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

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BACKGROUND

- o 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)
- o In transracial adoptive (TRA) families, parents provide CS hoping to make a cultural connection to adopted child's birth country.
- o But what and how to provide CS is not clear.

Frameworks

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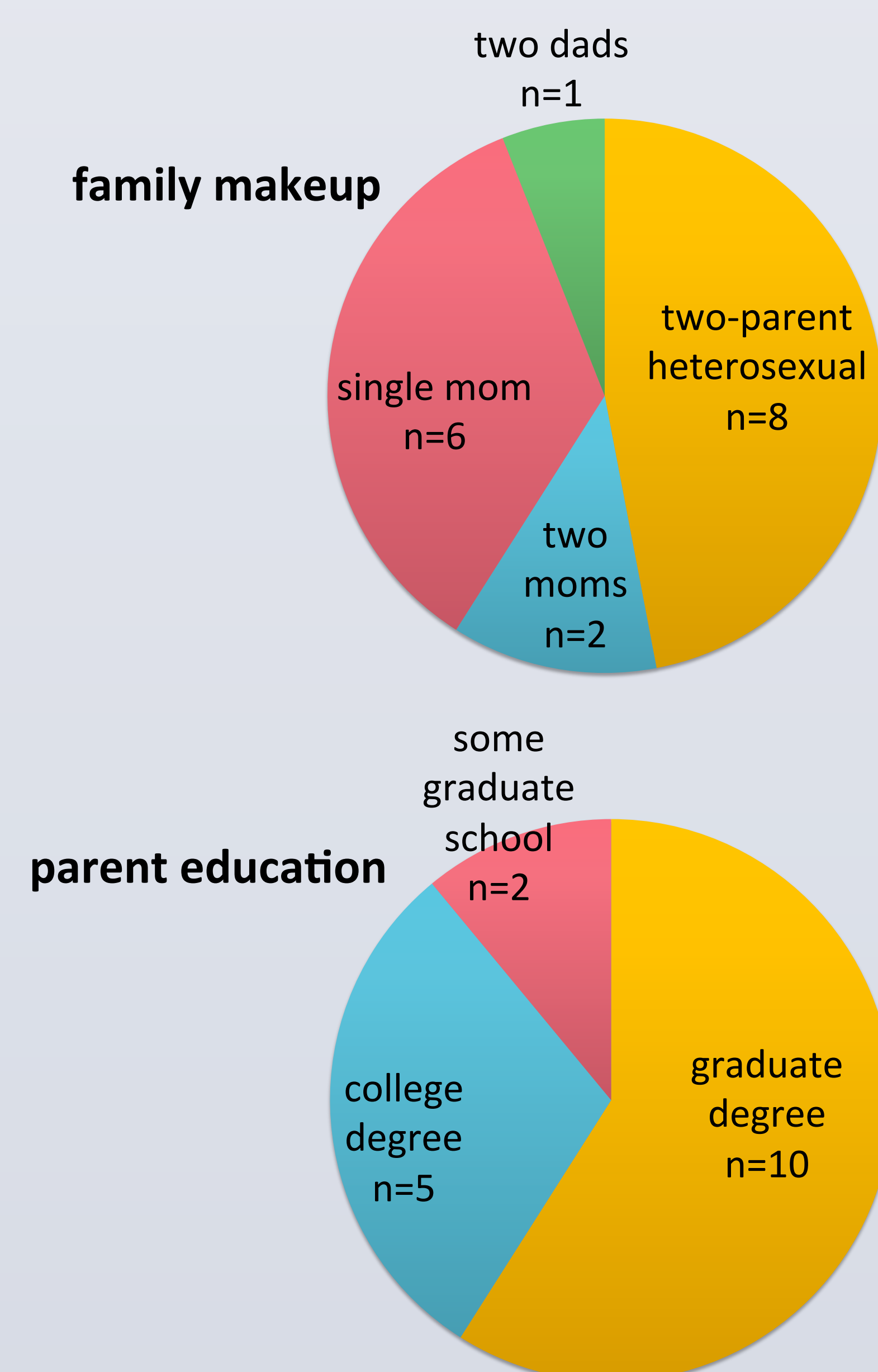
METHOD

