

Parenting Young Children during a Pandemic: A Cross-Cultural Study

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Parenting During a Period of Crisis

Parents' functioning is a key factor that influences children's sense of security and coping abilities. There is an association between the attitudes that parents express during stressful situations and the emotional reactions of their children aged 5-7 years (Gatenio-Kalush & Cohen, 2019). Positive parenting in such circumstances can enhance positive interactions between parents and children and enables meeting children's needs (Wang et al., 2020). Cohen et al. (2014) found that an intervention guiding parents to strengthen their leadership (e.g., planning) and love behaviors (e.g., playful interactions including physical contact) during stressful times had a positive effect on young children's behaviors, moods, and cooperation with others.

The COVID-19 outbreak introduced changes in the daily lives of families of young children around the world. During lockdown, the childcare/preschool settings that provide a meaningful developmental framework for children were closed and were partly replaced by digital education (Stites et al. 2021). However, educational experiences could not be fully replaced by online activities and parents had to take the leading role of setting their young children's everyday experiences. Parents had to address their children's emotional, social, and educational needs, without the support and physical help of family and friends (Ghebreyesus, 2020). A survey in 27 countries showed that being at home during the lockdown with more than one child was associated with high levels of parental stress (Kowal et al., 2020). Parents with a child under the age of 18, who experienced cumulative stressors (e.g., anxiety or depression), reported that their children's health and learning declined (Brown et al., 2020).

A Cross-Cultural Perspective of Parenting

Learning about parenting during a crisis in different cultures has descriptive and explanatory value. While the complex and intensive nature of parenthood is perceived as universal, there are aspects that are mediated by cultural context (Harkness & Super, 2002). Culture can be defined as patterns of behaviors acquired through socialization processes (e.g., Boyd & Richerson, 2005). The present chapter presents data regarding parenting during the time of crisis in five cultures.

Bulgarian Parenting

Traditionally, Bulgarian families were more conservative than Northern and Western European families (United Nations Development Programme Bulgaria, 1995). Yet, fifty years of socialist regime in the country has affected the characteristics of parenting. During this period, the Christian religion and values, traditionally strong for the Bulgarians, were trampled. Bulgarian parenting tended to be collectivist and the family's main values were security, duty, intra-group harmony, hierarchy, cooperation and emotional dependence. Today, after the advent of democracy, there are two contradictory trends in Bulgarian parenting: On the one hand, a return to traditional values that are characterized by a patriarchal culture, i.e., a high degree of adult control and power distance (Andonova, 2018), and on the other hand, a rapid adaptation to Western parenting style (Luleva, 2016).

Israeli-Arab Parenting

Generally, family values of Israeli-Arab parents are collectivistic and are characterized by traditional patriarchal and authoritarian approaches. Extended families often live close to each other and interact daily (Kaufman et al., 2012). There is an emphasis on obedience and adherence to behavioral patterns that advance the harmony of the collective (Dwairy & Achoui,

2006). In the past three decades, however, Arab society in Israel has been going through modernization processes (Agbaria, 2020). Today, Israeli Arabs are concerned with preserving Arab family culture, while also integrating Western influences (Lavee & Katz, 2003). Consequently, traditional parenting has undergone changes, expressed by less conformity to traditional views (Shechory-Bitton et al., 2015).

Israeli-Jewish Parenting

Traditional Israeli-Jewish norms focus on the centrality of the family and of children within the family (e.g., Oryan, 2014). Israeli-Jewish mothers believe that their efforts in child rearing are an obligation to society and a means to accomplish self-fulfillment (Doron, 2003). Extended family relationships are based on interdependence and mutual care (Samoocha, 2005). Despite international influences, the family is a relatively stable institution, more than in most western countries (Scharf, 2014). At the same time, the majority of Israeli-Jewish society holds Western, individualistic family values (Beystrov, 2012; Samoocha, 2005). Parents tend to give freedom to their children (Dwairy & Achoui, 2006). They show little authority and provide few rules and restrictions (Chen et al., 2014).

