THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN RELATIONAL AGGRESSION:
ASSOCIATIONS WITH NEGATIVE AFFECT AMONG
CHINESE AMERICAN AND EURO AMERICAN PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

A Thesis

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Ann Kathleen Wayland

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Abstract

of

THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN RELATIONAL AGGRESSION:
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Ann Kathleen Wayland

The goal of this study was to explore the role of culture in relational aggression behaviors and the associations with negative affect among Chinese American and Euro American preschool age children. Teachers completed the Preschool Social Behavior Scale-Teacher measures on relational aggression and negative affect. Children completed measures on peer rating using a modified version of the Preschool Social Behavior Scale-Peers. Results indicated that significantly more relational aggression was reported in the Chinese American group than the Euro American group although significantly more negative affect was reported in the Euro American group than the Chinese American group. Limitations and future implications of relational aggression among preschool age children were discussed.

______________________, Committee Chair
Dr Juliana Raskauskas

______________________
Date
DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to Professor Nickie R Crick, 1958 - 2012
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I humbly thank Dr. Juliana Raskauskas for all her support and guidance throughout this thesis and for the many teaching assistantships and research opportunities. I am especially thankful for her patience while guiding me through the statistical portion of this thesis and introducing me to the concept of linear thinking. I could not have finished this without her devotion.

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Thank you to my Grandfather, Dr. Robert Glasgow, who left the enduring legacy that hard work and stamina is necessary to reach your goals.

A special thank you goes to Robert E. Clamon D.D.S. for his mentoring. His wise words and care for people helped direct and guide the closure of this thesis.

Finally, I also want to acknowledge Dr. Fred McFeely Rodgers, who said,

“As different as we are from one another, as unique as each one of us is, we are much more the same than we are different. That may be the most essential message of all, as we help our children grow toward being caring, compassionate, and charitable adults”
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td>xii</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Chapter

1. INTRODUCTION ................................................................. 1

   - Purpose of Study ......................................................... 1
   - Statement of Problem .................................................. 1
   - Significance of Study .................................................. 3
   - Methods ................................................................. 5
   - Measures/Data Collection .......................................... 6
   - Definition of Terms .................................................. 8
   - Limitations ............................................................ 9
   - Organization of the Study .......................................... 10

2. LITERATURE REVIEW ........................................................... 11

   - Gender Differences in Relational Aggression .................. 17
   - Theoretical Framework .............................................. 20
   - Psychological Effects of Bullying ................................. 27

3. METHODS ............................................................................. 31

   - Research Question ..................................................... 31
4. RESULTS ......................................................................................................................... 40

5. DISCUSSION ................................................................................................................ 50
   Limitations .................................................................................................................. 59
   Conclusions and Future Research ............................................................................ 60

Appendix A. Consent to Participate in “Understanding Bullying” Research .......... 62
Appendix B. Consent to Participate in Covert Aggression Research ...................... 63
Appendix C. Preschool Social Behavior Scale – Teachers Form ......................... 65
Appendix D. Preschool Peer Nomination Measure – Peer Form ......................... 68
Appendix E. Pictorial Faces ......................................................................................... 71
References ..................................................................................................................... 72
LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tables</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Mean Scores of Relational Aggression and Negative Affect</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Number Classified as Relationally Aggressive by Gender based on Teacher Reports</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Teacher Reports of Negative Affect by Gender</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Pearson Correlations Among Relational Aggression and Negative Affect</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF FIGURES

1. Mean Scores of Teacher Reports of Relational Aggression and Negative Affect ................................................................. 46

2. Mean Scores of Peer Reported Negative Affect ................................................................................................................. 47
Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the role of culture in relational aggression behaviors and the associations with negative affect among Chinese American and Euro American preschool age boys and girls by comparing the two groups for differences in negative affect, such as sadness and crying. It was important to explore for cultural differences in behaviors because identification of relational aggression behaviors early in childhood can allow for culturally sensitive intervention and prevention strategies.

Statement of Problem

Bullying is a subset of aggressive behaviors, (Olweus, 1994, as cited in Espelage & Swearer, 2003), either physical or verbal, and occurs within a relationship where there is an imbalance of power (Espelage & Swearer, 2003). One form of bullying, called relational aggression, is a form of aggression where the target is exposed repeatedly and over time to negative actions that are intended to threaten relationships (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995). Examples are exclusion from a group, malicious gestures such as making faces, spreading rumors as a way of retaliation, and threatening to exclude from play if target does not go along with aggressor (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995). It is a form of bullying that has been studied predominantly among adolescents, yet it has been shown to
increase in frequency around age 10 years, and research has now shown that even preschool age children exhibit this covert form of aggression (Crick, Ostrov, Burr, Cullerton-Sen, Jensen-Yeh, & Ralston, 2006).

In any form of bullying, physical, verbal, cyber, or relational, there is an imbalance of strength, either physically or mentally, where the person who is exposed to bullying feels helpless against the perpetrator (Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Smith, Morita, Junger-Tas, Olweus, Catalano, & Slee, 1999).

Researchers have also been interested in the psychological effects of bullying (Kawabata, Crick, & Hamaguchi, 2010). For example, Slee (1995) has shown that victimized children of bullying experience poor self-esteem, unhappiness at school, feel left out of peer groups, and believe they have no control. Research has consistently shown that victimization is associated with concurrent depression and promotes higher levels of depression in early adulthood (Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Slee, 1995).

Although much of the research related to bullying has focused on school age children, research that is more recent has examined bullying during preschool age (Crick et al., 2006; Kawabata et al., 2010). Also in the forefront of recent research is understanding how personal and situational factors such as gender (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995; Michiels, Grietens, Onghena, & Kuppens, 2008), parenting styles (Kuppens, Grietens, Onghena, & Michiels, 2009), sibling status (Ostrov, Crick, & Stauffacher, 2006), and peer relationships (Michiels et al., 2008) can influence relationally aggressive behaviors.
Most recently, research has also begun to focus on the possible role of cultural values and differences in relational aggression. Kawabata et al., (2010) conducted a study exploring the role of culture in the associations between aggressive behaviors and depressive symptoms among fourth-grade children in Japan and the United States. They found the association was stronger for the Japanese children due to the collectivist cultural norms related to valuing inter-relatedness and close relationships. To this researcher’s knowledge, to date, no cross-cultural studies on relational aggression have been conducted among preschool age children. Continued cross-cultural research in this area is needed to increase understanding on cultural values and beliefs possible influence on relational aggressive behaviors and its effects.

**Significance of Study**

There is need for more research on relational aggression in preschool age children. Limited research has explored the psychological effects of relational aggression on preschool age children and like with older children it can be harmful to children (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995; Kawabata et al., 2010). Even fewer studies have looked at cultural influence on relational aggression among young children. Additionally, the role of culture in relational aggression and associations with depressive symptoms warrants further study (Kawabata et al., 2010). This study differs from previous bullying studies in that it examines the role of culture in relational aggression and associations with negative affect such as sadness and crying in preschool age children. Furthermore, previous
studies have not considered culture as a moderating factor; therefore, it is not clear how cultural beliefs and values influence bullying behaviors and the effects of bullying.

Culture is defined as a set of systems of meanings, practices, and social institutions in the context of expressing emotions within collective and individualistic societies (Mesquita, 2001). For example, in a collectivist culture children are socialized to view themselves as part of a group where emotions are expressed in the relationship to others, whereas in an individualistic culture children are socialized to be unique and independent where emotions are expressed for the subjective self (Kawabata et al., 2010; Mesquita, 2001). Within the Chinese American culture, high value is placed on collectivism and the consideration of group needs over the self (Stright, Herr, & Neitzel, 2009).

Studies have been done exploring the Chinese culture yet no study has looked at relational aggression within the Chinese American preschool age population. It is important to examine factors of culture because culture plays a strong role in a child’s development (Triandis & Suh, 2002; Shaffer, 2009). Furthermore, relational aggression can only be understood in the context of the norms that govern acceptable social behavior within a culture (French, Jansen, & Pidada, 2002). For example, social ostracism (excluding from the group) may be viewed differently in a collective society then an individualistic society (Kawabata et al., 2010). Understanding the role of cultural beliefs and values in relational aggression among preschool age children affords early interventions that can be uniquely and respectfully tailored to each child.
Methods

Design

The study presented here is examining cross-cultural variations in relational aggression between Chinese American and Euro American preschool age children. It is a descriptive, comparative quasi-experimental design that used surveys, peer and teacher responses, to compare of Euro American and Chinese American preschool age children on negative affect such as sadness and crying, to relational aggression.

Participants

There were 21 preschool age children recruited to participate in this study. The sample consisted of two groups. The first group consisted of Chinese American preschool age boys and girls enrolled in a preschool within a Chinese community in Southern California. To increase the cultural homogeneity of the Chinese American sample inclusion criteria for Chinese American preschoolers specified that they were born in China or in the United States with parents (mother and/or father) or guardians born in China (i.e. first or second generation only was included) (Tsai, Chentsova-Dutton, Freire-Bebeau, & Przymus, 2002). All children in the Chinese American group spoke Cantonese and/or Mandarin and English yet at school, they were encouraged to use the English language. Prominent language for parents and guardians was Cantonese and/or Mandarin. The second group was comprised of Euro American preschool age boys and girls enrolled in a preschool in central California. Inclusion criteria for the Euro American preschoolers specified they were born in the United States and whose parents (mother
and/or father) or guardians were born in the United States (See Appendix A and B). Prominent language for children and parents/guardians in the Euro American group was English.

**Procedures**

Ten preschoolers from the Chinese American group and 11 preschoolers from the Euro American group were chosen to participate. Written parental consent was requested for all children in each class. In addition, verbal assent was required from each child before participating.

Upon receipt of signed consent the final selection group was determined by random selection in that, the first signed consent forms returned were the chosen participants. On the possibly a child dropped out, any remaining consent forms were randomly selected to fill that vacancy. Due to a language barrier in the Chinese American group, demographic information was limited to age only on the consent form. However, teachers verbally provided the birthplace of parents/guardians.