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.

family makeup

- two dads n=1
- two-parent heterosexual n=8
- single mom n=6
- two moms n=2

parent education

- some graduate school n=2
- graduate degree n=10
- college degree n=5

How to Measure CK and CT

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

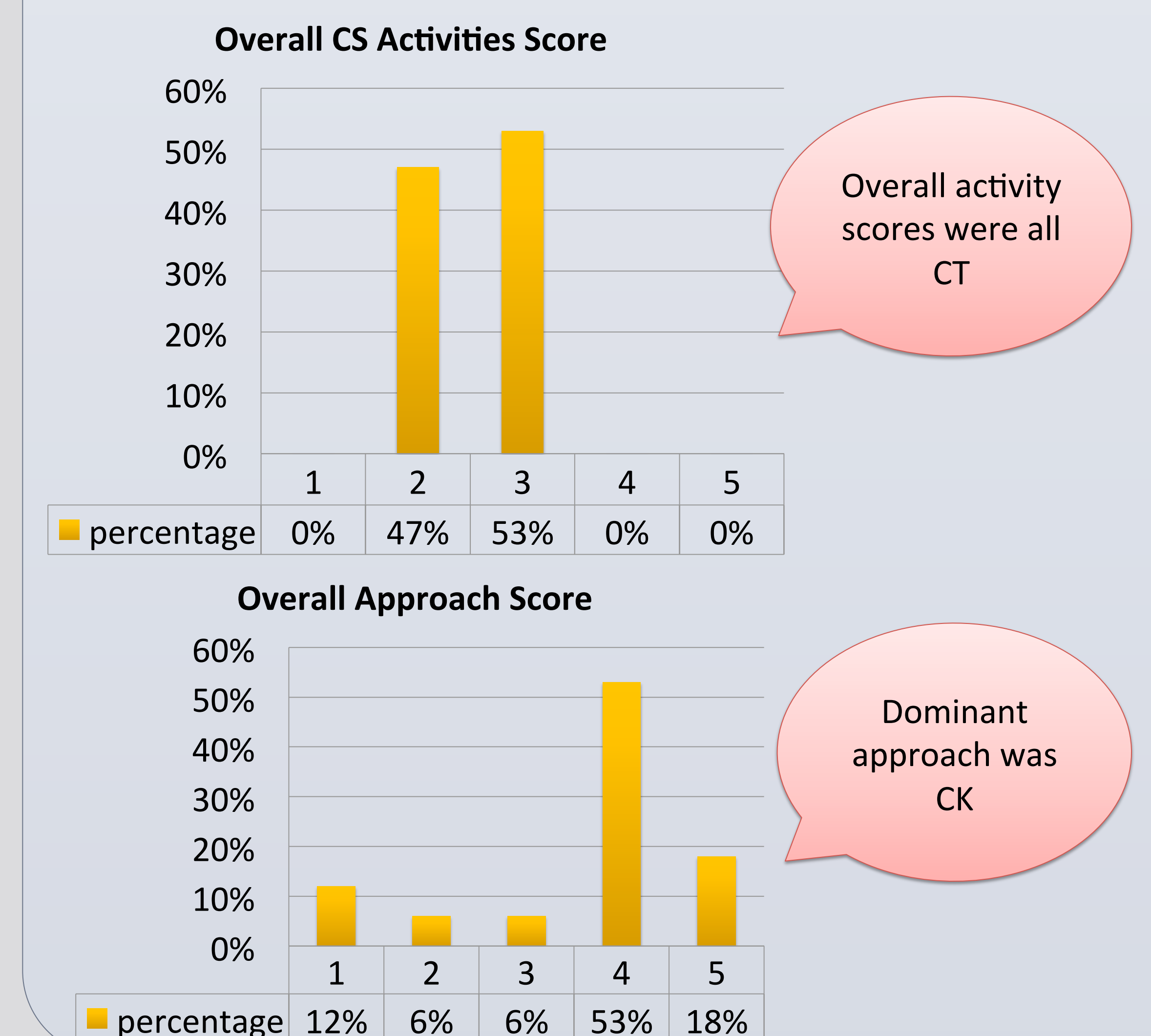|	
• Child only, family, or community-level (move) • Structured or unstructured • Presence of a Chinese cultural expert	CS activities
• Parent initiated an activities • Parent proposed an activates • Parent waited for child to suggest/initiate CS	Approach
• Child's positive identity development • Socialize with children with similar experiences • Suggestion by someone in adoption community • Resistance to CS (why not doing X)	Motivation
• Acknowledgement of cultural differences • Importance of cultural differences in daily life	Attitudes toward cultural differences