Spanish Parenting

Spanish culture has been characterized as horizontal collectivist, where parents understand the individual self as part of the family self and emphasize the use of affection and involvement in children's socialization (García & Gracia, 2009; García et al., 2019; Gouveia et al., 2003). Moreover, Spanish families are oriented towards the satisfaction of children's emotional needs. However, parenting is particularly concerned with safety and multiple forms of control are considered necessary for children's well-being (Gómez Espino, 2012). The role of

education is crucial for Spanish families as the central means for optimizing children's future possibilities (Gómez Espino, 2012). Parents' concern about the possibility of their children failing in school and, as a consequence, falling victim to economic precariousness is an important motive for exercising intensive parenting (Gil Calvo, 2009).

U.S. Parenting

Most of the research on U.S. parents comes from middle income or White parents. These parents support individualistic values (Bornstein et al., 1998). They value their children's self-expression and accordingly, encourage them to pursue personal goals and interests (Mayseless & Scharf, 2003). American mothers are competitive, and they are likely to adopt an intensive parenting approach by investing a lot of energy in the upbringing of their children (Bornstein et al., 1998). This is known as concerted cultivation (Sonnenschein et al., 2016). Parents often acknowledge the importance of their educational input to their children's development (Rodriguez & Olswang, 2003), and set boundaries for their children and establish consequences to maintain family order (Oryan, 2014).

Purposes of the Study

The COVID-19 outbreak created a worldwide situation that facilitated studying parenting of young children during stressful times from a cross-cultural perspective. The data for this study were collected during the March-May 2020 lockdowns. In-class schooling was terminated and parents had to take care of their children. There was fear and lack of knowledge regarding the severity of the epidemic, people were quarantined, hospitalized and there were daily international reports regarding the mortality rates. It was not clear how long this state would last.

The aim of the study was to cross-culturally explore parenting of young children in line with the PPM, during this stressful time. We do not statistically compare the cultures but explore them separately. Our research questions were: (1) What are the characteristics of parenting behaviors (the PPM constructs) during a crisis time in each of the five cultures? What are the relative strengths and the challenges of parents within the cultures? (2) What are the relations between the family's background measures (child's age, number of children, parent's age, and education) and the PPM constructs.

Method

The research questions were examined via a quantitative study. Although this is not a comparative study, this design enabled us to use a cross-cultural view of parenting behaviors. Also, these data can be used for future research to compare behaviors in more routine times.

Participants

Participants were 1080 parents (153 Bulgarian, 192 Israeli-Arabs, 290 Israeli-Jews, 304 Spanish, and 141 U.S.). In each group, the family had at least one 2-8-year-old child to whom they referred in our study. The majority of the parents (93%) were mothers (1001 mothers and 79 fathers) from a middle socio-economic background. Parents' mean age was 36.67 years ($SD = 5.18$). Parents' education ranged from primary school diploma (2%) to PhD (7%). Most of the parents (77.70%) had at least a BA degree (90.20%, 58.90%, 88.30%, 67.10%, 89.90% and 77.60% for Bulgaria, Israeli-Arabs, Israeli-Jews, Spain, and the U.S. respectively). Their participating children were 50.30% boys and 49.70% girls. Children's mean age was 60.89 months ($SD = 18.91$, range 2-8 years). The mean number of children per family was 2.33 ($SD =$

1.06). Family's organization was typically nuclear and they lived in suburban-to-urban middle-class settings. Table 1 details these demographic characteristics in each culture.

Measurement Instruments and Procedures

Parental daily behaviors questionnaire

The study utilized a self-report online questionnaire, built to characterize parenting behaviors according to each of the five-PPM constructs. Parents were asked to refer to one of their children (aged 2-8-years) and report the frequency of their behaviors on a scale of (1) = never to (6) = always during the current times.

