The effects of acculturation level and parenting styles on parent-child relationships within the Egyptian culture

Jacqueline Sawires

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THE EFFECTS OF ACCULTURATION LEVEL AND PARENTING STYLES ON PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN THE EGYPTIAN CULTURE

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Social Work

by
Jacqueline Sawires
June 2000
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PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN THE EGYPTIAN CULTURE

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between the parental level of acculturation and parenting styles on parent/child conflict among Egyptians since no research has been done in this area on this population. Acculturation is defined as the adoption by one cultural group or individual of the culture of another. Acculturation is viewed as a process of conditioning of an individual or a group to social patterns, behaviors, morals and values of the dominant culture. Based on the existing research, it was hypothesized that parents who were less acculturated were more likely to utilize more traditional parenting styles versus those who are more acculturated. It was also hypothesized that parents who were less acculturated and utilized traditional parenting styles would report a higher rate of parent/child conflict than those who were more acculturated and used a less traditional parenting style.

This study was exploratory in nature and utilized a post-positivist paradigm. A qualitative research design was applied utilizing a self-reported questionnaire regarding level of parental acculturation, parenting styles, parent/child conflict.
and demographical information (which has been established by the researcher). The intention of this study was to obtain knowledge about the Egyptian community, as there appeared to be a lack of attention to this population. Results indicated that more acculturated parents utilized permissive type of parenting styles. Results also showed that there is no relationship between acculturation and conflict, nor parenting styles and conflict. Results of this study could be used to help promote cultural sensitivity towards the Egyptian community and assist clinicians in appropriately treating familial issues in this population.
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First and foremost, I want to offer my honor and deepest gratitude to my Father, Lord, and Savior, Jesus. I thank you for holding me when I was scared and for carrying me through it all. Without you, I am nothing!

I would like to thank my mother for being my model of how to be a human being, and who, by teaching me her virtues, has brought me to this honorable profession.

Thanks to my family for their support and jokes. I love you guys!

To my best friend, and many friends who offered their support, encouragement, and laughs, you know you are the best!

To all those who shed a light along my path, I deeply thank you, and I pray to repay you all through my service to humanity.

To all those who prayed endlessly for me through the many exams... I thank you!

Finally, to those who hurt me along the way, I thank you for helping me grow through those trials, and for teaching me I can overcome all!!!!
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INTRODUCTION

Problem Statement

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between the parental level of acculturation and parenting styles on parent/child conflict among Egyptians. According to Barker (1995), acculturation is defined as the adoption by one cultural group or individual of the culture of another. Acculturation is viewed as a process of conditioning of an individual or a group to social patterns, behaviors, morals and values of the dominant culture. It is believed that this process can create much confusion among those who try to blend in with the dominant culture due to differences of the way of life (World Book Encyclopedia, 1987).

Such confusion can, in fact, create tension or conflict between members of the dominant culture and those who are in the process of adopting the new culture. Conflict can also occur between immigrants who blended well with the new culture versus those who have not acculturated as well. Such is the case for parents who immigrated to the United States who maintain a more traditional parenting style while raising children who blend well into the American culture. For this reason, this study was interested in looking at the level of parental acculturation along with the parenting styles and its impact on parent/child conflict among Egyptians, since they are perceived to be an invisible
Different cultures often have a different belief system and once they are mixed, due to immigration, conflict may occur. For example, the beliefs of the American culture are vastly different from the Egyptian culture. The American culture is more individualistic while the Egyptian culture is more collectivist. The American culture tends to emphasize individuation from family and freedom in action, speech and religion as defined by the Constitution (Day, 1997). Exploration of life is also encouraged before one settles down. Young men and women are expected to date prior to marriage in order to choose their mate for themselves.

The Egyptian culture, however, is more strict and traditional in nature than the American way of life. Family togetherness is emphasized and children are not encouraged to individuate. Personal freedom is not necessarily favored, and children are expected to stay close to their roots and hold onto their traditions. They are also expected to abide by parental rules and be respectful of their parents. Traditionally, young adults are not allowed to date and the process of mate choosing is considered a family issue rather than one made by an individual. Again, family cohesion is expected rather than individuation.

It is apparent that if these two cultures are in contrast, disparity can occur. For example, in the Egyptian
culture, women are not allowed to move out of the parents' home until marriage takes place. However, when an Egyptian family migrates to the United States, friction may occur when the two cultures are in conflict with one another. An American female may be encouraged to enjoy her freedom and individuate before settling down, whereas an Egyptian woman, living in a home where more traditional parenting style is practiced, would be expected to live at home until she finds a husband.

When immigrants are faced with discrepancies between cultures such as the American and Egyptian cultures, the relationship between parent and child is then challenged. Such is the case for parents who choose to hold on to their primary culture while raising children who have blended well with the American culture. Outside of the family life, children are faced with the American culture but are still expected to be traditional once they cross the threshold of their home. The cultural discrepancies, combined with a more traditional parenting style, can then lead to parent/child conflict.

Much research has been conducted looking at the effects of acculturation on immigrants as well as the effects of different parenting styles among different ethnic groups. However, it would appear that no research has been conducted on Egyptians. As a matter of fact, the United States Census
Bureau (1990) reported a very small number of Egyptians in the United States. The Egyptian population consisted of only 73,097 people out of the entire United States population. Demographical information on this population was also reported. The U.S. Census Bureau also reported that about 50,556 Egyptians (69.2%) of the entire Egyptian population are foreign born (immigrants), and over two-thirds are married people. Over half the population are reported speaking another language other than English, and about 26.4% reported not speaking English "very well." About half the population have attained a bachelor degree or higher, with a mean annual income of $53,727. This population has been treated as if members are invisible, but, in fact, they do exist despite the small numbers. For this reason, the Egyptian population was chosen for this study to help foster better understanding about this group of people, which appears to have been overlooked.

