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PARENTING STYLES AND ADOLESCENTS' SELF-ESTEEM IN BRAZIL[1]

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Summary.—This study explored the relationship between parenting styles and self-esteem among 1,239 11- to 15-yr.-old Brazilian adolescents (54% girls; *M* age = 13.4 yr., *SD* = 1.4). Teenagers' families were classified into 1 of 4 groups (Authoritative, Authoritarian, Indulgent, or Neglectful) based on adolescents' answers to the ESPA29 Parental Socialization Scale. Participants completed the AF5 Multidimensional Self-Esteem Scale which appraises five dimensions: Academic, Social, Emotional, Family, and Physical. Analyses showed that Brazilian adolescents from Indulgent families scored equal (Academic and Social) or higher (Family) in Self-esteem than adolescents from Authoritative families. Adolescents from Indulgent families scored higher than adolescents from Authoritarian and Neglectful families in four Self-esteem dimensions, Academic, Social, Family, and Physical. Adolescents from Authoritative families scored higher than adolescents from Authoritarian and Neglectful families in three Self-esteem dimensions, Academic, Social, and Family. These results suggest that Authoritative parenting is not associated with optimum self-esteem in Brazil.

This study analyzes the relationship between parenting styles and adolescents' personal adjustment, indicated by the adolescents' self-esteem, in Brazil. Parenting is one of the most relevant perspectives in the study of relationships between parents and children. Parenting performance and its effect on children's developmental outcomes (Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Gray & Steinberg, 1999) has traditionally been studied as two orthogonal constructs, demandingness and responsiveness (Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Baumrind, 1989, 1991). Demandingness refers to the extent to which parents show control, supervision, and maturity demands in their parenting; responsiveness refers to the extent to which parents show their children affective warmth and acceptance, give them support, and communicate with them. Based on these two dimensions, four parenting styles have been identified (Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Baumrind, 1991): Authoritative parents are high both on demandingness and responsiveness, Indulgent parents are low on demandingness and high on responsiveness, Authoritarian parents are high on demanding-

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ness and low on responsiveness, and Neglectful parents are both low on demandingness and responsiveness.

Studies carried out on Euro-American families in the United States with samples of children and adolescents of all ages (e.g., Baumrind & Black, 1967; Baumrind, 1982; Steinberg, Elmen, & Mounts, 1989) have shown that authoritative parenting is consistently associated with positive developmental outcomes in offspring (Baumrind, 1971; Steinberg, Lamborn, Darling, Mounts, & Dornbusch, 1994), including school adjustment and academic achievement (Dornbusch, Ritter, Leiderman, Roberts, & Fraleigh, 1987; Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbusch, & Darling, 1992), higher self-esteem and psychosocial competence, and less psychological and behavioral dysfunction (Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Buri, 1989; Lamborn, Mounts, Steinberg, & Dornbusch, 1991). These results have demonstrated that a combination of high warmth, acceptance, and involvement (which characterizes both authoritative and indulgent styles) together with high strictness (which characterizes the authoritative and authoritarian styles) corresponds with the optimal prototype of parental socialization among Euro-American families: the authoritative parenting style. This parenting style fosters optimal adjustment in Euro-American children by offering emotional support by means of responsiveness and establishing guidelines, limits, and expectations by means of demandingness.

Nevertheless, different studies have questioned whether those results can be generalized to other ethnic or cultural contexts. For example, among African-American and Asian-American adolescents, there is no evidence of positive influence of authoritative parenting on academic achievement (Dornbusch, *et al.*, 1987; Steinberg, Mounts, Lamborn, & Dornbusch, 1991; McBride-Change & Chang, 1998). Other studies have suggested that Asian American adolescents from authoritative families are not better off in school than those from authoritarian families (Chao, 2001), and that for the Chinese population authoritarian parenting predicts satisfaction with the overall parent-child relationship whereas authoritative parenting does not (Quoss & Zhao, 1995). Likewise, Dwairy, Achoui, Abouserie, and Farah (2006) found that in Arab societies, authoritarian parenting is not associated with negative effects on the adolescents' mental health as it is within Western liberal societies. Finally, in certain contexts, it has been found that indulgent parenting is associated with equal or better outcomes for children than authoritative parenting. In this sense, Kim and Rhoner (2002) observed that Korean American adolescents raised by authoritative parents do not have better academic achievement than youth raised by indulgent parents. In Mexico, Villalobos, Cruz, and Sánchez (2004) found that adolescents from authoritative and indulgent families obtained higher scores than adolescents from neglectful families on diverse measures of competence and adjustment, but there were no