The questionnaire was anonymous and included 38 items. The items referred to each of the five constructs as follows: **Partnership**. Ten items described parents' daily collaboration behaviors, for example: "I back up my partner in her/his reactions to our child" and "My partner and I discuss issues relating to our parenting"; **Leadership**. Eight items described daily behaviors that emphasize the parents' role as the family leaders who organize family life and set an example for their children, for example: "I behave according to my goals as a parent" and "I plan my parenting behaviors (e.g., I prepare for toilet training)"; **Love**. Ten items described daily physical and verbal expressions of love, sensitivity and empathy towards the child, for example: "I hug, kiss and hold my child" and "I do small actions that will make my child happy (e.g., prepare food that he/she loves)"; **Independence**. Five items described encouraging the child to independently perform tasks that match his/her abilities, for example: "I encourage my child to be independent in his/her day-to-day activities (e.g., dress, shower)" and "When my child asks me for help I first suggest that he tries on his/her own". **Rules**. Five items described parents' daily adherence to the home rules and routines, for example: "I make sure that my child behaves

according to the rules I set". The average score each construct's items constituted its score. Higher scores indicated more beneficial parenting.

Fifteen Jewish and Arab MA educational counseling students who learned the PPM model assessed its content validity of the questionnaire. A Confirmatory Factor Analysis assured the overall fit of the PPM model (Meoded Karabanov et al., 2021). Reliabilities among items for Partnership, Leadership, Love, Independence and the Rules constructs were Cronbach's $\alpha = .87$, $\alpha = .80$, $\alpha = .92$, $\alpha = .79$ and $\alpha = .80$, respectively. The overall reliability of the PPM index was $\alpha = .95$.

Participants also completed a demographic questionnaire. We requested information on child's gender and age, birth order of participating child and number of children in the family, living area, religious affiliation, parents' education level, and child's educational setting.

The Hebrew questionnaires were translated back and forth to each of the other languages (Arabic, Bulgarian, English, and Spanish) by native speakers of both languages (e.g., Hebrew and Arabic; Hebrew and Spanish). The study received the approval of the Ethics Committee of Tel-Aviv University, UMBC and other institutions where it was required. The researchers distributed these anonymous self-report questionnaires through social media in each of the participating countries during March-May 2020. The parents first read information about the study and then indicated their consent to participate by continuing with the survey.

Data Analysis

First, an average score for each construct was calculated. We then computed descriptive data for the PPM constructs within each country, followed by ANOVAs learning about the differences between the constructs in each culture. Thereafter, we calculated the correlations

between the family's background measures (child's age, number of children in the family, and the responding parent's education) and the PPM constructs. Last, we ran General Linear Model, GLM, analyses in each group, comparing the PPM constructs while controlling for the family's background measures.

Results

We first present each of the PPM constructs and the differences between them in each culture. Next, we display the correlations between the family's background measures (child's age, no. of children, parent's age, and education) and the PPM constructs.

Table 2 presents the PPM descriptive statistics in each culture. Generally, parents' self-reports on the five constructs were high. Table 2 shows that among the PPM measures, the highest scores across the five cultures are in the Love construct. Parents reported frequent expressions of love towards their children (e.g., empathy, shared parent-child time). Also, Partnership between the parents (e.g., agreement regarding children's activities, task division) is relatively lower than the other constructs in each culture.

We used an ANOVA to examine the differences between the five parenting constructs in each culture. The findings reveal significant differences between the five parenting constructs in all five cultures: Bulgarian ($F(4, 149)=57.46, p=.00, \eta^2=.61$); Israeli-Arabs ($F(4,188)=111.96, p=.00, \eta^2=.70$); Israeli-Jews ($F(4,286)=103.40, p=.00, \eta^2=.59$); Spanish ($F(4, 294)=149.71, p=.00, \eta^2=0.67$); and the U.S. ($F(4,136)=106.15, p=.00, \eta^2=.76$). Bonferroni post-hoc-tests explored the significant differences between the constructs in each culture (see Figure 2).

Within the Bulgarian group Love was significantly higher than the other constructs ($p = .000$ for all the comparisons). Independence was significantly lower than Love ($p = .000$) but

significantly higher than Partnership ($p = .000$), Leadership ($p = .025$) and Rules ($p = .023$). We found no significant differences between Partnership and Leadership and Partnership and Rules.

As for the Israeli-Arab group, the Love construct was significantly higher than the rest of the constructs ($p = .000$ for all the comparisons). Leadership was significantly lower than Love ($p = .000$) and higher than Partnership, Independence and Rules ($p = 0.000$ for all the comparisons) with no significant differences among them.

