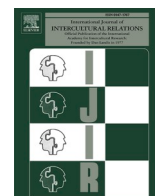


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Review

## Interethnic parenting experiences in raising mixed-ethnicity children: A systematic qualitative review

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## ABSTRACT

There has been growing interest over the years in examining interethnic unions to explore their unique parenting configurations and associated mixed-ethnicity children's outcomes. One aspect that determines parenting is how parents perceive and experience their parenting role in relation to one another, to their children, and to society at large. The present review aimed to narratively and systematically synthesize the existing literature on the strengths and challenges that parents experience in interethnic unions about themselves, their partners or co-parents, or their mixed-ethnicity children. A total of 49 studies were identified through a systematic search. Included studies were dissertations and published journal articles that contained qualitative and quantitative findings. Five themes were identified about the interethnic parenting experience: (1) strengths in parenting mixed-ethnicity children, (2) challenges in interethnic parenting, including the specific challenge of negotiating cultural differences between parents, (3) strategies to overcome cultural differences, (4) self-reflections about parents' own ethnocultural backgrounds, and (5) similarities in parenting between interethnic and non-interethnic parents. A Model of Interethnic Parenting Experiences summarizing the identified themes is outlined. The review findings are discussed with reference to gaps in the literature and potential moderators of the known parameters regarding interethnic parenting. Recommendations for future research are made that may further elucidate the nuanced experience of interethnic parenting.

As the world has become more globalized, there has been a corresponding increase in the frequency of intercultural, interracial, and interethnic contact. This is particularly true in locations such as Canada, USA, Australia, and Western Europe, to which diverse groups from around the world immigrate to pursue better lives for their families ([International Organization for Migration, 2020](#)). With increasing contact between these groups, there is also a rise of interethnic couples—that is, romantic unions in which one partner has a different racial, ethnic, and cultural background from the other ([Negy & Snyder, 2000](#); [Wang, 2012](#)). For example, as of 2015 in the USA, 17 % of newlyweds were interethnic couples, and as of 2011 in Canada, 4.6 % of unions were interethnic ([Bialik, 2017](#); [Statistics Canada, 2011](#)). Such interethnic unions often result in families composed of individuals that hold distinct backgrounds, including children of mixed ethnic backgrounds and cultural heritage.

Although these families are sometimes heralded as exemplars of an integrated, multicultural society, they may also uniquely experience strengths and challenges in navigating their ethnocultural differences. While literature on parenting experiences in interethnic

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unions is limited, most research has focused on the potential that they may experience heightened levels of stress or challenges in their relationship. For example, interethnic couples are thought to experience relatively more relationship conflicts, less relationship satisfaction, and higher rates of divorce compared to non-interethnic couples (Bratter & King, 2008; Hohmann-Marriott & Amato, 2008). In one theoretical review of interethnic romantic relationships, Crippen and Brew (2007) also posited that the greater risk of relationship conflicts experienced by interethnic parents is likely due to ethnicity-related cultural differences in schemas about parenting, which would greatly increase interparental stress. This assertion is supported by research demonstrating that differences exist across cultures in parenting behaviors and related child outcomes (see reviews by Deater-Deckard et al., 2011; Elliott & Urquiza, 2006), as well as in parenting cognitions (e.g., Bornstein & Cote, 2004; Kil et al., 2021; Rudy & Grusec, 2006). However, other researchers have suggested that if interethnic couples show awareness and make cognitive room for one another as they transition to parenthood, they may be more accepting and validating of one another's culture and experiences, ultimately leading to relationship stability (Roy et al., 2020). Thus, it is possible that interethnic parents may experience both strengths and challenges during parenting, depending on how they address their cultural differences, with impacts on the interparental relationship and their children.

### **Navigating cultural differences in interethnic parenting**

Indeed, interethnic parents may vary in their integration of their cultural differences, their own relationship and their children's adjustment. Borrowing from intergroup contact literature, Berry (Berry, 2005; Sam & Berry, 2010) proposed an orthogonal model of intercultural contact describing how individuals from the minority newcomers' culture and the dominant majority culture may approach cultural differences in a multicultural society. These include (for brevity, only minority cultural orientations are presented): marginalization away from both dominant culture and culture of origin; assimilation into the dominant culture without retaining culture of origin; separation by retaining only culture of origin and not learning the dominant culture; and integration of both dominant culture and culture of origin. Research assessing these orientations suggests that integrating both cultures may be most adaptive for minorities' well-being, sense of belonging, and mental health in the host or dominant culture (Berry & Hou, 2017; Hou et al., 2018). Echoing this work, a related body of research has demonstrated that bicultural individuals and mixed-ethnicity children who spend a large portion of their developmental years in a culture other than their nationality or their current location of residence (e.g., third-culture individuals) also report better outcomes with cultural integration approaches (Abu-Rayya, 2006; Huynh et al., 2011; Yampolsky et al., 2013).

Applying intercultural group contact models to interethnic parenting, parents who can successfully integrate their ethnocultural differences in parenting may be most likely to demonstrate adaptive, harmonious, and less conflicted parenting relationships and practices. Understanding the strategies for achieving strengths in interethnic parenting may have important implications for the interparental relationship as well as children.

#### *Implications for mixed-ethnicity children*

The unique parenting experiences of interethnic parents may exert eventual implications for their mixed-ethnicity children's development. Following the spillover hypothesis (Martin et al., 2017), parenting and interparental relationships are thought to have spillover direct and indirect effects on children's well-being and adjustment. A unique parenting concern for interethnic parents is navigating the potentially stressful task of socializing their children in the knowledge of traditions and histories of their multiple ethnic and cultural identities as well as in the associated challenges of being 'mixed' in a multicultural world (e.g., coping with discrimination, identity integration; see reviews by Atkin & Yoo, 2019; Hughes et al., 2006; Priest et al., 2014). Accordingly, there has been growing interest in identifying how parenting may help mixed-ethnicity individuals' identity integration and adjustment, with some evidence that perceptions of parent supportiveness and high-quality parent-child relationships may exert positive influences (e.g., Lorenzo-Blanco et al., 2013). Interparental relationship quality also appears to play a role, with less intense and less frequent interparental disagreements linked to non-mixed-ethnicity children's overall adjustment over time (Berkien et al., 2012; Harold & Sellers, 2018; McKinney & Renk, 2008). Parenting could thus facilitate positive integration of both parents' cultures and the culture of the place of residence, thereby reducing the psychological distress associated with the process of acculturating to multiple cultures, such as tridimensional acculturation (Ferguson et al., 2014). Yet, different perspectives on how to effectively socialize children about ethnic identity are likely to emerge in interethnic parenting, as parents share only part of their mixed-ethnicity children's identities (Snyder, 2012). Thus, understanding the strengths and challenges experienced by interethnic parents may be important to assess spillover effects not only on the parents' relationship and parenting, but also on their mixed-ethnicity children's outcomes.

#### *Implications for intercultural interventions*

Given potentially unique experiences in interethnic parenting as well as parents' central role in mixed-ethnicity children's development, a better understanding of interethnic families is direly needed. Despite the aforementioned additional stress, pressures, or conflict that interethnic parents may face, little is known about interethnic parents' experiences in parenting, or whether these are unique from the experiences of non-interethnic parents. This lack of knowledge in turn greatly limits possible interventions aimed at supporting the wellbeing of these families. For example, there is a growing body of literature on interventions created or adapted to serve single-ethnicity families, including Black, Latinx and Hispanic, as well as Asian parents and their children, in multicultural societies (e.g., Coard et al., 2004; Pantin et al., 2003; Reid et al., 2001; Wang et al., 2021). However, there is little intervention research to date on how to best identify areas for support in interethnic parenting to improve parental relationships and children's well-being.

Interethnic parenting may present a unique experience not addressed by many typical diversity-focused interventions, considering that cultural differences in interethnic parenting must be resolved in a manner that is adaptive and supportive of all family members and ultimately contributes to mixed-ethnicity children's well-being. Further, in contrast to family interventions for single-ethnicity families, interethnic families consist of a more diverse group that should be appropriately represented and acknowledged in interventions. A literature synthesis on this theme that cross-cuts disciplines, methodologies, and publication status could provide a comprehensive overview of the experience of interethnic parenting, and its associated challenges and resolutions, thereby helping to identify how to support positive outcomes in both interethnic parents and their mixed-ethnicity children.

### *The present review*

With these overarching goals in mind, the present review aimed to comprehensively synthesize the existing published and dissertation research on how interethnic parents experience parenting a mixed-ethnicity child and parenting with a co-parent whose ethnic and cultural identity differs. Specifically, our research question was: What are the strengths and challenges in parenting experienced by parents in interethnic unions, about themselves, their partners or co-parents, or their mixed-ethnicity children?

We defined interethnic parents as parents who are from different ethnic or racial backgrounds and associated cultural identities, and whom together have a child of mixed ethnicity. For consistency, we use the term interethnic to describe these parents and mixed-ethnicity to describe their children. The term multicultural is used in this review to define societies and countries in which diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds are represented, such as the United States or United Kingdom. Finally, the term ethnic minority is used to identify individuals who are ethnically underrepresented within a multicultural society, regardless of generational status.