**Measures/Data Collection**

Two measures were used to assess relational aggression and negative affect: (a) teacher ratings, “Preschool Social Behavior Scale Teacher Form”, (PSBS-T), and (b) a modified version of peer nominations, “Preschool Social Behavior Scale Peers”, (PSBS-P).
Teacher Rating

Using the PSBS-T, teachers were asked to rate frequency of relational and physical aggression behaviors on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1= never and almost never true to 5= always and almost always true). The PSBS-T, developed for previous studies (Crick, Casas, & Mosher, 1997; Crick, Casas, & Ku, 1999), has six items that assess teacher’s perceptions of relational aggression such as, “This child tries to get others to dislike a peer”, (Crick et al., 1997) and “This child ignores a peer or refuses to listen to her if she is mad at her” (McEvoy, Estrem, Rodriguez, & Olson, 2003), and six items that assess physical aggression such as, “This child kicks or hits others” (Crick et al., 1997). Additional questions were added for teachers to document depressive symptoms such as crying, sadness, turned downed mouth, and head down. These were also rated as 1 = never and almost never true, to 5 = always and almost always true. The purpose for using the teacher rating was to assess the teacher’s perceptions of children’s relational and physical aggression.

Peer Rating

A modified version of the peer-nomination instrument, PSBS-P, was used to measure negative affect that may be related to relational aggression (Crick et al., 2006). The participants were asked to rate their classmates by placing their photo in one of four boxes labeled with a happy face, a neutral face, a sad face, and an additional dimension, a crying face. With the addition of the crying face box, it was believed negative affect might be identified. A method used by Crick et al., (2006) was used to ensure the
children understand the format, where by a practice session was administered first. Participants were asked to place pictures of food, toys, or animals in one of the boxes accompanied with comments acknowledging their choice (i.e., “Do carrots make you sad?”; “Oh, cameras make you happy?”; “Awe, dogs make you cry?”). However, when photos were placed in boxes no verbal cues were given. The purpose of the peer ratings was to assess children’s perceptions of relational aggression (Crick et al., 2006).

**Data Analysis**

To answer the research questions data from the surveys were analyzed in two phases. First, descriptive statistics were used to describe the characteristics of both groups. Means and standard deviations were reported for the whole sample and for each group. Second, t-tests for independent sample were used to compare culture groups to determine if there were significant differences on reported relational aggression and negative affect.

**Definition of Terms**

*Relational aggression* is defined as: behaviors that are purposefully intended to damage peer friendships such as angrily excluding another from one’s playgroup, purposefully withdrawing friendship in order to control a friendship, ignoring by covering one’s ears, and spreading rumors to hurt and control friendships (Crick & Grotputer, 1995).
**Negative affect** is defined as negative emotions including: crying, sadness, turned down mouth, head down, and withdrawal such as avoiding peers.

**Culture** is defined as: a set of systems of meanings, practices, and social institutions in the context of expressing emotions within collective and individualistic societies (Mesquita, 2001).

**Limitations**

This study has several limitations worth discussing. Firstly, due to the small and non-representative sample, findings cannot be generalized to other populations and need replication. Secondly, although teachers were trained in administering the peer surveys, no measure of fidelity in administration of the “game” with children was collected, thus there may have been bias in the way the pictures/photos were presented. Another limitation was in the data sources. Although having two respondents (teacher and peer) strengthens the study, adding researcher observation in future research may provide a more objective measure of affect and aggression that could increase the validity of methodology and corroborate the findings. For example, mean differences on negative affect reported by teachers may indicate that the teachers over identified sadness in some children. Additionally, extending data collection to the playground, participant’s home (parents as informants) and neighborhood would have given a clearer look at relational aggression within these contexts (Crick et al., 2006; McEvoy et al., 2003).
Organization of the Study

The next chapter, Chapter Two, discusses relevant literature pertaining to relational aggression, culture, and negative affect in children from preschool age to adolescence. Chapter Three provides the methodology that was used to conduct this study. Chapter Four describes the analysis used and research question findings. Finally, Chapter Five discusses the conclusions and limitations of this study and provides suggestions for future research in relational aggression.
Chapter Two
LITERATURE REVIEW

The subject of bullying among children has received increasing interest from researchers since the 1980’s (Maccoby & Jacklin, 1980; Olweus, 1994; Crick & Grotz, 1995; Owens, Slee, & Shute, 2000; Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Kawabata et al., 2010). In too many cases, adolescents have been negatively affected, physically or emotionally, some to the point of suicide (Hinduja, Patchin, 2010; James, 2010; Kaltiala-Heino, Rimpela, Marttunen, Rimpela, & Rantanen, 1999; Kumpulainen, Rasanen, & Puura, 2001; Luxton, June, & Fairall, 2012; River & Noret, 2010). Further, aggressive behavior in children has been shown to be linked with higher risk of future social problems, substance abuse, and criminal behavior (Elkinson, 2009). Researchers have focused their attention on the seriousness of bullying by exploring the many forms of bullying.

**Forms of Bullying**

Bullying takes many forms. Physical bullying is harm through which there is damage or threat of damage to ones physical well being (Crick & Grotz, 1995). Examples are kicking, hitting, threatening, shoving, and locking inside a room (Espelage & Swearer, 2003). Physical bullying involves one or more children who repeatedly taunt another child who is viewed as less powerful and where some children regularly abuse targeted classmates (Olweus, 1994; Raskauskas, 2010; Shaffer, 2009).
Verbal bullying is any communication that is intended to psychologically cause pain to another and as children become more verbal it is more commonly seen on the playground (Vissing, Straus, Gelles, & Harrop, 1991). Examples of verbal bullying are sending nasty notes, purposely not talking to another person, name-calling, teasing, and face-to-face confrontation (Espelage & Swearer, 2003).

Technology can be additional medium for bullies to verbally and/or covertly assault their targets. This form of bullying is referred to as cyber-bullying or electronic bullying (Raskauskas & Stoltz, 2007). Cell phones and computers provide an environment for critical and positive learning but also provide youth with a tool for bullying. Cyber-bullying has been universally defined as, “willful and repeated harm inflicted through the medium of electronic text” (Hinduja & Patchin, 2008). Peers are an important part of a youth’s social and emotional development (Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Kupersmidt & Coie, 1990), so it is not surprising that not only do they use their cell phones and computers to socialize and keep in contact, but also for covert aggression such as saying/texting hurtful words, sending provocative pictures (sexing), and texting threatening words to harm someone else (Smith, Mahdavi, Carvalho, Fisher, Russell, & Tippett, 2008).

Another form of aggression, and the focus of this thesis, is the more indirect form of bullying known as relational aggression. This is a form of covert aggression where the intent is to harm another person through manipulation of relationships and social exclusion (Werner & Crick, 2004). Relational aggression includes behaviors that are purposefully intended to damage peer friendships such as angrily excluding another from one’s group, purposefully withdrawing friendship in order to control a friendship, ignoring by covering one’s ears, and spreading rumors to hurt and control friendships (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995). Unlike
physical and verbal bullying relational aggression is often psychological in nature and includes manipulation such as malicious gestures, making faces or exclusion from play unless the target goes along with aggressor (Crick & Grotputer, 1995; Kawabata et al., 2010).

In some middle school age children and adolescents the behaviors are intentional and strategically designed to harm others by damaging peer relationships by way of rumor spreading, using social exclusion, manipulation, retaliation, body posturing, and facial expressions (Crick et al., 1997; McEvoy et al., 2003; McNeilly, Hart, Robinson, Nelson, & Olsen, 1996; Simmons, 2002). Previously it was thought that preschool age and younger children did not engage in relational aggression because they were egocentric and the aggression was believed to be without intent to harm (Miller, 2002; Shaffer, 2009). However, research has shown that preschool age children do engage in relational aggression (Crick et al., 2006; Crick, Ostrov, & Werner, 2006).

Relational aggression in preschool often looks like walking away from a peer when peer tries to play with them, telling other children not to pay with someone, whispering or saying mean things about other children, telling children to go away, not listening to another child by covering ears, telling another child he/she will stop liking them unless they do what they want, or telling other children that they can’t play with the group unless they do what the group wants them to do (McNeilly-Choque et al., 1996).

**Relational Aggression in School Age Children**

Ostrov et al., (2006) suggest that peer relationships are an important part of school age children’s social, emotional, and cognitive development. This can have an effect on interpersonal relationships later on in their school years. Therefore, if unhealthy skills develop within these
relationships to resolve conflicts, peer rejection, victimization, and internalizing problems they can interfere with healthy friendships and school performance (Ostrov et al., 2006).

Victims of covert aggression rate more poorly on measures of psychological well being than their peers (Kawabata et al., 2010; Owens et al., 2000). Hundreds of studies have looked at the social-psychological effects of physical aggression with intervention strategies being specifically designed for those children at risk (see Ostrov et al., 2006), yet very few interventions have been designed to deal with relational aggression due to the hidden aspect of the behaviors. Therefore, very few strategies to intervene social-psychological adjustment problems such as peer rejection, eating disorders, delinquency, and internalizing emotions have been implemented (Crick, Murray-Close, & Woods, 2005; Crick et al., 2006; Murray-Close, Ostrov, & Crick, 2007; Werner & Crick, 2004). However, Rose and Swenson (2009) report that adolescent girls who perceived themselves as popular experience no emotional adjustment problems when they tease or gossip about another peer.

**Preschool Age Children and Relational Aggression**

Studies of relational aggression among preschool age children have found the behaviors to be quite common in children’s interactions (Crick et al., 1997; McNeilly-Choque et al., 1996). In addition, longitudinal studies have shown that early childhood aggression is a predictor of future social maladjustment (Crick et al., 1997). Because children at this age are still developing cognitively and linguistically, relational aggressive behaviors are still relatively unsophisticated. Although preschool age children
are just beginning to understand their social world and engage in relational aggression in more concrete ways, recent studies have shown that they are already beginning to use covert forms such as gossiping and rumor spreading (Putallaz & Bierman, 2004). Possibly, children learn the behavior by modeling adults and other older children (Carroll & Bandura, 1985).

Early childhood is the developmental period when preschool age children learn social skills and form relationships (Miller, 2002; Shaffer, 2009). It is common for preschool age children to form new friends in the classroom at the beginning of a school year. It is also common for aggression to be observed at relatively high rates as individuals sort out their hierarchical status and compete for limited resources’ such as toys, snacks, and play spaces at the beginning of school (Pellegrini, Roseth, Mliner, Bohn, Van Ryzin, Vance, Cheatham, & Tarullo, 2007). It may seem surprising that children as young as four and five years old can express relational aggressive behaviors, yet previous studies have shown that young children learn relational aggressive behaviors from a number of sources; peers (McEvoy et al., 2003), siblings (Stauffacher & DeHart, 2005), and parent’s beliefs about relational aggression. (Casas, Weigel, Crick, Ostrov, Woods, Yeh, & Huddleston-Casas, 2006).