A similar pattern was found in the Israeli-Jewish group. Love construct was significantly higher than the rest of the constructs ($p = .000$ for all the comparisons). Leadership was significantly lower than Love ($p = .000$) and higher than Partnership, Independence and Rules ($p = 0.000$ for all the comparisons) with no significant differences among them.

In the Spanish group, Love was significantly higher than the rest of the constructs ($p = .000$ for all the comparisons). Partnership was significantly lower than the rest of the constructs ($p = .000$ for all the comparisons). There were no significant differences among the Leadership, Independence and Rules constructs.

A similar pattern was found in the U.S. group. Love was significantly higher than the rest of the constructs ($p = .000$ for all the comparisons). Partnership was significantly lower than the rest of the constructs ($p = .000$ for all the comparisons). There were no significant differences among the Leadership Independence and Rules constructs.

We calculated the correlations between the family's background measures (child's age, no. of children, parent's age, and education) and the PPM constructs in each of the groups. We found some significant correlations. Interestingly, they look somewhat alike across cultures.

Parent's age correlated negatively with some of the PPM constructs in the Bulgarian (Love $r = -.21, p = 0.01$; Rules $r = -.16, p = 0.05$); Israeli-Jews (Partnership $r = -.28, p = .00$; Leadership $r = -.16, p = .01$; Love $r = -.18, p = .00$, Independence $r = -.12, p = .05$, Rules $r = -.14, p = .02$); Spanish (Love $r = -.14, p = .01$) and the U.S. groups (Rules $r = -.23, p = .01$). Generally, during the COVID-19 first lockdown, older parents reported less beneficial parenting behaviors.

Number of children in the family correlated negatively with Love in the Bulgarian ($r = -.19, p = .02$), Israeli-Arab ($r = -.16, p = .02$), Israeli-Jews ($r = -.11, p = .05$) and Spanish groups ($r = -.30, p = .00$). Parents of larger families tended to report fewer Love behaviors. In Spain parents with more children reported giving more independence to their children ($r = .14, p = .01$).

Children's age correlated positively with Independence in the Israeli-Jewish ($r = .15, p = .02$), Spanish ($r = .21, p = .00$) and the U.S. ($r = .18, p = .03$) groups. Parents of older children reported that they gave their children more independence during the lockdown.

Last, parent's education level correlated positively with Independence in the Bulgarian group ($r = .18, p = .03$). More educated parents reported that they gave their children more independence and responsibilities. Parents' education level correlated negatively with Rules in the U.S. group ($r = -.22, p = .01$). More highly educated parents reported that they set fewer rules at home during the lockdown.

Acknowledging these correlations, we ran General Linear Model, GLM, analyses in each group, comparing the PPM constructs while controlling for the family's background measures. These analyses revealed the same picture as the one described above. Hence, we do not present them. Thus, the background measures are related to parents' reported behaviors, yet they do not change the balance between the five parenting constructs within each culture.

Discussion

The aim of this chapter was to describe from a cross-cultural perspective parents' behaviors towards their young children during the first COVID-19 lockdown in March-May 2020. We utilized the Parenting Pentagon Model (PPM) to study different aspects of parents' behavior. The PPM addresses five beneficial general parenting behaviors: Partnership between the main caretakers; Leadership of the parent in managing the family's life; Love behaviors towards the children; encouraging children's Independence; and Adhering to Rules within the daily routines. The COVID-19 crisis affected families across the world and children's vulnerability increased (Cluver et al., 2020). We studied parents in Bulgaria, Israeli-Arabs, Israeli-Jews, Spanish, and the U.S. The results show that the PPM is an effective model for learning about parenting behaviors across cultures. Most studies on parenting distinguish between two main sequences by which parental style is characterized - support and control (Aunola & Nurmi, 2005). The PPM aims to portray a more detailed description of parental conduct. The five constructs present a coherent picture of parents' behavior in the family that can help educators and therapists focus their attention on guidance adapted to the parents' needs.

We did not statistically compare the five groups because we wanted to portray parenting, including the relative strengths and weaknesses, within each culture, while recognizing the shared challenging context of the pandemic. Exploring the relative strength of parenting behavior constructs in each culture showed some general cross-cultural and some specific parenting patterns. Looking at the pattern of parenting behaviors during the COVID-19 lockdown concerning each construct of the PPM we see similarities and differences across cultures. Interestingly, the description of parents' behaviors in each culture remained the same after

controlling for the family's background measures (child's age, number of children, parent's age and education).

