

Preliminary Analysis of Data Comparing Socialization and World View of Children from Japan, Korea, China, Spain and the US.

日本、韓国、中国、スペイン、アメリカの子ども達の社会化と
世界観に関するデータ比較の一次分析結果について

Marilyn Higgins
ヒギンズ・マリリン

Introduction:

Socialization refers to the manner in which knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and behaviors are transmitted to children in order to enable them to become useful, contributing members of society. In the face of rapid and widespread changes in social and educational systems, the balance needed in order to maintain efficient and effective socialization processes can become inadvertently skewed in one direction or another. The current research is an extension of an earlier study (Aihara, ed., 2005) comparing socialization of children in Japan, China and Korea. That study attempted to gain a “snapshot” overview via survey of the effects of rapid changes in society on the home, school and community practices in order to provide international comparison of conditions and trends related to children’s socialization and education. This paper shares some of the preliminary results of the same survey carried out with elementary school 5th graders in the United States and Spain and compares it with results from the earlier survey.

Methods and Survey Content:

The original research was carried out by researchers in Japan, China and Korea who developed and carried out a survey of over 2000 elementary school 5th graders and second year junior high school students and their parents in small-to-medium size cities in their respective countries. The populations selected had similar characteristics, and this was not by random chance. Each of the areas was situated near a university; Yamaguchi Prefectural University, its sister universities in Kyongnam University in Korea, and Qufu Teacher’s University in China. The areas had been previously selected and research ties nurtured partially based on the similarity in their semi-rural settings.

The research focus of the current study is on 5th grade elementary students only. The comparison groups are added from Spain (Pamplona, Navarra) and the United States (Tarzana, California). The samples were also selected based on research ties and similarity in general setting in non-urban, small city areas. Yamaguchi Prefectural University has another sister-school in Pamplona, in the northern region of Navarra, Spain. Pamplona has a population of 197,000. Three schools from the area (a total of 6 classes) provided data from 5th grade elementary students (n=205). In the United States, Tarzana, California, is a small city located in the foothills near the coast northwest of Los Angeles. It has a population of 27,000. Although Yamaguchi Prefectural University does not have an official sister-school relationship in the area, the writer and her colleagues on this project have been working on joint research with the Full-Circle Learning Projects whose leader, Teresa

Table 1: Sample Population Data

Country	US	Spain	Japan	China	Korea
Number of Respondents n =	82	205	292	333	386
Male % =	48.7	49.7	47.3	54.8	55.1
Female % =	51.3	50.3	50.5	45.2	44.9

Langness, is based there. She arranged for us to survey the 5th-grade students of three classes in Tarzana Elementary School (n=82). Data from these two populations is compared with the data from 5th grade students from Japan, China and Korea published from the previous study. As in the previous research, due to the small size of the populations, it cannot be claimed that the findings represent a complete picture of the entire population of the nations involved. However, the typical nature of the settings may be said to represent some “universal” features of the populations as whole. Due to the differences in sample size the data will be reported for the most part as percentages of the populations involved for ease of comparison. (See Table 1)

The broad-ranging survey used in the previous study which was already translated into English, was also translated into Spanish for this study. The entire questionnaire is reprinted in Aihara, 2005. The 29 questions and numerous sub-questions provides much more data than can be reported in complete detail here. However, highlights from the data collected that will be the focus of this report include

- 1) students' general use of time, i.e., time spent after school and on Sundays;
- 2) students' attitudes toward school; students' general sense of self-reliance focusing on their confidence in taking on certain tasks and responsibilities;
- 3) their world-view.

Discussion of the data will make reference to implications of the findings in relation to the in-depth research on developmental assets provided by the Search Institute.