Sibling relationships have influences on young children’s social development. Studies have shown that not only do siblings have an effect on learned physical aggression (Martin & Ross, 1995) but also older siblings model relational aggressive behaviors to their younger counterparts (Ostrov et al., 2006). Preschool age children learn
relational aggressive behaviors from their older siblings, in addition, they use it more with their older siblings then they do their peers (Stauffacher & DeHart, 2005).

Parents model relational aggressive behaviors by using psychological control. For example, when a child is consistently exposed punitive parental control that is covert in nature (i.e. love withdrawal, or “I won’t love you tomorrow if you are not good”) they may adopt the behavior with peers (Laible, Carlo, Torquati, & Ontai, 2004). Casas et al., (2006) found that some parents who use psychological control (i.e. guilt induction) had children who were rated by their teachers as relationally aggressive. Interestingly, they also found a relationship between fathers who use psychological control and their daughter’s demonstration of relational aggressive behaviors. This is noteworthy because maternal psychological control was not associated with relational aggressive behaviors in boys. In a study by Werner, Senich, and Przepyszny (2006), mothers were more likely to perceive physical aggression as more hurtful then relational aggression. Another study found mothers to view physical aggression as “bullying” behavior but not relational aggression (Stockdale, Haungaduambo, Duys, Larson, & Sarvela, 2002). In general, mothers have been shown to view relational aggression as more normal and acceptable than fathers (Werner & Grant, 2008).

Another interesting factor associated with relational aggression in young children is language development. The association between language development and aggression in preschool age children is interesting in that research has shown that lower language skills in children is a predictor for future physical aggression (Adams, Snowling, Hennesy, & Kind, 1999; Stevenson, Richman & Graham, 1985) yet strong language
skills may facilitate onset of relational aggression (Bonica, Arnold, Fisher, & Zeljo, 2003). For example, relational aggression may be developmental in nature in that children as young as 2-1/2 years old demonstrate relational aggressive behaviors when they begin to use language (Crick et al., 1999). In addition, results from Bonica et al., (2003) provided support for a positive relationship between strong verbal skills and relational aggression that was robust across gender and SES among preschool age children. Many strategies of relational aggression rely on verbal sophistication (McNeilly-Choque et al., 1996). For example, children who use indirect means of aggression manipulate their friendships by saying mean things behind someone’s back or, they may threaten the friendship with an ultimatum unless they do, as the child wants (Crick, 1996; Crick, Bigbee, & Howes, 1996; Crick & Grotpeter, 1995; Crick, Werner, Casas, O’Brien, Nelson, Grotpeter, & Markon, 1999; McNeilly-Choque et al., 1996). In addition, the development of theory of mind (ability to attribute mental states to others separate from self) has been found to be linked to early language ability and facilitates relational aggression (Astington & Jenkins, 1999). A review of the literature found limited research on relational aggression and preschool students and none on a cross-cultural analysis of relational aggression and preschool students.

**Gender Differences in Relational Aggression**

Previous research among school age children has documented that boys are more likely to engage in overt aggression, and girls are more likely to use more covert methods of aggression (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995; Owens et al., 2000; Willer & Cupach, 2008).
However, recent studies have shown this gender gap narrowing and that there is little difference in the use of relational aggression among boys and girls (Coyne, Archer, Eslea, & Liechty, 2008; Carpenter & Nangle, 2006). What may differ are cultural perceptions about the use of aggression, the perception that covert aggression by boys is justified; where- as aggression for girls it is not considered socially acceptable (Coyne et al., 2008). This could be why adolescent girls who are targets of such teasing and rumors report higher levels of stress when the perpetrated against (Eder, 1996).

Researchers have determined that when all forms of aggression -physical, relational, and verbal are taken into account, both boys and girls are approximately equal in the rate in which they display them (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995; Espelage & Swearer, 2003). Yet, there are studies that show gender differences. When assessing relational aggression among younger children, findings have been varied based on informant (e.g. teacher, observer, peer) that relational aggression and physical aggression are gender specific (Archer, 2004 [as cited in Pellegrini & Roseth, 2006]; Estrem, 2005). For example, Archer (2004) found the largest effect sizes, 74%, was favoring girls for relational aggression when informant was via observation, followed by peer ratings at 19% and teacher reports at 13%. Yet, the most significance was the peer nominations with less than 1% no gender differences noted in relational aggressive behaviors. A study done by Ostrov, Woods, Jansen, Casas, & Crick (2004) showed that, preschool age boys observed relational aggression was positively associated with teacher-rated exclusion by peers. Although Pellegrini and Roseth’s (2006) article was a discussion article, their report was consistent with others in that they reported no gender differences when using
teacher ratings of relational aggression. To further show varied results on gender differences, Ostrov (2006) found that girls are more likely to be relationally aggressive against girls, and boys were more relationally aggressive to boys.

When looking at relational aggression behaviors among boys and girls from other countries, mixed findings have emerged. Using self-report questionnaires, girls between 8 and 15 years of age in Finland, Italy, Poland, and Israel were more likely than boys to use relational aggression (Osterman, Bjorkqvist, Lagerspetz, Kaukiainen, Landau, Fraczek, & Caprara, 1998). Chinese preschool girls were found to be more relationally aggressive, than boys were, when their mothers where physically controlling and their fathers were more psychologically controlling (Nelson, Hart, Yang, Olsen, & Shenghua, 2006). In contrast, boys in southern Italy were observed to more likely exhibit relational aggression than girls (Tomada & Schneider, 1997).

In a study by Crick and Grotpeter, (1995) 491 third through sixth-grade children were assessed for gender differences in overt and relational aggression. To assess the relation between gender and aggression, two analyses of variance were conducted where gender and grade served as the independent variable and children’s scores for overt and relational aggression served as the dependent variables. Results revealed that girls were more prone to relational aggression and boys more prone to overt aggression. In a another study done by Crick et al., (2006) preschool age boys and girls were assessed for relational and physical forms of aggression. Girls observed relational aggression was stable over time whereas boys observed relational aggression was not stable over time. In addition, girls observed indirect aggression significantly predicted future teacher reports
of peer rejection where as for boys observed relational aggression was not significantly predictable of future peer rejection. Because there are varied results with informant assessments of relational aggression on gender differences, boys and girls were chosen for this study.

**Theoretical Framework**

In this study, a theoretical framework pertaining to cultural patterns was used to predict and understand relational aggression in two subcultures. Sociocultural theory argues that children’s first culture of learning and development is via the discourse/interactions between themselves and their parents within a social-cultural context (Bodrova & Leong, 2007). This is important because problem solving abilities and expression of emotions may suggest different meanings within different societies. For example, in some cultures, children are encouraged to express emotional harmony, adjust to the needs of others, and be aware of how their emotions influence others (Rogoff, 2003). In other cultures children are encouraged to be different, establish themselves as special, display uniqueness through expression of emotions, and use emotions to assert themselves (Tsai et al., 2002).

The sociocultural framework adds merit to this study because it asserts that children’s learning is a socially mediated process that varies from culture to culture (Miller, 2002; Shaffer, 2009). In addition, it informs that children’s cognitive development is grounded in culture and history where culture mediates learning through language and adult mentoring (Kagitcibasi, 2007). Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory states
that when adults share their knowledge, whether it is emotional or cognitive, with their children, they are shaping their child’s development by socially sharing thoughts and ideas that reflect their culture by way of their language system (Miller, 2002; Shaffer, 2009). These social exchanges provide a culturally unique learning environment (Bodrova & Leong, 2007). For example, when adults communicate with a child, the language and its meaning goes into the child’s mental underground. Language directs thinking, which in turn directs the child’s behavior and influences how they organize and express thoughts and emotions (Miller, 2002).

As children use language they are demonstrating their own cultural system of meanings that help them make sense of their world (Bodrova & Leong, 2007; Miller, 2002; Shaffer, 2009). This is important because problem solving abilities and social-psychological adjustment problems, such as depressive symptoms, may suggest different meanings within a collective society, such as the Chinese American community, and an individualistic society, such as the Euro American community. For example, in a collective culture children are encouraged to express emotional harmony, adjust to the needs of others, and be aware of how their emotions influence others, whereas in an individualistic culture some children are encouraged to be different, establish themselves as special, display uniqueness through expression of emotions, and use emotions to assert themselves (Tsai et al., 2002). How parent’s support and communicate with their children may have culturally unique implications on how they express, respond, and cope with relational aggressive behaviors. It was hypothesized that the Chinese American children
would be less likely to exhibit negative affect in response to a peer’s photo than the Euro American children due to the importance placed on harmony within peer groups.

**Culture and Relational Aggression**

How children express emotions may additionally be influenced by cultural patterns known as collectivism and individualism, and although measuring them has been somewhat challenging for researchers it has been found that collectivist societies give more priority to the goals of the group and individualistic societies give more priority to personal goals (Triandis, 2001). It is important to examine factors of culture because culture plays a strong role in a child’s development (Bodrova & Leong, 2007; Miller, 2002; Shaffer, 2009). Furthermore, relational aggression can only be understood in the context of the norms that govern acceptable social behavior within a culture (French et al., 2002). For example, social ostracism (excluding from the group) may be viewed differently in a collective society than in an individualistic society (Kawabata et al., 2010).

Understanding the role of cultural beliefs and values in relational aggression among preschool age children affords early interventions that can be uniquely and respectfully tailored to each child. Yet, it is important not to assume that everybody in individualistic cultures assume all the characteristics of that culture and the same for collectivist culture, rather people sample from both depending on the situation and share certain values such as understanding, appreciation, and acceptance of oneself and the world (Schwartz, 1990; Triandis, 2001).
Culture has been defined as “shared attitudes, beliefs, categorizations, expectations, norms, roles, self-definition, values, and other elements that are found and shared among individuals whose interactions are of the same language and historical period (Triandis, 1993; Triandis & Suh, 2002). Through socialization, communication, and modeling children learn the traits of their culture (Triandis, 1993). Individualism and collectivism are organizing themes of a subjective culture in that the organizing theme for individualism is centered on the “self” or the “individual” and for collectivism; it is centered on “family/tribe” or “group” (Lee, McCauley, & Draguns, 1999; Triandis, 1993). In addition, the utility of cultures effects the development of personality and expression of emotions (Lee et al., 1999). Many Western societies score higher on individualism, whereas many Asian countries, such as China and Japan, score higher on collectivism (Forbes, Collinworth, Zhoa, Kohlman, & LeClaire, 2011; Li, Wang, Wang, & Shi, 2010).

