found in Plato’s work titled *Republic*. Epistemological individualism was also preached by the British empiricists like Descrates, Berkley and Hume. Similar themes of individualism can also be traced in North America (Kagitabasi, 1997).

However Kagitcibasi (1997) quotes Tonnies’ concepts of *Gesellshaft* and *Gemeinshaft* (1857/1957) as the “historical precursors of individualism and collectivism”. Waterman’s (1984) detailed analysis of the psychological construct of individualism also explains the concept of individualism along with a thorough summary of research related to these concepts. Since there are several criticisms about individualism Waterman (1984) defends individualism as a psychological trait that encompasses four qualities: sense of personal identity, Maslow’s idea of self-actualization, Rotter’s concept of internal locus of control (1966) and principled moral reasoning (Kohler, 1969).

Over the years, this concept of individualism has been widely studied in several branches of social psychology, sociology and communication. In the communication field, the literature dealing with individualism and collectivism can be traced back to Geertz Hofstede, who studied the constructs of individualism and collectivism in the organizational communication context across several countries. While Hofstede (1984) came up with his country-level categorization of individualism and collectivism scores, researchers have tweaked or re-invented his operationalization over the years.
There have been several approaches used to operationalize individualism and collectivism (Oyserman et al., 2002). One approach as outlined by Oyserman et al. (2002), is assuming the country-level individualism-collectivism scores as stated by Hofstede. According to Oyserman et al. (2002), the studies adopting this approach are usually the ones that assume European Americans or westerners are more individualistic than the East Asian countries. The second approach as outlined by Oyserman et.al is the one that employs user rating scales to measure individualism-collectivism by asking the respondents to respond to scaled items usually by saying how much they agree or disagree with the given statements. The third approach uses priming techniques by administering IND-Col scales before the respondents are asked to respond/react to the actual experimental stimuli or intended survey topic. Each of these methods has its shortcomings however the second method will allow me to collect individual ratings and still compare them to Hofstede’s scores hence I chose the IND-COL scale ratings approach for my thesis study.

It should be noted that researchers have often dealt with East-West comparisons on the basis of individualism and collectivism. European Americans have always been touted as being the epitome of individualism because of their emphasis for “personal privacy, individual rights and personal freedoms” (Oyserman et al., 2002, p. 4). On the other hand the Asian countries symbolize the antagonistic construct of collectivism which describes people’s tendency to place society or cultural groups before self. Without assuming these prior observations to be true, it is important to see whether differences in cultural dimensions exist beyond national boundaries.
Individualism implies a preference for or a focus on individual goals and tasks and less emphasis on the goals of the group and interdependence (Hofstede, 1980). Collectivism on the other hand implies a preference for interdependence or close-knit group where individuals expect their relatives, clan, or the group members to look after each other (Hofstede, 1980; 1983). The core concept explained by the dimension of individualism/collectivism is the degree of independence or interdependence within members of a culture (Hofstede, 1980).

It is important to note that individualism is a group level construct hence is focused on cultural values as agreed upon by a group or a culture and not necessarily the individual values. Individualism is usually construed on a national level, where research participants from United States are hypothesized as being more individualistic, while participants from India would be predicted to be more collectivistic. Hence this construct taps into the national level culture and does not address the sub-cultural deviations within the broader national-level values.

**Conceptualizing individualism in parenting.** While individualism and collectivism as described above are broader level constructs, when measured at an individual level these constructs can be applied in specific interpersonal contexts. At the interpersonal or relational level, individualism is about the basic “human merging and separation” (Kagitcibasi, 1997). It refers to how dependent or connected or merged a person feels with other people (collectivism) or how independent and separated one is from other people (individualism). Looking back at previous research there have been several studies that have applied the individualism-collectivism construct in the parenting context.
Maday and Szalay (1976) did a cross cultural comparison between Korea and United States, to study the importance of interpersonal relationships in both countries. They found that participants from United States stressed on the idea of an ‘individuated self’, while Koreans focused more on familial bonds. Chen & Uttal (1988) observed differences in academic expectations between collectivist Chinese parents and individualistic American parents. They found that Chinese parents tend to set higher standards for their children, which resulted in a better academic performance of Chinese children as compared to American children. More recently, Rudy and Grusec (2001) conducted a comparative study of Egyptian-Canadian parents and Anglo-Canadian parents using Baumrind’s measures of parenting styles and correlating them with the collectivism/individualism constructs. The results of their study indicated a strong association between collectivism and authoritarian parenting style.

While applying the concept of individualism in parent-child communication, the idea of interdependence needs to be conceptualized as seen in the context of the family. Individualism in parents refers to their tendency to define themselves irrespective of the family and encourage similar behavior in their children. On the other hand, collectivist parents can be described as those who would emphasize interdependence within the family and encourage similar behavior in their children. Personal choice, intrinsic motivation, self-esteem and self-maximization are the four attributes valued by the individualistic parents while parents from collectivist cultures value connection to the family, orientation to the larger group, respect and obedience (Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2008).
Hence, it is expected that individualistic parents will emphasize individual achievement and the importance of creating an individual identity irrespective of the family/group. These parents would be more likely to teach their children that it is okay to follow individual beliefs without considering the social consequences or conflicts that can result out of it. On the other hand, collectivist parents would be expected to emphasize loyalty to the family and the importance of interdependence. These parents would be more likely to teach their children to adopt a commonly agreed perspective that benefits the entire group/family and prevents any type of conflict within the family.

**Power Distance**

Power distance is simply defined as, “the extent to which the members of a society accept the unequal distribution of power in institutions and organizations” (Hofstede, 1991, pp.28). Power distance describes the dynamic created between people as a result of power distribution within them. According to Hofstede (1980), people in high power distance societies tend to accept the hierarchical order resulting from power distance, while people in low power distance societies demand equal distribution of power and usually have equality of power in interpersonal relationships. The core concept addressed by this dimension is the unequal distribution of power which is culturally embedded within relationships. Although Hofstede (1980) would predict that participants from India would be high in power distance and participants from United States to be low in power distance, I would be measuring power distance individually so we could look at the presence and effect of power distance in families regardless of what country they belong to.
Conceptualizing power distance in parenting. Power distance was first studied by Hofstede (1980) in the organizational communication context where he observed the power distance variations between subordinates and superiors in various counties. In his more recent work about Asian management, Hofstede (2007) highlights that the construct of power distance guides how much people respect authority in the organizational contexts but he also acknowledges that values of power distance are indoctrinated at an early age through a parent-child relationship. Power distance is thus an important culturally acquired dimension that creates differences in interpersonal communication styles across cultures.

Since its inception power distance has been explored as an influential component of various types of interpersonal relationships. Spencer-Oatey (1997) studied power differences in perception of student-tutor relationships between British and Chinese participants. The results of the study indicated that Chinese participants rated the student-tutor relationships as being closer and having a higher power-distance than the British participants. Hofstede also studied cross cultural differences in teacher-student relationships based on power distance. Hofstede (2002) described the low power distance societies as having a very open and balanced communication style between the teachers and the students. This meant that students in low power distance cultures could question or criticize the teachers and were encouraged to speak spontaneously and have their own independent thinking. In general low power distance societies were described as having a “student-oriented model”. On the other hand, the education model in high power distance societies was described as being more “teacher-focused”, where the power was concentrated in the hands of the teacher. Hofstede described the higher power distance
societies as being more rigid about the manner in which students interacted with their teachers. In a higher power distance scenario Hofstede observed that students respected the teacher inside as well as outside the classroom and the teacher was never criticized or questioned.

Previous research has also acknowledged how power distance influences general communication styles in interpersonal relationships. Hwa-Froelich & Vigil (2004) in their thorough review of cultural influences on communication outline three areas of cultural influence on communication – responsibility relationships, interpersonal relationships and risk management. Hwa-Froelich and Vigil (2004) state that low power distance cultures such as the United States view power inequality in an interpersonal relationship as a negative phenomenon and believe in equality of power between everyone. On the other hand high power distance cultures such as India socialize their children to maintain a high power distance between the elders and the youngsters. Respect for all elders is an important aspect of interpersonal communication that children are taught in India. The Indian custom of children touching their elders’ feet as a sign of respect personifies the high power distance existent in the interpersonal relationships in the traditional Indian society. Whether or not these patterns still exist in the urban Indian population needs to be investigated through this research.

Thus to conceptualize power distance in parenting, we are essentially conceptualizing the distribution of authority and control of the parent over the child. In the family context, the relationship between the child and the parent is one that includes an interaction between an experienced adult human being (eager to shape the child and impart his/her wisdom) and a developing child (learning to make sense of the world
An innate power distance is thus implicit in the act of parenting. Whether and how this power distance manifests itself in a parent-child relationship could be a culturally acquired norm.

A high power distance family would tend to confer more power to the parents than the children. This power distance traverses beyond the day-to-day rule making and discipline activities. It includes an implicit parental control/influence over how the child forms his/her opinions and construes the world. In high power distance families, parents would be predicted to have the final word on what is right and what is wrong. Although traditionally India has been labeled as a high power distance society it would be important to see if the individual samples from India match up to this prediction.

On the other hand low power distance families have a slightly more flexible distribution of power between the parents and the children. Parents would be predicted to provide more freedom and authority to the children rather than having a complete control in the family dynamic. Children would probably be given more freedom in terms of making individual choices. At times low power distance in parenting can result in neglectful parenting practices where parents cannot discipline the children or seem to have little control over guiding their children’s behavior. However, it should be noted that although a lack of power distance could imply excessive freedom for children, it does not always mean neglectful parenting or a complete lack of parental control.

Essentially, it confers an equal power status to the opinions and beliefs of the child and the parents being comfortable with the child’s individual opinions and choices. The United States which has been described as a low power distance society would be
predicted to have low power distance in parenting. However it would be interesting to see whether the samples match up to the prediction or show variations in power distance.

**Self-Construal: The Way You Define Yourself**

While cultural values definitely play a role in shaping individual ideas about parenting, individual level factors like personality traits (e.g., Belsky, 1981; Brooks, 1991) or self construals (Gudykunst, Ting-Toomey, & Nishida, 1996) can be equally predictive of communication styles across cultures. While national-level cultural variables provide some description about commonly shared values within a country, individual differences do exist irrespective of the broader nationally defined culture (Bochner, 1994). Hence in addition to the cultural variables, the importance of the individual level construct of self-construals in determining family communication patterns should also be acknowledged.

