

Cross-Cultural Comparisons of Perceptions and Evaluations of Adolescent Misconduct: Parents' versus Adolescent Children's Perspectives

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ABSTRACT

The primary goal of the current study was to examine cultural differences in Chinese and American adolescents' and parents' perceptions and evaluations of adolescent misconduct behaviors. A total of 395 American and Chinese adolescents (ages 11 to 19 years) and 255 parents participated in this study. Each participant made a list of adolescent misconduct behaviors and rated each misconduct behavior as to the degree of wrongness. The misconduct behaviors were coded into 14 categories. Significant cultural differences were found in a number of adolescent misconduct behaviors. For example, Americans generated more misconduct behaviors in weapon offenses and drug use than did Chinese. These cultural differences were further complicated by an interaction between the role of culture and that of family. Although Chinese adolescents were more likely than American adolescents to use categories of school conventional violations, home conventional violations, and social conventional violations, and considered these adolescent misconduct behaviors more wrong, it was American parents who considered adolescent misconduct behaviors in these categories more wrong than did Chinese parents. Finally, results were discussed in terms of the role of culture and that of family.

INTRODUCTION

Although there is not one particular stage in which children are easy to manage, adolescence seems to be an especially challenging period of time for parents across cultures. While a flood of physical changes leads to an adult-size body and sexual maturity, most adolescent children remain economically dependent on their parents (Steinberg, 1987). Struggling with developing their own identities, adolescents report feeling less close to their parents during this period of time (Holmbeck, 1996). Family tensions increase as the gap grows larger between parents' and adolescents' views of teenagers' readiness to take on adult responsibilities (Dekovic, Noom, & Meeus, 1997). As a consequence of these complex forces, adolescents are more likely than children in other life stages to engage in a heightened level of misconduct behaviors (Chen, Greenberger, Lester, Dong, & Guo, 1998). These misconduct behaviors range from breaking home, school, and social conventions to anti-social aggression (Tisak, Chen, Tisak, Goldstein, 2001).

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Although adolescent misconduct has been a major concern in almost every society, only a few studies have directly compared cross-cultural differences in perceptions and evaluations of adolescent misconduct behaviors. However, cross-cultural comparisons are important because they help reveal the underlying social processes that influence adolescent misconduct behaviors in different cultures. For example, Weisz and colleagues (Weisz, Chaiyasit, Weiss, Esatman, & Jackson, 1995; Weisz, Sigman, Weiss, & Mosk, 1993) compared 11- to 15-year-old Embu children in Kenya, Thai children, African-American children, and Caucasian-American children. American adolescents were reported by their parents to be more likely than Asian and African youths to display under-controlled problems (e.g., arguing, disobedient at home, cruel to others). These behavioral differences have been attributed to cultural values and socialization processes. Specifically, American and European cultures emphasize individualism and independence, whereas Asian and African cultures stress collectivism and interdependence. A collective culture value harmony in home and public places (e.g., school). These cultural values may lead to fewer adolescent misconducts in these domains.

Unfortunately, results from past research on cross-cultural differences in adolescent misconduct behaviors are not always consistent. Sometimes, conflicting results were found by the same investigators, using different methods. For example, Weisz et al. (1995) found that Thai teachers reported higher levels of problem behavior of Thai Children than American teachers reported of American children. The opposite pattern was true when direct observation was used in evaluating cross-cultural differences in problem behaviors of the same groups of Thai and American children. American children displayed twice as many problem behaviors as their Thai age-mates. The authors argued that in conducting cross-cultural research, it is critical to take into account the cultural relevance of problem behaviors. For example, Thai and American teachers may differ in considering certain behavior problematic. The current study employed a new methodology to compare 11- to 19-year-old American and Chinese adolescents on their perceptions and evaluations of adolescent misconduct behaviors. Instead of presenting adolescents with experimenter-generated misconduct behaviors to evaluate, the current study asked participants to make a list of adolescent misconduct behaviors and then evaluate how wrong they consider each behavior to be.

One advantage of using participant-generated misconduct behaviors is that cultural differences in specific misconduct behaviors can be examined. For example, dating may be considered perfectly normal by American adolescents but is wrong in Chinese culture. Holding certain religious beliefs (such as Falun Gong) is illegal in China but is within the law in the United States. Another advantage is that only culture-relevant behaviors were evaluated. It is especially important for cross-cultural studies to avoid using misconduct behaviors that are differentially relevant in different cultures. By asking participants to evaluate misconduct behaviors named by themselves, the current study was able to examine cultural differences not only in specific behaviors considered misconduct but also in degree of wrongness of culture-relevant misconduct behaviors.