**Problem Focus**

This study was exploratory in nature. Since this was social science research, it was difficult to control for biases and utilize an objective approach. For this reason, a post-positivist paradigm was used. A qualitative research design was applied utilizing a self-reported questionnaire regarding level of parental acculturation, parenting styles, parent/child conflict and demographical information.
The purpose of this study was to gain knowledge about acculturation and parenting styles on parent/child relationship among Egyptian immigrants. The intention of this study was to gain knowledge about the Egyptian community, which might have been overlooked. Results of this study might be used to help promote cultural sensitivity towards the Egyptian community and assist clinicians in appropriately treating familial issues in this population.
LITERATURE REVIEW

Acculturation is defined as a process in which an individual or group adapts to a culture different from the one in which he/she was born (Ghaffarian, 1987). This process of emerging into the dominant culture is often experienced by immigrants who find themselves in circumstances where they must learn to deal with the expectations of the new culture. In this process of conditioning, an individual or a group adapts to social patterns, behaviors, morals and values of the dominant culture. It is believed that the outcome of acculturation is often assimilation into the mainstream culture, and eventually acceptance occurs (Melikian & De Karapetian, 1977). Acceptance of the dominant culture does not necessarily mean that all immigrants will eventually assimilate, nor does it mean that all immigrants will go through the acculturation process at the same pace. Ghaffarian (1987) conducted a study to look at acculturation and psychological adjustment among Iranian women. She found that there seemed to be a relationship between young Iranian women's level of acculturation and their psychological adjustment. Her findings indicated that Iranian men seemed to better acculturate to the American society than Iranian women. This suggests that not all immigrants go through the
acculturation process at the same time, nor are they all at the same level of acculturation.

Many studies have been conducted on various immigrant groups to study the impact of acculturation. Such groups include Hispanics, Puerto Ricans, Indians, Cubans, Pakistanis, Asians, and Arab Moslems (Bernal, 1982; Elkholy, 1966; Fitzpatrick, 1976; Soto, 1983; Sue, 1981; Szapocznik, Kurtines, & Fernandez, 1980; Wakil, Siddique, & Wakil, 1981). It was found that many of these immigrants faced conflicts and problems when they attempted to assimilate into the mainstream culture. Studies conducted on Mexican-Americans showed that during the acculturation process, those who are less acculturated tend to be more traditional (Carrillo-Beron, 1974).

Much research has also been conducted in order to look at the effects of acculturation. Ghaffarian (1998) looked at the process of acculturation among Iranian immigrants. She specifically looked at the relationship between acculturation and mental health. Ghaffarian utilized the Warheit and Buhl’s anxiety scale, depression, psychosocial dysfunction scale, and the Iranian version of Mendoza’s cultural life style inventory. Results indicated a relationship between acculturation and mental health. It was found that when cultural resistance increased, mental health scores decreased, and a positive correlation was also
found that when cultural incorporation and shift towards the new culture increased, better mental health also increased. Studies on Filipinos were also conducted and found that despite acculturation, Filipinos are still resilient and can easily adjust to their new environment (Pido, 1994). Among Chinese immigrant adolescent girls, acculturation was also studied (Shih, 1998). It was found that the degree of acculturation partly determined psychological proximity. It was also found that parental support played an important role in adolescent friendships.

As is demonstrated from many past research studies, the process of acculturation has been thought to have a negative impact on children; however, some research suggests the opposite. Meleis, Lipson, and Paul (1992) suggest that acculturation does in fact improve psychological well-being. This notion that acculturation has a negative impact on immigrants and that it increases psychological distress is also refuted by Flaskerud and Uman (1996). Flaskerud and Uman conducted a study on Latina women. They looked at the relationship between stress and the level of acculturation. Latina women were interviewed about their acculturation, self-esteem and social support in either English or in Spanish (utilizing bicultural translators). Results showed that the Latina immigrant women in the study experienced an increased level of self-esteem as they became more
acculturated. Results suggest, consequently, that the acculturation process does not necessarily have a negative impact on immigrants, but may in fact improve their psychological well-being.

There seem to be opposing viewpoints regarding the impact of acculturation on immigrant emotional and psychological health. One proposed perspective suggests that immigrants who attempt to hold on to their native culture have more adjustment difficulties (Griffith, 1983). A second perspective proposes the opposite. It suggests that separating from the native culture and adopting the way of life of the new culture leads to greater stress and adjustment difficulties (Ramirez, 1969). A third theory suggests that those who are bicultural (identify with both the native and mainstream culture) are healthier and better adjusted (Buriel, Vasquez, Rivera, & Saenz, 1980).

Existing research on Iranians, which is one of the closest population to Egyptians, was also found. After the Iran revolution, many Iranian families migrated to the United States (Sabagh & Bozorgmehr, 1987). It was found that among those families, the exposure of American culture fostered many tensions and pressure. Iranian immigrants were faced with decisions regarding adopting American lifestyle or retaining their native culture. Hanassab and Tidwell (1989) found that women from such homes seemed to be
caught between the two cultures. They lived in traditional homes with traditional parents but at the same time, they were constantly exposed to the contrasting culture of the American lifestyle. It was found that these women's world is not necessarily "traditional" or "modern" in nature. As a result, both stress and conflict arose in their lives. Being exposed to two contrasting cultures caused these women to feel much stress and personal conflict between the two cultures.

