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INFLUENCE OF PARENT-CHILD COMMUNICATION ON PARENTAL UNDERSTANDING OF CHILDREN: A CROSS-CULTURAL COMPARISON BETWEEN JAPANESE AND AMERICAN PARENTS

By

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ABSTRACT

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By

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This thesis proposes that Japanese parents, who are in a collectivistic culture and use high context communication style, may perceive their children differently from American parents who are in an individualistic culture and use low context communication styles. The influence of parental perceptual differences and parent-child communication on parental understanding of their children was examined. The main findings include that American parents who felt more connectedness to their children understand their children better than do Japanese parents, in terms of family related issues.

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PERSONAL PROLOGUE

Mother: "Hey, do you wanna go to see grandma this afternoon?"
Daughter: "Nope!"
Mother: "You sure? It's not far from here."
Daughter: "No.... I won't go there."
Mother: "OK, then."

This is a part of conversation between my friend, Chris, an American mother, and her daughter Megan, when three of us were visiting our mutual friends almost two years ago. It was not a special conversation, but I experienced culture shock when I observed this parent-child interaction. In this conversation, the daughter was only four years old, but still her mother let her little daughter decide what the daughter would do by herself. However, in my perception, this parental attitude is not usual in Japanese society; Japanese parents are inclined not to seek their children's opinions, especially when the children are under six years old. In my impression, most of the time, Japanese parents decide their children's schedule and behave as if they totally know what their children would like to do. Therefore, the incident in which the American mother asked her child's opinion, even a child who was very small, struck me as a culturally distinct behavior. This experience of having encountered a parent-child interaction in American society led me to think that American parents' perceptions of their children might be different from Japanese parents.' Specifically, American parents may be more likely to perceive and treat their children as separate individuals, rather than as an extension of themselves, compared to Japanese parents.

Thinking about the example above, Japanese and American parents may have different behaviors and beliefs about their children. There are at least two examples from my experiences. The first example is as in the prologue above; American parents frequently seem to provide their children many opportunities to express their

opinion. Parents try to learn what children want to do, instead of assuming that they want to do what the parents think they want to do. Parents may seek children's opinion, "Do you want to go to see grandmother this weekend?" In another case, usually, it is children themselves who decide what they will eat at a restaurant. Parents may ask, "What do you like?" or "Would you like a potato?" In comparison, my speculation is that, Japanese parents do not provide their children many opportunities to express their opinions. Parents rarely ask their children what they want to do. Rather, they behave as if they perfectly know what their children want, need, like and think. For instance, parents may tell their children, "We will go to see grandmother this weekend." Also, parents may decide what their children will eat at a restaurant without asking the children what they want to eat. Parents may say, "Let's have a potato," or "You will have a potato, won't you?" Japanese parents believe that they know what children want to do and what children like to do.

The other example of culturally distinct parent-child communication is the way in which parents refer to themselves. Japanese parents often call themselves "mother/father" in front of their children, while American parents tend to call themselves "I." It seems to me that Japanese parents are inclined to identify themselves as "a part of a parent-child relationship," not as a discrete "individual." In comparison, American parents may identify themselves as "an individual" as well as "mother/father." Although they feel closeness to their child, they perceive a parent and their child as a pair consisting of two separate souls. Japanese parents usually call themselves "mother/father," instead of "I," in front of their children. A Japanese mother may tell her child, "Mother will go shopping, so stay in this room, OK?" or "Pass the salt to Mother." On the other hand, an American mother may tell her child, "I will go shopping, so stay in this room, OK?" or "Pass me the salt."

Chapter 1
INTRODUCTION

Child-parent relationships have been examined as an important factor for child development within many fields, including communication, human ecology, and psychology. As a discipline, plenty of studies place the primary interest on child development and measure the effects of the variance in parenting or attachment styles on child personalities (Herz & Gullone, 1999; Lieb, Wittchen, Hofler, Fuetsch, 2000), adjustment patterns (Dudley & Wisbey, 2000; Slicker, 1998; Wintre & Yaffe, 2000), or academic success (McBride-Chang & Chang, 1998; Warash & Markstrom, 2001). Family communication research, however, has not focused on the relationship between a child-parent relationship and the parents' general feelings or perceptions of their children. In this paper, the effect of parents' general perceptions of children, in terms of *connectedness*, on the degree to which parents understand their children's emotions and thoughts will be examined.

It is important to compare parent-child relationships across cultures. Parent-child interactions are primary human behaviors that are shaped by culture. Given that people from different cultures perceive the world differently (Balsineler & Beck, 1995; Callister, Vehviolaines-Julkunen, & Lauri, 1996; Neuliep & Ryan, 1998), it is inevitable that parents' thoughts and perceptions differ across cultures.

This thesis looks at how Japanese and American parents understand or misunderstand their children, from the perspective of their fundamental cultural beliefs regarding child-parent bonds. This thesis is a cross-cultural extension of two studies regarding understanding: Sillars, Pike, Jones, and Murphy (1984) and Sillars, Folwell, Hill, Maki, Hurst, and Casano (1994). While Sillars et al. (1984) and Sillars et al. (1994) looked at understanding and communication in marital relationships, I will pursue understanding and communication in parent-child relationship.

In chapter 2, literatures on connectedness, understanding, and Japanese and American cultures will be reviewed. In chapter 3, assumptions regarding the relationship between connectedness and understanding will be supplied, and my primary hypotheses and a research question will be presented. In chapter 4, methods and procedures will be discussed. In chapter 5, results will be provided. This thesis will be concluded with a discussion of my findings in chapter 6.

Chapter 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

In this thesis, I am proposing that Japanese and American parents are different in terms of how they perceive their children. Specifically, I am predicting that Japanese parents, who are in a collectivistic culture with high context communication, tend to misunderstand their children compared to American parents, who are in an individualistic and low context communication culture. To provide support for my hypotheses, I must first visit the literatures on self conceptions, high/low context communication, connectedness, cross-cultural differences, and understanding.

1) Self Conceptions

Individualism-collectivism is a broadly accepted theoretical dimension of cultural differences used to predict a wide variety of communication behaviors in a number of different cultures (Niles, 1998; Oetzel, 1998; Triandis, 1985). Individualism is a social pattern consisting of loosely connected individuals who view themselves as unique, and collectivism is a social pattern consisting of closely linked individuals who view themselves as members of one or more "in-groups" (Hofstede, 1980; Triandis, 1995).

Historically, Japan and the United States have been classified as typical collectivistic and individualistic cultures respectively (Hofstede, 1980; Schwartz, 1994). Many researchers support that Japanese collectivistic culture is different from American individualistic cultures along several important value orientations, including importance of the family, interrelatedness with others, and separation from in-groups (Triandis, Brislin, & Hui, 1988; Triandis, McCusker, Betancourt, Iwao, Leung, Salazar, Setiadi, Sinha, Touzard, & Zaleski, 1993). For instance, Americans value individual benefits such as personal goals, freedom, and independence, while Japanese value group benefits, such as harmony amongst group members and group interest as a

whole.

People in collectivist cultures identify the self in relation to others, and the self is mutually dependent. In these cultures, the self is evaluated in terms of one's fit in the social setting, and this cultural framework produces an interdependent, collectivistic self (Markus & Kitayama, 1994). This interdependent construal of self involves an emphasis on the feeling of connectedness to in-group members, and interdependent individuals are inclined to seek a way to fit in with relevant others to become a part of various interpersonal relationships (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). This has been defined by Guzley, Araki, and Chalmers (1998) as "inherent connectedness."

Kimura (1989) defined the Japanese self as a mutually, interdependently, and continuously reformed self through interactions with others. It is assumed that Japanese parents identify themselves as "mother/father" more than as "an individual." They consider parents and their children as a single soul. More emphasis is placed on group benefits than on individual benefits, and interdependence, cooperation, and mutual reliance are encouraged.

On the other hand, individualism involves seeing oneself as a separate, unique individual, and the self does not include others. This independent construal of self involves the view that an individual is a unique entity with a unique repertoire of feelings, and thoughts (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Markus and Kitayama (1991) described persons in individualistic cultures as having an independent view of self and being "egocentric, separated, autonomous, idiocentric, and self-contained" (p.226). In individualistic cultures, the dominant norms and values reinforcing the idea of the self as independent and autonomous are thought to produce an independent, individualistic self (Markus & Kitayama, 1994). Traits such as self-reliance and independence are positively evaluated, and as Hofstede (1991) claimed, self identity

comes from within individuals.

Recently, the link between the Individualism-Collectivism scale and the Self-Construal scale has been debated. Levine, Bresnahan, Park, Lapinski, Wittenbaum, Shearman, Lee, Chung, and Ohashi, (2003) conducted a meta-analysis of published self-construal research and found that the self-construal scales are unstable, unreliable, and fail to mirror the intended cultural differences. In response, Gudykunst and Lee (2003) argued that there is no major conceptual or measurement error in the self-construal scales.

2) High- and Low- context Communication

The classification of high/low-context culture originally was introduced by Hall (1959). High-context communication involves less verbal communication, and utterances are typically indirect. Hall (1976) described high-context communication as one in which "most of the information is already in the person, while very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message" (p.79). Communication interactions in this type of culture are intuitive and contemplative, and people tend to use indirect and ambiguous messages (Miracle, Chang, & Taylor, 1992). An indirect approach where a mood or image is projected in an attempt to build a relationship with the interactant is appropriate in high-context cultures (Stewart & Furse, 1986). Ting-Toomey (1985), using high/low-context classification in her research, observed frequent usage of intuitive-reflective rhetoric in individuals in high-context cultures.