Several other differences may help account for the conflicting results of cross-cultural studies on adolescent misconduct behaviors. Feldman, Rosenthal, Mont-Reynaud, Leung, & Lau (1991) conducted a cross-cultural study of high school students from the United States, Hong Kong, and Australia. Hong Kong high school students reported a lower level of misconduct than did their American and Australian counterparts. However, Chen et al. (1998) found that junior high school students from southern California, Taipei, Taiwan, and Beijing, China showed similar levels of self-reported misconduct. The two studies differed in a number of sampling characteristics, including age group (i.e., high school vs. junior high) and residence (e.g., Hong Kong vs. Mainland China). Arnett and Balle-Jensen (1993) also suggested that city size and laws were important in conducting cross-cultural studies. The current study recruited adolescents of a

similar age range (11- to 19-year old) and from similar city sizes (Toledo, Ohio State in the United States and Maanshan, Anhui Province in the People's Republic of China. Each city has a population of about 300,000).

Another limitation of previous research involves the source of information. Some studies used teachers' and parents' reports (e.g., Weine et al., 1995), whereas others used adolescents' self-report (e.g., Feldman et al., 1991). Very few research compares parents' and adolescent children's perspectives on adolescent misconduct behaviors (Stewart, Bond, McBride-Chang, Fielding, Deeds, & Westrick, 1998). This is especially striking given that adolescence has been identified as a period of less family interaction and greater gap between parents' and adolescent children's views of almost every aspect of life (Dekovic, et al., 1997; Holmbeck, 1996). A notable exception is a cross-cultural study by Stewart et al. (1998). Stewart and colleagues (1998) examined differences between teenagers and their mothers' reports of values and autonomy expectations in relation to school misconduct in Caucasian and Asian high school students attending an international school in Hong Kong. It was found that differences between teenagers and their mothers' values significantly predicted disciplinary violations across the two cultures. The results of this study suggested the importance of examining adolescent misconduct from both parents' and adolescent children's perspectives. Specific behaviors that are considered misconduct by parents may not be seen as being wrong from the adolescent children's point of view. In addition, even if the same behavior is considered wrong by both parents and adolescent children, they may differ in their perceptions about how wrong the misconduct behavior is. The present study used a fully crossed design to compare parents' and adolescent children's perspectives on perceptions and evaluations of adolescent misconduct behaviors in both the United States and the People's Republic of China.

The major goal of the current research was to examine cultural differences in Chinese and American adolescents' and parents' perceptions of what specific behaviors constitute misconduct and how wrong they perceive the specific misconduct behaviors to be. It was expected that the number of misconduct behaviors generated and evaluations of degree of wrongness would differ by culture and family roles (i.e., parents versus adolescent children). Specifically, cultural main effects were expected in the types of misconduct behaviors generated and the seriousness of the misconduct, presumably due to cultural differences in values of independence and autonomy versus interdependence and conformity (Chen, et al., 1998; Tisak, et al., 2001).

Hypothesis 1. American and Chinese parents and adolescents would differ in making the list of misconduct behaviors and rating the degree of wrongness of these misconduct behaviors.

Hypothesis 2. Within each culture, parents and their adolescent children would differ in both perceptions and evaluations of specific misconduct behaviors.

Finally, cultural differences in perceptions and evaluations of adolescent misconduct may be further complicated by the point of view one takes: parents versus adolescent children. Feldman et al. (1991) found that Hong Kong high school students reported a lower level of misconduct than did their American and Australian counterparts. Parental monitoring was consistently related to levels of adolescent misconduct in Hong Kong, Australia, and the United States. However, the mean level of parental monitoring did not differ significantly across three cultures. Thus, it was possible that cultural differences were most salient in adolescents' perceptions and evaluations of adolescent misconduct. Parents across different cultures, on the other hand, may exert control only when they notice the differences between their own perspectives and those of their adolescent children. Consequently, they may display an opposite pattern to their adolescent children's on perception and evaluations of adolescent misconduct.

Hypothesis 3. An interaction effect of culture and family roles was expected. American parents and their adolescent children would display an opposite patterns of cultural differences in

perception and evaluations of adolescent misconduct behaviors.

