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Jennifer Clegg April 19, 2011

Preschool in the South Pacific:
Establishing a Quantitative Method for Cross-Cultural Comparison in the US, Samoa and Vanuatu

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An abstract of
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Abstract

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By Jennifer Clegg

Preschool systems provide an opportunity to directly examine the process through which children become socialized to their culture within a relatively controlled environment. In the preschool setting, children are implicitly and explicitly instructed about cultural norms and practices, and because of this, preschools become microcosms of society. Cross-cultural psychologists have long sought a means of quantifying differences between cultures, but outside of qualitative interview analysis, little progress has been made in the examination of culture at the childhood level. Following the model of Tobin et al. (1989, 2009), a three-part method for the observation and evaluation of cultural models of preschool has been employed in the South Pacific. Though it appears that preschools do not differ significantly when analyzed quantitatively, it is believed that the addition of anecdotal evidence helps to illuminate the presence and lack of cultural differences.

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Abstract

Preschool systems provide an opportunity to directly examine the process through which children become socialized to their culture within a relatively controlled environment. In the preschool setting, children are implicitly and explicitly instructed about cultural norms and practices, and because of this, preschools become microcosms of society. Cross-cultural psychologists have long sought a means of quantifying differences between cultures, but outside of qualitative interview analysis, little progress has been made in the examination of culture at the childhood level. Following the model of Tobin et al. (1989, 2009), a three-part method for the observation and evaluation of cultural models of preschool has been employed in the South Pacific. Though it appears that preschools do not differ significantly when analyzed quantitatively, it is believed that the addition of anecdotal evidence helps to illuminate the presence and lack of certain differences.

INTRODUCTION:

Over the course of modern history, disagreement has arisen as to the extent to which culture shapes human development. There is a long history of studies examining the differing, and in some cases, universally demonstrated abilities and behaviors of children in a variety of societies, but few have been able to directly explore *why* children demonstrate these phenomena. Commonly, researchers rely on contextual anecdotes from adults in the culture of interest or other researchers' documentation of similar outcomes to explain their findings but few empirically examine the *direct means* through which children are exposed to culture during development. Just as it would be unwise, however, to use the experience of a high-income family to explain the behaviors of a child from a low-income family, it is imprudent to use the experiences of adults to explain the behaviors of children. The ways in which children and adults experience their cultures are different.

In his book, *The Anthropology of Childhood* Lancy reviews over 1,000 studies to create a comprehensive overview of childhood through the lens of modern anthropology (2008). Combining studies from Papua New Guinea to Zawiya, Morocco, Lancy offers a view of the child from birth to adolescence around the world. American views of the teenage "fluff chicks" (Lancy, 2008, p.341) are contrasted with the students in Afikpo bush schools (p.311). The balance between work and play among Ugandan girls is presented in a chapter on children's development of responsibility and is later reassessed in a discussion of sibling care-taking (p. 242). While these studies consistently present views on childhood and a child's experience in each culture, the presentation of quantitative and objective data to support their observations is

rare. Instead, a series of anecdotes from ethnographies are presented as factual evidence for most views.

In one particular example, while asserting that children learn culture through recreating "domestic scenes" in play, Lancy highlights how "wedding ceremonies are captured in make-believe" and listing a series of examples from Zapotec (Mexico), Mehinacu (Brazilian), and Lepcha children (Lancy, 2008, p. 210; Jensen de Lopez, 2003; Gregor, 1988; Gorer, 1967). Though each provide insight to the culture they represent, it is difficult to assert that these recreations of wedding ceremonies or any of a number of other practices presented by Lancy are truly representative of the day-to-day experiences of children that face on a daily basis. What is missing, at least some psychologists argue, is a way to quantify this behavior?

This is not to doubt or to discount the research methodology of ethnography, in fact neither quantitative nor qualitative paradigms should be expected to stand fully on their own in the social sciences. Instead, I wish to call into question the extent to which ethnographic accounts can fully depict the ways in which children are exposed to and develop within their respective cultures and propose a means through which an empirical quantitative and objective assessment of culture can further characterize culture as experience by children. If anything, I wish to explore the ways in which quantitative research on children's experience of culture can inform both quantitative and qualitative work in the social sciences.

One of the foremost reasons ethnographies undergo scrutiny is what some feel is a high level of subjectivity due to the ethnographer's direct participation in most events. Where some ethnographers, such as Cintron embrace their subjectivity and attempt to constantly evaluate their views of a culture in concordance with their own cultural biases, others attempt to remove themselves from the events (1997). When this removal occurs, however, it is difficult to

determine the success of the author in remaining an objective observer rather than a vessel of their own cultural biases, which are most times unconscious. The history of ethnography is riddled with accusations of individuals not being able to remove themselves from their personal agendas, the debate between Frank Boaz and Margaret Mead over Mead's portrayal of Samoans in *Coming of Age* in Samoa being one of the most notable examples (Shore, 1983). More or less, no matter how hard a researcher tries to remove themselves from their understanding, innate cultural bias is difficult to circumvent.

When studying other cultures, however, it is important that an effort is made to expound upon that culture in as objective way as possible so that any resulting evaluation is as pure of an insight into that culture as possible rather than a characterization shaped by Western interpretations and ideals of behavior. Participant-observation makes it difficult to maintain this degree of removal, however, as researchers are further welcomed into their target group. Instead, researchers should strive to develop ways that allow for similar levels of intimacy with a culture but remove the researcher's inherent biases from its description.

Moreover, any given researcher can only see so much and interact with so many members of the group of interest. In *Angels' Town*, Cintron recognizes that his experiences were virtually all with males, leaving him with a male-centered understanding of the culture he was investigating (1997). Like Mead's *Coming of Age in Samoa*, the Lynds' *Middletown: A Study in Modern American Culture*, a formerly fundamental text in the study of American ethnography was faced with much public criticism after it was determined that the Lynds excluded the lives of middle-class African Americans in their study- a near third of the population they were attempting to depict (Lassiter, 2004). Through the devising of an objective, quantitative-based method, researchers interested in culture can use sampling methods and create investigative

constructs that can examine one particular cultural artifact and then generalize this finding with statistical certainty. This method, in combination with qualitative contextual work, allows for the assessment of culture at a broader level without requiring the researcher to interact with every member of a society.

Given problems these problems with the execution of ethnography, is there a way to combine ethnographic and psychology-based methods in order to better examine culture as it is experienced by children?

The growing global presence of formal Early Childhood Education (ECE), or preschool as it is more widely know, might provide for an ideal medium through which to conduct this investigation. Today our world is one in which "childhood without schooling is unthinkable" and "it is now unusual *not* to see an example of Western or Asian-inspired public schools in every village [on every continent]" (Lancy, 2009, p. 305, 314). This is true not only for older children, but for preschool children as well. From at least the early 1800's, missionaries have been supporting the development of ECE in developing countries as it was much easier to teach and manage young children than adults (Prochner, 2009). Over time, different cultures have taken these models and adapted them, embracing early childhood education with increasing frequency.

Tobin and his colleagues were some of the first to draw upon the growing global presence of ECE to in order to create a cultural comparison of the United States, China and Japan. Using filmed preschool classroom observations and interviews with education experts, teachers and parents in each of the countries, Tobin et al. created a comprehensive view of culture as it is experienced by preschool children in the three countries, asserting that above all, preschools served as representations and perpetuators of cultural values (1989, 2009).

Drawing inspiration from Tobin, I have attempted to develop a paradigm that uses ECE as a means of assessing culture as it is experienced by children through a combination of anthropological and psychological methodologies. Not only does preschool observation allow me to assume the role of objective observer, an evaluation of ECE provides access to a wide cross-section of children in each culture. Moreover, the growing global presence of ECE theoretically allows for the development of a consistent measure and construct of culture as it relates to children in any culture with preschools.

Using a three-part methodology that consists of a systematic coding of a typical day in each culture's preschools, a behavior-identification paradigm that requires adults in each culture to identify films of classroom practices and a questionnaire eliciting basic opinions about the purpose of preschools, I set out to both create a cultural comparison of the South Pacific nations of Samoa and Vanuatu and the United States in addition to evaluating the effectiveness of my proposed methodology.

Samoa and Vanuatu were chosen as the cultures of interest both due to the possibility of access through Dr. Philippe Rochat's previously established research sites and a belief that they can provide an interesting point of contrast to the present research on ECE. Much of the investigation into early childhood education has centered on developed nations from a largely anthropological and sociological standpoint, leaving discussion and comparison stagnant and, from a cross-cultural view, rather limited. Without a thorough examination of ECE outside of the developed world, a complete understanding of its place in the global society is impossible. Moreover, any claims to the universality of pedagogical practices or to the natural activities of young children when placed within an educational environment cannot be fully supported if lacking observations from non-industrialized cultures.

Within the realm of less-developed nations embracing the development of ECE, the island nations of the South Pacific provide a unique opportunity to examine cultures that have remained relatively robust in the face of the globalization that has forced them out of their previous isolation (Norton 1993). In particular, Vanuatu and Samoa provide interesting settings for examining ECE practices due to not only a long-standing anthropological interest in them which provides for an extensive literature on both cultures (Vanuatu for linguists as over 120 languages are spoken in the country alone; Samoa as a location of anthropological interest and legend after the initial work of Margaret Mead), but for the noted development of ECE on both islands and its accompanying documentation. In Samoa itself, education has become of great interest considering that 99.7% of the nation's population is literate (CIA The World Factbook, 2010), a rare find in a developing country, thus indicating the presence of an education system that goes beyond that of other South Pacific countries. Additionally, due to the difficulty of establishing local schools in Vanuatu due to the variety of languages and overall physical difficulty of reaching each of the country's 65 inhabited islands, recent efforts have been made to begin to regulate and record Ni-Vanuatu ECEC (Crane, 1998).

Cultural Background

Samoa

Samoa is an island nation in the South Pacific that is historically placed within the Polynesian cultural group. Samoa consists of two islands, Upolu and Savai'i, with settlements typically occurring around the outer areas of each island near roads which run traverse the perimeter of each island. Luua Faga (*fan-ga*), the research site, is a village located on the island

of Savai'i that is know for a series of *fales*, or wall-less huts, along the beach. Savai'i has one local primary school and a preschool shared by Luua Faga and the neighboring Salimu Faga.

Anthropologists have long considered Samoa to be an example of a vertical collectivist culture, or a culture in which a large amount of emphasis on established hierarchies exists in conjunction with a strong value placed on the in-group (Triandis). In Samoa, there remains a great emphasis on *fa'asamoa*, which can literally be translated as the "Samoan way," that is intricately tied to notions of discipline and the execution of punishment. Samoan society is a rigidly-structured system of hierarchies based on both family chiefs or *matai* and the village chief system, *fono* (Smith, 2009). Socialization in Samoa is meant to orient the child to the collectivity and hierarchy surrounding this system while "diminishing the scope and importance of the inner world of the subject" (Mageo, 1991, p. 405). Nearly all aspects of Samoan childrearing reflect the desire to "[shape children] to fit a communal mold" (p. 406) and can be summarized within the realm of three base values: interpersonal dependence, respect and deference, and collective identity (Mageo, 1991).

Vanuatu:

Located in the South Pacific and placed within the Melanesian cultural group, Vanuatu consists of 65 inhabited islands or various sizes. Mota Lava is located in the Banks, a northern grouping of islands and consists of three villages. There are two primary schools on Mota Lava, an English language primary school and a French Language primary school, and both of these schools have an associated preschool or kindy.

Unlike Samoa, socialization in Vanuatu is based considerably less around the notion of a traditional lifestyle and more around premises fostering a collective and cooperative community. While notions of *kastom* exist in Vanuatu, the role of tradition in the lives of the ni-Vanuatu is

much less salient than that of *fa'asamoa* in the lives of Samoans. In fact, *kastom* is only vaguely defined as "ancestrally enjoined rules for life" (Keesing, 1982, p. 360 as cited in Linnekin & Poyer, 1990) and viewed as a cultural notion rather than identity or way of life (Linnekin & Poyer, 1990) as is prescribed by the idea of *fa'asamoa.* Ni-Vanuatu society is much less structurally rigid than that of Samoans and while the country as a whole does "have some features of custom and social structure in common" (Norton, 1993, p. 750), there is a much greater emphasis on village life and less of a sense of cultural salience. Ni-Vanuatu are much more concerned with instilling "the values of respect, family, and land" as a means of achieving "mutual understanding throughout Vanuatu" (Prior, 2001, p. 47) than ideas of extreme deference to authority. Although the Chief system does continue to exist, Ni-Vanuatu recognize their human failings and at times will withdraw their allegiances (Prior, 2001, p. 49). In fact, the only system of dominance that seems to pervade is that of men over women, but women respond to this as men's "*rubis* (rubbish) interpretations of the Bible" as they have the full power to instruct their children (Jolly, 1996, p. 179), demonstrating the lack of a definite power structure.

Pinecrest, Atlanta, GA (United States):

Pinecrest is an affluent community located in the Druid Hills/Decatur area of Atlanta, Georgia, a large metropolitan area in the South East United States. Though as a whole Atlanta has a high rate of racial diversity, the Pinecrest area does not display a large degree of diversity.