Findings:

Tables 2 and 3 below provide some insight into what students in each of these countries do between leaving school each day, and returning the following day. Korean students tend to have the shortest school day with nearly 95% leaving school before 4 pm. While just over half of them return home directly, a third of them go to

Table 2: Time spent after school before returning home:

Country	US	Spain	Japan	China	Korea
Leave school before 4 PM % =	73.2	53.6	63.4	24.9	94.6
Went straight home	32.9	64.8	65.4	70.6	53.1
School club/Sports	7.3	1.4	3.4	5.1	2.8
Other club/sports out of school	4.9	14.1	2.4	3.6	1.8
Play on school grounds	46.3	6.8	8.6	8.1	10.6
Play with friends outside school grounds	9.8	15.1	7.5	6.9	19.2
Went to cram school	1.2	<1.0	1.4	1.8	36.3
Studied in Library of elsewhere	6.1	10.7	0.7	2.1	0.3
Other	32.9	18.5	9.9	3.3	7.0

Table 3: Activities between eating dinner and going to bed

Country	US	Spain	Japan	China	Korea
Watched television % =	59.8	68.3	86.6	45.6	59.5
Studied/ Did homework	50.0	26.8	47.6	81.7	49.4
Talked with family	26.9	32.1	21.2	18.0	26.7
Played computer or other games	32.9	27.8	29.8	7.5	26.5
Read newspaper or book	6.1	27.3	12.7	19.8	20.4
Read comic books or magazines	6.1	4.8	27.1	33.3	18.0
Did nothing in particular	12.2	7.3	8.6	1.2	7.1
Helped with dishes / chores	19.5	17.6	17.5	35.1	12.3
Studied for exams	9.8	11.2	0.7	12.6	19.7
Other	19.5	21.0	7.5	1.2	12.5

cram schools (the highest figure of cram-school attendance for elementary school students among these five populations). About a third of Korean students go to cram schools, while another one-third play with friends or join in club activities after school. In comparison, 75% of the US students leave school by 4 PM. But almost half of them play on the school grounds with their friends after school, another 10% play with friends off the school grounds, while 12% attend after-school clubs (either at school or outside). Spanish students are more likely to go straight home after school (about two-thirds), another third play either outside school grounds, or on school grounds or in clubs that are held outside of school. The US and Spanish students tended to give a wider variety of answers to what they did after school, and were much more likely to say they studied at a library or elsewhere than the students in the three Asian countries surveyed. (See Table 2)

Once at home, the students' activities seem to be quite similar between groups. Interestingly, Japanese children tended to watch the most television (over 86% of Japanese children selected this option compared with about 68% of Spanish children and only about 60% of US or Korean children and 45% of Chinese.) It is also surprising that Japanese children placed 4th out of these 5 populations regarding doing homework. Less than half of Japanese 5th graders reported that they “studied or did homework” (compared to a little less than half of Koreans, exactly 50% of the US children and over 80% of Chinese children). Only the Spanish children rated

Table 4: Last night's bedtime:

Country	US	Spain	Japan	China	Korea
Before 9 PM	31.7	1.9	2.1	62.8	3.6
9 ~ 11 PM	65.8	55.6	78.9	35.1	44.8
After 11 PM	2.4	43.9	17.8	.6	51.7

Table 5: Today's waking time:

Country	US	Spain	Japan	China	Korea
Before 6 AM	3.6	0	2.4	14.7	2.3
6 ~ 6:59 AM	61.0	3.9	64.0	81.4	11.9
7 ~ 7:59 AM	13.6	69.8	31.8	1.2	74.6
After 8 AM	2.4	27.8	0.7	2.1	11.1

lower in doing homework with just 27% reporting that they did homework. About one out of five Japanese or Chinese children talked with their family compared to just over one out of four US or Korean students and one out of three Spanish students. Fewer US students (compared to others) read books or magazines, but the US group had the highest number of students who played computer or other games. In the 2005 data, Chinese students were the most avid readers (over 50% said they read books or other reading material), while just 7.5% said they played computer games. As the “digital divide” has closed rapidly in China in the past three years, it would be interesting to know if this data still stands. Over one-third of Chinese students say they helped with chores, while the data for other countries (12% in Korea ~ 19.5% in the US) was surprisingly low. (See Table 3)