differences between adolescents from authoritative and indulgent families. Finally, various studies conducted in Spain (Llinares, 1998; Musitu & García, 2001) and in Italy (Marchetti, 1997), using different parenting style measures (Musitu & García, 2004), showed that adolescents with indulgent parents obtained equal or higher scores on self-esteem than adolescents with authoritative parents.

These discrepancies in the associations between parenting and adolescents' adjustment, suggest that parenting practices have different meanings and implications for children depending on the sociocultural context in which these practices occur (Chao, 1994; Tam & Lam, 2003; Musitu & García, 2004; Villalobos, *et al.*, 2004). In relation to the positive effects of authoritarian parenting practices in Asiatic cultures, Grusec, Rudy, and Martini (1997) theorized that, in contrast to the United States, Asian parents employ authoritarian practices because these practices are considered beneficial for the children. In these cultures strict disciplinary practices are understood as a strategy that fosters family harmony and ensures children's moral development (Ho, 1989; Chao, 1994). It has also bee pointed out that for Asians the authoritarian style is associated with parental concern, caring, and love (Tobin, Wu, & Davidson, 1989; Chao, 1994), whereas for Americans, authoritarian parenting is associated with manifestations of parental hostility, aggression, suspicion, and dominance (Rohner & Pettengill, 1985; Kim & Chun, 1994). On the other hand, the positive association of indulgent parenting with psychosocial adjustment found in Spain, Italy, and Mexico measured with several variable outcomes like self-esteem indicates that low parental strictness combined with high affection, acceptance, and involvement could be enough to obtain optimal adolescent adjustment (Marchetti, 1997; Musitu & García, 2004; Villalobos, *et al.*, 2004). The latter countries can be categorized as horizontal collectivistic cultures (Triandis, 1995, 2001; Gouveia, Alburquerque, Clemente, & Espinosa, 2002; Gouveia, Clemente, & Espinosa, 2003), according to Triandis' (1995) categorization, where emphasis is placed on affection, cooperation, mutual respect, harmony in the group, social support, and egalitarian relations instead of hierarchical relations as in vertical collectivistic or individualistic cultures (Triandis, 1995, 2001). This could explain why parents' use of strictness and demandingness would not be necessary to set limits and obtain optimal adolescent adjustment. Instead, children's behavior would be adequately controlled by means of reasoning and dialog practices.

Consistent with the fact that parenting style is theoretically independent of specific socialization content (Darling & Steinberg, 1993, p. 493), in Brazil, as in the United States, empirical studies confirmed that dimensions of demandingness and responsiveness provide adequate and valid assessment information about parental styles of socialization (Costa, Teixeira, & Gomes,

2000; Martínez, 2003; Weber, Prado, Viezzer, & Brandenburg, 2004). However, no conclusive results of the affect of parenting styles on children's outcomes have been obtained. Weber, Brandenburg, and Viezzer (2003) found that children raised by authoritative parents were more optimistic than children raised by neglectful parents, although the authoritative group does not significantly differ from children raised by indulgent or authoritarian parents. In another study analyzing only the authoritarian and authoritative styles, Oliveira, Marin, Pires, Frizzo, Ravanello, and Rossato (2002) found that children from authoritarian mothers had more externalizing and internalizing problem behaviors than children from authoritative mothers. Finally, Pacheco, Gomes, and Teixeira (1999) found no association between parenting styles and social skills among Brazilian adolescents. On the other hand, there are indications that certain Brazilian parental attitudes and the meaning of some parental practices can differ from those in the United States. Thus, respect to authority seems to be more important to North American than Brazilian children (Biaggio, 1973), which is in line with the characterization of Brazil as a horizontal collectivistic culture (Gouveia, Guerra, Martínez, & Paterna, 2004) emphasizing egalitarian instead of hierarchical relations. Also, reasoning has proved to be more effective in Brazil than power assertion in some areas, such as development of moral reasoning (Camino, Camino, & Moraes, 2003). Finally, education in Brazil is considered to be tolerant (Costa, *et al.*, 2000).