American culture is considered by anthropologists to be a vertical individualistic culture, which is characterized by a strong sense of independence from others in addition to a consistent competition between individuals (Triandis). Though regional and socioeconomic differences have some effect on the degree to which vertical individualism is present in all American communities, it is my experience that the characterization holds in Pinecrest.

PART I: PRESCHOOL OBSERVATION AND CODING

Introduction

As most widely theorized through Vygotsky's work, some psychologists propose that learning occurs within, rather than adjacent to, cultural bounds. According to the interpretive theory of socialization children learn through interaction with adults and more able peers within the teaching and learning models present in their culture. Vygotsky's interpretive theory of socialization and learning asserts that children gain their own agency in the day-to-day interactions that help to define culture and became active participants in their social communities (Corsaro & Eder, 1990). Thus, the development and socialization of the child is as an interactive process in which the young child is exposed to and active in "a community of those who share his sense of belonging to a culture" (Bruner, 1986, p. 127), creating an indivisible connection between a child's culture and his development.

ECE provides one of the first instances in which children are exposed to the bounds of their culture within a social setting outside of the home, through interaction with their peers and an adult that is neither a parent nor family member. Preschools are "where child rearing meets education [and] where the world of parents and home first meets the world of teachers and school" (Tobin, Hsueh & Karasawa, 2009, p. 2). This "major change… of movement outside of the family" the child faces when beginning preschool attendance is one of the child's first fully immersive experiences in their own culture and as such, preschools provide an opportunity to examine culture from a new perspective (Corsaro & Eder, 1990, p. 200).

Tobin and his colleagues were some of the first to apply the interpretive theory of socialization to the study of ECE in their comparison of preschools in the United States, China, and Japan (Tobin, Wu & Davidson, 1989). In their study, Tobin et al. embraced the most basic principle set forth by the interpretive theory of socialization- that children learn and are socialized within the bounds of their culture- and attempted to examine how culture manifested itself in a preschool setting. Beginning with the premise that "preschools both reflect and affect social change" Tobin and his fellow researchers attempted to capture the cultural differences between each preschool through the use of a "multivocal ethnography" or the incorporation of multiple mediums, specifically observational films and interviews, into an ethnography (Tobin, Wu & Davidson, 1989, p. 2).

After a period of initial observation followed by a period of filming, Tobin, Wu & Davidson created twenty minute "typical day" films of each preschool that were then shown to educational experts, teachers, parents and students both within and outside of the subject culture in order to elicit responses from the audience to the activities shown in the films and more general impressions of the schools. Using these reactions, the researchers worked to create a thorough cross-cultural comparison, incorporating both comments that each culture's participants made about their native culture's school in addition to those made about the other cultures' schools as further reflection of cultural values as they related to ECE. Tobin, Wu & Davidson recognized that each culture's impressions of other preschools were not only a reflection of the "culture being described [but] the culture doing the describing" (1989, p. 9). Thus, by having the Chinese, American and Japanese participants comment on the other cultures' behavior, Tobin et al. created a much more thorough picture than that which could have been garnered by solely using anecdotal evidence from each cultures' adults.

Tobin et al.'s initial findings fully support the notion that culture manifests itself in the preschool classroom, claiming that preschools are above all "forces of cultural continuity," serving as one of the first sites of socialization for the child (1989). Both in the typical day films and in the responses elicited from participants, Tobin et al. observed practices that directly reflected specific values in each culture. For example, Tobin et al. observed that in the US, children were frequently "encouraged to use words" and express their feelings to address their problems with other classmates. This tendency, which was praised by American audiences outside of the target school, indicates that Americans tend to value and prize the expression of emotion and therefore attempt to communicate its importance to preschoolers. When Japanese audiences saw these films, however, they were surprised as they felt the discussion of feelings with young children was "a bit heavy" indicating a variance in cultural conceptions about the appropriateness and capability to express emotion; a variance that is evident in each culture's preschools (Tobin, Wu & Davidson, 1989, p. 152-153). Based on evidence such as this as gathered through the observations and interviews, Tobin et al. conclude their initial work by claiming that preschools provide an environment where each society's main values are conserved and reinforced (1989).

In 2002, Tobin revisited his initial claims and in order to evaluate the validity of his method as an assessment of cultural in addition to a measure of cultural change. Continuing with the premise that preschools are "sites of cultural continuity that reproduce in a new generation of children traditional ways of seeing, understanding, believing and interacting" Tobin, Hsueh and Karasawa both returned to the three schools in the original study to create new "typical day films" and incorporated a new school site in each country (2009, p. 3). By returning to the schools of interest in the first study and including two new schools, Tobin et al. were able to

assess how (or even if) the schools changed in addition to the consistency of practices across a nation's schools. As in the first *Preschool in Three Cultures*, Tobin et al. determined that preschools, in spite of the growing influence of globalization, continued to be "institutions that both reflect and help to perpetuate the cultures and societies of which they are a part" (2009, p. 225). Even in the face of a world that is becoming increasingly more connected and homogenous, preschools remain both as reflections of and forces perpetuating core cultural ideals.

Tobin and his colleague's use of classroom observation as a means for assessing cultural differences has strongly influenced the ways in which research is conducted as it relates to children, but also reflects a general shift in methodology that is evident in the work of their contemporaries. Corsaro, in particular, uses a similar method of classroom observation in addition to the construction of broader ethnographic depiction of a culture in addition to the employment of traditional psychology paradigms to examine children's transition from the home to school. In contrast to Tobin, however, Corsaro attempts to objectively define the particular ways in which socialization occurs within cultural bounds at a more focused and narrow level through quantitative research (Corsaro, 1996).

In particular, Corsaro proposes the existence of *peer cultures* in preschools as a link between broad cultural notions and the goings-on of the classroom. In its most basic sense, a peer culture is the shared set of understandings resulting from the interactions of a peer group in a designated environment. For preschool children, peer culture is created through the interaction of the children in their shared preschool setting (Corsaro & Eder, 1990; Corsaro, 1988). Corsaro argues that the peer culture created in preschool is the first of several to follow throughout a child's life before they fully join adult society (Corsaro & Eder, 1990). Corsaro also claims that

these peer cultures are imperfect reproductions of broader adult society, but reproductions nonetheless (Corsaro & Eder, 1990). This judgment of complete or incomplete reproduction, however, serves only to convolute the idea of peer culture within ECE settings. What is significant is the Corsaro recognizes the tendency of the children to incorporate and respond to their own culture while co-creating their peer culture. Thus, through their interactions in the classroom, preschoolers cooperatively develop a peer culture that is reflective of the cultural norms they find in their own society.

Children as young as two years-old are believed to engage in the co-construction of peer culture (Rutanen, 2007), indicating that preschool classrooms of children ranging from three to five years old are most likely engaging in this cooperative attempt to unintentionally recreate their culture on a microcosmic level to a rather sophisticated degree, especially once verbal and communicative abilities are solidified. Studies have demonstrated that between the ages of three and five years old, children's abilities to relate to and communicate with each other significantly increase (Selman, 1981; Hart, DeWolf, Wozniak & Burts, 1972). Thus the children in a preschool classroom are interacting and exploring social bounds in relation to each other and in doing so are naturally and unconsciously incorporating aspects of their native culture - responding to both implicit cultural pressures and the explicit guidance of their teachers and parents.

Researchers have attempted to quantitatively and qualitatively assess different facets of this microcosm, examining cultural differences in behaviors from social pretend play (Farver, Kim & Lee-Shin, 2000; Farver, Kim & Lee, 1995) to responses to conflict in the classroom (LeMaster, 2010). While these studies provide insight to the potential of quantitative analysis of preschool activities to examine cultural as it is experienced and manifested by children, none of

them take into account the structure of the "typical day in school" as a whole in their examination of culture. A society cannot be wholly characterized by focusing on one behavior and preschool activity cannot be fully evaluated as a measure of culture unless multiple aspects of the typical school day are analyzed and considered as a collective body. Socialization occurs in this complete body of activities and consequently it is essential to evaluate the entire progress of a day in a given society's preschool in order to gain insight into its culture.

Based on this body of work, it is evident that the development of an empirical and quantitatively based assessment of preschool classrooms as a reflection of culture is a logical and well-founded direction. By combining both the comprehensive view of Tobin's work with the more specific, but objective view of psychology-based research in the preschool classroom, there is the potential to create a method that complements work in both fields and provides an objective and thoroughly-constructed depiction of culture as it is experienced by children.

Method

Participants:

Classroom activities in four preschools were filmed: the Luua Faga Preschool in Samoa, the Telhe and Mifala Kindies in Vanuatu and Pinecrest[1] Cooperative Preschool in Atlanta, GA.

Luua Faga *aoga fa'a tai tai* or preschool is located in a large, walled building next to the London Missionary Society Church in Luua Faga and directed by the pastor's wife Nori. The preschool serves Luua Faga and the surrounding villages and had a total of 42 children enrolled with an age range of 2.5 years old to 6 years old. An average of 24 children attended school on a given day. In addition to Nori, two teachers presided over the classroom, each normally taking

[1] Name changed for privacy of the school, families and teachers involved in this study.

control of one of the age groups (3-4 or 5-6). Preschool is free of charge to all children and lunch is provided for every child. Children are expected to and are provided with a uniform similar to that worn by Primary and Secondary school students in Samoa. The school week is Monday to Thursday, 9 am to 12 pm each day, with teacher planning on Fridays.

Telhe Kindy is located centrally between the villages of Mota Lava in a traditional Ni-Vanuatu bungalow at the Telhe English Primary School, but is not monetarily associated with the school. Miss Josephine is the main teacher and director, with Miss Cynthia, a Year 2 teacher and former kindy teacher and trainer, serving as a consultant. Approximately 20 children, on average, came to school each day with ages ranging from 3 to 5 years old. Kindy is private, and therefore each child must pay a fee to attend in addition to providing a morning snack for themselves. The children do not wear uniforms. The school week is Monday to Friday, 8 am to 11 am.

Mifala Kindy is located in the village of White Sands on the island of Tanna, in a traditional Ni-Vanuatu bungalow next to one of the village's churches. Saloky is the main teacher, with the director of the primary school also serving as its director. On the day I was able to observe the class, approximately ten children attended with ages ranging from 3 to 8 years old (different children arrived during the day due to rain), which the teacher informed me was a small class size. As at Telhe, the children did not wear uniforms and had to provide a morning snack. The school week is Monday to Friday, 8 am to 11 am. This preschool will serve as a control to determine how consistent ECE practices are across Vanuatu due to the ability to only collect one day of film or adult contextual data.

Pinecrest Cooperative Preschool is located in the Druid Hills/Decatur area (predominantly upper-middle class) of Atlanta, Georgia and uses the available classroom and

playground space in a local Episcopal church though it has no recognized religious affiliations. Approximately 40 children attend the tuition-based cooperative[2] school and are divided into classes based on age, beginning at approximately 2.5 years old and extending to 4 years old. The class of interest in the study was a group of ten students representing the oldest children in the school with 9 four year-olds and 1 three year-old (the brother of another student in the class who the teachers and director deemed socially ready for the class), a lead teacher, Samantha and an assistant teacher, Will[3]. The school week is Monday to Friday, 9:15 am to 12:45 pm. Children do not wear uniforms. Each day, one family provides food for snack for the entire class and students are expected to bring their own lunch.

The Problem of Typicality

As asserted by Tobin et al., "one preschool cannot represent the preschools of a nation" (Tobin, Hseuh & Karasawa, 2009, p. 8). In the following analysis, I do not wish to claim that the preschools presented above are perfect vessels of their cultures or a representation of what occurs in every school in each of the nations. Instead, like Tobin et al., I would like to assert that the preschools in the study "are not atypical" and reflect, if not universal practices, a sense of an overarching "cultural logic" in the sense that the practices I witnessed did not seem to contradict the characterizations of each culture I found in the literature or in discussions with teachers, broader community members, and cultural outsiders, specifically Peace Corp workers who had spent an extended period of time in each nation (Tobin, Hseuh & Karasawa, 2009, p. 9-10).

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[2] As defined by the school, "a cooperative preschool is a private, nonprofit entity run by its members, who are parents of the students. The school is operated by the parents and staffed by professional teachers." http://[redacted].com/about/cooperative-preschools/

[3] I recognize that the presence of a male teacher in an American preschool classroom is unique, but I do not feel that Will's presence significantly alters the classroom environment found at Pinecrest. In the United States, there is a growing trend, especially in cooperative preschools to require parents to volunteer as assistant teachers and this responsibility is being met by fathers as well as mothers, increasing the presence of adult males in preschools.

Model

After meeting with the director of each preschool and gaining permission to observe within the classroom, if time allowed, one to two days were spent observing each classroom to gain a sense of a "typical day." After this initiation observation period and a discussion with teachers about what a "typical day" consisted of, two to three days were spent filming a full day's activities in each of the target classrooms, hoping to capture the general order of the day in addition to a series of specific behaviors, including teacher-led instruction, individualized student-teacher interaction, student-student interaction, and discipline.