In particular, the present review focused on interethnic parents of children and adolescents, rather than adult children, as parenting values and practices are more likely to arise as a topic of discussion between parents of younger children and adolescents. Indeed, in their model of interethnic parenting at the transition from couplehood to parenthood, Roy et al. (2020) suggest that interethnic couples experience heightened cultural negotiation and conflict particularly regarding parenting after having a mixed-ethnicity child, as they negotiate new roles and culturally-bound notions of parenthood together. Further, from a developmental perspective, infants and children are highly sensitive to parenting practices, and parents act as the primary socializing agent in many families (Grusec, 2002). As children enter adolescence, parents maintain important roles for guiding and monitoring their children as they begin to explore their own identities beyond the family (e.g., Lansford et al., 2014; Vazsonyi & Belliston, 2006). However, at emerging adulthood, beginning around age 18, children explore their self-identities more freely outside of the constraints of parenting and family roles (Arnett, 2007; Kins et al., 2009). Thus, while it is understood that the impact of parenting at childhood and adolescence does have consequences for the emerging adult (Dumas et al., 2009), interethnic parents are likely to discuss parenting when the need for parenting is salient, that is, focused on younger mixed-ethnicity children who are still developmentally sensitive to the socialization and parenting practices of parents and living with parents.

Based on the above prior literature, themes that we considered as potentially emerging from our review included strengths and challenges experienced in interethnic parenting of mixed-ethnicity children, particularly the challenge of cultural differences experienced between interethnic parents; and, given burgeoning work on navigating these differences, discussion of how cultural differences may be navigated or resolved by interethnic parents. However, we used an open approach in reviewing the identified studies, thus ensuring that any themes not limited to those listed above emerging from the studies would be included in our review.

We examined both qualitative and quantitative studies to ensure comprehensive review of the existing literature. A cross-disciplinary approach was adopted, with studies from psychology, sociology, and anthropology, as well as other social science fields. We did not include the vast literature on parents' ethnic and racial socialization of mixed-ethnicity children, on which there already exist a number of reviews (e.g., Atkin & Yoo, 2019; Priest et al., 2014), because our interest was on the parent's inner thoughts and experiences singularly. We summarized the reviewed findings into a model of interethnic parenting experiences. Gaps in the existing literature were identified, and recommendations were made to inform future research and practice.

### **Methods**

Articles published in print or online up to July 6, 2020 were identified through systematic searches in PsycInfo, MEDLINE, EMBASE, Social Work Abstracts, and Sociological Abstracts, using database-specific subject headings and keywords in natural language. Search terms for the interethnic concept included: interethnic or mixed-ethnicity or intercultural or multicultural or mixed-culture or cross-cultural or mixed-race or multiracial or biracial or cross-national. The parent concept included: parent or caregiving or family or couples or marriage or married or childrearing or maternal or mother or paternal or father. Search terms and concepts were combined using Boolean logic (e.g., mother OR maternal) or proximity searching (e.g., interethnic adj2 parent\*), and truncation (e.g., ethnic\*) was used.

Inclusion criteria for each study were: focus is on interethnic parents' perceptions and experiences of parenting; parents must have children under 18 years of age; parents were married, cohabiting or living under common-law; heterosexual couples; biological child being jointly raised by the parents; journal article or dissertation; in English or French. Studies that included parents of children over 18 years of age were not excluded so long as at least one parent had a child under 18 years of age in the sample.

Exclusion criteria were: prenatal sample without a previous child; participants are teachers or siblings or extended family; study is a personal narrative; no themes or data identified on interethnic couples' parenting; historical analysis of interethnic marriage from census or public health data; comparisons across cultures when parents are not interethnic; single parents; children are adopted, foster children, or otherwise non-biological; and book chapters, reviews, or conference abstracts. An additional set of exclusion criteria were

chosen based on focus outside of the scope of the present review, including: focus is only on child outcomes without descriptions of parent experiences; focus is on therapy or interventions or divorce, as these situations deal with clinically elevated symptomology in children or elevated conflict or disagreements in parents that would detract from general experience in interethnic parenting, per se; focus is on racial socialization, as there is already much literature and reviews on this topic; and focus is on stereotypes or prejudices/biases related to race of child or parent without reference to cultural or ethnic practices, as the focus of the review was on culture and ethnicity-related perceptions that contribute to interethnic parenting experiences beyond racial, i.e., biological, distinctions.

Studies for which abstracts were identified as potentially fitting inclusion criteria were full-text screened. Of those studies included at abstract screening stage, 10 studies were not available as full-texts online. Three of these studies had no information that could be retrieved about either the manuscript or author. The authors of the remaining seven studies were contacted by email to obtain full texts. One author responded with the full-text (Conrad, 2019), and another responded but was not able to provide the full text as it was too long ago. The remaining five authors did not respond. The study by Conrad (2019) did not fit our inclusion criteria as it did not discuss parenting, and was thus excluded (see Fig. 1).

We integrated the qualitative and quantitative evidence under the same overarching themes (Noyes et al., 2019), using a holistic narrative approach. For qualitative studies, we integrated findings across studies using the themes identified by study authors to draw overarching conclusions, rather than examining each participant's individual responses across studies as in thematic analyses. As such, this synthesis identifies whether similar themes were drawn across studies to provide a holistic perspective on recurrence of themes across sets of participants. Due to the nature of this approach, some studies appear more than once across the results—for example, if study findings cover both parenting perception and interparental conflict, it appears once in both sections below. Quantitative studies were analyzed using a similar narrative approach (rather than a quantitative synthesis such as meta-analysis) due to high variability in the parenting experience measures and sample profiles across studies.

It is generally recommended that reviews including both qualitative and quantitative research integrate the findings of both types of studies into a cohesive narrative (Noyes et al., 2019). However, this was not possible in the current review due to the highly different nature of findings across many studies using the two methodological approaches. Qualitative studies on the topic of parenting in interethnic unions were more specific to phenomena that took place within the parenting role, as well as experiences of interparental differences in parenting, such as cultural differences within interethnic couples. In contrast, quantitative studies that were identified as

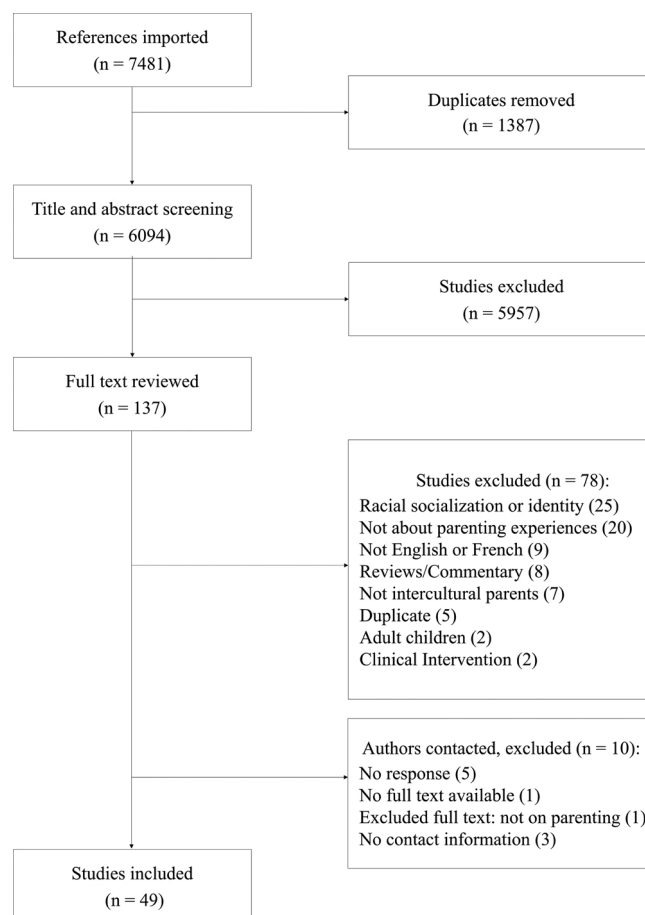


Fig. 1. Flow diagram.

fitting inclusion criteria in this review largely focused on comparisons between interethnic and non-interethnic couples. When qualitative and quantitative findings were related, we aimed to integrate the findings under a single theme.

## Results

A total of 49 studies were identified (see Fig. 1 for flow diagram). Of these, 40 qualitative studies represented 794 parents in interethnic unions, and 7 quantitative and 2 mixed-method studies represented 2035 parents in interethnic unions. Children's ages varied in range across all studies, 0–40 years. Study characteristics are presented in Table 1. We identified topics raised in each study and categorized them into broader themes that encompassed those topics, using thematic clustering of topics. For example, when parents described their parenting experience in a positive light, such as by describing their celebration of diversity within the family, this topic was identified as a strength in interethnic parenting of mixed-ethnicity children and brought into the first theme. Through this process, we identified five themes:

- Theme 1: strengths in parenting mixed-ethnicity children
- Theme 2: challenges in parenting mixed-ethnicity children, particularly cultural differences
- Theme 3: strategies to resolve cultural differences in parenting
- Theme 4: exploration and self-reflection about own ethnocultural identity
- Theme 5: interethnic and non-interethnic parenting (sometimes) experienced differently

The first four themes emerged from a combination of qualitative and quantitative studies, and described the unique experiences of interethnic parenting. The fifth theme emerged across only quantitative findings on the differences between interethnic and non-interethnic couples in their experiences of parenting.

