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Parenting dimensions in relation to pre-schoolers' behaviour problems in Latvia and Lithuania

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Abstract

The aim of the present study was to examine associations between parenting and child behaviour problems in two neighbouring countries with subtle, yet apparent cultural differences. Participants were mothers and fathers of preschool-age children from Latvia and Lithuania. Parents completed a measure of child-rearing attitudes and reported on their child's internalizing and externalizing behaviours. In both countries, parental warmth was negatively associated with child behaviour problems, and punishment orientation was positively associated. There were differences by country in the association of paternal psychological control and behaviour problems, and in the interactions of parenting dimensions, specifically maternal warmth and punishment orientation. Possible differences in the meaning attributed to parenting practices imply considerations for parent training programs.

Keywords

behaviour problems, parenting dimensions, pre-school children

In order to facilitate more positive developmental pathways for children, it is crucial to consider the role of the child's early relationships within the socialization process and the development of adaptive or maladaptive behavioural patterns. Numerous longitudinal studies have demonstrated continuity of behavioural profiles from the preschool age to adolescence (Broidy et al., 2003; Emond, Ormel, Veenstra, & Oldehinkel, 2007; Reef, Diamantopoulou, van Meurs, Verhulst, & van der Ende, 2011), as well as from school age to adulthood (Byrd, Loeber, & Pardini, 2012; Kokko, Pulkkinen, Huesmann, Dubow, & Boxer, 2009). Considering the "cardinal principle" that early experience has a profound effect on human development (Fox & Rutter, 2010), the earlier that behavioural difficulties are identified and appropriate intervention commenced, the greater are the possibilities for the minimization of behaviour problems and positive outcome later in life (Shonkoff, 2010). For the purposes of developing more effective and contextually appropriate intervention programmes, it is crucial to understand the various risk and protective factors which play a role in early behavioural development.

Both proximal factors within the "micro system", particularly the parent–child relationship, but also more distal factors within the "macro system", including the sociocultural context, traditions and values are involved in early child development (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Chen et al., 2003). Cross-cultural comparison of parenting practices and child behaviour problems provides opportunity to examine both the interactions of parent–child within the "micro system" as well as to consider the effects of various factors at the broader level of the "macro system". The present study had the goal of comparing associations between parenting practices and child behaviour problems in two neighbouring European countries, Latvia and Lithuania, culturally and historically similar yet different, allowing for a consideration of differences in these associations in the context of possible cultural variations in the meaning attributed to parenting practices.

Parenting dimensions and their relation to child behaviour

In the extant research on parenting practices in relation to child behaviour there are several prominent theoretical models, many of which also include dimensions of parental control. Within Baumrind's (1971) classic model of parenting styles the authoritative parenting style includes emotional warmth in combination with age appropriate parental control and limit-setting, whereas authoritarian parenting is marked by a dearth of emotional warmth in combination with harsh, rigid control. Barber, in turn, has differentiated psychological control and behavioural control. The former is a parenting strategy characterized by six critical aspects—induction of guilt and shame, invalidation and constriction of the child's emotions and self-expression, negative criticism and love withdrawal (Barber, 1996, 2002; Nelson, Yang, Coyne, Olsen, & Hart, 2013). Psychological control constrains, invalidates and manipulates the child's psychological and emotional experience. Behavioural control is conceptualized by Barber as an adaptive form of parental control which includes monitoring, limit-setting and the regulation of the child's behaviour through firm and consistent discipline (Barber, 1996).

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Research has indicated that psychological control is a non-adaptive form of parental control which negatively affects the child's thoughts and feelings, and is predictive of child and adolescent internalizing problems such as depression and externalizing problems such as delinquency (Barber, 2002; Barber, Xia, Olsen, McNeely, & Bose, 2012). Parental psychological control has been found to undermine adolescent self-esteem (Boudreault-Bouchard et al., 2013). In contrast, higher levels of parental behavioural control are related to lower levels of aggression and antisocial behaviour among children and adolescents (Barber, Stolz, & Olsen, 2006). Psychological control has been further delineated into subcomponents, referred to as intrusive, overprotective control and derisive comments (Rubin, Burgess, & Hastings, 2002), which have been found to moderate the relation between toddlers' peer inhibition and pre-schoolers' social reticence. Recent research has also examined the effects of parental psychological control as a predictor of adolescent aggression, but with this effect buffered when the adolescent reported a high-quality relationship with the other parent (Murray, Dwyer, Rubin, Knighton-Wisor, & Booth-LaForce, 2014).