Although my original intention was to simply leave the video camera recording in one corner of the classroom to capture the day's activities, after my first day in Luua Faga preschool, I found that this method would not properly capture the level of interaction and involvement I desired. In response to this each day of filming was spent in constant movement, following the teacher and attempting to balance between filming the entire class and smaller occurrences, such as two children playing a learning game. The actual progression of filming is more similar to that of Tobin and Stevenson in their respective projects and will therefore provide a more comparable result (Tobin, Wu & Davidson 1989, Tobin, Hseuh & Karasawa 2009, Stevenson 2009). When it was possible to capture the entire class from one camera position, the camera was left unattended as was originally intended.[4]

One entire day of footage (2.5 to 3.5 hours) from each preschool was coded every ten seconds in order to determine the frequency and duration of certain behaviors and interactions. This coding schema provides a quantitative basis for comparison between the different

[4] At Pinecrest, due to constraints imposed by a period of time in which the entire preschool has a free play period outside and difficulties gaining permission from the entire student body, I was unable to film for that period of time. In response to this, I did my best to code the behaviors in real time, averaging my frequencies for two days of observation.

preschools. While previous studies have used similar methods to evaluate differences in play behavior (Farver, Kim & Lee-Shin 2000), this is the first study known to the author where an entire day of classroom practices will be evaluated and analyzed.

Measures:

In order to create an objective assessment of each school, the researcher evaluated the distribution of group size, activity type, activity intent and the role of the teacher throughout the day.

Classroom activity was assessed as follows[5]:

Table 1

Preschool Coding Measurements

Category	Measures
Group Size	Large Group, Intermediate Group, Small Group, Pairs, Individual
Activity Type	Instruction/Learning, Play, Meal, Other
Activity Intent	Whole Group Activity, Paired Activity, Individual Activity
Role of the Teacher	Teacher Directed, Supervised, Unsupervised

Starting with the point when class activity began, the researcher recorded one measure for each of the aforementioned categories, every ten seconds using the previous ten seconds as a context for the measure. At the conclusion coding, the frequency of each classroom activity category was divided by the total number of coding measures in order to represent the proportion of each day spent in a certain activity and to account for the discrepancies in school day length. In order to eliminate experimenter bias and establish reliability within the measures, a secondary investigator who had trained in accordance with the measures coded twenty percent of the films independently. After an initial attempt at the secondary coding, problems and any points of

[5] For a more detailed explanation of measures, see Figure 2 in the appendix.

confusion were discussed and the films were recoded, resulting in 85% reliability for all measures**.**

Hypotheses

Because it was anticipated that each preschool would reflect specific aspects of its native culture, certain hypotheses were made in relation to the frequency of specific measures based on findings in similar cultures' preschools and probable manifestations of cultural artifacts in the classroom.

A. Samoa:

Given the prominent "[emphasis on] the interdependence of every human and some collectives" in Samoan culture, a number of anthropologists from Margaret Mead to O'Meara (1990) and Shore (1983) assert that Samoa has a highly collectivist culture (Triandis, p. 36). Due to its similar highly collectivist nature, Japanese culture and its manifestations in preschools as presented by Tobin et al. can be used as a basis for postulating the ways in which Samoan culture is demonstrated in the preschool classroom. Tobin et al. found that one of the main differences between Japanese, US and Chinese preschools, both in the initial observations and in *Preschool in Three Cultures Revisited*, was the Japanese educators' emphasis on the importance of a large class size and the incorporation of activities that allowed for whole group participation (1989, 2009). According to Japanese teachers and parents, an ideal student to teacher ratio is between 15 to 12 students per teacher, whereas in the US, the ideal is no more than 4 to 8 students per teacher. Those interviewed in Japan indicated that this preference for a larger class size was to ensure a greater amount of student-student interaction rather than student-teacher interaction so that children could better learn to be members of a group (Tobin, Davidson & Wu, 1989; Tobin, Hseuh & Karasawa, 2009).

Samoans demonstrate a similar prizing of in-group belonging and identify themselves primarily as members of their families and villages rather than as individuals as a means of upholding traditional Samaon values or *fa'asamoa*. From an early age, children are left to the devices of their peer group, with older children caring for younger children once they reach the age of two in order to emphasize the importance of interdependence among children (Mageo, 1991; Odden, 2009; Clegg, 2010). Socialization in Samoa is meant to orient the child to the collectivity their cultural system while "diminishing the scope and importance of the inner world of the subject" (p. 405) and nearly all aspects of Samoan childrearing reflect the desire to "[shape children] to fit a communal mold" (Mageo, 1991, p. 406).

It was believed that this cultural tendency toward collectivism would translate into an emphasis on group-based activity in preschools as manifested both in more time spent in intermediate and large-sized groups (50% to 74% and 75% to 100% of the class respectively) as evident in Tobin et al.'s characterization of Japanese preschools (1989, 2009).

In order to further emphasize the importance of children learning to be a member of a group in preschool, Tobin et al. found that Japanese classrooms frequently featured whole group-based activity and that several of the Japanese respondents expressed a preference for group-oriented activity (a preference Tobin et al. termed "groupism") so that children could "experience…unity with something larger than the self" (Tobin, Wu & Davidson, 1989, p. 39). Tobin et al. assert that the foremost method Japanese preschools use to reinforce the importance of group membership is having the children wear uniforms to represent their individual school (Tobin, Wu & Davidson, 1989, p. 40). In a sense, the entire preschool's participation in the activity of wearing the school's uniform is representative of the cultural values dictating group-based activity at the classroom level.

Like their Japanese counterparts, Samoan preschool children in Luua Faga preschool are expected to wear uniforms to preschool. In Samoa, these uniforms are replicas of those worn by primary and secondary school students, indicating that Samoans not only value membership to the large group of their respective preschools, but to the broader population of students. This emphasis on the importance of the peer group is also anticipated to be reflected in a high level of groupism in the classroom, with children participating in a significantly greater amount of activity intended for the whole group than at US and Ni-Vanuatu preschools.

B. Vanuatu (Mota Lava):

Though classified as a collectivist nation, Ni-Vanuatu culture is considered to be notably different from Samoan or other collectivist cultures in that it embodies what Triandis terms a *horizontal collectivism* (Triandis). While placing value on in-group membership, horizontal collectivist (HI) cultures do not distinguish between the statuses of in-group members as stringently as vertical collectivist (VI) cultures such as Samoa or place as high of a value on "the sacrifice of the individual for the preservation of the group" (Triandis, p. 36). Thus, in Vanuatu while not as strongly encouraged as in an individualist culture, the expression of individualism and the attempt to navigate one's position in society is permissible. The Big Man system in Melanesia (the cultural group that Vanuatu belongs to) in which men can assert a higher power status through a series of challenges to other authority figures and the creation of interpersonal debt in the community is a demonstration of this permissible social navigation (Sahlins, 1963).

This acceptance of individuality within a broader strong in-group structure is reminiscent of aspects of Chinese preschools. Whereas in Japanese preschools the recognition of individual differences is considered detrimental to the formation of a positive group identity, in Chinese preschools, "individual differences in aptitude and performance are less threatening." While

showy and disruptive attempts to assert an independent identity are not encouraged "displays of individual talent or achievement that follow a clearly defined structure and stay within socially defined boundaries are considered pro- rather than antisocial" (Tobin, Wu & Davidson, 1989, p. 107-8). This tolerance of the display of individual talent within a specific cultural structure is similar to the aforementioned Big-Man system as in both individuality can be asserted if done so within specific cultural parameters.

Moreover, both China and Vanuatu (more so than Samoa, which anthropologists propone has maintained a strong sense of *fa'asamoa*) have been faced with the increasing pressures of socialization that have resulted in a struggle to balance between an increasing emphasis on the individual and cultural values maintaining the importance of the in-group (Tobin, Hsueh & Karasawa, 2009). Due to both the horizontal nature of Ni-Vanuatu society and an attempt to navigate between the value of the individual and the value of the in-group, Mota Lava's kindy should demonstrate the midpoint, more or less, between practices in Samoa and the United States. A Ni-Vanuatu Kindy "typical day" should provide a balance between large group and small group activity and should also demonstrate less whole group-based activity and more individual-based activities than Luua Faga preschool and more whole group-based activity and less individual-based activity than Pinecrest Cooperative.

C. Vanuatu Control (White Sands):

While grouped as one nation, the people of Vanuatu are spread over 65 islands and speak over 110 different local languages. Though some notions of national *kastom* which is vaguely defined as "ancestrally enjoined rules for life" do exist, *kastom* is viewed as a more abstract notion compared to the local traditions and values that reflect day to day life (Keesing, 1982, p. 360 as cited in Linnekin & Poyer, 1990) and viewed as a cultural notion rather than identity or

way of life (Linnekin & Poyer, 1990). The country as a whole does "have some features of custom and social structure in common" (Norton, 1993, p. 750), but there is a much greater emphasis on village life and less of a sense of cultural salience.

In this sense, the problem of typicality in Vanuatu was of greater concern than in the other two countries and out of a desire to assess cultural continuity (and more or less as a result of pure luck at being able to find a second preschool while visiting another part of the country) I was able to film a full day of preschool in White Sands, a village on the island of Tanna, an island highly distinct from Mota Lava due to location and the presence of a larger tourist industry. Due to a knowledge of the growing influence of the Ni-Vanuatu and Australian governments to regulate education that was reaffirmed by the existence of similar posters and government materials in both classrooms, it was anticipated that the preschools in Mota Lava and White Sands would not demonstrate marked differences in basic structures, such as the time spend in each group size, the amount of teacher direction, and the duration of each type of activity. Specific ways of executing these categories may be different between the kindies, with these differences reflecting local culture. Overall, it was anticipated that the group activity, distribution of activity type and objective and teacher involvement would not be significantly different.

D. United States:

In contrast to the collectivist nature of both Samoan and Ni-Vanuatu cultures, the culture of United States is considered to individualistic or to place a high value on the independence of the individual (Triandis, p. 36). In American preschools, a tendency toward an individualistic culture, as it balances with the perception of the child, is believed to manifest itself in preschools in the form of a greater amount of individually-oriented activity, more small group activity, less

teacher directed activity and more play, or free time, to allow children to explore and assert who they are as individuals.

American preschools in Tobin et al., both in 1989 and 2009, prominently displayed the above characteristics and American respondents placed great emphasis on their presence in schools. In fact, even when evaluating the two American preschools, American EC educators frequently expressed a distaste for the amount of "large-group activities and too few opportunities for free play and individual choice" (Tobin, Hsueh & Karasawa, 2009, p. 197). This is not to say that the American preschools did not demonstrate a tendency toward small group or free play, but that in spite of the amount observed, American educators still felt that there should be more.

Choice, specifically the ability of the child to choose their activities, is a pronounced feature of American preschools as depicted by Tobin et al. (1989, 2009). Tobin et al. assert that "as a cultural value underlying American preschool practices, choice is closely tied to individualism and to the notion of individualized education" and as such, the American preschool teachers who watched the films asserted the importance of individualism and "disparage[d] its opposites" (2009, p. 196). This emphasis on choice translates not only into the multiple options given to children , but into a greater emphasis on individual-centered activity, which facilitates the provision of choice, than in other countries' preschools.

American teachers also expressed a belief that too much teacher-directed activity limits the freedom of children and that outside of maintaining a general sense of balance and order, it is important that children are given the opportunity to explore who they are as individuals (1989, 2009). Thus, it is anticipated that Pinecrest will show less teacher-directed activity than the other schools of interest.

Play, both in 1989 and 2009, was strongly emphasized as an important aspect of the preschool day as "play *is* children's work" and provides an "opportunity for inquiry, problem-solving, self-understanding, and social interactions" (Tobin, Wu & Davidson, 1989, p. 154). Whereas in the other cultures play may be viewed as simply a free period in which children take a break from the rigors of class, to Americans, play is important to development and therefore receives greater emphasis during the typical American preschool day when compared to other countries.

Summary of Hypotheses

1. Children in Samoa will spend significantly more time in large groups than children in Vanuatu and the United States.

2. The Samoan preschool day will include significantly more activities with a whole group focus than that of Ni-Vanuatu and American preschools.

3. A day Telhe Kindy (Mota Lava) will have less large group time than that of Samoa and more large group time than in the United States and more small group time than Samoa and less small group time than the Unites States.

4. Time spent in small groups and large groups will be evenly distributed at Telhe Kindy as will activities with whole group objectives verse individual objectives.

5. There will be no significant differences in basic school day structure between Telhe Kindy and Mifala Kindy.

6. Children in the US preschool will spend significantly more time in individually-oriented activity than those in Samoa and Vanuatu.

7. The US preschool day will consist of significantly more time spent in small groups than that of Samoa and Vanuatu.

8. There will be significantly less teacher directed activity in the American preschool than in the Ni-Vanuatu and Samoan preschools.

9. American children will spend significantly more time of their preschool day in play activity than Samoan and Ni-Vanuatu children.