METHOD

Participants

A total of 395 adolescents (246 Americans, 110 males and 136 females; 149 Chinese, 72 males and 77 females; age range 11 to 19 years old) and 255 parents (89 Americans, 18 males and 71 females; 166 Chinese, 106 males and 60 females; age range 27 to 67 years old) participated in this study. American participants (92% Caucasian) were recruited from Toledo, Ohio in the United States and Chinese participants (100% Asian) were recruited from Maanshan, Anhui Province of the People's Republic of China. All American adolescents who agreed to participate and whose parents signed the consent form were included in this study. American parents were contacted through letters taken home by their adolescent children. Those parents who participated the study returned both the consent form and the questionnaires. In Maanshan, China, permission for students' participation was vested in the school. Parental data were collected at a school event involving students' parents. Only those who signed the consent form and completed the questionnaires were included in the study. Education level of parents were obtained using a classification of 1 = less than 12 years of school to 5 = post-graduate. The education level was higher for parents in the United States than those in China (96.6% of American parents had high school or higher education, compared to 74.1% of Chinese parents).

Materials and Procedures

A background questionnaire including age, gender, race, and father's and mother's education levels was administered first. To protect the anonymity, participants were instructed not to put their names on the background questionnaire. Because adolescents' and parents' data were collected on separate occasions and there was no way to link individual adolescent child to his or her parents, the two data sets were not matched.

The target questionnaire on adolescent misconduct consisted of a set of instructions, 40 blank double-spaced lines, and a Likert rating scale placed adjacent to each blank line. The instructions were different for adolescent children and their parents. Adolescents were asked to write down misconduct behaviors that a person their age does on the blank lines. Parents were asked to write down misconduct behaviors that a teenager does on the blank lines. Both adolescents and parents were asked to list as many misconduct behaviors as they could think of (up to 40). In addition, they were asked to indicate how wrong they felt each behavior was, by circling a number from 1 = a little wrong to 5 = extremely wrong.

Two steps were taken to ensure cross-cultural equivalence of the research instrument. First, researchers of American and Chinese cultural backgrounds collaborated in designing the questionnaires. Extensive discussion was carried out about the nuances of particular words in the two languages. After specific attention was paid to instructions and scale anchors, the English version was finalized. Second, the English version was first translated into Chinese by a bilingual researcher whose first language is Chinese. The Chinese version was then translated back to English by a bilingual translator who was blind to this study. The resulting two English versions were compared and double-checked for any discrepancy.

Coding Procedure

A coding system was developed from 25% of the sample of subject protocols from the United States and 25% from China. The protocols from China were translated into English and

were checked by two bilingual researchers (English and Chinese languages). Two independent raters then coded these protocols. Inter-rater reliability was 95% for the United States protocols and 90% for the Chinese protocols.

RESULTS

The misconduct behaviors generated by participants were categorized into 14 categories. As described in Table 1, the categories include vandalism, physical aggression, verbal aggression, general legal violation, weapons offense, school conventional violations, home conventional violations, social conventional violations, illicit drugs, minor drugs, sex behaviors, romantic relationships, prudential behaviors, and religious violations. The percentage use of each of these categories by culture and family roles is presented in Table 2. A series of 2 (culture: American vs. Chinese) X 2 (family role: adolescent children vs. parents) ANOVA were conducted to assess the mean usage and the mean degree of wrongness of each category separately.

Table 1. Categories for Misconduct Behavior (examples)

Categories	Description (examples)
Vandalism	Destroying or making a mess of property (smashing windows; breaking school property)
Physical Aggression	Physically harming a person (beating up a kid; hitting; mugging)
Verbal Aggression	Using words to hurt another individual (cursing; Making fun of someone)
General Legal Violations	General violations against society or individual (driving without a license; stealing; forging a signature)
Weapon offense	Having or using a weapon (bringing a knife or gun to school)
Illicit Drugs	Using hard drugs (using Marijuana, cocaine)
Minor Drugs	Minor offenses involving drugs and alcohol (smoking cigarettes; drinking beer)
School Conventional	Upsetting the social order of the classroom or the school (talking in class; not doing homework; cheating on an exam)
Home Conventional	Upsetting the arbitrary rules of conduct in the home (not doing chores; not listening to parents; playing video games)
Social Conventional	Arbitrary violations of social conduct and social etiquette (lying; not friendly; not letting the elderly have seats on bus)
Sexual Behaviors	Involvement in sexual activity (having sex; getting pregnant; prostitution)
Romantic Relationships	Pertaining to dating and relational problems (cheating on one's mate; having a boyfriend/girlfriend)
Prudential behaviors	Harm to oneself (suicide; walking along railroad)
Religious Violations	Not respectful or not upholding religious beliefs (joining illegal religious groups; not believing in God)