The majority of children raised in collective societies are taught to be interdependent within their in-group (family, tribe, and nation) and to shape their behavior in a communal way. Majority of children raised in an individualistic culture are taught autonomy and to be independent from their in–groups; they behave on the basis of their attitudes rather than the norms of the group (Triandis, 2001). Collective cultures focus heavily on maintaining relationships and prefer conflict resolutions that do not destroy relationships (Leung, 1988; Triandis, 2001). Emotions are expected to be expressed in relation to others and social sharing ensures that others share in the concern with behaviors appropriate for the group (Mesquita, 2001). For example, children are
socialized to view themselves as part of a group where emotions are expressed in the relationship to others, whereas in an individualistic culture children are socialized to be unique and independent where emotions are expressed for the subjective self (Mesquita, 2001). In collective cultures interpersonal communication, or personal information, is exchanged when the verbal statements facilitate social cohesiveness (Bond, 1986).

Chinese children are raised as early as kindergarten with the ideology that personal sacrifice is for the social good (Bond, 1986; Dien, 1982). In addition, humility is encouraged because it may enhance group harmony and facilitate group work (Bond, Leung, & Wan, 1982). Emphasis is put on social harmony and group interest and verbalizing expression of emotions/feelings can often be viewed as disrupting the group and seen as superfluous and improper (Wang, 2001). Parents in Chinese cultures are not preoccupied with children expressing their emotions instead emphasize psychological discipline, yet children are encouraged to be sensitive to others feelings (Chao, 1995; Chen, Hastings, Rubin, Chen, Cen, & Stewart, 1998). For example, a study done by Wang (2001) explored American mother-child and Chinese mother-child conversations with their 3 year olds about emotional experiences. It was found that American mother-child conversations showed an “emotion-explaining style” in which child and mother discussed rich explanations of emotions.

The Chinese mother-child conversations showed an “emotion-criticizing style” where the focus was on proper behavior in the child and gave few explanations of emotion itself. Yet, the Chinese mothers were more likely than their American counterpart to encourage their children to reestablish the relationship with the
“perpetrator” who caused the negative emotion and teach their children moral appropriateness. This is important because Chinese preschool age children may be more affected then US preschool children by being bullied. They are raised to consider group harmony and may not fully disclose their hurt, especially in classroom setting as doing so may create group disharmony. Crick et al., (2006) studied relational aggression and physical aggression in a sample of US preschool age children and results suggested that preschool age girls do engage in relational aggressive behaviors, and furthermore, the behaviors remain stable during early childhood and were associated with future peer rejection. No studies have been found that have looked at cultural differences in the association between relational aggression and psychological adjustment problems among preschool age children because constructs such as depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem are hard to measure in preschool age children.

It is just recently that a cross-cultural perspective has been applied to the study of relational aggression looking at fourth graders in Japan and United States (Kawabata et al., 2010). They looked at 197 fourth grade Japanese and 99 fourth grade US children and found that the association between relational aggression and depression was influenced by culture in that the Japanese children exhibited greater depressive symptoms then the US children possibly due to importance of peer relationships and friendships. In addition, the association was stronger for relationally aggressive Japanese children then non-aggressive Japanese children. Their study demonstrated that relational aggression was associated with social-psychological adjustment problems in both cultures, but was stronger for the Japanese children. Kawabata et al., (2010) suggested that because
children in Japan were raised in a collective society that value group relationships and intimacy, children were more vulnerable to negative interpersonal experiences such as relational aggression. Japanese children place a high value on relationships, there is high emotional distress when they aggress against a peer. They note that relationally aggressive children in Japan may be rewarded initially, but soon experience rejection by their peers. Additionally, Kawabata et al., (2010), state that because Japanese children relate to others as a group, it is possible that the aggression on one peer influences the others in the group. This may be due to Japanese parenting styles emphasizing “symbiotic harmony” or the encouragement of harmonious relationships in which the goal is to teach children to strive for stable long term relationships (Kawabata et al., 2010). In contrast, US parents teach independence and individualism where the goal is for their children to be unique and to explore new environments on their own (Kawabata et al., 2010; Triandis & Suh, 2002).

In another cross-cultural study done by Tsai et al., (2002), differences and similarities of emotion expression were noted between Hmong-Americans and Euro Americans. The Chinese culture is similar to Hmong culture in that they both regard expression of negative emotions to be disharmonious to the group. This may be due to emphasis on emotional balance and the high value placed on the needs of others in that there is concern their emotional expression may affect others (Frye, 1995; Tsai et al., 2002).

No studies have been found that explore relational aggression among Chinese American preschool age children and few have looked at Euro American preschool age
children. When exploring relational aggression in collective and individualistic cultures respect to how children are socialized needs to be considered. Across studies, East Asian societies such as Japan and China have been noted as collective in nature in that children are raised to consider the welfare of others, value relationships, and promote balance within the group (Frye, 1995; Tsai et al., 2002). Many studies have been done exploring the Chinese culture but no study to date has looked at differences in relational aggression behaviors and the associations with negative affects within the Chinese American and Euro American preschool age population.

Within the collective culture, high value is placed on considering the group needs over the self. Parenting centers on teaching children interdependence and conformity with others instead of autonomy. Similar to other Asian cultures, parenting beliefs are directed to honor family, be respectful of authority, and be aware of their position in the family (Stright et al., 2009). In addition, Chinese and East Asian societies (Brendgen, Dionne, Girard, Boivin, Vitaro, & Perusse, 2005) children are socialized with filial piety beliefs, or devotion to family. For example, children are expected to obey parents without question and keep opinions to themselves (Nguyen & Williams, 1989). This concept is important when attempting to understand associations between relational aggression and depressive symptoms because depressive symptoms may look different in each culture.

**Psychological Effects of Bullying**

The emotional consequences to targets of relational aggression can be numerous. Victims have reported loss of self-esteem, anxiety, and loneliness (Willer & Cupach,
Slee (1995) has shown that victimized children of bullying experience poor self-esteem, unhappiness at school, feel left out of peer groups, and feel they have no control. Research consistently associates victimization with depression both concurrently and over time (Hawker & Boulton, 2000). In fact, Rueger, Malecki, & Demary (2011) found that psychosocial and academic effects occur at the onset of bullying, but that not all of these effects abate without intervention after the bullying stops.

Crick and Grotpeter (1996) have documented children’s reports of loneliness and depression, from acts of relational aggression. Crick and Grotpeter (1995) found that targets of relational aggression were more emotionally upset, rejected by peers, felt more lonely, and had greater self-resistant problems (e.g. inhibiting anger, greater impulsivity) than non-peers. Teens may initially deny suffering any ill effect, but upon repeated aggression children have reported anxiety, loss of self-esteem, and depression so severe it lead to the desire to escape the group, then escape from school (Crick & Grotpeter, 1996; Owen et al., 2000; Willer & Cupach, 2008). Feelings of victimization have placed children at risk for decreased school performance, negative attitudes about school, and academic failure (Juvonen, Nishina, & Graham, 2000). This can lead to emotional problems such as depression, isolation, and worthlessness (Rose & Swenson, 2009).

Cross-cultural studies exploring relational aggression and physical aggression have been reported in multiple countries outside the United States such as Indonesia (French et al., 2002), Russia (Hart, Nelson, Robinson, Olsen, & McNeilly-Choque, 1998), Belgium (Kuppens et al., 2009), and Italy (Tomada & Schneider, 1997). For example in a cross-cultural study of Japanese and United States fourth-graders, Kawabata
et al., (2010) found both overt aggression and covert aggression were associated with external adjustment problems (disruptive behavior) and internal adjustment problems (depression) where culture had an influence. For example, Japanese children were more affected than United States children by depressive symptoms, both when they were the bullier and when they were the target. In other words, because Japanese children place a high value on relationships, there is high emotional distress when they aggress against a peer. In addition, both types of aggression have been shown to be stable over time and significantly predictive of future social maladjustment (Crick, 1996). Knowing whether an adolescent who aggresses feels remorse for aggressing (e.g. feeling unhappy, depressed, or worthless) is important because they are more likely to seek help, yet, if a child does not feel any remorse or emotional problems about aggressing they have little reason to change (Rose & Swenson, 2009).

Studies have demonstrated that there are cross-cultural similarities and differences in the way children internalize and externalize the effects of relational aggression (Crick, 1996; Crick & Grotpeter, 1995; Kawabata et al., 2010). Although most studies have looked at elementary school age children and adolescence (Crick, 1996; Coyne et al., 2008; Kawabata et al., 2010; Owens et al., 2000; Swearer, 2008) there are limited studies in this area that focus on preschool age children and even less on the cross-cultural influences. To further the study of relational aggression behaviors among the preschool population, additional tools and measures may be needed to precisely assess psychological impact. These tools must be sensitive across cultures and be valid with a wide range of young children. With the findings of this study, it may help with future
research that examines relational aggression cross-culturally among children as young as toddler age. The following chapter addresses the method used in the current study.
Chapter 3

METHODS

Research Question

Are there cross-cultural differences in negative affect responses as they relate to relational aggression behaviors between Chinese American and Euro American preschool age children? Specifically the following two hypotheses were tested:

1. Chinese American and Euro American preschool children will differ in amount of teacher reported relational aggression in that the Chinese American group will have higher reports of relational aggressive behaviors.

2. Chinese American and Euro American preschool age children will differ in the amount of teacher reported and peer reported negative affect in that the Euro American group will have higher teacher and peer reports of negative affect.

Research Design

This study was a descriptive, comparative, quasi-experimental design that used peer and teacher surveys to compare Euro American and Chinese American preschool age children on negative affect, such as sadness and crying, in association with relational aggressive behaviors. The independent variable was the culture/subculture in which the children were raised. The dependent variable was negative affect associated with relational aggression. Considering the striking difference cross-culturally, in that collective cultures emphasis harmony with-in groups and individualistic cultures
emphasizes expression of self, there would be a significant difference between the groups. Responses where then compared with the scores obtained from the two measures.

**Participants**

Two groups of preschool age children participated in this study (12 girls, 9 boys, $M = 4.40$ years, $SD = .50$). The Euro American participants were 11 students (7 girls, 4 boys) recruited from a university-based preschool located in central California. This location was selected because of the high population of Euro American students and was considered representative of an individualistic culture. The Chinese American participants in this study were 10 students (5 boys and 5 girls) recruited from a Chinese American private preschool located in southern California. The location was selected because of the high population of Asian Americans and was considered representative of a collective culture. Teachers from the Chinese American school, although not of Chinese heritage, had taught there for in excess of 25 years and were regarded by the school’s director as very knowledgeable in working with that population. One of the Euro American teachers was of Euro American heritage and had taught at the school for eight years while the other teacher was of Hispanic heritage and had worked there 15 years.