Analysis

In order to evaluate the above hypotheses the proportion of each school day spent in the target activities were compared using either using a Chi-Square Test of Independence or Fisher Exact Test with 2x2 or 2x3 contingency tables, as was appropriate to determine whether there were statistically significant relationships between location and the demonstrated behaviors. [6]

1. Children in Samoa spent approximately 55.9% of the school day in large group activity whereas Ni-Vanuatu children spent 33.4% and American children spent 39.0% of their time in large groups. A chi-square test of independence was performed to evaluate the relationship between location and time spent in large groups. A significant relationship was found between the variables, X^2 (2, N = 300) = 11.64, $p < 0.01$. In order to determine the direction of this relationship, the proportion of time spent in large groups in the United States's and Vanuatu's sites were compared to that of Samoa using a one-tailed Fisher Exact Test with a 2x2 contingency table and found that children in Samoa spent a statistically significantly greater portion of their day in large groups ($p < 0.01$ and $p < 0.05$).

2. Contrary to what was hypothesized, Pinecrest Preschool demonstrated the most amount of time spent in activity with a group-based focus. American children engaged in group-based activities for 81.4 % of the day, Samoan children followed with 54.3% and Ni-Vanuatu

[6] For a more detailed overview of the data, please see Figure 3.

with 33.5%. A chi-square test of independence indicated a significant relationship between the variables of location and time spent in activity that included the whole group, X^2 (2, N = 300) = 45.23, $p < 0.01$. The results of one-tailed Fisher Exact Tests with 2x2 contingency tables indicate that the relationship is directional, with the US's proportion being statistically significantly greater than both Samoa and Vanuatu ($p < 0.01$ and $p < 0.01$, respectively) and Samoan time spent in group-oriented activity statistically significantly greater than that of Vanuatu ($p < 0.01$).

3. As previously examined in point 1, Samoan children spent significantly more time in large groups than Ni-Vanuatu children as hypothesized. There was not a significant difference, however, between the amount of time spent in large groups in Vanuatu and the US. A Fisher Exact test for a 2x2 contingency table did not indicate a strong relationship between location and the amount of time spent in large groups for Vanuatu and the United States ($p > 0.05$).

Children in the US site spent approximately 32.2% of the day in small groups, Ni-Vanuatu children 32.8% of the day and Samoan children 23.5% of the day. Given the similarity of the amount of time in small groups in the US and Vanuatu, it was expected that there would not be a significant relationship between location and time in small groups as the Fisher Exact test demonstrates ($p = 0.5 > 0.05$). When the relationship between the variables was examined for Samoa and Vanuatu, there was no statistical significance ($p > 0.05$). A chi-square test of independence examining the strength of the relationship between location and small group duration for all three locations together maintains the absence of a significant relationship, X^2(2, 300) = 2.33, $p > 0.05$.

Thus, while children at the research site in Mota Lava did demonstrate significantly less time in large groups than those in Samoa, they were not in large groups more than American students (according to the proportions, they technically spent less time in large groups than their

US counterparts) or in small groups significantly more or less than their peers in the other research sites.

4. In order to assess the distribution of group activity across the five categories of measurement and the three categories of activity intent, chi-square goodness of fit tests were performed. Amount of time spent in each group size was not equally distributed during the day, $X^2(4, N = 100) = 49.49, p < 0.001$), but the amount of time spent in conducting activities in each of the intent categories was equally distributed, $X^2 (2, N = 100) = 4.76, p > 0.05$ as hypothesized.

5. For all measures except for the duration of meals ($p > 0.05$) and "other" activity ($p > 0.05$), intermediate group size ($p > 0.05$), and the distribution of teacher-directed ($p > 0.05$) and supervised activity ($p > 0.05$) (neither school had unsupervised activity), the proportions of specific measures where highly dependent on location as determined by a series of Fisher exact tests (all $p < 0.01$), indicating that based on coding values, the typical school day in White Sands is fundamentally different from that in Mota Lava with the exception of the role of the teacher in the day's activities.[7,8]

6. Upon first look, it is evident that counter to what was hypothesized, American children spent the least amount of time in individual-centered activity at 15.7%, where Samoan children spent 37.3% and Ni-Vanuatu children spent 42.1% of their school time in individual-centered activity. A chi-square test of independence was run to evaluate the relationship between location and time spent in individual-centered activity. The test indicates that the relationship between the variables is significant $X^2 (2, N = 300) = 17.59, p <0.01$. Thus, location of the preschool does

[7] All the other differences noted were values that were similar in either 3 or all 4 of the preschool locations and therefore did not indicate a specific consistency between Telhe Kindy and Mifala Kindy.

[8] For a more detailed overview of the data, see Figure 4.

appear to play a role in the amount of engagement in individual-centered activity, though not in the way hypothesized.

7. As determined above, there was no significant relationship between location and the duration of small group activity during the preschool day. Therefore, US students did not spend a significantly greater amount of time in small group activity during the school say.

8. Approximately 44.5% of activity in the American school was teacher directed compared to 48% of Ni-Vanuatu activity and 57.4% of Samoan activity, indicating that at least through a surface evaluation, American preschools are characterized by less teacher-directed activity. A chi-square test of independence was conducted to determine whether the apparent relationship between location and prevalence of teacher directed activity was statistically significant. In spite of the surface difference that exists, there is no significant relationship between location and the proportion of teacher directed activity, X^2 (2, N = 300) = 1.99, $p >$ 0.05.

9. A chi-square test of independence was executed to evaluate the relationship between preschool location and the proportion of play during the day. As hypothesized, location and the amount of play activity demonstrate a significant relationship, X^2 (2, N = 300) = 8.27, $p < 0.05$. Fisher exact tests conducted to determine the direction of the relationship indicate that the US preschool is more likely to have a greater amount of play activity (with Samoa, $p < 0.05$ and with Vanuatu, $p < 0.01$).

10. Additional Analysis: After calculating the amount of each day spent in each type of activity, there seemed to be a large discrepancy between the amount of time spent on meals in the United States preschool (15.6% of the day's recorded activities) compared to the Samoan (2.9%) and Ni-Vanuatu preschool (4.0%). Though this difference was not hypothesized, it is too

large of a difference to ignore. In order to establish whether or not this discrepancy was statistically significant, a chi-square test of independence was conducted and indicated that there is a significant relationship between location and time spent on meals, $X^2(2, N = 300) = 14.27, p < 0.001$). The American preschool is more likely to spend more time on meals than the other two schools.

Discussion

In spite of a detailed examination of the manifestation of culture in preschool based on the findings of Tobin et al. and a considerable consideration of the various components of each of the cultures of interest, the comparison of the behaviors measured in each preschool only upheld three of the nine proposed hypotheses. This discrepancy between theory and findings either indicates a gross misunderstanding of the cultures of interest or the need to evaluate the effort to quantify preschool behavior as a measure of culture.

The driving force behind the development of this paradigm as a measure of culture is the belief that a culture's outlook is manifested in preschool practices as a result of the mutually constructed peer culture of children and the implicit and explicit guidance of classroom authority figures. In both Preschool in Three Cultures and Preschool in Culture in Three Cultures Revisited, Tobin et al. maintain, "preschools are institutions that both reflect and help to perpetuate the cultures and societies of which they are a part" (Tobin, Hsueh & Karasawa, 2009, p. 225). If this is true, why is it that an attempt to quantify those behaviors and values that ethnographers such as Tobin and Corsaro highlight does not reaffirm their findings? Is this discrepancy between Tobin et al.'s work and the attempt to quantify culture a matter of a disjoint in measurement or is indicative of a broader predicament- How exactly is a culture's outlook

translated into preschool practices, and more important, does this translation occur in every culture?

One important distinction between the cultures typically featured in preschool ethnographies and those highlighted in the present study is the history of formal education and in turn preschool education in each culture. In Tobin et al.'s studies, the target cultures each have a rich history of formal education systems that were used as models for the development of preschools whereas the development of formal education systems in Samoa and Vanuatu is relatively recent. Education in Asian cultures can be traced back to the establishment of a meritocracy in China based on Confucian ideals that required the education and evaluation of the country's civil servants. As early as the fourth century BCE, Chinese officials were positing the importance of schools in ensuring the development of "learned and morally sound bureaucrats" (Lancy, 2008, p. 311 & Kinney, 1995, p. 18-19 as cited in Lancy). This system diffused through Asia, leading to the development of a system that "even in nursery school" manifests "the Confucian legacy" (Lancy, 2008, p. 339). Education in the United States has its origins in Europe, specifically as a result of the catalytic nature of the Renaissance and Reformation which both sought to increase access to "secular knowledge" with the "development of widespread basic or general education" (Lancy, 2008, p. 310).

Neither Samoa nor Vanuatu can lay claim to a similar rich cultural history of education as Europe or Asia. Formal education is believed to have come to Samoa as a result of the missionary work of the Reverend John Williams of the London Missionary Society (LMS) who in the early 1830's attempted to establish schools for the purpose of teaching adults to read the Bible. After he found that adults and older youth were not interested in this endeavor, he proposed the development of "infant schools" for young children and in 1838, the first infant

school was established in Samoa (Prochner, 2009, p. 75-76). This tradition of preschools based in the church persists in Samoa today and it is important to note that Luua Faga preschool, the school used as a measure of Samoan culture, is directed by the wife of the LMS minister. From 1979 on, a strong emphasis on math and science has characterized the Samoan curriculum , indicating a marked departure from the original purpose of Samoan schools as envisioned by the Reverend John Williams (Va'a, 1987).

The founder of the first Samoan infant school attempted to repeat his missionary work in Vanuatu in 1839 but was killed in the process. In 1848, attempts at missionary work reconvened, and it is assumed that a renewed effort to establish schools accompanied it (Prochner, 2009). It was not until 1959, however, that Vanuatu's first education officer was appointed by Vanuatu's British administration. In 1984, three years after Vanuatu had gained independence, the Ministry of Education created the Vanuatu Institute of Education, marking one of Vanuatu's first attempts to independently govern its education system (Ministry of Education, Government of the Republic of Vanuatu). To this day, however, Vanuatu's school system is highly influenced by the monetary and philosophical contributions of New Zealand.

Whereas European, and in turn American, and Asian cultures have drawn on intrinsic cultural models and values over a significant period of time in the development of their formal school systems, formal education as it exists in Samoa and Vanuatu today has had neither a significant period of development nor a basis in innate cultural values. More so than the importance of time in the establishment of a formal school system, the very nature of a Western cultural model being imposed on each society precludes the nation's ability to fully appropriate formal schooling into a body that is highly-entrenched in cultural values.

Perhaps for this reason Tobin et al. were able to find more definite differences between each culture's preschools that were indicative of commonly held cultural values. Moreover, given that the hypotheses that were supported by the comparison of the quantified behaviors were predominantly those that characterized American preschools[9], it is possible that the evaluation of culture as demonstrated by preschool practices is only constructively sound in those cultures that have an established history of and cultural model for education. One way to determine whether or not this is the case would be to recreate the present study in other cultures known to have a similar history surrounding the development of their education system to those of America, Japan and China.

All this being said, I am not convinced that the proposed medium of evaluating preschool as a reflection of culture is completely ineffective. As previously mentioned in the explanation of Corsaro's work, preschools are not expected to be perfect recreations of culture and as such it should be expected that not all cultural values are immediately visible in ECE practices. Even Tobin et al. recognize that preschool practices do not always completely conform to cultural models.

In fact, just as the present study was unable to establish with statistical significance that teacher directed activity occurs less in American culture due to the value placed on the child's self-actuated ability to explore, Tobin et al. noted that American teachers "who viewed the [two American preschool] videos routinely faulted both programs" for what they felt was too much teacher directed activity (Tobin, Hsueh & Karasawa, 2009, p. 197). In spite of this view being commonly held however, holding a cultural view and translating it to effective preschool

[9] As hypothesized, a significant more amount of playtime was demonstrated in the US research site. Moreover, though not statistically significant, the US, as was asserted, demonstrated the least amount of teacher-directed activity.

practices are two completely different processes. Given the prevalence of American teachers expressing a distaste for teacher directed activity in the classroom, it is likely that teachers at the target preschools of Tobin et al.'s study share a similar distaste and were not actively attempting to dominate the day with teacher-directed activity, but were actually simply unable to fully integrate more child-directed activities while maintaining order in their classroom Thus when it comes to the basic need to maintain a functioning and organized class, there comes a point when each preschool must diverge from some cultural value in one form or another, thus creating a classroom culture that is not entirely reflective of broader cultural values.

Given this evaluation of my proposed method, it is apparent that one of the strength's of Tobin et al.'s method is the use of qualitative evidence and context , the very component I attempted to eliminate. Through the use of poignant quotes from interviews or detailed descriptions of classroom happenings as they relate to culture, Tobin et al. are able to move past basic classroom practices, which as seen above, may or may not be indicative of cultural practices. Although the preschools in my study or Tobin et al.'s studies may not explicitly show the value placed on children's autonomy through the presence of less teacher directed activity, contextual evidence provides further insight to culture values and an explanation as to why a child's autonomy cannot fully be encouraged in the American preschool classroom.

Anticipating the importance of context in the evaluation of culture, I attempted to explore the ways in which traditional psychological methods could be applied to the proposed paradigm. In the following section, I evaluate the effectiveness of my proposed methods in establishing this context. In the conclusion of this paper, the methods will be fully combined to explain the unexpected differences in meal duration between the American and the South Pacific schools.