### *Strengths in parenting mixed-ethnicity children*

Recent studies have documented that interethnic parents typically report both strengths and challenges in parenting mixed-ethnicity children. Strengths of interethnic parenting were reported in studies conducted in the USA, with four qualitative studies focused on interethnic parent couples consisting of one White or European American parent and an ethnic minority parent. These interethnic parents reported experiencing the following strengths: being able to celebrate different cultures that each parent brought to the family (Bratawidjaja, 2008; Moriizumi, 2011), being able to expose the child to different ethnic groups' cultural heritage (Bratawidjaja, 2008), and ethnic minority parents being able to take a lead in teaching heritage values and customs to their children (Filipina mothers; Asante, 2011).

Three qualitative studies examined interethnic parenting in Israel, England and Wales, and Korea. Strengths of interethnic parenting in these studies were somewhat different from those of studies based in the USA. Strengths reported by interethnic parents included: Caucasian Jewish mothers in Israel reporting that the experience of parenting mixed-ethnicity children is unique (Sigad & Eisikovits, 2009); that being a mother is satisfying for diverse migrant mothers in Korea (Yu et al., 2011); and that fathering was a means to pass on the cultures of host and minority cultural backgrounds in the UK (Edwards & Caballero, 2015).

Overall, studies on interethnic parents both in the USA and in a number of other countries identified that parents expressed strengths related to ethnic and cultural teaching in raising their mixed-ethnicity children. In general, for the studies on parents in the USA, strengths were related to teaching and celebrating cultural diversity with their mixed-ethnicity children. Studies on parents outside of the USA were somewhat different in the sub-themes identified, with strengths related to both teaching culture to mixed-ethnicity children as well as positive experiences of parenthood for ethnic minority parents.

### *Challenges in parenting mixed-ethnicity children*

On the other hand, challenges in interethnic parenting were identified in 13 qualitative studies. One of the oldest records identified in this review was Zaveruha's (1984) study on interethnic marriage and childrearing in ethnic tribes in Ghana. Interviews with interethnic married parents indicated that parents experienced challenges in meeting matrilineal or patrilineal expectations from the tribe, which caused conflicts regarding whether the mother's side or father's side of the family would get a claim over the child as carrying the tribal line. Building on this pioneer work, more recent literature has largely focused on the USA. Identified challenges included struggles in helping the child integrate and connect to both cultures of the parents (Arteaga, 2013; Rosenblatt & Stewart, 2004), White American parents feeling the need to tolerate the other parent's cultural customs for childrearing (Asante, 2011), dealing with the expectation of teaching the other parent's cultural customs (Pitiakoudis, 2014), White parents (mostly mothers) feeling regret and challenge in not being able to instill their own cultural identity in their children (Pitiakoudis, 2014; Weisberg, 2016), and managing to emphasize own minority culture in the USA where the American culture is dominant (Thiagarajan, 2007; Xiang, 2015). In particular, in one of the studies on Jewish White and ethnic minority parents (Weisberg, 2016), Jewish White parents felt that it was challenging to them that the other, ethnic minority parent and their mixed-ethnicity children shared a unique experience of being a person of color. In two studies, no parenting related challenges were identified (Bratawidjaja, 2008; Smith, 2019), while in another study, parents experienced ambivalence in whether to instill ethnocultural identity in their children (Kim & Leavitt, 2012).

Two qualitative studies and one quantitative study examined challenges in interethnic parenting in Spain, Korea, and Taiwan. Challenges identified for ethnic minority and immigrant parents included: Senegalese and Gambian fathers' difficulties in instilling

**Table 1**  
Study Characteristics and Summary

First Author (Year)	Study Type	Place of sampling	Sample				Relevant Research Question (RQ) / Measures	Relevant Findings	
			N Total (N Parents)	Ethnocultural background	Parent Age	Child Age			% Female
<b>QUALITATIVE STUDIES</b>									
Arteaga (2013)	DISS	Chicago, USA	6 indiv. (all)	1 Caucasian, 2 African American, 2 Latino, 1 multiracial	25–57	NR	66.7 %	To examine how parents of multiracial individuals understand and become involved in children's identity development	1) Integration of cultures as challenging 2) Integration of cultures as positive process
Asante (2011)	DISS	Dallas-Forth Worth metroplex, USA	5 couples (all)	Filipino American-European American couples (Filipino wives and European husbands)	25–70	3–18	–	To examine Filipino/European American intercultural marriages	1) Filipino-American wives lobbied for teaching of Filipino values to children and use of Filipino customs for parenting 2) European-American husbands felt a duty to be tolerant of wives' Filipino customs, but not all felt their children must learn Filipino values
Bhugun (2017a,b)	JA	Southeast Queensland, Australia	14 couples (all)	Anglo-Australian and Other couples (including African, Asian, Indian, Arabic, Muslim, Pacific Islander)	28–67	6 m -18 y	–	(a) What are the experiences of, challenges and conflicts in, and negotiation methods for cultural differences in intercultural parenting? (b) to understand intercultural relationships and parenting from a systemic perspective and propose advice for intercultural couples	1) Interparental cultural differences arose regarding childrearing and communication 2) Different strategies identified that reduced conflict about cultural differences in parenting
Brahic (2013)	JA	Manchester, UK	42 indiv. (12)	British, Other	NR	NR	66.7 %	Exploring the process of mixed marriage and change in binationality in couples' development and relationships with families	Parents felt the need to transmit their language and heritage to children. Some parents felt that this "mixedness" may lead to greater disparity with other parent.
Bratawidjaja (2008)	DISS	Midwest USA	8 couples (all)	7 White/European/American husbands, 1 Mixed; 2 European, 4 Japanese, 1 South Korean, 1 Taiwanese	42–57	5–18	–	What is the lived experience of being parents of mixed-heritage children? (additional sub-questions)	1) Strengths about raising mixed children, including celebrating differences, teaching bilingualism, exposing child to different cultural experiences 2) Challenges about raising mixed children, including lack of familiarity with school system, dealing with insults or problems mixed child faces 3) Differences between parents regarding approach to parenting and decisions about child education, leading to feelings of lack of spousal support 4) Importance of trust, respect, and sensitivity toward each other and their cultures, maintaining honesty and open communication
Choi et al. (2013)	DISS	South Korea	2 couples, 14 indiv. (all)	7 Vietnamese, 5 Filipina, 2 Chinese, 1	22–41	2–12		To identify challenges and strengths influencing adjustment	1) Theme: Feeling exhausted due to childrearing in married life as a

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Table 1 (continued)

First Author (Year)	Study Type	Place of sampling	Sample				Relevant Research Question (RQ) / Measures	Relevant Findings	
			N Total (N Parents)	Ethnocultural background	Parent Age	Child Age			% Female
				Cambodian, 1 Mongolian			Couples: - Indiv.: 100 %	and marital satisfaction of immigration women who married Korean men in Korea	challenge 2) Theme: Doing their best and staying devoted to raising children in adjusting to their married life. 3) Satisfaction with being a mother, spending time with children.
Crippen (2013)	JA	NR	6 couples, 9 indiv. (all)	Various intercultural couples	NR	6–32	Couples: - Indiv.: 88.9 %	To examine strategies of cultural adaptation in intercultural parenting in a non-clinical sample	1) Strategies for adaptation fell into themes of A) perception of cultural differences (minimize, differentiate, transcend, emphasize), and B) degree of mutual acculturation to cultural differences (low, accommodation by one parent, convergent, and high) 2) The two themes intersected to create strategies of cultural adaptation: assimilation, cultural tourism, cultural transition, cultural amalgamation, and dual biculturalism
Day (2015)	JA	NR	15 indiv. (6)	Korean adoptees to White European American parents with White European American male coparent	25–37	NR	100 %	To examine the impact of becoming a mother on racial and/or ethnic identities or self-understanding for Korean American adoptees	1) Two strategies interacted to inform mothers (and future mothers) in their thinking about parenting: A) Reflecting with Intention (about their own experiences with cultural, ethnic identity) and B) Reframing and Taking Action (about their own cultural knowledge and identity in order to teach their children) 2) Compared to future mothers, mothers were more focused on reflecting, reframing and taking action in their and their children's identity
Del Rio (1999)	DISS	USA	5 indiv. (all)	Puerto Rican women married to White North Americans	35–50	NR	100 %	To investigate the migration experience of Puerto Rican women, their connection to the native culture and their perceptions of the role of this connection in their intercultural marriages	1) Participants were in conflict with husbands regarding parenting children with values of assertion, freedom, and confidence
Edwards (2010)	JA	England & Wales	30 couples; 5 indiv. (all)	"diverse range"	NR	7–12	Couples: - Indiv.: 100 %	How parent couples from different backgrounds understand difference and foster sense of belonging	1) parents used 3 approaches to dealing with difference and belonging of children: open-individualized (thinking beyond ethnic/racial/faith category), mix collective (integration of both backgrounds), and single collective

(continued on next page)

Table 1 (continued)