In a low-context culture, words and their denotation are most trusted, and people are expected to act on them. Hall (1976) described low-context communication as a place where "the mass of the communication is vested in the explicit code" (p.79). Communication interactions are analytical and action oriented, and people tend to use clearly articulated and spoken messages (Miracle, Chang, & Taylor, 1992). Utterances are typically direct, and people prefer to express their

thoughts, emotions, and expectations to one another through clear words. Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey (1988) insisted that what is said carries much more weight than what is meant through context, and people are encouraged to speak their minds. Compared to high-context cultures, low-context cultures are cultures in which "protocol plays less of a role" (Jacobs, 1998, p.110). More-direct and well-expounded messages and clearly articulated points of differentiation are appropriate for low-context cultures (Stewart & Furse, 1986).

Japanese live in a high-context culture, while Americans live in a low-context culture (Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1988; Hall, 1976, 1987; Takada & Jain, 1991). Jacobs (1998) suggested that Japanese communication is based on personal relationships and formal etiquette. There is no need to express everything by words since many kinds of aspects are considered to be shared within in-group members, such as families, friends, or ethnic groups. It is expected that people presume others' thoughts, emotions, and expectations, without needing clarification in words. Communication by "hear one and understand ten" – meaning understanding more than what a person heard – is required as virtuous. Therefore, much understanding comes from counting on or guessing from a little segment of what is literally heard.

3) Connectedness

a. Definition of Connectedness

Connectedness and autonomy are major topics in relational research. However, careful attention needs to be paid to the fact that the concepts of "connected" or "connectedness," contain broad meanings and are defined differently from article to article. Neisser (1973), who studied a mother's practical importance to her daughter, pointed out that the definition of closeness would vary by culture, depending on the cultural environment in a society and a family's economic or social circumstances. Juang (1977) examined Asian-American university students' autonomy and

connectedness in terms of their relationships with their parents. She defined connectedness as "the extent to which adolescents feel their parents are supportive and understanding" (p23). She claimed that connectedness is one of the components an adolescent goes through in the process of obtaining a sense of autonomy. Grotevant (1983) identified communication styles from the aspect of individuality and connectedness. Connectedness includes "permeability" (openness or responsiveness to others) and "mutuality" (sensitivity and respect of others' points of view). In contrast to connectedness, separateness is defined as "one's ability to express differences from each other."

Among the varieties of definitions for "connectedness" and "autonomy," Kerr and Bowen's (1988) claim seems to be most relevant to my research. They defined high differentiation within a family system in terms of low dependence. Similarly, Williamson (1981) argued for a connection between relatively low differentiation/individuation and greater dependence within a family system. What these authors meant by "differentiation" or "individuation" seems to be conceptually equivalent to what I mean by "autonomy" or "less connectedness."

The disagreement regarding correspondence between a term and its meaning leads to the necessity to define the terms clearly for this study. In this thesis, "connectedness" is defined as the spiritual oneness between self and the other. In the child-parent context, it defines the parents' perception to see their child as a part of themselves and observe their child subjectively. Also, "autonomy" is defined as the psychological separation of self from the other. In child-parent context, it represents the parents' tendency to see their child as a unique individual and to observe their child objectively. Autonomy lies at the opposite pole from connectedness, and it is identical to "least connectedness." This autonomy-connectedness scale mediates people's cultural beliefs and parental attitudes.

Table1: Comparison in Definitions of Connectedness and Autonomy

Authors	Connectedness/ Autonomy	Definitions
Juang (1977)	Connectedness	"the extent to which adolescents feel their parents are supportive and understanding"
Grotevant (1983)	Connectedness	"permeability" (openness or responsiveness to others) and "mutuality" (sensitivity and respect of others' points of view)
Kerr and Bowen (1988)	Autonomy	high "differentiation" within a family system in terms of low dependence
Williamson (1981)	Connectedness	relatively low "differentiation/individuation" and greater dependence within a family system
Kagawa (for This Thesis)	Connectedness	° spiritual oneness between self and the other ° parents' tendency to see their child as a part of themselves and observe their child subjectively
	Autonomy	° psychological separation of self from the other ° parents' tendency to see their child as a unique individual and to observe their child objectively

b. Research on "Autonomy" and "Connected/Connectedness"

Lamborn and Steinberg (1993) examined the effect of adolescents' autonomy on their adjustment styles in parent-adolescent relationships. The researchers divided adolescents into four types, depending on two factors: 1) degree of emotional attachment to parents and 2) level of support from parents. The four categories are

"individuated" (high in emotional attachment and high in support), "detached" (high in attachment and low in support), "connected" (low in attachment and high in support), and "ambivalent" (low in both attachment and support). The researchers found that "individuated" adolescents were more adaptive and had more pride and academic competence. It was claimed that autonomy is stressful and creates obstacles for adolescents.

Cooper, Grotevant, and Condon (1983) investigated the influence of individuality and connectedness on psychosocial competence and defined these two independent variables with two components, respectively. "Individuality" includes self –assertion (ability to have and express own opinion) and separation (ability to distinguish self from others). "Connectedness" is composed of permeability (being open to others' opinions) and mutuality (being sensitive or respectful of others). They concluded that a balance of individuality and connectedness is important to adolescents so that they can become capable of expressing their own opinions and hearing others'.

Lamborn, Mounts, Steinberg, and Dornbusch (1991) compared Asian-Americans and European-Americans in respect to the degree of self-reliance. The scores of Asian-Americans were lower than those of European-Americans. The result suggested that Asian parents emphasize connectedness, rather than autonomy since self-reliance is conceptually closely related to independence and autonomy.

Feldman and Rosenthal (1991) compared the age when behavioral autonomy is expected between adolescents in Hong Kong and in America. Behavioral autonomy is expected at a later age in Hong Kong compared to in America. It is assumed that Japanese social expectancy is more similar to Hong Kong's than to Americans since both Hong Kong and Japan belong to Asian culture. The result also suggested that autonomy is not required until a later age in Japanese society. Therefore,

connectedness may exceed autonomy in value in Japanese parenting.

Although no studies were found that dealt with parental psychological unity in terms of a parent-child relationship, two cross-cultural studies are most relevant to my examination. First, Rose (1999) examined parent-child interactions patterns among Japanese and American mothers in terms of consumer socialization. A total of 661 questionnaires (243 in Japan and 418 in the U. S.) were completed by mothers of children between the ages of three and eight years old in Japan and the United States. Samples were taken from relatively well-educated, middle- to upper-middle-class families. The results suggested that Japanese mothers maintain greater control over their children's consumption than do American mothers, who encourage and expect the earlier development of independent consumption. This is consistent with the collectivist and interdependent beliefs in Japanese society. The result supports the observation that Japanese parents have more consumption rules than American counterparts (Robertson, Ward, Gatignon, & Klees, 1989). It is also in line with Doi's (1962) claim that Japanese mothers promote dependence in their children and perceive their children as more dependent. Although this research looked specifically at mothers' parental attitudes on consumption socialization, the results suggested that Japanese parents are more psychologically connected to their children than American parents.

Rasrogi and Wampler (1999) compared the perception of adult daughters' relationship with their mothers across the European-American, Asian-Indian American, and Mexican-American cultures, along the dimensions of closeness, reliability, and collectivism. Closeness was defined as a sense of connection and intimacy in the relationship, which was not restricted to geographical proximity. Reliability referred to knowing the existence of the mother or daughter for their dependence on each other. Collectivism referred to the balance between one's individuality/differentiation and the

needs of the group. A total of 91 women (30 or 31 for each ethnic group) between the ages of 25 and 35, having some college education, were elicited as the sample. One-way ANOVAs demonstrated that the Asian-Indian American group was higher for actual connectedness and closeness, and both the European-American and the Asian-Indian American groups scored significantly higher than the Mexican-American women for ideal closeness. The European-American group emphasized both autonomy and caring, while the Asian-Indian American group emphasized a secure relationship. This result parallels the differences in actual connectedness and closeness between the two groups. The content analysis suggested that the Asian-Indian American women sought more advice and support from their mothers and more dependence, while the European-American women stressed non-dependency, especially in financial matters. Moreover, the European-American culture fostered a significantly higher level of ideal differentiation than did the other cultures. The comparison between the European and Asian-Indian groups is relevant to my study. The European group is expected to have a similar culture to American, whereas Asian Indian culture seems to reflect more Japanese culture than American, in terms of the classification of Western and Eastern/Asian cultures. This study implies that the concepts of dependent, connected, and closeness are dominant in Japanese society, while independent, autonomy, and differentiation are valued in American society.

4) Cross-Cultural Differences (Japanese versus American Parenting)

Researchers have concluded that mother-child interactions differ significantly between Japan and the U.S. (Shwalb & Shwalb, 1996). Bornstein (1989) suggested that Japanese and American parentings are different in the degree to which they emphasize "group identification versus individual assertiveness" (p.197). People in the United States are viewed as autonomous, whereas people in Japan are composed of an inherently interrelated set of group members and are inherently integrated with

others.

Japanese mothers educate their children emphasizing politeness, harmony, emotional maturity, and avoidance of conflict (Hess, Kashiwagi, Azuma, Price, & Dickson, 1980; Kazui, 1997; Ujiie, 1997; Power, Kobayashi-Winati, & Kelley, 1992). Japanese parents focus on maintaining and strengthening the parent-child bond until the child naturally internalizes adult standards (Hess et al., 1980). Doi (1973) suggested the concept "amae," meaning to depend and require of others benevolence or help, predetermines Japanese culture. "Amae" is originally based on parent-child relationship. Maintenance of connectedness to parents and peers is considered as more valuable than autonomy.