The concept of self-construal was defined by Markus and Kitayama (1991) as “what people believe about the relationship between the self and others, and, especially, the degree to which they see themselves as separate from others and as connected with others” (p. 226). According to Markus and Kitayama (1991), if a person defines himself/herself as connected to others, he/she is said to have an interdependent self-construal, while a person’s definition of self that is separate and distinct from others is an independent self-construal. It should be noted that while individualism–collectivism are group–level cultural variables, self-construal refers to the individual’s view of the self, which might be different from the dominant cultural value. Prior research (e.g., Gudykunst & Lee, 2002; Kim 1993) endorses combined use of cultural and individual variables while predicting cross-cultural communication styles.
Several researchers have found self-construal to be useful in predicting various communication outcomes like conversational styles, conflict strategies, motivation to comply with others as well as communication in the contexts of doctor-patient interactions (LeVine et al., 2002). For example, Ellis and Wittenbaum (2000) found that within a US sample, participants who reported to have an independent self-construal used verbal self-promotion strategies while participants with interdependent self-construal used other-promotion strategies during interviews. Kim and Sharkey (1995) applied the construct of self construals in organizational communication to study their influence on people’s organizational communication styles focusing on importance of communication clarity, dealing with emotions and negative evaluations at the work place. They found that self construals were not associated with self-reported cultural identity but that people from collectivist cultures were more likely to avoid negative evaluations as compared to people from individualistic cultures.

Several researchers have also used the self construals with the individualism-collectivism construct to predict general communication patterns (e.g., Aune, Hunter, Kim & Kim, 2001). More recently, Lin (2010) investigated the relationship between self-construals and adult attachment styles. The results of the study showed that participants with higher collectivist values demonstrated secure attachment style, while participants with higher individualist values demonstrated dismissing attachment style. The existing research provides strong indications that the way people see themselves (connected to others/separate from others) strongly influences the interpersonal relationships they form, including the parent-child relationships.
**Conceptualizing self-construal in parenting.** Individual level self-construal is thus an important construct that needs to be applied in parent-child communication. There has been some research dealing with parent-child relationships that uses self construals. In a very interesting study designed to study differences in children’s conception of self, Rubeling, Keller, Yovsi & Lenk (2010) examined children’s drawings to assess their perceptions of cognitive-selves. They found that children with an interdependent self-concept drew themselves smaller as compared to the family members in the drawing, while children with independent self-concept drew themselves larger than the family members in the drawing. The researchers described the self-conceptualization as a culturally transferred attribute that led to a culture-specific parenting style. There isn’t much research that applies self-construal as a variable influencing family communication.

In the current study, I would expect self-construals to vary individually rather than by nationality. This means that irrespective of the country to which the participant belongs (India/US), participants will exhibit individual variations in the way they define themselves – independent or individual self-construal. Regardless of their nationality, we would expect that parents with independent self-construal would tend to emphasize autonomy and independence in their parenting/communication styles.

Also, I would expect that parents who exhibit an interdependent self-construal would stress interdependence and group loyalty in their parenting/communication styles. Thus parents, who define themselves as being connected to the people around them, would be expected to instill the same values in their children and hence encourage interdependence and cohesion within the family. Attributes of interdependent self-
construal in parents are more likely to translate in a socio oriented family communication pattern. On the other hand parents who have an independent self-construal are more likely to emphasize individual freedom and encourage individuality. Thus parents who have an independent self-construal are more likely to adopt a concept oriented family communication pattern. Although individual level individualism and collectivism have a conceptual overlap with the constructs of independent and interdependent self construals respectively, it should be noted that the operationalization of individual level individualism-collectivism is different from the scales used to measure self-construal.

**Family Communication Patterns: The Communication Dynamic within the Family**

Family communication patterns (FCP) is the construct that will serve the role of a mediator between the cultural variables, self-construals and the parental mediation strategies. Although family communication patterns have been conceptualized in different ways, I will be using the socio-concept orientation conceptualization (Chaffee, McLeod & Atkin, 1971; McLeod & Chaffee, 1972). There also exists a revised family communication patterns conceptualization (Ritchie & Fitzpatrick, 1990) that uses conformity and conversation orientation to define four types of families. Pluralistic families that are high on conversation orientation but low on conformity orientation, protective families that are low on conversation orientation and high on conformity orientation, consensual families that are high on conversation as well as conformity and laissez-faire families that are low on both conversation and conformity. However owing to the simplicity of Chaffee & McLeod’s dichotomous conceptualization, the socio-concept conceptualization was selected for the purpose of this study.
The family communication pattern model (Chaffee McLeod & Atkin, 1971; McLeod & Chaffee, 1972) was specifically developed for understanding the process of media socialization in families and hence fits the purpose of this study. Under this typology, families are categorized as either socio oriented families or concept oriented families. Previous research has shown that socio and concept orientation families have clearly distinct styles of using media and even talking about media (Chaffee, McLeod & Atkin, 1971; Lull, 1980; McLeod & Chaffee, 1972).

According to the family communication pattern model (Chaffee, McLeod & Atkin, 1971; McLeod & Chaffee, 1972), socio orientation refers to families that encourage children to avoid conflict and sacrifice expression of opinions to preserve harmonious relationships. Socio-orientation of family communication pattern is commonly used by parents who want to protect their status-quo and thus maintain their authority in the eyes of their children (Fujioka & Austin, 2002). The socio orientated parent would be a parent who would try to maintain or achieve harmony in the family by emphasis of conformity and control through parenting (Austin, 1993b; Ritchie, 1991). Accordingly, it is expected that socio-oriented parents would encourage their children to avoid controversy and argument with the family members.

On the other hand, the concept oriented parent values communication within the family (Chaffee, McLeod & Atkin, 1971; McLeod & Chaffee, 1972). Parents in concept oriented families tend to value conversation, encourage development of autonomous opinions, respect every member’s opinion and teach children to focus on understanding information (Ritchie, 1991). Concept oriented parents do not try to avoid conflict in the
family. They are comfortable with disagreements that result from discussion and arguments between the family members (Fujioka & Austin, 2002).

Researchers have contributed to this line of research by investigating some predictors of family communication patterns like gender (e.g., Bakir, Rose & Shoham, 2006) parents’ education and income (Chan & McNeal, 2003). Cultural variables have not yet been established as factors that could influence family communication patterns. However, there have been some cross-national comparisons of family communication patterns. Rose, Bush and Kahle (1998) studied the cross-national differences in the effect of family communication patterns on parents’ reactions to advertising. This cross cultural examination between Japanese and American mothers showed that while American mothers exhibited all four types of family patterns, Japanese mothers mostly reported Laissez-faire or protective family communication patterns. Irrespective of nationality, laissez-faire mothers had most positive attitudes while pluralistic and consensual mothers had most negative attitudes about advertising. Also Laissez-faire mothers reported lowest mediation of advertising while pluralistic and consensual mothers reported highest mediation of advertising.

Recently Shearman and Dumlao (2008) conducted cross-cultural comparisons of family communication patterns in young adults from Japan and United States. They found that participants from United States exhibited the consensual family type, while participants from Japan frequently reported preference for the laissez-faire family type. The researchers also found that irrespective of the cultural variables, conversation orientation was associated with integrating and compromising strategies in parent-child
conflicts, while conformity orientation was associated with avoiding and obliging parent-child conflict management strategies.

The family communication patterns have been used to predict a wide variety of behavioral and psychological outcomes in children and parents (for a full review see Schrodt, Witt & Messersmith, 2008). For example Austin, Roberts and Nass (1990) found that family communication between children and parents helps children to perceive the similarities and differences between real life and television content and have a better perception of ‘realism’ in the media context. Austin et al., state that parents help children to understand the real world against which the children can compare the media content. Also having a discussion within the family helps children to better understand the media content and aids in children’s construction of reality.

Austin and Nelson (1993) explored the role of family communication patterns in adolescents’ socialization to US politics. They found that the political socialization process is greatly influenced by the family communication styles at home which might differ according to the ethnic background of the parents. Skinner and Slater (1995) found that rebellious adolescents from the more conformity-oriented families considered anti-drug PSA messages to be less believable than the non-rebellious adolescents from conformity-oriented families. Huang (1999) found that young adults from conversation-oriented families showed higher degrees of self-disclosure, desire for control, self-esteem, and sociability than the young adults from conformity orientation families. On the other hand the participants from conformity-oriented families scored higher than the participants from conversation oriented families on personality traits like self-monitoring and shyness. In another interesting study, Pingree, Hawkins and Botta (2000) looked at
the effect of family communication patterns on young people’s science literacy. They found that children from consensual families (families high on conformity and conversation) were most likely to have meaningful criticism of scientific content shown to them. Fujioka & Austin (2002) investigated the relationship between family communication patterns and parental mediation strategies. They found that concept orientation in families was associated with both positive and negative active mediation. Also, socio orientation predicted both positive mediation and coviewing. Their research confirms the fact that family communication patterns and parental mediation are conceptually distinct and that family communication patterns can be used to predict parents’ parental mediation strategies. In this thesis, the FCPs are hypothesized to mediate the influence of cultural dimensions (individualism and power distance) and self construals on various parental mediation strategies. Thus the FCPs will serve as a bridging concept that links culture and parental mediation.

**Parental Mediation: Communication about Media**

While parental mediation has been defined as “parents’ interactions with children about television” (Nathanson, 2001, pp.116-117), more generally, today it can be thought of as a term to describe parenting strategies about the use of media or targeted parent-child communication about any media. Over the past forty years, several communication scholars have studied various aspects of the parental mediation phenomenon starting from studies about mediation of television messages in the early years to investigating the mediation of new media like video games and internet. (e.g., Austin, 1993; Buijzen & Valkenburg, 2003; 2005; Dorr, Kovaric & Doubleday, 1989; Fujioka & Austin, 2003; Lee & Chae, 2007; Lwin, Stanaland & Miyazaki, 2008; Mesch, 2009; Mohr, 1979;
The three important types of parental mediation styles discussed in the parental mediation literature are: restrictive mediation, co-viewing and active mediation (Nathanson, 1999). Active mediation is defined as conversations that parents have with their children about television and it is termed as active in order to reflect the active discussion associated with the behavior (Nathanson, 2001). Active mediation can be further categorized as positive and negative mediation. Active mediation has been the most effective form of mediation in terms of reducing aggression (Corder-Bolz, 1980; Nathanson, 1999; Nathanson & Cantor, 2000), counteracting effects of female stereotypes on TV (Nathanson, Wilson, McGee & Sebastian, 2002), stimulating non-traditional gender roles (Nathanson, 2010), enhancing self-esteem (Schooler, Kim & Sorsoli, 2006) and more generally facilitating better understanding of media portrayals (Desmond, Singer, Singer, Calam, & Colimore, 1985). Conventionally, active mediation refers to any type of communication between parents and children. It does not necessarily include two-way discussion and explanation or clarification of ideas but is a broad and a somewhat vague term used to describe parent-child communication behaviors about television.

Positive mediation can be described as the process of pointing out the good (positive) things that characters do, agreeing to/re-emphasizing media messages or even encouraging children to adopt the behavior portrayed in the media (Nathanson, 2002). On the other hand negative mediation focuses on getting children to understand the negative aspects of media portrayals through activities such as criticizing/condemning the
behavior of characters, explicitly expressing disagreement with televised messages, discouraging children from adopting characters’ behaviors or explaining that the characters are not realistic (Nathanson, 2002).