Cross-Cultural Similarity in Parenting Behaviors

Love

Parents gave the highest ratings on the Love construct in each of the five cultures. That is, they reported that they frequently expressed their love to their child by hugging, showing empathy, and more. Emotional support is essential in stressful situations in which parents are the only significant adults who are continuously present in their children's lives (Cohen et al., 2014). Parents perceive expressions of love as a major part of being a good parent, both during routine (e.g., Lawton, & Coleman, 1983) and crises such as wars (Ames et al., 2011).

It seems that regardless of cultural background, parents recognized that expressions of love are central to their parenting role during the COVID-19 lockdown. Interestingly, there is evidence that mothers' compassionate love for their children is associated with activation of the parasympathetic nervous system that calms the mothers themselves (Miller et al., 2015). We suggest that beyond showing love to support their children expressing love (e.g., giving hugs) toward their children may also be a way for the parents to calm themselves during the lockdown.

Partnership

In all five cultures, parents gave the lowest ratings on items on the Partnership construct. That is, they reported that they did not tend to consult with their partner, did not share daily chores regarding the children or present a uniform front to the children, and more. In Spain and the U.S., this construct was significantly lower than all the other four constructs. The overall

relatively low ratings on Partnership is somewhat unexpected. During the lockdown both parents often stayed at home. One could expect that in these circumstances, parents would share the heavy burden related to childcare, when no schooling or support from relatives were available. In attempting to explain this finding, we note that most of the participants in our study were mothers. A national survey in the U.S. showed that mothers spent on average 6.2 hours daily on interactive activities with children, compared to an average of three hours among fathers (Villadsen et al., 2020). Reports from the U.S. (Evans et al., 2020) showed that couples' coping as partners decreased under the pandemic stress, resulting in increased rates of conflict. Our study supports this idea as parents from all cultures reported lower scores with regards to collaboration with their spouses (Partnership construct).

Mothers across cultures often carry more of the burden of raising children and fathers usually work more hours outside the home (Landivar et al., 2020). This division of labor serves as a "cover story" that helps in justifying, and perhaps obscuring, the traditional role that mothers take upon themselves. Yet, when both parents were at home the imbalance was evident and its justification was disrupted, thus, leading to tensions in the partnership. The lockdown seems to have sharpened the "traditional" role division, according to which mothers raise the children and fathers are the breadwinners. Researchers report evidence of more stress between parents during the lockdown (Prime et al., 2020). It is also possible that the increased, stressful time that parents spent together at home created and/or intensified tensions between them that were transferred to their parenting behaviors.

Cultural Variations in Parenting Behaviors

Bulgaria Culture

For Bulgarian participants in the study, the Independence construct was prominent. This

may be explained by Bulgarian cultural values and norms that were manifested and perhaps strengthened during the lockdown. For example, in line with the collectivist value of duty, Bulgarian parents communicate to their children from an early age that they need to "cope with life on their own" (United Nations Development Programme Bulgaria, 1995). Bulgarian children are young (around 10-years-old) when they first start going to school by themselves, and many children are required to participate in household chores. This mentality may have formed during the communist era when children would go on month-long excursions with their schools and were expected to be fairly independent. These values still guide parents in child rearing and may have intensified when there was no schooling. Another possible culturally related explanation might be that the norm of people's mistrust in government institutions resulted in an emphasis of "trusting nobody but yourself" (Andonova, 2018).

Israeli Arab and Jewish Culture

For Israeli Arab and Jewish participants in the study, parents' Leadership was noticeably higher than Partnership, Independence, and Rules. The centrality of Leadership in parents' reports seems to reflect taking responsibility for monitoring the family's changing needs. Recognizing the existential nature of the pandemic's challenges, researchers have suggested that parents' reflection on their values and constructs can significantly assist them in leading the challenging family processes during this irregular time (Fraenkel & Cho, 2020). In Israel, familism is a mark of the society. The family codes are anchored in each religion and are present in everyday lives (Fogiel-Bijaoui & Rutlinger-Reiner, 2013). Our findings suggest that during the lockdown, Israeli parents (Arabs and Jews) connected to their classic family values and hence reported leadership behaviors. It is possible that revisiting traditional behaviors helped them manage the family during the challenging time.

