

Conceptualising cross cultural differences in early caregiving: comparative levels of instruction and mind-mindedness



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Introduction



- **Parental practices** have a great impact on various aspects of child development (e.g. emotional, social, cognitive, etc).
- **Cultural attitudes** deeply influence child rearing practices. E.g. beliefs on:
 - how children are perceived
 - what their role is in the society
 - how they should think, feel and behave
- These values are transmitted during **daily interactions** between caregivers and children.





Introduction



**Cross cultural
research focused
on broad-based
indices of
parenting**

**Parental
style**

**How
children are
perceived**

**Socialisation
goals**

**Western
societies**

Authoritative

Mental agents

**Autonomy
Independence**

**Asian
societies**

Authoritarian

**Operate on
natural
instinct**

**Obedience
Relatedness**



Introduction



Parental mind-mindedness (MM)

In Western societies it is associated with:

Authoritative

- sensitive and responsive parenting behaviour (e.g. Laranjo et al., 2008)
- better child linguistic and cognitive development, executive functioning and behavioural outcomes (e.g. Bernier et al., 2010; Meins et al., 2013)

WE KNOW

Few studies on mind-mindedness in Asian populations (mainly in Chinese and Japanese populations)

WE DON'T KNOW



Introduction



Parental Control

In Western societies it is associated with:



Authoritarian

- negative attitudes toward children (e.g. Barber & Harmon, 2002)
- negative child outcomes (e.g. internalizing and externalizing problems) (e.g. Barber & Harmon, 2002).

In Asian societies these associations were not consistently found (e.g. Rudy & Halgunseth, 2005).

- Positive control?

Lack of cross-cultural studies:

- in early child age
- using observational methods

Need of more circumscribed measures reflecting guidance





Introduction

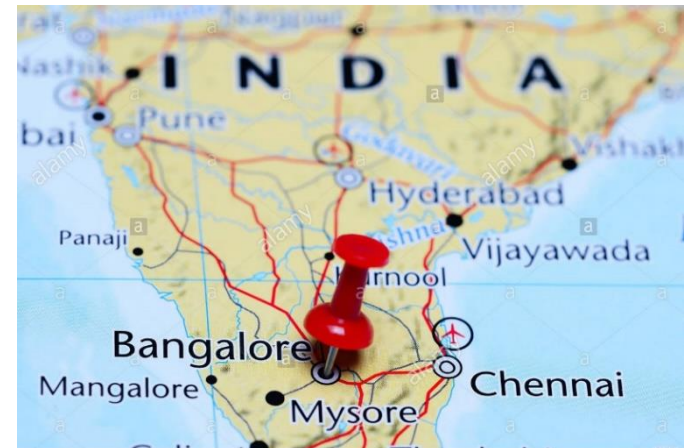


Aim of the study

To investigate the influence of culture on parental practices comparing two different populations



- one from the UK (Wirral - WCHADS)
- one from India (Bangalore - BCHADS)





Aims of the Study



To find out whether there is evidence that **UK and Indian mothers** appear to be trying to achieve different objectives with their infants:

- Examine whether **Indian mothers aim to guide their infants** as evidenced in giving more instructions
- Examine whether **UK mothers aim to understand their infants' motives** as evidenced in making more mind-minded comments



Develop a **measure of parental instructions** and assess reliability and validity



Method



100 mother-infant dyads: 50 from the UK and 50 from India (50% males)

6 months of infant age: mother-child play interaction video recorded using NICHD procedure



	UK	INDIA	P*
Child age (months)	6.8 (sd 0.73)	7.8 (sd 1.56)	<.001
Mother age (years)	27.3 (sd 6.28)	22.8 (sd 2.64)	<.001
Age finished education (years)	19.0 (sd 2.75)	16.9 (sd 2.03)	<.001
Parity (primiparous)	50 (100%)	25 (50%)	<.001
Marital status (married/cohabiting)	31 (62.0%)	50 (100%)	<.001
Income (up to £10,000)	9 (19.1%)	38 (100%)	<.001

* Preliminary data to be confirmed



Method



Maternal speech transcribed and coded for:

- **Mind-mindedness** (taken from Meins & Fernyhough, 2015)
 - Desires and preferences (e.g. *Do you want to get the ball?; You don't like the car*)
 - Cognition (e.g. *You think it's funny?*)
 - Emotions (e.g. *Are you happy about that? Are you getting upset?*)
 - Intentions (e.g. *Are you trying to pull that out?*)
- **Instructions** (new coding scheme)
 - Do instructions (e.g. *Sit there; Give it to me*)
 - Don't instructions (e.g. *Don't pull that; Don't go there*)