The purpose of this study was to examine whether the beneficial effect of authoritative parenting observed in the United States in Euro-American middle-class families (Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Steinberg, *et al.*, 1994) can be generalized to the Brazilian cultural context. This is important because in Brazil no conclusive results on the relation of parenting styles with children's outcomes have been obtained (Oliveira, *et al.*, 2002; Weber, *et al.*, 2003). In this study it was examined whether in a horizontal collectivist culture such as Brazil, characterized by egalitarian relationships (Gouveia, *et al.*, 2004) and where education is considered tolerant (Costa, *et al.*, 2000), parents' use of strictness would not be essential to obtain optimal adolescent adjustment. As occurs in other horizontal collectivist countries (e.g., Musitu & García, 2004; Villalobos, *et al.*, 2004) it is possible that in the Brazilian culture indulgent parents, characterized by lower strictness but with high responsiveness, may be as effective as authoritative parents. It is possible that these parents could set tolerable limits for adolescents' behaviors mainly by means of reasoning.

This study examined the effects of parent-adolescent relationships on adolescents' psychological adjustment, as indicated by the adolescents' self-esteem. Self-esteem is a traditional indicator of psychological adjustment in parenting studies (Felson & Zielinsky, 1989; Barber, 1990; Barber, Chadwick, & Oerter, 1992). Higher adolescent self-esteem has been associated in

the same way as other indicators of psychological adjustment with the authoritative parenting style in Euro-American middle-class families (Maccoby & Martin, 1983, pp. 46-47; Steinberg, *et al.*, 1991, p. 1049; Baumrind, 1993, p. 1308). Following the theoretical framework proposed by Shavelson, Hubner, and Stanton (1976, p. 413) and Byrne and Shavelson (1996, p. 602), self-esteem is measured in this study as five specific dimensions (Academic, Social, Emotional, Family, and Physical). All five dimensions are positively related with different important personal aspects of psychological adjustment and it has been theorized that these specific components are more highly related with the actual behavior than the global component (Byrne & Shavelson, 1996). The following hypotheses were proposed for the effects of parenting style in adolescents' self-esteem in Brazil: (1) across all five dimensions of self-esteem, adolescents reporting authoritative parenting were expected to score higher than those reporting authoritarian and neglectful parenting; (2) whereas adolescents reporting indulgent parenting were expected to score the same as those reporting authoritative parenting.

Method

Sample

The participants in the study were 1,239 adolescents from a large metropolitan area in Northeast Brazil with over one million inhabitants. Slightly over half of the students were girls (53.7%) and the average age was 13.4 yr. ($SD = 1.4$, range = 11–15). Participants were selected from low and middle socioeconomic groups. The adolescents in the Low SES group (45.7%) were recruited from four public schools, where parents were mostly blue-collar workers and most of them had a monthly income of $300 or less. The adolescents in the Middle SES were recruited from six private schools where parents' occupations were as skilled workers or professionals and incomes ranged mostly from $900 to $1,300 per month. In Brazil, adolescents' attendance at public or private school is a clear indicator fo the families' social class. All of the youngsters who received their parents' approval and were in attendance in the designated classroom for data collection were included in the study (87% response rate). Participants were administered a series of self-report questionnaires in a designated classroom during regular class periods.

Measures

ESPA29 Parental Socialization Scale (Musitu & García, 2001).—Offspring reported the frequency of several parental practices, with separate reports for father's and mother's practices, among different situations with significant affect on the parent-child relationship in Western culture. Twenty-nine situations were sampled, 13 youngsters' compliance situations (e.g., "If