Restrictive mediation is a more authoritative style of parental mediation which is centered on the rule-making aspect of parenting and media. Restrictive mediation refers to limiting the amount of media exposure as well as making decisions about the appropriateness of a particular media message for the child. Early research has found some positive outcomes of restrictive mediation in children like increased ability to understand television (Desmond et al., 1985) and improvement in reading achievement (Roberts, Bachen, Horby, & Hernandez-Ramos, 1984). However, later on scholars have foreseen the negative effects of high levels of restrictive mediation such as increased aggression in children (Nathanson, 1999). Thus there is ambiguity about the effectiveness of restrictive mediation strategies.

Co-viewing is where the parent is physically present with the child while viewing television or any other form of media. Co-viewing is thus a more passive form of parental mediation. Previous research has found positive as well as negative outcomes of co-viewing. For example, Salomon (1977) found that co-viewing could have positive outcomes in children in the context of educational media content. However research has also found that co-viewing is related to several negative outcomes like increased beliefs of children about television characters being real or increased aggression in children (Nathanson, 2001). The mixed results about co-viewing could possibly be explained by the fact that most of the studies are based on the specific media context in the given situation. Co-viewing of educational media for example can aid the child’s learning and
hence yield positive effects. However co-viewing of inappropriate content might lead the child to believe that the parent is advocating / agreeing to the media message and hence might lead to negative effects. In both the cases however, the mere presence of the parent leads to an increase in the child’s attention and enhances the child’s learning.

Restrictive mediation is synonymous with rule-making, while coviewing is the act of passive exposure of the children to the media, in the presence of the parent(s). In general, both coviewing and restrictive mediation are associated with a form of parenting that lacks constructive communication between the parent and the child and relying on rule-making or adopting passive parenting styles.

A limited number of predictors of parental mediation have been identified through empirical research, the two prominent ones being parental attitudes about TV (e.g., Bybee, Robinson & Turow, 1982; Cantor, Stutman & Duran, 1996; Nathanson, 2001; Valkenburg, Krcmar, Peeters, & Marseille, 1999;) and gender (e.g.; Brown, Childers, Bauman, & Koch, 1990; Carlson, Grossbart, & Tripp, 1990). For example Bybee et al. (1982) found that parents who perceived a negative (anti-social) influence of television on children, were more likely to engage in restrictive mediation or ‘evaluative guidance’ – a term synonymous with active mediation. Brown et al. (1990) found that mothers were more likely to restrict their children from watching certain television programming.

There is a need to identify what other predictors lead parents to make specific parental mediation choices. Although there might not be a consistency in the way parental mediation is measured across different studies, the core idea of parents talking to their children about media is fairly stable in all parental mediation studies. While research concerning parenting styles has always been criticized of being ‘Western-focused’,
research in parental mediation is now being conducted in various developing countries along with developed parts of the world. Parental mediation is now being recognized as an important phenomenon and is being studied in India (e.g., Mukherji, 2009), China (e.g., Chan & McNeal, 2002), Israel (e.g., Dafna, Rivka & Rotem, 2009; Tsfati, Rivka & Cohen, 2005) and Turkey (Ozdogan & Altintas, 2010) along with the European countries (e.g., Dens, Pelsmacker & Eagle, 2007; Hasebrink, Livingstone, Haddon & Olafsson, 2009; Kirwil, 2009).

Previous literature has acknowledged the importance of studying parental mediation through both parents’ and children’s perspectives and the differences in both perspectives (Austin, 1992; Austin & Fujioka, 1999; Nathanson, 2001). However before we could get into the bi-directional perspective in the cultural context, understanding the parents’ perspective can be seen as the first step of introducing culture into the parental mediation context. Hence parental mediation in this research is conceptualized solely from the parents’ perspective – the way parents think they communicate with the children about media.

Cross-national studies comparing the West and the East are important to understand how the implicit cultural differences manifest themselves in parent-child communication. Hence, instead of merely comparing differences in parental mediation strategies, it is vital that the cultural elements be scrutinized more carefully, so as to make predictions about their role in influencing the parental mediation choices. An important contribution of the current research is to explain how differences between cultural dimensions in India and United States could be a potential reason for the difference in parental mediation strategies between the two countries. It is important to recognize that
cultural influences in a country contribute to shaping parenting ideologies. These cultural influences on parenting ideologies manifest themselves in today’s technologically advanced times as various parental mediation choices. Thus a cross-national analysis of parental mediation can help us understand the differences in parental mediation choices, while delving into the deeply-rooted cultural influences that cause these differences.

**Perceived Risk of Media Exposure**

Television is an important influence in children’s lives (Rideout & Hamel, 2006; Kaiser Family Foundation, 2003; 2006; Vandewater, Rideout, Wartella, Huang, Lee, & Shim, 2007). A study supported by UNESCO (Groebel, 1998) found that amount of time children devote to television viewing was extensive in Asia, Latin America, Europe and Africa. According to the UN report on media for children and adolescents (Gigli, 2004) the amount of media exposure directed towards children across the world has grown tremendously.

At the same time there has been a substantial amount of research that demonstrates the harmful effects of media on children (for full reviews see Paik & Comstock, 1994; Villani, 2001; Wood, Wong & Chachere, 1991). Researchers have specifically raised concerns over the harmful effects of violence and sexually explicit content in children’s programming (Kunkel & Wilcox, 2000). Besides, some researchers have also found that parents worry about how television could influence children’s food choices (Ip, Mehta & Coveney, 2007).

Parents are increasingly becoming aware of these negative media effects that could be harmful for their children. However the amount of risk or harmful effects that parents associate with media exposure varies from parent to parent. Amongst other things
it depends on the level of awareness about media effects of the parent, amount of media at home and parents’ perceived susceptibility of their own child (Barkin et al., 2006). Perceived risk of media exposure simply refers to the amount of risk that the parents associate with exposing their children to the media. Previous research has shown that parents’ views about the media are one of the important predictors of what parental mediation strategy they might use with their children (Bybee, Robinson & Turow, 1982; Nathanson et.al, 2002; van der Voort, Nikken & van Li, 1992). Thus while the current literature looks at the severity of violent or inappropriate media content and perceived susceptibility of their child to the negative effects, this study uses a more generalized conceptualization termed ‘perceived risk of media exposure’ (PRME). This generalized term gives us an idea about how useful/harmful parents think the media could be in their children’s day to day life. Thus this measure is not specific to any particular media genre but is an overall evaluation of how parents feel about the presence of media in their children’s lives. Since this term is more generalized it can be applied in the proposed model while predicting parental mediation styles from family communication patterns.

While there are various attributes of media that parents are worried about, more generally parents do have an overall assessment of how useful/detrimental media can be for their children. In the current study I will aim to measure how detrimental or risky parents think media can be for their children. While educational media or other beneficial contexts of media do exist, it is important to find out whether equal awareness about the negative effects of media persists in both India and United States. In the current research perceived risk of media exposure would be used as a moderator for the effect of family communication patterns on mediation choices.
Now that all the variables have been conceptualized and defined, the next section will help establish the theoretical relationships within these variables.

**Predicting the Effect of Cultural Variables and Self-Construal on Family Communication Patterns**

Parenting goals include a hierarchy of proprieties, such as ensuring children’s physical health and self-maintenance but also development of behavioral capabilities that maximize relevant cultural values (LeVine, 1977). Since different cultures emphasize different values and beliefs, it is obvious that parents from different cultures have different parenting ideologies. Researchers in the field of intercultural communication have taken into account the influence of culture on interpersonal relationships (Gudykunst, Ting-Toomey et.al, 1996). Although some studies look at influence of culture on parenting styles (Chao, 2001; Russell, Hart, Robinson & Olsen, 2003), the specific relationship between culture and family communication patterns related to parental mediation has not been investigated. It should be noted at this point that culture in the context of this study is construed in terms of the broader national characteristics instead of dissecting the national diaspora into specific ethnic groups. The following paragraphs in this chapter will now explicate the links between the variables described in the previous part.

**Influence of Power Distance on Family Communication Patterns**

A high power distance implies concentration of greater authority in the hands of the parent. Parents and children in high-power distance countries tend to accept the hierarchical order in the relationship. Thus, in a high power distance family parents have a higher authority over the children and they can enforce the children to conform to the
family norms. Parents who have higher power distance will expect the children to accept their views without questioning them. As discussed in the previous section, the socio-orientation involves an inherent need of the parent to maintain the status quo. Thus, regulation of expression and emphasis on avoidance of conflicting ideas is the prominent attribute in a family with socio-orientation. Thus you would expect that the higher the power distance between the parent and the child – the greater these families tend towards socio family orientation that stresses conformity.

**H1a: Power distance will be positively associated with socio orientation.**

On the other hand parents and children in low power distance societies are rooted in power equalization and demand justification for power inequalities. Thus parents and children who have equal power or equal rights of expression will tend to openly discuss as well as challenge each other’s ideas. The concept family orientation is characterized by open discussion and expression of individual opinions about ideas presented in the media. Thus we can hypothesize that parents and children who have a low power distance will show more tendency for open style of communication without hesitation of challenging each other’s ideas and hence a lower power distance will tend towards concept family orientation.

**H1b: Power distance will be negatively associated with concept orientation.**

**Influence of Individualism-Collectivism on Family Communication Patterns**

The fundamental issue addressed by the individualism-collectivism variables is the degree of interdependence on the institution of family among individuals. High individualism implies less dependence on the institution of family and emphasis on individuality. Parents with high individualism will tend to value their children’s
independent identity. High individualism parents would also tend to create a communication environment where both children and parents would be free to express and defend their ideas. The focus would be expression of individual opinions and not avoidance of conflict. Thus higher levels of individualism will tend to be associated with higher instances of challenging and critically discussing ideas – which is the basis for the concept family orientation. Concept family orientation stresses open discussion of ideas and opinions about media and hence when parents exhibit a high level of individualism, they are bound to promote an open style of communication about media. Thus parents with high levels of individualism will tend towards a concept family orientation.

**H2a: Individualism will be positively associated with concept orientation.**

On the other hand, collectivism stresses unquestioned loyalty and agreement between an in-group (in this case the family) and hence gives emphasis to interdependence and avoidance of conflict. Thus, parents with higher levels of collectivism will tend to avoid conflict and encourage the children to conform to their opinions and beliefs. Parents who demonstrate high levels of collectivity will tend to create a family environment where all members agree upon a common perspective/shared belief system.

In the media context this would mean the parents will encourage acceptance of a single perspective as the family norm. This would imply avoiding discussion of individual opinions and acceptance of a singular/common perspective. A socio orientation is synonymous with avoidance of conflict and tendency to promote conformity to a commonly shared perspective between all members of the family. Hence
parents who demonstrate higher levels of collectivism will tend towards having a socio family orientation.