First Author (Year)	Study Type	Place of sampling	Sample			Parent Age	Child Age	% Female	Relevant Research Question (RQ) / Measures	Relevant Findings
			N Total (N Parents)	Ethnocultural background						
Edwards (2015)	JA	Britain, New Zealand	31 in.. (all)	Various intercultural couples	NR	NR	0	To explore partnered fathers' understanding of their fathering involvement in raising their mixed or multi-race children.	(highlighting one background). 2) two parents from one couple can be discrepant with one another on the approach used, and those who are most discrepant experience the most parental conflicts 1) Fathers considered involvement in children's activities as a means to passing on culture (their own or the partner's)	
Ezra (2009)	JA	West Bank	6 couples, 4 indiv. (12 indiv.)	Western wives with Palestinian husbands	23–43	1–20	Couples: - Indiv.: 25 %	What are the socialization patterns of children in intermarried Palestinian men and Western women?	1) Western women adopted assimilation, ambivalence, or bicultural adaptation to Palestinian childrearing values. 2) Palestinian men adopted assimilation to Western culture, bicultural approach, or rejection of Western culture in adapting to Western childrearing values. 3) Conflict about socialization arose when women were ambivalent and men rejected Western culture.	
Farr et al. (2018)	JA	Britain	4 indiv. (all)	Spanish wives with English, Arabic, and Greek husbands	35–42	1–5	100 %	To explore the experience of language use between Spanish-speaking mothers and their children in Britain.	1) Spanish mothers felt their ethnic identity was highlighted by speaking to their babies in Spanish and were motivated to transfer Spanish language to their children 2) In actual practice, mothers struggled with transmitting their heritage language by enforcing their children to speak in Spanish, and less in English. 3) When speaking in English with their children, Spanish mothers felt a sense of failure and challenges with their own authenticity	
Fletcher (1998)	DISS	Cleveland and Canton Ohio, USA	11 couples (all)	Caucasian wives with African American husbands (n = 10) and Spanish husband (n = 1)	26–63	NR	–	To determine how interracial couples mediate a family identity and cohesive personal identity development in their biracial children	1) Couples experienced major adjustments through parenting of biracial children, which led them to think about their world differently. 2) Couples felt it was important to pass on their heritage to their biracial children	
Hawkins (2017)	DISS	USA	6 couples (all)	US-born and non-US-born couples	30–43	NR	–	(RQ) How do interracial/ interethnic couples experience being a partner and parent in the scope of their racial/ethnic, national, and gender identities?	1) Parents reflected on their own histories and made efforts to transmit identity 2) Parents perceived both complementary and contrasting parenting styles, but	

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Table 1 (continued)

First Author (Year)	Study Type	Place of sampling	Sample				Relevant Research Question (RQ) / Measures	Relevant Findings	
			N Total (N Parents)	Ethnocultural background	Parent Age	Child Age			% Female
Karis (2000)	DISS	USA	17 indiv. (all)	White women with current or previous black partners	28–65	1–40	100 %	To examine white women's racial identities within heterosexual black-white relationships, and as mothers of biracial/black children?	these shifted over time in line with a desire to be better parents 1) Parenting differences were one of the most frequently acknowledged areas of conflict 2) White mothers experience shifts in their own racial awareness and parenting behaviors in raising children with their black partners
Kim (2012)	JA	USA	31 couples (24)	Jewish American and Asian American couples	NR	0–19+	–	How do religion, race, and ethnicity intersect in the for Jewish American and Asian American couples?	1) Jewish-Asian families were satisfied with and highly incorporated into a Jewish life for their children's upbringing 2) Male participants felt that raising their children in a Jewish household was a priority for their Jewish wives 3) Men felt they were responsible for instilling cultural-ethnic identity and values in their children, but feared that their children were not sufficiently doing so 4) Some parents are ambivalent about the extent to which they need to instill ethnoracial identity in their children
Koide (2019)	JA	Japan	20 indiv. (all)	Diverse origins (sampled for variety in country of origin) in a Japanese-foreign relationship	34–65	0–33	65 %	What kind of societal pressures and inner struggles do multicultural parents contend with when parenting their children in Japan?	1) non-Japanese mothers were frustrated by gender role expectations that they do most childrearing and housework 2) Cultural differences in parenting about different expectations, e.g., about academics 3) Parents found cultural differences hard to comprise between, and parents found themselves teaching conflicting values, which they thought was confusing for their children
Kuramoto (2018)	JA	Japan	19 couples (all)	Japanese wives with non-Asian husbands	32–50	1–10	–	To determine how intercultural couples in Japan raise children and maintain successful marriages during transition to parenthood	1) Fathers respected mothers' lead in childrearing, which kept the family healthy, however, fathers felt that they were still actively involved in child-rearing 2) In order to adjust to parenting-related conflicts, parents experienced changes in communication, respecting one another and adjusting their own cultural habits, remaining flexible and open-minded, and self-care

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Table 1 (continued)

First Author (Year)	Study Type	Place of sampling	Sample				Relevant Research Question (RQ) / Measures	Relevant Findings	
			N Total (N Parents)	Ethnocultural background	Parent Age	Child Age			% Female
Markowitz (2007)	DISS	Hawaii, USA	6 couples (all)	Asian American (and Asian-mixed) wives and European American husbands	34–45	3–12	–	To understand how interracial couples create a meaningful ethnic and racial identity in the transition to marriage	1) Couples noted differences in how to manage their children 2) European American husbands felt that cultural awareness activities for children's identity development fell in the wife's domain 3) European American husbands were unresponsive to their ethnic identities until the children were born and they had to face the children's mixed identity in the community.
Meins (2018)	DISS	California, USA	8 couples (2)	Latino/a and non-Hispanic White couples	26–37	2.5–11	–	To explore cultural factors that influence conflicting communication in interethnic couples that are Latino/a and non-Hispanic White	1) Raising bicultural children was a low frequency source of conflict for interethnic couples
Moriizumi (2011)	JA	Southwest USA	4 couples, 1 indiv. (all)	Japanese wives with US-born husbands	NR	2–6	Couples: - Indiv.: 100 %	To examine identity negotiations of intercultural Japanese-American families	1) Parents felt responsible for and committed to raising children in positive ways, although each parent had different expectations
Nabeshima (2006)	DISS	West Coast, USA	20 couples (all)	Japanese wives and American husbands	M38.2–39.9	≤ 6	–	To explore cultural differences, social context, motives for marriage in marital adjustment for intercultural Japanese-American couples with children	1) Each parent had unique views regarding parenting, but couples were generally compatible and parenting seen as joint endeavor 2) No culture based differences arose in discipline style, or instilling independence or dependence 3) Majority of parents saw bilingualism and biculturalism as a major childrearing goal
Pfeil (2006)	DISS	Canada, USA, Philippines	23 couples (18)	Filipina wives with North American Caucasian husbands	33–85	3–18	–	To explore the links between Biblical teaching and church participation to commitment and adjustment in intercultural marriages	1) Parents have conflicts about disciplining and raising children in line with each of their cultural values
Pitiakoudis (2014)	DISS	Midwest USA	6 couples (5)	Greek American and non-Greek American couples	42–66	0–4	–	To investigate the lived experiences of intercultural Greek-Americans and their non-Greek American spouses	1) Non-Greek Am mothers attempted to incorporate their cultural childrearing practice with their children, but felt regret because this was not possible, and resented that their Greek husbands stated the children should not go into an intercultural union
Remennick (2009)	JA	Israel	18 couples (15)	Israeli and Russian immigrant couples	M 29–33	6 m-11 y	–	To examine the process of adjustment and coping with	1) Recurring disputes between parents about values to be instilled

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Table 1 (continued)

First Author (Year)	Study Type	Place of sampling	Sample				Relevant Research Question (RQ) / Measures	Relevant Findings	
			N Total (N Parents)	Ethnocultural background	Parent Age	Child Age			% Female
Rodríguez García (2006)	JA	Catalonia, Spain	53 indiv. (NR)	Senegalese-Spanish and Gambian-Spanish couples	NR	NR	NR	cultural differences in intercultural couples To examine patterns of endogamous and exogamous marriage among Senegalese- and Gambian-Spanish binational couples	and direction of development and education. 1) Parents try to transmit cultural values with some flexibility
Rosenblatt (2004)	JA	Minneapolis/St. Paul, USA	12 couples (9)	Chinese women with Euro-American husbands	24–57	NR	–	To explore cultural issues that emerge as challenges for intercultural couples	1) Chinese mothers experienced difficulties with cultural differences in childrearing and frustration that children were not able to integrate Chinese language and culture 2) Parents acknowledge and accept cultural differences about parenting as children get older
Seshadri (2010)	DISS	Southern California, USA	17 couples (12)	Various intercultural couples	26–59	NR	–	How do couples manage their interracial and intercultural differences	1) Couples fell into four relationship structures based on how they experienced and managed cultural differences, including parenting domain: integrated, co-existing, singularly assimilated, and unresolved
Sigad (2009)	JA	North America (lived in Canada & USA)	14 indiv. (all)	North American, Jewish Caucasian wives with Israeli-born husbands	31–43	0–7	100 %	To explore the cross-cultural adaptation patterns and processes of immigrant women from North America to Israel in relation to mothering	1) North American mothers considered themselves to be more strict, setting more boundaries, and providing more structure in parenting compared to their husbands 2) Mothers attributed to their husbands general parenting characteristics of Israeli people. 3) North American mothers adamantly rejected Israeli upbringing of children that gives them much more freedom 4) Mothers believed that motherhood as an immigrant is a distinct personally significant experience 5) Mothers appreciated the encouragement of motherhood in Israel, which was not present in North America
Smith (2019)	DISS	Southeast USA	7 couples (all)	Black and White couples	25–47	10–24	–	To explore the influence of parenting style on racial identity and academic achievement in biracial children	1) One theme was identified that directly related to experience of childrearing and parenting: responsibility of parents
Soncini (1997)	DISS	USA	12 couples (4)	6 Western/ Western couples ; 6 Western/ non-Western couples	M 28.6–36	0–5	–	To determine the contributions of cultural differences, conflict	1) Couples experienced conflict over childrearing after arrival of the first baby

