



Hawaiian Children's Developmental Understanding of Race and Culture

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Children's Understanding of Race

- Understanding of race and culture based on applying:
 - General cognitive skills
 - Naïve theory of biology --> Phenotype
 - Social cognitive development
 - > social features of race

Children's Understanding of Race



- Model of Ethnic/Racial Perspective Taking Ability (Quintana, 1994; 1998)
 - Mexican American children
 - African American children
 - Caucasian children
 - Trans-racially adopted children
 - International sojourner children
 - Native children in Guatemala



Native Hawaiian Children

- Research Question:

Does the model of ethnic perspective-taking ability (EPTA) apply to Native Hawaiian children?



Study Methodology

- Individual Interviews
 - Interviewers were Native Hawaiian
 - Interviews at school or home
 - Open-ended questions
 - Probe for children's logic
 - Questions about social experiences and imaginary scenarios
 - 30 - 45 minutes in length



EPTA Interview

Examples of Interview Questions:

- What does it mean to be Hawaiian?
- Do you like being Hawaiian? Why?
- Why does prejudice occur?
- Do you do different or similar things with Hawaiian and Caucasian friends?



Scoring of Interviews

- Interviews transcribed
- Transcriptions are scored
- Scoring based on EPTA level
- Examples of scoring to follow



Questionnaires

- Hawaiian Culture Scale (Hishinuma et al. 2000)

- Customs and Beliefs Subscale

- Family home blessed by Hawaiian priest or Kahuna

- Offerings at heiau

- Responses: *Don't know.....believes.....practices custom*

- Activities and Social Events Subscale

- Baby Lü`au

- Hula

- Responses: *Don't know.....Know....Do Activity*



Questionnaire continued

- Demographic and other cultural variables
 - Age
 - Sex
 - School
 - Ancestry
 - Exposure to Hawaiian language



Procedures

- Parent Consent and Child Assent
- Interviews conducted at home or school
- Interview administered before questionnaires
- Interviews audio-taped and transcribed
- Interview transcripts scored according to developmental level



Participants

Elementary schools: 2 public, 1 private

58 Native Hawaiian children

15 children from each public school

28 children from private school

Grades 3- 6, Mean age 9.57 years

34 females (58.6%), 24 males (41.4%)



Results

- Each level of EPTA described
- Excerpts from interviews illustrate level
- EPTA described in context of general social cognitive abilities
- Preliminary Quantitative and Qualitative Results

Social Cognition Level 0 (approx. 0 - 5,6 years)

- Physical and observable perspective
 - Social Cognition: Social world conceived
 - Physical
 - Observable
 - Sometimes, egocentric

- Examples

How do people change as they get older?

They get bigger, shoes are bigger, talk louder

What makes people happy?

Smiling



EPTA Level 0

- Race, culture understood based on physical, observable, egocentric terms
 - Skin, hair color
 - Some misconceptions (e.g., confuse culture with state residency)
 - Obvious observable features (e.g., language)



EPTA Level 0 cont'd

How can you tell if someone is Hawaiian or not?

Child: Like if they have yellow hair then you can tell [that they are not Hawaiian].

Child: You can tell the difference, the Caucasians are kind of white in skin color and the Hawaiians are like tannish brown, not white



EPTA Level 0 cont'd

Can you ever stop being Hawaiian?

Child: No, I don't think so.... oh yeah. By going to live somewhere else like Wyoming.

Why would someone not like being Hawaiian?

Child: They may not like being Hawaiian because they are Japanese and speak some other language.



Social Cognition Level 1 (approx. 4 - 7 or 8 years)

Greater awareness of unobservable, internal states

Examples:

People smile because they are happy

How do people change as they get older?

Child: Group-ups think about or like different things than kids do



EPTA Level 1

- Awareness of unobservable features of race, culture (e.g., ancestry)
- Literal Perspective



EPTA Level 1

How do you know you are Hawaiian?

Child: *Cause my grandma is Hawaiian and my dad is half of that and I am half of that.*

Child: *Cause my mom is Hawaiian and she got her Hawaiian from her dad and her mom.*

Child: *Cause my grandpa knows how to cook real Hawaiian kinds of food and like when he was younger I guess he learned from his parents old Hawaiian food*

Child: *I know I'm Hawaiian because I live in Hawaii and I wear Hawaiian clothes*



EPTA Level 1

Why do you like being Hawaiian?

Child: It's cool to be Hawaiian because the language is cool and stuff they did way back is cool.



Social Cognitive Level 2 (approx. 7 - 11 years)

Social, relational perspective
See self through eyes of others

Example:

Why would someone smile if they were not happy?

May be they wanted others to think they were happy



EPTA Level 2

- Understand nonliteral features of culture, race
- Understand social consequences of culture, race



EPTA Level 2

How are Hawaiian families different from Caucasian or White families?

Child: Maybe the[Hawaiian] parents would sing him to sleep and in the White family they might just say 'good night' and turn off the light.



EPTA Level 2 cont'd

How can you tell the difference between Hawaiians and Caucasians?

Child: Because if another person [a Caucasian] met someone who was Hawaiian the Hawaiian might talk pidgin a little bit and they might say 'you're not speaking right, you're weird.' and start teasing you and stuff



EPTA Level 2 cont'd

What does it mean to be Hawaiian?

Child: *Hawaiians are really kind and loving...and when they dance its like real nice they actually show you what the song is about with their hand motions*

What does it mean to be Caucasian or White?

Child: *Because I realize when I talk to Caucasian people some of them aren't that...friendly...but like pure Caucasians... Well I don't meet them a lot*



Level 3 Social Cognition

Approx 12 yrs through adol.

Generalize across discrete events, individuals

==> Develop group Perspective,
(e.g., function in groups or cliques)

==> Generalizations and stereotypes

==> Develop sense of identity



EPTA Level 3

Which team (all Hawaiian, all White, or Mixed teams) would the Hawaiian girl choose to join?

Child: She would pick the all Hawaiian team because she could connect better because they have the same experiences



EPTA Level 3

Do you like being Hawaiian?

Child: Being Hawaiian is fun because you get to learn more than if you...cause if you are in this school, you get to know about your culture and religion and how you are supposed to live. It gets me to know myself a little better

What does it mean to be Hawaiian?

Child: Having pride in being Hawaiian



EPTA Level 3

How are Hawaiians and Caucasians different?

Child: Because earlier in MLK day, the Whites wouldn't agree with the Hawaiians and Blacks and use them as slaves...if we were in those days right now we would be scrubbing someone's floor or digging someone's weeds and doing a lot of stuff and slaving and working really hard



Preliminary Quantitative Results

EPTA predicted by age ($r = .51, p < .01$)
and by cultural exposure ($r = .66$)



Discussion

Pattern of results suggest following model of children's understanding of:

- a) Hawaiians
- b) Caucasians
- c) Hawaiian-Caucasian inter-racial relations
- d) Intra-racial relations among Hawaiians