On the other hand, compared to Japanese mothers, American mothers generally expect their children to behave independently and make their own decisions from a younger age (Tajima, 1995). Most mothers in the United States emphasize the skills of expressing needs and desires through verbal communication as their parenting goals; they value independence, assertiveness, and autonomy (Caudill & Schooler, 1973; Schooler, 1996).

Also, regarding high/low-context communication, Japanese parents, who live in a high-context culture, assume that context is the bigger concern than uttered words themselves. They may believe that their own thoughts, emotions, and expectations are, of course, shared with core in-group members, specifically with their children. Consequently, they do not feel the necessity to communicate for clarification of their child's thoughts, emotions, and expectations. American parents, who are likely to use low-context communication, are assumed to try to verbally communicate with their children. As well as sending their message to their children through direct utterances, American parents are expected to believe that their children's verbal expressions are necessary to understand their children's thoughts, emotions, and feelings.

Cultural differences in parental beliefs and attitudes are seen in the educational systems in kindergartens. In Japanese kindergartens, teachers decide the schedule for the day and tell the children what to do. Teachers do not encourage the children to think of what children want to do. Conversely, at American kindergartens, teachers highly respect children's voices. Teachers usually ask the children what the children want to do each time. The children have opportunities to express their opinions and desires to the teachers.

The differences in educational systems may yield long-term consequences. Manzo (2002) reported that one college instructor was troubled, in the comparison with American students, that Japanese "students seem helpless in the face of challenges that require them to think for themselves," and another instructor frets that Japanese "students are not resourceful, that they tend to seek the one "right" answer, and that they look for guidance in solving relatively simple, everyday problems." These claims reflect the Japanese society where parents and teachers routinely tell children what the children need to do, and where there is no need for children to subjectively think what they should do or want to do. Underneath these differences in educational attitudes may lie the differences in parental perceptions between Japan and the United States.

The Japanese people, who are in a collectivist culture, establish the self in relation to others. They feel an extremely close connection toward the members of intimate relationships, such as a family and close friends. The self is considered as a part of a total group, and all members in a group are frequently treated as one. In the same way, Japanese parents are assumed to have a feeling of psychological unity with their child. Lebra (1978) suggested that collectivism involves "cooperation and solidarity, and sentimental desire for the warm feeling of *ittaikan* ("feeling of oneness") with fellow members of one's group" and this principle dominates Japanese

society. Japanese parents perceive their children as part of themselves and observe their children subjectively.

Since Japanese parents believe that their children's values are identical to their own values, parents are quite confident about their children's thought and values. Parents usually maintain a low uncertainty[1] level about their children's day-to-day thoughts. There are fewer information seeking behaviors among Japanese parents because they are unnecessary. Information about their children is already known for parents since child-related information is actually their own information (Berger & Calabrese, 1975).

On the other hand, Americans, who are in an individualistic culture, are inclined to value individual characteristics, rather than harmony with other persons. Sillars (1995) described the American Family as "a constellation of separate personalities kept in dynamic equilibrium through continual (verbal) negotiation of relationships" (p.390). American parents are assumed to perceive their children as a unique individual or discrete person from the self and to observe their children objectively.

American parents are in moderate to high uncertainty levels about their children's day-to-day thoughts. Parents are not always confident about their children's thoughts and values. Parents think that their children have their unique values which are not always identical to the parents' own values. Also, compared to Japanese parents, more information seeking behavior is detected among American parents. Parents are eager to seek information about their child to understand their children. Information about their child is usually unknown for the parents. Parents

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[1] Uncertainty is a psychological state where people lack information that is relevant to the situation. Berger and Calabrese (1975) developed Uncertainty Reduction Theory to explain communication in initial interaction.

believe that child-related information is under the surface and needs to be detected consciously (Berger & Calabrese, 1975).

5) Understanding

The last topic in this chapter is "understanding," "Understanding" is defined by Sillars (1984) as the congruence between a person's inference of the partner's perspective and the partner's direct perspective. In a parent-child relationship, "parental understanding" is the degree to which a parent's perception of a child's perspective matches that child's actual perspective. "Agreement" is often confounded with "understanding" (Sillars, 1984). "Agreement" is congruence between a person's direct perspective and the partner's direct perspective about an issue. In child-parent relationships, "agreement" is the congruence between what a parent thinks and what a child thinks about certain issues.

To measure the accuracy in understanding amongst married relationships, Sillars (1984) suggested the following four measurement factors:

1) Actual agreement--- congruence between a person's direct perspective and the partner's direct perspective.
2) Perceived agreement--- congruence between a person's direct perspective and a person's inference of the partner's perspective.
3) Raw understanding--- congruence between a person's inference of the partner's perspective and the partner's direct perspective.
4) Actual understanding--- congruence between a person's inference of the partner's perspective and the partner's direct perspective, removing the effect of projection (described below).

According to Sillars (1984), a person projects his/her own thoughts to infer the other's thoughts, even in a close relationship. Typically, a person is unconscious of himself/herself projecting, and s/he believes himself/herself considering the other's

thought, independent from his/her own thought about the issue. However, it is quite common that s/he actually makes use of his/her own thoughts as a primary reference to infer another's thoughts. The cognitive process works as follows, "I (wife) think that fidelity is incredibly important for us (wife and husband). So, my husband would feel the same way as myself; he must hold fidelity in high regard, just like me."

It is prevailingly believed that closer relationships yield better understanding of each other. Indeed, there are some articles suggesting that close friends can understand more accurately than strangers (Colvin, Vogt, & Ickes, 1997; Ickes & Stinson, 1997). However, there are contradicting experimental findings about understanding. Sillars (1989) and Sillars, Folwell, Hill, Maki, Hurst, and Casano (1994) found that spouses perceive more agreement between one another than actually exists. Spouses rating of perceived agreement also were much higher than understanding; in fact, actual understanding scores (controlling for projection) were close to what one might expect by chance. Sillars (1998) suggested some features that contribute to misunderstanding. The features include (a) "the biasing effects of familiarity and intimacy" and (b) "the tendency to regard ambiguous inferences with certainty" (p.9).

As people develop their relationship, they construct inter-subjective meanings, which make unique sense within the relationship (Colvin et al., 1997). People in intimate relationships, such as couples or friends, have complex, sophisticated, and organized cognitive structures to understand their partners. Information about the partner is accumulated in a person's long-term memory as a schema. This set of stored previous information, a schema, is activated whenever a person processes information about the partner. A schema allows a person to have some idea about the partner's thoughts and behaviors and to deal with new information about the partner with little effort. Close relationships enable a person to construct sophisticated and

organized inference processes for the partner (Thomas & Fletcher, 1997). Sillars (1998) suggested that closeness in a relationship brings insensitivity to new information about the partner, which disturbs accurate understanding. A schema prevents a person from examining new information about the partner carefully and deliberately. Rather, a person selectively listens to the partner. By using schemas, a person can deal with new information so that it fits the information in the schema. Through this organized process, the original information is distorted in the inference process within a close relationship. It is quite routine for people to make inferences with little information or knowledge. In close relationships, predictability and understanding are expected, and a person tends to be excessively certain about their partner.

Chapter 3
RATIONALE & HYPOTHESES

People in Japan and those in the United States live in societies that have very different cultural values. Numerous researchers have conducted cross-cultural studies and classified Japan as a collectivistic and high-context culture and the United States as an individualistic/low context culture, respectively. Japanese define the self in terms of the relationship with others and value dependence, harmony, connectedness, and indirect expression. In comparison, Americans' self-definition does not include others, and they emphasize independence, autonomy, differentiation, and direct expression.

Among the variety of social interpersonal relationships, it is widely agreed that the child-parent relationship is the primary bond for human beings. Hence, culturally distinct values should be manifested in parenting behaviors. As predominant cultural perceptions are reflected in the parent-child relationship, Japanese parents are likely to feel connectedness, or psychological oneness, between themselves and their children, whereas American parents perceive their children as discrete, independent selves. Formally stated,

H1: Japanese parents will have a higher connectedness in terms of the parent-child relationship than will American parents.

Based upon the literature review in chapter two, I would also expect several cultural differences related to understanding.

First, there should be differences related to actual agreement. Within Japanese culture, children and parents traditionally share a great amount of time in the same environment. It is quite common in Japanese society that infants spend almost 24 hours a day with their parents (Kim, 1997). Hence, they often exchange values and thoughts and influence each other. The consequence is that Japanese parents and

children should have quite similar values. On the other hand, American parents may not spend much time with their children. At least 70% of American families consist of children and two working parents or by an unmarried working parent (Kombluh, 2003). Accordingly, American children spend relatively large amounts of time away from their parents, in daycare centers or at home with a television. Because of less time to share, American parents and children may not have enough chance to exchange their thoughts with each other.

H2: Japanese parents have a higher agreement with their children on major issues for the parent-child relationship than do American parents.

Third, if the hypothesis that Japanese parents possess stronger feelings of connectedness to their children compared to American parents (H1) is true, Japanese parents should become more inclined to believe that their children must feel and think in the same way as they do. In other words, due to a stronger sense of connectedness, Japanese parents are more likely to project their thoughts onto their children in order to infer their children's thoughts. Japanese parents' belief in connectedness to their children induces the parents to project their own opinions onto their children. On the other hand, if the hypothesis that American parents have weaker connectedness than Japanese parents is true, American parents are more likely to understand that their children have their own, unique opinions and thoughts. Thus, projecting their thoughts onto their children is not likely to be a tendency for American parents.

H3: Overall, parents who have higher connectedness would have higher perceived agreement with their children regarding major issues for the parent-child relationship

Because Japanese parents have higher connectedness than American parents (H1), I also would expect:

H4: Japanese parents have a higher perceived agreement with their children regarding major issues for the parent-child relationship compared to American parents.