When immigrants are faced with discrepancies between their native culture and the American culture, the relationship between parent and child can be challenged. Such is the case with parents who choose to hold onto their primary culture while raising children who have adjusted well with the American culture. When looking at the attitudes of young Iranian women on gender roles and acculturation, findings suggest that the greater the acculturation, the more liberal their attitudes (Kranau et al., 1982). Hanassab and Tidwell (1989) suggest that, outside of the family life, children are faced with the American culture but are still expected to be traditional once they cross the threshold of their home. The cultural discrepancies, combined with a more traditional parenting style, can then lead to parent/child conflict in their relationship at home.
It is important to look at parents' parenting styles and how it impacts children because it is believed that the family has the greatest impact on children (Boveja, 1998). Boveja believes that family in general is considered to be the most important system that impacts the development of children and adolescents. To test the impact of parenting styles on adolescents, the author conducted a study involving 800 male and female, high school, minority students. The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between parenting styles and the students' learning and studying strategies. The students were asked to complete a demographic sheet, along with a modified version of the Perception of Parent's Actions Questionnaire, as well as the LASSI-HS (to assess students' learning and studying behaviors). Results showed that students, who perceived their parents to be authoritative, tended to commit to a more effective learning and studying strategy.

Other research studies also examined the effects of parenting styles on children, and found a great impact on children in various areas. Mboya (1995) suggests that child-rearing practices are the tools that contribute to shaping the development of children and adolescents' self-concept. Dubin, Darling, Steinberg and Brown (1993) also attempted to look at the effects of parenting styles on children's behavior. Results indicated that children who
had parents who are accepting, yet controlling (authoritative), tended to measure high in school-related variables as well on their mental well-being. Reich (1991) also explored parental practice and its impact on children, and found that one of the key issues regarding school drop-out rates had to do with parents not expressing love or control to their children. Reich also found that adolescents who abuse drugs came from families who have a greater communication gap between parents and youth. Those parents were either highly permissive or highly authoritarian in their disciplinary style. All three factors (communication gap, highly permissive and/or authoritarian parenting) contributed to faulty learning styles and a limited opportunity to achieve effective studying strategies. For those adolescents who have parents who are high in responsiveness and demandingness, these tend to be more social and have high educational objectives. Laurence Steinberg also conducted a study (Salmon, 1996) involving 2,000 teenagers and hundreds of parents, nationwide. He found that children who were raised by authoritative parents did, in fact, perform better in school than adolescents from authoritarian or permissive families. This study also suggests a relationship between parenting practices and children's academic performance.
Similar research studies also found similar results regarding parenting impact on children. It is believed that family and school provide a way of communicating experiences, where an individual learns speech, listening skills, interactions, and negotiations, all of which contribute to adolescents’ study habits (Boveja, 1998). Olson (1981) also examined parenting style and its influence on adolescents. It was found that adolescents who perceive their parents to have too much or too little support and control regarding basic family functions, are at risk in their intellectual development. This in turn also reduces their school achievement abilities. Balswick and Macrides (1975) also found that very restrictive or authoritarian homes lead to patterns of frustration and aggression. It was also found that permissive homes can lead a youth to not knowing the parental expectations, which may also lead to aggression. Also, when there was no check on the aggression, an increased level of aggression was then expressed. This research suggested that authoritative parenting styles may be the most beneficial type of parenting to increase students’ achievement.

Other research studies also looked at parenting and how it affects children. Dominguez and Carton (1997) designed a study to investigate the relationship between self-actualization and parenting styles. Based on Maslow’s
theory of motivation and Diana Baumrind's research on parenting styles, two things were predicted. It was predicted that high self-actualization scores would be positively associated with authoritative parenting, and negatively associated with authoritarian parenting. To test these hypotheses, college students were given the Short Index of Self-Actualization and the Parental Authority Questionnaire. Results supported the hypotheses, and suggested that an authoritative parenting style may actually facilitate self-actualization.

Based on the existing research, this study will attempt to look at parental level of acculturation and parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive) and its impact on parent/child conflict. For the purpose of this study, the three parenting styles that will be examined are Authoritarian, Authoritative and Permissive as identified by Diana Baumrind (1966). Authoritarian parents tend to be very directive with their interactions with their children. Such a parenting style is more traditional and parents value obedience. Parents do not encourage verbal interaction, and favor punitive measures to control their children. Authoritative parents tend to direct their children's behavior in a more rational manner, utilizing reason and shaping. They are open to set firm limits for their children when necessary, but still respect their
children’s opinion. Permissive parents are the opposite of both authoritarian and authoritative parents. Permissive parents use little punishment and make few demands on their children. Permissive parents also do not take an active role in shaping their children’s behavior.

Much like the Egyptian culture, it was found that Iranian families come from a family-oriented culture where family ties are strong and are highly valued (Behnam, 1985). Cultures, such as Egyptian, that are traditional in nature tend to hold onto traditional parenting styles. Since there is no existing research on the Egyptian population, it is the intention of this study to gain knowledge about the Egyptian community, due to a lacking in this area. It is hypothesized that parents who are less acculturated are more likely to utilize more traditional parenting styles versus those who are more acculturated. It is also hypothesized that parents who are less acculturated and utilize traditional parenting styles will report a higher rate of parent/child conflict than those who are more acculturated and use a less traditional parenting style.

Results of this study will hopefully be used to help promote cultural sensitivity towards the Egyptian community and assist clinicians in appropriately treating familial issues in this population. Mental health practitioners working with the Egyptian population need to gain a greater
awareness of the cultural impact on the family dynamics and relationships.
METHODS

Purpose and Design of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between the level of acculturation and the parenting styles and their impact on parent/child conflict among Egyptians. A post-positivist approach was utilized for this study since it is difficult to control for biases in social research. A qualitative research design was also used because only weak associations or links can be made as a result of the design. For convenience purposes, Egyptian parents from a Coptic Orthodox Church were selected to participate in this study. They were examined utilizing the Sawires Parenting Style questionnaire, a modified version of the Family Functioning Scale (please see Appendix A for permission to use the scale), and the Sawires Acculturation scale for Egyptian-Americans together with a demographic questionnaire, which the researcher has designed.