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Table 1 (continued)

First Author (Year)	Study Type	Place of sampling	Sample				Relevant Research Question (RQ) / Measures	Relevant Findings	
			N Total (N Parents)	Ethnocultural background	Parent Age	Child Age			% Female
Song (2015; 2016)	JA	United Kingdom	62 indiv. (all)	Diverse multiracial and mixed-race parents whose partners are White	25–62	NR	59.7 %	resolution, and adjustment style to marital harmony or conflict To explore how multiracial parents who have white partners discuss ethnic and racial 'dilution' and cultural loss in socializing their children (2015) To explore the ways in which multiracial people raise their children (2016)	1) Parents reported on feeling a loss of cultural knowledge and practices that could connect their children to their minority ancestors (2015 & 2016) 2) Most participants reported an emphasis on cosmopolitanism, and fewer on raising as British, as British with symbolic ethnicity, retaining minority culture, or cosmopolitanism, which came with different concerns and motivational experiences (2016)
Thiagarajan (2007)	DISS	USA	8 indiv. (all)	Asian Indian women with non-Asian Indian husbands	29–47	NR	100 %	To identify, describe, and understand the challenges, struggles, conflicts, and consequences, experienced by cross-culturally married Asian Indian women	1) Some women shared concerns about children's upbringing, particularly challenges about emphasizing Indian culture in America
Tien (2017)	JA	USA	8 couples (3)	Various intercultural couples	30–62	NR	–	To understand commonalities in experiences of intercultural/ multilingual couples	1) cultural differences were significant for childrearing, requiring constant interparental communication
Weisberg (2016)	DISS	California, USA	10 indiv. (all)	White, Jewish parents with non-Jewish, people of color partners	30–64	4–17	80%	To explore the experience of White Jewish parents in relationships with interracial and interfaith partners, and the impact of raising a biracial child with Jewish identity	1) White Jewish parents expressed feeling a yearning to instill social values for their family 2) They perceived greater challenges due to not having a partner that can also impact Jewish culture 3) Utilizing strong communication for bicultural negotiation and compromising of differences in values, including about how to parent
Yu (2011)	JA	Taiwan	11 indiv. (all)	Taiwanese fathers in cross-national marriages with Vietnamese and Filipino mothers	30–43.56	NR	0%	To identify the experiences of fathers in the childbearing stage of cross-national marriages	1) Fathers engaged in compromising between wives and their own mothers regarding gendered expectations about housework and childrearing 2) Fathers felt success and pride about having a child, but had many responsibilities for which they had to become accustomed, some related to being marginalized as a family
Zaveruha (1984)	DISS	southern Ghana	73 indiv. (61)	Eight ethnic tribal groups in Ghana	15–45	NR	100 %	To examine interethnic relations and process of cultural change in interethnic marriage	1) Parents can differ based on patrilineal or matrilineal affiliation about which side will "claim" the

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Table 1 (continued)

First Author (Year)	Study Type	Place of sampling	Sample				Relevant Research Question (RQ) / Measures	Relevant Findings	
			N Total (N Parents)	Ethnocultural background	Parent Age	Child Age			% Female
<b>QUANTITATIVE STUDIES</b>									
Broderick (2019)	CS	Denver, USA	301 couples (all)	Black-Black parents; Hispanic-Hispanic parents; White-White parents; interethnic parents	18–68 (mothers) 18–74 (fathers)	<1–25	–	Relationship adjustment quality; Relationship conflict; Coparenting; Economic strain	child in their own line, in which case conflicts can occur 2) differences in childrearing practices were cited as complaints and difficulties
Chebotareva (2020)	CS	NR (Russia)	69 couples (all)	20 Russian-Russian (RR) couples; 30 Russian-Arabic (RA) couples; 19 Russian-Caucasian (RC) region couples	23–47	1–13	–	Role Expectations and Claims in Marriage - Parental subscale	RR considered parental functions of the family as less important compared to RA and RC. RA considered parental functions less significant compared to RC. Within RR, parenthood valued more by men than women. No gender differences for RC or RA.
Chung (2015)	CS	Seoul area, South Korea	273 mothers (all)	91 Korean, 87 Chinese, 80 Vietnamese	M 27.1–34.2	6–36 m	100 %	Parenting Sense of Competence - Efficacy subscale	No statistically significant differences between groups on parenting efficacy.
Fusco (2012)	CS	USA	203 mothers (all)	117 White mothers of White children, 86 White mothers of biracial children	M 24.46- 26.20	M 4.8	100 %	Inappropriate Parental Expectations of Child, Lack of Empathy (from Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory)	No statistically significant differences between groups on parent expectations of child or lacking empathy.
Lee, Lee, and Park (2016)	CS	Korea	194 mothers (all)	194 foreign-born mothers in Korea	"less than 29" to "40 or above"	NR	100 %	Parenting Stress Index	1) Mothers' acculturation stress was related to greater parenting stress 2) Mothers' parenting stress was related to more child abuse 3) Fathers' spousal abuse was linked to greater mothers' acculturation stress, in turn linked to mothers' parenting stress, in turn linked to mothers' child abuse
Lindahl (1999)	CS	USA	113 couples (all)	50 Hispanic American, 32 European American, 31 biethnic (European-Hispanic)	M 31.3–36.7	7–11	–	Marital Satisfaction Inventory - Conflict Over Childrearing subscale	1) No statistically significant differences between groups in conflict over childrearing, or links among conflict over childrearing and family relationship structure or parenting style 2) Greater conflict over childrearing related to boys' more externalizing behavior for Hispanic American groups, but not for biethnic group

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Table 1 (continued)

First Author (Year)	Study Type	Place of sampling	Sample				Child Age	% Female	Relevant Research Question (RQ) / Measures	Relevant Findings
			N Total (N Parents)	Ethnocultural background	Parent Age					
Muller (2004)	CS	USA	120 couples (all)	40 White-White, 40 Latino-Latino, 40 Latino-White	M 40.00–44.65	NR	–	Enriching, Nurturing Relationship Issues, Communication & Happiness (ENRICH) inventory - Children and Parenting category	No statistically significant differences between groups in cohesion regarding beliefs and values about childrearing and parenting.	
<b>MIXED-METHODS STUDIES</b>										
Negy (2000)	CS; JA	Southwest USA	213 couples (NR)	72 Mexican Am-White Am, 75 both Mexican Am, 66 both White Am	M 33.1–41.4	NR	–	Marital Satisfaction Inventory - Conflict Over Childrearing subscale, Dissatisfaction with Children subscale	1) No statistically significant differences in conflict over childrearing 2) Interethnic parents reported greater dissatisfaction relating to children compared to monoethnic White or Mexican parents 3) In interethnic parents, Mexican-Am wives who were more acculturated to US reported more dissatisfaction with children, and their White Am husbands reported more conflict over childrearing and dissatisfaction with their children	
Xiang (2015)	CS; DISS	Western New York, USA	159 in. (all); Only n = 5 cross-national couples for qualitative interviews	82 cross-national, 77 traditional couples	M 38.98–39.09 (Qual.: 35–52)	M 4.28–4.94	Quant: 50.3 % Qual: -	Parental Stress Scale; Cultural Influence item (The culture my spouse and I were raised in helps me better enact my role as a parent)	1) No statistically significant difference between groups in parenting stress. In cross-national families, number of children and cultural influence were significantly related to parenting stress, but not for traditional families 2) In interviews, cross-national parents expressed similar as all parents a desire to instill happiness and goodness in their children, and experienced challenges in having mixed-culture family, affected by disagreements on parenting, location of residence, language use, and overall culture	

Note. In Study Type column, DISS = Dissertation; JA = Journal Articles; CS = Cross-Sectional; LONG = Longitudinal. In Sample columns, indiv. represents individuals. In Age columns, M represents mean age in years. In Child Age column, m represents child age in months, otherwise range in years provided. % Female column indicates the percentage of participants that were female or mothers in the sample, only reported for samples in which participants were individuals, not couples (all studies with couples were heterosexual couples, i.e., 50 % females). NR = Not reported.

cultural heritage when children spend more time with Spanish mothers in Spain (Rodríguez García, 2006), heightened acculturation and parenting stress, and related child abuse risk for foreign-born mothers in Korea (Lee, 2016), and Taiwanese fathers' experiences of helping to resolve conflicts about gendered expectations between their own mothers and their Vietnamese or Filipina wives (Yu et al., 2011). For the latter study, Taiwanese fathers also experienced an added challenge in communication difficulties due to their wives' lack of fluency in the local language.

Overall, challenges varied greatly in nature across studies with parents in the USA and those beyond, with sub-themes covering negotiating each parent's role in teaching culture, difficulties for the ethnic minority parent in incorporating the dominant culture or the influence of the parent from the dominant culture during parenting, heightened acculturation and parenting stress and related child abuse risk for foreign-born parents, and ethnic minority parents not being able to emphasize their own culture with their children. However, in some cases, no parenting related challenges were identified (Bratawidjaja, 2008; Smith, 2019).