Japanese parents, compared to American parents, are more likely to believe that their children's thoughts are identical to their own thoughts. If children have their own thoughts that are different from their parents' thoughts, the possibility of parents' misunderstanding of their children exists. The projection process can lead to misunderstanding. This misunderstanding process may be seen more often in Japanese parents. Since Japanese parents possess a stronger feeling of connectedness to their children than do American parents (H1), Japanese parents expect that they and their children share the same feelings, thoughts, and emotions compared to American parents (H4). Subsequently, Japanese parents are more in danger of failing to observe, listen, and treat their children as unique individuals. As a result, Japanese parents are more likely to misunderstand about their children than American parents.

H5: Japanese parents have lower understanding about their children regarding major issues for the parent-child relationship than do American parents.

Thus far, due to different cultural backgrounds, differential levels of connectedness and understanding of Japanese and American parents with the relationship with their children have been hypothesized. In concluding this chapter, an additional variable, "amount of communication," is discussed as it may affect parental understanding. Does the degree to which the parents communicate with their children influence the degree of parental understanding of their children? If so, are there any cultural differences between Japanese parents and American parents?

Sillars's (1984) studies included the examination of the role of verbal and nonverbal communication in understanding the spouse among American married couples. The results suggested that 1) nonverbal communication contributed more to understanding the spouses' feelings than verbal communication, 2) aggressive or competitive verbal messages were positively related to understanding, and 3) communication was associated with understanding both positively and negatively

depending on gender and issues. The results suggested that couples' communication related with their understanding in some ways. Whether the similar tendencies would be found between a parent and child is worth testing. Also, in terms of the first findings, Sillars (1984) commented that verbal cues may be more influential than nonverbal cues for those couples who largely value verbal disclosures or who speak relatively frankly with each other. Considering this at the cultural level, Americans in a low context culture tend to count on verbal communication and prefer frank or direct communication, compared to Japanese parents, in a high context culture.

In the high context communication, communicators' attention is focused on social settings, word choices, gestures, tone of voice, relational history, status and posture to understand the meanings of utterances, in while a low context communication, words themselves contain the meaning of utterances. Hence, in the United States, the understanding of others largely comes from the words used in communication. If the assumption that the words exchanged in communication play a major role for Americans to understand others is true, American parents' understanding of their children should be positively related to the amount of parent-child communication.

In Japanese society the virtue of silence predominates. Not talking too much is regarded as proper and symbolized as adulthood in Japanese society. Tujimura (1987) argued that "ishin-denshin," meaning tacit agreement, is a main character of Japanese communication. This "ishin-denshin" is a traditional mental telepathy, and its ultimate meaning is "understanding without talking." Also, this silence connotes the meaning of truthfulness, which is fulfilled only between in-group members. On behalf of discouragement of verbal communication, it is natural that nonverbal communication plays a more important role in Japanese society. Japanese people may not be aware, but social settings, word choices, gestures, tone of voice, relational

history, status and posture are vital factors for Japanese to understand others. Accordingly, the understanding of others would not be predicted by the amount of communication in Japanese culture.

H6: The relationship between amount of parent-child communication and parental understanding is moderated by culture, such that American parents who communicate more with their children understand better about their children while the amount of parent-child communication does not affect Japanese parents' understanding of their children.

Chapter 4
METHOD & PROCEDURE

1) Overview

The purpose of this study is to find out the cross-cultural differences in parental understanding of their children between Japanese and American parents. In particular, the focus of this study is on 1) how cultural values influence parental feelings of connectedness toward their children, 2) how parents' connectedness level interacts with understanding of their children, and 3) how amount of communication contributes to parental understanding of children. In order to study these questions, the study was divided into two primary phases. In the first phase, data on the major issues for the parent-child relationships that are salient both in Japanese and American cultures were gathered. In the second phase, parents' understanding of their children was tested.

2) Phase 1

The purpose of the first phase was to find the major issues for parent-child relationships that are routinely sources of concern between parents and children among *both* Japanese and American families. Sillars et al. (1984), in their study on understanding of married couples, came up with ten potential conflicts, on which the understanding of the couples was measured. In my study, I asked both Japanese and American children to describe the major issues for their parent-child relationships. This step was inevitable; the issues about which parental understanding will be measured in the second phase should be meaningful issues both for Japanese and American parents. It was a big challenge to find issues that would be seen as important for parent-child relationship across two very different cultures.

The data were collected from two different samples: American and Japanese. American subjects included 123 freshmen in a communication class in Michigan State

University. For the American subjects, the questionnaires were distributed in a class, and students were asked, for credit, to complete them at home and return them after a week. Japanese data were collected through electronic mail. Forty-nine Japanese subjects, who were either university students or were in their age 18 to 29, participated voluntarily. Both American and Japanese subjects were asked to raise five issues of conflict, potential conflict, concern, and/or disagreement between them and their parents. The questionnaire was originally developed in English and was translated into Japanese for Japanese subjects.

The dozens of topics that subjects raised were classified into 21 base issues: job-related, religion, drinking, grade at school/ education, money, time management, parental control, health and safety, personality, dating relationship/ sex, marriage/ raising children, smoking, future plan, family relationship, housework, friends, politics and economy, races, succession, no conflict/ no talk with parents, and others. Two separate coders conducted this coding process, and coding agreement was 100%.

In terms of each issue, the percentage of subjects who raised the issue was calculated for Japanese and American separately. The issue that Americans answered most was money; 76% of American subjects raised money as a salient topic in their parent-child relationship. The second to the fifth most major issues for Americans were school grades/education (41%), parental control (37%), family relationship (32%), and job-related (28%) issues. In contrast, the most salient topics for Japanese were job-related (35%), family relationship (35%), parental control (33%), future plan (29%), and marriage (16%) issues.

Interestedly, there was surprisingly larger degree of commonality between Japanese and American data. In order to measure the degree to which Japanese and Americans shared the similar issues, Pearson's correlation was calculated between Japanese and American data over all 21 issues. The result suggested that Japanese

and American university students share some common issues that are discussed with their parents, r=. 524 (p= .015), η= .27.

These results suggest that parental control, family relationship, and job-related issues are three major issues that are in common between Japanese and American families (table 2).

Table 2: Means for top 3 common major issues between Japanese and Americans

(%)	**Japanese (N=49)**	**American (N=123)**
Issues 1: Parental control*	**33**	**37**
Issues 2: Family relationship*	**35**	**32**
Issues 3: Job-related*	**35**	**28**
Issues 4: Future plan	29	17
Issues 5: Money	16	76
Issues 6: Family relationship	35	32
Issues 7: Marriage/ Raising children	16	1
Issues 8: Dating relationship	12	20
Issues 9: Religion	1	15
Issues 10: Time management	1	17
Issues 11: Personality	1	17
Issues 12:Housework	1	1
Issues 13: Politics and economy	1	11
Issues 14: Succession	1	0
Issues 15: No conflict/ No talk with parents	1	0
Issues 16:Drinking	0	15
Issues 17: Health and Safety	0	1
Issues 18: Smoking	0	1

* three major issues for the parent-child relationship

Based upon this analysis, I decided to use these three issues as the major issues for the parent-child relationship in my study.

2) Phase 2

In the second phase, parents' understanding of their children in terms of the three major issues for the parent-child relationship was tested.

Participants

In this thesis, university students and their parents were chosen as subjects in order to examine their parent-child relationships. The reason why university students were chosen as "children" is that their age group was considered to be old enough to have developed their own opinions. Typically, children younger than ten years old assimilate their parents' opinions and attitudes. Thus, university students were regarded as proper "children" subjects in terms of their age range for this thesis to examine parental understanding of children's opinions.

Participants included 71 pairs of American parents and children and 52 pairs of Japanese parents and children. American children consisted of 14 male (19.7% of total American children) and 57 female (80.3% of total American children) students in a communication class at Michigan State University. Age range was from 18 to 23 years old (SD = 1.23), and 79.0% participants fell between 19 to 21 in their age. Japanese children consisted of 13 males (25.0% of total Japanese children) and 39 females (75.0% of total Japanese children) who studied at a university in Japan. Age range was from 18 to 32 years old (SD = 2.64), and 73.2% participants fell between 19 to 21 in their age.

The university students were asked to choose the parent with whom they thought they had the most communication. American parents consisted of 14 fathers (19.7% of total American parents) and 57 mothers (80.3% of total American parents). Age range was from 39 to 62 years old (SD = 4.58), and 81.6% participants fell between 44 to 54 in their age. Japanese parents consisted of 9 fathers (17.3% of total Japanese parents) and 43 mothers (82.7% of total Japanese parents). Age range was from 43 to 65 years old (SD = 4.76), and 86.7% participants fell between 44 to 54 in their age.

Questionnaires

Two sets of questionnaires were prepared; one for students the other for their parents. These two types of questionnaires were almost identical except for the step two, which involved the questions regarding the parental connectedness, and part of step three, which involved the questions asking about the parental perceptions of their children. At step one in the questionnaires (both for parents and students), the basic demographic questions (age and sex) were asked. At step two, only parents were asked their general feelings toward their children. This step two was missing in the questionnaires for students.

At step three, both students and parents were asked to recall the moments when they discussed each of the three major issues for the parent-child relationship and to describe the encounter and parental messages. Three issues reflected the result of phase one, which were 1) parental control over personal behaviors, 2) parental disapproval of job and/or career, and 3) parental concern regarding family issues. Subsequently, both students and parents answered the questions related to 1) the frequency of the communication over each issue and 2) the degree to which they themselves thought the issue was important. In addition, only parents answered the questions regarding 3) the degree to which a parent thinks the child thinks the issue is important). The answers were marked by 7-point Likert type scales.

