

The Counterintuitive Psychological Benefits of Intergenerational Discrepancies in Family Prioritization for Jamaican Adolescent–Parent Dyads

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The current study tests a prediction of Relational Discrepancy Theory (RDT; i.e., emotional distress will not accompany discrepancies in hierarchical relationships) for family obligations discrepancies among adolescent–parent dyads in Jamaica, a moderately collectivistic and hierarchical society. Ninety-five dyads reported psychological adjustment and discrepancies in family prioritization (i.e., value priority placed on family vs. other life domains). Results supported RDT and replicated recent work with Caribbean immigrants in Europe. Unlike findings in individualistic and egalitarian societies, discrepancies were not an emotional liability for Jamaican adolescents but were associated with fewer depressive symptoms and higher life satisfaction. Furthermore, Jamaican parents benefitted psychologically when adolescents prioritized family highly but may have been unaware of the emotional risks to their teenagers of matching parental expectations.

Cross-cultural research suggests that adolescents with smaller adolescent–parent discrepancies in family obligations (henceforth, “discrepancies”) are better adjusted psychologically (Baumann, Kuhlberg, & Zayas, 2010; Fuligni & Zhang, 2004; Phinney & Ong, 2002; Phinney & Vedder, 2006). However, most of this research has been conducted among families—both immigrant and nonimmigrant—living in Western societies, which place a higher value on individualism and egalitarianism in adolescent–parent relationships. Relational Discrepancy Theory (RDT; Robins & Boldero, 2003), on the other hand, suggests that discrepancies may not be problematic in hierarchical relationships. Thus, families living in many majority-world societies, which place a higher value on collectivism or familism and hierarchical adolescent–parent relationships, may not experience discrepancy-related distress. The current study tests this prediction of RDT in Jamaica, a moderately collectivistic and hierarchical society, by investigating the association between psychological adjustment and discrepan-

cies among adolescent–mother dyads in one aspect of family obligations—the value priority placed on family relative to other life domains. Because parental well-being is largely overlooked in the discrepancy literature, both adolescent and parent psychological adjustment are examined.

CULTURAL AND FAMILY VALUES IN THE CARIBBEAN

The Caribbean is a relatively understudied majority-world region located between North and South America comprised of countries in or bordering the Caribbean Sea. Due to ecological (e.g., climate, vegetation), geopolitical (e.g., European colonization and African slavery), and proximity reasons, Caribbean countries have many cultural similarities such as parental ethnotheories and some cultural differences such as language (Evans & Davies, 1997; Senior, 2003). Jamaica is the largest English-speaking Caribbean island, and its culture endorses a collectivistic or familistic orientation owing to its prominent African heritage (92% Black, Jamaican Census, 2001), vestiges of native Taino Awarak culture, and Eastern cultural influences from Chinese, Indian, and Lebanese arrivals in the 19th century. Accordingly, Jamaica’s national motto is “Out of Many, One People,” and its individualism index score and rank in Hofstede’s (2001) 50-country global sample (39/#25) are more similar to those of India (48/#21) and Mexico (30/#32) than to those

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Appreciation is extended to the participating Jamaican families and school staff for their generosity. Support for data collection was provided in part by Bowling Green State University Dissertation Funds. An earlier version of this article was presented as a poster at the 2010 Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research on Adolescence, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

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of the United States (91/#1) or Great Britain (80/#3). Caribbean parenting emphasizes very high behavioral and educational expectations, strict discipline, and absolute parental authority although socialization expectations vary by gender—boys are granted autonomy earlier, whereas girls are kept under parental supervision for longer (Bailey, Branche, McGarrity, & Stuart, 1998; Evans & Davies, 1997). The Jamaican parenting style has been characterized by some as “authoritarian” although this may be a miscategorization given that culture-specific expressions of parental warmth often accompany firm-handedness (Kagitcibasi, 2007).

