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Young children's close relationships outside the family: Parental ethnotheories in four communities in Norway, United States, Turkey, and Korea*

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Abstract: Parents, preschools, and schools in different cultures vary greatly in the extent to which children are encouraged to develop long-term relationships with people outside the family circle—peers and teachers. In contemporary societies, parents face complex choices as they bridge children's transitions to a wider world. This exploratory cross-cultural study used a newly developed questionnaire, Parental Concerns for Preschool Children Survey, to assess parental beliefs, values, and judgments. The sample included 521 parents from four cities: Oslo, Norway; Lincoln (Nebraska), United States; Ankara, Turkey; Seoul, Korea. Strong cultural community differences were found in parental descriptions of their own child's friendships and beliefs about the needs of young children in general for close and continuing relationships in preschool and primary. The findings suggest the following conclusions, for example: Oslo parents favored the value of long-term continuity with peers and teachers; Lincoln parents had a more academic than relational focus to school and wanted their children to deal successfully with (new) teachers in different settings; Ankara parents (an upwardly mobile sample) were low in reporting their child's friendships at preschool but valued parent–teacher and child–child relationships there; Seoul parents (oriented to education as a means to economic success) favored their children having quality learning experiences and close peer relationships in preschool.

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Young children learn and develop not only in relationships with others, but through and for them (Fogel, 1993). Enduring, close relationships to parents and other family members provide the first context for learning and development (Dunn, 1993; Laursen & Bukowski, 1997; Noam & Fischer, 1996; Sturgess, Dunn, & Davies, 2001). Yet, from the earliest days, children's attention is also drawn outward beyond the family. Parents mediate children's first interactions and relationships, guided by cognitive models or ethnotheories framing what children want, need, and their capabilities. These models relate to the parents' culturally shared conceptions about how best to further general goals promoting child survival and reproductive success, economic prosperity, and personal happiness and self-actualization (LeVine, 1980).

In contemporary societies, parents face many complex choices and constraints as they bridge children's transitions to a wider world, but which strategies they should use to promote their children's well-being may not be altogether clear to them. How can they best ensure their children's present and future health, wealth, and life satisfaction? For example, one major dilemma they face concerns how to help their children move out into the community around them. How can and should they help their children learn to deal with neighbors, teachers, and other community members outside the extended family? Should they focus on giving children experiences that help them learn to form and maintain close ties with a few particular people? Or, instead, should they provide experiences that foster a friendly and less intimate style of interaction with a diverse succession of new people? This is a particularly challenging issue for parents in contemporary society (Giddens, 1991). The purpose of this study, conducted in four communities, was to discover whether parents differ by culture in their ethnotheories related to young children's enduring relationships in childcare, preschool, and primary school.

Several concepts have been used in the literature to capture parental ideas about young children. Some approaches have favored the concepts of folk theories (Bruner, 1996) or *ethnotheories* (Harkness & Super, 1996) when referring to the cognitive models that parents hold regarding child development, socialization, and family interaction. Goodnow and Collins (1990) prefer the concept of parental ideas, questioning the extent to which parental thinking about everyday life can be regarded as a "theory". Because there is considerable overlap in usage, we shall use the concepts of parental ideas and ethnotheories interchangeably to capture how parents think about young children's extended relationships. Three closely intertwined subdimensions are distinguished: beliefs (descriptive concepts about children, their communication skills, friendships, attachments, and needs); judgments (decision concepts based on beliefs and underlying choices that parents make for children); and values (evaluative concepts guiding these judgments, for example, concerning what childcare, preschool, and school arrangements are best and why). They are related to D'Andrade's (1984) four functions of cultural meaning systems: to represent the world, create cultural entities, evoke certain feelings, and direct people to do certain things.

Previous research has examined the role of culture in the construction of parental thinking about children's development, suggesting that parental theories are culturally shared beliefs, values, and practices, constructed within broader cultural belief systems (Goodnow & Collins, 1990; Harkness & Super, 1996; Lightfoot & Valsiner, 1992). Mainstream North-American parents are described as placing greater emphasis on the fostering of personal autonomy and independence in their children than are members of many other cultures, who may place greater value on family or community identification and affiliation (Harkness, Super, & Keefer, 1992;

Raeff, 1997). Compared with parents from other societies, American parents stress autonomy and individuality and favor cognitive and linguistic competencies over more social-relational competencies (Aukrust, 2001; Bornstein, Tal, & Tamis-Lemonda, 1991; Harkness *et al.*, 1992; McGillicuddy-De Lisi & Subramanian, 1996; New & Richmann, 1996). In mainstream North-American culture, relationships inside and outside of the family have been found to be sustained as individuals explicitly express themselves in ways that make their views and goals readily understood. This way of organizing relationships differs from the structuring of relationships in varied non-Western cultures. For example, in some Asian and Latino cultures, relationships are likely to be organized hierarchically, and family relationships heavily prioritized over friendships and other close relationships with non-family persons. In addition, people are expected to fulfill implicit social obligations toward one another through unspoken emotional intimacy, based on long-term relationships, rather than through explicit communication. Anthropological studies have documented that relationships outside of well-defined kinship systems and other institutions differ with respect to cultural groups, and differ in the extent to which such relationships are seen as mainly expressive and emotional versus instrumental (Krappmann, 1998).

Even though studies have found that cultures vary in the extent to which they socialize children to independence versus interdependence, cultures also are multifaceted and simultaneously constituted by varied, even contradictory, ideas about relationships. A growing corpus of research has emphasized the need to understand and describe the complexities that exist within cultural systems (Edwards, Gandini, & Giovaninni, 1996; Orr, Assor, & Cairns, 1996; Raeff, 2000, Tudge *et al.*, 1999). Though parental beliefs have been reported to differ by child gender, with higher parental expectations for girls on conformity and for boys on independence in some studies (Antill, 1987; Schneider, Attili, Vermigli, & Younger, 1997), most studies have not found gender-related differences in beliefs (see, for example, Harkness & Super, 1996). Conversely, in several studies parental education has been identified as corresponding strongly with intracultural variation in beliefs and values about children's learning and development (Cashmore & Goodnow, 1987; Hoff-Ginsberg & Tardif, 1995; LeVine, Miller, Richman, & LeVine, 1996; Tudge, Hogan, Snezhkova, Kulakova, & Etz, 2000; Willemsen & Van de Vijver, 1997), though we are not aware of any study that has researched relations between parental education and parental beliefs about children's close relationships outside the family. Also, sociologists and educators have found that residential patterns and stability/mobility relate to adult values and child school achievement. For example, a large literature documents the negative correlation between high student mobility/transience on school achievement, particularly for low-income, less educated families (*e.g.*, Temple & Reynolds, 1999; Tucker, Marx, & Long, 1998). Thus, we predicted that parental education and residential stability would affect parental beliefs and values related to children's enduring social relationships.