#### *Specific challenge of cultural differences in parenting*

Because ethnocultural differences in parenting values, goals, and expectations were recurrent themes in the majority of qualitative studies, cultural differences were further examined as a subtheme. First, this subtheme emerged in Zaveruha's (1984) study of Ghanaian ethnic tribes, in which differences existed across ethnic tribes in parenting, including teaching prosocial behavior, using vulgar language towards children, and the freedom that daughters should have in their personal activities. Similarly, across 12 studies on interethnic parents in the USA (of which one was quantitative) and five studies outside of the USA (Israel, Japan, Australia), disagreements and differences in ethnocultural parenting expectations, goals, and values were identified in Puerto Rican-White (Del Rio, 1999), White-Black (Fletcher Stephens, 1998; Karis, 2000), Jewish North American-Israeli (Remennick, 2009; Sigad & Eisikovits, 2009), Asian-European American (Asante, 2011; Markowitz, 2007; Moriizumi, 2011; Pfeil, 2006; Rosenblatt & Stewart, 2004), Mexican-White American (Negy & Snyder, 2000), and other samples of parents from various interethnic backgrounds (Bhugun, 2017a, 2017b; Bratawidjaja, 2008; Koide et al., 2019; Soncini, 1997; Tien et al., 2017; Xiang, 2015).

Regardless of the location of residence of interethnic parents and their mixed-ethnicity children, some similar topics of disagreement were also identified, such as teaching children about independence or granting freedom, respect of elders, strict obedience of parents, and the importance of academic achievement. However, these were identified as the topics of disagreement for mostly Japanese-, Chinese-, Filipino-, or East Asian-interethnic parents (Asante, 2011; Koide et al., 2019; Moriizumi, 2011; Pfeil, 2006; Rosenblatt & Stewart, 2004). In two studies on Russian-Israeli and Jewish North American-Israeli parents, ethnocultural differences were focused on the Israeli custom of allowing children freedom and unstructured play (Remennick, 2009; Sigad & Eisikovits, 2009).

In a quantitative study that covered cultural differences more generally, Negy and Snyder (2000) reported that mothers in interethnic unions who experienced greater acculturation to the dominant culture (Mexican-American mothers to US culture) felt more dissatisfaction with the child, and that dominant culture fathers (White fathers in USA) were more likely to report conflict over childrearing.

Not all qualitative studies identified ethnocultural differences in parenting as a theme in their analyses. In three studies in the USA and UK focused on diverse interethnic parents (Brahic, 2013; Hawkins, 2017) and Latina and non-Hispanic White parents (Meins, 2018), only some parents identified that there were disparities in parenting ideologies. Further, childrearing conflict does not appear to be attributed to cultural differences in parenting ideologies for some interethnic parents. In two studies on Japanese-American parents in the USA (Nabeshima, 2006) and Asian Indian mothers with non-Asian Indian husbands in the USA (Thiagarajan, 2007), no concerns were raised regarding ethnocultural differences in parenting values. Similarly, interviews with Mexican American and White American interethnic parents indicated only some parents having conflicts regarding childrearing (Negy & Snyder, 2000).

Overall, the majority of studies identified that interethnic parents perceived cultural differences in parenting values, goals, and expectations. Further, these cultural differences were identified as having an effect on parents' and children's family experiences in some studies. In one study of White American and various ethnicity parents in the USA, the ethnocultural differences in parenting expectations led parents to struggle due to lack of support from the other parent (Bratawidjaja, 2008). In another study of Japanese and non-Japanese interethnic parents in Japan, parents found themselves teaching conflicting values to children due to their cultural differences, resulting in children's confusion (as reported by the parents; Koide et al., 2019). Interethnic parents' differences in their expectations and goals of parenting may be related to interparental conflict or disagreement, and be difficult to resolve through compromise (Koide et al., 2019).

#### *Strategies to resolve cultural differences in parenting*

In response to ethnocultural differences and potential challenges in childrearing, parents also engaged in conflict management strategies. Indeed, several studies identified themes surrounding interethnic parents' learning to resolve ethnocultural differences in parenting. Across a number of studies, general orientations for resolving cultural differences were identified, which depended on two factors: 1) acknowledging differences; and 2) seeing differences as negotiable and resolvable. In some of the included studies, a third factor emerged, 3) whether parents attributed cultural differences to ethnocultural traditions. These factors informed how interethnic parents approached their relationship with one another and their childrearing in terms of ethnoculturally-informed values and expectations.

In an often-cited study, Crippen and Brew (2013) interviewed interethnic couples and proposed a model on interethnic adaptation in interethnic parents in the USA. One factor is parents' perceptions and acknowledgment about the extent of differences, varying from minimization to emphasizing of differences. The second factor is whether parents are willing to negotiate these differences with one another, varying from low accommodation to high accommodation. These facets combine to form an orthogonal model consisting of five orientations for adapting to cultural differences: assimilation of the immigrant, ethnic minority parent to the culture of the

dominant culture's parent; cultural tourism in cross-national marriages in which immigrant fathers relinquish some cultural norms to better accommodate mothers' dominant culture; cultural transition in which ethnic minority or immigrant mothers relinquish some cultural norms to accommodate fathers' dominant culture, though with more cultural influence over the child compared to fathers in cultural tourism; cultural amalgamation of values and norms to blend and transcend each culture's differences into a third, family-relevant culture; and dual biculturalism in which each parent's culture is emphasized and both are taught to their children.

Similar models were also identified by [Edwards et al. \(2010\)](#) in the UK and [Seshadri \(2010\)](#) in the USA. [Edwards \(2010\)](#) identified three orientations: moving beyond ethnic or cultural differences, integrating the differences, and highlighting only one of the cultures. Meanwhile, [Seshadri \(2010\)](#) identified four orientations: keeping cultural differences unresolved, assimilating one culture into the other, co-existing of each cultural value or norm, and integration of differences. When assimilation occurred, singular assimilation of the ethnic minority parent to the dominant culture of the other parent was not always the case, with one study on White mothers and Black fathers demonstrating the reverse. [Karis \(2000\)](#) identified that White mothers ceded to Black fathers in order to ensure that their mixed-ethnicity child would be raised in a way that would be appropriate in Black American culture.

One study of parents in a non-English-speaking country identified slightly different orientations of cultural adaptation within interethnic parenting. [Ezra and Roer-Strier \(2009\)](#) identified in their study of Western wives with Palestinian husbands in the West Bank that Western women assimilated to, were ambivalent about, or biculturally adapted to Palestinian childrearing values, while Palestinian men assimilated to, biculturally adapted to, or fully rejected Western childrearing values. However, the authors identified that conflict about parenting was largely prevalent for families in which Western mothers were ambivalent about and Palestinian fathers rejected the other's cultural values.

In most studies, regardless of ethnic background or location of residence, parents' open communication and strong respect for one another were identified as specific skills that may help in negotiating ethnocultural differences ([Bhugun, 2017a, 2017b](#); [Bratawidjaja, 2008](#); [Tien et al., 2017](#); [Weisberg, 2016](#)). [Kuramoto \(2018\)](#) identified in their study of Japanese mothers and non-Asian fathers in Japan that communication styles sometimes need to be adjusted to accommodate one another (e.g., Japanese mothers needed to be more assertive, although this is not the cultural norm), acknowledging that compromises are not always possible (i.e., picking your battles), remaining flexible or open-minded, and integrating self-care into parenting practices. There was some indication that interethnic parents noticed cultural differences between them only after the birth of their first child ([Xiang, 2015](#)), then became more accepting of cultural differences as their children became older and parents gradually adjusted to these differences ([Rosenblatt & Stewart, 2004](#)). Potentially, as children develop, challenges with childrearing may present in different ways or parents may become more adept in negotiating and managing parenting conflicts.

Overall, the strategies for parents' adaptation to and navigation of ethnocultural differences in parenting were similar across diverse interethnic couples. For example, parents could acknowledge but not strategize about handling differences (e.g., unresolved, rejecting strategies), one parent could relinquish their cultural values and parenting would follow the other parent's cultural values, or the two parents could negotiate differences to arrive at a bicultural strategy such as creating a third culture for the family or highlighting both cultures during childrearing. Beyond these orientations, communication skills, interparental respect, and openness or flexibility were also identified as positive conflict management strategies in several studies.

#### *Exploration and self-reflection about own ethnocultural identity*

In addition to their experiences of parenting mixed-ethnicity and mixed-culture children per se, interethnic parents also reported self-reflective thinking about themselves and their own ethnocultural identity as a result of being part of an interethnic family. The most recurrent theme identified across qualitative studies, regardless of ethnic backgrounds and location of residence, was parents' feeling stronger ties with their ethnocultural identity. These feelings were positive in some cases, involving reframing or highlighting own ethnocultural identity and heightened motivation to teach children about their identity ([Day et al., 2015](#); [Farr et al., 2018](#); [Song & Gutierrez, 2015, 2016](#)). However, for some parents, these self-reflective thought processes were laden with negative emotionality. Specifically, [Farr's \(2018\)](#) study on Spanish minority mothers with British or Greek husbands in the UK identified feelings of failure and cultural inauthenticity in not being able to effectively teach cultural practices such as language to their mixed-ethnicity children. With a sample of mixed-ethnicity parents who were interethnically married to White partners, [Song \(2015, 2016\)](#) identified that some multiracial parents felt guilty and sad about their own lack of cultural competencies that they could pass on to their children, which served as motivation for learning more and socializing culture in their children. Similarly, in a study of White Jewish parents with partners that were people of color, [Weisberg's \(2016\)](#) study identified that White Jewish parents felt guilt about not being "Jewish enough" to uphold or carry out Jewish traditional practices with their children. In another set of studies, self-reflective thinking was related to feeling greater awareness or open-mindedness about cultural identities and diversity through their parenting experiences ([Arteaga, 2013](#); [Fletcher Stephens, 1998](#); [Karis, 2000](#); [Markowitz, 2007](#)), sometimes relating to shifts in their parenting beliefs (i.e., White mothers having increased understanding about Black fathers' parenting practices; [Karis, 2000](#)).