Coding Scale (part)
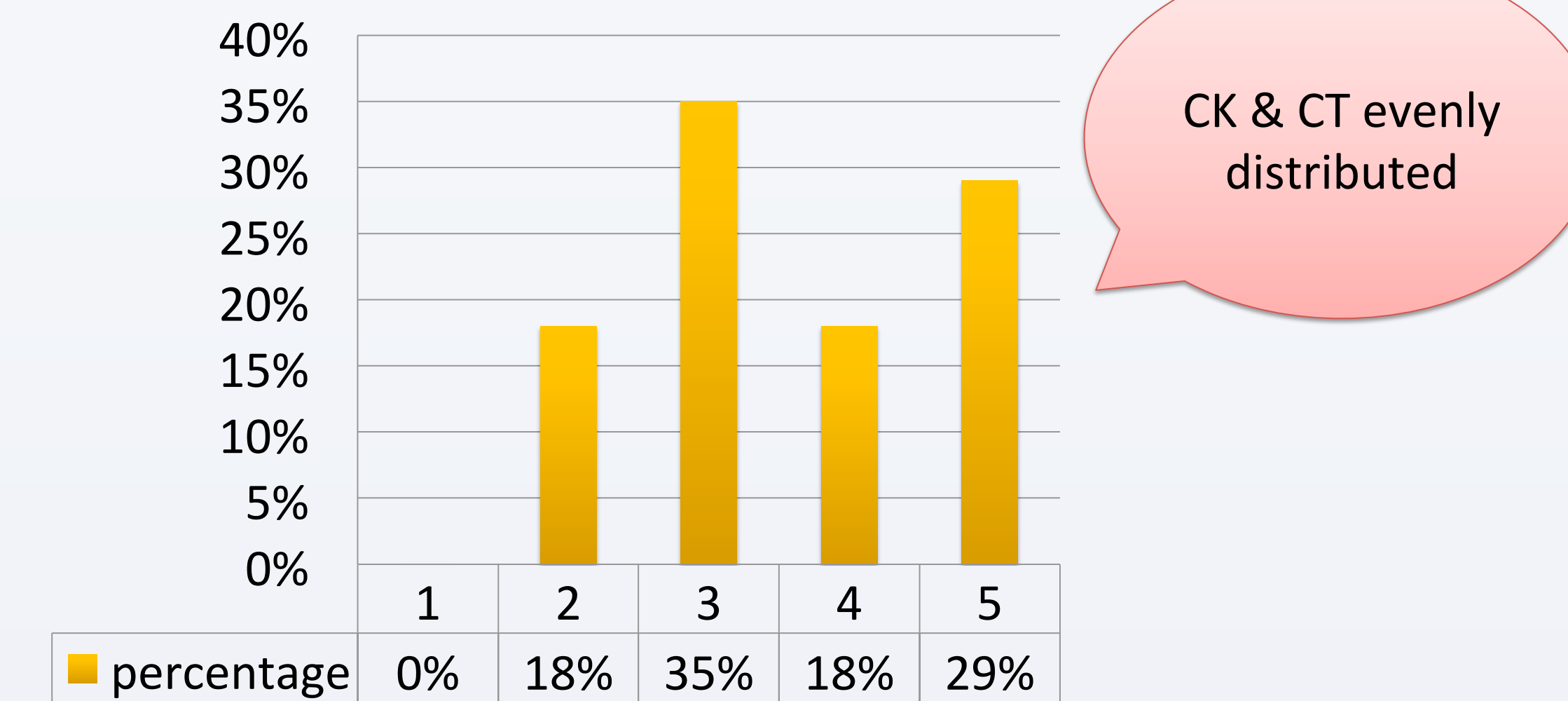**Each indicator coded in a 5-point Likert scale.**