Hart and colleagues (Hart, Nelson, Robinson, Olsen, & McNeilly-Choque, 1998; Nelson, Hart, Jin, Yang, & Olsen, 2006) have studied the effects of parental psychological control in parallel with examining the effects of parental "coercion," operationalized to include parental discipline in the form of verbal and physical punishment. Chen and colleagues have similarly studied harsh parenting practices, including physical punishment, and have referred to this dimension as "punishment orientation" (Chen et al., 2003). Harsh parenting has been associated with child aggression (Chen, Dong, & Zhou, 1997); parental coercion with both overt and relational child aggression (Hart et al., 1998; Nelson et al., 2006); and punishment orientation with less mature child self-control (Chen et al., 2003).

Positive parenting practices, including parental support, acceptance, responsiveness, parental nurturance, emotional warmth and affection, praise, respect and open communication in the parent–child relationship are often studied in parallel with harsh parenting. Consistently it has been found that supportive, responsive parenting is positively associated with adaptive child behaviour, higher self-esteem, greater social initiative (Barber et al., 2006; Tamis-LeMonda, Briggs, McClowry, & Snow, 2009); committed child compliance (Chen et al., 2003); less overt and relational aggression (Hart et al., 1998); symbolic competence, higher verbal ability and intellectual achievement (Bornstein, Tamis-LeMonda, Hahn, & Haynes, 2008; Eshel, Daelmans, Mello, & Martines, 2006). Positive parenting practices of encouragement and support have consistently been found to facilitate positive and prosocial child behaviours within various sociocultural contexts (Roopnarine, Krishnakumar, Narine, Logie, & Lape, 2014).

Cross-cultural comparison of parenting practices

Cross-cultural research has been positioned within the context of the "etic-emic debate" (Berry, 1989), exploring whether specific developmental processes are universal, culturally-similar across ethnic and national borders, or if they are culturally-dissimilar. It has been suggested that cross-cultural research may actually point to "universalism without uniformity," thereby demonstrating both the "etic" aspects of universality, as well as the "emic" aspects of cultural difference (Schweder & Sullivan, 1993). The importance of the cultural context within the developmental process was initially emphasized in the 1930s by Lev Vygotsky (Vygotsky, 1978), and was further elaborated by Urie Bronfenbrenner as a bioecological theory of development (Bronfenbrenner, 2005).

A majority of cross-cultural studies within the past several decades have been centred upon a comparison of developmental processes in Western and Eastern cultures (Pomerantz & Wang, 2009). Such comparisons often posit contrast between cultures which emphasize either the independent self in contrast to the interdependent self (Kitayama, Markus, & Matsumoto, 1995), or cultures which encourage individualism in contrast to collectivism (Gartstein, Slobodskaya, & Kinsht, 2009; Triandis, 1995). Although it is recognized that there are significant individual differences within each culture (Smith & Bond, 1999), nevertheless many cross-cultural developmental studies seem to assume a certain degree of cultural homogeneity.

In cross-cultural comparisons of parenting practices in the United States and China results have shown that in both countries parents' psychological control of adolescents is predictive of decreased emotional well-being, evidenced by higher ratings of experienced sadness, worry, shame and anger. However, the negative effect of parents' psychological control have been found to be greater among adolescents in the United States than in China (Wang, Pomerantz, & Chen, 2007). Chao and Tseng (2002) have suggested that milder forms of authoritarian parenting in China may be perceived by Chinese children as a sign of parental involvement and concern. They note that the Chinese word "guan" means "to govern" as well as "to love" and that in the Chinese culture, parental control often has positive connotations. In a study comparing Asian immigrant and European-American adolescent evaluations of parent control, it was found that Chinese immigrant adolescents rated their parents as manifesting greater strictness than did European American adolescents, but that they were less angry with the parental control (Chao & Aque, 2009).

In contrast, Sorkhabi (2005) presented an analysis of previous research which shows that authoritarian and authoritative parenting has similar functions in both collectivist and individualist cultures. Pong and colleagues (Pong, Johnston, & Chen, 2010) demonstrated that the associations between parenting style and adolescent school achievement were similar for adolescent Taiwanese Chinese and European-American students. However, within these various studies (Chao & Aque, 2009; Pong et al., 2010), notably different types of measures have been used to assess the parenting dimensions.

Several studies have examined the effects of parental psychological control in combination with other forms of parenting behaviours from the same parent or the opposite parent. Results from a study in Finland showed that young children of mothers who exercised a high level of psychological control in combination with high affection evidenced an increase in their internalizing problems (Aunola & Nurmi, 2005). Results from a recent study in the United States have shown that the influence of psychological control exercised by one parent were buffered when the adolescent perceived the other parent as being supportive, thereby resulting in lower levels of adolescent aggression than if a low-quality relationship with the other parent was perceived (Murray et al., 2013).