Differences in the cultural shaping of human relationships have been captured in former research as varying along dimensions of independence versus interdependence (Greenfield, 1994) or individualism versus collectivism (for review, see Oyserman, Coon, & Kimmelmeier, 2002). In their recent meta-analysis of research on individualism and collectivism outside and inside the United States, Oyserman *et al.* suggested that individualism is commonly associated with valuing personal independence, with facilitating interactions with strangers, and with fostering "a willingness to leave relationships that are not beneficial to the person" (p. 36). Conversely, collectivism implicates obligation and duty to an in-group and "willingness to remain permanently in relationships, even in personally costly ones" (p. 36). They concluded that even

though the diverse research literature related to this topic does not lend itself to simple summary, individualism seems to promote ease of interacting with strangers while collectivity promotes in-group preferences in relationships. Americans were found to interact with more people and to do this more easily than did the groups they were compared to, but also to feel obliged to groups, the difference being that these obligations were perceived as voluntary.

Parents from four communities participated in this study. Two of these, Oslo (national capital of Norway) and Lincoln (state capital of Nebraska), are typical cities from Western Europe and the United States. The other two communities in our study were Ankara (national capital of Turkey) and Seoul (national capital of South Korea). They provide useful contrasts to the American and Norwegian samples because they diverge from them in different directions.

In former research the four countries have been found to differ in degree and type of individualism and collectivism. Oyserman *et al.* (2002, p. 23) plotted overall individualism and collectivism effect sizes against each other in a graphic representation, in which Americans and Norwegians appeared fairly similar to each other in individualism and collectivism, Koreans appeared less individualistic than Americans and Norwegians (but similar in collectivism), and Turks more collectivistic than Americans and Norwegians (but not less individualistic). Koreans and Turks differed along both dimensions, with Koreans being less individualistic, but also less collectivistic, than Turks. Clearly, such between-country comparisons depend upon how individualism and collectivism are measured. Studies comparing, for example, Korea to United States have concluded that Koreans appear more collectivistic than Americans when the scales focused on social relationships, but less collectivistic when such items were not included. Americans, in general, appear to be low in collectivism based on group harmony and duty to in-groups, but not on aspects of seeking advice and in-group belonging; these latter may be American ways to connect and relate, compatible with individualism (p. 27). Thus, individualism and collectivism (like independence and interdependence) are probably not opposite ends of a single continuum; each is multifaceted. Macro-cultural dimensions such as cultural complexity (Miller, 2002) or level and type of competitiveness in society (Fiske, 2002) may predict certain aspects of individualism and collectivism and not others. For example, the particular type of Scandinavian individualism is associated with low levels of societal competitiveness (Eriksen, 1993) as compared to the competitive individualism of the United States (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1985; Lightfoot & Valsiner, 1992; Oyserman *et al.*, 2002; Stewart & Bennett, 1991). Also, cultures consist of practices and institutions in addition to the worldviews implied in the constructs of individualism and collectivism.

Turning from societal values to the principles underlying the social organization of educational institutions (preschools and schools) in our four communities, we find that they fall into two distinct categories. In the United States and South Korea, on the one hand, the preschool and elementary school systems are organized so that children are assigned to new teachers and groups of classmates each year. This system of organization may prepare individuals to get along and succeed in societies oriented to high mobility and rapid adjustment of newcomers. In Norway and Turkey, on the other hand, the preschool and primary school systems require children to stay with the same teachers and classmates for several years, thereby optimizing children's opportunities for developing multi-year extended relationships with peers and teachers. We assume that such macro features of educational organization (products of history and sociological forces) influence parents' ideas about how children should learn to deal with people outside the extended family. The Norwegian and Turkish systems, we predict, incline parents to focus on

child experiences that help them learn to form and maintain close ties with a few particular people, to develop a continuing relationship history. The American and South Korean systems, we predict, incline parents to focus on child experiences that foster connecting with a diverse succession of new people.

Early childhood programs were common and important in all four communities, but the local history and societal functions of preschool/childcare varied considerably, as did also their curriculum, the number of children in classroom groups, and the teacher–child ratio. In Norway, United States, and South Korea, early childhood programs incorporate 50% or more of all preschool-aged children, but in Turkey, less than 10% of 3- to 5-year-old children, most of them living in larger cities, attend preschool (Bo, 1993; Jalongo & Hoot, 1997; Kapci & Guler, 1999; Olmstead, 1989; Ostlyngen, 1983; Shim & Herwig, 1997; Spedding, 1993). Similarly, while preschools in the first three communities rely on long national traditions of educating young children, early childhood programs in Turkey are a relatively new option for working parents, commonly serving children from middle and/or high socioeconomic status (Kapci & Guler, 1999). Recently, a national preschool curriculum has been developed.

In Oslo, Norway, parents can place young children in *barnehager* (preschools), usually offering full-time care and serving most of the children living in the immediate neighborhood. Child group size is typically 9 for children less than 3 years of age and 18 for children above 3, with two or three teachers in each group. The preschools are regulated by national guidelines including a national curriculum, and are supported by a mix of national/local funding based on student enrolment and by parental payment.

In Lincoln, Nebraska, parents can place children in *childcare centers* (offering full-time care) and *preschools* (offering full- and part-time care). Class sizes are usually less than 15, with two teachers per classroom. Each centre or preschool has its own curriculum and is supported by parental tuition (with government subsidies for some qualifying children). The children do not necessarily live in the same neighborhood but are delivered by parents.

In Ankara, Turkey, parents can place young children in *kres* (private preschools, offering full-time care) and *ana okulu* (state-supported preschools, offering full- or half-day care). Each classroom group consists of 10–25 children. All the preschools are regulated by national guidelines, but the public preschools are generally more desirable because they are less expensive and of higher quality.

In Seoul, Korea, parents can place children in *youchiwon* (educational part-day preschools, rarely used by working mothers) and *uliniyip* (full-day childcare centers often used by working mothers). The privately financed preschool and childcare centers usually include 40 children per classroom, while public childcare centers, financed by government money and parental payment, have smaller group sizes of 20 children. All classrooms have one teacher, and children come from the surrounding neighborhood as well as further away. The curriculum in the Korean programs is guided by national standards, the preschools being controlled by the Minister of Education and the childcare centers by the Minister of Health and Social Affairs (Shim & Herwig, 1997).

Research questions and hypothesis

This exploratory cross-cultural study used a newly developed questionnaire to assess parental ideas (beliefs, values, and judgments) about young children's needs for friendships and attachments outside the home, their social and communication skills, beneficial preschool and school arrangements, and dimensions of quality preschool. Because we were interested in how parents conceptualized relationships outside the family, we focused only on families who had chosen to place their child in preschool or childcare. In this way, we selected samples of parents who had directly observed the concomitants and effects of such out-of-home experiences through their own children.