Readdressing the Problem of Typicality: Telhe and Mifala Kindies

As addressed in the analysis of the proposed hypotheses, an unexpected degree of contrast was found between the two Ni-Vanuatu kindies based on the quantitative evaluation of each preschool day. While this difference indicates that Ni-Vanuatu preschools may be more reflective of a local than a national culture, my inconclusiveness about the effectiveness of the quantitative method presents me from asserting with any degree of certainty that the Telhe and Mifala kindies do not reflect any sort of national culture given that I witnessed many behaviors that I felt were consistent between the schools even if not directly reflected quantitatively. In both schools, children played similar *kastom* games, conducted meals in the same way and made extensive use of natural materials, just to name of the few noted similarities that indicate a cultural consistency between the schools. This qualitative similarity but quantitative difference further emphasizes the importance of incorporating a way to gather contextual data in the present paradigm.

PART II: CLASSROOM PRACTICES EVALUATION AND QUESTIONNAIRE

Introduction

It is important to recognize that environment created in preschools is not solely the result of the peer culture created by children, but is instead subject to a certain amount of guided instruction from adults who themselves are governed and influenced by the bounds of their culture. In order to provide a more holistic view of the preschool as a manifestation of culture, it is important to also assess the ideas and beliefs of adults surrounding ECE practices and their purpose.

When examining the ideas and beliefs of adults as they relate to ECE, it is important to sample beyond the direct preschool community (i.e. parents and teachers). In their examination of free and imaginative play as reflections of cultural differences, Farver et al. engaged the opinions and beliefs of parents and teachers through the use of questionnaires and pre-established behavioral surveys in their cross-cultural analyses of preschools (Farver, Kim & Lee-Shin, 2000; Farver, Kim & Lee, 1995), but by limiting their sample to the parents and teachers found within the preschool the researchers prevented their data from being representative of the community at as a whole. While parents and teachers are certainly instrumental in the development of a preschool's environment, a preschool cannot be removed from the broader community it is a part of and for this reason various adults in the community should be included in any population sample.

Tobin et al. and Stevenson both used school observations in conjunction with broader sample of society in order to create an assessment of a culture. In *Preschool in Three Cultures* and *Preschool in Three Cultures Revisited*, Tobin and his research team presented their typical

day films not only to the parents and teachers of the subject school, but to educational experts, parents, teachers, general community members and university undergraduates located in at least five different sites in each country. Thus, by including both the preschool's immediate community members and members of the broader culture in their sample the researchers were able to determine values specifically related to each particular preschool in its immediate community as well as broader cultural values related to preschool as a cultural institution. As a means of providing context for a longitudinal study of the impact of parental education level on infant health and, as he phrases it "life chances" (Stevenson, 2009) in Ethiopia, Stevenson observed and filmed a first-grade class in Jimma, using Tobin's methods to elicit responses from teachers and students after the film's completion (Clegg, 2010). Thus, through combining observations and impressions from the first grade classroom and its parents and teachers in addition to data from a broader range of individuals within the community, Stevenson creates a more complete depiction of a culture that is not limited to the only the school.

Tobin et al.'s use of a standard stimulus to elicit a response in more than one culture evoke methodologies from studies ranging from the examination cross-cultural identification of emotional expressions (Ekman, 1972) to the investigation of universally recognizable components of infant-directed speech (Bryant & Barrett, 2007). These studies have been used to indicate the possible existence of behaviors that are discernable across cultures. Studies have yet to attempt to identify, however, whether or not the classroom practices of one culture are identifiable across cultures. Such an investigation would provide a way to gain not only further insight into the cultures examining the focal culture following the method set forth by Tobin et al., but would also provide an objective and quantitative means of further analyzing the possible existence of universal aspects of both ECE and general pedagogy. Given that facial expressions

and speech tones can maintain specific meanings across cultures, it is possible that actions as a whole can demonstrate the same cross-cultural salience, especially those actions involving interactions with young children, an event that occurs in every culture.

In the rationale for their study, Tobin et al. specifically draw on the work of Caudill and the Spindlers, contemporaries who both worked on the development of series of line drawings meant to elicit cultural values from participants. Tobin et al. then went on to refer to their films as "moving, noisy version[s] of the drawings used by Caudill and the Spindlers" (Tobin, Hsueh & Karasawa, 2009, p. 7). In essence, Tobin et al. asserted that using videos to elicit cultural values is as salient as using pictures or line drawings to do so. Moreover, Tobin et al. propones that it is important to have individuals not only watch scenes from their own culture's preschools but from other cultures' preschools as well as "ethnographic judgments… reflect an intermingling of the culture being described and the culture doing the describing" (1989, p. 9).

Drawing on Tobin et al.'s use of their preschool films to elicit reflections of their respondents' cultures, I have attempted to create a fourth culture comparison task that provides insight to each of the target cultures. Unlike Tobin et al. however, I wanted to create a paradigm that would incorporate a series of closed answer choices in order to quantify rather than simply record cultural differences in reaction to certain behaviors. Using film clips of the school from Stevenson's study in Ethiopia, I attempted to present a series of scenes that reflected a variety of the activities that could occur in school in order to assess each culture's response to a broad spectrum of behaviors.

Using film selections from a culture external (and presumably unfamiliar) to all three of the cultures of interest provides a reliable means of assessing each culture as related to their responses to one common culture. Moreover, the paradigm developed is highly adaptable and

can be used across a number of cross-cultural lines, allowing for the potential to evaluate the reflections of more than just three cultures. Unlike Tobin et al.'s methodology which required filming and then several edits of each of the videos before they were shown to external audiences, the classroom practices paradigm as presented in the this study only requires a translation of the protocol into each culture's predominant language. Even if only a short time can be spent in each culture, a cultural context can be provided for any footage gathered from the preschools.

In order to provide additional context to the preschool films and as a reflection of Tobin et al.'s original study, parts of the questionnaire used by Tobin et al. in their focus groups was administered to adults in each culture. By directly asking adults their various opinions about specific facets of preschools I was able to gather explicit cultural values about ECE in addition to the implicit values determined by the classroom practices paradigm.

It is theorized that the classroom practices paradigm and questionnaire will provide a context for and corroborate the findings of the quantitative evaluation of a day in preschool in each culture, thus resulting in a three part method to empirically and objectively evaluate culture as it is experienced by children.

Method

Participants[10]

For the classroom practices paradigm, participants were selected through a convenience sample. In the South Pacific, participants were recruited by the local interviewer in their areas of residence, with the experimenter and interviewer often establishing a location in one area of the village and the interviewer directing participants toward the location. In the US, participants were recruited by the experimenter and the preschool director before and after the formal school day and through e-mail solicitation.

In Samoa, participants were all residents of the neighboring towns Luua Faga and Salimu Faga. In all, 31 Samoan participants were interviewed and tested, with an age range of 18 to 57 years old and a mean age of $M = 37.6$. Of the Samoan sample, 19 were female and 12 were male. Overall, approximately 80 percent of the participants had children ($n = 25$, Women $n = 18$, Men $n = 7$) and of the participants with children a little over half had children that attended or had previously attended preschool ($n = 14$).

In Vanuatu, participants were all residents of the island of Mota Lava. A total of 32 participants with an age range of 19 to 63 and a mean age of $M = 31.7$ were interviewed and completed the classroom practices paradigm. Of the Ni-Vanuatu sample, 20 were female and 12 were male. In sum, approximately 75 percent of the participants had children ($n = 24$, Women $n = 18$, Men $n = 6$) and of the participants with children, approximately 88 percent had children that attended or had previously attended preschool ($n = 21$).

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[10] In Samoa and Vanuatu, the classroom practices paradigm and school questionnaire where conducted in the same session resulting in the same sample for both components of the present study. In the US these two measures were conducted separately, resulting in two different samples.

These samples were used as a model for the US sample, which was collected from both the parents and teachers at the preschool site and from undergraduate students at Emory University. Data was collected from 56 respondents, with two participants' data being removed from the set due to errors in the presentation of the stimuli. Approximately twenty-three 18 to 22 year-old women participated in the study. In order to create a more equitable sample, 3 sets of responses were randomly selected from this population group resulting in a sample size of N = 34. Participants in the sample were all residents of Atlanta, GA and in total had an age range of 19 to 60 and a mean age of M =31.6. Of the US sample, 19 were female and 15 were male. Approximately 65 percent of the sample had children (n = 22, Women n = 17, Men n = 5) and of the participants with children, all had children that attended or had previously attended preschool.

Model

The classroom practices paradigm was administered to participants by a local interviewer who had worked with the experimenter to translate and back-translate the questions and script into the native language of the village (Samoan in Samoa, Mutlap, the local language, in Vanuatu).

At the beginning of every session, a series of basic demographic information, including the participant's number of children, number of children 5 years old and younger, the number of their children that attended or had attended preschool, and whether or not they were a teacher. Of concern in regard to the demographic data was the number of participants whose children had or currently attended preschool as this measure gave a sense of the prominence of preschool education in each area and therefore indicated different levels of exposure to ECE.

In the South Pacific, following the collection of demographic data and the questionnaire (see the following section) the interviewer told the participant that they would be watching films from a school in a different country[11]. The interviewer then explained to the participant that different activities could occur in this school: teaching, play, punishment, and learning. As the interviewer listed each activity, they laid a corresponding card with a line drawing of the activity on the surface in front of the participant.[12] After ensuring that each card was understood, the experimenter would present a blank card and explain that if none of the activities indicated by the four previous cards occurred in the film, the participant should choose the blank card and then ensured participant understanding of the blank card.

Upon the completion of this explanation, the participant watched a series of ten film clips of scenes from a school in Ethiopia. Each clip is fifteen seconds long and proceeded by a four second title screen indicating the clip number. Participants were presented with one of five possible film orders, depending upon their participant number. Each order was composed of the same ten clips, with two clips of every indicated option presented. In order to establish clip identity, I consulted Jed Stevenson, who had filmed the classroom activities in Ethiopia.

[11] For a full script, see Figure 5 in the appendix
[12] For the line drawings and their descriptions, see Figure 6

Below is a description of the film clips and their designated identities:

Table 2

Classroom Practices Film Clip Descriptions

Category	Number	Description
Teaching	1	Teacher and student working together on a math problem
	2	Teacher demonstrating "head, shoulders, knees and toes" in English at the head of the classroom
Learning	1	Children reciting the sounds of different Amharic letters
	2	Children participating in "head, shoulders, knees and toes" in English standing at their tables
Punishment	1	The teacher pinches a girl's inner thigh and speaks quietly to her as the girl makes a face indicating that she is in pain
	2	The teacher leads a girl across the front of the room by her ear
Play	1	Children are seated in a circle playing a game similar to what Americans call "duck, duck, goose"
	2	Children and the teacher are in a standing circle, clapping and singing a song
Other	1	Teacher calls roll while sitting at a table with students
	2	The students of the school sing the national anthem as the flag is raised

After viewing each clip, the participant was asked to identify what had occurred in the film by pointing to one of the answer cards. The interviewer then confirmed their answer before the next clip was shown. During the testing process, the experimenter recorded the participant's answers on a coding sheet, stopping the interviewer for clarification when necessary.

Punishment served as a special condition in order to further assess the role of discipline and classroom in the culture. If the participant chose the punishment card, they were presented with a series of four misbehaviors (hurting another child, disobeying the teacher, not doing work, and lying to the teacher) and corresponding line drawings.[13] After participant understanding of

[13] For misbehavior line drawings and descriptions, see Figure 7

each of the possible misbehavior was confirmed, they were shown the film clip again and asked what they thought the child had done wrong and answered by pointing to one of the misbehavior cards. After identifying the misbehavior, the interviewer asked the participant how they would punish the child and translated the answer for the experimenter to record how they would punish the child. After the participant's answers were recorded, the misbehavior cards were collected and the next clip was played.

Following the ten clips, the interviewer asked participants were to answer a series of questions concerning the school they had seen in the films order to gather each participant's view of the novel school in comparison to their own schools and thus assess not only each participant's impressions of the school, but also their own culture based on their answers.[14] At the conclusion the experiment, participants were asked to put the misbehavior cards in order from worst behavior to the "least bad" behavior as a means of providing a context for the answers for the punishment condition.[15]

In the US, the aforementioned paradigm was adapted to self-regulated Internet survey. Due to a widespread access to Internet technology among the US sample and the consistency in language of use between the researcher and participants (i.e. English), I felt that the character of the study could be maintained without the presence of a researcher. After sitting with and piloting the on-line study with five participants, it was determined that the participants' interactions with the on-line version of the study did not differ significantly from those of participants in other countries. Moreover the participants did not express any confusion or appear to have any problems interfacing with the technology.

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[14] For the full list of questions, see Figure 8

[15] Only 12 participants in Samoa completed the last question due to difficulties in translating the idea of ranking behaviors.

Hypotheses

1. It is anticipated that participants in each culture will rate behaviors consistently with others in their culture as a reflection of shared cultural values as related to education. Given this, US participants are expected to have answers more consistent the labels given to the clips by the researcher.

2. Due to a higher levels of literacy and presumed corresponding exposure to classroom practices, it is expected that US and Samoan participants will show more similarity than Ni-Vanuatu participants.