Even though there seems to be a lack of research directed at Egyptians in particular, existing research suggests that there might be a difference in parents' responses. The difference might exist between those who are more acculturated with the American culture than those who are more traditional and hold onto the Egyptian culture. The following hypotheses were predicted:
1) Parents who are less acculturated are more likely to utilize more traditional parenting styles versus those who are more acculturated.

2) Parents who are less acculturated and utilize traditional parenting styles will report a higher rate of parent/child conflict than those who are more acculturated and use a less traditional parenting style.

**Sampling**

Due to the lack of information on location of this population, a non-probability sampling procedure was utilized. Convenience sampling was implemented using the closest, most available subjects. The recruitment site was St. John Coptic Orthodox Church located in Covina, California, because the church is predominantly composed of Egyptians. It was the researcher’s hope that this sample would be representative of the rest of the Egyptian population, with various parenting styles and levels of acculturation. Subjects who agreed to participate received a copy of the consent form as well as a verbal explanation of the study to ensure them anonymity. Participants were also given information on how they might obtain results of the study after its completion, if they wished.

This study hoped to have approximately 50 or more male and female parents. This number was chosen to have a significantly good sized sample, since the number of
Egyptians living in the United States is only 73,097, with 69.2% as immigrants (U.S Bureau of the Census, 1990). This number was also chosen to increase generalizability to the rest of the Egyptian community and reduce the number of sample error, to obtain meaningful statistics. However, only 31 participants completed and returned the questionnaire, despite the fact that 125 were distributed. These participants were members of the congregation of St. John Coptic Orthodox Church in Covina, California. All participants were Egyptian parents with children of various ages. All parents were also immigrants (to represent the majority of the Egyptian population in the United States), and were classified by a code number to help maintain the participants' anonymity.

Data Collection and Instruments

Prior to data collection, the Church leader (Priest) was notified, and a written consent to conduct this study on the church premises was obtained (see Appendix B). Participants were then asked to fill out a survey consisting of three scales (see Appendix C, D, & E), a demographic questionnaire (see Appendix F), a consent form (see Appendix G), and a debriefing form (see Appendix H).
Measures

Sawires Parenting Style Questionnaire: Sawires, J.S. (1999). Please see Appendix C. After consulting many parenting scales, it was discovered that there are no appropriate scales to measure Egyptian parenting styles that are culturally sensitive to the Egyptian experience. For this reason, this scale was designed to identify the different types of parenting (authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive). This scale is a ten-item, Likert-type scale, ranging from 1-5 (1= strongly agree, 2= agree, 3= neither agree nor disagree, 4= disagree, 5= strongly disagree). Questions number 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6 are in the direction of strongly agree, which might indicate being an authoritative parent. Participants who answer in the direction of strongly agree to questions 7, 9, and 10 would indicate being an authoritarian parent. Questions number 3 and 8 are also in the direction of strongly agree, which might indicate being a permissive parent. This scale was pretested by ten adults who agreed that this scale is measuring what it is supposed to measure. It was easy to understand, very culturally sensitive, and the individuals were willing to answer all items, in an honest way. Limitations of this scale included its lack of generalizability, and no validity or reliability data.
However, its strength lies in the sensitivity to this cultural group.

Family Functioning Scale

Bloom, B. L. (1985). Please see Appendix D. This scale is a well established scale with good construct validity of .81 and reliability of .92. It is a multidimensional scale consisting of seventy-five items, that looks at thirteen factors of family relationships. The thirteen factors include family cohesion, expressiveness, conflict, intellectual-cultural orientation, active-recreational orientation, religious emphasis, organization, family sociability, external locus of control, family idealization, disengagement, democratic family styles, laissez-faire family styles, authoritarian family styles, and enmeshment. For the purpose of this study, only the conflict factor was examined, which is composed of five questions. The scale was originally dichotomous but was modified to accommodate a 1-5 Likert-type scale (1= strongly agree, 2= agree, 3= neither agree nor disagree, 4= disagree, 5= strongly disagree). For sensitivity purposes, all questions were phrased in a positive direction, to avoid offending Egyptian parents. A low score indicates being high in the direction of the construct (ex. Low score on conflict will indicate a low level of conflict among the family).
Sawires Acculturation Scales for Egyptian-Americans

Sawires, J.S. (1999). Please see Appendix E. After consulting many acculturation scales, it was found that there were no culturally sensitive scales to measure the Egyptian acculturation experience. For this reason, this scale was constructed by the researcher. This scale is a ten-item scale, which hoped to determine the parent’s level of acculturation. This scale is on a five point Likert-scale ranging from 1-5 (1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = disagree, 5 = strongly disagree). A low score on questions number 1, 5, and 6 would indicate a high level of acculturation, and would indicate that the parent is more traditional. Having a low score on questions 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, and 10 would indicate a low level of acculturation and a less traditional lifestyle. This scale was also pretested by ten adults who agreed that this scale measured factors related to acculturation, was easy to understand, and very culturally sensitive, and that they would be willing to answer all items in an honest way. Limitations of this scale included its lack of generalizability (very culturally specific to Egyptian-Americans), and no validity or reliability could be made. It would probably be more beneficial to have this scale relevant to other cultures as well. However, its strength lies in the sensitivity to this cultural group, and the
questions are very inviting in nature (participants should not be hesitant in completing the questions).