Cross-cultural comparisons of parenting dimensions in Latvia and Lithuania

In order to further examine these at times contradictory results regarding the effect of various parenting practices in relation to

child internalizing and externalizing problems, it was decided to investigate these associations in Latvia and Lithuania, two post-Soviet countries which reflect much more subtle cultural contrasts than between China and the United States.

Hart and colleagues (1998) have pointed to the potential link between parental psychological control and traditional Soviet pedagogy, which placed an emphasis upon conformity, loyalty and the unquestioning acceptance of authority (Ispa, 1994). Bronfenbrenner, during his visits to the Soviet Union in the 1960s, observed psychological control in the parent–child relationship, since parents had been advised by Soviet pedagogical experts to use guilt induction or love withdrawal if the child didn't meet parental expectations (Bronfenbrenner, 1970).

Cultural contexts of Latvia and Lithuania

Latvia and Lithuania are both similar yet different. The recent historical context of Latvia and Lithuania has been similar in that both countries were independent states from 1918 to 1940, both were occupied by Nazi Germany from 1941 to 1945, both were incorporated into the Soviet Union from 1945 to 1990, and since 1990 both are again independent. The ideology of the Soviet system had a marked psychological impact in both countries—the role of the family was devalued, priority was given to the work collective, and authentic emotions and political opinions were more often repressed than expressed (Lieven, 1993).

In terms of differences, the primary religion of Lithuania is Catholicism, whereas in Latvia it is Lutheranism. In earlier historical context, during the period from the 13th to the 18th century, Latvian territory was under the rule of Germans, Poles, Swedes or Russians, respectively. In contrast, during the 15th century, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was one of the largest states in Europe (Suziedelis, 1997), and the narratives of strength and power which have evolved from the historical past are still today very much extant within the Lithuanian culture (Muktupavels, 2006).

There have been few studies to date which have examined psychological similarities and/or differences between Latvians and Lithuanians. An exception is a recent study (Huetinger, 2008) whereby Latvians and Lithuanians were compared on the dimensions of individualism and collectivism (Hofstede, 2001). Results showed that both Latvians and Lithuanians are moderately individualistic, but that in comparison to each other, Latvians are somewhat more individualistic and Lithuanians more collectively-oriented. The relatively greater individualism of Latvians has been previously noted both formally and informally (Lewis, 2000). Lithuanians expect and exude greater support of each other than do Latvians (R. Muktupavele, personal communication, 25 August 2010), they rate themselves as being more extraverted than Latvians (Realo et al., 2009), and are described as more emotionally expressive than Latvians (Lieven, 1993).

Overview of the current research

In summary, the main goal of this study was to examine cross-cultural differences in associations between parenting dimensions and young children's behaviour problems in Latvia and Lithuania, analysing the associations between parental behaviour and preschool children's internalizing and externalizing problems as reported by both mother and father. We hypothesized that in both countries, there would be negative associations between parental warmth and child behaviour problems, and there would be positive associations between punishment orientation and child behaviour problems. Based upon the results of previous studies, we hypothesized that there may be differences in the associations between psychological control and child behaviour in Latvia and Lithuania.

Method

Participants and procedure

Included in the study were 436 parents of preschool-age children, 274 from Latvia and 162 from Lithuania. Information regarding the study was presented by the researchers to parents at several preschools in both Latvia and Lithuania. Parents who agreed to participate were handed a packet of questionnaires, with a separate set of questionnaires for mother and father, together with an empty envelope for each. They were asked to complete the questionnaires at home, to place them in the included envelope, to seal the envelope and return it to the preschool. Parents were informed by the researchers about the purpose of the study and were assured of confidentiality, as well as voluntary participation and ability to withdraw from participation at any time.

Only if both parents completed the questionnaire packets were they included in the final sample, since the study was designed to analyse the child's internalizing and externalizing problems using a "multi-source" approach, taking the mean scores of mother's and father's ratings of child behaviour problems. Preschools were selected in each country with the intent of including parents with fairly similar levels of education and adequate motivational level to participate since there was no external incentive for participation. The two samples from Latvia and Lithuania were similar to each other in regard to parental demographics, but were not intended to be representative of the population as a whole.