Table 2. Percentage Use of Individual Response Categories by Culture and Family Role

	United States		China	
	Adolescents	Parents	Adolescents	Parents
Vandalism	6	4	9	5
Physical Aggression	12	4	6	7
Verbal Aggression	7	5	6	3
General Legal	15	11	12	8
Weapons offenses	3	1	1	0
Illicit Drugs	7	5	2	1
Minor Drugs	10	10	6	6
School Conventional	12	10	17	16
Home Conventional	8	19	17	26
Social Conventional	14	24	19	26
Sexual behaviors	3	4	1	0
Romantic Relationships	1	1	2	2
Prudential behaviors	1	1	1	0
Religious Violations	1	1	1	0

Cultural Differences

Our first hypothesis predicted cultural differences in the number of specific misconduct behaviors generated in each category. Supporting this hypothesis, main effects of culture were significant in 11 out of 14 categories: vandalism, weapon offenses, school conventional violations, home conventional violations, social conventional violations, illicit drugs, minor drugs, sex behaviors, romantic relationships, prudential behaviors, religious violations. In general, American participants were more likely than Chinese participants to list misconduct behaviors in weapon offenses, illicit drugs, minor drugs, and prudential behaviors. On the other hand, Chinese participants were more likely than American participants to use the categories of vandalism, school conventional violations, home conventional violations, social conventional violations, romantic relationships, and religious violations (see Table 3).

When evaluating specific adolescent misconduct behaviors on degree of wrongness, the results revealed main effects of culture in the following categories: vandalism, verbal aggression, general legal violations, school conventional violations, and home conventional violations. Specifically, American participants rated vandalism, verbal aggression, general legal violations, and school conventional violations more wrong than Chinese participants. Chinese participants, on the other hand, considered home conventional violations more wrong than American participants (see Table 4).

In summary, although it was the Americans who listed more adolescent misconduct behaviors in the categories of weapon offenses, illicit drugs, minor drugs, and prudential behaviors than the Chinese, they did not evaluate these behaviors to be more wrong than did the Chinese. The Chinese listed more adolescent misconduct behaviors in the categories of vandalism, school conventional violations, home conventional violations, social conventional violations, romantic relationships, and religious violations than Americans. However, they rated vandalism and school conventional violations less wrong than did Americans. The only category of behaviors that produced consistent cultural differences in the number of misconduct behaviors generated and in the degree of wrongness was home conventional violations. The Chinese listed more adolescent misconduct behaviors in this category and rated it more wrong than did the Americans.

Table 3. Means (standard deviations) for Usage of Categories by Culture and Family Role

Categories	United States		China	
	Adolescents	Parents	Adolescents	Parents
Vandalism ^{c**f**+**}	0.82 (1.23)	0.52 (0.71)	2.75 (1.82)	0.52 (0.84)
Physical Aggression ^{f**}	1.64 (1.60)	0.56 (0.67)	1.72 (1.00)	0.73 (0.75)
Verbal Aggression ^{f**+**}	1.03 (1.32)	0.79 (1.26)	1.62 (1.40)	0.28 (0.60)
General Legal Violations ^{f**+**}	2.13 (1.87)	1.62 (1.35)	3.07 (2.19)	0.88 (0.99)
Weapon offense ^{c**f**}	0.41 (0.74)	0.12 (0.36)	0.28 (0.56)	0.002 (0.17)
Illicit Drugs ^{c**f**}	0.94 (0.78)	0.79 (0.58)	0.36 (0.50)	0.008 (0.27)
Minor Drugs ^{c**f**+**}	1.41 (0.94)	1.42 (0.75)	1.08 (0.66)	0.60 (0.66)
School Conventional ^{c**f**+**}	1.68 (1.64)	1.51 (1.15)	4.83 (3.07)	1.77 (1.94)
Home Conventional ^{c**+**}	1.04 (1.50)	2.79 (2.47)	4.00 (2.11)	2.81 (2.35)
Social Conventional ^{c**+**}	1.98 (2.09)	3.55 (2.52)	4.37 (3.33)	2.88 (3.02)
Sexual Behaviors ^{c**}	0.45 (0.64)	0.57 (0.56)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
Romantic Relationships ^{c**f**}	0.20 (0.51)	0.12 (0.36)	0.46 (0.56)	0.23 (0.43)
Prudential Behaviors ^{c**f**}	0.17 (0.48)	0.13 (0.40)	0.15 (0.38)	0.02 (0.13)
Religious Violations ^{c**f**+**}	0.07 (0.34)	0.03 (0.18)	0.46 (0.54)	0.04 (0.23)