somebody comes over to visit and I behave nicely") and 16 youngsters' noncompliance situations (e.g., "If I break or ruin something at home") to assess parental practices with a 4-point scale (1: Never and 4: Always). In each of the 13 compliance situations, offspring had to rate the parenting practices of Affection ("he/she shows affection") and Indifference ("he/she seems indifferent"). In each of the 16 noncompliance situations, offspring had to rate the parenting practices of Dialog ("he/she talks to me"), Detachment ("it's the same to him/her"), Verbal Scolding ("he/she scolds me"), Physical Punishment ("he/she spanks me"), and Revoking Privileges ("he/she takes something away from me"). The parenting styles were evaluated from both contextual (Darling & Steinberg, 1993) and situational (Smetana, 1995) perspectives where a total of 232 questions were asked, 116 for each parent. The family score for the Acceptance/Involvement dimension was obtained by averaging the responses on Affection, Dialog, Indifference, and Detachment practices of both father and mother. In the last two practices the scores were inverted because they are inversely related to the dimension. The family score for the Strictness/Imposition dimension was obtained by averaging the responses on Verbal Scolding, Physical Punishment, and Revoking Privileges of both father and mother. Hence, two dimensions measured family parental styles (see Lamborn, *et al.*, 1991; Steinberg, *et al.*, 1994) so that higher scores represent a greater sense of Acceptance/Involvement and Strictness/Imposition (highest score on the two scales = 4). The higher the score on Acceptance/Involvement, the greater the parents' reinforcement of the compliance behavior of the adolescent through affection and correction of maladjustment behavior through bidirectional communication and reasoning (Musitu & García, 2004). The higher the score on Strictness/Imposition, the more the parents resort to imposing verbal reprimand, physical punishment, and the removal of privileges to correct the maladjustment behavior.

This scale was originally validated in Spain with a sample of almost 3,000 adolescents (Musitu & García, 2001) between the ages of 10 and 18 years (1,928 of whom were 11–15 years of age) and was developed to specifically assess the four types of parenting styles, Authoritative, Authoritarian, Indulgent, and Neglectful (Marchetti, 1997; Martínez, 2003; Musitu & García, 2001, 2004). The factor structure of the scale has been confirmed in different studies (Llinares, 1998; Musitu & García, 2001) and has the advantage (Lim & Lim, 2003, p. 21) of having the two dimensions relatively orthogonal (in this study, $r = .02$). To ensure that item concepts were comparable for the Spanish version and the Portuguese translated version, back-translation methods were used. After obtaining permission from the copyright holder, the initial measure was translated from Spanish into Portuguese. Three bilingual developmental researchers discussed discrepancies in

content, language, and meaning. Finally, the measure was back-translated and compared to the original Spanish version to ensure the concepts were the same. The factor structure of the Portuguese translated version was equivalent to the Spanish version (Martínez, 2003). The Cronbach alpha of all 232 items was .96 and for other dimensions were Acceptance/Implication .96 and Strictness/Imposition .96.

Typologies.—Following the examples of Lamborn, *et al.* (1991, p. 1053) and Steinberg, *et al.* (1994, p. 758) four parenting categories, Authoritative, Indulgent, Authoritarian, and Neglectful, were defined by trichotomizing the sample with a tertile split on Acceptance/Involvement and Strictness/Imposition, and examining the two variables simultaneously. Authoritative families ($N = 150$) were those who scored in the upper tertiles on both Acceptance/Involvement and Strictness/Imposition, whereas Neglectful families ($N = 145$) were in the lowest tertiles on both variables. Authoritarian families ($N = 132$) were in the lowest tertile on Acceptance/Involvement but in the highest tertile on Strictness/Imposition. Indulgent families ($N = 122$) were in the highest tertile on Acceptance/Involvement but in the lowest tertile on Strictness/Imposition. To ensure that the four groups of families represented distinct categories, families who scored in the middle tertile on either of the dimensions were excluded from the analysis. Table 1 shows that the sample of families scored in the upper or lower tertiles on the dimensions are demographically comparable to the overall sample. Table 2 provides information on the sizes of each of the four parenting groups as well as each group's mean and standard deviation on the Acceptance/Involvement and Strictness/Imposition dimensions.