In the Latvian sample, 48% ($n = 66$) were girls, mean age 3.74 years ($SD = 0.92$), and 52% ($n = 71$) were boys, mean age 3.79 years ($SD = 0.89$). Mothers ranged in age from 23 to 44 years ($M = 32.23$, $SD = 4.72$), and fathers ranged in age from 25 to 49 years ($M = 33.58$, $SD = 4.88$). In the Lithuanian sample 49% ($n = 40$) were girls, mean age 3.80 years ($SD = 1.04$), and 51% ($n = 41$) were boys, mean age 3.80 years ($SD = 1.01$). Mothers ranged in age from 23 to 42 years ($M = 33.08$, $SD = 4.37$), and fathers ranged in age from 25 to 50 years ($M = 34.80$, $SD = 5.85$). Parents of both samples were relatively more highly-educated than in a representative nationwide sample. In Latvia, 76% of the mothers and 51% of the fathers had completed university education, in Lithuania 75% of the mothers and 59% of the fathers had completed university education. The remaining had completed secondary school education. There was no significant difference in mean child's age, parental age or educational level between the participants from both countries.

Measures

All measures were carefully forward and back-translated from English to Latvian and Lithuanian, respectively. They were pilot-tested and after initial psychometric analysis, some items were made more precise in order to ensure conceptual equivalence of the items in comparison to the original.

Internalizing and externalizing problems. The children's internalizing and externalizing behaviours were measured by Latvian and

Lithuanian versions of the Child Behaviour Checklist for ages 1.5 to 5 years old (CBCL/1½–5, Achenbach & Rescorla, 2000). This questionnaire includes 99 items that describe the child's emotional and behavioural problems. Parents are asked to rate each item on a scale from 0 (''not true'') to 2 (''very true'' or ''often true''). In this study, the two aggregated scales were analysed: internalizing behaviours, which include emotionally reactive, anxious/depressed, somatic complaints and withdrawn; and externalizing behaviours, which include attention problems and aggressive behaviours. In the Latvian sample, alphas for externalizing problems were .85 for mothers and .87 for fathers; alphas for internalizing problems were .82 for mothers and .83 for fathers. In the Lithuanian sample, alphas for externalizing problems were .86 for mothers and .86 for fathers; alphas for internalizing problems were .77 for mothers and .83 for fathers.

Child behaviour scores were averaged across maternal and paternal reports, and for purposes of further data analysis, this averaged score of child internalizing and externalizing behaviour was used. In the Latvia sample, correlations between maternal and paternal report were $r = .63$, $p < .001$ for internalizing behaviours, and $r = .67$, $p < .001$ for externalizing behaviours. In the Lithuania sample, correlations between maternal and paternal report were $r = .48$, $p < .001$ for internalizing behaviours, and $r = .56$, $p < .001$ for externalizing behaviours.

Parenting practices. Mothers' and fathers' parenting practices were measured using the Latvian and Lithuanian versions of the Block's Child Rearing Practices Report (CRPR; Block, 1981). Parents were asked to complete a questionnaire of 30 items, with 28 items from the CRPR Finnish version used with preschool parents in Finland (Aunola & Nurmi, 2004), plus two additional items on physical punishment which were added in order to examine punishment orientation, as included in previous studies on harsh parenting (Chen et al., 2003; Hart et al., 1998). The mothers and fathers were asked to rate each item on a 5-point scale (1 = *not like me at all*, 5 = *very much like me*).

Considering that items from the CRPR have been used in previous studies to form either a two-factor structure (Chen et al., 1997), or a three-factor structure with different underlying constructs, such as ''punishment orientation'' (Chen et al., 2003) or ''behavioural control'' (Aunola & Nurmi, 2004), an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed. The EFA with principle axis factoring and direct Oblimin rotation, so as to permit interfactor correlations, indicated a clear three-factor model. Items which had factor loadings of less than .39, or items which conceptually did not fit with the other items of the yielded factor were excluded, resulting in a three factor solution consisting of 23 items, corresponding to theoretical constructs identified in previous studies. Separate EFAs using data from each cultural group confirmed the same factorial structure.

The three factors arrived at were as follows:

1. Warmth. This scale includes 10 items reflecting a positive relationship with the child, including support, praise and respect (e.g. ''I often tell my child that I appreciate what he/she tries out or achieves,'' ''I often show my child that I love him/her'').
2. Psychological control. This scale includes 8 items reflecting parental use of guilt induction and suppression of the child's self-expression (e.g. ''My child should be aware of how much I sacrifice for him/her,'' ''I do not allow my child to be angry with me'').
3. Punishment orientation. This scale includes 5 items reflecting parents' condoning of attitudes and behaviours concerning the use of verbal and physical punishment (e.g. ''If my child misbehaves I usually punish him/her,'' ''I believe scolding may be helpful,'' ''When my child is misbehaving I spank him with my hand'').