Demographic Questionnaire

Please see Appendix F. Participants were asked to respond to a short list of demographic questions. Questions included the following: 1. Age, 2. Gender, 3. Income, 4. Educational status, 5. Occupation, 6. Marital status, 7. Number of children, 8. Age migrated to the United States, 9. Time spent with children daily, 10. Location where parent was primarily educated (Egypt or the United States).

Procedure

The participants were recruited through a church visitation at St. John Coptic Orthodox Church in Covina, California. Participants were told that the goal of this study was to look at parenting styles and level of blending in with the American culture, and were asked to complete the questionnaire. Participants received a copy of the consent form and were debriefed after filling out the questionnaire. The questionnaire took approximately 30 minutes to complete and were picked up on the church premises. Information regarding obtaining results of this study were offered to the participants, and a contact person was offered in case they had any questions.
Protection of Human Subjects

Participants in this study were asked to complete a questionnaire consisting of three scales and a demographic questionnaire. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity of these subjects, at no time were they asked to indicate their name anywhere on the questionnaire. Also, no names were reported with participants' responses, and were coded to assure that none of the participants could be identified with their responses. All information collected in this study was treated completely anonymously, and all data was reported in group form only. Also, to protect participants' confidentiality, none of the participants had access to the surveys after they had been completed. Please see appendix I, which indicates approval to conduct this study by the Departmental Institutional Review Board in Social Work at California State University, San Bernardino.

Data Analysis

This study was exploratory in nature. Since this is social science research, it is difficult to control for biases and utilize an objective approach. For this reason, a post-positivist paradigm was used. A qualitative research design was applied, utilizing a self-reported questionnaire regarding level of parental acculturation, parenting styles, parent/child conflict and demographical information.
The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between the level of acculturation and the parenting styles and their impact on parent/child conflict among Egyptians. A qualitative research design was also applied because only association statements could be made. For convenience purposes, Egyptian parents from a Coptic Orthodox Church were selected to participate in this study. They were examined utilizing the Sawires Parenting Style questionnaire, a modified version of the Family Functioning Scale (please see Appendix A for permission to use the scale), and the Sawires Acculturation scale for Egyptian-Americans along with a demographic questionnaire, which the researcher had designed.

Even though there seemed to be a lack of research directed at Egyptians in particular, existing research suggested that there might be a difference in parents' responses. The difference might exist between those who are more acculturated with the American culture than those who are more traditional and hold onto the Egyptian culture. The following hypotheses were predicted:

1) Parents who are less acculturated are more likely to utilize more traditional parenting styles versus those who are more acculturated.

2) Parents who are less acculturated and utilize traditional parenting styles will report a higher rate of
parent/child conflict than those who are more acculturated and use a less traditional parenting style.

Since this was a qualitative study, frequencies and chi-squares were utilized to analyze the data. Frequencies were run to assess the mean, median, mode and range on the participants' demographic information such as age, gender, income, education level, location of primary education, marital status, number of children, age at time of migration to the U.S, and time spent with children daily. This provided a good representation of the sample, which was compared to the demographic information of the general Egyptian population obtained from the U. S Census Bureau. Such information was used to help indicate whether the sample is a good representation of the general Egyptian population or not, which impacted generalizability. Correlations were also run to assess whether there was an association between parenting styles, acculturation level, and level of conflict between parent and child.
RESULTS

Frequencies

Frequencies were run on the demographics to obtain the mean, median, and mode. Results indicated that the participants' ages ranged from 24-62, and the average age of the participants was 46 years-old, with a mean and mode of 49 years of age. The average income bracket that most participants fell into was the $25,000 to $34,999 category. However, 41% of the participants had a household income of $50,000 or more. Surprisingly, the mean, median and mode for the amount of education completed was the same for the participants, having about 3 to 4 years of college work completed, which was 35% of this study’s population. In terms of occupation, most of the participants fell into the paraprofessional/professional category, having 58% of the total participants who worked, as compared to the next highest percentage of 16% domestic engineers. The mean, median, and mode was also the same for marital status, and it was found that 93% of these participants were primarily married (might suggest strong family cohesion). A large percentage of the participants (55%) reported having two children. The average participants were female, which consisted of 55% of the participants (17 female, 14 male). One hundred percent of the participants were immigrants, and the average age at which participants migrated to the United
States was 28 years-old. Participants reported spending 3 3/4 hours daily with their children. Most of the participants (82%) reported being primarily educated in Egypt. This demographic data seemed to be consistent with the demographic data obtained from the United States Bureau of the Census (1990). Census data showed that 69.2% of the entire Egyptian population in the United States are immigrants, who reported speaking English "very well." The census also indicated that about 50% of the Egyptian population had obtained a bachelor degree or higher, with a mean income of $53,000 annually, which is consistent with this study's population. This study's demographic results are consistent with the Egyptian population in the U.S which increases the generalizability to the rest of the Egyptian community.

**Correlation Analysis**

Results indicated a positive correlation, at a significance .01 level between parents who rated high on acculturation and utilizing permissive parenting styles. It was predicted that parents who were less acculturated were more likely to utilize more traditional parenting styles than those who were less acculturated. The significant correlation between highly acculturated parents and permissive parenting styles ($r = .456, p < .01$) supported this hypothesis. That is, parents who scored high on
acculturation, tended to use less traditional parenting styles.