**Euro American Group**

Gaining approval to conduct research resulted from an initial e-mail that consisted of introductions and research proposal, followed by a personal visit with director of the preschool to discuss if they would like to take part in the research. Two teachers
volunteered to participate in study. A meeting was then scheduled to explain and train teachers on how to conduct the PSBS-T and PSBS-P. The consent forms were disseminated, reviewed by the teachers, kept in the school office for the duration of the study, and then shredded by of school’s director. Information sheets about relational aggression were given to parents along with a written parental consent that was required for each child’s participation (See Appendix B). Students who participated in the survey were picked at random in that the first ten completed consent forms were selected. If a child dropped out of study, the next consent form was accepted. Although consent forms did not address birthplace of children or their parents, teachers reported that all students were born in the United States with parents who were born in the United States.

**Chinese American Group**

Gaining access to this preschool took several months of corresponding via telephone, e-mail, and a personal visit. Two teachers volunteered to take part in study. A meeting was then scheduled to explain and train teachers on how to administer the PSBS-T and PSBS-P. Students who participated in the survey were picked at random in that the first ten completed consent forms were selected.

Most of the parents were non-English speaking therefore the information sheet about relational aggression and the consent form was revised by the school director. In addition, the director personally explained the information sheet and the consent form to the parents before signatures’ were obtained (See Appendix A). Teachers reported that all
students were born in the United States with parents/guardians and grandparents born in China.

The Protocol for the Humans Subjects Committee was submitted and approved by the California State University of Sacramento Human Subject Committee. It was deemed “at risk” in that the children participating in the surveys could be traumatized by being asked to place photos of their classmates in emotion labeled boxes. In both schools, children provided verbal assent to participate in survey or “game” prior to beginning. To insure anonymity of the children, no names were used on surveys. ID numbers were used on all data in lieu of a name. This allowed for anonymity because no name was associated with any portion of the study, with the exception of the consent form, which was kept in the director’s office. No data was collected on any child without consent from a parent or guardian, although because all children in the class were part of the population, no consent was needed for their photo to be placed in a box. Data was only collected on the children who were placing pictures in a box.

Measures

Two measures were used to assess relational aggression and negative affect: (a) teacher ratings “Preschool Social Behavior Scale Teacher Form” [PSBS-T] (Crick et al., 1997; Crick et al., 1999) and (b) a modified version of “Preschool Social Behavior Scale Peers” [PSBS-P] (Crick et al., 2006).
Teacher Rating

Using the PSBS-T, teachers were asked to rate frequency of relational aggression behaviors on a Likert scale (1= never and almost never true to 5= always and almost always true). The PSBS-T, developed in previous studies for children three to five years old (Crick et al., 1997; Crick et al., 1999), had ten items that assessed teacher’s perceptions of relational aggression such as, “This child tries to get others to dislike a peer”, (Crick et al., 1997) and “This child ignores a peer or refuses to listen to her if she is mad at her” (McEvoy et al., 2003), and six items that assess physical aggression such as, “This child kicks or hits others” (Crick et al., 1997), although these were factored out in the analysis (See appendix C).

Three questions addressed negative affect such as crying, sadness, turned downed mouth, and head down. These were also rated as 1 = never and almost never true, to 5 = always and almost always true. The teachers were given written and verbal instructions on how to complete the survey and a researcher was available to answer questions.

Peer Report of negative affect

The PSBS-P (Crick et al., 1997) consists of 19 items that explored participant’s feelings towards their classroom peers. For example, participants rated their peers from “yes, this person makes me happy”, to “no this person makes me cry”. The measure was modified from a nomination scale to a rating scale based on research suggesting that ratings are more reliable then nominations with younger children because participants provide information on all peers in their classroom (Asher & Dodge, 1986; Asher &
Hymel, 1986; Asher, Singleton, Tinsley, & Hymel, 1979; Hymel, 1983; Olson & Lifgren, 1988). Because it is difficult to measure depression in preschool age children, negative affect was measured in this study with sad face and cry face box responses. Furthermore, recent research has shown that children as young as four years old can identify with sadness and other negative emotions when reflecting on past events (Miller, 2002; Shaffer, 2009; Wang, 2001).

For both cultures, the peer-nomination instrument was used to measure negative affect, yet, three elements were added; the child’s name attached to each box, the addition of the cry face box, and no verbal prompts or questions asked about whom in their class physically or relationally aggressed (See appendix D). No known research has utilized the cry face box. The pictorial forms used in this study included an oval outline, brows, nose, and mouth and was chosen to generate extreme degrees of either positive or negative emotions (See appendix E). In a prior study, these shapes were generated to measure, the likes and dislikes of the Carl Orff approach to music among first through third grade students in 1968 (Glasgow & Hamreus, 1968). Children in that study rated the faces to represent very happy, little happy, sad, and very sad. The simple pictorial forms were chosen for this study because they are unlike any happy, sad, or cry face form known to date. There was a high probability that the participants of this study had not seen these forms before and could not relate any experience with them. To eliminate any cultural bias, the pictorial forms were used in both cultures to insure a genuine interpretation of emotions.
The practice pictures used in this study were selected cooperatively by the teachers to depict cultural items familiar to the children. For example, in the collective culture, food items that were common to the children were items such as rice, vegetables, candy, fruit, and drinks. Example pictures of toys were teddy bears, cameras, books, and some gender specific toy dolls and toy cars. Animal’s pictures were dogs, cats, snakes, and spiders. For the individualistic culture, food items included vegetables, ice cream, hamburger, and candy. When considering culture in how negative affect are expressed, there are differences in how children are raised to reveal and express emotions. For example, in collective cultures children are taught in school settings that modesty and honesty are expected both in behavioral conduct and in academic achievement (Lee, Cameron, Xu, Fu, and Board, 1997). Lee et al., (1997) also argues that the difference in collectivism and individualism may affect the way children disclose themselves during interpersonal communication in that disclosing ones deeds may have detrimental effects on group cohesion. It was also suggested that, predominantly in collective cultures, children are taught to exchange information when it serves to facilitate social cohesiveness (Bond, 1986). Teachers questioning about bullying incidents was removed from the study. This was to support children in feeling more comfortable and to promote responses that reveal the child’s actual feelings when choosing a box to place a classmate’s photo. Because the children were familiar with their teacher any risk of being traumatized would have been reduced and identified sooner. Children could refuse to put any picture in a box without repercussions. If child appeared distressed in any way, teachers stopped the activity.
Procedure

Four boxes were each labeled with the child’s name. A face form depicting a happy face (I like this person a lot), a face form depicting a neutral face or straight line for a mouth (This person I like a little), a face form depicting sad face (This person makes me sad), and a face form depicting crying (This person makes me cry) (See Appendix E). For example, if “Jane” were participating in the survey the teacher would use a clip to attach the name “Jane” (written on a small card) on each of the four boxes. The participant’s name was added to assist the children with identifying the happy, neutral, sad, and cry faces as their own.

Before introducing classmate’s photos, teachers first conducted a practice session using pictures of toys, food, and animals so the children would understand how to play the game. Because preschooler’s attention span can vary by child, situation, and interests, approximately five to six pictures were introduced in the practice game. When presented with a picture, the children were asked to place it in one of four boxes. The practice session was reinforced with objective comments such as, “I see you like carrots a lot,” or “You don’t like bears? They make you cry?” “You like dogs a little bit?” Once children were familiar with the game, teachers presented participants with photos of classmates, one at a time, and asked them to place the photo in one of the boxes. Happy face box (1), “I like this classmate, they make me happy”. Neutral face box (2), “I sort of like this classmate”. Sad face box (3), “I do not like this classmate, they make me sad”. Cry face box (4), “I really don’t like this classmate, they make me cry”. Teachers where instructed not to reinforce participants responses of their classmates as in the practice session, but to
respond with “thank you” instead. This was done to increase the freedom of response from the participant and not a response they may think their teacher would want to hear. Careful attention was given to select pictures that would elicit each emotion yet not induce emotional fear and trauma.

Means and standard deviation were calculated for happy face responses, neutral face responses, sad face responses, and cry face responses. A new category was created for negative affect by combining the means and standard deviations of the sad and cry face responses. Happy and neutral faces were used to eliminate getting all sad and/or all cry face responses. The purpose of the peer ratings was to assess children’s perceptions of relational aggression and negative affect.
Chapter 4

RESULTS

This study examined the role of culture on relational aggressive behaviors and their associations with negative affect among Chinese American and Euro American preschool age children. In order to examine the study objectives, the two groups were compared using teacher reports and peer reports. Teacher surveys (PBSP-T) were used to assess relational aggression behaviors and negative affect. Peer ratings (PBSP-P) were used to assess negative affect in response to a peer’s photo.

Descriptive Statistics

Teachers were asked to rate their students on how often they engage in relational aggressive behaviors and how often they look sad in class using a Likert scale (“1”=never or seldom, “5”= always). Students were asked to rate a photo of their classmates using a Likert scale (“1”=”they make me happy”, “4”=”They make me cry). Data from the PSBS-T represent the mean of teacher ratings for relational aggression and negative affect on twenty-one children. Data from the PSBS-P represent the mean of ratings for negative affect in response to a peer photo on twenty-one children. Results from the two assessment methods are displayed in Table 1 for both groups and overall.
Table 1

_Mean Scores of Relational Aggression and Negative Affect (N=21)_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Groups</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Relational Aggression</th>
<th>Negative Affect</th>
<th>Negative Affect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PSBS-T</td>
<td>M (SD)</td>
<td>M (SD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Euro American</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1.50 (.63)</td>
<td>2.70 (1.80)</td>
<td>2.04 (1.15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese American</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.03 (.79)</td>
<td>1.40 (.52)</td>
<td>1.43 (.62)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1.77 (.71)</td>
<td>2.10 (1.50)</td>
<td>1.74 (.89)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teacher reports of relational aggression were scored as follows; a response of “1” indicated that the student “never to almost never” engaged in relational aggression; “2” indicated not often; “3” sometimes was involved; “4” often involved; and “5” always or almost always involved. For a child to be classified as relationally aggressive, a score of 3 (sometimes) and higher was needed on any of the ten relational aggression items in the teacher survey. A Likert scale score of “3” was selected as the starting point when coding behaviors as aggressive, because in order to be classified as relational aggression it must be a repeated behavior occurring over time (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995). Teacher surveys indicated 100% of children in the Chinese American group and 64% of children in the Euro American group engaged in relational aggressive behaviors.