The questionnaires were written in English and translated into Japanese by a Japanese-English bilingual translator. The translated Japanese versions of questionnaires were converted back into English again by another Japanese-English bilingual translator. The inconsistencies between the original and the translated questionnaires were solved through the discussion between two translators.

Variables

Connectedness Scale

The connectedness scale was developed to measure how much parents feel psychological union with their children. This scale consisted of ten statements that described parents' possible feelings towards their children. The parents were asked to answer how much they agreed with or disagreed with each statement, using 7-point Likert scale from 1 = completely disagree to 7 = completely agree.

Amount of Communication

Amount of communication was measured through both parents' and children's subjective ratings of frequency of communication. Both parents and children answered the frequencies of communication over each of three major issues for the parent-child relationship by 7-point Likert scale.

In line with Sillars et al.'s (1984)'s study, the four variables, agreement, perceived agreement, raw understanding, and actual understanding, were calculated in the following way.

Agreement

Agreement was calculated by comparing the children's and the parents' direct perceptions about the issues. That is, agreement is the correlation between the parents' direct and their children's direct opinions about the issues.

Perceived Agreement

Parental perceived agreement was calculated by comparing the parents' direct opinions and parents' perceptions of their children's opinions about the issues.

Raw Understanding

Parental raw understanding was calculated by comparing the students' direct opinions and the parents' perceptions of their children's opinions about the issues.

Actual Understanding

Parental actual understanding was calculated by correlating the students' direct opinions with the parents' perceptions of their children's opinions, controlling for the parents' direct opinions about the issues.

Procedure

Each student was given 1) one questionnaire for students 2) one questionnaire for parents, and 3) an envelope. The questionnaires were completed at home. First of all, each student was required to choose either his/her father or mother with whom the student generally communicates more. Then, a student asked one of the selected parents to fill out the questionnaire prepared for parents. The students filled out the questionnaires prepared for students. The students' questionnaires were directly collected in a class. The parents' questionnaires were placed in sealed envelopes and collected indirectly through the students, so that the parents' answers would not be accessed by the students.

Japanese and American data were collected by similar procedures. The only difference is that Japanese questionnaires were sent to a university in Japan by mail and returned by mail.

Chapter 5
RESULTS

1) Test of Hypothesis 1 (Connectedness)

The connectedness scale, which was used to measure the degree of parental psychological closeness with the children, consisted of ten items. Among these ten items, unidimensionality was tested by the confirmatory factor analysis. The errors between the expected and the obtained correlations were calculated. The errors were small enough ($.01 < e < .14$) for the items to be considered as valid when the number of the items was reduced to five. The correlations between these five retained items were high; the correlations ranged from .33 to .77 for American parents and from .42 to .73 for Japanese parents. The remaining five items were discarded because of their invalidity. The final scale is found in Appendix A

Hypothesis one, which predicted that Japanese parents would score higher on connectedness than American parents, was rejected. Parents' perceptions of connectedness were submitted to a two independent samples t-test. The mean connectedness level of American parents was significantly higher than that of Japanese parents, $\underline{t}\,(119) = 5.10$, $\underline{p} < .01$, two-tailed.

Generally, the average connectedness level of the American parents ($\underline{M} = 4.85$, $\underline{s} = 1.39$) was more than 4 (the mid-point of the 7-point Likert scale); whereas, that of Japanese parents ($\underline{M} = 3.49$, $\underline{s} = 1.52$) was less than 4. American parents feel relatively high psychological connectedness with their children, while Japanese parents feel only weak psychological connectedness.

2) Test of Hypothesis 2 (Agreement)

Agreement was the correlation between children's direct opinions and parents' direct opinions about an issue. Hypothesis two, which predicted that there would be a higher degree of agreement between Japanese parents and children than

between American parents and children in terms of the major issues for the parent-child relationship also was rejected. Parent-child agreement was submitted to Fisher's Z test. There was no significant difference between Japanese (r = .13) and American (r = .34) in terms of parent-child agreement overall, z = 1.19, p = n.s., two-tailed. Regarding each issue, American parents and children agreed with each other (r = .52) significantly more than Japanese parents and children (r = .13) about the parental control issues, z = 2.38, p < .01, two-tailed. There was no significant cultural difference in agreement on the occupational, z = .11, p = n.s., or on the family related issues z = .29, p = n.s., two-tailed.

Japanese parents (M = 5.06, s = .98) and children (M = 4.43, s = 1.00) did not agree with each other overall (r = .13, p = n.s.) or over the parental control issue(r = .13, p = n.s.), the occupational issue (r = .09, p = n.s.), or the family related issue (r = .24, p = n.s.). On the other hand, across the three issues, American parents (M = 3.72, s = 1.83) and students (M = 4.05, s = 1.42) agreed with each other (r = .34, p < .05). Specifically, they agreed with each other over the parental control issue(r = .52, p < .01) and the family related issue (r = .29, p < .05), but not over the occupational issue (r = .11, p = n.s.).

3) Test of Hypothesis 3 (Connectedness - Perceived Agreement)

Perceived agreement was the correlation between parents' direct opinions and parents' perceptions of children's opinions about an issue. Hypothesis three, which predicted the positive relationship between connectedness and perceived agreement, was partially supported.

American and Japanese parents were all together divided into two groups depending on their connectedness levels. Those with average connectedness scores of more than 4.0 in 7-point Likert scale were categorized as the high connectedness group (n = 72), while those with average connectedness under 4.0 were categorized as

the low connectedness group (n = 49).

Fisher's Z test indicated that, overall, there was no significant difference between the high connectedness group (r = .89) and the low connectedness group (r = .82) in terms of the perceived agreement level, z = 1.36, p = n.s., two-tailed. The high connectedness group (r = .72) had significantly higher perceived agreement than the low connectedness group (r = .52), over the parental control issues, z = 1.74, p <.05, two-tailed. No significant difference was found in the occupational issues between the high connectedness group (r = .74) and the low connectedness group (r = .81) in terms of the perceived agreement level, z = .91, p = n.s., two-tailed. The high connectedness group (r = .89) had significantly higher perceived agreement than the low connectedness group (r = .74), over the family related issues, z = 2.44, p<. 05, two-tailed. Parents who had higher connectedness were likely to believe that their children had the same opinions as themselves in terms of the parental control issues and the family related issues. However, for the occupational issue connectedness level did not relate to the perceived agreement level.

4) Test of Hypothesis 4 (Perceived Agreement)

Hypothesis four, which predicted Japanese parents' higher perceived agreement level than American parents, was not supported. Perceived agreement was submitted to the Fisher's Z test to measure cross-cultural differences. The results indicated that American parents (r = .90; r = .74; r = .79; r= .88), compared to Japanese parents (r = .82; r = .54; r = .79; r= .88), were more likely to project their opinions to deduce their children's opinions, across the issues (z = 2.78, p < .01) of parental control (z = 2.14, p < .05), occupational (z = 2.26, p < .05), and family (z = 2.50, p < .05).

Japanese parents perceived very similar opinions about the issues with their children across the three issues (r = .74, p < .01), over the parental control issue (r

= .50, $p < .01$), over the occupational issue ($r = .57$, $p < .01$), and over the family related issue ($r = .72$, $p < .01$). American parents also perceived to have very similar opinions about the issues with their children overall ($r = .90$, $p < .01$), over the parental control issue ($r = .74$, $p < .01$), over the occupational issue ($r = .79$, $p < .01$), and over the family related issue ($r = .88$, $p < .01$).

5) Test of Hypothesis 5 (Understanding)

Hypothesis five, which predicted Japanese parents' lower understanding than American parents, was partially supported. This hypothesis was tested in two ways.

Raw Understanding

Raw understanding was the correlation between children's direct opinions and parents' perceptions of children's opinions about an issue. Japanese parents did not understand their children over the three issues ($r = .19$, p = n.s.), over the parental control issue ($r = .09$, p = n.s.), over the occupational issue ($r = .09$, p = n.s.), or over the family related issue ($r = .24$, p = n.s.). On the other hand, American parents understand their children overall, ($r = .34$, $p < .05$), over the parental control issue ($r = .47$, $p < .01$) and over the family related issue ($r = .42$, $p < .01$), but not over the occupational issue ($r = .13$, p = n.s.). However, American parents' higher score on raw understanding might be due to their higher agreement, compared to Japanese parents.

Actual Understanding

Actual understanding was the correlation between children's direct opinions and parents' perceptions of children's opinions about an issue controlling for parents' direct opinions. Predictably from the result for raw understanding, Japanese parents did not understand their children across the issues overall, or ($r = .14$, p = n.s.), the parental control issue ($r = .03$, p = n.s.), the occupational issue ($r = .14$, p = n.s.), or the family related issue ($r = -.11$, p = n.s.). Interestingly, American parents did not

understand their children overall (r = .09, p = n.s.), over the parental control issue (r = .16, p = n.s.), or the occupational issue (r = .07, p = n.s.). However, they did understand their children restrictedly over the family related issue (r = .36, p < .01).

After all, both Japanese and American parents generally did not understand their children; however, this tendency was issue specific. Regarding the parental control issue and the occupational issue, both Japanese and American parents failed to understand their children. Limited to the family related issue, American parents had a higher actual understanding level than Japanese parents, which was partly consistent with my original prediction.

Nevertheless, it is essential to claim that the parents understanding level may not be originated from their connectedness level. Originally, American parents were predicted to have a higher understanding level of their children than Japanese parents, led by American parents' lower connectedness level compared to Japanese parents. Actually, the result suggested that American parents have a higher connectedness level than Japanese parents.