Spanish Culture

For participants from Spain, Partnership was the lowest construct in parents' reports and was significantly lower than the rest of the constructs. Spanish mothers are usually the ones who make sure that the schedule is followed and manage the household routine (Mínguez, 2010). Our study strengthens a report showing that during the COVID-19 pandemic, Spanish mothers who were already the main caretakers of household chores and parenting, continued to do so to a considerably higher degree, despite the increase in men's participation (Farré & González, 2020).

U.S. Culture

For the U.S. participants in the study, Partnership was also the lowest rated construct. This finding may be explained by U.S. mothers' perception of motherhood. Pre-pandemic research found that many U.S. mothers held themselves to the standards of "intensive" parenting (e.g., Milkie et al., 2019) and regard this as a personal achievement (Bornstein et al., 1998), while struggling to balance parenting and paid work (Christopher, 2012). When in-school classes were cancelled or virtual, it put considerable pressure on parents. Instead of creating a real partnership with their partner, mothers felt guilty for working from home and not spending enough time with their children (Barnett & Jung, 2021). For mothers, parenting during the lockdown was extremely frustrating and demanding (Calarco et al., 2020).

Family Background Measures and Parenting Behaviors

We found some cross-cultural, significant correlations between the background measures and the PPM constructs. Mainly, parents' age correlated negatively with beneficial parenting behaviors, number of children in the family correlated negatively with the Love construct, and children's age correlated positively with Independence.

Parents' Age and Parenting Behaviors

Parents' age negatively correlated with beneficial parenting behaviors. Older parents within our sample reported lower application of the PPM constructs. This finding may be explained by parents' career stage. During the pandemic outbreak younger parents (20 to 30) were more often on leave from work (due to the epidemic) while those in their late thirties dealt with both career and parenting (Henehan, 2021). Older parents (mostly mothers) in our study were in a more advanced and demanding stage in their career, hence busier and less available. Juggling between home and work may have been more challenging for them, resulting in reports of less beneficial parenting. Another possible explanation may relate to an additional stress of older parents, namely caring for and worrying about their own elderly parents, who were more likely to be affected by the pandemic (Harapan et al., 2020).

Number of Children at Home and Parents' Love

Regardless of family size, the number of children in the family correlated negatively with the Love construct. Parents who have more children reported fewer love behaviors. Previous evidence suggests that the number of children in the family is negatively related to parental involvement in their children's education (e.g., Vellymalay, 2013). During the COVID-19 outbreak, couples with no children reported higher levels of dyadic adjustment than couples with children. The parenting burden during the lockdown decreased parents' wellbeing and affected their relationship, and this frustration may have spilled over into their relations with their children (Lemish & Elias, 2020). These findings can also suggest that parents with more children dealt with more schooling demands. Parents had to help their school aged children with different programs, requirements, and assignments. This may have added to parents' fatigue and economic or emotional pressures, thus resulting in fewer loving behaviors.

Children's Age and Parents' Encouragement of Children's Independence

Children's age correlated positively with the Independence construct. Parents whose children were at the older end of the 2-8-year range, reported that they encouraged more independence. Parental support for autonomy represents parenting practices that encourage, recognize, and respect children's perspectives and individuality (Grolnick, 2003). During the lockdown, parents' challenge of working and also caring for children may have intensified the need for more child independence. Relatively to toddlers, older children could manage themselves better so parents could provide them with more independence (Matte-Gagné et al., 2015).

Summary, Strengths, Implications, and Recommendations for Research and Practice

In this study, we assessed parents' reports of their behavior during the COVID-19 outbreak in five cultures in Eastern and Western Europe, the Middle East, and the U.S. Findings presented a comprehensive view of parenting of young children and demonstrated cultural similarities and differences. Parents reported Love behaviors as the most prominent, expressing the recognition of its centrality in parenting, regardless of culture. Partnership behaviors were reported as least frequent in all cultures, suggesting that collaboration between spouses was most challenging for parents. Additionally, coping with the lockdown circumstances was more challenging in larger families and for older parents. During this time parents tended to encourage independence of older children.