We hypothesized that parents would differ by cultural community in their ideas about young children's extended relationships outside the home. However, we also realized that parents are not passive recipients of cultural ideas and that most cultures include several cultural messages that parents may attend to selectively. Thus, we also hypothesized that parental education and residential stability would affect parental ideas about children's extended relationships in school.

This study addresses the following specific questions: How do cultural community, parental education, and residential stability (high/low) influence parental ideas regarding:

1. descriptions of their own child's past and present close relationships outside the family;
2. beliefs about young children's needs in general for such friendships and attachments, and what social/communication skills they need;
3. judgments related to the importance of relationship continuity within and across educational systems (the advantages and disadvantages of changing a hypothetical child's preschool and changing teachers and classmates each year of primary school);
4. values about what dimensions of quality are most important for a preschool/childcare program.

Methods

Participants

The parents (167 in Oslo, 95 in Lincoln, 147 in Ankara, and 112 in Seoul) were recruited through their child's daycare or preschool program. The Oslo parents were recruited through eight *barnehager* (preschools), all but one offering full-time care. The Lincoln parents were recruited through five *childcare centers* (offering full-time care) and two *preschools* (offering full- and part-time care). The Ankara parents were recruited from three *kres* (private preschools, offering full-time care) and two *ana okulu* (state-supported preschools, offering full-or half-day care). The Seoul parents were recruited through three *youchiwon* (educational part-day preschools, rarely used by working mothers) and three *uliniyip* (full-day childcare centers often used by working mothers).

The parents were asked to participate in a cross-cultural study of young children's social relationships and friendships outside of the family. Either parent could respond, and typically mothers did so; the target child of these parents was a son or daughter in about half of each subgroup (see **Table 1** – *tables begin on page 23*). Questionnaires were distributed in preschools or childcare programs, and parents filled them out at home and returned them. The return rates were 53% (Oslo), 33% (Lincoln), 92% (Ankara), and 66% (Seoul). In Lincoln, the return rates varied

greatly across centers (15% to 92%) and were lowest in the large centers where parents had little daily contact with their director and received much information and many requests via paper-work.

All of the communities included middle-class families as well as some upper working-class families. Parental education was measured on a 4-point scale (1 = *high school or less*, 2 = *some college*, 3 = *2-year college completed*, and 4 = *college completed*). As can be seen in **Table 1**, in all four groups, the parents were typically in their early thirties, and they were parenting children with a mean age varying between 51 months (Lincoln) and 58.7 months (Seoul). Additionally, most were married (or, in Oslo, living together in a long-term relationship with the target child's other parent). Their families were not usually large: parents reported a mean of 1.9 children in Oslo, 1.9 in Lincoln, 1.4 in Ankara, and 2.1 in Seoul.

Residential mobility and proximity to kin were of particular interest because of the focus on embeddedness in their local community as a predictor of parental ideas and beliefs. Several different questions addressing stability/mobility were included, and the Oslo sample was overall most stable and the Lincoln sample most mobile. Families were asked about recent moves, and the number who had *not* changed residences within the past 2 years varied from 49% in Lincoln to 71% in Oslo. The parents were also asked where they had grown up and about half or more of Oslo, Ankara, and Seoul parents had grown up in the same city. The stability in Turkey is also supported by a mobility style where families relocate from rural to urban areas in conjunction with other close family members, in order to maintain extended family ties.

Because Lincoln is such a small city compared to the other three, it was thought comparable to ask about growing up in-state versus outside Nebraska, and most Lincoln parents (65%) had grown up in-state. Asked about their plans to leave their city, Oslo parents scored the highest on no plans to leave the city (80%), while Lincoln parents most often reported that they might leave (50%). Finally, Lincoln families (76%) had fewest close relatives living nearby, while the other groups had more than 92% of families living near to grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, or others (see **Table 1**). Thus, the Lincoln parents were more familiar with mobility than the others, but were still a fairly stable group by American standards.

Instruments

The Parental Concerns for Preschool Children (PCPC) survey was developed for this study and pilot tested in 1999. The questionnaire was originally developed simultaneously in Norwegian and English by the first two authors, then later translated into Turkish and Korean by Kumru and Kim, respectively, with extensive collaboration. Asiye Kumru translated the interview into Turkish, then three developmental psychology professors, fluent in both Turkish and English, confirmed the translation and the cultural validity of the items, resulting in some adjustments in the original questionnaire. The Korean version was translated, backtranslated, then corrected by Misuk Kim and a Korean psychologist fluent in Korean and English in consultation with Carolyn Edwards.

The PCPC consists of an introduction requesting background information and 5 sections addressing parental ideas.

Section 1: Description of own child's friendships and attachments. This section posed questions to parents about whether their own child had ever had a

“best” or “close” friend in preschool or neighborhood or been “attached” to a preschool/childcare teacher or a neighbor or family friend.

Section 2: Beliefs about young children's close relationships. Part 1 of this section involved a hypothetical story format that required parents to think about young children in general. Two scenarios were posed where a close friend/teacher at preschool leaves the school. Parents answered on 3- or 4-point scales: Will the person be missed? (*not really, for a short time, for several weeks, for months*); How hard will it be to form another equally close relationship? (*very difficult, somewhat difficult, somewhat easy, very easy*); How long will that take? (*right away, short time, several weeks, months*); Is such a relationship something the child really needs? (*needed, enjoyed but not needed, not needed, better not to have*); and How does it affect relationships at home? (*positively, no effect, negatively*).

Part 2 consisted of six paired sets of items that assessed beliefs about relationships and communication skills that their own young child needs most. One item in each pair reflected preference for intensive, long-term relationships and communication style. The other reflected preference for more short-term, immediate relationships and communication style. Parents were asked to report agreement according to one of four categories, as either fully or mostly agreeing with one of the two statements in each pair.

Section 3: Judgments about preschool continuity of care. Parents responded to a hypothetical dilemma story about a 5-year old child who is comfortable in a preschool setting, having many friends who would go on to the same school next year. A new preschool has opened at the mother's place of work and close to a sibling's place of care. Should the child be moved or not? Parents were asked to make a choice, and then to rank four rationales for keeping the child in the old preschool and four for changing. Rationales were constructed to identify preferences for long-term relationships and continuity, advantages of the child getting experiences in interacting with new persons (*e.g.*, “opportunity to get used to new teachers, before going on to public school setting”), and familiar school routines as opposed to excellent equipment and convenient location.