**H2b:** Collectivism will be positively associated with socio orientation.

Effect of Self-Construal on Family Communication Patterns

Now, similar predictions can be made for self-construals. It can be predicted that parents with an interdependent self-construal will encourage an interdependent self that encompasses family relationships within the definition of self. Parents who have interdependent self-construal would be more likely to encourage conformity and harmony. They would also have the tendency to avoid conflict while communicating with their children about media and would prefer harmony over discussion – which are characteristics of a socio oriented family communication pattern.

**H3a:** Interdependent self-construal will be positively associated with socio-orientation.

On the other hand, parents who have an independent self-construal, focus on individual level values, freedom, independence and autonomy. Parents who have independent self construals would always engage in discussion, offering autonomy to every individual member of the family even if that means a clash of ideas and conflict of opinions in the family. Thus independent self-construals would lead to an open communication atmosphere where everyone gets to express their individual opinion – which is a characteristic of the concept oriented family communication pattern.

**H3b:** Independent self-construal will be positively associated with concept orientation.

Predicting the Effect of Family Communication Patterns and Perceived Risk of Media Exposure on Parental Mediation Strategies?
The family communication pattern construct has been linked with different types of parental mediation strategies in several media contexts like advertising (Rose, Bush & Kahle, 1998), political development (McLeod & Chaffee 1972; Meadowcroft, 1986), social uses of television (Lull, 1980) and aggression (McLeod, Atkin & Chaffee, 1972). Fujioka and Austin (2002) found that concept orientation was positively associated with positive and negative mediation. Concept orientation also predicted critical discussion with children. Socio orientation was also associated with positive mediation and was associated with co-viewing. However Fujioka and Austin (2002) found that parents with socio-orientation did not demonstrate negative mediation or any type of critical discussion about television messages. They concluded from their results that parents with a concept orientation tend to have a lot more discussions with their children about television, while socio-oriented parents tend to reinforce television messages (Fujioka & Austin, 2002).

Although the family communication patterns have been established as one of the predictors for parental mediation strategies, research using FCPs has ignored the interaction between other factors and FCP which may be important while making predictions about choice of parental mediation strategies. In addition to the overall communication style in the family, one thing that determines choice of mediation strategies is the amount of risk that parents associate with exposure to media. Based on the amount of media at home, and the level of awareness about effects of media on children, parents will conceive different levels of risk associated with media exposure. Although we do not have any theoretical reasons to predict difference in levels of
perceived risk within Indian and American parents, it would be interesting to see if there is a difference. This leads to the first research question:

RQ1: Will there be a difference in the levels of perceived risk of media exposure within Indian and American parents?

The perceived influence of media has been studied in research about perceived threat of exposure to violent media and sexual content (Nathanson et.al, 2002). Similarly, in the general media context, we would predict that parents who seem to perceive higher levels of risk associated with media exposure would adopt different strategies of mediation than parents who perceive lower risks associated with the media exposure. Owing to the increased awareness about the possible harmful effects of media, a large number of parents have become very particular about their children’s media exposure. Thus, it is hypothesized that the perceived risk of media exposure will moderate the relationship between the FCPs and the parental mediation strategies. An interaction of the family communication patterns and perceived risk of media exposure will lead to different parental mediation strategies.

Predictions can be made about the choice of parental mediation strategies based on the interaction of family communication patterns and levels of perceived media risk. Socio oriented parents who emphasize on conformity and harmony, but see high levels of risk associated with the media exposure – will tend to restrict the children from media exposure. The assumption being that in a socio-oriented family, parents’ perceptions will be valued and enforced on the child and since the parent believes media exposure is harmful – restrictive mediation would be the outcome behavior. However, if we have a socio-oriented parent, perceiving low or negligible risks associated with media exposure

38
– then the outcome would be a harmless perception about media which would be enforced in the family. This would lead to co-viewing because, there is no discussion (hence no positive mediation) and additionally the parent does not see any risks associated with media exposure (hence no restriction).

If a concept-oriented parent (who stresses on discussion of ideas) perceives high levels of risk associated with media exposure, he/she is likely to discuss about the negative effects of media and is likely to refute the media messages. Thus a high perceived risk, combined with a tendency for discussion will lead to active negative mediation. However a concept oriented parent (who encourages discussion of ideas) but perceives low levels of risk associated with media exposure is likely to talk positively or even endorse certain media messages. Thus a low/negligible perceived risk level combined with tendency of discussion will lead to higher frequency of positive mediation strategies.

**H4a:** Socio-oriented parents with low levels of PRME will choose coviewing.

**H4b:** Concept oriented parents with low levels of PRME will engage in positive mediation.

**H4c:** Socio-oriented parents with high levels of PRME will engage in restrictive mediation.

**H4d:** Concept-orientated parents with high levels of PRME will engage in negative mediation.

Besides the above proposed hypotheses, it is also important to test whether the cultural dimensions and self-construal of parents directly have an influence on parental mediation choices. Although there does not exist literature that uses these two constructs
as predictors of parental mediation, it would be interesting to study this, and hence following research questions are raised:

**RQ2:** How does individualism and collectivism influence parents’ mediation choices?

**RQ3:** How does power-distance influence parents’ mediation choices?

**RQ4:** How does self-construal influence parents’ mediation choices directly?

Having discussed two sets of linkages so far, it is important to put the pieces of the puzzle together. It is important to understand the linkages between all the previous hypotheses to construct the broader implications of the proposed linkages. The ultimate aim of the proposed model is to synthesize the process by which cultural influences play a role in the choice of parental mediation strategies. Thus, it is important to understand how culture influences family communication patterns, which in turn influence parental mediation choices under the influence of perceived risk of media exposure. Summarizing the cumulative logic of all the three previous hypotheses, the following hypothesis, which is the essence of this study, is proposed:

**H5:** The effect of culture on parental mediation is mediated by the family communication pattern and moderated by the perceived risk of media exposure.
Chapter 2: Research Methods

This study was based on a survey that was administered to participants from India and the United States. The survey consisted of 106 questions and participants had the option to fill out the hard copy or go online and complete the online version of the same survey. The questions in both the versions were exactly the same. Data collected by both methods was manually entered in SPSS and analyses were carried out to test the hypothesis. This chapter will describe in detail the research method including operationalization of all the variables in this study.

Participants and Data Collection

Data were collected from two countries – India and the US. The sample of Indian parents was obtained by distributing hard copies of the survey to parents’ through two schools in the city of Pune in the state of Maharashtra. Being an urban city in India, this city was selected so that the sample would be representative of the urban Indian parents. Elementary school children (Grades 3, 4 and 5) in two schools were provided with the surveys and a brief flyer including information about the research and contact information. Children took the surveys home to their parents and returned the completed surveys. No incentives were provided to the parents/children for returning completed surveys. Two hundred surveys were distributed, from which fifty-seven completed surveys were returned, thus the response rate was 28.5%. None of the participants from the Indian sample completed the survey online. The average age of Indian parents who
participated in the survey was 37 years \((M = 37.6, SD = 4.19)\) while the average age for children was 9 years \((M = 9.1, SD = 0.92)\). The average of total number of media at home reported by the parents was 2 \((M = 2.74, SD = 1.06)\). The total number of media included all electronic media at home like television, dvd/cd players, music players and video games. The parents provided precise numbers for every type of electronic media equipment they had at home which was totaled to compute a number indicating total amount of media for each participant.

In the United States four elementary schools in the Worthington school district of Columbus, Ohio volunteered to participate in this research. Similar to the procedures carried out in India, hard copies of surveys along with the flyers were distributed to children in elementary school (Grades 3, 4 and 5). Children were asked to take the surveys home and ask their parents to complete the surveys and get them back to school. Again, no incentives were provided to the parents/children for returning completed surveys. Out of the two hundred surveys that were distributed fifty-six completed surveys were returned, thus the response rate was 28%. Ten participants out of the total fifty-six completed the survey online. The average age of American parents who participated in the survey was 40 years \((M = 40.36, SD = 7.32)\) while the average age for children was 9 years \((M = 9.54, SD = 1.03)\). The average of total number of media at home reported by the parents was 8 \((M = 8.40, SD = 4.37)\).

The total study sample from both the countries included 113 participants of which 70 were mothers and 43 were fathers.

**Individualism-Collectivism**
In order to operationalize the cultural dimensions Hofstede’s scale was used. The questions targeted to measure power distance and individualism-collectivism were retained while the questions assessing the other two dimensions (uncertainty reduction and femininity) were omitted from the survey. There has been a certain amount of criticism surrounding Hofstede’s measures since Dorfman and Howell’s (1988) operationalization was proposed as a revised version for the scales. However, Blodgett et.al (2008) demonstrated that these two research instruments were theoretically equivalent.

The participants were asked to respond to every statement on a scale of 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). The individualism and collectivism scale was a thirty-two item scale with sixteen items measuring individualism and sixteen items measuring collectivism. Parents’ responses on these sixteen items pertaining to individualism and collectivism were added up separately to form two composite scores – individualism and collectivism respectively. The reliability of the individualism scale with 16 items was .667 (M = 49.13 SD = 5.71) and for the 16-item collectivism scale was .733 (M = 63.78, SD = 6.38).

Power Distance

The original power distance scale in Hofstede’s version was modified. The items in the power distance scale were reworded so as to fit the parent-child context more specifically. Participants were provided with statements that talked about the concept of power distance in parenting. For example one of the sample items on the scale was “Parents should decide what is best for children and what is not”. The participants responded to the four scale items on a five-point likert scale choosing from 1 (Strongly
Agree) to 5 (Strongly Disagree). The responses were summed to form a composite. The reliability of the 4-item scale which included four items was .553 (*M* = 14.19, *SD* = 2.26).

**Self-Construal**

Singelis’ (1994) scale for measuring independent and interdependent self-construals was used in the survey. Of the 30 items, 15 items measure independent self-construal while 15 items measure the independent self-construal. Participants were asked to respond to every item on a scale of 1 (Strongly Agree) to 5 (Strongly Disagree). The Cronbach’s alpha for the 15-item the independent self-construal scale was .690 (*M* = 52.02, *SD* = 6.09) and for the 15-item interdependent self-construal scale was .722 (*M* = 53.13, *SD* = 6.64).

**Family Communication Patterns**

Family communication patterns were operationalized using McLeod et al.’s measures (1972) for socio and concept orientation. The participants were asked to respond to every statement on a scale of 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). The Cronbach’s alpha for the 10-item socio orientation family communication pattern was .537 (*M* = 32.2, *SD* = 4.25) while it was .832 (*M* = 52.96, *SD* = 4.07) for the 13-item concept orientation family communication pattern. The scores for socio and concept orientation were separately added up to create two composite scores – one for socio orientation and one for concept orientation.

**Perceived Risk of Media Exposure**

Operationalizing perceived risk of media exposure is essentially capturing the parents’ perceptions about the risks associated with media exposure. PRME was operationalized adapted from two items from Nathanson et al.’s (2002) susceptibility and
severity of impact measures. The participants were asked to respond to every statement on a scale of 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). A composite with the means for two items was created to reflect participants’ perceived risk of media exposure. The reliability for the 2-item measurement for perceived risk of media exposure was estimated by a simple correlation since there were just two items measuring this construct. There was a significant positive correlation between the two items \( r=0.483, p<0.01 \).