Alphas for warmth were .77 for Latvian mothers and .83 for Latvian fathers; .78 for Lithuanian mothers and .85 for Lithuanian fathers. Alphas for psychological control were .80 for Latvian mothers and .74 for Latvian fathers; .78 for Lithuanian mothers and .60 for Lithuanian fathers. Alphas for punishment orientation were .72 for Latvian mothers and .73 for Latvian fathers; .73 for Lithuanian mothers and .73 for Lithuanian fathers.

Analytic strategy

Statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS version 22. First, mean level differences between maternal and paternal parenting were examined with paired-sample t test. In order to compare the mean level of ratings by parents of their parenting practices and child behaviour, by culture and child's gender, we conducted univariate analysis of variance. Ratings of child internalizing and externalizing behaviour in this and all subsequent analysis was based upon the mother's and father's ratings of their child's behaviour averaged. Second, correlation analyses were used to examine bivariate associations among the parenting behaviours and child behaviours. Third, regression analysis were conducted in order to examine culture × parenting behaviour interactions in predicting child behaviour problems. In the analyses, child sex, child age, maternal age, maternal education (or paternal age and paternal education, respectively) and the main of effects of culture and the parenting behaviour were entered in the first step. In the second step, the interaction variable, which had been computed upon the basis of standardized ratings, was entered. Fourth, regression analysis were conducted in order to examine separately the main effects of the parenting behaviours, separately for mothers and fathers of each country. Finally, interactions of two parenting behaviours were examined, again separately for mothers and fathers of each country. Child sex, child age, maternal age, maternal education (or paternal age and education) and the main of effect of each parenting behaviour was entered in the first step. In the second step, the interaction variable, which had been computed upon the basis of standardized ratings, was entered. A three-way interaction for the parenting dimensions was computed, including the above identified variables in the first step as well as all two-way interaction variables entered first. For purposes of illustrating one of the interaction variables, Warmth × Punishment Orientation for Latvian mothers, the values of the mothers' parenting behaviours were computed according to the principles of centred mean (moderate), one standard deviation above the centred mean (high), and one standard deviation below the centred mean (low), as recommended by Cohen and colleagues (Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003).

Results

Mean level differences between maternal and paternal parenting

Mean level differences between maternal and paternal parenting were analysed with paired-sample t test. Mothers from both

Table 1. The comparison of mean scores of parenting practices and CBCL problems by country and gender.

	Latvia				Lithuania							
	Girls ($n = 66$)		Boys ($n = 71$)		Girls ($n = 40$)		Boys ($n = 41$)					
	M	*(SD)*	*M*	*(SD)*	*M*	*(SD)*	*M*	*(SD)*	*F* value Culture	*F* value Sex	*F* value Culture × Sex	η^2
Maternal warmth	4.17	(0.40)	4.17	(0.37)	4.45	(0.35)	4.30	(0.42)	13.43***	1.86	1.96	.071
Maternal psychological control	2.95	(0.67)	2.86	(0.62)	3.52	(0.56)	3.41	(0.62)	40.56***	1.40	.006	.165
Maternal punishment orientation	2.92	(0.59)	3.07	(0.46)	3.17	(0.45)	3.49	(0.68)	19.07***	9.62**	1.24	.118
Paternal warmth	3.88	(0.55)	3.93	(0.44)	4.18	(0.44)	4.11	(0.56)	11.67**	.03	.68	.054
Paternal psychological control	2.87	(0.59)	3.06	(0.60)	3.54	(0.49)	3.72	(0.45)	72.78**	5.50*	.007	.268
Paternal punishment orientation	3.02	(0.64)	3.17	(0.53)	3.22	(0.59)	3.36	(0.65)	5.13*	2.86	.005	.037
Child internalizing	11.02	(5.40)	10.30	(6.49)	10.19	(4.71)	9.13	(5.10)	1.62	1.27	.04	.013
Child externalizing	14.28	(6.16)	14.94	(6.27)	11.86	(4.71)	13.26	(6.62)	5.85*	1.47	.18	.033

Note. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$. Child internalizing/externalizing ratings reflect mothers' and fathers' ratings averaged; $df = 3, 214$ for *F* values. Parental warmth, psychological control and punishment orientation are rated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 to 4. Child internalizing and externalizing problems are rated on a 3-point Likert scale, ranging from 0 to 2. Possible scores for Child internalizing range from 0 to 72, possible scores for Child externalizing range from 0 to 48.