Section 4: Judgments related to the importance of relationship continuity in elementary school. This subscale consisted of a hypothetical contrast, eliciting parental judgments concerning continuity of classmates and teachers from one year to the next. The hypothetical situation described two contrasting elementary school systems, one promoting continuity, where teachers and children stayed together across grades, and another where children changed teachers and classmates as they progressed. In constructing this section of the questionnaire, we took advantage of the fact that the national systems of our study contained two of each type. Accordingly, in the hypothetical story, for each parent group, their own country was described first, followed by a contrasting one (Norway and United States contrast for each other; United States the contrast for Turkey; and Norway

the contrast for Korea). Fourteen items allowed rating of the relative advantages and disadvantages of each type of system. Parents were asked to rank from 1 to 3 the possible advantages of each system (one choice being “there are no advantages to this system”) and the possible disadvantages (one choice being “there are no disadvantages to this system”). Four items were constructed that reflected priorities for extended relationships (*e.g.*, “developing a close-knit classroom community takes more than a year”), four items reflected priorities for learning to interact with new persons (*e.g.*, “children get experience in dealing with new adults”) and four items were related to academic rather than social dimensions (*e.g.*, “children begin learning each fall with less wasted time in adjusting”).

Section 5: Values about what dimensions of quality are most important for a preschool program. Thirteen items allowed rating of dimensions along which preschool programs vary, of which only some items were related to promoting extended relationships as quality dimensions. Parents rated items in terms of the four most important and four least important items, thinking about their own child as they answered. The items addressed children’s peer groups and relations, curriculum, teachers, parent relations, school reputation, and leadership.

Results

Parental descriptions of own child

A 4 (Culture) \times 3 (Parent Education) \times 2 (Residential Stability) factorial MANOVA was performed, with parental descriptions of own child from Section 1 of the interview as dependent variables. The MANOVA on the parental descriptions of own child was strongly significant for culture and education: culture, Wilks’ lambda = .89, $F(12, 1262.32) = 4.69$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .04$; education, Wilks’ lambda = .95, $F(8, 954) = 3.21$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .03$. The culture effects were stronger for these and other variables and so are provided (along with means and standard deviations) in **Table 2** [p. 24]. The follow-up ANOVAs found significant cultural differences on three variables. For “has ever had a best/close friend at preschool,” the post hoc Fisher LSD tests showed that Seoul was significantly higher than the others, and Oslo was also higher than Ankara. For “has ever had a best/close friend in the neighborhood,” Ankara and Oslo scored significantly higher than Lincoln and Seoul. For “has ever had an adult attachment at preschool,” Lincoln scored higher than Ankara. The follow-up ANOVAs for education main effect found significant differences on two variables. For “adult attachment at preschool,” $F(2, 480) = 6.35$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .03$, the post hoc Fisher LSD tests showed that parents with high school education ($M = 0.23$, $SD = 0.43$) scored lower than those with some college ($M = 0.36$, $SD = 0.48$) and those who completed college ($M = 0.42$, $SD = 0.49$). For “has been attached to an adult family friend or neighbor,” $F(2, 480) = 3.95$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .02$, the post hoc Fisher LSD tests showed that parents with high school education ($M = 0.43$, $SD = 0.50$) and those with some college ($M = 0.49$, $SD = 0.50$) scored higher than those who completed college ($M = 0.38$, $SD = 0.49$).

Parental beliefs about young children in general

Factor structure of the PCPC. Section 2 of the questionnaire assessed parental beliefs about young children's general needs for close relationships with outsiders. To examine the relationships among items of Section 2, a varimax rotated principal components factor analysis was performed. Five distinct factors emerged, accounting for 55.12% of the variance (see **Table 3**, p. 25). Items with a factor loading of at least .40 were considered to load on that factor, with the exception of one item on communication skill scale that had a loading of .38 (see numbers in italics in **Table 3**). The factors that emerged were easily interpreted. Factor 1 involved replacing close relationships. All four replacement items ("replacing a best friend is difficult," "replacing a best friend takes a long time," "replacing an adult attachment is difficult," and "replacing an adult attachment takes a long time") loaded positively on factor 1. No item from other subscales loaded on this factor. Factor 2 involved value of close relationships. Three of the four items about the value of close relationships loaded positively on this factor ("a close friendship at preschool is needed," "an adult attachment at preschool is needed," and "an adult attachment has a positive [rather than negative] effect on relations to parents"). No other item loaded on factor 2. Factor 3 involved missing lost relationships, with two items ("a lost friend is missed" and "a lost adult attachment is missed") loading positively on this factor, and the replacement item ("replacing an adult attachment takes a long time") also loading positively on this factor. Factors 4 and 5 involved many items from Section 2, Part 2 of the questionnaire, and were labelled the needs for attachment and communication skills factors.

The corrected item- total correlations for each subscale were examined to assess the inter-correlations among the items of the PCPC. The corrected item- total correlations ranged from .42 to .50 on the replacing close relationships. For the value of close relationships subscale, the corrected item- total correlations ranged from .21 to .50. For the missing lost relationships subscale, the corrected item- total correlation between the two items was .51. The corrected item- total correlations on the needs for attachment subscale ranged from .12 to .24. For the communication skills subscale, the corrected item- total correlation between the two items was .22. Cronbach alphas for the five subscales were .68, .55, .67, .35, and .37, respectively. Because the need for attachment and communication skills subscales had low levels of internal consistency, they were dropped from further statistical analyses (alphas .35 and .37, respectively).

Effects of culture and background variables. A 4 (Culture) \times 3 (Parent Education) 2 (Residential Stability) factorial MANOVA was performed, with parental beliefs about young children as dependent variables. The MANOVA was strongly significant for culture and education: culture, Wilks' lambda = .91, $F(9, 1022.32) = 4.45$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .03$; education, Wilks' lambda = .93, $F(6, 840) = 4.90$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .03$. As with parental descriptions of their own child, culture effects are provided (along with means and standard deviations) in **Table 2**. The follow-up ANOVAs found significant cultural differences on one variable. For value of close relationships ("close relationships outside the family do not harm relations within family"), the post hoc Fisher LSD tests showed that Oslo and Seoul were significantly higher than Lincoln and Ankara, and also Lincoln was higher than Ankara.