**Parental Mediation**

Parental mediation of television viewing was measured using the typology developed by Valkenburg et al., (1999). It included fifteen likert-type scale items which measured the frequency with which parents co-view, restrict and actively talk to their children about contents on the television. Active parental mediation was assessed by asking how often parents engaged in active communication with their children about the things that they saw on television. There was one item measuring positive active mediation and one item measuring negative active mediation respectively. The two items assessed how often parents pointed out positive and negative things about the content on TV. These two items individually were used to operationalize positive and negative mediation respectively.

Restrictive mediation was operationalized by asking the parents about their restrictive rules regarding quantity and quality (certain genres) of media content. The parents were asked whether they have rules about their children’s media exposure. Co-viewing was assessed by having parents rate how often they co-view media content. Co-viewing scores on all the items were averaged to create a scale.
The participants responded to all the statements on a scale of 1 (never) to 4 (often) indicating how frequently they engage in the described behavior. The parental mediation scale as a whole had a reliability of .781 ($M = 50.30, SD = 5.32$) while the Cronbach’s alpha for active mediation including the two items for negative and positive active mediation was .769 ($M = 16.19, SD = 2.40$), restrictive mediation was .751 ($M = 16.85, 2.78$) and coviewing was .811 ($M = 17.31, SD = 2.58$).
Chapter 3: Results

Data obtained through the survey were analyzed using SPSS. Data analysis involved simple correlational analysis, linear regression analysis as well as use of some macros for testing mediation (SOBEL) and moderation (MODPROBE). This chapter describes the results for all the proposed hypothesis and research questions.

Analysis

A simple correlational analysis was carried out for the first four hypotheses. The results of this correlational analysis can be seen in Table 1. The first hypothesis (1a) predicted that power distance would be positively associated with socio orientation. Although research suggests that participants’ nationality (Rose, Bush & Kahle, 1998), gender (Ritchie, 1991) and age might be related to their family communication patterns, correlations between these factors and the dependent variable (socio orientation) were not significant in my dataset. Hence there was no need to control for any variables and hence run a regression model. The results of a simple correlational analysis suggest that there is a significant positive correlation between power distance and socio oriented family communication patterns ($r = 0.341, p < .005$).

The second part of first hypothesis (1b) predicted that power distance would be negatively associated with concept orientation. Considering the lack of significant correlations between the control factors as noted in the above paragraph, factors like parents’ nationality, gender and age were not controlled for and hence there was no need
for a regression analysis. The results of a simple correlational analysis revealed that there was not a significant correlation between power distance and concept oriented family communication patterns \((r = .120, p = .206)\). Power distance addresses the distribution of power between parents and the children. It is possible that conceptually low power distance in some cases could have started overlapping with the concept of negligent parenting instead of open exchange of ideas and conversation-oriented parenting in general. Thus a low power distance parent-child dynamic can also be interpreted as a negligent/passive communication style and hence does not have a significant correlation with the concept orientation.

The second hypothesis (2a) predicted that individualism will be positively associated with concept orientation. A simple correlational analysis helped to establish a marginally significant positive correlation between individualism and concept orientation \((r = .174, p = .065)\). The second part of the second hypothesis (2b) predicted that collectivism will be positively associated with socio orientation. Results of a simple correlational analysis established a positive correlation between collectivism and socio oriented family communication pattern \((r = .209, p < .05)\).

The third hypothesis (3a) predicted that interdependent self construals would be positively associated with socio oriented family communication patterns. Results of a simple correlational analysis showed that interdependent self-construal was significantly positively correlated with socio oriented family communication pattern \((r = .261, p = .005)\). The third hypothesis (3b) also predicted that independent self-construal would be positively associated with concept orientation. Results of a simple correlational analysis
showed that independent self-construal was positively correlated with concept orientation 
\( r = .231, p < .05 \).

The fourth hypothesis (4a) predicted that parents with socio oriented family communication patterns and those who perceive a low risk of media exposure for their children would tend to choose co-viewing. To test this hypothesis perceived risk of media exposure (PRME) was tested as a moderator or the interactive effects of socio orientation and PRME were tested on co-viewing. Using Hayes’ modprobe tool it was found that the interactive effects of socio orientation and PRME were not significant in predicting co-viewing \( (b = .0075, p = .94) \).

Socio orientation is synonymous with conformity orientation. It is possible that even the slightest perceived risk of media exposure no matter how low it is – could be a significant trigger for the parents to completely restrict the media exposure. Co-viewing might not be the option that socio oriented parents resort to when they perceive even the slightest for of risk associated with exposing the children to media. This might be one of the reasons for why socio oriented parents didn’t seem to co-view with the children but rather restrict it. Results for the next hypothesis suggest that restrictive mediation could be a preferred strategy for socio oriented parents when the perceived risk of media exposure is both high as well as low.

The fourth hypothesis (4b) also predicted that socio oriented parents with high levels of PRME will tend to adopt restrictive mediation strategies. To test this prediction Hayes’ modprobe tool was used to generate general regression statistics and also the conditional effect of the focal predictor at different values of the moderator. It was found that the interactive effects of socio orientation and PRME were a significant predictor of
restrictive mediation strategies \( (b = -0.3449, p < 0.05) \). There was a marginal negative effect of the interaction on restrictive mediation at the highest level of PRME \( (b = -0.4153, p = 0.0586) \).

The hypothesis (4c) predicted that concept orientation parents with low levels of PRME will engage in positive mediation. Again, the \textit{modprobe} macro was used to assess the interactive effects and check the conditional effects of focal predictor at different values of the moderator. The results revealed that the interaction between concept orientation and PRME had a significant effect on positive mediation \( (b = 0.3663, p = 0.0562) \). However it was found that higher levels of PRME led to positive mediation \( (b = 0.5289, p < 0.05) \). The effect of concept orientation on positive mediation was not significant at lower levels of perceived risk of media exposure \( (b = 0.1983, p = 0.1767) \).

Positive mediation was operationalized as a single-item on the active mediation scale. It is possible that the single item measure did not completely capture the accurate conceptualization of the positive mediation construct. While positive mediation is usually sighted with a negative connotation that implies reemphasizing media propagated beliefs, the single item might not have communicated the exact meaning of positive mediation.

The fourth hypothesis (4d) predicted that concept oriented parents with high PRME will engage in negative mediation. The \textit{modprobe} macro was used to assess the interactive effects and check the conditional effects of focal predictor at different values of the moderator. The results revealed that the interactive effects of concept orientation and PRME were not a significant predictor of negative mediation \( (b = 0.0708, p = 0.7657) \). There was no support for this hypothesis.
The fifth hypothesis checked the mediated moderation hypothesis where the cultural dimensions were the independent variables, the family communication patterns were the mediators, PRME was the moderator and the parental mediation strategies were the dependent variables. These analyses were carried out in different steps. The analyses involved testing of nine mediated moderation paths which are described in the following paragraphs. Active mediation in the following hypotheses is conceptualized as the overall active mediation term that includes both positive active and negative active mediation.

First of all the mediation between individualism, concept orientation and active mediation was tested. Mediation analysis was carried out using the sobel tool for testing mediation. It was found that Individualism was a significant predictor of concept orientation \( (b = .3406, p < .05) \), concept orientation was a significant predictor of overall active mediation without controlling for individualism \( (b = .1906, p = .0653) \) as well as after controlling for individualism \( (b = .3373, p < .005) \), individualism was also a significant predictor of active mediation controlling for concept orientation \( (b = .2763, p < .05) \). The interactive effects of concept orientation and PRME are also significant predictors of active mediation \( (b = .3663, p < .05) \).

Mediation was established and moderation is also established at higher levels of PRME. This meant that the cultural level dimension of individualism led to concept orientation family communication pattern, which in turn led to overall active parental mediation style. There is complete mediation which means that for individualistic parents to choose active mediation it is necessary for them to establish a concept oriented family communication pattern at home. Also the moderation test tells us that in order for concept
orientation to lead to active mediation, parents must perceive higher levels of risk associated with media exposure.

It was predicted that the effect of collectivism on coviewing and restrictive mediation would be mediated by socio orientation and moderated by PRME. The mediation between collectivism and active and restrictive mediation styles by socio orientation was carried out using the sobel tool. It was found that collectivism was a significant predictor of socio orientation (b = .2319, p = .0261) and it was a marginally significant predictor of restrictive mediation after controlling for socio orientation (b = .2587, p = .0673). However it was found that socio orientation is not a significant predictor of restrictive mediation controlling for collectivism (b = -.1044, p = .4105) and collectivism is not in itself a significant predictor of restrictive mediation (b = .2345, p = .0891). Thus, collectivism can predict restrictive mediation only when socio orientation is controlled for. Thus neither mediation nor moderation was found.

The same analysis was carried out this time predicting coviewing instead of restrictive mediation. The mediation between collectivism and coviewing by socio orientation was carried out using the sobel tool. It was found that only collectivism was a significant predictor of socio orientation (b = .2319, p = .0261). However collectivism was not a significant predictor of coviewing after controlling for socio orientation (b = .2027, p = .1245) and neither without controlling for socio orientation (b = .1984, p = .1225). Also socio orientation was not a significant predictor of coviewing after controlling for collectivism (b = -.0185, p = .8755).

It was predicted that the effect of power distance on restrictive mediation will be mediated by socio orientation. The results only supported that power distance was a
predictor of socio orientation \( (b=.2542, \ p <.005) \). However power distance was not a significant predictor of restrictive mediation with controlling for socio orientation \( (b=.1624, \ p=.1014) \) as well as without controlling for restrictive mediation \( (b=.1295, \ p=.1642) \). Also socio orientation was not a significant predictor of restrictive mediation after controlling for power distance \( (b= -.1297, \ p= .3273) \).

It was predicted that the effect of power distance on coviewing would be mediated by socio orientation. The results only supported that power distance was a significant predictor of socio orientation \( (b=.2542, \ p<.0005) \). Power distance was not a significant predictor of coviewing with controlling for socio orientation \( (b=-.0671, \ p=.4694) \) as well as without controlling for socio orientation \( (b=-.0543, \ p=.5318) \). Also socio orientation was not a significant predictor of coviewing after controlling for power distance \( (b=.0504, \ p=.6852) \).

It was predicted that the effect of power distance on overall active mediation would be mediated by concept orientation. The results showed that concept orientation was a significant predictor of active mediation controlling for power distance \( (b=.3850, \ p=.0007) \). However power distance was not a significant predictor of overall active mediation after controlling for concept orientation \( (b=-.0228, \ p=.7740) \) and not controlling for concept orientation \( (b=.0102, \ p=.9012) \). Also power distance was not a significant predictor of concept orientation \( (b=.0857, \ p=.2058) \).