TABLE 1

COMPARISON OF DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF TOTAL SAMPLE ($N = 1{,}239$) VERSUS FOUR PARENTING GROUPS ($N = 549$): PERCENT

		Total Sample	Parenting Groups
Sex	Girls	53.7	53.2
	Boys	46.3	46.8
Age Group	11–13 yr. old	47.9	47.9
	14–15 yr. old	52.1	52.1
Type of School	Public	45.7	47.5
	Private	54.3	52.5

Outcome variable.—Adolescents' personal adjustment was measured with the Multidimensional Self-esteem Scale AF5 (García & Musitu, 1999). Self-esteem is one of the traditional outcome variables in parenting studies (Felson & Zielinsky, 1989; Barber, 1990; Barber, *et al.*, 1992). The AF5 scale with 30 items appraises self-esteem in five different domains: Academic, feelings of self-appraisal that the subject has on the quality of performance in

TABLE 2
NUMBERS OF CASES IN PARENTING STYLE GROUPS AND MEAN SCORES AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS ON MEASURES OF PARENTAL DIMENSIONS ($N = 549$)

	Total	Indulgent	Authoritative	Authoritarian	Neglectful
Frequency	549	122	150	132	145
Percent	100.0	22.2	27.3	24.0	26.4
Acceptance/Involvement					
M	3.25	3.73	3.71	2.81	2.79
SD	0.50	0.15	0.14	0.23	0.25
Strictness/Imposition					
M	1.88	1.43	2.26	2.34	1.45
SD	0.49	0.18	0.25	0.33	0.15

Note.—Scores on the Acceptance/Involvement and Strictness/Imposition scales could range from 1 to 4.

the student role, e.g., "I do my homework well"; Social, perception of the subject's own performance in social relationships, e.g., "I make friends easily"; Emotional, perception of the subject's emotional state and responses to specific situations, with a certain commitment and involvement in everyday life, general perception of emotional state and in specific situations, (reverse scored), e.g., "Many things make me nervous"; Family perception that the subject has on involvement, participation, and integration in the family unit, e.g., "I feel that my parents love me"; and Physical, perception that the subject has on physical appearance and physical state, e.g., "I take good care of my physical health." Each domain is measured with 6 items on a 99-point scale (visualized as a thermometer), ranging from 1: Complete disagreement to 99: Complete agreement. The students rated between the two poles by marking a line. Ratings were divided by 10 to obtain scores ranging from .1 to 9.99 (García & Musitu, 1999). The factor structure of the scale was confirmed with both exploratory (García & Musitu, 1999; Martínez, 2003) and confirmatory (Tomas & Oliver, 2004; García, Musitu, & Veiga, 2006) factor analyses and no method effect appears to be associated with negatively worded items (Tomás & Oliver, 2004).

The AF5 was initially developed and normed on a sample of 6,500 Spanish subjects (García & Musitu, 1999) and is more comprehensive than the tool used by the majority of studies. The shorter Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, for example, contains only 10 or 15 items (Gual, Perez-Gaspar, Martínez-Gonzalez, Lahortiga, de Irala-Estevez, & Cervera-Enguix, 2002; Martínez-Gonzalez, Gual, Lahortiga, Alonso, de Irala-Estevez, & Cervera, 2003). In the AF5 scale, self-esteem is understood to be multidimensional, hierarchically ordered, and increasingly differentiated with age. In the first stages of life self-esteem is less specific, being less differentiated by domains, based on the Shavelson, Hubner, and Stanton theoretical model (see Shavelson, *et*

al., 1976, p. 413; Byrne & Shavelson, 1996, p. 602). After permission was obtained from the copyright holder, the AF5 scale was adapted into Portuguese following the same back-translation protocol as was used for the ESPA29. Factor analyses (Martínez, 2003) and multi-group factorial invariance analyses showed that the Portuguese version of the AF5 had similar factor weights, variances, and covariances of the factors (García, *et al.*, 2006). The Cronbach alpha of all items was .79 and by factor were Academic .82, Social .55, Emotional .99, Family .72, and Physical .73.

Results

Preliminary Multivariate Analyses

First, possible interactions between adolescents' sex, age, and social class (indexed by type of school) were tested with Parenting Style (Lamborn, *et al.*, 1991; Kelley, Power, & Wimbush, 1992; Steinberg, *et al.*, 1994; Aunola, Stattin, & Nurmi, 2000). A multivariate analysis of variance was computed between Parenting Style (Indulgent, Authoritative, Authoritarian vs Neglectful), sex (girls vs boys), age (11–13 vs 14–15 years old), and type of school (public vs private) on the five self-esteem dimensions (Academic, Social, Emotional, Family, and Physical). The results yielded main effects of Parenting Styles ($\Lambda = .768$, $F_{15,1397.2} = 9.32$, $p = .001$), sex ($\Lambda = .944$, $F_{5,506.0} = 6.03$, $p = .001$), age ($\Lambda = .978$, $F_{5,506.0} = 2.24$, $p = .049$), and type of school ($\Lambda = .969$, $F_{5,506.0} = 3.27$, $p = .006$). But, in line with other studies (Lamborn, *et al.*, 1991; Steinberg, *et al.*, 1994), no interaction effects were found. Hence, only the main univariate effects were analyzed.