Education effects were significant for all three subscales. The follow-up ANOVA indicated significant results for replacing close relationships, $F(2, 422) = 8.11$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .04$. The post hoc Fisher LSD tests showed that parents who completed college ($M = 2.67$, $SD = 0.54$) scored

higher than those with some college ($M = 2.51$, $SD = 0.45$) and high school education ($M = 2.45$, $SD = 0.56$). The follow-up ANOVA also indicated significant results for the value of close relationships, $F(2, 422) = 5.66$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .03$. The post hoc Fisher LSD tests showed that parents who completed college ($M = 2.44$, $SD = 0.52$) and some college ($M = 2.43$, $SD = 0.46$) scored higher than parents with high school education ($M = 2.30$, $SD = 0.43$). Finally, the follow-up ANOVA indicated significant results for missing lost relationships, $F(2, 422) = 9.14$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .04$. The post hoc Fisher LSD tests showed that parents who completed college ($M = 3.26$, $SD = 0.67$) scored higher than those with some college ($M = 3.01$, $SD = 0.70$) and high school education ($M = 2.89$, $SD = 0.73$).

Parental judgments about preschool continuity of care

Section 3 of the interview tapped parental judgments (and rationales) about the importance of preschool continuity of care (**Table 2**). The first question asked parents for their judgment about whether it would be better to keep the child in the present arrangement or to move the child to another one. A 4 (Culture) \times 3 (Parent Education) \times 2 (Residential Stability) factorial ANOVA was performed, with parental decision (3 = *stay at old preschool*, 2 = *cannot decide or it does not matter*, 1 = *move to new preschool*) as the dependent variable. The findings indicated a strong main effect for culture only (see **Table 2**). Post hoc Fisher LSD tests found that the Oslo parents differed significantly from all other groups in favoring continuity, and the Lincoln parents differed from Seoul but not Ankara parents.

The parents were then asked to rank their rationales (beliefs) for keeping the child at the current school as well as for moving the child. An initial analysis showed that only 6% of parents favored discontinuity, and they were excluded from the next analysis of parental rationales. A 4 (Culture) \times 3 (Parent Education) \times 2 (Residential Stability) factorial MANOVA was performed, with four rationales favoring continuity as a dependent variable. The only significant finding was a main effect for culture (**Table 2**). Follow-up ANOVAs showed that culture significantly differentiated parents on all four rationales.

Post hoc Fisher LSD tests found the following significant differences. First, Lincoln and Seoul parents ranked higher than the others on the rationale that the child is comfortable with the setting and schedule in the old preschool, and Ankara scored higher than Oslo. Second, Lincoln and Ankara parents ranked higher than others on the importance of knowing and trusting the teachers there. Third, Seoul parents were highest on the importance of the child's playing well with current friends, while Lincoln parents were lowest. Last, Oslo parents were highest on the rationale related to future friendship (children will move together next year to kindergarten), and Lincoln was second, using this rationale more than the other two communities.

Parental judgments about the advantages of relationship continuity in elementary school

Section 4 of the interview posed a hypothetical situation allowing parents to reflect and make judgments on the advantages of teacher-child continuity and discontinuity in the elementary school. Although there were seven judgments favoring continuity (as in the Norwegian and Turkish systems) and seven favoring discontinuity (as in the American and Korean systems), nevertheless parents in all cultural communities favored only a few of them. The analysis was therefore limited to the six rationales chosen first or second in all four communities, and the means and standard deviations are presented in **Table 4** (p. 26).

Two separate MANOVAs were conducted. First, a 4 (Culture) \times 3 (Parent Education) \times 2 (Residential Stability) factorial MANOVA was performed, with three advantages of a system favoring discontinuity as dependent variables. The MANOVA was strongly significant for culture and residential stability: culture, Wilks' lambda = .82, $F(9, 1109.94) = 10.40$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .06$; residential stability, Wilks' lambda = .98, $F(3, 456) = 2.81$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .02$. As before, culture effects and descriptive statistics are provided in **Table 4**, along with the significant follow-up ANOVAs. Post hoc Fisher LSD tests revealed the following significant group differences: (1) for the rationale that discontinuity allows children to get experience in dealing with new adults, Lincoln and Ankara parents scored higher than Oslo and Seoul; (2) for the rationale that discontinuity allows children to get experience in dealing with new children, Oslo scored lower than all other groups; and

(3) for the rationale that discontinuity allows newcomer students to enter and become part of the group, Ankara and Seoul scored significantly higher than Oslo and Lincoln. Residential stability effects were significant for the discontinuity rationale of newcomer children: follow-up ANOVA, $F(1, 458) = 6.95$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .02$. The parents who reported not moving in the last 2 years ($M = 0.95$, $SD = 1.02$) scored higher than parents who had moved ($M = 0.82$, $SD = 1.00$).

Next, turning to the advantages of a school system favoring continuity, a 4 (Culture) 3 (Parent Education) 2 (Residential Stability) factorial MANOVA was performed on the three advantages. The MANOVA was strongly significant for culture. As before, culture effects and descriptive statistics are provided in **Table 4**, along with the significant follow-up ANOVAs. Post hoc Fisher LSD tests revealed the following significant group differences: (1) for the rationale that continuity allows teachers to create a better learning situation, Oslo scored lower than all others; (2) for the rationale that continuity allows children to become fond of others and the classroom homelike, Oslo parents scored higher than all others, and Seoul scored higher than Ankara; (3) for the rationale that continuity allows a close-knit classroom community to develop, again Oslo parents scored higher than all others, and Lincoln scored higher than Ankara and Seoul.

Parental values about dimensions of quality in a preschool program

Section 5 of the questionnaire assessed parental values about 13 dimensions of preschool quality. A 4 (Culture) \times 3 (Parent Education) \times 2 (Residential Stability) factorial MANOVA was performed on the 13 dimensions, with significant main effects for culture, Wilks' lambda = .48, $F(39, 1318.49) = 9.39$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .22$, and education, Wilks' lambda = .92, $F(26, 890) = 1.53$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .04$, and a culture by education interaction, Wilks' lambda = .78, $F(78, 2459.67) = 1.47$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .04$. Follow-up ANOVAs proved significant for culture on 11 of the 13 variables (see **Table 4**). The values are grouped into three categories according to whether parents in all, some, or none of the four groups saw them as relatively "important" (that is, gave that dimension a mean rating of 2.0). The three most important values involved small class groups (enough individual attention), enough teachers and space, and activities building on children's interests. The four least important values involved social dimensions of close relations among children and among parents.

Post hoc Fisher LSD tests for culture found the following statistically significant differences between means along each of the values about quality. For the three dimensions that all communities saw as important: (1) "class groups are small enough that teachers can give individual

attention,” Oslo and Lincoln ranked highest, Seoul third, and Ankara last; (2) “school has enough teachers and space,” Ankara again ranked lowest; and (3) “activities build on children’s expressed ideas and interests,” Seoul scored highest, and Ankara lowest.