It was also predicted that the effect of independent self construals on overall active mediation would be mediated by concept orientation. The results supported the fact that concept orientation completely mediated the effect of independent self construals on overall active mediation. Independent self-construal is a significant
predictor of concept orientation ($b=.2440, p=.0137$). Independent self-construal was also a significant predictor of overall active mediation ($b=.2148, p=.0757$). Concept orientation is a significant predictor of active mediation after controlling for independent self-construal ($b=.3530, p=.0022$). The effect of the independent self-construal on active mediation is completely lost when concept orientation is controlled for ($b=.1287, p=.2798$).

Complete mediation was established because IV turns completely insignificant when mediator is added to the model. Also PRME moderation between concept orientation and active mediation is already established. This means that parents with independent self construals are more likely to have a concept oriented family communication pattern which in turn leads to the use of active parental mediation strategies. Also, concept oriented parents who perceive moderately high risks of media exposure are more likely to engage in active parental mediation.

It was predicted that the effect of interdependent self construals on restrictive mediation would be mediated by socio orientation. It was found that interdependent self-construal was a significant predictor of restrictive mediation controlling for socio orientation ($b=.2171, p=.0779$) but wasn’t a significant predictor without controlling for socio orientation ($b=.1885, p=.1120$). Interdependent self-construal is also a significant predictor of socio orientation ($b=.2489, p=.0052$). However socio orientation wasn’t a significant predictor of restrictive mediation after controlling for interdependent self-construal ($b=.1152, p=.3708$).

It was predicted that the effect of interdependent self construals on coviewing would be mediated by socio orientation. It was found that interdependent self-construal
was a significant predictor of socio orientation \((b=.2489, p=.052)\). However interdependent self-construal was not a significant predictor of co-viewing with controlling for socio orientation \((b=.0620, p=.5908)\) and without controlling for socio orientation \((b=.0627, p=.5717)\). Also socio orientation wasn’t a significant predictor of co-viewing after controlling for interdependent self-construal \((b=.0027, p=.9823)\).

The first research question was aimed at investigating whether there is a difference in the American and Indians parents in terms of the perceived risk of media exposure. Results of an independent sample t-test showed that there was no significant difference in the degree of perceived risk of media exposure between Indian parents \((M=4.14, SD=.6665)\) and American parents \((M=3.93, SD=.7350)\); \([t (111) = 1.605, p=.111]\).

Research questions 2, 3 and 4 were aimed at assessing the relationship between the cultural variables, self-construals and the parental mediation strategies. The second research question was to assess the relationship between individualism and parental mediation. As seen in Table 1 individualism was positively correlated with active mediation \((r =.256, p<.005)\) and co-viewing \((r =.192, p<.05)\). However collectivism was not significantly correlated to any of the parental mediation strategies.

The third research question looked at the relationship between power distance and parental mediation choices. It was found that power distance was not correlated with any of the parental mediation strategies. Lastly, research question four looked at the relationship between self-construals and parental mediation. It was found that neither independent self-construal nor interdependent self-construal was correlated with any of the parental mediation strategies.
Chapter 4: Discussion

Parental mediation research is slowly breaking out of previously established typologies and researchers are now exploring various facets of this phenomenon. One of the primary goals of parenting is to aid the development of children’s cognitive capabilities and help them understand their environment. Since nowadays media of all kinds be it television, video games, movies has a strong presence in children’s day to day life, it is important to understand how parents enable children to wisely use media and avoid the possible negative effects. While it is important to keep exploring what type of parent-child communication helps to minimize negative media effects, researchers should acknowledge that there isn’t a single definitive answer that could be applied to all parent-child dyads or other types of caregiver-child scenarios. People around the world have different ideas about defining the dynamics of parent-child relationships. A cross cultural comparison of parent-child communication patterns is the first step of accommodating and acknowledging diverse groups of people and understanding their ways of communication.

The general aim of this current study was to establish cultural elements and parents’ self-perceptions as factors that shape family communication styles and resulting parental mediation choices. Individualism, power distance and self-construal are constructs that aim at capturing not just who you are, but how you see yourself in context of the people around you and how you construe interpersonal relationships. However
more than relying on previous predictions, the focus was on examining the relationships between the cultural dimensions of individualism, collectivism, power distance and self construals with family communication patterns and parental mediation strategies.

The comparison of the two samples on various dimensions showed that the Indian sample and the American sample differed from each other only in the number of media per household and interdependent self construals. The number of media per household was significantly higher in the American families which could have had possible differences in the way American parents perceive media in the parenting context as opposed to how Indian parents perceive media. Also Indian parents were more likely to display an interdependent self-construal as compared to the American parents. Surprisingly the Indian and American samples did not have significant differences in individualism-collectivism, power distance, socio orientation, concept orientation, active mediation, restrictive mediation or coviewing. This challenges many of the previous notions of vast differences in the Eastern and Western parenting styles.

First possible explanation for these differences could be the fact that the Indian participants were sampled from an urban population. The urban population in India shows substantial deviations from the traditional Indian values owing to globalization and tremendous influence of the West. Secondly, if linguistic relativity was to be taken in consideration, the responses of the Indian population could have been influenced by the fact that they took the survey in English and not their native language. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis states that differences in language are indicative of the different thinking patterns of the native speakers of those languages and that language shapes people’s worldviews (Kay & Kempton, 1984). Thus if this logic was extended to the current study,
one could contemplate that had the Indian participants’ filled out the survey in their native language, the responses could have been different. Overall, the first three hypotheses (1a, 1b, 2a, 2b, 3a & 3b) that dealt with the relationships between individualism-collectivism, power distance and independent-interdependent self construals with the family communication patterns were supported by correlational analysis results. As predicted by the first hypothesis (1a) power distance was positively associated with socio oriented family communication pattern. Previous literature has looked at the role of power distance in interpersonal relationships at the workplace, student-teacher relationships and in the context of general interpersonal communication (e.g., Hofstede, 1980; 2002; 2007; Hwa-Froelich & Vigil, 2004; Spencer-Oatey, 1997).

While cross cultural comparisons can be made based on power distance, power distance is a crucial element of every parent-child relationships. The way power distance manifests itself in a parent-child relationship determines the overall dynamic of the relationship between the parent and the child.

While previous research dictates that power distance can be a predictor of various communication styles, future research should be aimed at establishing causality between these two variables. While one could argue that power distance is a culturally acquired variable that helps parents construe the nature of relationships and that parents’ ideas about distribution of power distance could be a precursor of their parenting ideologies, a reverse argument could be made. The parent-child relationships themselves shape ideas of power distance for the future parents and contribute to strengthening of previous cultural ideas or formation of new cultural constructions of parenting. Future research should probe the possibility of reinforcing spirals.
Hypothesis 1b that predicted a negative association between concept orientation and power distance could not be supported. Low power distance in parenting was conceptually connected to the idea of a more open family environment granting equal independence and authority to the children and the parents. However it is possible that conceptually low power distance could also overlap with the concept of negligent parenting. Baumrind’s typology of parenting styles (1991) describes the uninvolved parenting style as being marked by no responsiveness in communication with the children. A low-power distance scenario could thus present itself in the form of a negligent/passive communication style and hence possibly does not have a significant negative correlation with the concept orientation.

Also it should be noted that the measures used to operationalize power distance were adapted from the general power distance measures. While these were reworded to fit the parent-child context, they might not necessarily present the complete range of parent-child scenarios in which power distance can be manifested. Expanding the current operationalization of power distance in parenting could help capture the concept better. More specific statements about power distance and parenting in the media context should be added to the scale. For example, “parents should be in charge of deciding children’s media diet”. Additional measures of power distance that present multiple parenting scenarios involving manifestation of power distance could help to capture this construct more accurately.

As predicted by hypothesis 2a individualism was positively associated with concept orientation. The idea of individualism is synonymous with individual independence and freedom which is the hallmark of concept oriented family
communication pattern where every member has autonomy resulting in a healthy exchange of ideas and thoughts between parents and the children. Individualism has been used to make cross cultural comparisons of parenting styles, however it is again important to look at this construct in understanding parenting behavior regardless of cross-cultural comparisons. Again, since this was a correlational analysis future research needs to investigate causality between these concepts. Like stated previously, this could also be a case of reinforcing spirals where culture determines construction of family communication but the existing family communication evolve over time to generate new cultural meaning for parent-child relationships.

Hypothesis 2b that predicted a positive correlation between collectivism and socio oriented family communication pattern was supported. Previous research suggests a connection between collectivism and authoritarian parenting style (Rudy & Grusec, 2001). This study adds on to the previous findings by establishing a relationship between collectivism and the socio oriented family communication pattern. Future research should attempt integrating these findings to establish causality between collectivism and family communication patterns. Exploring the complex interplay between cultural dimensions and parent-child behavior and the effect of contextual factors can help us understand how parenting is influenced by culture and how new construals of parenting are changing the cultural meanings/definitions of parent-child relationships.

Hypothesis 3a & b predicted a positive relationship between interdependent self-construal and socio orientation and independent self-construal and concept orientation. As predicted, interdependent self-construal was positively associated with socio orientated family communication pattern and independent self-construal was positively
associated with concept oriented family communication pattern. This finding validates that how people define themselves or see themselves in the context of others around them relates to how they construe interpersonal relationships and how they communicate. The self-construals have been used to predict a variety of communication outcomes like conflict management strategies and even attachment styles (Aune, Hunter, Kim & Kim, 2001; Ellis & Wittenbaum, 2000; Kim & Sharkey, 1995; LeVine et al., 2002; Lin, 2010). Self-construal is a personality trait and is independent of the cultural context. Hence one could look at this construct as being the cause of resulting family communication patterns hence future research could possibly establish causality between self-construal and family communication patterns. However the possibility of a personality trait originating from cultural influences or influence of parents cannot be denied. Thus, there exists the possibility of a dynamic relationship involving mutual influence or reinforcing spirals.

The second step of investigations in this study involved predicting parental mediation strategies from family communication patterns. Previously, Austin and Fujioka (2002) have demonstrated that concept orientation is a predictor of active mediation, both positive and negative and that socio orientation is associated with positive mediation and coviewing. In the current study, I examined the interactive effects of family communication patterns and perceived risk of media exposure on choice of parental mediation strategy. Thus, in addition to the communication style, parents’ perceptions about the helpfulness/harm associated with media exposure were accounted for. Also Austin and Fujioka’s study (2002) did not make any predictions about restrictive mediation which this study did.
Also, I found that socio orientation was a significant predictor of restrictive mediation when the parents anticipated high perceived risk of media exposure. This means that when conformity oriented parent perceives high risk of exposing the children to the media content, the parent tries to restrict the exposure. Since there are no tendencies to discuss in a socio oriented family, parents choose to employ restrictive mediation thereby attempting to minimize the negative media effects that they anticipate.