Overall Score	CS Activity	Approach	Motivation	Attitude
5 Genuine culture keeping	• Diverse community • Diverse school • Structured family-level interactions w/ cultural experts	Initiating ≥ 70%	Unmet needs ≥ 70%	High Ack ≥ 70% and high salience ≥ 70%
3 Cultural tourism – balance between parent interest and child interest	• Child-level structured activities w/out a cultural expert • Unstructured family-level interactions w/ a cultural expert	(initiating + proposing) = 50-70%	Distribution of motivation fits none of the other descriptions.	High Ack ≥ 70% and high salience < 50%; or High Ack = 30-70% and high salience ≥ 50%
1 Resistance to CS	• Parent articulates not doing a particular activity	Waiting ≥ 70%	Motivation against CS ≥ 50%	High Ack< 30% and high salience < 50%

RESULTS

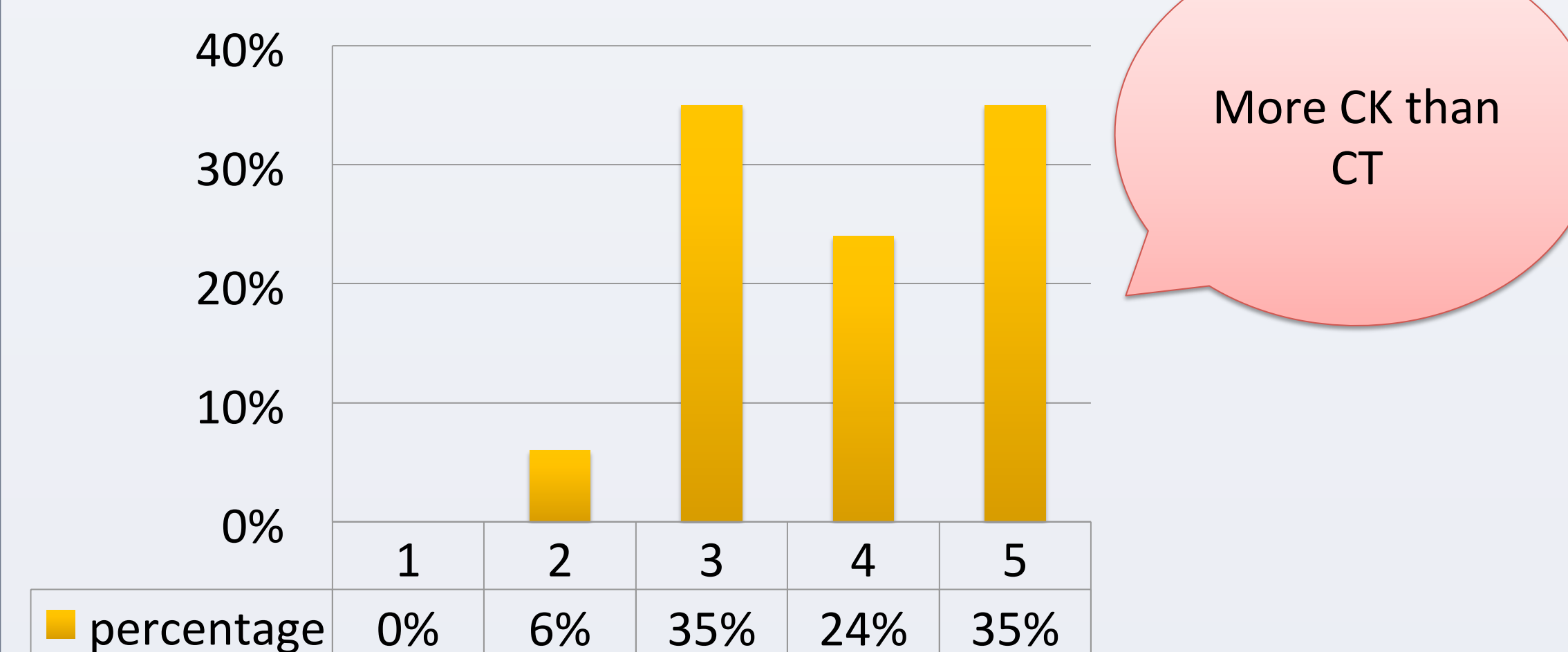### 1. What and how do parents provide cultural socialization?