For the six dimensions that some communities but not others rated as important: (4) “children experience a sense of belonging in the classroom,” Lincoln scored higher than Oslo and Ankara, and Oslo and Seoul scored higher than Ankara; (5) “many experienced teachers stay at the school for a long time,” Oslo ranked highest, Lincoln second, Ankara third, Seoul lowest; (6) “parent–teacher relationships become close over time,” the ANOVA was nonsignificant and no post hoc tests performed; (7) “school leadership is stable and provides direction,” Lincoln and Seoul ranked higher than Ankara and Oslo; (8) “activities connect and develop into long-term projects and themes,” Seoul scored higher than all other groups; and (9) “the school has a history known to families that gives it a special identity,” Ankara ranked highest and Oslo lowest.

Finally, for the four dimensions that no community rated as important: (10) “class groups are stable because few children come and go,” parents from Oslo and Ankara ranked higher than Lincoln and Seoul; (11) “children play with the same few friends every day,” Oslo and Ankara scored higher than Lincoln and Seoul; (12) “friendship groups stay together from one year to the next,” the ANOVA was nonsignificant and no post hoc tests performed; and (13) “parents get to know each other and become a group,” Ankara parents ranked highest and Oslo lowest.

Additionally, follow-up ANOVAs proved significant for an education main effect along one dimension, “the school has a history known to families that gives it a special identity,” $F(2, 457) = 3.29$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .01$. Post hoc Fisher LSD tests for education found that parents with some college ($M = 1.42$, $SD = 0.69$) scored lower than parents with high school ($M = 1.58$, $SD = 0.73$) and college completed ($M = 1.59$, $SD = 0.77$). The significant culture by education interaction proved significant for the dimensions “children experience a sense of belonging in the classroom,” $F(6, 457) = 2.59$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .01$, and “children play with the same few friends every day,” $F(6, 457) = 2.80$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .04$. Post hoc one-way ANOVAs for each education level indicated significant cultural effects. For “sense of belonging,” and high school parents, $F(3, 136) = 3.62$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .07$, Ankara ($M = 1.93$, $SD = 0.88$) and Oslo ($M = 1.79$, $SD = 0.66$) scored higher than Seoul ($M = 1.36$, $SD = 0.49$) but not Lincoln ($M = 1.62$, $SD = 0.77$). For parents with some college, $F(3, 125) = 4.84$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .10$, Oslo ($M = 2.00$, $SD = 0.69$) scored higher than Lincoln ($M = 1.46$, $SD = 0.59$) and Ankara ($M = 1.47$, $SD = 0.85$), but not Seoul ($M = 1.76$, $SD = 0.83$). For parents with college completed, $F(3, 225) = 4.67$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .06$, Oslo ($M = 2.06$, $SD = 0.67$) scored higher than Ankara ($M = 1.71$, $SD = 0.85$), Seoul ($M = 1.51$, $SD = 0.71$) and Lincoln ($M = 1.57$, $SD = 0.64$).

For “children play with the same few friends every day,” and high school parents, the culture main effect was significant, $F(3, 138) = 6.41$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .12$, that is, Oslo ($M = 2.44$, $SD = 0.66$) scored higher than Ankara ($M = 2.05$, $SD = 0.65$) but lower than Seoul ($M = 2.68$, $SD = 0.56$) but not Lincoln ($M = 2.38$, $SD = .65$). For parents with some college, $F(3, 124) = 11.69$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .22$, Oslo ($M = 2.71$, $SD = 0.46$), Lincoln ($M = 2.71$, $SD = 0.55$), and Seoul ($M = 2.59$, $SD = 0.62$) scored higher than Ankara ($M = 1.81$, $SD = 0.82$). For parents with college completed, $F(3, 223) = 31.27$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .30$, all groups were significantly different: Lincoln ($M = 2.84$, $SD = 0.37$) higher than Seoul ($M = 2.62$, $SD = 0.55$), Oslo ($M = 2.39$, $SD = 0.60$), and Ankara ($M = 1.95$, $SD = 0.62$).

The significant culture by education interaction was also examined in terms of education. Post hoc one way ANOVAs for each culture indicated significant education effects for “children experience a sense of belonging in the classroom” only. For Oslo parents, $F(2, 159) = 5.23$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .06$, those with some college ($M = 2.71$, $SD = 0.46$) scored higher than high school parents ($M = 2.44$, $SD = 0.66$) and college completed ($M = 2.39$, $SD = 0.60$). For Lincoln parents, $F(2, 85) = 5.00$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .11$, those with college completed ($M = 2.84$, $SD = 0.37$) and some college ($M = 2.71$, $SD = 0.55$) scored higher than high school parents ($M = 2.38$, $SD = 0.65$). For Ankara and Seoul parents, there were no significant education effects.

Discussion

Cultural community was a striking predictor of many of the dependent variables. Parent education effects were found for some variables, but residential stability for only one variable.

Findings about *parental descriptions of their own child's relationships outside the family* showed strong cultural effects when it came to peers and parental education effects when it came to attachments to adults. The mean scores indicated that all groups of parents reported many such connections for their children (not surprising since the entire study sample had elected to put their child into early education settings), but the ecology of where these friends and attachments were located varied significantly (see MANOVA and ANOVA results in **Table 2**).

For example, regarding close peers, Seoul parents were quite distinctive in reporting their child to have had a best friend in preschool (80%) rather than family/neighborhood circle (36%), parents from Ankara showed almost the opposite pattern, and parents from Oslo and Lincoln reported more balanced friendship patterns for their children, with Oslo children relatively high on close friendships in both settings and Lincoln relatively low. Regarding attachments to adults, parent education rather than cultural community was the deciding factor. Education main effects were stronger than culture for both of the adult attachment variables, with more highly educated parents reporting attachments at preschool, and less highly educated parents reporting attachments in their circle of neighbors or family friends.

Findings about *beliefs about close relationships outside the family* suggested that most of our parents saw a value to them and realized that they meant something to young children in general. Again, these findings may not be surprising, given the parents' inclinations to use preschool in the first place, but also the findings complement their descriptions of their own child having experienced such relationships. Descriptively, most parents everywhere thought that such relationships were “really needed” by children and would have no effects or positive effects on home relationships. They said that children would miss for “several weeks” (rather than not at all, days, or weeks) a close friend or adult who moves away or leaves them. Replacement would be “somewhat difficult” and also take “several weeks.” For statistical analysis, these variables were combined into three factors, value of close relationships, missing lost relationships, and replacing lost relationships. Cultural differences were significant for value of close relationships, with Seoul and Oslo parents highest, Lincoln parents third, and Ankara parents last (the same ordering as emerged for parental descriptions about their own child's best friends at preschool). Parental education effects were significant for all three factors, with more highly educated par-

ents scoring higher, just as was found for parental descriptions about their own child's attachment to an adult at preschool.