6) Test of Hypothesis 6 (Amount of Communication – Understanding)

Amount of Communication

Amount of communication was submitted to a two independent samples t-test. The mean perceived communication frequency level of Japanese parents (M = 3.81, s = 1.27) was significantly higher than that of Japanese children (M = 3.08, s = 1.09), t (94) = 3.00, p < .01, two-tailed. There was a perceptional gap between Japanese parents and their children on amount of communication.

This finding in Japanese subjects was issue specific. Japanese parents (M = 4.32, s = 1.66; M = 3.89, s = 1.55) perceived the amount of communication significantly higher than their children (M = 3.13, s = 1.54; M = 3.13, s = 1.60) over the parental control, t (101) = 3.77, p < .01, and occupational issues, t (96) = 2.38, p

< .05, two-tailed. However, there was no difference between Japanese parents (M = 3.27, s = 1.76) and their children (M = 3.07, s = 1.72) in their mean communication frequency over the family related issue, t (98) = .52, p = n.s., two-tailed. There was perceptual agreement only for the family related issue, not for the parental control and occupational issues.

On the other hand, there was no statistical difference between American parents (M = 3.85, s = 1.23) and their children (M = 3.82, s = 1.16) in their mean perceived communication frequencies, t (138) = .16, p = n.s., two-tailed. Generally, American parents and their children perceived the same amount of communication. This finding was not issue specific. There was no statistical gap between the parents (M = 3.23, M = 4.19, M = 4.18) and children (M = 3.18, M = 4.15, M = 4.13) on the amount of communication related to all three issues: parental control, occupational, and family related issues, {t (139) = .18, p = n.s.; t (139) = .11, p = n.s.; t (140) = .17, p = n.s.}, two-tailed.

In cross-cultural comparison, there was no difference between Japanese parents (M = 3.81, s = 1.27) and either American parents, {M = 3.85, s = 1.23, t (114) = .20, p = n.s.}, or American children, {M = 3.82, s = 1.16, t (116) = .07, p = n.s.}, in their mean communication frequency, two-tailed. The mean communication frequency level of Japanese children (M = 3.08, s = 1.09) was significantly lower than that of both American parents {M = 3.85, s = 1.23, t (116) = 3.51, p < .01}, and American children {M = 3.82, s = 1.16, t (118) = 3.52, p < .01}, two-tailed. Japanese children perceived the amount of their parent-child communication significantly lower than all Japanese parents, American parents, and American children.

Relationship Between the Amount of Communication and Actual Understanding

Both American and Japanese parents were all together divided into two groups depending on their amount of communication. The parents who perceived

their communication frequency level as more than 4 in the 7-point Likert scale were classified into the high frequency group. Those whose communication frequencies were under 4 were classified into the low frequency group.

The relationship between the parents' perceived amount of communication and their actual understandings was found to be issue specific; no relationship was detected across the three issues. The significant relationship was found only among the high frequency group in terms of the family related issues ($\underline{r} = .33$, $\underline{p} < .01$). Those parents who perceived frequent communication with their children regarding the family related issues tend to understand their children.

Test of Hypothesis 6

Hypothesis six, which predicted that amount of communication and understanding are related to each other positively for American and are not related to each other for Japanese, was partially supported. As predicted, the general tendency of positive relationships between amount of communication and understanding was qualified only among American parents but only limited to the family related issues. The American parents who perceived more amount of communication tended to understand their children better about the family related issues($\underline{r} = .39$, $\underline{p} < .01$).

Among Japanese parents, none of the relationships were found to be significant between amount of communication and understanding, even on the family related issues ($\underline{r} = .21$, $\underline{p}$ = n.s.). In line with my predictions, the amount of communication would not predict understanding in Japanese culture.

Table 3: Means and Standard Deviations regarding Amount of Parent-Child Communication

	Mean (SD)	All 3 Issues	Parental Control	Occupati -onal	Family Related
American	**Parents** (N=71)	3.85 (1.23)	3.23 (1.71)	4.19 (1.76)	4.18 (1.69)
	Children (N=71)	3.82 (1.16)	3.18 (1.60)	4.15 (1.58)	4.13 (1.79)
Japanese	**Parents** (N=52)	3.81* (1.27)	4.23* (1.66)	3.89* (1.55)	3.27 (1.76)
	Children (N=52)	3.08* (1.09)	3.13* (1.54)	3.13* (1.60)	3.07 (1.72)

7-point Likert scale (1 = the issue is not discussed in parent-child relationships at all; 7 = the issue is discussed very often in parent-child relationships)

* Significant difference between parents and children

7) Secondary Analysis of Hypothesis 5 (Test of Relationship between Connectedness and Actual Understanding)

The tests of five hypotheses showed that American parents, who have higher connectedness level than Japanese parents, understand their children better regarding the family related issue, compared to Japanese parents. The hypothesized, underlying negative relationship between connectedness and actual understanding was rejected. This result led to the further examination of how parental connectedness level influences the parents' actual understanding. American and Japanese parents were respectively divided into two groups depending on their connectedness levels. Those whose average connectedness was more than 4.0 in 7-point Likert scale were categorized as the high connectedness group, while those whose average connectedness was under 4.0 were categorized as the low connectedness group.

None of the American high connectedness (n = 17), American low connectedness (n = 54), Japanese high connectedness (n = 32), and Japanese low connectedness (n = 18), groups had actual understanding across the three issues.

However, the results for American subjects were issue specific. The American high connectedness group had actual understanding over the parental control issue ($r = .28$, $p < .05$) and the family related issue ($r = .49$, $p < .01$), two-tailed. Regarding American parents, those who felt high connectedness to their children understood their children over the parental control and the family related issues. American parents did not understand their children over the occupational issue, independent from how much the parents felt connectedness to their children. Japanese parents did not understand their children over either the parental control, occupational, or the family related issues, independent from the degree of their connectedness level to their children.

The influence of parental connectedness level on the parents' actual understanding was examined beyond cultures. The two high connectedness groups (American high connectedness group and Japanese high connectedness group) were combined into the high connectedness group ($n = 49$), and the two low connectedness groups (American low connectedness group and Japanese low connectedness group) were combined into the low connectedness group ($n = 72$). Overall, the high connectedness group had actual understanding ($r = .25$, $p < .05$). Issue specifically, the high connectedness group had actual understanding on parental control issue ($r = .25$, $p < .05$) and the family related issue ($r = .42$, $p < .01$), not on the occupational issue. The low connectedness group did not show any actual understanding at all. This result indicated that those parents who feel higher connectedness to their children understand their children generally, especially on the parental control issue and on family related issue, among American and Japanese cultures.

Table 4: Means and Standard Deviations regarding Parents' Direct Opinions, Parents' Perceptions of Children's Opinions, and Children's Opinions in terms of Three Issues

	Mean (SD)	All 3 Issues	Parental Control	Occupati-onal	Family Related
American (N=71)	**PD***	3.72 (1.83)	3.58 (2.10)	3.66 (2.21)	3.84 (2.23)
	PP	3.83 (1.74)	3.84 (1.94)	3.65 (2.13)	3.94 (2.05)
	CD	4.05 (1.42)	4.03 (1.70)	3.80 (1.94)	4.36 (1.80)
Japanese (N=52)	**PD**	5.06 (.98)	5.60 (1.12)	4.94 (1.26)	4.75 (1.57)
	PP	4.53 (1.14)	4.30 (1.58)	4.89 (1.37)	4.39 (1.57)
	CD	4.43 (1.00)	4.52 (1.47)	4.52 (1.44)	4.25 (1.67)
High Connected (American + Japanese) (N=72)	**PD**	5.79 (1.00)	6.13 (.18)	5.50 (2.12)	5.75 (.71)
	PP	5.42 (.71)	6.00 (1.41)	5.25 (1.77)	5.00 (1.77)
	CD	4.48 (.79)	3.50 (1.04)	4.75 (.61)	5.15 (2.33)
Low Connected (American + Japanese) (N=49)	**PD**	4.07 (1.53)	4.45 (1.82)	3.90 (1.77)	4.00 (1.97)
	PP	3.67 (1.41)	3.56 (1.65)	3.83 (1.90)	3.67 (1.42)
	CD	4.38 (1.31)	4.52 (1.58)	4.36 (1.88)	4.24 (1.84)

7-point Likert scale (1 = the issue is not important for parent-child relationships at all; 7 = the issue is very important for parent-child relationships)

* **PD** = Parents' Direct Opinions

PP = Parents' perceptions of children's opinion

CD = Children's Direct Opinions

Table 5-1: Correlations depending on Nationality and Issues (Agreement)

	All 3 Issues	Parental Control	Occupational	Family Related
American	.34 **	*.52* **	.11	.29 **
Japanese	.13	*.13*	.09	.24

* p < .05; ** p < .01

italic: significant cultural difference (Japanese vs. Americans)

non italic : significant connectedness level (High Connectedness vs. Low Connectedness)

Table 5-2: Correlations depending on Nationality and Issues (Perceived Agreement)

	All 3 Issues	Parental Control	Occupational	Family Related
American	*.90* **	*.74* **	*.79* **	*.88* **
Japanese	*.74* **	*.50* **	*.57* **	*.72* **
High Connected (American + Japanese)	.89**	.72**	.74**	.89**
Low Connected (American + Japanese)	.82**	.52**	.81**	.74**

* p < .05; ** p < .01

italic: significant cultural difference (Japanese vs. Americans)

non italic : significant connectedness level (High Connectedness vs. Low Connectedness)

Table 5-3: Correlations depending on Nationality and Issues (Raw Understanding)

	All 3 Issues	Parental Control	Occupational	Family Related
American	.34 **	.47 **	.13	.42 **
Japanese	.19	.09	.17	.09

* p < .05; ** p < .01

Table 5-4: Correlations depending on Nationality and Issues (Actual Understanding)

	All 3 Issues	Parental Control	Occupatio -nal	Family Related
American	.09	.16	.07	.36 **
American High Connected	.21	.28 *	.13	.49 **
American Low Connected	-.03	.04	.06	.15
Japanese High Connected	.47	.09	.39	.08
Japanese Low Connected	.03	-.03	.12	-.31
High Connected (American + Japanese)	.25 *	.25 *	.15	.42 **
Low Connected (American + Japanese)	.02	.02	.08	.12

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

8) Secondary Analysis of Hypothesis 6 (Influences of Nationality and Connectedness on Amount of Communication)

The parental perceived amount of communication was analyzed in a Nationality (American vs. Japanese) x Connectedness (High Connectedness vs. Low Connectedness) between subjects factorial analysis of variance. Across the three issues, there were no significant effects for nationality, connectedness, and no significant interaction.