Results

As hypothesized, Americans had a higher rate of consistency with the assigned clip identifications ($M = 8.6$, $SD = 0.8$) than the Ni-Vanuatu participants ($M = 6.1$, $SD = 1.6$) and the Samoan participants ($M = 4.6$, $SD = 2.1$) as indicated by an analysis of variance that demonstrates that the effect of location was significant, $F(2,94) = 51.93$, $p < 0.0001$. Post hoc analyses using the Tukey HSD test criterion indicate that the average number of clips identified consistently with the identifications of the researcher was significantly greater for American participants than both Samoan and Ni-Vanuatu participants ($p < 0.01$) and significantly greater for Ni-Vanuatu participants than Samoan participants ($p < 0.01$). Though it was anticipated that there would be a difference between the identifications of the two cultures, it was not expected that the Ni-Vanuatu would be significantly more consistent with the assigned identifications than the Samoans, $t(61) = 3.09$, $p = 0.002$. Aspects of the hypothesis were correct however, in that the culture with a greater exposure to ECE as indicated by the percentage of those whose children had or currently attended preschool (about 88% of Ni-Vanuatu participants with children

indicated that their children attended or had attended preschool in comparison with a little over half of the Samoan participants with children), did show a greater consistency with the assigned identifications.

While examining the data, it appeared that the most inconsistencies in identification occurred for those clips identified as punishment or in the case of Samoans, simply identifying clips as punishment. In total, 11 Samoan participants did not identify a single clip as punishment in contrast with 1 Ni-Vanuatu participant any and no American participants. A Fisher Exact test confirms ($p < 0.0001$) a significant relationship between location and the identification of film clips of punishment. Moreover, 24 American participants (approximately 71%) labeled the first punishment clip, which depicted the teacher pinching a girl's thigh, as something other than the intended "punishment" label (5 labeled it teaching and 19 labeled it "other").

For Ni-Vanuatu participants, in spite of a high level of agreement with the researcher's identification of clips, there was a significant amount of discrepancy for one identification. For the second learning clip (in which children are participating in "head, shoulders, knees and toes") 19 of the 32 respondents identified the activity as play. A chi-square test of independence was conducted to examine the strength of the relationship between a participant's location and their identification of the second learning clip as play. A significant relationship was found between location and the identification of the clip as play, X^2 (2, $N = 97$) = 13.8, $p = 0.001$. Ni-Vanuatu participants were more likely to identify children engaging in "head, shoulders, knees and toes" as *play*.

In contrast with the inconsistent labeling of punishment clips, approximately 82% of all participants ($n = 80$) corroborated with the identification of the play clips as *play* (i.e. identified both as play). An analysis of variance indicates that the effect of location was significant on the

average responses consistent with the researcher's identification of play behavior, $F(2, 94) = 7.35$, $p = 0.001$. Post hoc analyses using the Tukey post hoc criterion, however, indicate no significant difference between the responses of Ni-Vanuatu and Samoan participants or the Ni-Vanuatu and American participants, but does indicate a significant difference between the mean responses of Samoan and American participants, $p < 0.01$.

Discussion

Samoan Discrepancies:

In spite of a higher rate of literacy and presumably an accompanying higher level of exposure to school, Samoans consistently identified the classroom practices as something other than the identities assigned by the researcher and, as it became apparent, the majority of the US sample. Samoans even differed significantly in their identification of play the play clips, both of which were identified as play by the majority (81%) of respondents. While it is certainly possible that Samoans have a different way of perceiving and labeling classroom behaviors that differ from Western views, this inconsistency with the researcher's identifications is surprising. The village members of Luua Faga and for the most part, Samoans as a whole, have a great deal more exposure to Western practices and ideals in their daily lives than the Ni-Vanuatu. Access to TV shows, radio and Western popular culture is common in villages and as noted earlier, Samoan school structures are based on Western methods.

Why is it that in spite of this greater amount of exposure to Western ideals, Samoans score more inconsistently with the researcher's identifications than those in the Ni-Vanuatu sample? One possible answer could be the robustness of Samoan culture and a continued emphasis on *fa'asamoa*, the Samoan way in spite of growing Western influences. Samoan's

tendency to not label the classroom practices as discipline may be indicative of this dedication to cultural continuity.

Polynesian countries have a well-documented history of a prevalence of physical punishment (as termed by Westerners), beginning with the ethnographic work of Ernest Beaglehole (1938-9). In Samoa, discipline and punishment are deeply engrained into the parents' and caretakers' view of their culture and many believe, as one parent mentioned in Smith's examination of human rights in Samoa, "physical punishment is the way of the *fa'asamoa*" (2009, p. 19). Similar studies have resulted in homologous sentiments, such as that of one Samoan mother who noted "for some [children] 'words are useless'" (Odden, 2009, p. 160) while in another study a participant explicitly stated "children need to respect their parents and hitting them and smacking them is the only way for them to understand that – there is no other way" (Smith, 2009). Given this recognition of punishment as a vital component of Samoan life and *fa'asamoa*, it is surprising that neither of the punishment clips, one of which shows clear physical punishment (a girl being pulled by her ear across a classroom), were identified as punishment by nearly a third of the Samoan participants.

One possible explanation could be the disconnect between what Westerners explicitly label as punishment and Samoans simply see as a normal component of daily life. As summarized by one Peace Corps member who I met during my stay in Samoa, in Samoan society, "You are not being beat, you are just living." When evaluating Samoan's more physical tendencies, are Westerners imposing a label of punishment that is not culturally salient? The results of the classroom practices paradigm indicate that this may be the case, as when given the

option to label events as *punishment*, Samoans tend to instead identify them as *teaching* or as *other*.[16]

Discomfort in the United States

American participants also demonstrated inconsistencies with the researcher's label of *punishment*, but only for one of the clips (all 34 of the participants identified the other punishment clip as *punishment*). This clip, which depicts the Ethiopian teacher pinching the inner thigh of a little girl who is squirming in discomfort, causes a certain of level of discomfort in American audiences as evidenced in one of Stevenson's screenings of his typical day film and during the pilot sessions of the online version of the paradigm. After watching the film clip for the first time in one of Stevenson's screenings, I noticed tension in the room as the American audience watched the teacher stick her hand between the little girl's thighs. Almost immediately, some one asked Stevenson what was occurring, clarifying that it was not an act of sexual aggression as was feared by the audience. I was not surprised to see similar reactions from the Americans piloting my study and after the study was over, was almost immediately asked by the all of the pilot participants what had happened.

This discomfort with the clip and sensitivity to the teacher's hand placement is not indicative of Americans' inability to recognize punishment, but rather a cultural artifact that reflects "the specter of dangerous sexuality that has come to haunt contemporary US preschools" (Tobin, Hsueh & Karasawa, 2009, p. 200). As highlighted by Tobin et al., in the late 1980s and early 1990s several allegations of sexual abuse were purported against preschools and daycares that gained a great deal of media attention. Though most of these cases were eventually deemed

[16] It should be noted that in spite of the prevalence of physical punishment in Samoan culture, no instances of physical punishment were observed in the preschool over the course of the three-day observation period.

invalid, “the twin characters of the pedophilic preschool teacher and the sexually vulnerable preschooler” had entered “the consciousness of the nation” (p. 200). Today, this has translated into a variety of policies that regulate the kind of touching that can occur between teacher and student (Tobin, Hsueh & Karasawa, 2009).

Due to the presence of this cultural awareness of and sensitivity to the sexual abuse of children, it is believed that American audiences were more sensitive to the placement of the teacher’s hand than those in other cultures and as a result were less likely to label the event as *punishment* and felt that the only valid choice was *other.* Thus, even within the researcher’s own culture, the responses elicited by classroom films of another culture can provide insight to cultural values and views as related to preschool.

Western Influences in Vanuatu

The use of the responses to the film clips to evaluate cultural values is further demonstrated in the tendency of Ni-Vanuatu participants to identify children engaging in “head, shoulders, knees and toes” in English as *play* rather than *learning* as it was labeled by the researcher. Given the amount of consistency between the US and Ni-Vanuatu participants as to events that are representative of *play* and the noted use of song and repetitive word games in observed in Ni-Vanuatu classrooms (both in Mota Lava and White Sands) during filming, it is believed that this identification provides insight to the extent to which Ni-Vanuatu preschools have been impacted by Western models. In other words, it is not that the Ni-Vanuatu do not recognize song and dance as a means of instruction, but rather this particular *Western* song and dance is unfamiliar to them.

Considering that “head, shoulders, knees and toes” was one of my first lessons in Samoan and its appearance in Stevenson’s films of a school in Ethiopia, the spread of this classic English

children's activity is indicative of the dissemination of Western teaching methods around the world. As previously discussed, neither Samoan nor Vanuatu has a native formal education system and the system present today are the legacies of Western models of education being imposed on the islands by missionaries. I believe that the extent to which these Western models are maintained and implemented, however, are subject to accessibility, especially in Vanuatu.

Mota Lava, located in Vanuatu's northern section of islands is incredibly isolated with very little influence from the Western world present in day-to-day living. The island itself has one boat, one truck and one "functioning" television. While we were staying in Mota Lava, the village attempted to set up a satellite to watch the FIFA World Cup but was never able to find signal. In direct contrast to the aforementioned TVs, radios and overall access to Western popular culture present in Samoa, Mota Lava is considerably isolated. A Peace Corp member on Mota Lava informed me that this isolation inhibits the distribution of teaching materials from the central government and New Zealand to the island and that a good portion of the materials that were present, she had worked to bring with her after her visits to Port Vila, Vanuatu's capital. Thus, many of the materials, games and songs used in Telhe Kindy were endemic to Mota Lava and based on my preschool observations and the responses of adults, "head, shoulders, knees and toes" does not seem to have been appropriated into the activities of children in Mota Lava.

Overall, I do not believe that the Ni-Vanuatu participants' identification of "head, shoulders, knees and toes" is a reflection on the use of song and dance in instruction but more of a matter of a lack of cultural awareness of or exposure to the rhyme.

Classroom Practices and Classroom Coding

The aforementioned divergences from the identities proposed by the researcher identities indicate that different cultures may have different ways of conceptualizing classroom practices

than that of the researcher and their cultural contemporaries. In other words, the initial findings indicate that classroom practices are not universally identifiable. If this is the case, to what extent do different understandings of and labels for behavior influence the progression of the preschool day? If behaviors are truly being perceived in significantly different ways (as it appears that they are between the US and Samoa), the results of coding will reveal a bias for American categories rather than an objective analysis of the school day as is desired.

If the classroom practices paradigm is extended to include films from each of the target cultures, I believe that in consultation with an educator from each country, a coding schema could be established that reflected the views of the culture rather than simply a Westerner's understanding of the culture. If the establishment of this culturally-relevant coding is successful while retaining its intent to be statistically comparable overall, a more clear view of the preschool day as a quantified entity may be possible.

Parent Questionnaire

Method

Participants

For the questionnaire, participants were selected through a convenience sample. In the South Pacific, participants were recruited by the local interviewer in their areas of residence, with the experimenter and interviewer often establishing a location in one area of the village and the interviewer directing participants toward the location. In the US, participants were recruited by the experimenter and the preschool director before and after the formal school day and through e-mail solicitation.

In Samoa, participants were all residents of the neighboring towns Luua Faga and Salimu Faga. In all, 31 Samoan participants were interviewed and tested, with an age range of 18 to 57 years and a mean age of $M = 37.6$. Of the Samoan sample, 19 were female and 12 were male. Overall, approximately 80 percent of the participants had children ($n = 25$, Women $n = 18$, Men $n = 7$) and of the participants with children, and a little over half had children that attended or had previously attended preschool ($n = 14$).

In Vanuatu, participants were all residents of the island of Mota Lava. A total of 32 participants with an age range of 19 to 63 and a mean age of $M = 31.7$ were interviewed and completed the classroom practices paradigm. Of the Ni-Vanuatu sample, 20 were female and 12 were male. In sum, approximately 75 percent of the participants had children ($n = 24$, Women $n = 18$, Men $n = 6$) and of the participants with children, approximately 88 percent had children that attended or had previously attended preschool ($n = 21$).

These samples were used as a model for the US sample, which was collected from both the parents and teachers at the preschool site and from undergraduate students at Emory University. Unlike the sample for the preschool practices, the parent questionnaire sample is not comparable to the same degree, but it is believed due to the consistency found in the data that this did not strongly influence the data. A total of 20 participants with an age range of 21 to 60 and a mean age of $M = 34.75$ completed the survey. All participants were residents of Atlanta. Of the US sample, 15 respondents were female and five were male. Overall, 75 percent of the participants had children ($n = 15$, Women $n = 14$, Men $n = 1$) and of those participants with children, 100 percent had children that attended or had previously attended preschool ($n = 15$).

Model

The questionnaire was administered to participants in Samoa and Vanuatu by a local interviewer who had worked with the experimenter to translate and back-translate the questions and script into the native language of the village (Samoan in Samoa, Mutlap, the local language, in Vanuatu). In Samoa, the questionnaire was also back-translated by a second native speaker.