Findings about *judgments about continuity of care in preschool* suggested that parents' cultural community (but not their education or residential mobility) predicted their favoring a decision to keep a hypothetical child at his/her current preschool rather than move the child. Although most parents in all groups favored continuity for this hypothetical story, the post hoc analysis indicated that the Oslo parents were as predicted especially high (significantly higher than other groups), but Lincoln parents unexpectedly came second, scoring higher than Seoul parents (who came last). The preschools of Oslo and Ankara have organizations that favor continuity of care, in contrast to those of Lincoln and Seoul.

The rationales selected by parents for their decision also showed strong cultural effects. Oslo parents (coming from a society that values "belongingness to the local community" (Klausen, 1995) were highest on the rationale related to friendships that will extend forward into the future (children will move together next year to kindergarten). Seoul parents (who had been found in our study to describe their own children as very high on having "best friends" at preschool) were also highest on the importance of the hypothetical child's playing well with current friends now. Lincoln and Seoul parents ranked higher than the others on the rationale that the child is comfortable with the setting and schedule in the old preschools. Lincoln and Ankara parents ranked higher than others on the importance of adults knowing and trusting current teachers.

Findings for *judgments about continuity versus discontinuity in elementary school* suggested that culture was the most significant predictor. MANOVAs showed that the groups were different in how they rank ordered rationales for how continuity could be an advantage. Post hoc tests suggested that Oslo parents scored higher than all other groups in believing that keeping a teacher and group of classmates together for more than a year allows the classroom to become homelike, and a close-knit community to develop. They were lower than all other groups in focusing on the benefits of continuity for promoting a better learning situation or climate. When rank-ordering rationales for the advantages of changing teachers and classmates every year, Lincoln and Ankara parents scored higher than others in seeing the advantages of children getting experience in dealing with new teachers. The Oslo parents (with their interest in preserving children's friendship groups between preschool and primary school) were significantly lowest in seeing the advantage of getting experience in dealing with new peers. Parents in Seoul and Ankara (where class sizes are very large) scored higher than parents in Oslo and Lincoln in appreciating that discontinuity allows newcomer children to more easily enter and become part of the group.

Parental education controlled no variance for these variables, but residential stability did, for the discontinuity rationale of newcomer children. The more stable parents scored higher than more mobile parents in appreciating this rationale. This finding was unexpected. A possible explanation may be that the residentially stable parents were more aware of relationship histories shared by students and teachers, and therefore tended to focus on newcomers' situation when asked to identify advantages of a discontinuity system.

Finally, findings about *dimensions of preschool quality* indicated that three dimensions related to structural organization were ranked on average as very important by parents in all four cultural communities: "small class sizes"; "enough teachers and space"; and child-centered curriculum ("activities building on children's ideas and interests"). Four dimensions that focused on peer relationships and parent-parent relationships were not ranked as most important by any

cultural group, and the remaining six were rated as very important in some cultural communities but not others. These 13 quality dimensions were predicted primarily by parents' cultural community, secondarily by their education, and not at all by their recent residential stability. Each of the four groups had its own pattern of dimensions on which it was relatively high and low. Oslo was especially high on "small class groups," "experienced teachers," "stable class groups," and "children play with same friends every day." Lincoln was especially high on "small class groups," "child sense of belonging," and "school leadership." Ankara was especially high on "school history and identity," "stable class groups," "children play with the same friends every day," and "parent-teacher relationships." Seoul parents were especially high on the curriculum dimensions (child-centered and project-based) and "school leadership." The education effects for the preschool quality dimensions included only one main effect and two culture by education interactions. The details of these findings have been described above but their interpretability seems unclear.

Former research has pointed to the impact of education on parental beliefs (for review, see above). Overall parental education in this study was moderately predictive of parental ethnotheories. Parents with higher education were more likely to endorse bridging their child to the outside world by becoming involved in close relationships with adults at preschool. In further violation of expectations, background factors of residential stability/mobility had minimal influence on parental descriptions, beliefs, judgments, and values, and certainly did not control the huge between-cultural differences that were found. Though we do not know of any study that has researched the impact of residential patterns on parental beliefs about young children's close out-of-family relationships, a large body of research documents a negative correlation, particularly in less educated families, between high student mobility, parental values, and student school achievement (Temple & Reynolds, 1999; Tucker *et al*, 1998). The mainly middle-class character of the sample might explain why residential stability/mobility only had a minimal impact on parental beliefs about children's close relationships in these families.

Different ethnotheories for the four parent groups. To sum up our findings in a different way, looking at them with respect to the unique configuration of each cultural community, Oslo parents favored a series of beliefs and values for extended close relationships with peers and adults outside the family. They tended to make judgments in favor of continuity of preschool care and rank highly the continuity rationale anticipating long-term friendships (carrying preschool friendships forward into elementary school). Their values regarding preschool quality indicated that they stood out in favoring small class groups (individual attention), experienced teachers who stay a long time, class groups staying together from one year to the next, and stable friendship patterns (**Table 4**). Their values regarding elementary school (**Table 4**) showed that they favored continuity for the social reasons of promoting fond relationships, homelike classrooms, and classroom community that takes more than a year to develop (characteristics of the Norwegian school organization). The Oslo group was the most residentially stable in the study sample, with the highest percentage of families living near to close relatives. Oslo families send their children to preschools in the immediate neighborhood, and look forward to them continuing on with the same children to elementary school, in a way concordant with anthropological accounts of the Norwegian society. Anthropologists normally agree on two variables characterizing Norwegian values: first, emphasis on equality (Gullestad, 2002; Kiel, 1993); and second, emphasis on belongingness to the local community (Klausen, 1995). A recent study characterizes

Scandinavian countries as high on individualism and low on competitiveness (Fiske, 2002). Together these values constitute an “egalitarian individualism” (Eriksen, 1993), identified as different from the US constellation of competitive individualism. Because the Norwegian system of government provides preschools and schools of consistently good, but uniform, quality, parents ordinarily have no reason to worry that their own child’s school or preschool might be inferior to another one across town.

Lincoln parents, in contrast, had a more academic than social-relational focus to preschool. They were high in reporting attachments outside the family for their children (**Table 2**). They were also high in believing in the continuity rationales related to the child’s comfort with the setting and schedule and knowing and trusting the teachers, but low on the rationale of preserving the child’s friendship groups. Lincoln parents were high in valuing the dimensions of quality preschool related to small class groups (individual teacher attention) and children’s sense of belonging but low in those related to close relationships among children and among parents (**Table 4**). Thus, relationships with new adults outside the family were seen as important by Lincoln parents, necessary to successful adjustment to school. They wanted their children to be accepted in their peer group and make friends, but not necessarily to carry their relationships from one setting to the next or across time. On the beliefs favoring close relationships outside the family (**Table 2**), Lincoln parents scored at an intermediate position. This had not been predicted. Studies comparing North American parents with other groups tend to uphold the notion of fundamental cultural differences in parental beliefs, with American parents emphasizing autonomy, individuality, and cognitive competencies over more social-relational competencies (see above). Lincoln parents, coming from a competitively individualistic nation with many opportunities for mobility and distance from extended kin, had been expected to take the extreme position from the Oslo parents. Instead, the extreme position was taken by the Seoul group. Perhaps the settled, rooted nature of Lincoln, a medium-sized Midwestern city with many families living within driving distance of kin, anchored the families in a worldview more friendly to values of stability and continuity. Nebraska is one of the states with the highest residential stability; in most counties, including Lincoln/Lancaster County, at least 60% of residents were born in-state (Harden, 2002).