A chi square analysis was conducted for each group to examine whether one gender was more likely to engage in relational aggression. In the Chinese American group, chi square analysis found a relationship between gender and relational aggression.
where boys (60%) were more likely than girls (0%) to “tell a peer they won’t be invited to their clan/birthday party unless he/she does what the child wants”, $X^2 (2, N=10) = 7.3$, $p = .03$. A relationship was also noted where boys (20%) were more likely than girls (0%) to “verbally threaten to hit or beat up other children”, $X^2 (2, N=10) = 6.5$, $p = .02$. No other significance were noted across categories.

In the Euro American group, 29% of girls and 25% of boys were reported by teachers as likely to, “tell a peer they won’t invite them to their clan/birthday party unless he/she does what the child wants”. Moreover, 14% of girls and none of the boys were reported by teachers as likely to, “verbally threaten to hit or beat up other children”. Table 2 depicts the gender distribution.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Groups</th>
<th>Relational Aggression Boys</th>
<th>Relational Aggression Girls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Euro American</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese American</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Children classified as relationally aggressive if scored 3 or higher on teacher report.*

The second scale on the teacher survey examined how often students presented negative affect in class. To be classified as presenting negative affect a score of 3 (sometimes) and higher was needed. Negative affect scores were as follows. “1” never to
almost never sad in class; “2” not often sad in class; “3” sometimes sad in class; “4” often sad in class; and “5” always to almost always sad in class. Teacher reports indicated more children in the Euro American group (64%) presented negative affect than children in the Chinese American group (10%).

Chi square analysis showed no relationship between gender and negative affect in either group. Table 3 shows the group distribution.

Table 3

*Teacher Reports of Negative Affect by Gender*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Groups</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Euro American</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese American</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There was a relationship between teacher’s reports of relational aggression and negative affect when viewing the Euro American (11) and Chinese American (10) groups. Teachers of Euro American children reported less relational aggression but greater negative affect while teachers of Chinese American children reported more relational aggression but lower negative affect.

Children’s degree of negative affect, when rating a peer’s photo, was scored as follows. A peer’s photo placed in the happy face box was scored as “1”, placed in the neutral face box was scored as “2”, placed in the sad face box scored as “3”, and photo
placed in the cry face box scored as “4”. The cry face box was added to this study to capture a wider range of emotional response. The higher scores represented negative affect where “3” was classified as, “This peer makes me sad” and “4” classified as, “This peer makes me cry”. Results for the Euro American group showed 100% of the participants reported negative affect in response to a classmate’s photo. For the Chinese American group, 50% reported negative affect in response to a classmate’s photo. For this study, sad and cry face means were combined to create a total mean because both were scored as negative affect (Refer to Table 1).

**Hypothesis Testing**

The results were organized according to the stated hypothesis. An alpha level of .05 was used for the statistical tests unless otherwise noted.

**Teacher Reports of Relational Aggression**

Considering inter-parental conflict styles in some Chinese cultures (Li, Putallaz, & Su, 2011; Nelson et al., 2006) it was hypothesized that relational aggressive behaviors would be reported more in the Chinese American group than the Euro American group. A two tailed independent sample t-test was used to compare teacher reports of relational aggression across the two groups. Findings showed a significant group difference on teacher reports of relationally aggressive behaviors, $t(19) = -3.39, p = .003$. The Euro American group ($N = 11, M = 15.40, SD = 3.29$) had significantly lower rated relational aggression than the Chinese American group ($N = 10, M = 22.40, SD = 5.85$). The
results support the hypothesis that relational aggressive behaviors would be reported more in the Chinese American boys and girls than the Euro American boys and girls.

**Teacher Reports of Negative Affect**

Considering the cross-cultural differences in the expression of emotions and value placed on harmony within relationships (Triandis, 1993) it was hypothesized that negative affect would be less reported by teachers in the Chinese American group than the Euro American group. A two tailed independent sample t-test comparing the two groups showed that there were significant group differences on teacher reports of negative affect, \( t(12) = 2.78; p = .02 \). The Euro American group \( (N = 11, M = 5.36, SD = 2.90) \) was significantly higher on negative affect than the Chinese American group \( (N = 10, M = 2.80, SD = .91) \). The Euro American group had the higher mean on reported negative affects than the Chinese American group, yet a lower mean on reported relational aggression behaviors. Figure 1 shows the inverse relationship between teacher’s reports of relational aggression and negative affect between the two groups.
Peer Reports of Negative Affect

In addition, it was hypothesized that peer reports would show less negative affect responses for the Chinese American group than the Euro American group.

An independent sample t-test was conducted to compare peer reports of negative affect in both groups. There was a significant difference in the scores for Euro American “sad face” responses to a peer (\(M = .44, SD = .25\)) and Chinese American “sad face” responses to a peer (\(M = .22, SD = .28\)) conditions; \(t(19) = 2.78; p = .01\). There was a significant difference in the scores for Euro American “cry face” responses to a peer (\(M = .69, SD = .60\)) and Chinese American “cry face” responses to a peer (\(M = .00; SD = .00\)) conditions; \(t(19) = 2.85; p < .001\). When the “sad face” emotion and the “cry face” emotion were combined to create the negative affect, the Euro American participants...
were more likely to report a negative emotion toward a peer \((M = .57, SD = .43)\) than the Chinese American group \((M = .11, SD = .14)\) conditions; \(t(19) = 4.43; p < .001\). However, no significant difference was found in the scores for Euro American “happy face” responses \((M = .45, SD = .23)\) and Chinese American “happy face” responses \((M = .60, SD = .27)\) conditions; \(t(19) = 1.50; p = .16\). Lastly, no significant difference was noted in scores for Euro American “neutral face” responses \((M = .43, SD = .28)\) and Chinese American “neutral face” responses \((M = .64, SD = .55)\) conditions; \(t(19) = .50; p = .62\).

These results support the hypothesis that the Chinese American children would be less likely to share negative affect about a peer and that the Euro American children would be more likely to express negative affect. The means and standard deviations for peer ratings are presented in Figure 2 by each emotion face.

**Figure 2.** Mean Scores of Peer Reported Negative Affect

![Bar chart showing mean scores of peer reported negative affect](image-url)
**Relation between Relational Aggression and Negative Affect**

It was also of interest to examine the relationships between relational aggression and negative affect. In the Euro American group, negative associations were found in three areas. Firstly, relational aggression was negatively correlated to reports of sadness when a “child was mad at a peer and kept peer from being in playgroup”, $r(9) = - .81, p < .01$. Secondly, “when a child told a peer they won’t be invited to their clan/birthday unless he/she does what the child wants”, there was a negative relationship with “child looking sad”, $r(9) = - .81, p < .01$. Lastly, there was a negative association on “child turns his/her back on a peer when he/she is mad at that peer” and “child looking sad”, $r(9) = - .62, p < .05$. Correlations are presented in Table 5. The negative associations might represent teachers over-reporting sadness and/or under-reporting relational aggression. Another possible explanation might be due to differences in parenting practices between groups.
Table 4

*Pearson Correlations Among Relational Aggression and Negative Affect (n=11)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscale</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. When mad at child, this child keeps that peer from being in the play group</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Child tells a peer they won’t be invited to their clan/birthday unless he/she does what child wants.</td>
<td>1.00**</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Child walks away or turns his/her back when he/she is mad at another peer.</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Child looks sad.</td>
<td>-0.81**</td>
<td>-0.81**</td>
<td>-0.62*</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)**

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Cultural Group = Euro American

No significant correlations were noted in teacher reports of relational aggression and negative affect within the Chinese American group. Additionally, no significant associations were noted between teacher reports of relational aggression and peer reports of negative affect.
Chapter 5

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this thesis was to examine the role of culture sub-group in relational aggression behaviors and the associations with negative affect between two groups of preschool age children from Southern California and Central California. This study contributes to the existing information on bullying in that it adds to recent studies looking at relational aggression among preschool children (Crick et al., 2006; McEvoy et al., 2003). In addition, it adds new information on the cross-cultural differences in associations between relational aggression and negative affect among preschool children (Crick et al., 1999; Kawabata et al., 2010). In this study, it was hypothesized that higher levels of relational aggression would be reported for the Chinese American group compared to the Euro American group. The second hypothesis was that the relationship between relational aggression and negative affect would be stronger for the Euro American group than the Chinese American group. The present study revealed possible associations between relational aggression and negative affect that may have been influenced by culture such that, compared to the Chinese American group, the relationship was stronger for the Euro American group. In other words, the Euro American participants reported more sad faces and cry faces when presented with a peer photo. In addition, teacher surveys for both groups were consistent with peer reports. The scores obtained for the Chinese American group indicated high relational aggression with low negative affect.
**Teacher Reports of Relational Aggression**

As hypothesized, there were overarching differences between groups on teacher reports of relational aggression. In the Chinese American group, 91% of the participants were reported as being relationally aggressive compared to 70% of Euro Americans. This is noteworthy because over two thirds of the participants in both groups were identified as exhibiting these behaviors. These findings are consistent with numerous researchers who have documented preschoolers, and children as young as nursery school, engaging in relational aggression (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995; Crick et al., 1996, 1997; Hart et al., 1998; McEvoy et al., 2003).

Gender differences were noted between groups. In the Chinese American group, 84% of the boy’s and 100% of the girl’s exhibited relational aggression. In the Euro American group, 50% of the boys and 72% of the girls exhibited relational aggression. This is inconsistent with previous studies showing insignificant gender differences (Hart et al., 1998; McEvoy et al., 2003; Stauffacher & DeHart, 2005; Juliano, Werner & Cassidy, 2006). Although, having a small overall sample size (n= 21) may have contributed to the gender differences.

There are several possible explanations for the higher rate of relational aggression among the Chinese American participants. Forbes et al., (2011) noted that in collective cultures direct or overt forms of confrontation to settle a dispute are reprimanded because it causes disharmony in a group. Child-rearing practices place emphasis on using indirect forms of aggression to settle conflicts and children are rewarded for doing so. Additionally, Forbes et al., (2011) showed that participants from China reported high
levels of indirect conflict-reducing behaviors and lower levels of overt behaviors when settling disputes. In contrast, Nelson et al., (2006) researched relational aggression among preschool age children in China and reported physically coercive and psychologically controlling parenting to predict relational aggression in Chinese children. Cultural practices are transmitted to children via language and modeling of behavior, so it makes sense that children will learn conflict strategies, whether it is direct or indirect, from their parents (Triandis & Suh, 2002).