At the beginning of every session, a series of basic demographic information, including the participant's number of children, number of children 5 years old and younger, the number of their children that attended or had attended preschool, and whether or not they were a teacher.

Following the collection of demographic data, the interviewer administered an oral questionnaire consisting of three questions that elicited information about the value of ECE in the individual's culture. Each question was followed by the presentation of a series of possible answers written in the participant's native language on index cards and asked to place the answers in order from most important to least important, which was recorded by the experimenter. For each question, the answer choices were spread onto the surface between the interviewer and the participant in the order indicated by the previous participant in order to randomize the presentation order and ensure that answer positioning did not sway patterns of answering. The questions, which were taken from a similar survey Tobin et al. presented to the parents of each school in their three-culture comparison (Tobin, Wu & Davidson 1989), asked participants to identify what children should learn in preschool, why a society should have preschool, and what a teacher should be like.[17] Each of these questions provides insight to a different facet of the cultural values surrounding ECE, from what skills and characteristics are

[17] For full wording of questions and answer choices, see Figure 9

valued in young children to the purposes behind the existence of preschools, and the characteristics valued in those teaching and providing an example for young children.

Participants in the US were given the option to complete the questionnaire either in paper form or on-line. For the paper form, each question was presented as it is in the appendix and participants were asked to rank the behaviors from most important (1) to least important (9 or 11 depending on the question). In the on-line version of the questionnaire, participants were asked to arrange the answer choices in order of importance, much like the index cards presented to participants in Samoa and Vanuatu.

Results

Each sample's collective set of responses was evaluated based upon the percentage of participants that identified each answer choice as their first choice or as one of their top three choices. Responses labeled as most important for questions 1 and 2 are listed below:[18]

Table 3

Responses to Questionnaire (Questions 1 & 2)

	What are the most important things for children to learn in preschool?	**Why should a society have preschools?**
Samoa	1. Beginning reading and math skills 2. Gentleness 3. Good health, hygiene and grooming habits	1. To give children a good start academically 2. To give children experience being a member of a group 3. To give children a chance to play with other children
Vanuatu	1. Arts/music/dance 2. Beginning reading and math skills 3. Self-reliance/Self-Confidence	1. To give children a good start academically 2. To start young children on the road to being good citizens 3. To supplement, educate and support parents
US	1. Cooperation and how to be a member of a group 2.Sympathy/empathy/concern for others 3. Self-reliance/Self-confidence 4. Communication skills	1. To give children experience being a member of a group 2. To give children a good start academically 3. To give children a chance to play with other children

For purposes of this discussion, the first two questions will be the main focus. While cultural values regarding the ideal characteristics of a preschool teacher were construed, the first two questions better illuminate the struggle to accurately quantify a preschool day as a reflection of culture.

[18] For a complete summary of the questionnaire data, see Figures 7, 8 & 9

Discussion

As with the other two components of the proposed paradigm, for the questionnaire, answers that appear to support current understandings of each culture are accompanied by selections that on first look do not corroborate notions of cultural values and structure. These unexpected preferences, however are not necessarily indicative of invalidity, but may provide insight to each culture in a way that was not previously considered.

Samoa:

Given the tendency of Samoan culture to valorize physical punishment (for a more detailed summary, please see the discussion section of the classroom practices section), it was surprising to both cultural insiders and me that *gentleness* was rated by Samoans as one of the most important things for children to learn in preschool. Upon further analysis, it was determined that the concept of *gentleness*, as Americans interpret it, is not directly translatable into Samoan. The word used in the study, *faapelepele i ai* meant, in the words of the secondary back translator, "soft, take care of." Unlike the English understanding of *gentleness*, which implies a sense docility or a description of temperament, the Samoan translation used referred more directly to children taking care of one another. In this sense, the prominence of *faapelepele i ai* among Samoan's choices is not surprising, as it reflects the broader collectivist notion of the importance of the in-group and in the case of Samoans specifically, the peer group, among whom Samoans spend the majority of their time (as evidenced by the significant amount of time spent in large group activity in the Samoan preschool).

Noticeably absent from Samoans' top three choices is *cooperation and how to be a member of a group*, even though Samoans rated *to give children a chance to be a part of a group*

as one of the top reasons a society should have preschool. Upon further consideration, however, this distinction between learning to be a member of a group and the chance to be a member of a group are distinct ideals. In *Preschool in Three Cultures Revisited*, Tobin, Hsueh & Karasawa posit that their Japanese respondents valued both children learning to be a member of a group and giving children the opportunity to be a member of the group because with decreasing birthrates, children were no longer receiving that experience in the home and therefore needed it in school (2009). Samoan children, however, are expected to be members of their peer groups from the age of 24 months and on, when caretaking responsibility transfers from the mother to older siblings or other sorts of family members. Thus, Samoan children may not need to learn how to be members of a group, but the community still values them spending time in a group in a preschool setting as it reinforces what occurs in the village.

United States:

Data from the American sample, especially the emphasis on group dynamics, appeared to be consistent with that gathered by Tobin et al. (1989, 2009). What is of interest is that Samoan respondents and US respondents exhibited similar ratings for the most important reasons a society should have a preschool. This similarity begs the question, when two different cultural samples respond in the same way, are their responses truly the same? While on the surface, the answer appears to be yes, I would propone that the answers to the above questions should only be evaluated in light of the data collected in the other components of the study and cultural context. In other words, what each answer choice means is different in each culture. For example, while Americans feel that children should learn how to be members of a group, they do not mean that they should value the in-group over the identity of the self, as do those in collectivist cultures such as Samoa. Instead while being members of a group, American children

are expected to maintain their individual identity and learn how to navigate the space between self and other. Thus, while the above questions can provide insight to each culture's values in regard to the purpose of preschool, they should not be removed from the cultural contexts in which they are being answered.

Vanuatu:

In Ni-Vanuatu participants' responses to the questionnaire, the hypothesis proposed in regard to the typical day coding that as members of a horizontal-collectivist culture, the Ni-Vanuatu are given more freedom to assert their individuality within culturally accepted bounds is supported by Ni-Vanuatu participants valuing *self-reliance/self-confidence* as on of the most important things for children to learn in preschool. As in the above explanations, this answer should be considered within its cultural context in order to gain full meaning.

The Questionnaire as a Point of Reference:

While Tobin et al.'s questionnaire is a source of surface insight on its own, I believe that it has great potential, barring further difficulties with translation, to give community members a greater chance to indirectly expound on what is occurring in their community's preschools. Like the proposed use of the classroom practices paradigm to create a more culturally relevant coding system, the answers to the questionnaire could be used to better focus the evaluation of each preschool as a reflection of its native culture.

DISCUSSION

In a final evaluation of the method, I return to the question that I asked when discussing the typical day coding data- How exactly is a culture's outlook translated into preschool practices, and more important, does this translation occur in every culture?

I do not feel that any of the components of my method can answer this question singly nor am I comfortable strongly asserting that when considered collectively, my data forms a complete picture of culture, much less preschool, as it is experienced by children in Samoa, Vanuatu and the United States. By removing anecdotal evidence, which I felt to be a source of potential bias and a barrier to the assertion of cultural generality, I removed what makes Tobin et al.'s comparisons compelling. Several times throughout his works, Tobin asserts that no one behavior, practice or comment can be indicative of a culture as a whole, but when combined, they provide a wealth of insight.

Perhaps what my method is missing is this anecdotal component- the actual and not just the measured voice of those that I am trying to capture. In this final section, I attempt to combine my data with anecdotal evidence in an attempt to assert that when combined with qualitative evidence, quantitative evidence can provide an added layer of richness and support by examining the mealtimes in each school as a reflection of culture.

When evaluating the distribution of time spent in each type of activity, I was struck by the large discrepancy between the amount of time spent on meals in the United States (16%) in comparison with Samoa (3%) and Vanuatu (4%). After reviewing the films of each of the schools I noticed that not only was the amount of time spent eating in each culture's preschool

significantly different, the way in which meal time was conducted in each culture was completely different and these differences reflected the cultural values communicated by adult participants in the questionnaire and classroom practices identification.

In the United States, meals are not only meant for eating, but hold a highly instructional purpose and significant role in the scaffolding of cultural values and norms, indicating a possible reason for their length in comparison with those of the other schools. During meal time in the United States, children are exposed to a variety of narratives and cultural norms that lead to their formation of identities as students and members of their communities. Each component of the children's experience with mealtime contributes to this formation in some way, from the roles of the teachers to the distribution of food to peer conversations and even the presence of multiple receptacles for waste.

When asked in the questionnaire what children should learn in preschool and why a society should have preschools, American participants responded that children should learn *how to be a member of a group* and develop *communication skills* while going to preschool to *have the chance to gain experience as a member of a group*. These values are highly evident in meal times, during which American children are encouraged to converse with each other and with the teacher as the teacher often guides and models the flow of conversation.

A sense of individualism, however, is never absent from this exchange as children are allowed to select and ask for the types of food that they would like from the teacher during snack and brings lunches from home, prepared specifically for them. The ability to choose food and the presence of a unique meal for each child is unique to the Unites States in this study. In Samoa, children are all given the same meal and in Vanuatu, children bring in food that is then divided and distributed equally to the class.

Moreover, the vertical nature of American culture is frequently navigated in peer conversation, as children compare their foods, attempting to assert either a unique identity ("I'm the only one with apples.") or a common trait with the group ("Raise your hand if you have something orange."). It should be noted that conversation during mealtime is also unique to the US preschool and only Americans rated *communication skills* highly as a learning objective for preschoolers.

Mealtime in Luua Faga preschool is almost the complete opposite of that in the Pinecrest. After washing their hands, children sit and wait for food to be brought to them. Each meal is the same and prepared by the preschool and children are discouraged from bringing food from home, which the director views as "unhealthy rubbish." Given that Samoans selected *good health, hygiene and grooming habits* as one of the most important learning objectives, it appears that the director is trying to encourage children to eat healthier foods than the processed alternatives they often find at home.

The one exception to everyone receiving the same meal was the director's grandson, who was given a water bottle and additional food if he requested it. As the LMS minister's grandson, the child belonged to one of the most respected families in the village and as such was afforded special privilege. This privilege is a direct reflection of the vertical nature of Samoan culture, where hierarchies are stringently woven into the fabric of the collective.

Samoan children spend the overwhelming majority of their meal silent. They did not compare their foods, discuss their preferences or even contribute to the meal. When they finished eating, they carried their plate to the teacher and then proceeded to go play. In contrast to the meals at Pinecrest, the meals in Samoan schools serve the purpose of feeding children, rather than instructing them. This is not to say that cultural values are not being modeled for children

during mealtime, as the preceding examples indicate otherwise, but that meals are not used in the same way by the instructors at Luua Faga as they are used as at Pinecrest.

As it was hypothesized that the preschool coding would demonstrate for the school day as a whole, meals in Mota Lava preschool (and at White Sands, where similar meal practices were evident) navigate the middle ground between collectivistic ideals and the encouragement of individual identity. Like their US peers, each child brings food to preschool for the day's meal, but instead of eating this food individually, the Ni-Vanuatu children give it to their teacher to distribute to the class. In a sense, this equal contribution to mealtime is almost a metaphor for a horizontal collectivist culture- where each individual is making an independent and noted contribution for the well-being of the collective. By bringing food to school, children are also asserting *self-reliance* and *self-confidence*, a learning objective valued by Ni-Vanuatu adults.

While children do not engage in conversation like their American peers, there are several other points throughout the day where similar conversations are encouraged in small groups. Thus, mealtime may not be the time in which agency is being bestowed upon the children but they are given the opportunity to explore their personal voice at other times throughout the day.

As concluded from the data in the classroom practices activity, an important and missing layer to this analysis of mealtime in each school would be the evaluation of the teacher and perhaps several members from each culture. Given that the classroom practices were not universally recognizable (although this has not been tested for clips of children eating), it is important to use culturally constructed evaluation rather than one that appears to have a Western bias.

From an observation made in the coding of the preschool observation films about the unequal distribution of time spent eating between the schools a comparison of the translation of

culture in mealtime practices could be constructed with data from the questionnaire in addition to the theoretical contributions of insight from adults in each culture (as informed by the results of the classroom practices paradigm) and anecdotal evidence from each preschool. Thus when used in combination with anecdotal evidence, the proposed paradigm shows promise for evaluating culture as it is experienced by children in preschool.

While I still do not believe that I can assert with any degree of certainty how or even the extent to which culture is translated into the preschool practices of Samoa, Vanuatu, and the United States, I feel that my method provides a basis for future investigation into the intersects between ethnographic and psychology-based research as it relates to how children experience culture.

Appendix

Figure 1.