Overall, across studies, parents had self-reflective thoughts relating to awareness of their own ethnocultural identity and motivations to teach children about cultural identity, feelings of guilt or failure regarding not knowing enough about their own ethnocultural identities or not being able to effectively teach cultural practices to their mixed-ethnicity children, and more openness to and awareness of culturally diverse ways of thinking and parenting.

#### *Interethnic and non-interethnic parenting (sometimes) experienced differently*

In contrast to the previous four themes identified in mostly qualitative findings, the theme most recurrent in quantitative findings centered on differences in parenting experiences between interethnic and non-interethnic parents. Results of most of these studies



pointed to no significantly heightened conflict over parenting (Lindahl & Malik, 1999; Muller, 2004; Negy & Snyder, 2000), parenting stress (Xiang, 2015), or difference in the perceived importance of parenting (Chebotareva & Volk, 2020), in interethnic parents compared to non-interethnic parents. Another study comparing Black, Hispanic, and White couple parents to interethnic parents showed that economic strain was related to more relationship conflict and less adjustment, which in turn was related to less supportive coparenting, but these associations were not different across ethnic groups (Broderick et al., 2019). Further, two studies reported no difference between interethnic and non-interethnic parents in general experiences of parenting, including sense of parenting satisfaction and efficacy (Chung & Bang, 2015) and inappropriate expectations of the child (Fusco & Rautkis, 2012), although one study reported that interethnic parents perceived greater dissatisfaction with their children compared to non-interethnic parents (Negy & Snyder, 2000). In the latter study, the authors discussed the possibility that this heightened dissatisfaction related to their children may be due to the challenges faced by mixed-ethnicity children (e.g., identity confusion) or because of interethnic differences in parenting role expectations (e.g., egalitarian parenting roles).

Although there were few differences between interethnic and non-interethnic parents with regards to experiences of and conflict over parenting, some studies reported differences in the effects of or antecedents of parenting conflict. For example, Lindahl and Malik (1999) reported that, while there were no differences between interethnic and non-interethnic parents in the effect of parenting conflict on more negative parenting behaviors, parenting conflict was related to more externalizing difficulties in sons for only non-interethnic parents. Further, Xiang (2015) reported that having more children and high rates of recognition of cultural influence on parenting was related to more parenting stress for interethnic parents, but not for non-interethnic parents. Additionally, in this same study, mothers were more likely than fathers to experience parenting stress in interethnic relationships, but this gender difference did not emerge in non-interethnic relationships.

Overall, the majority of included quantitative studies evidenced no difference between interethnic and non-interethnic parents with regards to their experiences of parenting, including parenting stress or interparental conflict, or general experiences of parenting such as parenting efficacy. A small subset of studies identified that interethnic parents may be more dissatisfied with their child, and that effects of parental conflict on the child and precursors of parenting stress may differ across interethnic and non-interethnic parents.

**Discussion**

Understanding how parenting is experienced both internally and between parents in interethnic unions may provide useful information on how to support interethnic parents’ and their mixed-ethnicity children’s well-being and outcomes. From 49 identified qualitative and quantitative studies, the present review identified five themes illustrating the experience of parenting in interethnic unions, depicted as a Summary Model of Interethnic Parenting Experiences in Fig. 2. First, strengths of interethnic parenting focused on celebrating cultural diversity with the mixed-ethnicity child (Theme 1) and challenges focused on struggles with transmitting and integrating cultural knowledge (Theme 2). One of the major challenges identified included cultural disagreements regarding parenting beliefs, values, and goals (Theme 2). Based on the extent to which parents acknowledged cultural differences, saw the differences as resolvable, and attributed the differences to cultural reasons, interethnic parents oriented themselves to reject the other parent’s

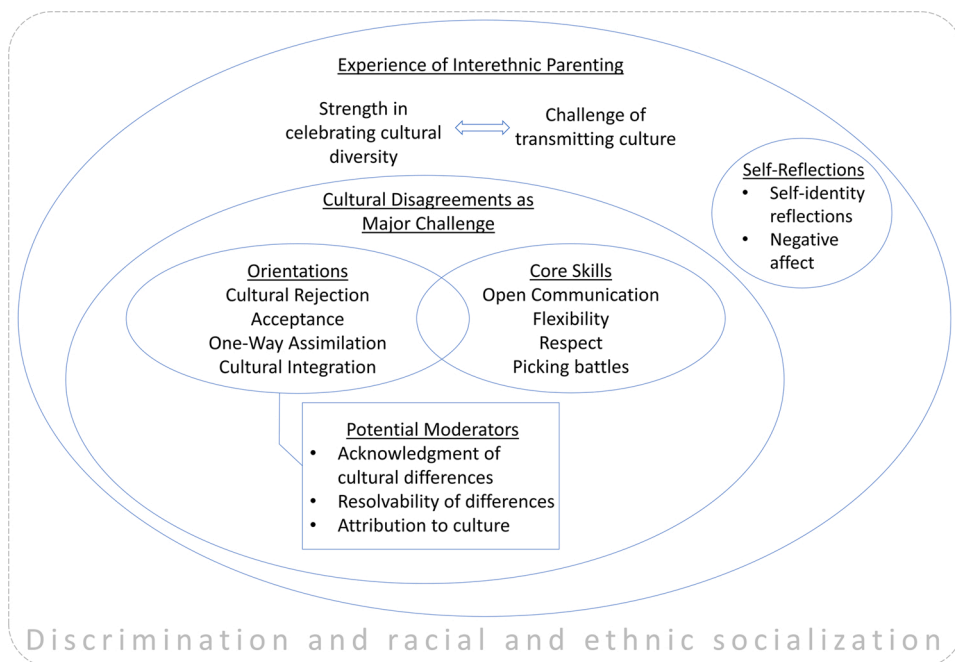


Fig. 2. A Summary Model of Interethnic Parenting Experiences.

culture, simply accepted and acknowledged the differences without resolving, assimilated such that one parent's culture took precedence, or integrated knowledge from both cultures in parenting their mixed-ethnicity children (Theme 3). Regardless of these orientations or the specific object of cultural disagreement, however, interethnic parents agreed that open communication, flexibility and open-mindedness, respect for one another, and picking the battles that could be negotiated were specific core skills that could help to resolve these challenges (Theme 3). Particularly for ethnic minority parents, self-reflections on their own cultural identity and knowledge and resulting guilt or sadness were important and unique facets of the interethnic parenting experience (Theme 4). Although not a focus of the present review, the model in Fig. 2 also includes the reality of discrimination and ethnic socialization challenges in which interethnic parents' unique experiences are situated, depicted in the dotted border. The identified themes are further discussed with reference to relevant existing work, limitations of studies, and areas for future research.

#### *Highlighting the unique experience of interethnic parenting*

Broadly, this review's findings suggest that unique ethnoculturally-relevant strengths and challenges arise in interethnic parenting. Some of the strengths of interethnic parenting, such as celebrating diversity and increased open-mindedness (Theme 1), may result in couples' awareness and acceptance of one another's cultures (Roy et al., 2020), supporting relationship quality and impacting child development. Yet, difficulties with transmitting and integrating cultural knowledge (Theme 2) also need to be considered. One aspect that is not clear in the reviewed studies is whether the interaction of parenting role and parents' ethnic minority status impacts the strengths and challenges in interethnic parenting. That is, whether mothers or fathers are ethnic minorities may impact their socialization goals and transfer of cultural values as strengths to children (e.g., Asante, 2011; Rodríguez García, 2006; Yu, 2011). In the present review, the majority of the included studies were focused on parent couples with ethnic minority mothers and ethnic majority fathers, reflecting the documented tendency for ethnic majority men to enter exogamous marriages, i.e., by marrying a woman of a different ethnic background, at least in English-speaking countries (although this pattern differs by ethnic background and other demographic factors; Kulu & Hannemann, 2019; Qian & Lichter, 2011; Statistics Canada, 2011). Thus, findings regarding ethnic minority status and parenting roles did not follow a specific pattern, and generalizability may be limited given the greater representation of certain ethnic profiles of interethnic marriage.

Regardless, one highlighted challenge in interethnic parenting was parents' ethnocultural differences in parenting expectations, goals, and values (Theme 2). There is a wealth of research suggesting that parenting and parent perceptions may differ across ethnic groups (e.g., Bornstein et al., 2011; Lansford & Bornstein, 2011). The assumption that parenting differs across groups stems from models that identify differences in goal orientations and core ideologies across societies, impacting interpersonal relationships (e.g., individualism-collectivism distinction; Hofstede, 2011; Triandis & Suh, 2002). During intimate situations, as in interethnic unions, it is possible that such culturally-informed schemas and beliefs, especially those surrounding childhood and parenting, arise as conflicting issues to be resolved (Roy et al., 2020).