Regarding bedtimes and waking times for the youngsters in these different cultures it was interesting to note that Chinese children tend to have the earliest bedtimes, followed by US children, then Japanese. Spanish and Korean students had the latest bedtimes with nearly half of each population going to bed at or after 11 PM. However, it was noticed that a number of Spanish students reported that they took naps as “other” after-school activities. In Spain, dinnertime tends to be quite late - often after 8 or 9 PM. (See Table 4)

As might be expected, waking times for the Spanish and Korean children also tended to be later. Chinese children have the greatest number of early risers (with nearly 15% saying they rise before 6 AM and over 95% rising before 7 AM. US and Japanese children’s responses on this point are nearly equal, with two-thirds getting up before 7 AM. Most Spanish and Korean students rise between 7 and 8 AM. (See Table 5)

One measure of a child’s successful socialization is his or her attitude toward going to school, which is considered the primary task or “work” for that age group. On that issue, Chinese students seem to be farthest ahead with only one in five (20%) saying that they sometimes or often feel like not going to school, while over 60% of Chinese students say they never feel that way. The US students seem to have the greatest challenge with this issue. Nearly 70% of these US children said they sometimes or often do not feel like going to school. In contrast, 55% of Spanish children, 50% of Korean children and about 47% of Japanese children responded that they sometimes or often did not feel like going to school. It would be interesting to investigate what the Chinese school and socialization processes are doing right in that regard.

The reasons for not wanting to go to school are often not clear even to the children themselves. The reasons most cited in the children’s responses were “just don’t feel like it” or “feel tired or lethargic.” Close to 15% of US children also cited headaches or stomach aches (while this reason was given by only 2.7 ~ 7.3% in the other

Table 6: Lack of desire to go to school and main reasons

Country	US	Spain	Japan	China	Korea
Often feel do not want to go to school	22.0	15.6	13.4	0.9	7.0
Sometimes feel do not want to go to school	48.8	40.0	33.6	19.8	43.8
Hardly ever feel do not want to go to school	20.7	24.9	35.6	17.4	30.1
Never feel like not wanting to go to school	9.7	21.0	17.1	61.0	18.9
Reasons for not wanting to go to school:					
Homework/class preparations not done	3.6	2.4	4.5	0.6	5.4
Relationship problems with friends	9.7	0.5	6.2	1.8	5.4
Just don’t feel like it	43.9	37.1	31.2	7.8	17.4
Feel tired/lethargic	41.4	25.9	9.9	4.5	32.9
Have headache or stomach ache	14.6	7.3	2.7	5.4	4.4
Other: Don’t like classes, etc.	19.5	11.7	15.4	6.0	9.9

Table 7: Main activities last Sunday

Country	US	Spain	Japan	China	Korea
Studied at home	18.2	61.0	62.0	92.5	64.5
Read books/listened to music at home	34.4	34.6	34.6	56.2	57.0
Watched TV/Read comics or magazines	62.2	61.0	74.0	75.4	76.7
Relaxed at home	50.0	5.8	33.6	8.4	33.4
Played TV/computer games	52.4	41.4	50.3	15.3	34.7
Used internet	48.8	31.2	15.1	9.0	76.4
Went to cram school, lessons, sports	10.9	8.2	18.2	39.0	4.1
Went shopping with parents	47.6	19.5	46.6	56.5	37.6
Played with friends	42.7	69.3	31.8	63.4	44.8
Participated in school club activity	0.0	1.9	1.4	7.8	0.0
Participated in neighborhood activity	4.8	1.4	0.0	3.6	0.0
Did volunteer work	3.6	<1.0	0.0	0.9	0.3
Went on an outing with family	26.8	15.6	4.1	11.7	6.2
Went to church/shrine/temple w. family	26.8	18.5	1.4	0.6	16.3
Other	14.6	36.5	11.3	6.6	0.3

countries). In addition, nearly 10% of US children selected “relationship problems with friends,” as a reason, while the Japanese cited relationship problems only 6% of the time and other countries even less. Less than 1% of Spanish children gave “relationship problems” as a reason for not wanting to go to school. US data also showed the highest number of children who said they didn’t understand classes or found classes unpleasant. These figures may be due to the high number of immigrant children in this particular population. Nearly one-third of Tarzana’s people come from non-English speaking countries (Iran, Mexico and elsewhere). We were unable to obtain the parent data from this group due to the high number of non-English speaking parents. (See Table 6)