Table 2. Intercorrelations among parenting dimensions and child behaviour problems.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Child internalizing problems		.59**	−.11	.10	.29**	−.25*	−.23*	.21
2. Child externalizing problems	.66**		−.29**	−.03	.34**	−.23*	−.13	.30**
3. Maternal warmth	−.30 **	−.26**		.18	−.20	.25*	−.08	−.24**
4. Maternal psychological control	.15	.17	.05		.26*	.15	.29**	.17
5. Maternal punishment orientation	.17*	.22**	−.19**	.26**		−.13	−.06	.55**
6. Paternal warmth	−.13	−.20*	.38**	.04	−.17		.15	−.28*
7. Paternal psychological control	.32**	.24**	−.10	.30**	.16	.001		.12
8. Paternal punishment orientation	.09	.20**	−.04	−.02	.17*	−.26**	.35**	

Note. Below the diagonal are correlations for the Latvia sample, $n = 274$; above the diagonal are correlations for the Lithuania sample, $n = 162$. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

countries reported higher ratings of Warmth than did fathers ($p < .001$). Ratings of Punishment Orientation did not differ for mothers and fathers in either country. Ratings of Psychological Control did not differ for mothers and fathers in Latvia, but Lithuanian fathers reported higher levels of Psychological Control than did Lithuanian mothers ($p < .05$).

Comparisons across cultures and child sex on parenting dimensions and child behaviour

To test the differences in mean level of ratings by parents of their parenting practices and child behaviour we conducted univariate analysis of variance (ANOVAs), as seen in Table 1. The analysis revealed significant main effects of Culture, with both Lithuanian mothers and fathers reporting higher levels of parenting warmth, psychological control and punishment orientation than Latvian mothers and fathers. Main effects of Culture were also found on child externalizing problem scores, with Latvian preschool children being rated by their parents as having greater externalizing problems. Main effects of child Sex were found on maternal punishment orientation and paternal psychological control. Mothers reported higher scores on punishment orientation in the parenting of their sons than daughters, both in Latvia and Lithuania. Fathers reported higher scores on psychological control of their sons than daughters, both in Latvia and Lithuania.

Intercorrelations among parenting dimensions and child behaviour variables

Bivariate associations (Pearson correlations) between parenting practices and child behaviour problems (for girls and boys grouped together) are presented in Table 2. In both the Latvia and Lithuania samples, significant associations were found between the parenting practices of mother and father, ranging from $r = .17$, $p < .05$ to $r = .55$, $p < .01$. In both countries, negative correlations were found between parental warmth and child behaviour problems, whereas positive correlations were found between parental punishment orientation and child behaviour problems. Differences in direction of association were found in regard to paternal psychological control. In the Latvia sample, paternal psychological control was positively correlated with child internalizing problems, $r = .32, p < .01$, in the Lithuania sample paternal psychological control was negatively correlated with child internalizing problems, $r = -.23, p < .05$, with statistical difference, $z = -3.97, p < .001$.

Relations between parenting practices and child behaviour

Regression analyses were conducted in order to examine the possibility of cultural differences in the relations between parenting practices and child behaviour. In these regression analyses, internalizing and externalizing child behaviour ratings were the criterion

Table 3. Interactions between parenting dimensions and culture in predicting child behaviour problems.

	Mothers			Fathers		
	Beta	R^2 Δ	F Δ	Beta	R^2 Δ	F Δ
Warmth × Culture						
Internalizing	−.10	.01	2.06	.05	.00	.51
Externalizing	−.01	.00	.03	−.03	.00	.23
Psychological control × Culture						
Internalizing	.02	.00	.05	.25	.05	10.88**
Externalizing	.05	.00	.59	.14	.02	3.11
Punishment orientation × Culture						
Internalizing	−.05	.00	.59	.02	.00	.07
Externalizing	−.05	.00	.50	.01	.00	.02

Note. $n = 274$ for the Latvia sample, $n = 162$ for the Lithuania sample. The interactions terms were entered into the equation after child sex, child age, demographic variables and main effects of the parenting dimension variable and culture. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

variables. Maternal and paternal parenting practices were analysed in separate regression models. Child sex, child age, demographic variables (that is, for analysis of maternal parenting practices we entered maternal age and education), and the main effects of the parenting practice and culture were controlled first. The interaction between culture and parenting practice, calculated on the basis of standardized values, was then entered into the equation. The results indicated significant interactions between culture and paternal psychological control in predicting child internalizing behaviour problems. The results concerning Culture × Parenting practices are presented in Table 3.