FAMILY OBLIGATIONS AND FAMILY PRIORITIZATION IN ADOLESCENCE

Family obligations refer to the set of values which hold that children should respect elders or authority figures, prioritize family relationships and activities, show family loyalty, and assist dutifully in the home (Fuligni, Tseng, & Lam, 1999). Family obligations vary across generations and cultures—parents endorse higher family obligations than do adolescents, and collectivistic cultures moreso than individualistic ones (Fuligni et al., 1999; Phinney, Ong, & Madden, 2000; Phinney & Vedder, 2006; Stewart, Bond, Deeds, & Chung, 1999). Family obligations are transmitted bidirectionally across generations through explicit socialization and implicit enculturation (Vedder, Berry, Sabatiere, & Sam, 2009), and this cultural transmission is believed to be stronger in collectivistic cultures although it weakens with increasing adolescent age and autonomy (Schönpflug, 2001).

Family prioritization is an important yet understudied dimension of family obligations which facilitates cultural transmission. In the context of socialization and enculturation into broad cultural value priorities of the zeitgeist, adolescents set personal value priorities and parents select value priorities to reinforce via parenting (Kwak, 2003; Schwartz, 1994). Examining the priority placed on family relative to other life domains acknowledges the reality of competing values (Schwartz, 1996) and allows for a way not only to assess associations between value priorities and subjective well-being (Joshnloo & Ghaedi, 2009), but also to capture the costs of internal value conflicts (Cowan & Cowan, 1999; Ratliffe, 2010).

Prior research among Jamaican adolescents and young adults indicates very strong beliefs that youth should rely on guidance and advice from

elders, obey their parents, and subjugate their desires to their parents’ out of respect. Jamaican youth also report moderate difficulty doing something contrary to parents’ wishes (Richardson, 1999). Nonetheless, Jamaican adolescents hold parents as their primary role models (i.e., person they most admire) more often than any other category of personally known or unknown adults (Ferguson, 2007), which demonstrates the juxtaposition of strict parenting with warmth. In addition, urban Jamaican adolescents prioritize family in their self-identity over several life domains including peers, dating, religion, and sports (Ferguson, 2006). Using a graphical pie chart to depict the relative value placed on each domain, these Jamaican adolescents ranked family second among six domains, behind only academics. What is more, adolescents’ family prioritization correlates positively with their perceived parental ideal for family priority, suggesting the presence of intergenerational family value transmission in Jamaica (Ferguson & Dubow, 2007).

PARENTAL IDEAL FOR FAMILY PRIORITIZATION IN ADOLESCENCE

Parents typically hold somewhat different priorities for their adolescents than adolescents hold for themselves. Cross-cultural family research indicates that parents’ socialization priorities are often aimed at fostering responsible attitudes and behaviors to ensure their adolescents’ future success (Smetana, Daddis, & Chuang, 2003; Yau & Smetana, 1996). For parents in majority-world cultures endorsing collectivism or familism, commitment to the family and meeting family obligations may be particularly important priorities that parents desire to see their adolescents embrace (Fuligni et al., 1999). Thus, adolescents’ prioritization of family may be positively associated with parents’ sense of self-efficacy to the degree that it does or is perceived to represent successful transmission of parental values (Schönpflug, 2001). Virtually nothing is known about how parents’ well-being varies with their family obligations ideals or intergenerational discrepancies.

INTERGENERATIONAL DISCREPANCIES IN FAMILY PRIORITIZATION AND WELL-BEING

Discrepancies in family obligations are common in adolescence and vary across cultures. Immigrant families originating from numerous majority-world regions (e.g., Asia, Africa, Caribbean, Central America) in the International Comparative Study

of Intercultural Youth (ICSEY, Phinney & Vedder, 2006) had higher discrepancies than nonimmigrant families residing in 10 traditional Western receiving societies including North America, Western Europe, and Australia. It is intuitive to expect discrepancies to be associated with poorer well-being if, for example, it promotes significant parent–adolescent conflict (Rosenthal, Ranieri, & Klimidis, 1996). Indeed, ICSEY research and other U.S.-based studies have found discrepancies to be associated with lower life satisfaction and more psychological, behavioral, and school adjustment problems across several cultural groups (Baumann et al., 2010; Phinney & Ong, 2002; Phinney & Vedder, 2006). On the other hand, RDT (Robins & Boldero, 2003), a descendant of Self-Discrepancy Theory (Higgins, 1987), holds that discrepancies between oneself and one’s partner in relational ideals produce negative emotional consequences only in the context of egalitarian (or “exchange”) relationships and not in hierarchical (or “authority-ranking” or “leader–follower”) relationships. This counterintuitive protective effect of discrepancies occurs in hierarchical relationships because the lower-ranking partner expects, accepts, and adjusts for the relational differences. Empirical findings among Australian college students support RDT’s predictions: Associations between discrepancies and dejected emotions are significantly stronger for lower-ranking partners in egalitarian supervisory relationships and egalitarian friendships compared to partners in hierarchical supervisory and friendship relationships (Boldero et al., 2009).