Regarding activities on Sundays (See Table 7), the previous data revealed that the Chinese students were the most studious, with over 92% studying at home on Sundays (compared to 64% of the Koreans and 62% of Japanese.) It was surprising to note that the Spanish students nearly keep up with the Asian students, with over 60% say they studied last Sunday, while a mere 18% of US students claimed to have studied on Sunday. However, more of the US students participate in religious activities (26.8% compared with 18% for the Spanish children, 16% of Koreans, 1.4% of Japanese and less than 1% of Chinese.) Religious activities for children in churches, temples or mosques are also a kind of study and certainly, as will be discussed later, have a positive aspect on socialization. In addition, children from the US and Spain were more likely to go on outings with family than their Asian counterparts. US children were also more involved in neighborhood activities and volunteer activities (8.5%). These are considered “high value” activities in terms of social learning. While TV watching, etc. tended to be about the same across the board, a higher number of US students said that they “relaxed at home” (50%) and a higher number of Spanish students (69%) said that they played with friends on Sunday. This was similar to the Chinese (63%) and was in contrast to Japanese students, only about a third of whom said they played with friends on Sunday. Shopping with parents tended to be a common activity except among the Spanish students (19% vs. 37 ~ 56%+ in the other countries).

The next topic to be addressed in this report concerns the children’s sense of self-reliance. In this area, on the

Table 8: Sense of self-reliance: How well can you perform the following tasks?

Country	US	Spain	Japan	China	Korea
Answer the telephone for family member:					
Very well	72	87.8	52.1	73.9	79.8
Fairly well	23.1	8.7	38.7	18.3	18.4
Not very well	3.6	2.9	6.2	1.2	1.6
Not at all	2.4	<1.0	2.4	3.6	0
Greet guests politely					
Very well	76.8	79.5	33.9	75.1	60.9
Fairly well	18.2	8.7	46.6	20.7	36.5
Not very well	3.6	<1.0	15.4	1.2	2.3
Not at all	2.4	0.5	3.4	0	0
Help clean up after meals					
Very well	51.2	41	25.7	36	16.6
Fairly well	37.8	44.9	40.4	46.5	32.6
Not very well	8.5	9.2	25.3	10.5	39.4
Not at all	3.6	5.4	8.2	3.3	11.1
Study without being told					
Very well	51.2	47.8	19.2	41.1	17.6
Fairly well	31.7	33.7	40.1	48	45.3
Not very well	9.7	13.7	28.8	6.3	30.6
Not at all	7.3	5.4	11.3	0.6	5.7
Keep promises made with parents					
Very well	64.6	41.5	21.2	45.3	35
Fairly well	25.6	40	44.2	47.1	46.9
Not very well	7.6	17.6	29.5	3.9	15.8
Not at all	2.4	1.9	4.8	0.6	1
Follow directions through to finish task					
Very well	45.1	47.3	22.3	44.7	32.9
Fairly well	42.7	39.5	45.5	43.8	45.3
Not very well	7.3	9.7	26.4	7.8	20.2
Not at all	2.4	2.4	4.5	0	1.6
Use allowance wisely					
Very well	47.6	61.5	37.7	36.6	26.9
Fairly well	29.3	23.4	34.6	41.1	34.5
Not very well	8.5	4.8	17.8	14.1	30.1
Not at all	11	7.8	8.9	4.5	8
Save to buy something desired					
Very well	63.4	69.3	50.7	37.8	42.2
Fairly well	22	16.6	33.9	33.3	31.9
Not very well	8.5	7.8	9.9	12	17.1
Not at all	2.4	5.3	5.1	13.2	8.3
Check to make sure I haven't forgotten something in the morning					
Very well	65.9	59.5	32.9	44.4	36.5
Fairly well	19.5	29.3	27.1	41.1	40.9
Not very well	8.5	7.8	26.7	8.1	17.1
Not at all	2.4	3.9	13	3.3	4.4