Another possible explanation for higher relational aggression may be that the Chinese American group’s language skills were more developed. Chinese American children may live in a home environment where they speak Chinese (maybe one or more of seven different Chinese dialects) and English. Strong emphasis is placed on language and education in the Chinese culture (Cheng, Newman, Qu, Mbulo, Cha, Chen, & Shell, 2010; Vang, 2010). Studies have shown that strong expressive verbal skills appear to predict relational aggression (Estrem, 2005). In addition, children as young as four years old can make clear distinctions between their public self and their private self (theory of mind and this is further fostered with language development (Shaffer, 2009). The Chinese children in this study speak several languages and may be more verbally skilled than young children who speak one language (Barac & Bialystok, 2012). However, additional cross-cultural studies in the area of relational aggression and language skills among preschool age children are needed to support such a claim.
Teacher and Peer Reports of Negative Affect

Relational aggression has been shown to be associated with depression symptoms and social-psychological adjustment problems (Cheng et al., 2010; Crick et al., 1999, 2006; Crick & Grotpeter, 1995; & Kawabata et al., 2010). This study was exploratory in nature in that it looks at relational aggression and associations with negative affect, cross-culturally, among preschool age children. It follows the studies done by Crick et al., (1997) and Crick et al., (1999) who looked at social-psychological adjustment (peer rejection, peer acceptance, and prosocial behavior) in preschoolers. In addition, the following two measures, as juxtaposed to previous studies, looked at depression and social-psychological adjustment problems in older children. Because it has been shown that relational aggression is significantly associated with depression and anxiety (Craig, 1998; Kumpulainen et al., 2001) future social maladjustment (Crick, 1996; Kawabata et al., 2010), suicide (Kaltiala-Heino et al., 1999; Rivers & Noret, 2010) and low self-esteem (Kumpulainen et al., 2001; Simmons, 2002), they add merit to this study.

Teacher Reports of Negative Affect

Results showed Euro American participants had more teacher reports of negative affect than the Chinese American group. In the Euro American group, 64% of the participants reported with negative affect. This was not surprising because to be identified as sad, teachers only had to report “sometimes” or greater to classify a child as having negative affect. The same scoring applied to report a participant not having much fun at school. It was surprising that in the Chinese American group, 91% had no reports
of negative affect. This high percentage means the majority of the participants received scores of, “not often” or “never” on looking sad and not having fun at school. This study demonstrated a significant cross-cultural difference in that more than half of the Euro American participants reported as looking sad and not having much fun at school. These findings contribute to Crick et al., (1997) who found that relational aggression in preschoolers significantly related to social-psychological maladjustment (e.g., more depressed, lonely, socially anxious, and rejected) in both boys and girls. It was also in line with Crick et al., (1999) where teachers reported increased internalizing problems in preschool children. In addition, these findings were similar to past research in school age children (Crick, 1996; Crick & Grotpeter, 1995) where relational aggression significantly related to high levels of peer rejection. This is important because relationally aggressive behaviors predict future peer rejection for both boys and girls (Crick, 1996). It is not clear; however, whether sadness and not having fun at school was related to relational aggression due to the restricted scope of this study. Overt aggression was factored out in the analysis because this study was only looking at relational aggression. In addition, teachers may not have recognized negative affect in the children. Future cross cultural research on preschool aged children should examine relationships between each form of aggression and indicators of negative affect.

For the Chinese American group, findings were inconsistent with past cross-cultural studies that looked at relationships between relational aggression and social-psychological adjustment problems in older children. A study done by Kawabata (2010) revealed that relationally aggressive children in Japan were more likely to exhibit
depressive symptoms when they aggressed against a peer. This could be because collective societies place high value on relationships (interdependence). They may be biased against being hostile themselves, therefore, will experience more emotional distress when they use aggressive behaviors towards a peer. This was not the case in the current study. Although the Chinese American participants had high levels of relational aggression, teacher reports revealed low levels of negative affect.

**Peer Reports of Negative Affect**

In the Euro American group, all of the children rated peers with a reaction of negative affect. In the Chinese American group, half of the children rated peers with a reaction of negative affect. Although, self-reports were in the lower range than the Euro American group, the Chinese American range was still noteworthy. This is not surprising because participants had only to place one peer in the sad face box or the cry face box to identify with negative affect.

No known study has explored cross-cultural differences in peer reports of negative affect due to relational aggression among preschool children. Previous studies have been limited to elementary age and adolescence children and very few have explored the cross-cultural influences. However, Kawabata et al., (2010) looked at Japanese (collective culture) and United States (individualistic cultural) fourth grade students and found that for the Japanese children, the association between relational aggression and depressive symptoms was stronger than for the US children. Findings
from this study were inconsistent with the Kawabata et al., (2010) study in that a negative affect association was stronger for the Euro American children.

The results from this study were also in line with previous studies that used peer ratings to evaluate relational aggression and social functioning (Crick et al., 2006; Juliano et al., 2006). Although the researchers were not looking at negative affect such as sadness and crying in response to a peer, the peer ratings assisted with identifying children who were exhibiting negative social behavior due to relational and physical aggression by depicting which peers they liked and did not like. This study is also similar with previous studies in which peer nomination measures were used to evaluate, relational aggression (McEvoy et al., 2003), peer acceptance, peer rejection, and prosocial behavior (Crick et al., 1999). For example, in the Crick et al., (1999) study, peer reports of social-psychological adjustment yielded results that indicated relationally victimized children were less accepted than non-victimized children. The current study was in line with these findings such that the negative affect expressed in response to a peer photo may indicate that either they are rejecting the peer in some way or the peer has rejected them. It is important to mention that because physical aggression was not the focus of this study, it is not known if negative affect is actually related to relational or physical aggression. In either case, constant peer rejection can lead to victimization, which in turn hinders children’s ability to make and keep friends (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995; Crick et al., 1999; McEvoy et al., 2003; Crick et al., 2006; Cheng et al., 2010). Furthermore, young children seem to have less negative adjustment problems later on in school when their peers
accept them (Shaffer, 2009). In addition, children who enter kindergarten with friends have fewer adjustment problems and like school better (Shaffer, 2009).

This study contributes to what we already know about relational aggression among preschool age children by exploring the cultural differences in reported negative affect. In both groups, children were asked to select a picture of their peer and place it in a box that best represents how they feel about the individual. An emotional response developed when participants appraised their peers as being either relevant or not relevant to their values, motives, or expectations (Mesquita, 2001). The higher range of negative affect reported by the Euro American group seems to fit the individualist way of thinking in that self expression of emotions are encouraged (Trandis & Su, 2002; Wang, 2001). It is not surprising that the entire Euro American group could express sadness and crying because; in American culture, children are socialized to communicate their emotions. In a cross-cultural study on mother-child conversations about emotional memories, American and Chinese mothers held different cultural beliefs about emotion and emotion sharing in which their three year olds mirrored in their conversations. American mothers encouraged emotion sharing as it was a direct expression of the child, whereas the Chinese mothers viewed emotion sharing as a disruption to social harmony (Wang, 2001). The present study adds to Wang’s (2001) study in that the Euro American group had a higher range of expressing negative affect and, in comparison, the Chinese American had a significantly lower range of expression. Yet, it could be that the measure did not capture negative affect in the Chinese American group.
It was not surprising that the Chinese American group would have lower scores in expressing negative affect than the Euro American children. Previous studies have documented that extremely collective societies; like Chinese, Japanese, Hmong, and Korean, live by the core values of avoidance of conflicts, obligation to others, and maintenance of social harmony (Forbes et al., 2011; Wang, 2001). This certainly does not mean that Chinese children do not feel sadness, loneliness, and depression, for numerous studies have documented that some children raised with collective values are extremely affected by bulling with psychological adjustment problems such as, depression, loneliness, and anxiety, (Cheng et al., 2010; Kawabata et al., 2010; Matsunaga, 2010; Mesquita, 2001; Nelson et al., 2006). Crick et al., (1997) and Crick et al., (1999) provided the first evidence that there is a relationship between relational aggression and internalizing difficulties (e.g. peer rejection) in preschool age children. This study extends their research in that it shows a possible link between internalizing negative affect and relational aggression in the Chinese American children. Because values of social harmony and group cohesiveness are part of their child rearing philosophy (Li et al., 2011; Nelson et al., 2006), they may feel hindered from disclosure (Matsunaga, 2010). Child-rearing practices in Chinese American families teach that collectivism represents giving priority to the goals and interests of the group and the decision to disclose feelings is based on whether it serves to facilitate social cohesiveness (Fu, Brubet, Lv, Ding, Heyman, Cameron, & Lee, 2010). Internalizing their true feeling may be to show modesty and humility (Fu et al., 2010) or to protect the group (Triandis & Suh, 2002).
Another explanation may be an Asian dialectic philosophical (ADP) way of perceiving pleasant and unpleasant emotions (Bagozzi, Wong, & Yi, 1999). For example, in the more westernized cultures happy and sad were found to be considered opposites; a person is either judged happy or sad, but not both (Schimmack, Oishi, & Diener, 2000). In contrast, in ADP society happy and sad are not considered opposites, therefore may rate happy and sad as compatible (Schimmack et al., 2000). They found that ADP, not collectivism, influenced the perception that happy and sad are compatible. The Chinese American children in this study were first generation born into a westernized society and were indoctrinated, via child rearing practices, to view happy and sad as compatible, therefore, they may have self reported from a dialectical way of thinking. Lastly, although the teacher reports indicated high relational aggression behaviors, some Chinese students may not count certain forms of harassment as bullying (Cheng et al., 2010).

Limitations

A number of limitations of this study should be considered. First, the sample was small and non-representational of the population. Although there were significant findings between groups, future studies should investigate a more representative sample so findings can be generalized. Teachers graciously volunteered their time during playtime and breaks to conduct surveys with the children, which may have entered error into the collection of the data. In addition, tests were conducted with other distractions in the room, which could have also entered error into the data. Secondly, with the high number of children in the Chinese American group reported as relationally aggressive,
using observation and peer report measures of relational aggression would provide validation for the teacher reports. Observations of preschoolers’ aggressive behavior have been found to be consistent with teacher reports (Crick et al., 2006; McNeilly et al., 1996; Ostrov & Keating, 2004). In addition, it would help overcome any cultural bias that might arise. There was a threat of “imposed etic” (Berry, 1989) as measures were used cross-culturally. Adding an observation measure may overcome that threat as relational aggression is immediate and subtle (Kawabata et al., 2010). Third, using parent rating would help to identify negative affect more accurately. Hinshaw, Han, Erhardt, and Huber, (1992) found that teacher ratings were more accurate in identifying externalizing behaviors and parent ratings were more accurate in identifying internalizing behaviors. A fourth limitation was not including physical aggression in the findings. Evaluation of physical versus relational aggression, would give a clearer picture of peer reported negative affect. Lastly, SES was confounded in this study. Thus, it is impossible to know whether cultural factors or SES were responsible for the differences.