Due to previous studies which have shown the effects of interaction between two parenting dimensions (Aunola & Nurmi, 2004, 2005; Murray et al., 2014), we also analysed the effect of two parenting variables in interaction. Child sex, child age, demographic variables and each of the two parenting dimension was entered separately in the first step to control for the effects of these variables. The interaction variable of two parenting dimensions, calculated on the basis of standardized values, was entered in the second step. The results indicated significant interaction of Warmth × Punishment orientation for Latvian mothers, with higher ratings of warmth predicting lower levels of child behaviour problems, but low levels of warmth in combination of high levels of Punishment orientation predicting high levels of child behaviour problems (see Figure 1). A combination of high levels of maternal psychological control and punishment orientation was predictive of higher levels of internalizing problems in the Latvian sample. A combination of high levels of maternal warmth and psychological control was predictive of lower levels of child internalizing problems in the Lithuanian sample. These results are presented in Table 4.

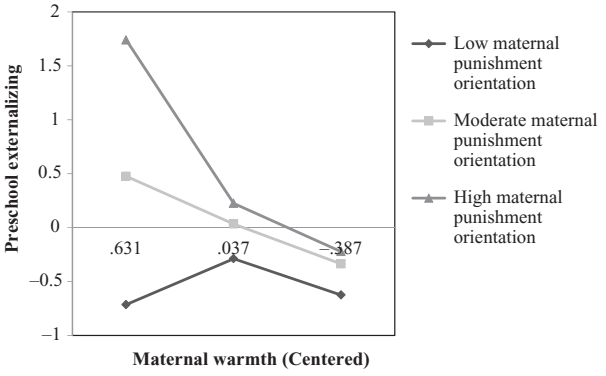

Figure 1. Latvian mothers' warmth and punishment orientation in relation to pre-schoolers' externalizing problems.
Note. $n = 274$.

Discussion

Cross-cultural comparison of the associations between parenting practices and preschool children's behaviour provides opportunity to accentuate those aspects of parenting which seem to be universally associated with positive child outcome, and those aspects which have repeatedly been shown to be associated with negative child behaviours. In addition, cross-cultural comparison also allows one to examine more subtle differences in parenting behaviours which may be related to cultural differences in the meanings attributed to parenting and child behaviours, thereby identifying aspects of "universalism without uniformity" (Schweder & Sullivan, 1993).

The results of this study showed both similarities and differences in the associations of parenting practices and child behaviour in Latvia and Lithuania. In both countries, paternal warmth was generally associated with lower ratings of child behaviour problems, and punishment orientation was associated with higher ratings of child difficulties. These findings are in accord with previous studies of acceptance-rejection in that parental acceptance has been associated with lower levels of psychological disorder and parental rejection with higher levels of psychological difficulty for the child (Dwairy et al., 2010; Rohner & Khaleque, 2005). Similarly, responsive parenting has been found to be positively associated with adaptive child behaviour, committed child compliance, less overt and relational aggression, whereas punishment orientation or coercive parenting has been associated with less mature compliance, and greater levels of aggression (Chen et al., 2003; Hart et al., 1998; Nelson et al., 2006; Roopnarine et al., 2014).

Associations of parental psychological control and child behaviour problems were found to be different in Latvia and Lithuania. The significant Culture × Paternal psychological control interactions, follow-up analysis, and the significant differences in correlations between the reported ratings of Latvian and Lithuanian fathers showed that fathers' psychological control was positively associated with internalizing child behaviour problems in Latvia, but negatively associated with internalizing child behaviour problems in Lithuania. These differences may stem from differences in

Table 4. Regression analysis of child behaviour problems based on parenting dimension variables.

	Latvian mothers		Latvian fathers		Lithuanian mothers		Lithuanian fathers	
	Beta	$F\,\Delta$	Beta	$F\,\Delta$	Beta	$F\,\Delta$	Beta	$F\,\Delta$
Warmth								
Internalizing	−.29	12.71**	−.08	.76	−.14	1.48	−.21	3.35
Externalizing	−.27	9.84**	−.21	5.12*	−.27	5.87*	−.16	2.05
Psychological control								
Internalizing	.08	.80	.36	16.34***	.09	.52	−.22	2.88
Externalizing	.12	1.93	.22	5.38*	.00	.00	−.07	.32
Punishment orientation								
Internalizing	.12	1.96	.12	1.70	.35	8.72**	.18	2.38
Externalizing	.20	5.15*	.21	4.93*	.33	8.07**	.25	5.04*
Warmth × Psychological control								
Internalizing	−.10	1.28	.03	.07	−.44	7.61**	−.14	.60
Externalizing	−.04	.18	−.09	.79	−.27	3.07	−.26	2.35
Warmth × Punishment orientation								
Internalizing	−.20	6.34*	.01	.00	.08	.47	.02	.02
Externalizing	−.22	7.21**	.06	.45	.17	2.14	.06	.23
Psychological control × Punishment								
Internalizing	.21	4.95*	.09	1.02	.03	.06	.24	1.59
Externalizing	.13	1.76	.02	.04	−.05	.12	.12	.40
Warmth × Psychological control × Punishment								
Internalizing	.14	1.48	.12	1.10	.17	.47	.17	.34
Externalizing	.00	.00	.07	.37	.26	1.19	.10	.12