Table 9: Attitudes toward interaction with foreign people and cultures

Country	US	Spain	Japan	China	Korea
Want to have foreign friends:					
Strongly agree	39	48.8	41.4	69.7	49
Agree	46.3	31.2	27.4	18.6	22.8
Disagree	8.3	13.2	18.2	5.1	15
Strongly Disagree	4.9	5.8	11.6	2.7	11.9
Want to feel proud of own country's culture and traditions:					
Strongly agree	78	65.8	23.6	79.3	37.6
Agree	17	23.4	36.3	12.6	41.5
Disagree	2.4	8.7	27.4	2.7	17.4
Strongly Disagree	1.2	<1.0	1.7	1.2	2.6
Want to respect all cultures in the world:					
Strongly agree	70.7	72.2	30.8	66.4	54.9
Agree	22	17.1	37.7	26.1	36.5
Disagree	4.8	7.3	23.3	1.8	6.5
Strongly Disagree	1.2	1.5	6.5	0.9	1
Want to know more about cultures of developed countries:					
Strongly agree	56	53.2	16.8	65.8	43.5
Agree	37.8	22.9	25.3	26.4	36
Disagree	4.8	14.1	38.7	2.4	15
Strongly Disagree	2.4	7.3	16.8	0.9	4.4
Want to put effort into learning a foreign language:					
Strongly agree	69.5	55.2	30.5	69.7	45.3
Agree	19.5	24.9	27.7	21.6	30.3
Disagree	4.9	11.2	24.7	2.7	17.1
Strongly Disagree	6.0	3.2	15.1	1.8	6.5
Want to have foreign person do homestay with family:					
Strongly agree	23.2	37.6	13	58	22
Agree	39	20.1	17.1	29.4	22.8
Disagree	18.3	19	39	5.1	36.8
Strongly Disagree	17.0	21.5	28.8	2.1	16.8
Want to study abroad in the future:					
Strongly agree	42.6	27.8	8.9	65.8	40.9
Agree	32.9	22.9	11.3	20.1	25.6
Disagree	9.7	21.9	37	4.8	21
Strongly Disagree	12.2	26.8	40.4	3.6	11.1
Want to watch more foreign news and movies:					
Strongly agree	23.2	24.4	31.8	30.6	26.7
Agree	30.5	20.5	23.6	30.9	26.4
Disagree	30.5	34.6	26	19.5	32.6
Strongly Disagree	13.4	19	16.8	11.1	13
Want to interact with foreigners through the Internet:					
Strongly agree	29.2	25.4	17.5	30.6	34.5
Agree	31.7	22	16.1	30.9	22.5
Disagree	13.4	23.4	33.2	19.5	25.4
Strongly Disagree	23.1	28.3	30.5	11.1	16.3

whole, the US and Spanish children seemed to be a bit ahead of their Asian counterparts. On most of the 8 measures from “answering the telephone for the family...” to “check to make sure I haven’t forgotten something in the morning,” the figures for “do fairly well” or “very well” amounted to 80% to 90% and higher. At the same time, Japanese students had only about 60% positive responses on about half of the items and had many fewer responses of “very well” on all items. Chinese and Korean students tended to be more confident, but even their responses were “spotty.” (See Table 8.) It is interesting to note that one area where Spanish students far outstripped the other country’s children was “use allowance wisely.” However, note that in the previous table less than 20% of the Spanish students went shopping with their parents on Sundays compared to 37% ~ 56%+ of the students in other countries. Not going shopping is one sure way to guard against impulse-spending.