The strength of this study lies in its wide view of parenting within cultures and across cultures. The picture that it presents can aid in supporting parents' coping skills, for the benefit of their family members. Acknowledging parents as the central agents in their children's lives

during times of crisis can empower them. It can encourage them to be aware of their major role in their children's life and manage a supportive child center routine during this continuing stressful situation. It also can encourage parents to be aware of behaviors that need strengthening in the family.

The findings encourage additional cross-cultural research on parenting behaviors during such periods. Studies should use interviews in addition to questionnaires in order to deepen our understanding of both universal and cultural aspects of parenting. Also, as this study was based on self-reports, observation-based research can be added to understand how parent statements are manifested in behaviors. An additional limitation is that the families were mainly middle-class. Future studies should include a broader range of participants in different cultures.

Finally, the similarities and differences across cultures have implications for understanding and guiding parents during stressful times. They highlight the possibility of international programs based on PPM that address universal issues and are also adaptable to diverse cultures and languages. The COVID-19 pandemic has enhanced fruitful global collaborations for coping with its worldwide negative impacts, mainly medical. This process should continue and expand to additional domains. Cross-cultural professional collaborations in planning guidance and support programs for parents can promote more egalitarian, culturally sensitive support for parents worldwide and benefit children globally.

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Table 1*Demographic Characteristics of the Sample by Culture (N = 1080)*

	Child's age ¹	Parent's age	No. of Children	Girls ²	Mothers ³
	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	(%)	(%)
Bulgaria (<i>n</i> =153)	61.77 (19.49)	35.91 (5.15)	1.64 (0.61)	54.2	94.8
Israeli-Arabs (<i>n</i> =192)	57.49 (17.14)	33.19 (5.50)	3.31 (1.63)	45.3	94.8
Israeli-Jews (<i>n</i> =290)	56.65 (18.17)	37.58 (4.95)	2.70 (1.21)	49.3	93.8
Spain (<i>n</i> =304)	61.38 (20.31)	38.66 (4.57)	1.85 (0.80)	50.3	87.5
U.S. (<i>n</i> =141)	67.16 (19.4)	38.01 (5.73)	2.16 (1.04)	50.3	96.6

¹ In months; ²The rest are boys; ³The rest are fathers

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics: Means, and Standard Deviations of the PPM Measures (N =1080)¹

	Bulgaria	Israeli-Arabs	Israeli-Jews	Spain	U.S.
	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>
Partnership	4.79 (0.88)	4.81 (0.71)	4.35 (0.75)	4.99 (0.66)	4.89 (0.57)
Leadership	4.96 (0.62)	5.19 (0.52)	4.61 (0.57)	5.15 (0.37)	5.13 (0.37)
Love	5.55 (0.54)	5.55 (0.49)	4.94 (0.66)	5.66 (0.37)	5.63 (0.35)
Independence	5.11 (0.68)	4.91(0.64)	4.43 (0.60)	5.17 (0.49)	5.16 (0.40)
Rules	4.93 (0.75)	4.86 (0.65)	4.38 (0.63)	5.16 (0.47)	5.07(0.45)