Note. $n = 274$ for the Latvia sample, $n = 162$ for the Lithuania sample. Parenting dimension variables were entered into the equation after child sex and demographic variables. The interactions terms were entered into the equation after child sex, demographic variables and main effects of the parenting dimension variables. All two-way interactions were included in the model when three-way interactions were added. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

cultural traditions and implied meanings of parental behaviours, whereby informal observations have indicated that in Lithuania parents who are emotionally caring and involved with their children may also have a tendency to be psychologically controlling as an expression of their care. There may be some similarity to other cultures where parental control carries positive connotations (Chao & Tseng, 2002; Pomerantz & Wang, 2009), or where "supportive-controller" parenting patterns have been associated with lower levels of behavioural problems (Pereira, Canavarro, Cardoso, & Mendonca, 2009).

These differences in the associations between psychological control and child behaviour may be related to differences in cultural traditions and values, with the Lithuanian culture being somewhat more collectively-oriented (Huetinger, 2008). Of consideration is that in the present study we examined the reports from parents of preschool children, and it may well be that the relations between parenting and child behaviour will change as the child matures (Chen et al., 2003). Barber has emphasized that the negative effects of psychological control may become particularly apparent during the adolescent period, when the adolescents' need for autonomy and identity development may conflict with parental strategies of psychological control (Barber et al., 2006).

Lithuanian mothers and fathers of preschool-age children reported that they more often engage in expressions of emotional warmth with their child than do Latvian parents, but they also reported higher levels of psychological control and punishment orientation. These results are congruent with previous studies which have shown that Lithuanians are generally more expressive, they report higher ratings of extraversion and expressiveness than Latvians (Realo et al., 2009).

Whereas in both countries, high levels of maternal warmth were associated with lower ratings of child behaviour problems, in Latvia, lower ratings of child behaviour problems were reported even in situations whereby high levels of maternal warmth were combined with high levels of punishment orientation (belief in scolding, spanking and punishment in general). One might assume that these are mothers who have the intention of parenting with "sensitive structuring," but that they have internalized intergenerational patterns of parenting which include the necessity of scolding and punishing if a child misbehaves, and a belief that a lack of punishment would spoil the child (Sebre et al., 2004). These results imply that parenting patterns of maternal warmth can buffer the effects of punishment orientation, somewhat similar to the buffering effects of positive parent–child relationships from one parent, even if the other parent is engaging in psychological control (Murray et al., 2013).

A specific limitation of the present study is that the parents were not asked to report on their attitudes regarding culturally defined values and expectations, and thereby it was not possible to link results of the study directly to the cultural context. It would be meaningful in the future to examine the parents' parenting philosophies and practices directly in relation to their understanding of culturally implied values (as suggested by Lamborn, Dornbusch, & Steinberg, 1996). Other limitations include the cross-sectional nature of the study and reliance on the parents' report, which may have inflated the correlations due to shared method variance. In future studies it would be meaningful to include researcher observations, third-person (that is, preschool teachers') reports, as well as to study the parenting practices, child temperament and child behaviour longitudinally to ascertain the direction of effects, given that a bidirectionality of parent and child effects is to be expected (Lee, Zhou, Eisenberg, & Wang, 2012). Greater sample sizes would be of benefit. Similarly, as researchers of East Asian parenting practices have noted the possible effects of the Confucian doctrine of "filial

piety" (Chen et al., 2003), it may be beneficial to consider the possible effects of religious traditions in relation to parenting attitudes in countries such as Latvia and Lithuania.

The findings of this study underscore the need for culturally-specific parent training programs for both fathers and mothers. The results imply that in both countries, training programs for parents of young children should emphasize the advantages of increased parental warmth and responsiveness, and the advantages of practicing alternate methods of child-rearing other than verbal/physical punishment. It is apparent that the effects of psychological control should also be addressed, including discussion of possible differences in the cultural meanings attributed to different parenting strategies.

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