The final area of focus in this report is on the world-view of children in the 5 countries studied. Between 69 and 88% of children in these countries expressed a desire to have foreign friends. The Chinese children’s figures were highest on this point. The percentages reflected in the data for US and Spanish children tend to mirror the Chinese children’s percentages on other issues such as desire to feel proud of ones culture while wanting to know more about other cultures, being willing to put effort into learning a foreign language, and so on. Only on the item concerning desire to watch foreign news and movies did the Japanese children’s responses reflect more positive sentiments than those in other countries. (See Table 9)

Table 9: Attitudes toward interaction with foreign people and cultures

We were surprised to see in the data from the US and Spain, as well as by reviewing the data from Asia, the breadth of the students’ geographic knowledge as expressed in the number of countries mentioned in response to

Table 10: Country you would like to visit

Country	US	Spain	Japan	China	Korea
Percent of respondents	91.5	95.6	67.5	90.7	91.7
Number of countries mentioned:	N=24	N=28	N=37	N=24	N=30
Japan	3.6	3.9	~	5.7	9.1
Korea	0	0	1.7	2.4	~
China	6	1.9	5.5	0.3	7.3
Other Asian countries	6	1.9	3.8	2.7	1.8
Unites States	~	17.5	27.7	58	25.6
Canada	2.4	1	0.7	1.5	5.4
Other North American	12	7.8	5.5	1.2	2.1
Australia	0	1.9	3.8	2.1	9.1
New Zealand	0	0	0.7	0	2.8
England	1.4	5.4	6.8	8.1	6.5
France	9.8	11.2	2.1	6.6	5.7
Italy	3.6	11.2	2.4	1.5	2.1
Other European Country	10.9	7.3	2.7	2.4	10.4
Middle East	8.5	1	0.3	0.3	0.3
Africa	2.4	0	1.7	1.8	2.8
South America	9.7	10.2	0.7	0.3	0.3
Cities within own country	8.5	10.7	2.1	1.8	1
No answer or unclear	8.5	5.8	0.3	1.5	~

the question asking them to name a country they would like to visit. (See Table 10) While less than 70% of 5th grade children in Japan responded to this item, over 90% of students in the other countries responded. Yet the responses of the Japanese children were the most varied. Although just over two-thirds of the 333 Japanese children responded, they mentioned a total of 37 countries in 6 continental regions. Students from the US and Spain also mentioned a wide variety of countries around the world (24 and 28 respectively) as well as various cities or places within their own country. The only area not mentioned by children in the US that was mentioned by students in other lands was Australia and New Zealand. And the only area not mentioned by Spanish children was Africa. It is obvious that children today are growing up with a global awareness that was not part of the previous generation's education at least at the elementary level.

Analysis and Discussion:

Beyond merely noting interesting or unexpected comparisons in analyzing data such as this, it may be helpful to look for signs of relative strengths or weaknesses related to what other researchers have identified as productive (or non-productive) approaches to socialization of children. For example, regarding the constructive use of time outside of school there is evidence (Posner and Vandell, 1999, reported in Scales, et al, 2004) that Black children's participation in non-sports extra-curricular activity in the third grade had a significant positive correlation to better social adjustment of the same children in grade 5, while for White children, unstructured outdoor activities was related to poorer grades and social adjustment. Their conclusion was that different cultures may need a different "mix" of activities. While it is not easy to determine precisely the effects (positive or negative) of activities within an overall pattern of use of time, Scales, et al, (2004) have found that "children do not need a diet of time that is wholly structured, but they do need most of it to be supervised or at least monitored by parents or other caring adults. "High quality children's programs provide a developmentally appropriate mix of warmth, control, and promotion of children's psychological autonomy." (p. 123) It is interesting to note from our data that US students participate two to four times as much in after-school play with friends than Koreans, Chinese or Japanese. Whether that is a good thing or not may depend on the nature of the activities and the provision for supervision to keep the activities flowing in a positive way. The fact that nearly 10% of US students claim that they sometimes do not want to go to school due to relationship problems with their friends, may be a signal that the after-school play-time is not being adequately monitored by adults. Finding a proper balance of activities is especially challenging in today's world where opportunities for children to grow and learn and play are rapidly being added that parents themselves have no experience with. Are cram schools helpful or harmful to the overall socialization of children? Are computer games and access to Internet a good thing or a bad thing? How does the reduction of time reading actual books affect children's development and future? The best any parent, teacher or concerned adult can do is to stay in close touch with a child's experience and to monitor the balance of time, encouraging and accompanying children to find safe, fruitful and satisfying uses of time that make the most of their precious early years.