It was also predicted that parents who were less acculturated and utilized parenting styles would report a higher rate of parent/child conflict than those who are more acculturated and use a less traditional parenting style. Results indicated that there is no significance to support this hypothesis. In other words, there was no relationship between parents' level of acculturation, their parenting styles and their level of conflict with their children. As a matter of fact, there was no significant level of conflict reported at all between either acculturation or parenting styles.
DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between Egyptian parents' level of acculturation and their parenting styles on their conflict with their children. Acculturation is the process of adoption of social patterns, behaviors, morals and values of the dominant culture (World Book Encyclopedia, 1987). Research suggests many difficulties that many immigrants face when trying to blend into the dominant culture, and their struggle of holding onto their traditional beliefs and traditional parenting styles. Many studies have been conducted on various immigrant groups to study the impact of acculturation. Such groups include Hispanics, Puerto Ricans, Indians, Cubans, Pakistanis, Asians, and Arab Moslems (Bernal, 1982; Elkholy, 1966; Fitzpatrick, 1976; Soto, 1983; Sue, 1981; Szapocznik, Kurtines, & Fernandez, 1980; Wakil, Siddique, & Wakil, 1981). It was found that many of these immigrants faced conflicts and problems when they attempted to assimilate into the mainstream culture. Studies conducted on Mexican-Americans showed that during the acculturation process, those who are less acculturated tend to be more traditional (Carrillo-Beron, 1974). The struggle with blending in with the dominant culture and raising children traditionally in the new environment, might create parent/child conflict. Since there is no existing
research on Egyptian-American immigrants, this study attempted to examine the parent/child conflict level along with parents’ acculturation and parenting styles.

Based on existing research on immigrants from different backgrounds, it was hypothesized that parents’ acculturation level would impact their parenting styles. It was also hypothesized that parents who are less acculturated would more likely utilize traditional parenting styles and would have a high level of parent/child conflict. Results of this study indicated that there is a significant relationship between those who were of high acculturation and permissive parenting styles. These results provided support for existing research that suggested less acculturated parents utilized traditional parenting styles. Also, results indicated no support to the second hypothesis, and showed that there was no relationship between acculturation and conflict, or parenting and conflict.

This result was not surprising, due to the cultural standards of the Egyptian community. Part of the Egyptian cultural practices suggest that there is a strong sense of silence, privacy, and protection of the family name (women’s International Network News, 1996). Part of this silence includes a familiar slogan to Egyptian families which states “ma tenshorsh khasil el wesikh,” which translates into “don’t air your dirty laundry.” This concept of secrecy is
a well known cultural practice that is applied to many things in the Egyptian culture. For example, if a family has any problems, it is often only discussed among family members or with a religious leader. Problems are also solved by family members or the religious leader.

This component of secrecy serves two purposes in the Egyptian culture. One, to preserve the family bond, unity, and structure. This dictates who is included in the family affairs, and who is excluded. Second, to eliminate the sense of shame and stigmatization that might accompany some problems (shame and guilt serves as a major deterrent in the Egyptian culture). To help prevent any shame to families, problems within the family are not told to those who are outside the family. Women's International Network News (1996) talks about how major issues within the family such as family violence committed against women is rarely discussed publicly. This is due to the high value attached to privacy in this traditional culture. Lack of quantitative data regarding family violence is also associated to the value of privacy in the Egyptian culture, since it is rarely discussed outside family members. Gardner (1997) also confirms the privacy component in traditional cultures, along with holding onto cultural norms when immigrants blend in with the American culture. Among traditional Hispanic cultures such as Puerto Ricans, it was
found that talking about personal family issues such as domestic violence is not part of the cultural norm. Domestic violence perpetrators who immigrated from Puerto Rico to the United States reported not doing anything wrong, even the wives refused to file charges because of the cultural understanding of the machismo philosophy. Gardner talked about how Americans deal with personal issues such as domestic abuse more openly, than some immigrants, and that it was not viewed as a problem until migrating to the United States (clashing with the dominant culture). Not talking about family violence occurred because immigrants view family conflict as "nobody else's business." For this reason, it was the researcher's anticipation (due to personal familiarity with the Egyptian culture) that no significance would be found to support the second hypothesis pertaining to acculturation, parenting styles and conflict level between parent and child.

Opposing views on acculturation, causing a high level of conflict, may in fact explain why there was no significance reported between acculturation, parenting, and the conflict level between parent and child. Meleis, Lipson, and Paul (1992) suggest that acculturation does in fact improve psychological well-being. This notion that acculturation has a negative impact on immigrants and that it increases psychological distress is also refuted by
Flaskerud and Uman (1996). Flaskerud and Uman conducted a study on Latina women. They looked at the relationship between stress and the level of acculturation. Latina women were interviewed about their acculturation, self-esteem and social support in either English or in Spanish (utilizing bicultural translators). Results showed that the Latina immigrant women in the study experienced an increased level of self-esteem as they became more acculturated. Results suggest, consequently, that the acculturation process does not necessarily have a negative impact on immigrants, but may in fact improve their psychological well-being.

Research also suggests another possible explanation as to why no significance was found between parents’ acculturation level, parenting styles, and conflict with their children. Gorman (1998) looked at parenting styles among Chinese parents, whose parenting styles has been seen as being traditionally “authoritarian.” It was suggested that authoritarian parenting may be a Western concept and does not accurately describe Chinese socialization. Results of that study showed “subtle influence” to abide by parental expectations and rules. It was reported that those expectations were derived from parents’ desire to help their children succeed and be “good people.” It was also discussed that traditional attitudes of the parents were not
authoritarian in nature, but stemmed from a traditional set of beliefs that are valued, which is culturally based.