Note: c=main effect for culture, f=main effect of family role, += interaction effect of culture and family role, *=p<.05, **=p<.01

Differences between Parents and Adolescent Children

The second hypothesis predicted differences between parents' and adolescent children's perspectives on perceptions and evaluations of adolescent misconduct behaviors. Supporting this hypothesis, there were significant main effects of family role in 11 out of 14 categories: vandalism, physical aggression, verbal aggression, general legal violations, weapon offenses,

school conventional violations, illicit drugs, minor drugs, romantic relationships, prudential behaviors, and religious violations. In all cases, adolescent children generated more misconduct behaviors in these categories than their parents (see Table 3).

Table 4. Means (standard deviations) for Degree of Wrongness for each Category by Culture and Family Role

Categories	United States		China	
	Adolescents	Parents	Adolescents	Parents
Vandalism ^{c**f**+**}	3.48 (1.11)	4.53 (0.70)	3.10 (0.86)	3.12 (1.04)
Physical Aggression ^{f**}	4.04 (0.96)	4.42 (0.79)	3.95 (0.78)	4.18 (0.96)
Verbal Aggression ^{c**}	3.70 (0.98)	3.86 (0.89)	3.21 (0.94)	3.21 (1.17)
General Legal Violations ^{c**f**}	4.11 (0.85)	4.73 (0.42)	3.85 (0.76)	4.28 (0.85)
Weapon Offense	4.65 (0.78)	5.00 (0)	4.05 (1.00)	4.50 (0.70)
Illicit Drugs ^{+*}	4.46 (0.87)	4.90 (0.33)	4.81 (0.71)	4.69 (1.11)
Minor Drugs ^{f**+**}	3.76 (1.16)	4.55 (0.60)	4.13 (0.89)	3.98 (0.99)
School Conventional ^{c**f**+**}	2.84 (1.10)	4.02 (0.85)	3.10 (0.79)	3.25 (1.00)
Home Conventional ^{c**+**}	2.85 (1.16)	3.29 (0.90)	3.53 (0.77)	3.03 (0.99)
Social Conventional ^{f**+**}	3.07 (1.08)	3.90 (0.67)	3.47 (0.82)	3.23 (0.90)
Sexual Behaviors ^{f**}	3.76 (1.27)	4.58 (0.73)	-- --	-- --
Romantic Relationships	3.71 (1.19)	4.10 (0.99)	4.10 (0.86)	3.97 (0.90)
Prudential Behaviors	4.29 (0.91)	4.05 (1.07)	4.27 (0.98)	4.67 (0.58)
Religious Violations	4.13 (1.17)	3.67 (1.53)	3.90 (0.99)	3.42 (1.02)

Note: c=main effect for culture, f=main effect of family role, += interaction effect of culture and family role, *=p<.05, **=p<.01

When evaluating specific adolescent misconduct behavior on degree of wrongness, the results revealed main effects of family role in 7 out of 14 categories: vandalism, physical aggression, general legal violations, school conventional violations, social conventional violations,

minor drugs, and sex behaviors. In all cases, parents rated these adolescent misconduct behaviors more wrong than their adolescent children (see Table 4).

In summary, although parents generated fewer adolescent misconduct behaviors than their adolescent children in almost all categories except home conventional violations, social conventional violations, and sex behaviors, they rated misconduct behaviors in half of the 14 categories more wrong than their adolescent children: vandalism, physical aggression, general legal violations, school conventional violations, social conventional violations, minor drugs, and sex behaviors.

Interaction between Culture and Family Roles

Our final hypothesis predicted interaction effects between culture and family roles. Supporting this hypothesis, significant interaction effects of culture by family role were found in 8 out of 14 categories: vandalism, verbal aggression, general legal violations, school conventional violations, home conventional violations, social conventional violations, minor drug, and religious violations.