It was interesting also, to note that the number of children in this study who had participated in religious activities the previous Sunday was a bit lower than expected based on the traditionally important place of religion in the US and in Spain. The percent of Spanish children who attended a religious service was only slightly greater than the number who attended such services in Korea (18% vs. 16%). Our US data showed just over one in four children (26%) had participated in a religious service the previous Sunday. It is reported in the 2004 US census (Dye, 2008) that about 45% of US children (age 6 to 17) attend religious activities weekly or nearly weekly, while about one in five never attend religious activities. Dye's bivariate analysis of regularity of

religious attendance and well-being showed that children who attend church or other religious activities on a more regular basis tend to like school more, to work harder on their studies and to show higher interest in learning. They are also more likely to be praised regularly by their parents and to enjoy more “fun-time” with their parents. A “double blessing” in terms of assets: having more positive adults to relate to, while having parents who participate in a social milieu that encourages them to reflect on better parental practices and values, may be part of the underlying mechanism of such an outcome. In addition, if the religious setting is a positive one, not one of prejudice or bigotry against other groups, children are exposed to positive role models through great literature that imbues spiritual values and invites a search for deeper meaning.

The questionnaire regarding self-reliance relate to the assets of social competence (such as planning, making and maintaining good relationships) and assets of positive self-identity (including the sense that a child can influence things that happen in his or her life, and has self-esteem). A cursory look at the positive and negative answers on the eight “can do” items presented may lead one to conclude that US and Spanish children are in general more similar in this regard to the Chinese than to Japanese students. On character formation items such as whether one can keep promises with parents, study without being told and follow directions through to the end, over one-third of the Japanese children reported a lack of confidence. The very purpose of a child in the middle school years is to develop skills and effective means so that they can begin to regulate and govern themselves. According to Scales, et al, (2004) “Research consistently shows that an internal sense of control and efficacy over one’s life in middle childhood is related to better school outcomes, emotional adjustment, social competence and healthy behaviors.” They point to research showing that academic outcomes are better, problem-solving skills increase, and social relations are also better the more confidence and efficacy a child can show in contributing and exercising his or her own discipline in home and community life. This research does not include any data or analysis of the actual school or social performance of students surveyed. However, educators in Japan may ponder whether there are ways to encourage middle-school children in their development of simple social skills that lead to qualities of self-reliance.

Regarding “world-view,” as noted above, the Japanese children showed a wide general knowledge about geography and a general wish to travel to various countries and to have foreign friends. They were surprisingly reticent, however, compared to children in the other countries surveyed, to learn about and to respect other cultures, to welcome foreigners for a homestay, to devote time to studying a foreign language, to study aboard, or to communicate by internet with foreigners.

Spanish students seemed most interested in visiting places within their own country or other Spanish-speaking countries in South America, Central America and the Caribbean. Even places in “Los Estados Unidos” (US) that were mentioned often were places with high Hispanic populations (Texas, Miami, New York, Los Angeles). It was interesting that they also mentioned Asian countries and Australia, but none of the Spanish students selected any country in Africa, which seems much closer to them geographically.

The most surprising statistic from this set of data is that nearly 90% of the US children said that they agreed or strongly agreed that they would like to spend time learning a foreign language, while only about 60% of the Japanese students agreed. Forty percent (40%) of Japanese students surveyed did not agree that they wanted to spend time to learn a foreign language. Since Japanese is spoken by only about 2% of the world’s population, however, it is most imperative for Japanese children to gain some proficiency in a language used for global communication. It is a pleasant discovery, though, to note that in America, often known as a “monolingual culture,” children are discovering a desire to enjoy second-language learning and to broaden their outreach in foreign friendships. This, too, may be a factor related to the high immigrant population in Tarzana.