Map of Samoa and Vanuatu

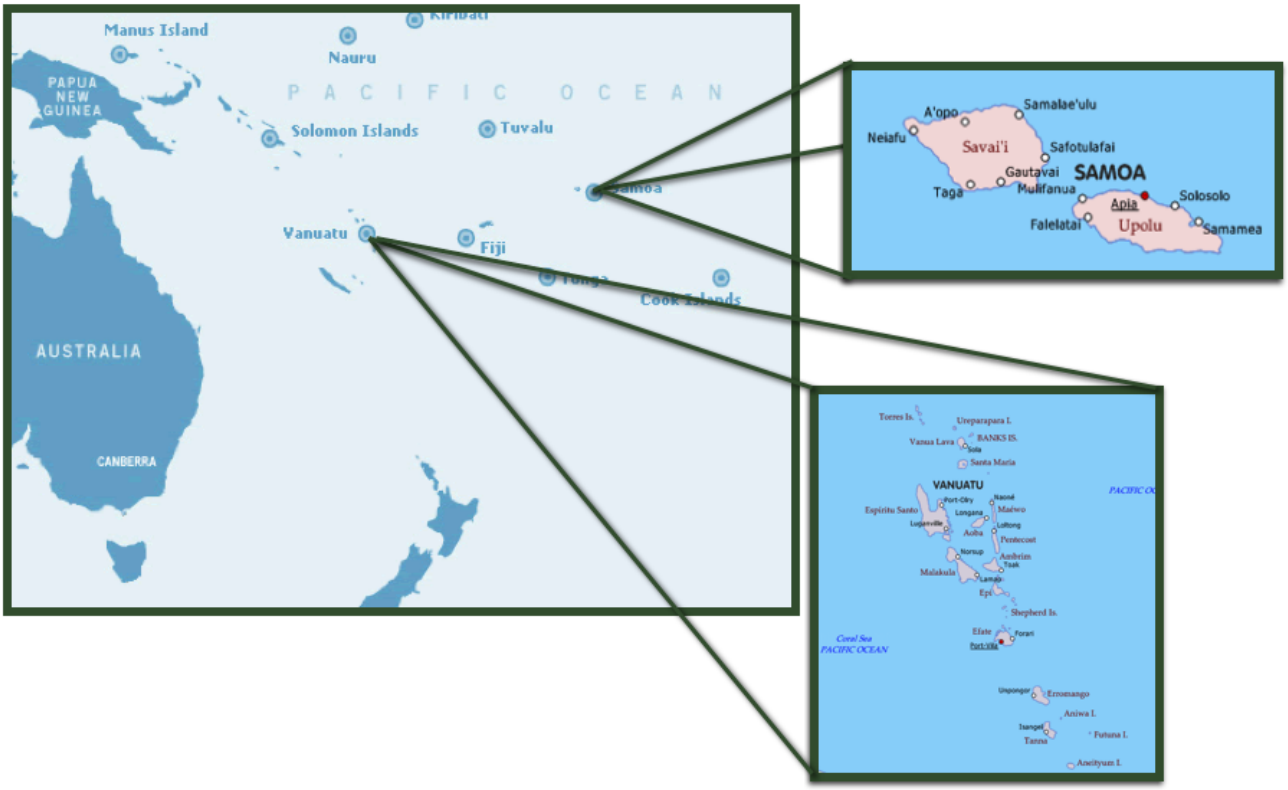


Figure 2.

Coding Measurements

Group Size	Large Group	75% to whole class
	Intermediate	50% ≤ x < 75% of class
	Small Group	20% ≤ x < 50% of class
	Pairs	2 to 3 students working together, 2 if smaller group ($N < 10$)
	Individual	Each child is working in their own independent space, ex. Children all sitting in different desks
Activity Type (as determined by activity planned by teacher or in the absence of a planned activity, based on behavior of the majority)	Instruction/Learning	Group songs/dance, Hygiene checks, group physical activity, Story time, Letter/Number/color drills, etc.
	Play	Free play, both child-directed and teacher-directed, games
	Meal	Snack time, lunch time, presentation of candy
	Other	Organization of class, comforting of class, Movement to and from different locations, Discipline and Punishment
Activity Intent	Individual	Intended to be Individual Work/task/activity (Ex. Individual coloring assignment, During play- each child has own toy, activity)
	Pair	Intended to be Partnered or Paired Work/task/activity (Ex. Letters game in 2 or 3 During play- interaction between two or three students)
	Whole Group	Intended to be Whole group work/task/activity (Ex. Whole group singing a song, Whole group listening to a story, During play- all children interacting)

Figure 2.

Coding Measurements (cont.)

Role of the Teacher	Teacher Directed	Teacher present, instructing or modeling behavior (determined by voice, actual sight), Teacher has an active role, even if only with one student, Includes discipline
	Supervised	Teacher present, not instructing; Regarded as supervised unless teacher has noticeably walked out of frame, classroom, etc.
	Unsupervised	Teacher not present, not instructing

Figure 3.

Summary of Activity Distribution

		Group Size				
		Large Group	Intermediate	Small Group	Pairs	Individual
Location	Samoa	55.9%	16.2	23.5	4.2	0
	Vanuatu (Motal Lava)	33.4%	6.0	32.8	27.1	0
	US	39.0%	18.4	32.2	10.4	0

		Activity Type			
		Instruction/ Learning	Play	Meal	Other
Location	Samoa	53.8	24.0	2.9	19.2
	Vanuatu (Motal Lava)	59.0	18.2	4.0	18.8
	US	31.1	35.7	15.6	17.6

		Activity Intent			Teacher Role		
		Whole Group	Pair	Individual	Teacher Directed	Supervised	Unsupervised
Location	Samoa	54.3	8.2	37.3	57.4	32.1	10.4
	Vanuatu (Motal Lava)	33.5	24.3	42.1	48.0	51.6	0
	US	81.4	2.9	15.7	44.5	55.5	0

Figure 4.

Summary of Comparison Data for Mota Lava and White Sands

		Group Size				
		Large Group	Intermediate	Small Group	Pairs	Individual
Location	Mota Lava	33.4%	6.0	32.8	27.1	0
	Whie Sands	75.2%	9.4	5.7	8.9	0

		Activity Type			
		Instruction/ Learning	Play	Meal	Other
Location	Mota Lava	59.0	18.2	4.0	18.8
	White Sands	37.9	46.3	6.1	13.7

		Activity Intent			Teacher Role		
		Whole Group	Pair	Individual	Teacher Directed	Supervised	Unsupervised
Location	Mota Lava	33.5	24.3	42.1	48.0	51.6	0
	White Sands	70.2	4.9	24.6	54.2	45.1	0

Figure 5.

Classroom Practices Identification Script

(Script is in bold)

I am going to show you some scenes from a day in a school in another country.

There are things that can happen in school (show notecards)…

Teaching
Play
Discipline and
Learning

(Confirm that each card is understood- Ask **"What does this card represent?"**)

Some of these films I show you will not show one of these four things. If you think you are watching one of these films, you will pick this card. (Show blank card)

(Hold up blank card) **When will you use this card?**

For Each Clip:

Now I am going to show you the _____ (first, second, third, etc.) film. (Show clip).

What happened? (Show cards, have subject point to card)

Just to make sure, you think that _____ occurred? (Confirm and point to card)

[If discipline] **You said that the teacher was disciplining the student in this film. What do you think the child did wrong? In this school a child can be naughty by:** (show notecards)

Hurting another student
Disobeying the teacher
Not working or
Lying to the teacher

(Confirm that each card is understood- Ask **"What is this?"**)

Now you will watch the film again. (Show clip). **What do you think the child did?** (Show notecards)

(Confirm) **You think the student _____.**

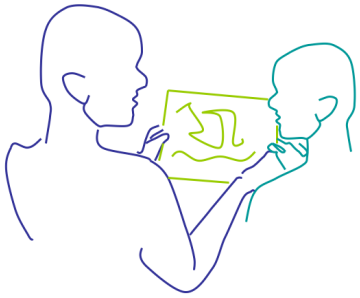
How would you punish this child?

Figure 6.

Line Drawings for Classroom Practices Identification

Discipline/Punishment:

Teaching:



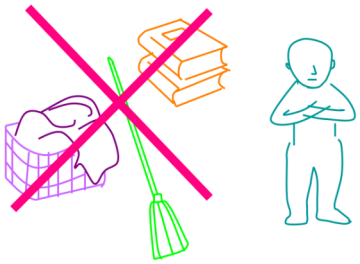
Play:

Learning:

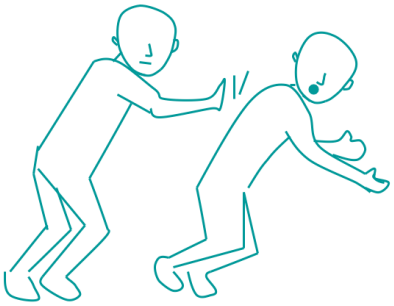
Figure 7.

Misbehavior Line Drawings

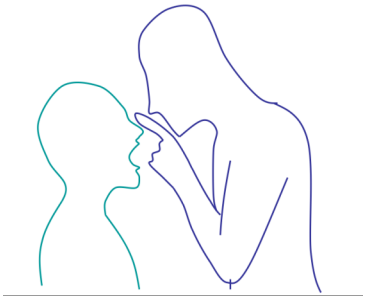
Not doing work:



Hurting Another Student:



Disobeying the Teacher:



Telling a Lie:

Figure 8.

Fourth Culture Comparison Questionnaire

1.) Where do you think this school is?
2.) What are the best aspects of the school you have just seen?
3.) What are the worst aspects of the school you have just seen?
4.) Do you think the class size in this school is
too small / just right / too large
5.) Do you think the teacher's approach to discipline in this class was
too strict / just right / not strict enough
6.) Is this school like your school? This school is _____ to your school
exactly the same somewhat similar somewhat different entirely different
7.) Do you think your school is…
better / same / worse

Behavior Interview
Now I have two more questions…
1.) Some of the children in this school misbehaved. Put these behaviors in order from the worst behavior (point to where worst should be) **to least bad behavior** (point where "least bad" should be)? (Show notecards)

(Confirm) **So you think it is worse to _____ than to _____.**

Figure 9.

Cultural Values Questionnaire

What are the most important things for children to learn in preschool? Rank these options from most important to least important:

_____Perseverance
_____Cooperation and how to be a member of a group
_____Sympathy/Empathy/Concern for others
_____Creativity
_____Beginning Reading and Math Skills
_____Self-Reliance/Self-Confidence
_____Art/Music/Dance
_____Communication Skills
_____Physical Skills
_____Good health, hygiene, and grooming habits
_____Gentleness

Why should a society have preschools? Rank these options from most important to least important:

_____To give children a good start academically
_____To reduce spoiling and make up for deficiencies of parents
_____To free parents for work and other pursuits
_____To give children a chance to play with other children
_____To start young children on the road toward being good citizens
_____To give children experience being a member of a group
_____To provide children with a fun place to go each day
_____To make young children more independent and self-reliant
_____To supplement, educate, and support parents

Figure 9. (cont.)

What are the most important characteristics of a good preschool teacher? Rank these options from most important to least important:

_____Affectionate, Warm
_____Communicates well with parents
_____Knows subject matter
_____Experienced
_____Devoted and conscientious
_____Creative
_____Understands and likes children
_____Good at making children study hard (a firm task master)
_____Tolerant

Figure 10. Questionnaire Question #1

What are the most important things for children to learn in preschool?

	Samoa		Vanuatu		US	
	First Choice	Top Three	First Choice	Top Three	First Choice	Top Three
Perseverance	7%	20%	4%	14%	0%	20%
Cooperation and how to be A member of a group	13	30	0	36	40	70
Sympathy/Empathy/Concern For others	3	7	4	11	15	60
Creativity	3	13	7	25	0	15
Beginning reading and Math skills	17	43	25	47	0	5
Self-reliance/Self-confidence	13	30	7	54	20	50
Art/Music/Dance	7	20	36	57	0	0
Communication Skills	3	13	7	29	20	50
Physical Skills	13	37	4	11	0	10
Good Health, hygiene, and grooming habits	3	47	7	11	0	0
Gentleness	20	40	0	7	0	10

Figure 11. Questionnaire Question #2

Why should a society have preschools?

	Samoa		Vanuatu		US	
	First Choice	Top Three	First Choice	Top Three	First Choice	Top Three
To give children a good start academically	47%	67%	36%	61%	15%	45%
To reduce spoiling and make up For deficiencies of parents	3	13	14	21	0	5
To free parents for work And other pursuits	7	13	7	25	5	10
To give children a chance to play With other children	7	60	4	32	5	45
To start young children on the road To being good citizens	0	20	32	61	10	30
To give children experience being a Member of a group	20	63	0	21	30	85
To provide a fun place for children to Go each day	7	27	7	18	10	20
To make young children more independent And self-reliant	3	20	0	29	10	30
To supplement, educate, and support parents	3	13	4	36	15	30

Figure 12. Questionnaire Question #3

What are the most important characteristics of a good preschool teacher?

	Samoa		Vanuatu		US	
	First Choice	Top Three	First Choice	Top Three	First Choice	Top Three
Affectionate, warm	17%	50%	7%	32%	25%	80%
Communicates well with parents	0	13	11	21	5	25
Knows subject matter	7	33	7	21	0	0
Experienced	47	77	32	61	0	15
Devoted and Conscientious	3	10	4	43	5	35
Creative	0	7	7	21	0	35
Understands and likes children	10	33	14	36	65	90
Good at making children study hard (A firm task master)	7	43	11	50	0	0
Tolerant	10	33	7	14	0	15

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