Parent–child relationships are inherently hierarchical but the degree to which this is expected to continue into adolescence varies considerably across cultures. RDT would predict less discrepancy-related distress in collectivistic cultures with high power distance (i.e., societal acceptance of power inequalities, Hofstede, 2001, 2011) in which families maintain hierarchical adolescent–parent relations, compared with individualistic cultures with low power distance in which egalitarianism is expected in adolescent–parent relationships. Recent findings among families from three ethnic groups in the Netherlands—native Dutch (national individualism and power distance index scores: 80/38), Turkish (32/80), and Surinamese (no data for Suriname; 49/69 for adjacent Southern neighbor, Brazil)—support the predictions of RDT (Vedder & Oortwijn, 2009). Discrepancies were unassociated with psychological well-being in the sample overall. Nevertheless, immigrant dyads from Suriname, the largest former Dutch Caribbean colony, reported

the highest discrepancies yet had the *fewest* psychological problems including depression and anxiety and the *highest* life satisfaction and self-esteem (Vedder & Oortwijn, 2009). The emergence of this meaningful culture moderation effect (albeit, in lieu of a statistical interaction—a discrepancy \times culture interaction term was not included in the regression model) led Vedder and Oortwijn to conclude that “intergenerational discrepancies in family obligations do not inevitably lead to a lower well-being of adolescents” (p. 713), which is consistent with the tenet of RDT. Although Turkish and Surinamese cultures are similar in key Hofstede dimensions highlighted, Surinamese immigrant dyads have the benefit of premigration exposure to Dutch cultural values and language and are probably better able to bolster culturally valued hierarchical relationship expectations against erosion in the presence of anticipated Dutch egalitarianism. Research among nonimmigrant families residing in a collectivistic majority-world country is needed to further test the predictions of RDT by removing the potential confounds of immigration-related experiences.

Autonomy development, which is both normative and adaptive in adolescence (Grotevant & Cooper, 1986), may also undergird counterintuitive benefits of discrepancies in family prioritization. From the standpoint of person–environment or stage–environment fit, adolescents function optimally when there is a match between their developmental need for autonomy and the autonomy granted by the family environment (Eccles et al., 1993). In particular, parents need to adjust their expectations and demands in response to normative increase in adolescents’ peer focus, time spent with peers, peer relationship closeness, and peer influence across the adolescent period (De Goede, Branje, Delsing, & Meeus, 2009; Laursen & Bukowski, 1997). Thus, high congruence in family prioritization during adolescence may be both nonnormative and maladaptive emotionally if it reflects agreement with parents’ values based on controlled motivation (i.e., external or internal pressures) versus autonomous motivation (i.e., intrinsic valuing, Knafo & Assor, 2007). Similarly, a foreclosed commitment to parental values without exploration of personal values may be problematic, particularly for older adolescents (Ghazarian, Supple, & Plunkett, 2008; Marcia, 1966).

STUDY HYPOTHESES

Based on prior cross-cultural research, I expected to find higher family prioritization among Jamaican

parents than adolescents, overall, and evidence of family value transmission, especially for younger adolescents. Second, I expected adolescent family prioritization to be positively associated with parental self-competence as it may signal successful family value transmission. Third, based on RDT, I did not expect family obligations discrepancies to predict poorer adolescent psychological adjustment (i.e., depressive symptoms, life satisfaction). Rather, I expected the opposite: that discrepancies would be associated with better adjustment whereas relational congruence would be an emotional liability, especially for boys (because autonomy is granted earlier) and older youth (because they should be further along in autonomy development), but not for parents (because their authority role in the relationship should be protective).