Conclusion:

This research note has focused on three highlighted areas of a broader set of questions comparing socialization of children in the US and Spain with children in Japan, China and Korea. The focus has been on results of sections of the questionnaire related to use of time, self-reliance and world-view of the 5th graders surveyed. It is hoped that the points raised may be considered by parents, educators and others who are seeking ways to enhance the educational experience of middle school children in their communities in this rapidly changing global era. Data that has not been reported here include questions relating to the children's relationship with their parents, the children's perception of their home environment and neighborhood, the child's perception of their scholastic abilities and educational plans for the future. These topics may be addressed in a future report.

Acknowledgement:

This research was partially supported by a grant from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Science, Sports and Technology. Other members of the research team include Professors Tsugio Aihara, Masako Iwano, and Associate Professor Amy Wilson.

References:

Aihara, T. (Ed.) (2005), *An international comparison of the socialization of children in today's rapidly changing society: with a focus on surveys conducted on parents and children in Japan, China and Korea*, Yamaguchi Prefectural University.

Dye J. L., (2008) Children's Religious Attendance and Child Well-Being. Findings from the 2004 SIPP. U.S. Census Bureau. <www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/files/religious_poster.ppt>

Scales, P. C., Sesma, A., and Bolstrom, B., (2004) *Coming into their own: How developmental assets promote positive growth in middle childhood*. Minneapolis, Minn.: Search Institute.

Preliminary Analysis of Data Comparing Socialization and World View of Children from Japan, Korea, China, Spain and the US.

日本、韓国、中国、スペイン、アメリカの子ども達の社会化と
世界観に関するデータ比較の一次分析結果について

Marilyn Higgins
ヒギンズ・マリリン

要約

本研究は、日本、中国、韓国の親子を対象に行なったアンケートを中心とする「International Comparison of the Socialization of Children in Today's Rapidly Changing Society」(Aihara, ed., 2005)の続きをなすものである。前回と同じアンケート形式を使用したため、新しくスペインとアメリカの小学生からの比較データを加えることができた。まだ分析途中ではあるが、これまで終えた分析は、子どもたちの学校外での自分の時間の使い方、学校での態度を決める学習ルール、学校外の学習活動、自己依存、自己観念や世界観などに焦点をあてるものとなっている。スペインとアメリカの子どもたちの多くの回答は、日本や韓国の子どもたちの回答よりも、中国の子どもに類似した傾向にあることを示していた。さらに、従来の文化的固定観念から想定されるアメリカやスペインに特徴づけられる回答は、世界中の急激な社会変化の影響のためなのか、明確には現れてこなかった。ただし、今回の調査によってアメリカとスペインの5年生に関するデータが加わったことにより、比較的広く国際的な視野を得ることができたことは興味深いといえよう。

Abstract

This research is an extension of the previously published "International Comparison of the Socialization of Children in Today's Rapidly Changing Society," (Aihara, ed., 2005) which focused on surveys conducted with parents and children in Japan, China and Korea. Using the same survey instruments our research team was able to focus on comparison groups of elementary school children in the United States and Spain. Although the data has not yet been fully analyzed, this research note will focus on some of the highlights gained from simple analysis of data on how children use their time outside of school, their engagement in learning as indicated by their attitudes toward school and their learning activities outside of school, their general sense of self-reliance and self-concept, and their world view. The data shows that many of the responses to the questions asked of children in the United States and Spain tend to be more similar to Chinese students than to Japanese or Korean students. However, with the rapid changes affecting the US and Spain as well as the rest of the world, some of replies that might have been expected from our cultural stereotypes do not appear. It is especially interesting to note the comparatively wide global vision of these 5th grade students from the US and Spain.