Main Univariate Effects of Demographic Variables

Although not central to this investigation, follow-up univariate analyses (ANOVAs) indicated that girls ($M = 7.37$, $SD = 2.01$) reported higher Academic Self-esteem than boys ($M = 6.88$, $SD = 1.76$; $F_{1,510} = 7.82$, $p = .005$); but boys ($M = 5.13$, $SD = 1.96$) reported higher Emotional Self-esteem than girls ($M = 4.54$, $SD = 2.04$; $F_{1,510} = 13.79$, $p < .001$). The analysis between age groups showed that adolescents 14–15 years of age ($M = 7.47$, $SD = 2.02$) reported lower Family Self-esteem than adolescents 11–13 years of age ($M = 7.78$, $SD = 1.78$; $F_{1,510} = 4.02$, $p = .046$). Finally, the analysis between types of school indicated that adolescents from private schools ($M = 8.00$, $SD = 1.73$) had higher Family Self-esteem than adolescents from public schools ($M = 7.20$, $SD = 2.02$; $F_{1,510} = 8.96$, $p = .003$).

Main Univariate Effects of Parenting Styles

Five follow-up univariate analyses (ANOVAs, see Table 3) indicated that Parenting Styles had statistically significant main effects for all self-esteem dimensions except for Emotional Self-esteem. As shown in Table 3, adolescents from Authoritative and Indulgent homes had higher Academic and

Social Self-esteem than adolescents from Authoritarian or Neglectful families. However, adolescents from Authoritative and Indulgent families did not differ from each other on Academic and Social Self-esteem. The Family Self-esteem of adolescents from Indulgent families was higher than that of adolescents from the other family types, although Family Self-esteem was higher in Authoritative families than in Authoritarian and Neglectful families. Adolescents from Authoritarian families were characterized by lower Family Self-esteem. Finally, adolescents from Indulgent families had higher Physical Self-esteem than adolescents from Authoritarian or Neglectful families, but adolescents from Authoritative families did not differ from the other three groups.

TABLE 3
MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, AND *Post Hoc* COMPARISONS ON FOUR PARENTING STYLE GROUPS ACROSS DIMENSIONS OF SELF-ESTEEM

	Indulgent		Authoritative		Authoritarian		Neglectful		$F_{3,510}$
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	
Academic	7.74^a	1.75	7.44^a	1.76	6.78^b	1.92	6.65^b	2.00	10.61†
Social	7.46^a	1.64	7.41^a	1.45	6.70^b	1.56	6.93^b	1.41	6.91†
Emotional	5.18	2.07	4.61	1.91	4.82	1.98	4.72	2.13	1.73
Family	8.77^a	1.17	8.16^b	1.53	6.33^d	2.16	7.25^c	1.76	42.29†
Physical	7.04^a	2.04	6.83	2.01	6.31^b	2.20	6.33^b	2.01	2.65*

Note.—*Post hoc* comparisons significant at .05 adjusted per Bonferroni. Superscripts in rows indicate significant differences between means. $^*p<.05$. $^\dagger p<.001$.

DISCUSSION

The findings suggest that parenting styles are related to adolescents' self-esteem in Brazil. However, in this country, the authoritative style of parenting is not necessarily associated with higher adolescent self-esteem (Maccoby & Martin, 1983, pp. 46-47; Steinberg, *et al.*, 1991, p. 1049; Baumrind, 1993, p. 1308). Adolescents reporting Authoritative and Indulgent parenting also had the highest scores on measures of academic and social self-esteem. Nevertheless, self-esteem scores of the Authoritative group on the parenting measure were lower than those of the Indulgent group. Authoritative parenting style was not associated with higher Physical self-esteem in offspring than the other parenting styles; conversely, the Indulgent parenting style was associated with higher Physical self-esteem in offspring than the Authoritarian and Neglectful parenting styles. It is significant that only on Family self-esteem, which reflects the adolescents' perception of integration in the family unit, adolescents reporting Indulgent parenting had higher scores than those reporting Authoritative parenting. This result can be explained by the fact that family self-esteem is probably mostly determined by the parents' behavior, whereas the other self-esteem dimensions can be influenced by other variables like school achievement or peers (Byrne & Shavelson, 1996).