However in cases where the parents anticipated a low risk of media exposure, I had predicted that socio orientation would lead to coviewing. There was no support for this finding. One possible explanation for this lies in the fact that socio orientation is highly positively correlated with power distance. Hence parents and children in socio orientation tend maintain their boundaries by establishing that parents have higher authority. This power distance could prevent parents and children from sitting and watching television together leave alone having a conversation about it.

Also the effect of concept orientation on active positive mediation was significant only at higher levels of perceived risk of media exposure (PRME) but not at lower levels of PRME. This finding was completely opposite of the prediction made in my hypothesis. Conceptually, parents who tend to discuss would employ positive mediation only when they see minimum/no risk of media exposure. There are two possible explanations for the lack of support for this hypothesis. First, positive mediation was operationalized using a single item on the parental mediation scale. Hence there is a possibility that the single item might not have accurately captured the construct. Second, the relationship between concept orientation and positive mediation would change with the specific media context. For example a concept oriented parent could use positive mediation while watching
informative/educational media content and hence perceive less risks associated with the content.

The existing conceptualization of positive mediation suggests a type of parental or communication that reinforces media messages. Besides this aspect of reinforcing/highlighting, the literature does not say much about the outcomes of positive mediation based on the context and hence there isn’t much clarity about whether parents should or shouldn’t adopt this mediation style. Similarly negative mediation is described as refuting or criticizing the media messages. The overall concept of active mediation in itself is quite vague and accommodates a wide variety of parent-child communication scenarios that may or may not be healthy for the children. There is a need to clearly define and promote a style of parental mediation that could be identified as healthy communication between parents and children about media. The current definition of active mediation promotes some sort of communication by the parents about media, but there is a need to go a step further and stress the importance of ‘active’ two-way communication including explanation/clarification of concepts and discussion of ideas. The dichotomy of positive and negative mediation should be dissolved and focus should remain on the conceptualization of ‘active mediation’ – a type of parent-child communication enabling children to understand media messages and develop cognitive abilities to use media wisely.

The overarching idea of the proposed study was to establish the connections between three broad domains – culture, family communication patterns and parental mediation and also considering the moderating effect of perceived risk of media exposure. I found support for moderated mediation between individualism, concept
orientation and active mediation and also between independent self construals, concept orientation and active mediation. These two cases demonstrate that the cultural and individual values of parents help form various family communication patterns at home, which then result in specific parental mediation strategies. These connections help to create a cohesive framework that explains the possible mechanisms behind parental mediation choices.

Over the years, the parental mediation literature has investigated different styles of parental mediation and other factors like the effectiveness of these styles in various contexts, predictors of these styles or cross-national comparisons of parental mediation styles (e.g., Austin, 1993; Buijzen & Valkenburg, 2003; 2005; Dorr, Kovaric & Doubleday, 1989; Fujioka & Austin, 2003; Lee & Chae, 2007; Lwin, Stanaland & Miyazaki, 2008; Mesch, 2009; Mohr, 1979; Nathanson, 1999; 2001; Shin & Huh, 2011; Valkenburg, Krcmar, Peeters & Marseille, 1999 & Youn, 2008). However, there is a clear need to develop a theoretical framework to explain the mechanisms that determine the choice of different parental mediation strategies.

This study helped create a conceptual framework to trace the concepts that lead to various parental mediation choices. The model proposed in this paper links literature from three domains to create a conceptual linkage between cultural dimensions, family communication patterns and parental mediation. Building on the existing family communication patterns literature and concepts from intercultural communication this model helps explain how people’s cultural values help shape their family communication patterns and hence result in certain parental mediation choices.
Although some attempts have been made in the past to explore the influences of family communication patterns on parental mediation (e.g., Fujioka & Austin, 2002), the cultural influences have never been accounted for in the parental mediation literature. Thus, in an attempt to expand on the limited number of predictors of parental mediation, this study tried to establish one more predictor that could influence parental choices of mediation strategies – culture.

Also, research dealing in parental mediation has been mainly done in the Western world and focused on western ideas and styles of parenting. However with the increasing progress of the developing Eastern countries, and the increasing amount of media available to children across the world, it is crucial that this topic be investigated in the developing parts of the world. This will not just help in assessing parents’ awareness levels about the need for parental mediation, but results could also be used to create awareness campaigns to educate parents about the need to talk to their children about the media. As media becomes an integral part of our lives, parents across the world would benefit from knowing how important it is to communicate with the children about optimum and responsible use of media.

It is important to understand the similarities and the differences in parental mediation across various countries that are culturally different from each other. This thesis effectively demonstrated that the cultural dimensions laid down by Hofstede along with the individual level self-construals serve as an effective means for comparison of parenting communication styles of parents from the United States and India. But at the same time, since there were no assumptions made about country-level cultural dimensions, this study helped to focus on the factors shaping parental mediation choices.
regardless of the nationality or the cultural background of the parents. Thus instead of labeling Indian parents as collectivistic or American parents as being individualistic, the operationalization allowed to see how the samples and the individual participants matched up to the conventional predictions. Individual level operationalization of cultural dimensions helped validate that previously stated country-level predictions about individualism and power distance do not necessarily apply to the current sample. At the same time, it provided an insight into how individual level individualism, power distance and self-construal could affect the family communication patterns which in turn influence the parental mediation choices.

While this study helped establish some important relationships, there are some limitations that need to be addressed at this point. The first limitation is the operationalization and conceptualization of culture. Culture is a complex construct that cannot be necessarily captured in a limited set of survey questions. It describes a variety of different elements like language, ideas, communication style, emotional expression, food, clothing and many other tiny details that come together to create a unique intricate pattern that embodies the way of life for a certain group of people. While Hofstede’s conceptualization provides a suitable operationalization for cross-cultural comparison and application in the specific context of interpersonal communication, it does have some limitations that need to be acknowledged.

The national level Hofstedian conceptualization tends to focus on the major patterns documented several years ago and has been labeled as ‘national culture’. The broader level cultural variables do not necessarily capture the diverse ethnic groups and sub-cultures that exist in both the United States as well as India. The definition of culture
in this study strictly adheres to the cultural dimensions as outlined in Hofstede’s line of research which are then applied in the interpersonal communication context. The individualism-collectivism dichotomy presented by Hofstede’s conceptualization might not necessarily accommodate complex value patterns of people who try to strike a balance between the two extremes of the continuum. There has been debate about whether these two constructs can be seen as two ends of a single continuum or whether they present two distinct concepts that should measure separately. A thorough review of conceptualization, operationalization and empirical testing of various individualism-collectivism typologies should help researchers choose the best fitting operationalization of these constructs. Also descriptive data can be obtained by supplementing survey methods with interviewing or participant observation to completely understand the complex thought processes parents employ while making the day-to-day parenting decisions.

Family communication patterns are also a concept that has been primarily developed with a western focus. The collectivistic Asian families are often not limited to parents and their children. Especially in India, where people believe in being connected with the extended family, the grandparents as well as the siblings, aunts, uncles and cousins are an important influence on children while growing up. It is important to have methods that can adapt to the different ideas of ‘family’ across the world instead of having a cookie cutter measure that is blindly applied all the families alike. That being said, I believe that starting with a cross cultural comparison without a pre-conceived notion can really be the first step to start discovering various parenting behaviors across families located in various parts of the world.
Although the model bridges concepts from three distinct areas of communication (intercultural communication, family communication and parental mediation), it solely relies on the existing individual measures without accounting for complex interactions. It does not address the interaction between the cultural dimensions of power distance and individualism but tests the variables independent of each other. Perhaps future research with refined methods will be able to capture the complex interplay between the multiple cultural dimensions and the other variables. It would be interesting to study how differing levels of each of these cultural dimensions could produce variations in family communication styles. For example when a parent is highly individualistic and believes in high power distance, the communication style would encourage individualism in children but at the same time emphasize parents’ authority. Or if the collectivistic parent believes in low power distance, the communication style would emphasize interdependence on the family members, harmony but at the same time would grant autonomy. In any of these interactions, the resulting family communication pattern would probably not belong in the socio-concept dichotomy.

On the same lines, the rigid dichotomy could be a limitation for the family communication patterns as well. Socio orientation and concept orientation seem like two ends of the continuum and there is a need to accommodate the entire range of the positions between these two ends. Perhaps the revised family communication patterns scale (Ritchie & Fitzpatrick, 1990) that provides four different styles of family communication patterns could be tested in the model to see if it better captures the variety of family communication patterns.
Also the conceptualization of parental mediation strategies assumes mutual exclusivity when in fact parents or families could be employing combinations of several types of parental mediation or family communication pattern. The interaction between various types of parental mediation strategies needs to be investigated to challenge the rigid boundaries of the previously proposed framework. While previous research has mostly treated these mediation strategies as mutually exclusive, there is no empirical evidence to support their exclusivity. There exists a possibility (a strong one) that parents might not necessarily have critical discussions with their children every time without ever co-viewing or having some type of restrictions. Thus parents could be using multiple strategies in various permutations and combinations. It is important to break away from the predefined categories of parental mediation and look at the dynamic parenting choices that change according to given contextual factors like age of children, type of television content and so on.

Future research needs to be directed at the interaction of the cultural variables as well as different types of parental mediation strategies. Also testing this model in multiple cultures can help us understand the differences as well as similarities in the cultural dimensions, communication and mediation processes. To begin with, a replication of this study by comparing countries that have been labeled as individualistic or collectivistic will help shed light on changing cultural dimensions and help explain the dynamic shift in cultural values in various populations across the world. Also parental mediation is a concept that is closely associated with educating parents about how to mitigate the harmful media effects on children. It is time that research should investigate
the parents’ awareness levels and current mediation strategies in the developing parts of the world, where the influence of media is on the rise.
References


of scientific progress and implications for the eighties, 2, pp. 272-286.


doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9507.2007.00419.x


Table 1. Correlations between all variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Indv</th>
<th>Coll</th>
<th>PD</th>
<th>Ind.SC</th>
<th>InterSC</th>
<th>Soc</th>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Act Med</th>
<th>Restrict</th>
<th>Coview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indiv</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collect</td>
<td>.160</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PD</td>
<td>.320**</td>
<td>.377**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ind.SC</td>
<td>.515**</td>
<td>.205*</td>
<td>.323**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>InterSC</td>
<td>.171</td>
<td>.693**</td>
<td>.470**</td>
<td>194*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soc</td>
<td>.118</td>
<td>.209*</td>
<td>.341**</td>
<td>.154</td>
<td>.261**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concept</td>
<td>.174</td>
<td>.309**</td>
<td>.120</td>
<td>.231*</td>
<td>.161</td>
<td>.142</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act Med</td>
<td>.256**</td>
<td>.049</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>.168</td>
<td>-.100</td>
<td>-.010</td>
<td>.314**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restrict</td>
<td>-.014</td>
<td>.161</td>
<td>.132</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>.150</td>
<td>-.042</td>
<td>.101</td>
<td>.213**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coview</td>
<td>-.192*</td>
<td>.146</td>
<td>-.059</td>
<td>.086</td>
<td>.054</td>
<td>.016</td>
<td>.334**</td>
<td>.427**</td>
<td>-.002</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * p < .01, ** p < .001