METHOD

Participants

In total, 243 adolescents and 110 of their parents were recruited from all 7th–11th grades in a large traditional public high school in Kingston, Jamaica (~30% participation rate). This paper uses data from the 95 dyads in which both partners participated. Students ranged from 11.42 to 17.00 years (65% girls, $M = 14.01$, $SD = 1.42$) and parents (86% mothers, 9% fathers, 5% other family or nonfamily guardians) had a mean age of 40.89 years ($SD = 6.41$). There was a mode of four individuals per household representing a variety of family formations: 35% two-parent nuclear, 22% single-parent nuclear, 32% parent-present extended, and 11% other. Most families were middle-class with educated parents: on a scale ranging from 1 (*less than high school*) to 10 (*M.D./Ph.D.*) the mode was 7 (41%, “finish university degree”). A middle-class sample was beneficial to avoid confounding ethnicity with socioeconomic status and to ensure the comparability to the majority of samples in the published international literature.

Measures

To align with the literature on intergenerational discrepancies in family obligations, the methodology used by Boldero et al. (2009) in their RDT studies with undergraduate students was adapted. The current study employed both adolescent and parent reports of family prioritization (rather than having adolescents report both on themselves and on their perceptions of their parents), and both

reporters in this study focused on the adolescent’s family prioritization (rather than also reporting on the parent’s).

Adolescent family prioritization. Adolescents reported domain prioritization by assigning a portion of a 20-slice *Identity Pie* (Ferguson, 2006; Ferguson, Hafen, & Laursen, 2010) to family and five other life domains—friends, schoolwork, dating, religion, and sports. This paper focuses exclusively on the family. Adolescents depicted their relative priorities in response to this prompt: “Think about who you are as a person and the things that make you, you. . . . Make this Pie represent *who you are* as a person based on how important these 6 areas of life are to you. . . .” The score for each domain was the number of slices assigned to that domain ranging from 0 slices to 20. To assess convergent validity, Identity Pie scores were correlated with scores from family domain subscales of adapted versions of the Subjective Task Values scale (Eccles et al., 1983) and the importance subscale of the Harter Self-Perception Profile for Adolescents (Harter, 1988). Positive and significant within-domain correlations were expected among the measures, but strong associations were not anticipated given that the Identity Pie is an ipsative instrument capturing relative valuing as opposed to absolute valuing measured by the comparison instruments. Findings supported expectations: Family Prioritization scores on the Identity Pie correlated positively and significantly with the Eccles measure ($r = .37$, $p < .001$) and the Harter measure ($r = .23$, $p < .05$).

Parental ideal for family prioritization. Parents were presented with a similar Identity Pie to depict their ideal socialization priorities for the target adolescents. They were asked to: “Think about the person that you want your teenager to be right now—NOT the person you would like for them to become in the future. . . . Make this pie represent *who you would like your teenager to be* based on how important you would like these 6 areas of life to be to your teenager.” Scoring was identical to the adolescent administration. Family Prioritization scores on the Identity Pie correlated positively with the Eccles measure ($r = .26$, $p < .01$) and the Harter measure ($r = .18$, $p < .10$).

Adolescent depressive symptoms. Adolescents completed the 20-item Center for Epidemiological Studies Depressive symptoms Scale (CES-D, Radloff, 1977); Cronbach’s α based on standardized items = .80. Participants rated the frequency of

experiencing each item on a 4-point Likert scale, and a mean score was calculated following reverse-coding of positively worded items. The CES-D has previously been successfully used to measure depression in Jamaica (Hutchinson et al., 2004).

Adolescent life satisfaction. The 5-item Satisfaction with Life Scale was used (SWLS, Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985); Cronbach's α based on standardized items = .81. Participants rated agreement with each item on a 7-point Likert scale and a mean score was calculated. A shortened form of the SWLS has previously been successfully used to measure life satisfaction in Jamaica (Hutchinson et al., 2004).