Overall CS Activities Score

	1	2	3	4	5
percentage	0%	47%	53%	0%	0%

> Overall activity scores were all CT

Overall Approach Score

	1	2	3	4	5
percentage	12%	6%	6%	53%	18%

> Dominant approach was CK

Overall Motivation Score

	1	2	3	4	5
percentage	0%	18%	35%	18%	29%

> CK & CT evenly distributed

Overall Attitude Score

	1	2	3	4	5
percentage	0%	6%	35%	24%	35%

> More CK than CT

2. What are the respective characteristics of CK and CT in cultural activities?

CK and CT characteristics in selected CS activities

Activity	Count	Score 2	Score 3	Score 4	Score 5
Total Count	152	90 (59%)	23 (15%)	28 (18%)	11 (7%)
Big Sister	3			2	1
Chinese New Year	14	14			
Food	10	9		1	
Language	20	4	2	10	4
Playgroup	8		2	6	
Diverse School	4	3	1		
Friends w/ Chinese adults	6	1	4		1

> e.g., Child listen to Chinese CD at her will

> e.g., Whole family attend weekly Chinese classes

> • Most activities were provided at *culture tourism* level.
> • There is variation within activities.

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, like she knew someone who was graduating … and I liked that she kinda 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.

Context (process) of Cross-cultural Contact

"Natural" contact (Chinese New Year organized by Chinese people) vs "artificial" contact (Chinese New Year organized by agents)

- *my concern with that was a lot of people was people like us: white parents who had Chinese kids putting on celebrations. You now what I mean? It wasn't done by Chinese people, it wasn't - it wasn't around…you know, we were the majority still…that they feel more confident that their culture can be the majority and the, you know, the white parents can be in the minority…*

2. Parents' had various reasons to resist cultural socialization

Doubts in CS

- *"… I don't think she's going to die because of it (lack of cultural socialization"*

Balance child's needs and parent's needs

- too tired", need to fulfill other parenting tasks

CS in the long term

- *"she hates it. I don't want to turn language lessons into a negative experience for her. We'll try again when she's a little older"*

Limitations

- o Secondary data
- o Small sample
- o Did not include adoptees' response to CS
- o Method used to calculate overall CS activities at risk of generalization

Research Implication

- o Does authenticity matter for cultural socialization in transracial adoptive families?
- o How to measure authenticity in cultural socialization?

Practice Implication

- o Important to understand why families do NOT engage in cultural socialization.
- o HOW to provide cultural socialization may be more important than WHAT to provide.
- o An ethnic role model in a natural setting may create a strong connection to adoptees' birth culture.
- o Does authenticity matter in cultural socialization for transracial adoptees?

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