This result suggests that the association between authoritative parenting style and optimum adjustment in offspring found for Euro-American adolescents (Baumrind, 1971, Lamborn, *et al.*, 1991) can not be generalized to a Brazilian cultural context. Conversely, the results provide support for the studies which question the fact that the association between an authoritative parenting style and optimum adjustment in offspring can be generalized to any cultural or ethnic context (e.g., Rohner & Pettengill, 1985; Dornbusch, *et al.*, 1987; Tobin, *et al.*, 1989; Steinberg, *et al.*, 1991; Darling & Steinberg, 1993; Chao, 1994; Kim & Chun, 1994; McBride-Chang & Chang, 1998; Quoss & Zhao, 1995; Tam & Lam, 2003; Musitu & García, 2004; Villalobos, *et al.*, 2004; Dwairy, *et al.*, 2006). This is the case for some studies with ethnic minorities in the United States where no relation between authoritative parenting and adolescents' adjustment was found (Dornbusch, *et al.*, 1987; Steinberg, *et al.*, 1991). It is also the case for studies where some non-authoritative parenting styles were shown to be associated with equal or higher adjustment in children compared to authoritative parenting (e.g., Chao, 2001; Musitu & García, 2004). Particularly, this study reinforces previous research carried out in some Southern European countries such as Italy and Spain (Marchetti, 1997; Musitu & García, 2001, 2004), and other South American countries such as Mexico (Villalobos, *et al.*, 2004) where it has been shown that indulgent parenting is associated with the same or better adolescent adjustment than authoritative parenting, perhaps as a consequence of the emphasis placed on affection and egalitarian relations in those countries (Triandis, 1995; Gouveia, *et al.*, 2003; Musitu & García, 2004; Villalobos, *et al.*, 2004).

In order to explain why authoritative parenting is not associated in all cultures with better child outcomes, the possibility that parents of different ethnicities hold unique educational aspirations, goals, and values for their children, and therefore enact distinct parenting practices was considered (Spera, 2005). It has also been argued that the same parenting practices can have different meanings according to the characteristics of each culture such as individualism or collectivism (Grusec, *et al.*, 1997; Kim & Rohner, 2002) and that particular socialization practices can be associated with different parenting objectives (Rao, McHale, & Pearson, 2003). Hence, parenting affects on offspring vary according to the culture. It appears that in a country such as Brazil, characterized by horizontal collectivism (Gouveia, *et al.*, 2004), where emphasis is placed on affection, harmony in the group, social support, and egalitarian relations (Triandis, 1995), and where competitiveness is not as marked as in the United States (Triandis, 1995, 2001; Biaggio, Vikan, & Camino, 2005), parenting styles characterized by high acceptance and involvement and low strictness and imposition are associated with similar or better adolescent self-esteem than parenting styles characterized by

high acceptance and involvement and high strictness and imposition. In summary, this study suggests that parents' use of affection and dialog practices is necessary in fostering higher self-esteem in Brazilian adolescents and that the use of strictness and imposition practices by parents does not necessarily improve offsprings' self-esteem.

Three considerations need to be taken into account. First, although self-esteem has been used as an adjustment criterion in numerous studies of parenting (Felson & Zielinsky, 1989; Barber, 1990; Barber, *et al.*, 1992) and is highly related with actual behavior, further examination of parenting effects on other outcome variables would be required to confirm the results of this study. Secondly, the results may have been influenced by the fact that youngsters self-reported on their parents' behavior, although some authors have found similar results when the parents carried out the assessment themselves (Aunola, *et al.*, 2000; Kim, 2001). Finally, the study was cross-sectional and hence did not provide the possibility to test causal hypotheses. It is possible that adolescents' outcomes influence their parents' child-rearing styles as well (see Maccoby, 2000). In any case, antecedent or consequence, it is clear that the relationship between parenting and self-esteem presents cultural differences which will need to be taken into consideration in future research.

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