**Conclusions and Future Research**

This study has contributed to the limited cross-cultural research on relational aggression among preschool age children. Results from this study highlight the importance of understanding the cultural variances in the practice of relational aggression. It has shown preschool children are affected emotionally by bullying and may communicate it externally or internally. Future research looking at mixed cultural groups with children of diverse ethnicity is needed to validate measures that capture relational
aggression and negative affect. Furthermore, research in this area is needed to develop culturally sensitive programs, to inform and educate children, parents and teachers, provide age appropriate intervention strategies and eventually reverse the prevalence of relational aggression.
APPENDIX A

Consent to Participate in “Understanding Bullying” Research

- My name is Ann Kathleen Wayland. I am a graduate student in the Child Development Program at California State University, Sacramento (akw44@saclink.csus.edu).
- My mentor is Dr. Juliana Raskauskas, Child Development Program at California State University, Sacramento (jraskauskas@csus.edu)
- Your child is being asked to participate in my study. My study will look at forms of bullying among preschool age children.
- Your child will only be asked to play a game of putting pictures in a box of:
  - Toys (trucks, balls, blocks, swings etc…)
  - Food (rice, cookies, hamburgers, French fries, carrots etc…)
  - Animals (kitty, puppy, gold fish, bunny etc…)
  - Classmates (Children in their class)
  - Each box that he puts a picture in will have either a happy face, a neutral face, a sad face, or a crying face.

- **Your child will not be asked questions about bullying.** Your child will only be asked to put pictures in a box. He or she may skip or stop putting pictures in the boxes anytime during the game and that will be ok.
- Your child’s teacher will be conducting the game and will stop it if your child seems upset by putting any picture in any box.
- I hope the results from this study will help teachers and schools develop programs to address bullying and a sensitive and caring manner.

Your child’s participation in this research is entirely voluntary. Your signature below indicates that you have read this page and agree for your child to participate in this study.

I give permission for my child _________________________________ to participate.

Signature of Parent or Guardian: ____________________________ Date: ____________
APPENDIX B

Consent to Participate in Covert Aggression Research

Your child is being asked to participate in a study which will be conducted by Ann Kathleen Wayland, a graduate student in the Child Development Program at California State University, Sacramento.

The study will investigate factors related to covert (less obvious) forms of bullying among preschool age children.

If you consent to your child’s participation, you will be asked to sign this consent form. Parents/Guardians will also be asked to provide birthplace and birth date and the birth place and date of your child. This information will be used to look at the influence of culture.

If you consent to your child taking part in this study, he will be asked to complete one survey with his teacher. The survey is confidential and consists of placing pictures of toys (trucks, balls, blocks, swings etc…), food (cookies, rice, hamburgers, french fries, carrots etc…), animals (kitty’s, puppy’s, gold fish, bunny’s etc…) and pictures of his classmates into one of four boxes (pictures will be from story books and photo’s in your child’s classroom). Each box that he places a photo in will be depicted with either a happy face, a neutral face, a sad face, or a crying face.

A minimal degree of distress may be experienced when placing pictures of classmates in a box especially if he has been the target of bullying. However, because your child’s teacher will be assisting the children there will be support and trust. Children will be informed that they can stop at any time and teachers will stop the activity if children appear bothered.

There will be no questions asked about specific bullying incidents. Your child will only be asked to place pictures of toys, food, animals, and classmates in one of the boxes. Your child has the right to skip any picture they do not want to address or to stop at any time.

It is possible your child may not benefit directly from participating in this study. It is hoped that the results from this study will benefit many teachers and schools with developing programs and strategies to address bullying in a sensitive and caring manner.

The school will provide ID numbers to match names for each child participating. ID numbers will be used on all data in lieu of a name. This will allow for anonymity because no name will be associated with any portion of the study, with exception to the consent
form which will be kept with the director of your child’s school. No data will be collected on any child without consent from a parent or guardian. All data, with only ID numbers, will stored in a secure locked location and destroyed after one year.

No monetary compensation will be offered for participation; however, the schools will receive a summary report of the findings. Also, an in-service, or Parents Night, will be offered to teachers and parents on strategies and recommendations for identifying and minimizing bullying. A story book that addresses bullying will be donated to each classroom.

If you have any questions about this research, you may contact Ann Kathleen Wayland at (XXX) XXX-XXXX, or by e-mail at akw44@saclink.csus.edu. You also may contact my research sponsor, Dr. Juliana Raskauskas, Sacramento State University, at (916) 278-7029, or by e-mail at jraskauskas@csus.edu.

Your child’s participation in this research is entirely voluntary. Your signature below indicates that you have read this page and agree for your child to participate in this study.

I give permission for my child ____________________________ to participate.

Signature of Parent or Guardian: ___________________________ Date: ___________
APPENDIX C

PSBS-T
Crick, Casas & Mosher, 1997

Preschool Social Behavior Scale – Teacher Form

The following measure is adapted from that described in:


The measure is based on a similar measure developed for use with children in middle childhood (e.g., Crick, 1996). The PSBS-T contains a total of 25 items and assesses the following:

Subscales:
- **Relational Aggression**: Items # 4, 8, 11, 13, 15, 19, 21, 22
- **Over/Physical Aggression**: Items # 2, 5, 7, 12, 14, 17, 20, 23
- **Prosocial Behavior**: Items # 1, 3, 6, 10
- **Depressed Affect**: Items # 9, 16, 18
- **Child’s acceptance with same gender peers**: Item # 24
- **Child’s acceptance with opposite gender peer**: Item # 25

1 = items cross-loaded on the factor analysis and were dropped from further analyses.
2 = item needs to be reverse-coded.
### Preschool Social Behavior Scale – Teacher

<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child’s ID Number ______________________</td>
<td>Child’s gender: Male or Female?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher’s Name _________________________</td>
<td>Age_______</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. This child is good at sharing and taking turns</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. This child kicks or hits others</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. This child is helpful to peers.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. This child tells a peer that he/she won’t play with that peer or be that peer’s friend unless that he/she does what this child asks.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. This child verbally threatens to hit or beat up other children.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. This child is kind to peers.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. This child pushes or shoves other children</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. This child tells others not to play with or be a peer’s friend.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. This child doesn’t have much fun.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. This child says or does nice things for other kids.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. When mad at a peer, this child keeps that peer from being in the play group.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. This child verbally threatens to physically harm another peer in order to get what they want.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. This child tries to embarrass peers by making fun of them in front of other children</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. This child ruins other peer’s things (e.g. art projects, toys) when he/she is upset.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. This child tells a peer they won’t be invited to their birthday party unless he/she does what the child wants.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. This child looks sad.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. This child throws things at others when he/she doesn’t get his/her own way</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. This child smiles at other kids.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. This child walks away or turns his/her back when he/she is mad at another peer.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. This child verbally threatens to push a peer off a toy(e.g. tricycle, play horse) or ruin what the peer is working on (e.g. building blocks) unless that peer shares.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. This child tries to get others to dislike a peer (e.g. by whispering mean things about the peer behind the peer’s back).</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. This child verbally threatens to keep a peer out of the play group if the peer doesn’t do what the child says.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. This child hurts other children by pinching them</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. This child is well liked by peers of the same gender.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. This child is well liked by peers of the opposite gender</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX D

PSBS-P
Crick, Casas & Mosher, 1997

Preschool Peer Nomination Measure – Peer Form

The following measure was adapted from that described in:


The measure is based on a similar measure developed for use with children in middle childhood (e.g., Crick & Grotpeter, 1995). The PSBS-P contains a total of 19 items and assesses the following:

Subscales:
**Peer Acceptance**: Item #1
**Peer Rejection**: Item #2
**Relational Aggression**: Items #4, 6, 7, 10, 12, 14, 16
**Overt/Physical Aggression**: Items #3, 5, 9, 13, 15, 18
**Prosocial Behavior**: Items #7, 11, 17, 19
Preschool Social Behavior Scale – Peer Form

Session A

1. Point to the pictures of three kids who you like to play with.
2. Point to the pictures of three kids who you don’t like to play with.
3. Point to the pictures of three kids who push or shove other kids. (OA)
4. Point to the pictures of three kids who tell other kids not to be someone’s friend. The might say, “don’t play with that kid.” (OA)
5. Point to the pictures of three kids who say they will hit or beat up other kids to that they can get what they want. (VTO)
6. Point to the pictures of three kids who say they won’t invite someone to their birthday party if they can’t get what they want. (VTR)
7. Point to the pictures of three kids who are good at sharing and taking turns. (PS)
8. Point to the pictures of three kids who won’t let a kid play in the group if they are mad at that kid. They might tell the kid to go away. (RA)
9. Point to the picture of three kids who say they will knock someone’s stuff overt or mess it up if they don’t get to play with it too. (VTO)
10. Point to the pictures of three kids who whisper mean things about other kids. (RA)
11. Point to the pictures of three kids who are nice to other kids. They might do nice things for other kids. (PS)
Session B

12. Point to the pictures of three kids who tell other kids that they can’t play with the group unless they do what the group wants them to do. (VTR)

13. Point to the pictures of three kids who kick or hit other kids. (OA)

14. Point to the pictures of three kids who won’t listen to someone if they are mad at them, they may even cover their ears. (RA)

15. Point to the pictures of three kids who say they will push someone off a toy if they don’t get to play on it too. (VTO)

16. Point to the pictures of three kids who say they won’t be someone’s friends if they don’t get what they want. (VTR)

17. Point to the pictures of three kids who help other kids. (PS)

18. Point to the pictures of three kids who throw things at other kids when they don’t get their way. (OA)

19. Point to the pictures of three kids who smile at other kids a lot. (PS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Loneliness Questions</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Can you find a friend when you need one?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Do you get along with other kids at school?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Do you have kids to play with at school?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Do the kids at school like you?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Do you have friends at school?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Do you like to hear stories?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX E

Pictorial Faces

Happy Face
Neutral Face
Sad Face
Cry Face
REFERENCES


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