With regards to negotiating cultural differences, strategies identified by parents were also similar across ethnic backgrounds and locations, such as ignoring, integrating, or compromising on cultural differences in parenting (Theme 3). These approaches to resolving cultural differences in interethnic parenting mirror existing theories earlier reviewed on simultaneous belonging to multiple cultures (e.g., orthogonal model of acculturation by Berry, 2005). The reviewed studies also identified specific skills for successfully resolving cultural differences in interethnic parenting, including open communication and respect and sensitivity towards one another's ethnocultural backgrounds. These approaches are not notably different from approaches for conflict resolution with same-ethnicity, non-interethnic parents, which identify cooperative discussion as most predictive of marital relationship quality (Greeff & De Bruyne, 2000; Li et al., 2019). Such similarities may indicate that if interethnic parents experience cultural differences, they may benefit from standard coparenting programs that foster positive communication skills to facilitate successful discussion and resolution of these differences. However, research is needed to identify whether such communication results in cultural integration approaches in interethnic parenting.

Although we did not identify any studies that addressed mixed-ethnicity children's outcomes, it may be expected that children observing cultural integration methods may internalize these processes (through observational learning; Grusec & Davidov, 2010). Research suggests that some mixed-ethnicity children and adults experience internal discord about and challenges with integrating their multiple ethnic and cultural identities, leading to mental health difficulties and reduced well-being (Albuja et al., 2019; Coleman & Carter, 2007). Potentially, children who observe and internalize interethnic parents' successful negotiation and integration of ethnic and cultural differences may be best equipped to resolve their own identities. Indeed, harmonious and calm interparental conflicts, compared to poorly resolved, intense conflicts, are associated with psychosocial adjustment in monoethnic children, both directly as well as indirectly through resulting parenting practices and modeling (DeBoard-Lucas et al., 2010; Harold & Sellers, 2018). Exploring these modeling mechanisms would be a fruitful area for future research, and may propel innovative interventions that appropriately support the parenting goals of interethnic parents and needs of mixed-ethnicity children.

Finally, an important and unique aspect of interethnic parenting identified in the present review was parents' self-reflection about their lack of ethnocultural identity or related cultural knowledge to be passed on to mixed-ethnicity children (Theme 4). Ethnocultural identity is highly salient during interethnic contact in general (Clément et al., 2001), thus it is possible that parents in interethnic unions feel their ethnocultural identity is emphasized when they are with partners of a different ethnic background. Indeed, ethnic minority immigrant parents in a new cultural setting feel a responsibility to pass on traditions from their heritage, since their children will have much influence from the dominant host culture (Choi et al., 2013; Inman et al., 2007; Sherry & Ornstein, 2014). A similar thought process may be prominent for interethnic parents, particularly parents with ethnic minority status. Additionally, some interethnic parents reported negative emotional responses (e.g., guilt) due to lack of ethnic knowledge to impart on their children (e.g.,

Song, 2015, 2016). Given that such negative emotional responses have been linked to reduced parenting confidence and self-efficacy (Kuhn & Carter, 2006), it is possible that some interethnic parents may, perhaps inaccurately, perceive reduced competence in their parenting overall.

#### *Are interethnic parents' experiences uniquely different? The jury is still out*

Contrary to the evidence reviewed in the first four themes, many quantitative studies demonstrated that challenges such as parenting stress or interparental conflict (Theme 5) did not ensue for interethnic parents (e.g., Nabeshima, 2006; Thiagarajan, 2007). These findings echo existing work positing that parenting may be similar across cultures because of the basic universal goals that arise in childrearing (e.g., teaching appropriate values, ensuring child's health and well-being; Bornstein, 2012). Thus, despite prominent perspectives that interethnic parents experience greater stress or challenges in parenting (e.g., Crippen & Brew, 2007; Roy et al., 2020), the reviewed studies demonstrate limited evidence for such relatively heightened parenting difficulties. However, the included studies did not measure culture-specific stress or culture-specific conflict, which may be informative and could be investigated in future studies. For example, interethnic parents may be expected to express higher levels of culture-related parenting conflict compared to parents from the same ethnocultural background. Cultural differences may also be especially salient for interethnic parents upon the birth of the first child rather than when children are older (e.g., as identified in Xiang, 2015). These findings echo existing models suggesting that even if cultural differences had been resolved during the dating stage of an interethnic couple's relationship, the birth of a child may emphasize culturally-unique values about childrearing that reignite cultural conflicts (see Roy et al., 2020).

#### **Gaps and future directions**

While this review sheds light on the distinct experience of interethnic parenting, the emergent themes also point to avenues for further research. First, further research is needed to determine whether interethnic parents attribute to culture their interparental differences in parenting goals, values, and expectations. Indeed, included studies showed variability in these attributions to culture. As suggested by Soncini (1997), blaming parenting differences on culture may overshadow personality issues, leading to misinterpretation of the conflict and heightened negative interactions (e.g., blaming) between parents. Based on attribution theory and models of social information processing (Crick & Dodge, 1994; Lemerise & Arsenio, 2000), misinterpretation of the cause of an actor's behavior can result in negative emotionality and maladaptive interpersonal reactions. Parents also may attribute conflict differently based on the domain of parenting (e.g., allowing children to date, using physical discipline). However, little is known about how interethnic parents attribute the cause of interparental disagreements. Future work may examine interethnic parents' attributions of conflict to their partner's cultural background or internal factors, as well as resulting links to emotionality and interparental reactions in interethnic parenting.

Second, the present review demonstrated that different parent ethnic profiles result in distinct interethnic parenting experiences, including negotiation of cultural differences (e.g., Asante, 2011; Koide, 2019; Moriizumi, 2011; Pfeil, 2006; Rosenblatt, 2004). However, it is unclear whether the same strategies for negotiating such differences may be effective across ethnic groups and locations of residence. For example, for interethnic couples living in East Asian countries, assimilation to the dominant culture may be a more adaptive approach than integration for resolving differences in parenting goals while following cultural norms. At the same time, some perspectives contend that little cultural variability exists in core values (e.g., Oyserman et al., 2002; Schwartz & Bardi, 2001), and thus similar strategies for resolving interethnic parenting conflicts may work with equal effectiveness in different contexts. Exploring these patterns of fit to cultural settings would be useful to build upon the arsenal of support available to interethnic parents in diverse contexts. Additionally, formulating a potential hypothesis regarding optimal conflict resolution strategies for interethnic parents is complex. Existing work on conflict negotiation suggests cultural variability in preference for conflict resolution strategies, whether more direct and assertive or deferent and submissive (see meta-analysis by Holt & DeVore, 2005). Borrowing from previous research in organizational settings (De Dreu et al., 2004; Dijkstra et al., 2009), these submissive and deferent conflict resolution styles may have negative repercussions on mental health and well-being for interethnic parents, and may lead to suppressing of opinions. Research on the use of different conflict resolution strategies and their impact on parent mental health and behavior may have valuable implications for helping interethnic parents to better negotiate cultural differences.

A final suggestion for future research deals with individual or sample variability. Studies that were included in the present review were largely uncomplementary and involved interethnic parents of immense variability. Interethnic parents' individual characteristics, such as ethnic background and parenting role (mothers versus fathers) could potentially moderate the parenting experience. Given that mothers are often the primary socializing agents for children's development, ethnic minority mothers may have more opportunities to transmit culture to their children (e.g., Asante, 2011) while ethnic minority fathers may struggle with this challenge (e.g. Rodríguez García, 2006). Relatedly, ethnic minority parents in interethnic unions who are highly acculturated to the host culture may be particularly well-adapted to parenting their mixed-ethnicity children, considering that acculturation is linked to greater adoption of the host culture's values and norms (Gonzalez & Méndez-Pounds, 2018; Ho, 2014; Yagmurlu & Sanson, 2009). Additionally, given evidence in the present review that ethnocultural differences in interethnic parenting may be highlighted after the birth of the first child (Xiang, 2015) and lessen over time as children get older (Rosenblatt, 2004), future studies may consider temporal changes in interethnic parents' experiences of parenting over children's development from birth to adolescence. In particular, we may expect that interethnic parents may be impacted by their mixed-ethnicity children's changing responses to their ethnic and cultural identity formation throughout childhood and adolescence. This review also identified that multiethnic parents experience an additional challenge of and negative emotional experiences due to limited knowledge of their own ethnocultural heritage (Song, 2015, 2016).

Considering that multiethnic adults often marry other multiethnic adults (Parker et al., 2015), these parents may also experience further unique strengths and challenges. Finally, work on tridimensional acculturation, describing the navigation of three cultural identities (e.g., two heritage cultures and one residence culture) shows that multicultural individuals can code-switch between their different cultures (e.g., Nguyen & Ferguson, 2020). Assessing how code-switching may emerge in interethnic parenting would provide unique perspectives on parenting in multicultural societies.

### Conclusion

Overall, this review identified qualitative and quantitative studies that examined parenting experiences, including strengths and challenges in parenting, ethnocultural differences in parenting, strategies to resolve these differences, and self-reflections regarding parents' own ethnocultural identity through parenting of mixed-ethnicity children. The collective evidence from included studies were summarized in a model of interethnic parenting experiences, which may be utilized for future research. Further work is needed to determine more specifically how, when, and for whom interethnic parenting can present greater challenges. This review serves as a foundation for such future work exploring interethnic parenting experiences as well as their impacts on parents and mixed-ethnicity children.

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