Abbreviations: Indv = Individualism, Coll = Collectivism, PD = Power Distance, IndSC = Independent Self-construal, InterSC = Interdependent Self-construal, Soc = Socio Orientation, Concept = Concept Orientation, Actmed = Active Mediation, Restrict = Restrictive Mediation, Coview = Coviewing.
**Table 2.** Results of Moderated Regression Analysis (PRME moderating the effect of family communication patterns on parental mediation choices).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>Dependent Variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive Mediation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio Orientation</td>
<td>( b )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concept Orientation</td>
<td>( .3663# )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: * \( p < .01 \), ** \( p < .001 \), # \( p = .1 \).*
APPENDIX B: SURVEY QUESTIONS
Primary Information about the Parent:

1. Age:
2. Gender:
3. Ethnicity:
4. Number of children:
5. Age of the children:
   - Child 1
   - Child 2
   - Child 3
6. Please indicate the media that you have at home
   (Provide number in brackets, for example if you have two TVs, check the television box and write (2) in brackets).
   - [ ] Television
   - [ ] Music player
   - [ ] CD/DVD players
   - [ ] Video-games /Gaming Consoles (eg:-Playstation /Xbox/Wii)
   Any other please specify: ________________________________
First we want you to answer a few questions about your personality and your philosophy in life. Please respond to the statements using the scale provided below each statement. Place a checkmark (✓) on the blank before your choice of answer:

1. One should live one’s life independently of others.
   ___Strongly Disagree ___Disagree ___Neutral ___Agree ___Strongly Agree

2. If a relative was in financial difficulty, I would help within my means.
   ___Strongly Disagree ___Disagree ___Neutral ___Agree ___Strongly Agree

3. Before taking a major trip, I consult with most members of my family and many friends.
   ___Strongly Disagree ___Disagree ___Neutral ___Agree ___Strongly Agree

4. I enjoy being unique and different from others in many ways.
   ___Strongly Disagree ___Disagree ___Neutral ___Agree ___Strongly Agree

5. Without competition, it is not possible to have a good society.
   ___Strongly Disagree ___Disagree ___Neutral ___Agree ___Strongly Agree

6. Some people emphasize winning; I am not one of them.
   ___Strongly Disagree ___Disagree ___Neutral ___Agree ___Strongly Agree

7. Children should be taught to place duty before pleasure.
   ___Strongly Disagree ___Disagree ___Neutral ___Agree ___Strongly Agree

8. I like my privacy.
   ___Strongly Disagree ___Disagree ___Neutral ___Agree ___Strongly Agree

9. Winning is everything.
   ___Strongly Disagree ___Disagree ___Neutral ___Agree ___Strongly Agree

10. It is important to maintain harmony within my group.
    ___Strongly Disagree ___Disagree ___Neutral ___Agree ___Strongly Agree

11. I would sacrifice an activity that I enjoy very much if my family did not approve of it.
    ___Strongly Disagree ___Disagree ___Neutral ___Agree ___Strongly Agree

12. We should keep our aging parents with us at home.
    ___Strongly Disagree ___Disagree ___Neutral ___Agree ___Strongly Agree

13. What happens to me is my own doing.
14. When another person does better than I do, I get tense and aroused.
15. I like sharing little things with my neighbors.
16. I usually sacrifice my self-interest for the benefit of my group.
17. My happiness depends very much on the happiness of those around me.
18. I am a unique individual.
19. It annoys me when other people perform better than I do.
20. The well-being of my co-workers is important to me.
21. I would do what would please my family even if I detested the activity.
22. Children should feel honored if their parents receive a distinguished award.
23. I feel good when I cooperate with others.
24. Competition is the law of nature.
25. When I succeed, it is usually because of my abilities.
26. I hate to disagree with others in my group.
27. To me, pleasure is spending time with others.
28. It is important that I do my job better than others.
29. I prefer to be direct and forthright when discussing with people.

___Strongly Disagree  ___Disagree  ___Neutral  ___Agree  ___Strongly Agree

30. I enjoy working in situations involving competition with others.

___Strongly Disagree  ___Disagree  ___Neutral  ___Agree  ___Strongly Agree

31. I often “do my own thing.”

___Strongly Disagree  ___Disagree  ___Neutral  ___Agree  ___Strongly Agree

32. If a co-worker gets a prize, I would feel proud.

___Strongly Disagree  ___Disagree  ___Neutral  ___Agree  ___Strongly Agree

33. I enjoy being unique and different from others in many respects.

___Strongly Disagree  ___Disagree  ___Neutral  ___Agree  ___Strongly Agree

34. I feel comfortable using someone’s first name soon after I meet them.

___Strongly Disagree  ___Disagree  ___Neutral  ___Agree  ___Strongly Agree

35. Even when I strongly disagree with group members, I avoid an argument.

___Strongly Disagree  ___Disagree  ___Neutral  ___Agree  ___Strongly Agree

36. I have respect for the authority figures with whom I interact.

___Strongly Disagree  ___Disagree  ___Neutral  ___Agree  ___Strongly Agree

37. I do my own thing, regardless of what others think.

___Strongly Disagree  ___Disagree  ___Neutral  ___Agree  ___Strongly Agree

38. I respect people who are modest about themselves.

___Strongly Disagree  ___Disagree  ___Neutral  ___Agree  ___Strongly Agree

39. I feel it is important for me to act as an independent person.

___Strongly Disagree  ___Disagree  ___Neutral  ___Agree  ___Strongly Agree

40. I will sacrifice my self-interest for the benefit of the group I am in.

___Strongly Disagree  ___Disagree  ___Neutral  ___Agree  ___Strongly Agree

41. I’d rather say “no” directly than risk being misunderstood.

___Strongly Disagree  ___Disagree  ___Neutral  ___Agree  ___Strongly Agree

42. Having a lively imagination is important to me.

___Strongly Disagree  ___Disagree  ___Neutral  ___Agree  ___Strongly Agree

43. I should [consider] my parents’ advice when making education/career plans.

___Strongly Disagree  ___Disagree  ___Neutral  ___Agree  ___Strongly Agree

44. I feel my fate is intertwined with the fate of those around me.
45. I prefer to be direct and forthright when dealing with people I’ve just met.

46. I feel good when I cooperate with others.

47. I am comfortable with being singled out for praise or rewards.

48. If my brother or sister fails, I feel responsible.

49. My relationships are more important than my own accomplishments.

50. Speaking up during a meeting is not a problem for me.

51. I would offer my seat in a bus to my professor (or my boss).

52. I act the same way no matter who I am with.

53. My happiness depends on the happiness of those around me.

54. I value being in good health above everything.

55. I will stay in a group if they need me, even when I am not happy with the group.

56. I try to do what is best for me, regardless of how that might affect others.

57. Being able to take care of myself is a primary concern for me.

58. It is important to me to respect decisions made by the group.

59. My personal identity, independent of others, is very important to me.
60. It is important for me to maintain harmony within my group.
___Strongly Disagree ___Disagree ___Neutral ___Agree ___Strongly Agree

61. I act the same way at home that I do at work.
___Strongly Disagree ___Disagree ___Neutral ___Agree ___Strongly Agree
62. I go along with what others want even when I would rather do something different.
___Strongly Disagree ___Disagree ___Neutral ___Agree ___Strongly Agree

Now we want to know your views about parenting and parent-child relationships:
63. I think parents should be in control of their children’s lives.
___Strongly Disagree ___Disagree ___Neutral ___Agree ___Strongly Agree
64. Parents know what is best for their children and what is not.
___Strongly Disagree ___Disagree ___Neutral ___Agree ___Strongly Agree
65. Children should obey their parents.
___Strongly Disagree ___Disagree ___Neutral ___Agree ___Strongly Agree
66. There should be a distance between parents and their children, otherwise children will not learn to respect the parents.
___Strongly Disagree ___Disagree ___Neutral ___Agree ___Strongly Agree
67. Children will know better when they grow up, until then it is the parents’ job to tell them what is right and what is wrong.
___Strongly Disagree ___Disagree ___Neutral ___Agree ___Strongly Agree
68. Children should not question their parents’ ideas.
___Strongly Disagree ___Disagree ___Neutral ___Agree ___Strongly Agree
69. It is wrong for children to argue with adults.
___Strongly Disagree ___Disagree ___Neutral ___Agree ___Strongly Agree
70. There are some things that are just not to be talked about with children.
___Strongly Disagree ___Disagree ___Neutral ___Agree ___Strongly Agree
71. When anything really important was involved, my parents expected me to obey without question.
72. After a disagreement in the family, the parents should have the last word.

73. Parents should always be the authority at home.

74. I feel irritated when my child has views/opinions that are different from mine.

75. I do not want to hear my child’s views if I don’t approve them.

76. Children should obey the rules set by their parents.

77. While discussing any issue in the family I ask for my child’s opinion.

78. I encourage my child to challenge my ideas and beliefs.

79. I encourage my child to share his/her thoughts and opinions with me.

80. My children can tell me anything that they want to.

81. My children talk to me about their feelings and emotions.

82. It is normal for me and my child to have long, relaxed conversations about nothing in particular.

83. I enjoy talking with my children, even when we disagree.

84. I often encourage my children to look at both sides of an issue.

85. I like hear my children’s opinions, even when I don’t agree with them.

86. I encourage my children to express their feelings.
87. I am very open about my emotions when I talk to my children.

88. I often talk to my children about things they had done during the day.

89. I often talk to my kids about their plans and hopes for the future.

90. I think watching too much TV can be bad for my children.

91. The content on television can harm my children.

These last few questions are about children's use of media. Please tell us how often do you engage in the following behaviors?

92. Try to help your child understand what s/he sees on TV?
   ___ never ___ rarely ___ sometimes ___ often.

93. Point out why some things actors (on television/in movies) do are good?
   ___ never ___ rarely ___ sometimes ___ often.

94. Point out why some things actors do are bad?
   ___ never ___ rarely ___ sometimes ___ often.

95. Explain the motives of TV characters?
   ___ never ___ rarely ___ sometimes ___ often.

96. Explain what something on TV really means?
   ___ never ___ rarely ___ sometimes ___ often.

97. Say to your child to turn off TV when s/he is watching an unsuitable program?
   ___ never ___ rarely ___ sometimes ___ often.

98. Set specific viewing hours for your child?
   ___ never ___ rarely ___ sometimes ___ often.

99. Forbid your child to watch certain programs?
   ___ never ___ rarely ___ sometimes ___ often.

100. Restrict the amount of child viewing?
101. Specify in advance the programs that may be watched?

102. Watch together because you both like a program?

103. Watch together because of a common interest in a program?

104. Watch together just for the fun?

105. Do you watch your favorite program together?

106. Do you laugh with your child about the things you see on TV?