Parenting self-competence. The 17-item Parenting Sense of Competence Scale (PSOC) measured self-efficacy and satisfaction in the parenting role (Johnston & Mash, 1989); Cronbach's α based on standardized items = .71. Participants rated agreement with each item on a 7-point Likert scale, and a mean score was calculated following reverse scoring of negatively worded items.

Procedure

The principal investigator and author is a Jamaican expatriate and has an ongoing collaborative working relationship with the high school from which the data were collected. Adolescent questionnaires (labeled with an assigned family ID numbers) were administered in group format by the principal investigator and collaborating school staff during an entire class period or after school. Parents completed questionnaires in their homes and returned them in sealed envelopes labeled with family ID numbers. Parent consent and adolescent assent were received for all participating dyads, and each participant was offered the chance to win movie theater vouchers.

RESULTS

Preliminary Analyses

Jamaican adolescents and parents were generally well-adjusted based on overall means of dependent variables: Adolescent Depressive Symptoms ($M = 0.71$, $SD = 0.41$ on a 4-point scale), Adolescent Life Satisfaction ($M = 5.2$, $SD = 0.72$ on a 7-point scale), and Parenting Self-Competence ($M = 4.62$, $SD = 1.31$ on a 7-point scale). Parental education was unrelated to main study variables; however,

family structure was associated with Parental Ideal Family Prioritization, $F(3, 88) = 4.30$, $p < .05$. Parents in two-parent nuclear families reported the highest ideals for family obligations followed by those in extended families and "other" configurations, with parents in single-parent nuclear families reporting the lowest ideal priority for family obligations. Family structure was added as a covariate in main analyses.

Hypothesis 1: Discrepancy and Value Transmission of Family Prioritization

Paired sample t -tests were computed to examine the presence of an intergenerational difference in family prioritization. Contrary to expectations, Parental Ideal Family Prioritization ($M = 3.62$, $SD = 1.12$) and Adolescent Family Prioritization ($M = 3.68$, $SD = 1.36$) were equally high, $t(94) = .39$, ns . However, cultural transmission of family prioritization was evident as hypothesized: Adolescent Family Prioritization was correlated with Parental Ideal Family Prioritization for younger adolescents (age < 14.01 years, $r = .37$, $p < .05$) but not for older adolescents ($r = .10$, ns). Thus, Hypothesis 1 was partially supported.

Hypothesis 2: Association Between Family Prioritization and Parenting Self-Competence

A moderated regression approach is recommended for examining the unique contribution of discrepancies to adjustment above and beyond individual ratings (Ferguson et al., 2010; Moretti & Wiebe, 1999). Therefore, separate hierarchical regression analyses (Aiken & West, 1991) were computed to predict Adolescent Depressive Symptoms, Adolescent Life Satisfaction, and Parenting Self-Competence after centering all continuous predictors and creating interaction terms. Adolescent Age, Gender (effect coded), and Family Structure (dummy coded) were entered into Step 1. Adolescent Family Prioritization and Parental Ideal Family Prioritization were entered into Step 2. In Step 3, two-way interaction terms between Adolescent Family Prioritization and each first-order variable in Step 1 were entered followed by the Adolescent Family Prioritization \times Parental Ideal Family Prioritization. Significant interactions were plotted and explored using follow-up analyses. Hypothesis 2 was supported in that there was a significant and positive main effect of Adolescent Family Prioritization on Parenting Self-Competence, $\beta = .30$, $p < .01$. See Table 1. There were no other significant main effects.

TABLE 1
Associations Among Adolescent and Parent Family Prioritization and Psychological Well-Being

	Adolescent Depressive Symptoms (β)	Adolescent Life Satisfaction (β)	Parent Self- Competence (β)
Step 1	$R^2 = .046$	$R^2 = .034$	$R^2 = .011$
Age	-.184	.034	.088
Gender	.116	-.062	-.073
Family structure	-.106	.181	.001
Step 2	$\Delta R^2 = .007$	$\Delta R^2 = .032$	$\Delta R^2 = .112^{**}$
AFamily	.038	.189	.301**
PFamily	.067	-.026	.103
Step 3	$\Delta R^2 = .095$	$\Delta R^2 = .070$	$\Delta R^2 = .036$
AFamily × Age	-.108	.135	.007
AFamily × Gender	-.115	.058	.186
AFamily × Family structure	-.076	-.179	.139
AFamily × PFamily	.282*	-.243*	.062

Note. Age = adolescent age; Gender = adolescent gender; AFamily = adolescent family prioritization; PFamily = parental ideal family prioritization. Significant main effects and interactions are bolded.