Finding no significance between acculturation level, type of parenting, and conflict level may be simply due to the cultural difference from the mainstream culture as to what is classified as cultural values, and what is conflict. This concept can help explain why Egyptian parents did not identify themselves as being authoritarian, nor did they perceive having a high level of conflict with their children. Chao (1995) found that parents who come from traditional cultures such as the Chinese culture, have a significantly different view of parenting than those held by mainstream American parents. For example, important elements such as respect and obedience is highly valued by the Chinese culture as it is in the Egyptian culture. Stricter discipline, higher expectations, and emphasis on education for higher social mobility are also emphasized in the Chinese culture. Because of the nature of the tradition of the Chinese culture, there seems to be a lot of similarity with the Egyptian culture. In this study’s populations, demographic information revealed that this study’s population seem to be a high income earning group, that is well educated, who have a paraprofessional/professional type of job, with a strong emphasis on marriage, and child rearing. Such information
may suggest this population holds strong family values (spending lots of time with children daily, and having the second highest occupation as domestic engineers), along with a strong value for education. This can perhaps explain why parents did not feel that they are authoritarian in their parenting styles or having much conflict with their children.
SOCIAL WORK IMPLICATIONS

The process of acculturation and its impact on immigrants has been a well-researched and debated topic. Some research suggests that the process of acculturation has a negative impact on immigrants. Research focuses upon how immigrants struggle a great deal, while trying to blend in with the mainstream culture. It was found that those immigrants who struggle with the acculturation process (less acculturated) tend to be more traditional and tend to hold onto their traditional values and beliefs. It was also found that immigrants who tend to be traditional also tend to utilize more traditional parenting styles that are close to their native land's parenting styles. Effects of less acculturated parents who utilize traditional parenting styles were also studied. It was found that a relationship between acculturation and mental health did in fact exist (Ghaffarian, 1998). For those who had a hard time assimilating into the mainstream culture as their resistance level increased, their mental health scores decreased. It was also found that when immigrants' shift towards the new culture increased, better mental health also increased.

As a result of trying to assimilate and raise their children in a traditional fashion, tension or conflict between parent and child may occur. Such is the case for parents who immigrate to the United States who maintain a
more traditional parenting style while raising children who blend well into the American culture. This study attempted to look at the level of parental acculturation along with the parenting style and its impact on parent/child conflict among Egyptians, since no research has been done on this group.

Demographic results of this study indicated that the sample population was very similar to the general Egyptian population reported by the United States Census Bureau (1990). Demographic information on the Egyptian population studied indicated that the group was a high income earning group, that is well educated, who have paraprofessional/professional type of job, with a strong emphasis on marriage, and child rearing. Such information may suggest this population held strong family values (spending lots of time with children daily, and having the second highest occupation as domestic engineers), along with a strong value for education.

Correlation analysis was run, and results indicated significance between a high level of acculturation and permissive parenting styles. However, there was no significance between acculturation and conflict level and no significance between parenting styles and conflict was found. Research proposed two possible explanation as to why no conflict level was reported. One was the privacy factor
for traditional cultures, and keeping family issues within the family. The other thought proposed was that perhaps traditional parenting (authoritarian) is in fact a Western concept. It therefore follows that parents are not strict on their children, but there is an understanding that parents want the best for their children, and that it is a cultural value.

Results of this study have several social work implications. This research has helped shed light on the Egyptian community which has been treated as an invisible group. Understanding the demographic information mentioned above about this population, social workers can now be able to understand a little more about Egyptian people's lifestyles. It is now known that most Egyptians in the United States are immigrants. Egyptians have a high value placed on child rearing and a strong sense of family values. That education is also valued and they tend to hold paraprofessional/professional jobs, which might indicate their high level of drive to excel. Results did confirm that those who were more acculturated tended to utilize permissive parenting which was consistent with existing research. This study helped to explain why conflict was not reported as a factor in parent/child relationship among Egyptians, which was otherwise not known prior to conducting this research. This study helped contribute to the existing
body of literature on acculturation and parenting, and helped bring awareness to this forgotten population. Having knowledge about this population can assist social workers with better servicing the Egyptian community and their needs. Further research is recommended to obtain more knowledge about this unique population.
Dear Jacqueline Sawires,

Per your request, I Father Gawargious A. Kolta, the priest of St. John Coptic Orthodox Church, Covina, California, grant you the permission to conduct your research study on Egyptians at church. I am interested to find out the results, when your project is completed. God blesses.

11/26/1999

Fr. Gawargious A. Kolta
I spoke with Dr. Bernard L. Bloom today (303) 443-8428 and was informed that Jackie could use his factorial structure of self-report measures of family functioning.

M. Jean Peacock
California State University
5500 University Parkway
San Bernardino, CA 92407
ph. (909)880-5579
fx. (909)880-7003
APPENDIX C: SAWIRES PARENTING SCALE

This is a questionnaire about your way of raising your children. There is no right or wrong answers so it’s very important that you give the answer that’s most correct for you. Remember that all answers are confidential.

When I think about my approach to raising children, I would rate myself on the following questions on a scale of 1-5 with:

1= I strongly agree
2= I agree
3= neither agree or disagree
4= disagree
5= strongly disagree

1. I see myself as being responsible directing or guiding my child’s behavior as he or she is growing up.
   1 2 3 4 5

2. I have standards by which my children operate, but I have a lot of flexibility when those standards need to be changed.
   1 2 3 4 5

3. I give my children unlimited room to form their own beliefs.
   1 2 3 4 5

4. I am very clear about what I expect from my children’s behavior.
   1 2 3 4 5

5. If I said or did something that hurt my children’s feelings, I would be willing to admit it.
   1 2 3 4 5

6. If I felt that I had said or done something to my child that was a mistake, I would apologize and try to make it up to them.
   1 2 3 4 5

7. I sometimes discipline my children for things about which most parents might not feel to be necessary.
   1 2 3 4 5

8. When I think my child has been particularly bad, I might choose to overlook it.
   1 2 3 4 5
9. I think the main problem with parents today is that they're too permissive in the way they raise their children.