¹Possible ranges: 1 to 6

Figure 1

The Parenting Pentagon Model

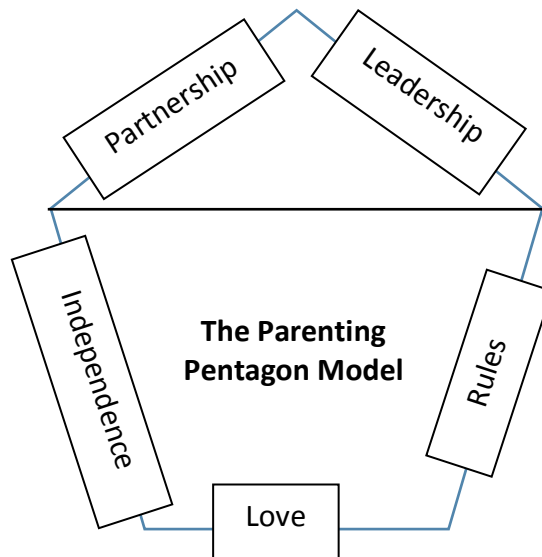
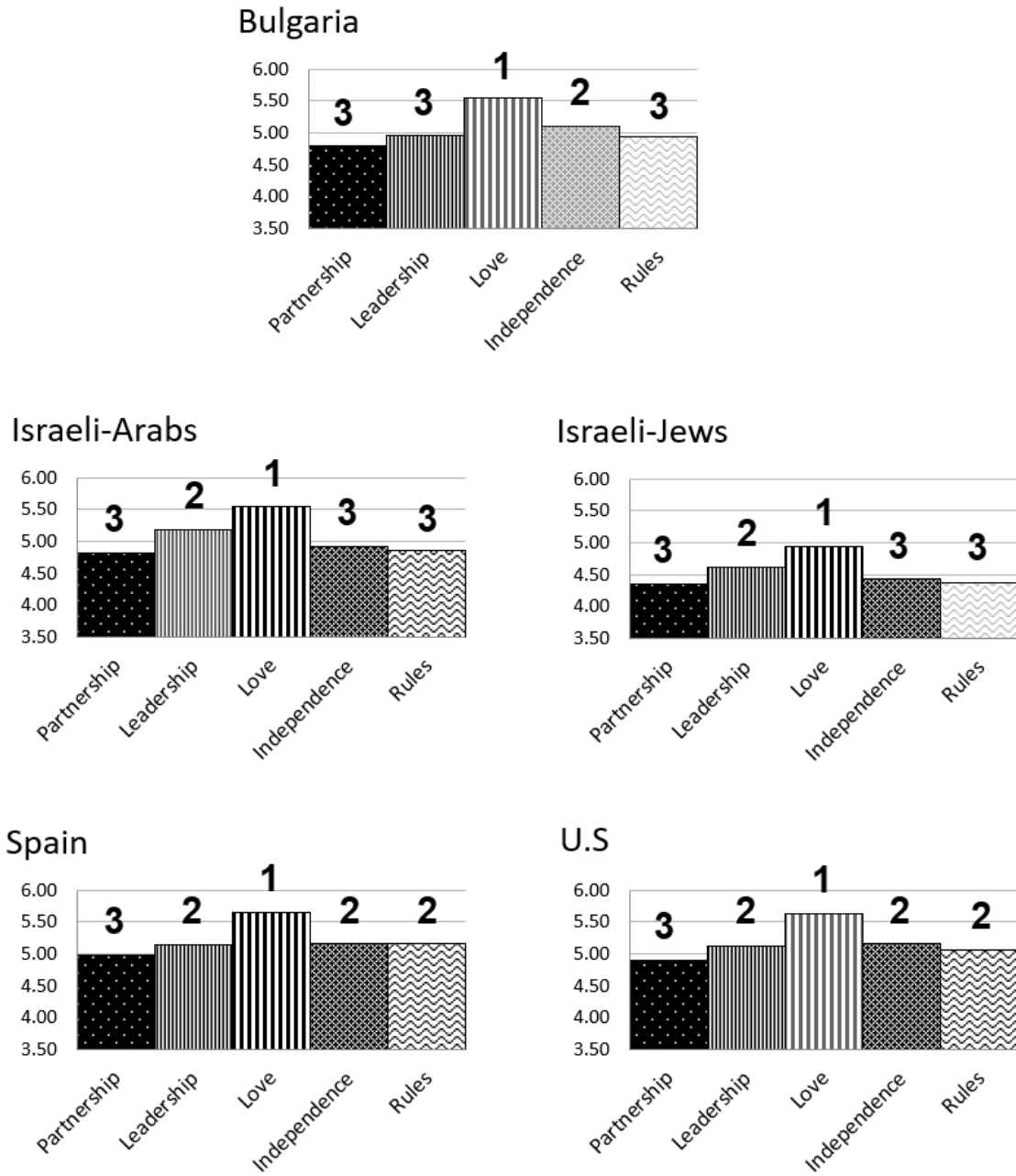


Figure 2
Means of the PPM Constructs in the Five Cultures



Note. The numbers within the columns represent the significant differences between constructs