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

Hypothesis 3: Association Between Discrepancies and Psychological Adjustment

There was a significant interaction between Adolescent Family Prioritization and Parental Ideal for Family Prioritization on Adolescent Depressive Symptoms, $\beta = .28$, $p < .05$ and Adolescent Life Satisfaction, $\beta = -.24$, $p < .05$, but not on parental self-competence. As predicted, adolescents' (but not parents') psychological adjustment was associated with discrepancies, whereas intergenerational congruence was an emotional liability (see Figures 1 and 2, respectively). To further investigate these interactions, separate follow-up regression analyses for both outcome variables were computed for adolescents with high and low (median split) Parental Ideals, respectively. Step 1 variables remained as in prior analyses, and Adolescent Family Prioritization alone was entered in the 2nd and final step. For adolescents with high Parental Ideals, higher Adolescent Family Prioritization (i.e., high/high) predicted more depressive symptoms ($\beta = .45$, $p < .01$), whereas there was an opposite though nonsignificant association for adolescents with low Parental Ideals ($\beta = -.20$, *ns*). In

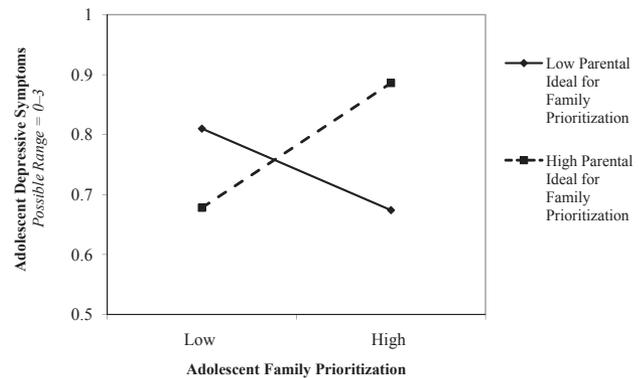


FIGURE 1 Association between adolescent family prioritization and depressive symptoms as moderated by parental ideal for family prioritization.

addition, post hoc *t*-tests showed that adolescents with a high/high profile prioritized sports and dating ($M_s = 1.41, 1.24$, $SD_s = 0.98, 1.24$) less than those with the high/low profile ($M_s = 2.71, 2.00$, $SD_s = 1.16, 1.23$), $t_s(44) = 4.03, 2.01$, $p = .00, .05$, respectively. In terms of life satisfaction, higher Adolescent Family Prioritization predicted marginally higher Life Satisfaction ($\beta = .26$, $p = .08$) for adolescents with low Parental Ideals, whereas there was no association for adolescents with high Parental Ideals ($\beta = -.01$, *ns*). Thus, Hypothesis 3 was mostly supported except that there were no Age or Gender effects.

DISCUSSION

This may be the first study on intergenerational discrepancies in family obligations to test the predictions of RDT (Robins & Boldero, 2003) or to measure both adolescent and parent psychological adjustment. Findings underscored the presence of strong familistic values among Jamaican adolescents and stronger values transmission during early adolescence. Moreover, RDT was supported in that discrepancy was not an emotional liability for adolescents but an asset, which aligns with Vedder and Oortwijn's (2009) findings among Surinamese Caribbean immigrants in the Netherlands. Parents benefitted psychologically from higher adolescent family prioritization.