Limited to the parental control issue, there was a main effect of nationality, $F(1, 113) = 7.15$, $p < .01$, eta-square= .06. Independent from the level of connectedness, Japanese parents (High Connected: $\underline{M}=4.35$; Low Connected: $\underline{M}=4.16$) perceived more frequent communication regarding the parental control with their children than American parents (High Connected: $\underline{M}=3.12$, Low Connected; $\underline{M}=3.57$). There were

no significant effects for the occupational issue. Limited to the family related issue, there were main effects for both nationality, $F(1, 111)= 3.94$, $p< .05$, eta-square= .03 and connectedness level, $F(1, 111)= 3.94$, $p< .05$, eta-square= .03. American parents (High Connected: M=4.38, Low Connected; M=3.53) perceived more frequent communication regarding the family related issues with their children than Japanese parents (High Connected: M=3.50; Low Connected: M=2.98). At the same time, independent from nationality, the parents in high connectedness level (Americans: M=4.38; Japanese: M=3.50) perceived more frequent communication over the family related issues with their children than the parents in low connectedness level (Americans: M=3.53, Japanese; M=2.98).

In sum, the influences of nationality and connectedness on perceived amount of communication were issue specific. There were cultural differences in the parents' perceived amount of communication specifically about the parental control and the family related issues. It was Japanese parents who perceived more communication with their children about parental control, while it was American parents who perceived more communication about the family related issue. Limited to the family related issue, parents who have high connectedness level toward their children tended to perceive more amount of communication with their children than those who have lower connectedness level, regardless of their nationalities.

9) Subjects

There were no cultural differences in terms of parents' age, $t (121) = -.67$, p = n.s., parents' sex, $t (121) = -.34$, p = n.s., children's age, $t (121) = -.01$, p = n.s., or children's sex, $t (121) = .70$, p = n.s.. Thus, cultural differences suggested in this thesis cannot be attributed to differences in age or sex differences between Japanese and American subjects.

Chapter 6
DISCUSSION

These results suggest that the relationship among 1) connectedness, 2) parental perception, and 3) the amount of communication is influenced by cultures and issues. Overall, a link among these three constructs was seen in the case of American parents, limited to the family-related issues. Specifically, American parents who felt higher connectedness to their children perceived more amount of communication and understood their children better regarding the family related issues. Although the other connections among the three constructs diverged, the three primary findings were as follows.

1) Cultural Differences

First, the cultural differences findings were extremely complicated. The findings were the exact opposite of predicted higher connectedness for Japanese parents and lower connectedness level for American parents. While American parents felt relatively high psychological connection with their children, Japanese parents felt lower psychological connection. The connectedness scale was created such that the higher connectedness level indicates more collectivism and the lower connectedness level indicates more individualism. American parents' higher connectedness level suggests their collectivistic attitudes toward their children; whereas, Japanese parents' lower connectedness level suggests their individualistic attitudes toward their children.

This phenomenon may be explained by the assumption that people are quite sensitive to contexts. In other words, people behave differently depending on contexts, such as when, where, with whom, and why they are talking. The contexts of this parent-child communication study included 1) the parental role: the parents responded to the questionnaires as a "parent" and 2) status of the communication

partner: the communication partner for the parents was their children. After all, the parents in this study, while responding to the questionnaires, deemed about communication with their children specifically as a role of parent and in the relationship with their children. The result would be totally different if the parents were asked to think about communication with their employers as a role of employee.

The connectedness scale was developed particularly for parent-child relationships. Given people's sensitivity to contexts, Japanese and American parents' connectedness levels are meaningful only in parent-child communication contexts. This parental connectedness to their children does not necessarily work for other relationships, such as friendships or work relationships.

The individualism-collectivism (I-C) scale has broadly been accepted as a reflection of cultural differences. If people's behaviors and attitudes change depending on the contexts, a person may behave in a more individualistic way in certain contexts and the same person may behave in more collectivistic way in other contexts. In other words, whether a person is more toward individualism or collectivism would not be stable within a person; rather it would change depending on contexts.

Agreement, perceived agreement, and understanding also were influenced by culture. First, American parents, compared to Japanese parents, overall were more likely to 1) agree with their children, 2) believe that their children had the same opinions as themselves, and 3) understand their children, although the results were mediated by issues.

The American parents' stronger tendency of projection may be explained by their higher connectedness, compared to Japanese parents. Actually, the positive relationship between connectedness and perceived agreement was supported for American parents, restricted to the parental control and family related issues. What is

interesting is that, American parents, despite their strong projection tendency, understood their children, while Japanese parents strong projection effect prevented them from understanding their children. This result suggests that Japanese parents' understanding of their children largely came from the projection of their opinions to their children. American parents understood their children independent from the projection effect.

Second, the parents both in the U.S. and Japan generally tended to project their opinions to speculate their children's opinions even though this inclination was more significant among American parents than Japanese parents. It was true that there was a cultural difference in parental projections; nevertheless, this projection effect existed across two cultures. This projection effect may be universal for all parents although the degree of projection may vary by cultures.

One of the limitations regarding cross-cultural effects is that the Individual-Collectivistic characteristic was not directly measured. Instead, the Japanese tendency of being collectivistic and Americans' tendency of being individualistic were assumed from previous research. Another limitation is the inclusion of double and triple barrels in the questionnaire. The questions for the connectedness scale "I think of my child as being a physical, psychological, and emotional extension of myself," should have been three separate questions, such that "I think of my child as being a physical extension of myself," "I think of my child as being a psychological extension of myself," and "I think of my child as being a emotional extension of myself." Similarly, "I feel a psychological and emotional oneness between my child and myself," should have been the two separate questions, such that "I feel a psychological oneness between my child and myself," and "I feel a emotional oneness between my child and myself."

2) Large Influence of Issues

Second, the cultural differences in parent-child agreement, perceived agreement, understanding, and the amount of communication were very issue specific. These results warn against the danger of generalization. Since parental understanding of children was different depending on issues, it is very dangerous to apply the findings for parental understanding of children regarding one topic into other topics.

Among the three issues, the family related issues, followed by the parental control issues, were the ones about which American parents understood and agreed with their children best. Judging from the positive relationship between understanding and the amount of communication in terms of the family related issues, American parents' better understanding of the family related issues came from the frequency of communication. However, this claim, "the more communication, the more understanding" did not apply for other topics. American parents-children communicated about the occupational issues as much as they did for the family related issues. However, American parents did not understand their children about occupational issues as much as they did for the family related issues. The family related issues may be inherently accessible for American parents regarding their children's opinions, compared to the parental control or occupational issues.

Regarding the family related issues, Japanese parents communicated least, agreed with their children most, projected their opinions most, and understood children least. For Japanese parents, the amount of communication was found not to contribute to parents' agreement or understanding. Their understanding was found to be highly damaged by their projections. Japanese parents understood most about the occupational issues, but reported even relatively low levels of understanding compared to American parents. The occupational issues were the ones about which Japanese parents agreed least with their children. Thus, Japanese parents may be better at understanding their children regarding the issues on which the parents and their

children have different opinions.

3) High Agreement

There was unexpectedly high agreement between parents and children. At least in the last two decades both in Japan and the United States, less and less time has been shared between parents and children as the numbers of double-income families has increased. With this social tendency, parents and children were expected to have relatively poor agreements by lacking enough chances to exchange opinions. However, American parent-child pairs highly agreed with each other about the parental control issues and the family related issues, while Japanese highly agreed with each other about the family related issues. This high agreement may be related to the fact that the subjects were university students. In a future study, I would like to examine the influence of age and generation on the degree of agreement.

4) Amount of Communication

While American parents and children perceived almost identical amounts of communication, there was a perceptional gap between Japanese parents and their children on amount of communication. Three possible explanations for the Japanese perceptual gap would be 1) the parents' overestimation of the amount of communication, 2) their children's underestimation of the amount of communication, and 3) a mutual existence of 1) and 2). Unless the explanation of the gap is exclusively attributed to 2) children's underestimation, the result regarding the amount of communication was in line with that regarding parental understanding of children in the three issues. That is, Japanese parents misunderstood children in terms of the amount of parent-child communication as well as parental control, occupational, family related issues.

One of the limitations of this study is absence of actual data on the amount of communication. This study relied on the subjective evaluation to find out the amount

of communication. Japanese children perceived the amount of their parent-child communication significantly lower than all Japanese parents, American parents, and American children. Without any additional data, it cannot be concluded that either American or Japanese parent-child actually communicate more than the other. Observations or tape recordings would be necessary to calculate the actual data.

Future studies could be done with varieties of other issues and cultures. It is interesting to examine parents from other cultures than the U.S. or Japan and to see if the parental projection behavior is universal. Also, other issues than three issues would be examined for better knowledge on the interactions among issues, cultures, and parental understanding of their children. More broadly, people's behaviors and feelings that are salient for family communication contexts will be examined in my future study.

