Culture Keeping or Cultural Tourism? - Cultural Socialization in Transracial Adoptive Families

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BACKGROUND

- Cultural socialization (CS): teach racial or ethnic heritage and history; promote cultural customs and traditions; promote cultural, racial, and ethnic pride (Hughes et al., 2006)
- In transracial adoptive (TRA) families, parents provide CS hoping to make a cultural connection to adopted child’s birth country
- But what and how to provide CS is not clear.

Frameworks

- Quine (2012): culture keeping vs. cultural tourism
  - Culture Keeping (CK): genuine, authentic connection to a culture (e.g., teaching in a diverse neighborhood; cross-cultural friendship)
  - Cultural Tourism (CT): superficial, consumerist connection to a culture (e.g., renaming a child, buying cultural artifacts; celebrating ethnic holidays)
- Pinderhughes (2010): multiple facets and complexities in socialization
  - Modality (e.g., are parents involved); structure of activities; location of activities/events
  - Parent role (e.g., how parents think of racial and cultural differences; parents’ racial and ethnic identity; proactive/reactive approach to socialization)
  - Contextual considerations
  - Developmental considerations
- Child engagement

Research Questions

1. What and how do adoptive parents provide cultural socialization for their children from China?
2. What are the respective characteristics of culture keeping and cultural tourism in cultural socialization activities?

METHOD

Procedure: Qualitative analysis of parent interviews.

Parent interviews are semi-structured interviews consisting questions regarding parents’ reflection on race, ethnicity and culture, and experiences of adoption.

Sample: 17 families. Mean parent age = 50 years; mean child age = 7.3 years.

How to Measure CK and CT

Four indicators: CS activities; approach; motivation; and attitudes toward cultural differences

- Child only, family, or community-level (move)
- Structured or unstructured
- Presence of a Chinese cultural expert
- Parent initiated an activities
- Parent proposed an activities
- Parent waited for child to suggest/initiate CS
- Child’s positive identity development
- Socialize with children with similar experiences
- Suggestion by someone in adoption community
- Resistance to CS (why not doing X)

Acknowledgment of cultural differences
- Importance of cultural differences in daily life

Coding Scale (part)

Each indicator coded in a 5-point Likert scale.

RESULTS

1. What and how do parents provide cultural socialization?

- Family makeup
- Parent education

RESULTS

- Overall activity scores were all CT

DISCUSSION

1. Cross-cultural contact might be an important discriminating factor between CK and CT

Content (what) of Cross-cultural Contact

- The Big Sister
  - and that’s just been great. I think for her just to have this kind of great, cool role model who she does cool stuff with and that she’s more alike. And that, you know, like when we went to her Big Sister’s graduation last year, and, um, and she was just so proud, I think she knew someone who was graduating ... and liked that she kinds felt cool about that, so I think the Big Sister has been a good part for her, too.
  - Chinese playgroup
  - Incredibly important. Wonderful. Loves it. Very important.
  - Especially after this [the playgroup] I think (Child’s name) is very interested in Chinese culture. I think it is also because of her age. She is highly interested. Wanting to learn more, the language especially. She is excited.

REFERENCES


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