Family Prioritization and Value Transmission

Overall, Jamaican adolescents' family prioritization is as high as their parents' ideals for them. Although this result was unexpected based on prior cross-cultural findings of discrepancies in Western societies (e.g., Fuligni et al., 1999; Phinney

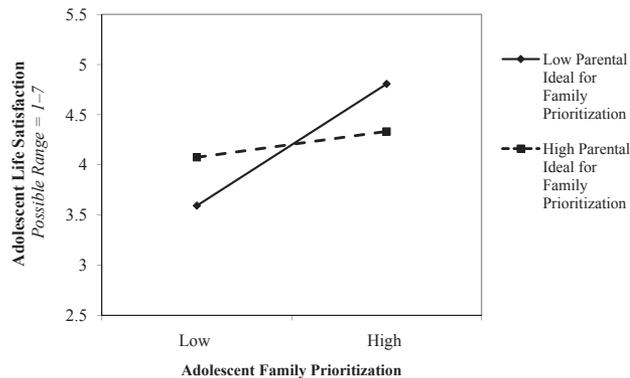


FIGURE 2 Association between adolescent family prioritization and life satisfaction as moderated by parental ideal for family prioritization.

& Vedder, 2006), it is not inconsistent with prior research in the Caribbean. Richardson (1999) found that Jamaican youth reported a very strong love for their parents despite knowing their imperfections and had a strong desire to make their parents proud. These sentiments may be reflected in adolescents' high family prioritization in the current sample. In addition, although discrepancies have been found among immigrant families from majority-world regions, it may be that their immersion in traditional individualistic, egalitarian receiving societies artifactually widens the intergenerational gap and makes parents present as more traditional or adolescents present as less traditional, or both.

In addition, value transmission was evident between Jamaican parents and adolescents and the degree ($r = .29$) of dyadic similarity was virtually identical to the correlation in the ICSEY across 10 countries ($r = .30$; Vedder et al., 2009). Moreover, the transmission of family value priority was stronger among early adolescents, which accords with prior research suggesting that autonomy development impedes value transmission (Schönpflug, 2001).

Parents Benefit More Than Their Teens Do From High Adolescent Family Prioritization

Jamaican parents feel more efficacious and satisfied in their parenting role when their adolescents place a higher priority on family. This sense of self-competence may be an adaptive response to successful cultural transmission of familism in a collectivistic culture (Schönpflug, 2001). Alternatively, confident parents may inspire their adolescents to prioritize family more highly. Either way, the interpretation of this association should be viewed alongside the finding that adolescents with high family prioritization

who also experience high parental ideals for family prioritization report less positive adjustment. Moreover, unlike findings in the United States (Johnston & Mash, 1989; Ohan, Leung, & Johnston, 2000), higher adolescent depressive symptoms were not accompanied by lower self-competence among Jamaican parents. Taken together, these findings suggest that Jamaican parents benefit psychologically from higher adolescent family obligations but may be unaware of the potential emotional liabilities to their teenagers of matching high parental expectations.

Counterintuitive Benefits to Adolescents of Intergenerational Discrepancies

As predicted by RDT (Robins & Boldero, 2003) and demonstrated in hierarchical supervisory and friendship relationships (Boldero et al., 2009), relational discrepancies between Jamaican adolescents' family prioritization and their parents' ideals do not predict emotional problems. Rather, discrepancies in family prioritization are counterintuitively *beneficial* for Jamaican adolescents, a result which is concordant with Vedder and Oortwijn's (2009) findings among Surinamese Caribbean immigrants in the Netherlands. Adolescents who are best adjusted psychologically prioritize family in a manner which counterbalances their parents' ideals for them. In a Caribbean cultural context which sanctions authority-ranking parent-adolescent relationships (Bailey et al., 1998; Evans & Davies, 1997; Richardson, 1999), adolescents whose parents have high expectations for family prioritization may expect and adjust for this reality by downregulating the importance they place on family to protect themselves from the depressing effects of a potential failure to live up to those parental ideals. On the other hand, for adolescents with autonomy-granting parents (who have already lowered their parental expectations for adolescent family prioritization) upregulating the importance placed on family may be an agentic and adaptive response that promotes a sense of satisfaction with their lives and protects against depressive symptoms. Knafo and Assor (2007) found a positive association between "autonomy-supportive parenting" and life satisfaction among Israeli college students. Future research is needed to investigate these and other potential self-regulatory mechanisms Caribbean teenagers and parents use to optimize adolescent well-being in the presence of discrepancies.