APPENDIX A

Connectedness Scale

Retained Items:

- I feel that my child is a part of myself.
- I feel that my child and I are soul mates.
- I think of my child as being a physical, psychological, and emotional extension of myself.
- I feel a psychological and emotional oneness between my child and myself.
- I feel that my child's heart and mine are totally connected.

Discarded Items:

- I find it easy to differentiate my child from myself.
- I feel that all that happens to my child happens to myself.
- I think of my child as being fundamentally different from me.
- I feel that, psychologically and emotionally, a part of my child will always exist inside of me.
- I feel that my child and I share the same destiny.

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire for Parents

Family Communication Survey

Parent Questionnaire

This purpose of this survey is to examine perceptions of important issues of concern and conflict that exist between parents and children.

In a previous study, American and Japanese college students were asked to report the biggest issues of concern and conflict that existed in their relationships with their parents. Results from that study suggested that across the two cultures, the most common issues of parent/child conflict are (1) parent control over student's personal behavior, (2) parent disapproval of student's chosen career or job, and (3) family disputes involving other siblings or relatives.

In this study, we're going to ask you (as a parent) to answer a number of questions about your communication with your child and your perceptions of interpersonal issues of concern. Importantly, PLEASE DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME OR ANY IDENTIFYING INFORMATION ON THE QUESTIONNAIRES. All responses will be kept strictly **anonymous** and **confidential**. For this reason, we ask that you answer the questions as honestly as you can.

Step 1

1. Please tell us a couple of things about yourself.

What is your sex? Male Female

How old are you? _____ **(years)**

Step 2

Take a minute and think about your relationship with your child. Then, answer the questions below, by circling the number that best represents your feelings toward your child. YOUR CHILD WILL NOT SEE THESE ANSWERS: THEY WILL BE COMPLETELY ANONYMOUS AND CONFIDENTIAL. **For this reason, please be as honest as you can in how you answer them.**

1. I feel that my child is a part of myself.

Completely Disagree **1 2 3 4 5 6 7** Completely Agree

2. I feel that my child and I are soul mates.

Completely Disagree **1 2 3 4 5 6 7** Completely Agree

3. I find it easy to differentiate my child from myself.

Completely Disagree **1 2 3 4 5 6 7** Completely Agree

4. I feel that all that happens to my child happens to myself.

Completely Disagree **1 2 3 4 5 6 7** Completely Agree

5. I think of my child as being a physical, psychological, and emotional extension of myself.

Completely Disagree **1 2 3 4 5 6 7** Completely Agree

6. I think of my child as being fundamentally different from me.

Completely Disagree **1 2 3 4 5 6 7** Completely Agree

7. I feel a psychological and emotional oneness between my child and myself.

Completely Disagree **1 2 3 4 5 6 7** Completely Agree

8. I feel that my child's heart and mine are totally connected.

Completely Disagree **1 2 3 4 5 6 7** Completely Agree

9. I feel that, psychologically and emotionally, a part of my child will always exist inside of me.

Completely Disagree **1 2 3 4 5 6 7** Completely Agree

10. I feel that my child and I share the same destiny.

Completely Disagree **1 2 3 4 5 6 7** Completely Agree

Step 3 **Now we would like you to answer a number of questions about** *your communication with your child*, **related to three different topics.**

Topic # 1: Parent Control over Personal Behaviors

One topic college students report as a source of tension and conflict in their parent-child relationships is ***control-related concerns***: attempts by parents to control and/or change the personal behaviors of their college-aged children. This includes things such as *parental disapproval of clothing, disapproval of appearance, attempts to change eating and sleeping habits, disapproval of tattoos*, and *attempts to enforce unreasonable curfews.*

Take a moment, and think carefully about your son/daughter, and communication you've had with her/him regarding your control of her/his personal behaviors. Then, please answer the following questions:

1. Can you think of an instance in which you and your child had a serious conversation, argument, and/or conflict regarding your control of her/his personal behaviors?

_____ Yes _____ No

2. If your answer to #1 above was "No," then go ahead and move on to Question #3 on the next page. If your answer to question #1 was "Yes," then please answer the following question:

During the encounter you had with your child regarding your control of her/his personal behaviors, *what was the single most important message you were trying to convey to your child*? Please describe the encounter and your message as specifically as possible, including exactly what was said (to the best of your memory).

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. Now, think about how ***often*** you and your child ***discuss*** your control of her/his personal behaviors ***in general***. Using the scales below, please rate the frequency of your communication with your child related to control issues:

My child and I discuss my control of her/his personal behaviors...

Never	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Often**
Rarely	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Commonly**
Infrequently	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Frequently**
Not at All	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**All the time**

4. Now, think about how ***important*** the issue of your control of your child's personal behaviors is as a source of tension/conflict in your relationship with your child. Is this issue a *large* source of tension and conflict in your relationship, or is it *insignificant*? Using the scales below, rate how important this issue is as a source of tension/conflict in your relationship with your child:

Within my relationship with my child, the issue of my control of her/his personal behaviors is...

Unimportant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Important**
Inconsequential	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Consequential**
Insignificant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Significant**
Trivial	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Substantial**

5. Now, think for a moment about ***your child's*** perception of this issue. How important do you think ***they*** think this issue is, as a source of conflict/tension in your relationship? Would ***they*** say it's a large problem, or insignificant? Using the scales below rate ***your child's*** perceptions of the importance of this issue within your relationship.

My child thinks the issue of my control of her/his personal behaviors is...

Unimportant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Important**
Inconsequential	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Consequential**
Insignificant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Significant**
Trivial	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Substantial**

Topic # 2: Parent Disapproval of Job and/or Career

A second topic people report as source of tension, conflict, and concern in their relationships with their parents is ***job-related concerns***. This includes things such as *parental pressure to find a job*, *parental disapproval of current job*, and/or *parental disapproval of career choice.*

Take a moment, and think carefully about your child, and communication you've had with her/him regarding your concerns about her/his job and/or career. Then, please answer the following questions:

1. Can you think of an instance in which you and your child had a serious conversation, argument, and/or conflict regarding your concerns about her/his job or career?

_____ Yes _____ No

2. If your answer to #1 above was "No," then go ahead and move on to Question #3 on the next page. If your answer to question #1 was "Yes," then please answer the following question:

During the encounter you had with your child regarding her/his job/career, *what was the single most important message you were trying to convey to your child*? Please describe the encounter and your message as specifically as possible, including exactly what was said (to the best of your memory).

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. Now, think about how ***often*** you and your child ***discuss*** your concerns regarding her/his job and/or career ***in general***. Using the scales below, please rate the frequency of your communication with your child related to job issues:

My child and I discuss my concerns about her/his job/career...

Never	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Often**
Rarely	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Commonly**
Infrequently	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Frequently**
Not at All	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**All the time**

4. Now, think about how ***important*** the issue of your concerns about her/his job/career is as a source of tension/conflict in your relationship with your child. Is this issue a *large* source of tension and conflict in your relationship, or is it *insignificant*? Using the scales below, rate how important this issue is as a source of tension/conflict in your relationship with your child:

Within my relationship with my child, the issue of my child's job/career is...

Unimportant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Important**
Inconsequential	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Consequential**
Insignificant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Significant**
Trivial	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Substantial**

5. Now, think for a moment about ***your child's*** perception of this issue. How important do you think ***they*** think this issue is, as a source of conflict/tension in your relationship? Would ***they*** say it's a large problem, or insignificant? Using the scales below rate ***your child's*** perceptions of the importance of this issue within your relationship.

My child thinks the issue of my concerns about her/his job/career is...

Unimportant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Important**
Inconsequential	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Consequential**
Insignificant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Significant**
Trivial	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Substantial**

Topic # 3: Parent Concern regarding Family Issues

A final topic people report as a source of tension, conflict, and concern in their parent-child relationships is ***family-related conflicts***. These include things like *post-divorce conflicts between parents, difficulty in dealing with one parent,* and *disputes with siblings and/or relatives.*

Take a moment, and think carefully about your child, and communication you've had with her/him regarding family conflicts. Then, please answer the following questions:

1. Can you think of an instance in which you and your child had a serious conversation, argument, and/or conflict regarding family conflicts?

_____ Yes _____ No

2. If your answer to #1 above was "No," then go ahead and move on to Question #3 on the next page. If your answer to question #1 was "Yes," then please answer the following question:

During the encounter you had with your child regarding family conflicts, *what was the single most important message you were trying to convey to your child*? Please describe the encounter and your message as specifically as possible, including exactly what was said (to the best of your memory).

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. Now, think about how ***often*** you and your child ***discuss*** family conflicts ***in general***. Using the scales below, please rate the frequency of your communication with your child related to family conflicts:

My child and I discuss family conflicts...

Never	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Often**
Rarely	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Commonly**
Infrequently	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Frequently**
Not at All	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**All the time**

4. Now, think about how ***important*** the issue of family conflicts is as a source of tension/conflict in your relationship with your child. Is this issue a *large* source of tension and conflict in your relationship, or is it *insignificant*? Using the scales below, rate how important this issue is as a source of tension/conflict in your relationship with your child:

Within my relationship with my child, the issue of family conflicts is...

Unimportant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Important**
Inconsequential	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Consequential**
Insignificant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Significant**
Trivial	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Substantial**

5. Now, think for a moment about ***your child's*** perception of this issue. How important do you think ***they*** think this issue is, as a source of conflict/tension in your relationship? Would ***they*** say it's a large problem, or insignificant? Using the scales below rate ***your child's*** perceptions of the importance of this issue within your relationship.

My child thinks the issue of family conflicts is...

Unimportant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Important**
Inconsequential	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Consequential**
Insignificant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Significant**
Trivial	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**Substantial**

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