10. I don't think parents today have enough authority to do what they think is right for their children.
APPENDIX D: FAMILY FUNCTIONING SCALE

This is a questionnaire looking at your family’s interaction. There is no right and wrong answer, so it’s very important that you give the answers that reflect your cultural practices. Remember that all answers are confidential. I would rate myself on the following questions on a scale of 1-5 with:

1= I strongly agree
2= I agree
3= neither agree or disagree
4= disagree
5= strongly disagree

1. We do not fight a lot in my family.
   1 2 3 4 5

2. Family members never get angry to the point that they throw things around.
   1 2 3 4 5

3. Family members hardly ever lose their tempers.
   1 2 3 4 5

4. Family members never hit each other.
   1 2 3 4 5

5. Family members rarely criticize each other.
   1 2 3 4 5
APPENDIX E: SAWIRES ACCULTURATION SCALE FOR EGYPTIAN-AMERICAN

This is a questionnaire about your acculturation. There is no right and wrong answer, so it's very important that you give the answers that reflect your cultural practices. Remember that all answers are confidential. I would rate myself on the following questions on a scale of 1-5 with:

1= I strongly agree
2= I agree
3= neither agree or disagree
4= disagree
5= strongly disagree

1. I mainly speak English.
   1= 2= 3= 4= 5=

2. I usually listen to Arabic music.
   1= 2= 3= 4= 5=

3. When I write, I first think in Arabic and then translate into English.
   1= 2= 3= 4= 5=

4. When I speak to my children, I often use phrases or sayings from my language of origin.
   1= 2= 3= 4= 5=

5. I identify myself more as being an American than Egyptian.
   1= 2= 3= 4= 5=

6. The food I usually eat is not traditional Egyptian food.
   1= 2= 3= 4= 5=

7. I feel more excited about Egyptian holidays than I do American legal holidays.
   1= 2= 3= 4= 5=

8. Most of the social functions I attend are with Egyptian people.
   1= 2= 3= 4= 5=

9. I tend to use traditional remedies for any health problem before I would ever see a doctor.
   1= 2= 3= 4= 5=

10. Most of the people in my church are also Egyptian.
    1= 2= 3= 4= 5=
APPENDIX F: DEMOGRAPHICS

1. Age

2. Into which of the following groups did your family income fall last year (1998).
   - under $5,000
   - $5,000 to $9,999
   - $10,000 to $14,999
   - $15,000 to $19,999
   - $20,000 to $24,999
   - $25,000 to $34,999
   - $35,000 to $49,999
   - over $50,000

3. Identify one of the following categories that best describes the amount of education you completed.
   - K-6th grade
   - 7-9th grade
   - 10-12th grade
   - 1-2 years of college
   - 3-4 years of college
   - Completed post graduate work
   - Technical training

4. If you are currently working, what is the title of your occupation (cook, counselor, clerical)
   ________________  if not, what career do you wish to attain ________________

5. Are you currently
   - Married
   - Divorced
   - Widowed
   - Separated
   - Never married

6. How many children do you have ________________

7. What is your gender? __male__female

8. At what age were you at the time you migrated to the United States? ________________

9. Approximately, how much time each day do you spend with your kids? __________ minutes/hours.

10. Were you primarily educated in the United States or in Egypt? ________________
APPENDIX G: INFORMED CONSENT

This questionnaire is designed to examine your cultural practices, the way you raise your children, and how it might relate to your relationship with your children. We are asking that you take thirty minutes of your time to complete this questionnaire.

This study is being conducted by Jacqueline Sawires, a graduate Social Work student at CSUSB under the supervision of Dr. Morley Glicken, Professor of Social Work at CSUSB. This project has been approved by the Social Work Department Human Participants Review Board of California State University, San Bernardino. All information collected in this study will be treated as confidential and totally anonymous. At no time will your name be reported along with your responses. All data will be reported in group form only. The results of this study will be available at the end of the 2000 Spring quarter. You can contact Dr. Morley Glicken or Jackie Sawires at (909) 880-5557, if you have any questions about the study or when the results will be available.

Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time during this study without any penalty. Give your consent by indicating the date here__________________.
APPENDIX H: DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

Thank you for your participation in this study. This research study was conducted by Jackie Sawires, a Social Work Student at California State University, San Bernardino. The purpose was to find out if there is a relationship between level of acculturation, choices of parenting styles, and the parent/child relationship.

Should you have any questions regarding the outcomes of the study, please contact Dr. Morley Glicken or myself in the social work department, any time after the end of the Spring, 2000, quarter. If anything has troubled you about the study, you may also contact one of us at the above number during daytime hours.
January 24, 2000

Ms. Jacqueline Sawires  
Department of Social Work  
California State University  
5500 University Parkway  
San Bernardino, Ca. 92407

Dear Ms. Sawires:

The Departmental Institutional Review Board in Social Work, an institutional arm of the University Institutional Review Board, has approved your research project entitled, "The Effects of Acculturation Level and Parenting Styles on Parent-Child Relationships Within The Egyptian Culture."

Please notify the departmental review board if any substantive changes are made to your research proposal or if any risks to subjects arise. If your project lasts longer than one year, you must reapply for approval at the end of each year. You are required to keep copies of the informed consent and data for at least three years.

Best of luck with your research.

Sincerely,

Morley D. Glicken, DSW  
Professor of Social Work
REFERENCES


Pearce, & J. Giordano (Eds.), *Ethnicity and family therapy*. New York: The Guilford Press.