It is intergenerational *congruence* that is an emotional liability for Jamaican youth, but not for

parents. The authority role in hierarchical parent–adolescent relationships appears protective for parents, whereas adolescents, who must negotiate their autonomy, have more to lose. Adolescent depressive symptoms are positively associated with congruent high family prioritization, which reflects, at least in part, an over-prioritization of family on the part of the adolescent at the expense of peer activities including sports and dating. On the other hand, life satisfaction is negatively associated with congruent low family prioritization, which may reflect general family disengagement or other nonnormative family dynamics that erode adolescents' life satisfaction. The difference between depression and life satisfaction findings, which may be related to a relatively weak intercorrelation between the two measures ($r = .27, p < .05$), seems less meaningful than the similarity between these two sets of findings. That is, adolescents in congruent dyads have poorer adjustment both in terms of depression and life satisfaction, which is consistent with the person- or stage-environment fit perspective (Eccles et al., 1983). These findings support the view that for an adolescent to be highly congruent with parental ideals may be both non-normative and maladaptive in the context of increasing adolescent autonomy because his or her developmental need is likely mismatched with opportunities provided by the family environment to meet that need (Grotevant & Cooper, 1986; De Goede et al. 2009; Laursen & Bukowski, 1997). This interpretation accords with prior findings that adolescent conformity with parental expectations correlates positively with self-derogation in Armenian heritage adolescents (Ghazarian et al., 2008). Intergenerational congruence may also reflect a foreclosed commitment to parental values without exploration of personal values (Marcia, 1966) or an agreement with parents' values based on pressures versus autonomous or intrinsic motivation (Knafo & Assor, 2007).

The current finding that parental ideal for family prioritization moderates the association between adolescent family prioritization and well-being sheds light on prior mixed reports in the literature regarding the most adaptive level of family obligations for adolescents. Some studies report that a moderate level of family obligations is best (Fuligni et al., 1999), whereas other report that very high levels are best (Fuligni & Zhang, 2004). Rather than a universally optimal level of family obligations, the optimal level may vary dynamically based on parental ideals and culturally derived adolescent–parent equality expectations.

Limitations and Future Directions

Although the sample characteristics (i.e., mostly urban, middle-class, adolescent–mother dyads) facilitate comparisons of findings to the international literature, they do limit generalizability to rural, lower SES, and adolescent–father dyads in Jamaica. Future research should intentionally sample families from these demographics to explore variations. The modest sample size may have masked some gender main effects or interactions. In addition, the possibility of self-selection biases inherent in nonrandom sampling should be mentioned as a challenge in this and other obligations discrepancy research (ICSEY, Phinney & Vedder, 2006).

Discrepancies explained small portions of variances in adolescent and parent psychological well-being in the current study. This is not surprising because psychological well-being is multiply determined, and other variables including genes, stressful life events, and gender are expected to be stronger predictors (see Hammen, Brennan, Keenan-Miller, Hazel, & Najman, 2010).

Main study findings using the Identity Pie (an ipsative measure akin to a zero-sum ranking of family relative to other domain priorities) accorded with the findings of Vedder and Oortwijn (2009) using a traditional family obligations scale (an absolute measure using Likert scales in which mean scores vary independently of obligations in other life domains). Nevertheless, the departure of some study results from prior international findings may be due to measurement differences.

Future work in this area should continue to use a variety of family obligations measures, to include parental psychological adjustment, and to incorporate both adolescent and parent reports of all variables to better account for the interdependence of partners' responses and reciprocal influences on each other (Kenny, Kashy, & Cook, 2006). Mixed-methods methodologies might be particularly helpful in exploring the reasons behind the psychological benefits of discrepancies and liabilities of relational congruence.

CONCLUSION: CAN INTERGENERATIONAL DISCREPANCIES BE GOOD?

Yes. Although Caribbean parents benefit psychologically when their adolescents place a higher priority on family relative to other life domains, discrepancies from parents' ideal prioritization are an emotional asset for adolescents. The best-adjusted

adolescents prioritize family in a manner which counterbalances their parents' ideals for them. Current findings suggest the need to contextualize the dominant conceptualization of discrepancy-related distress to account for cultural differences in adolescent-parent equality expectations in general and counterintuitive benefits to Caribbean adolescents in particular.

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