Method



Additional codes:

- **Verbal control** (taken from Stein et al., 1994)
 - Strong (e.g. *Look; Play; Listen*)
 - Mild (e.g. *How about playing with this instead?; Shall we play with the ball?; Let's sing a song*)
- **Positive comments** (as proxy for warmth)
(e.g. *Well done; Clever girl/boy; You have been very good; My precious/dear*)
- **Negative comments** (as proxy for negativity)
(e.g. *Don't be stupid; You have been horrible today; They will hit you*)

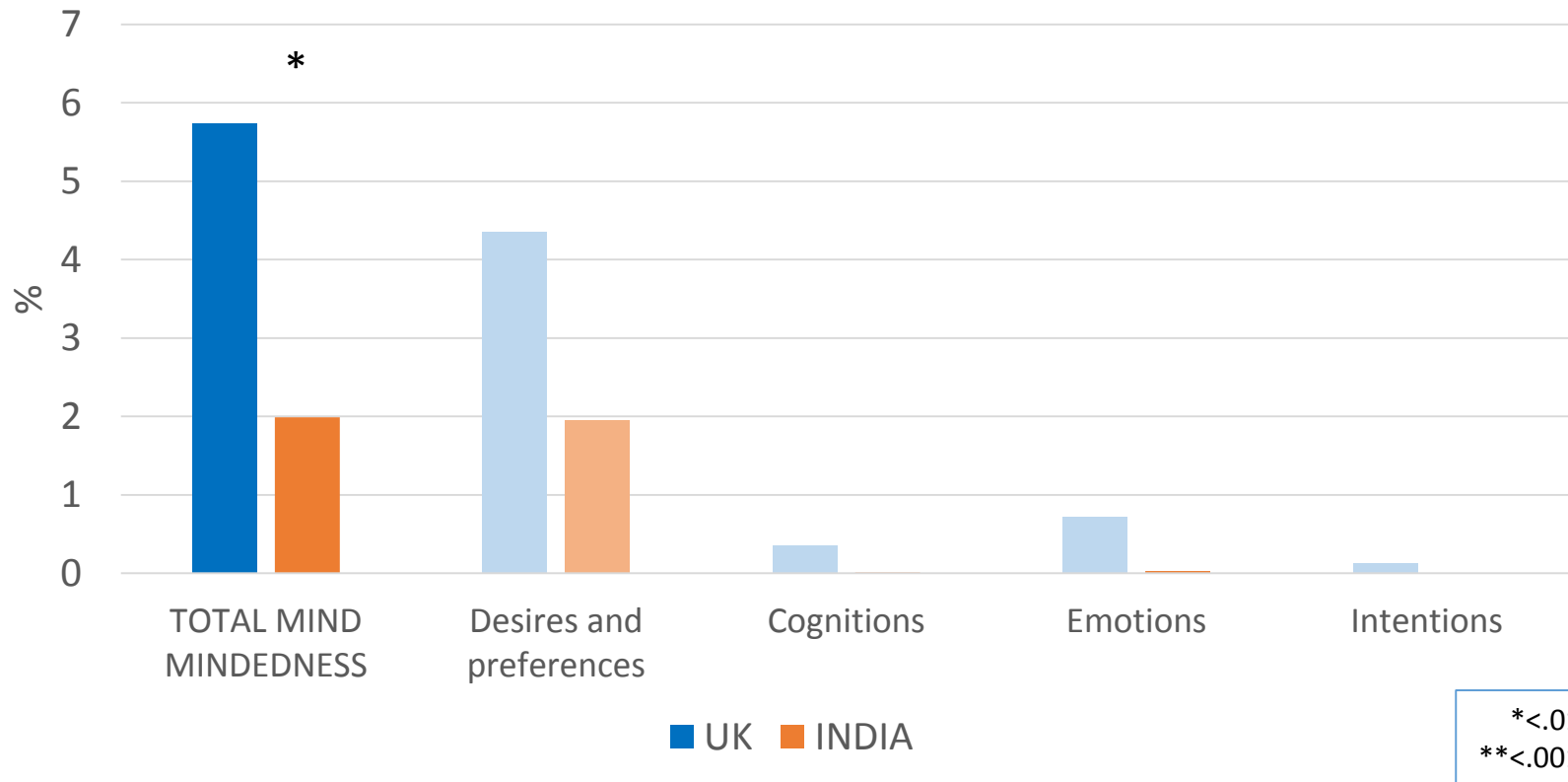
Analyses:

Generalised Linear Models were used to explore group differences in coding dimensions of maternal speech and associations between dimensions, controlling for the demographic variables



Results: Group comparisons

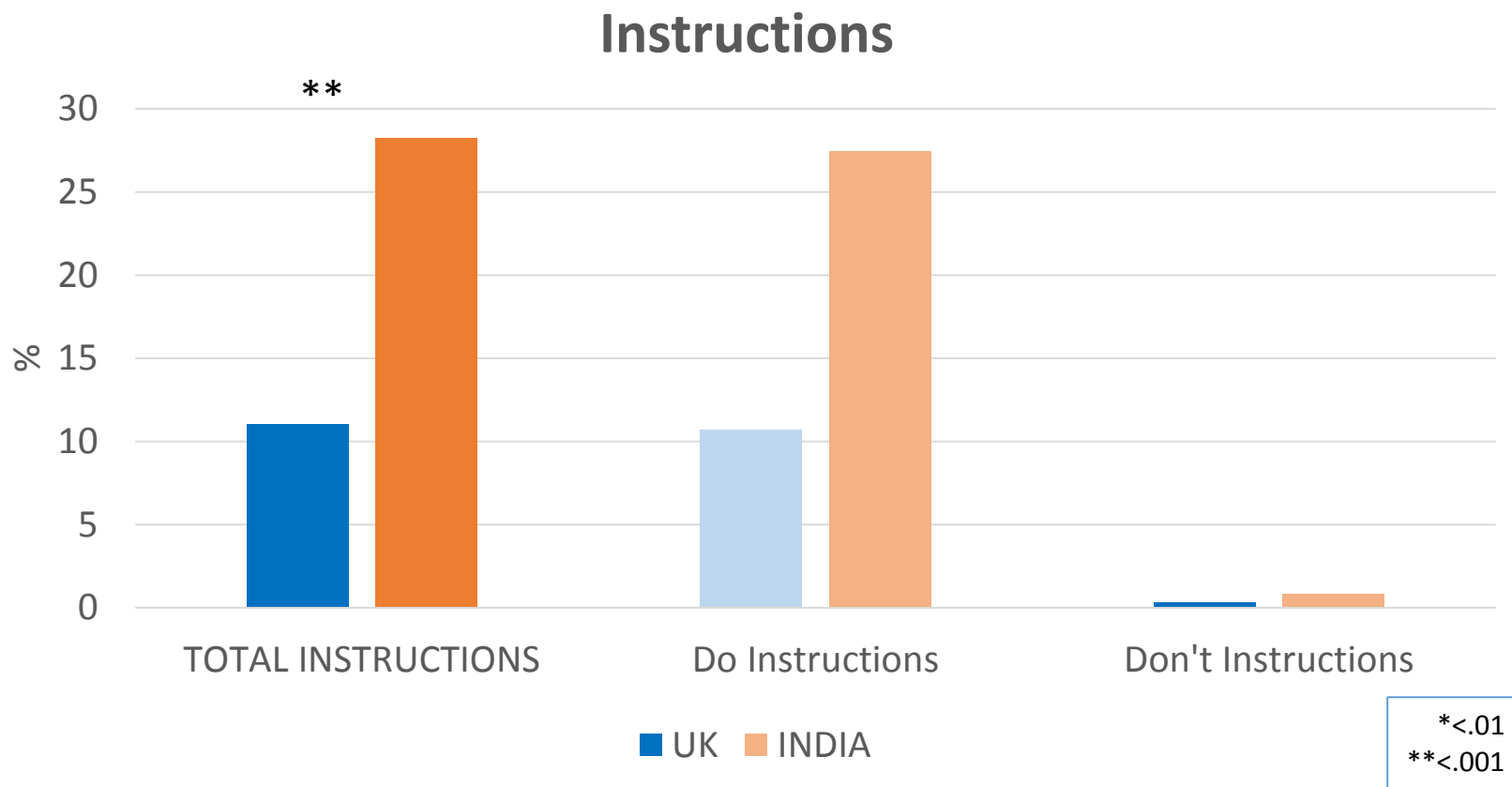
Mind-mindedness



Preliminary data to be confirmed



Results: Group comparisons

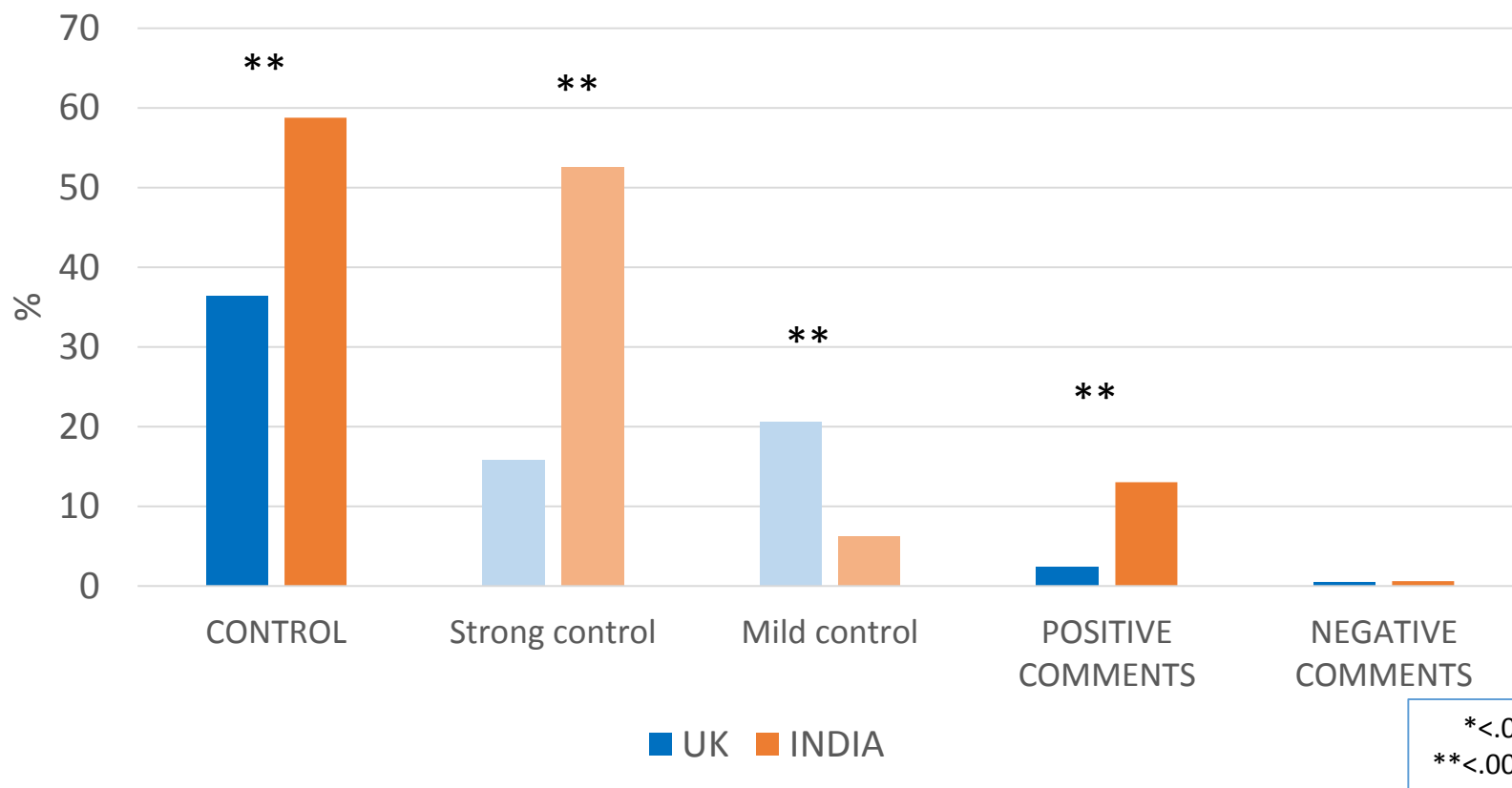


Preliminary data to be confirmed



Results: Group comparisons

Control, Positive and Negative comments

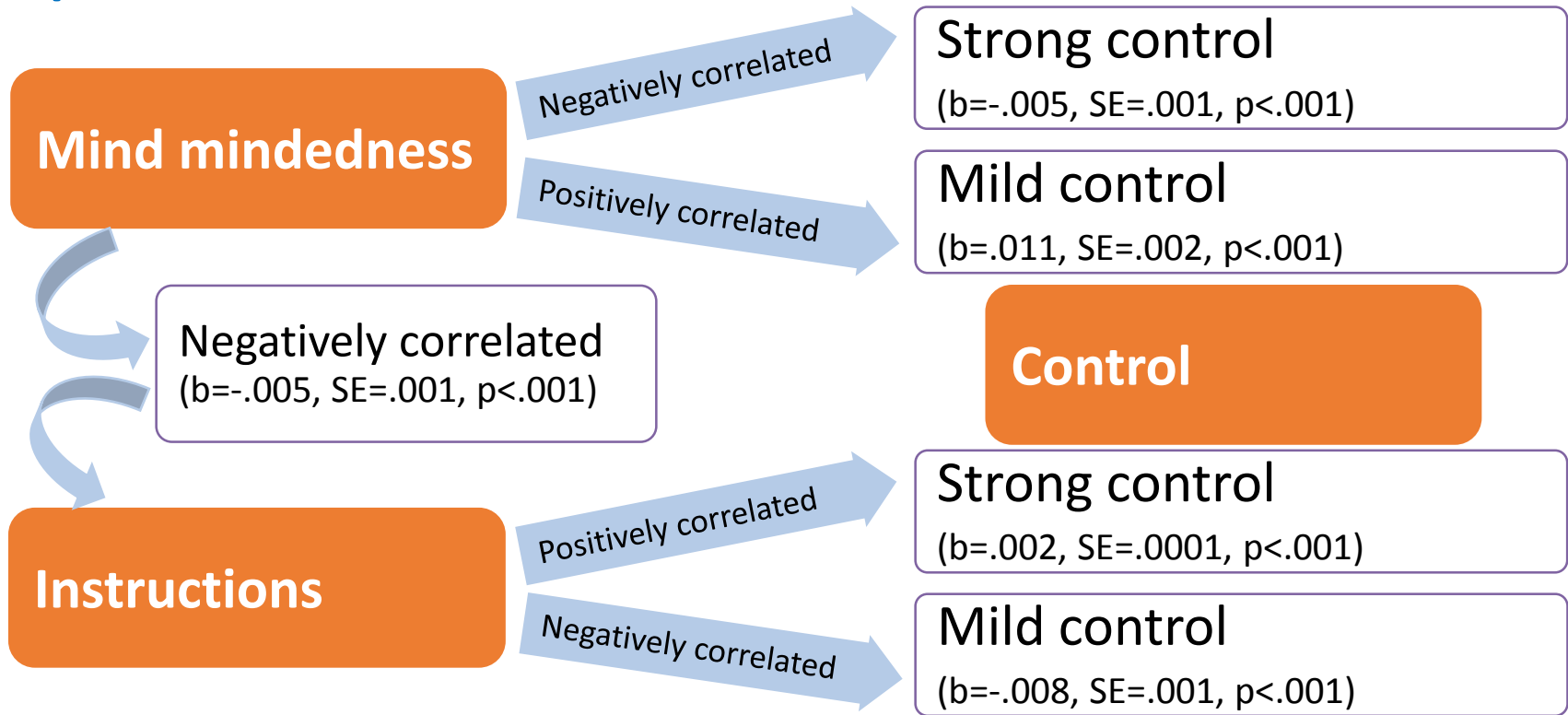


Preliminary data to be confirmed



Results: Whole sample

Association between different coding dimensions in maternal speech:



Positive comments were not associated with MM ($b=-.005, SE=.003, p=.072$), BUT they were negatively associated with Instruction ($b=-.003, SE=.001, p<.001$) and Control ($b=-.003, SE=.001, p<.001$)



Conclusions



WHAT IS NEW?

- Look at parental practices:
 - Comparing two different cultures (not explored in India)
 - Early child age
- Mind-mindedness:
 - Explore use in Indian mothers
- Control:
 - Code different dimensions of it, including instructions (positive control)
 - Challenge the assumption that instructions (control) is a reflection of negative parenting



Conclusions



We found **cultural differences in parental practices**:

- **UK mothers** express more mind-minded comments in their interactions and use more mild control
- **Indian mothers** give more instructions in their interactions and use more strong control

Results appear to reflect **cultural beliefs** about child rearing practices

Independent from the cultural groupings:

- **MM** is negatively associated with use of **Instructions**
- Higher **MM** associated with use of **mild control** strategies
- Higher **Instructions** associated with **strong control** strategies



Conclusions



Use of Instructions and Control, typical of the Indian culture, was far more evident than in UK

- Indian mothers made more **Positive comments** overall
- Positive comments – independent of MM, but negatively associated with Instruction and Control
- No group difference in **Negative comments**

Future research:

- **Wider sample** to investigate pattern of relationships between **sub-categories** in different cultures
- Analyse influence of culture and pattern of parental practices on **child development outcomes**

THANK YOU

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