T-tests were then used to further decompose the interaction effects. Chinese adolescents were more likely than American adolescents to use categories of vandalism, school conventional violations, home conventional violations, social conventional violations, and religious violations, whereas Chinese and American parents did not significantly differ on the mean usage of these categories. In addition, Chinese adolescents were more likely than American adolescents to use categories of verbal aggression and general legal violations, whereas American parents were more likely than Chinese parents to use these categories: verbal aggression and general legal violations. Finally, the category of minor drugs was more likely used by American adolescents than by Chinese adolescents. The differences were even greater between American parents and Chinese parents (see Table 3).

When evaluating specific adolescent misconduct behaviors on degree of wrongness, there were significant interaction effects of culture by family role in 6 out of 14 categories: vandalism, school conventional violations, home conventional violations, social conventional violations, illicit drugs, and minor drugs.

T-tests were then used to further decompose the interaction effects. Specifically, Chinese adolescents rated school conventional violations, social conventional violations, and minor drugs more wrong than American adolescents, whereas American parents considered school conventional violations, social conventional violations, and minor drugs more wrong than Chinese parents. Additionally, Chinese adolescents rated home conventional violations and illicit drugs more wrong than American adolescents, whereas there were no differences between Chinese parents and American Parents. Finally, American adolescents considered vandalism more wrong than Chinese adolescents. The differences were even greater between American parents and Chinese parents (see Table 4).

In summary, significant cultural differences and differences between parents' and adolescent children's perspectives found in previous sections were further complicated by interactions between culture and family roles. By comparing results based on the number of adolescent misconduct behaviors generated in each category and the degree of wrongness of each category, we came up with three general patterns of interaction effects. First, Chinese adolescents were more likely than American adolescents to use categories of school conventional violations, home conventional violations, and social conventional violations, and considered these adolescent misconduct behaviors more wrong. Chinese and American parents did not differ in using these categories, however, and it was American parents who considered adolescent misconduct

behaviors in these categories more wrong than did Chinese parents. Second, American adolescents were more likely than Chinese adolescents to generate misconduct behaviors in minor drugs, but rated these misconduct behaviors less wrong than Chinese adolescents. On the other hand, American parents were more likely than Chinese parents to generate misconduct behaviors in minor drugs and rated these misconduct behaviors more wrong than Chinese parents. Third, Chinese adolescents were more likely than American adolescents to generate behaviors in vandalism, but rated these misconduct behaviors less wrong than American adolescents. On the other hand, Chinese parents were more likely than American parents to generate misconduct behaviors in vandalism and rated these misconduct behaviors more wrong than American parents.

DISCUSSION

The major goal of the current research was to examine cultural differences in perceptions and evaluations of adolescent misconduct behaviors. In order to achieve this goal, this study employed a new methodology to collect the data. Participants were asked to generate a list of adolescent misconduct behaviors and evaluate the degree of wrongness of these self-generated misconduct behaviors. In addition, the current study used a fully crossed design to compare parents versus adolescent children's perspectives on adolescent misconduct behaviors. Finally, the current study took extra steps to match age range and city size of the American and the Chinese samples.

As expected, the results revealed cultural differences in a number of adolescent misconduct behaviors. Specifically, Americans generated more adolescent misconduct behaviors in the categories of weapon offenses, illicit drugs, minor drugs, and prudential behaviors than Chinese, whereas Chinese generated more adolescent misconduct behaviors in the categories of vandalism, school conventional violations, home conventional violations, social conventional violations, romantic relationships, and religious violations than Americans. These cultural differences may reflect cultural and societal differences in laws, religion, and socialization processes (Arnett and Balle-Jensen, 1993; Tisak, et al., 2001). For example, China recently declared certain religions (e.g., Falun Gong) illegal. Because of its saliency, a number of Chinese participants put down these religious activities as misconduct. In addition, our results provide a new perspective in explaining previous conflicting results of cross-cultural differences in adolescent misconduct (e.g., Feldman, et al., 1991, versus Chen, et al., 1998). It seems too simplistic to draw conclusions about adolescents in which displaying more misconduct behaviors. The present study suggests that it all depends on what types of adolescent misconduct behaviors are under examination. For example, American adolescents in general have more access to weapons and drugs than Chinese adolescents. This may explain why Americans generated more adolescent misconduct behaviors in these categories. Chinese adolescents, on the other hand, generated more adolescent misconduct behaviors in either home or public places (i.e., school and social settings) than American adolescents. This finding supported the notion that Chinese culture is more likely than American culture to emphasize group harmony and interdependency.

However, it would be misleading if one only focuses on the number of adolescent misconduct behaviors generated without looking at evaluations of these behaviors. Although Americans generated more adolescent misconduct behaviors in weapon offenses and drug use, they did not evaluate these behaviors to be more wrong than did Chinese. This pattern of results is consistent with previous research of Tisak and her colleagues (Tisak, Tisak, & Rogers, 1994). American adolescents may realize that certain behaviors (e.g., using minor drugs such as tobacco and alcohol under age) are misconduct, but they do not judge these misconduct behaviors to be very wrong and hence continue these misconduct behaviors despite regulations. Likewise, Chinese generated more adolescent misconduct behaviors in vandalism and school conventional violations but considered them less wrong than did Americans. It seems that the number of

misconduct behaviors only represent salient problem behaviors in a particular culture or society, whereas the degree of wrongness reflects the true values held by individuals in different cultures. The only category of behaviors that produced consistent cultural differences in the number of misconduct behaviors generated and in the degree of wrongness was home conventional violations. The Chinese generated more adolescent misconduct behaviors in this category and rated it more wrong than did the Americans. This may suggest that family relationship is more important in Chinese culture than in American culture. Chinese culture is a collective culture, whereas American is an individualistic one. According to Triandis and colleagues, a family, instead of an individual, is the basic unit in a collective culture (Triandis, McCusker, & Hui, 1990). If a child in a family conducts misconduct behaviors, the whole family loses "faces." So the age hierarchy is very salient in the Chinese culture. Parents make rules at home and they have more controls over their children's behaviors.

The findings of differences between parents' versus their adolescent children's perspectives on perceptions and evaluations of adolescent misconduct behaviors give us another example of why we should examine both the number of misconduct behaviors and the degree of wrongness. Although in general parents generated fewer adolescent misconduct behaviors than their adolescent children, they rated these misconduct behaviors more wrong. The number of adolescent misconduct behaviors generated by adolescents themselves may simply reflect a familiarity issue, whereas the degree of wrongness represents the true attitudes parents have about adolescent misconduct behaviors.

The most interesting results of the current study were the interaction effects between culture and family roles. Chinese adolescents were more likely than American adolescents to use categories of school conventional violations, home conventional violations, and social conventional violations, and considered these adolescent misconduct behaviors more wrong. This, again, can be attributed to cultural differences in valuing interdependence in home and public situations (i.e., school and social environment). However, it was American parents who considered adolescent misconduct behaviors in these categories more wrong than did Chinese parents. The results may be somewhat surprising for researchers who examine cultural differences alone, but may not be so surprising for those who study parental control (Steinberg, Mounts, Lamborn, & Dornbusch, 1991). Cultural differences in values may be most likely evident by adolescents' perspectives because of the specific life stage they are in during the socialization process. At this stage, adolescents may be more likely to accept the most salient cultural values without scrutiny and translate these values in their behaviors. Parents, on the other hand, may be more likely to look at their adolescent children's misconduct behaviors and adjust parental control wherever necessary (Feldman, et al., 1991). Thus, parents' perceptions and evaluations of adolescent misconduct behaviors may be more likely to tailor adolescent children's perspectives. For example, American adolescents felt less wrong than Chinese adolescents for misconduct behaviors in the domains of school conventional violations, social conventional violations, and minor drugs, which may simply reflect cultural differences. American parents, on the other hand, may perceive that they need more control over their adolescent children's behaviors in these domains and thus, evaluated them as more wrong than Chinese parents for these misconduct behaviors.

Overall, the present study made significant contributions to the current literature on cross-cultural differences in adolescent misconduct behaviors by using a self-generated methodology and examining cultural values from both parents' and adolescent children's perspectives. This study also lays ground work for future research to further examine the mechanisms that account for the interaction between culture and family roles. Finally, there are many implications for parents and teachers who are concerned about the heightened level of adolescent misconduct behaviors in today's society. For example, parents need to establish good communication with

their adolescent children, by not only understanding their definitions of which behaviors are misconduct behaviors, but also how wrong they consider the specific adolescent misconduct behaviors to be.

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