Ankara parents (an upwardly mobile sample) were similar to Lincoln parents on many dimensions to an extent that was somewhat surprising. These parents were highest (with Seoul parents) in holding favorable beliefs about close relationships outside the family and (with Lincoln parents) in the continuity rationale: knowing and trusting the teachers. They clearly emphasized that it would be good for a 4-year-old child to be attached to a peer or a teacher at school, but they also believed friendship and attachment harder for their child to achieve than parents in other groups. Perhaps the large class sizes in the Ankara preschools were influential on their thinking. Ankara parents were lowest on reporting their child to have ever had a close friend at preschool (**Table 2**). The Ankara parents also paid more attention to the parent–teacher relationship than was seen in the other groups. They scored relatively high on items related to parent–teacher relationships (**Table 4**). The Turkish school organization allows children to stay with the same teachers and peers for multiple years, but the Ankara parents (in contrast to Oslo with the same school organization) stressed values concerning academic achievement as well as relational continuity. The Ankara parents with most education seemed most attuned to the social dimensions. More educated parents were relatively likely to report that their child had a close/best friend or an adult attachment at preschool, to believe in close relationships outside the family, to

believe that children need friendships that would last and continue into the years to come, and to endorse the preschool quality dimension that parent–teacher relationships become close over time.

Seoul parents (strongly oriented to education as a means to economic success) most favored their children having quality learning experiences (“activities build on children’s expressed ideas and interests” and “activities connect and develop in to long-term projects and themes”) (**Table 4**). They reported significantly more often that their child had a close friendship in preschool but less often that the child had a close preschool attachment to an adult. (The reader will remember that class size in Korean preschools, child care centers, and elementary school classrooms is typically 30 children or more.) What the parents seemed to want from the school was for their children to establish a sense of belonging for themselves in the peer group and to learn well. Past research has found that parent education level in Korea relates to strong beliefs in the value priorities of education and social skills for children (Shim, 2000), but in this study parent education was predictive for only two items (dimensions of preschool quality). Socialization by peers has been found by other researchers to be a strong value in other Asian (Chinese and Japanese) preschool systems (Tobin, Wu, & Davidson, 1989).

Parents in these four communities thus seemed to express ideas about children’s relationship hierarchies in school that did not fall into any simple dichotomies. For example, the data suggest no obvious dichotomy between the two school systems that promote teacher–child continuity (Oslo and Ankara) versus the two that promote discontinuity (Seoul and Lincoln), or between societies described in Oyserman *et al.* (2002) as high on individualism and low on collectivism (Norway and the United States) versus societies described as less individualistic (but low on collectivism) (Korea) or more collectivistic (but not less individualistic) (Turkey). Instead, each group of parents presented its own unique set of relational themes. The Seoul parents clearly seemed to favor the child’s peer over child–teacher relationships at preschool, while the Ankara and Lincoln parents focused on the child’s (short-term) connection to teachers. The Ankara parents also stressed parents’ cordial relationships to teachers. The Oslo data did not indicate any particular relationship priority (rather, all seemed important), and parents emphasized children’s lasting relationships to both peers and teachers in preschool and primary school.

Theories of modern socialization have pointed to the diversifying and segmentation of contexts of interaction, and shed light on the changes in modern relationships towards the cosmopolitan person who may relate effectively to people in a variety of contexts, not depending upon persisting relationships to them (Giddens, 1991). This study revealed clear-cut cultural differences in parental ethnotheories about the importance of young children developing intimate and long-term ties with particular non-family persons. Though education and residential stability were less effective in predicting parental descriptions, beliefs, values, and judgments, the discussion has suggested further exploration of the complexities that may also exist within cultures as a means towards understanding how cultures shape varied aspects of human relationships.

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Table 1
Participants in the research

Study Sites	Which parent filed out the questionnaire?	Age and gender of child	Marital status of that parent	Education of parent ^a	No. of children in the family	Residential stability ^b	Where did the parent grow up as a child? ^c	Plans to live in same community?	Do close relatives live nearby?
				M SD		M SD			
Oslo—Norway	Mother = 140 Father = 25 Both = 2 (Mean age = 33.8 years)	52.26 months 56% girls 44% boys	Married = 88% Single = 12%	2.82 (0.83)	1 = 52 2 = 86 3 = 27 4 = 1	.71 (.43)	Mostly same 62% Mostly another 30% Moved around a lot? 1% Another country? 7%	No plans to leave: 80% May move: 20%	Yes = 154 No = 13
Lincoln—USA	Mother = 85 Father = 9 Both = 1 (Mean age = 32.0 years)	50.98 months 49% girls 51% boys	Married = 74% Single = 14% Divorced or widowed = 11% Other = 1%	3.38 (0.84)	1 = 30 2 = 46 3 = 17 4 = 1 5 = 1	.49 (.50)	Mostly same 65% Mostly another 22% Moved around a lot? 5% Another country? 7%	No plans to leave: 50% May move: 50%	Yes = 72 No = 23
Ankara—Turkey	Mother = 114 Father = 31 Both = 2 (Mean age = 33.41 years)	55.87 months 48% girls 52% boys	Married = 99% Divorced or widowed = 1%	3.12 (1.02)	1 = 94 2 = 45 3 = 6 4 = 1	.68 (.47)	Mostly same 48% Mostly another 40% Moved around a lot? 7% Another country? 4%	No plans to leave: 74% May move: 26%	Yes = 143 No = 4
Seoul—Korea	Mother = 106 Father = 6 (Mean age = 34 years)	58.66 months 53% girls 47% boys	Married = 97% Divorced or widowed = 3%	3.36 (0.85)	1 = 25 2 = 50 3 = 35 4 = 2	.51 (.50)	Mostly same 58% Mostly another 39% Moved around a lot? 2% Another country? 1%	No plans to leave: 69% May move: 31%	Yes = 111 No = 1

^a 1 = high school or less, to 4 = college.

^b 0 = has moved in last 2 years, 1 = no moves in last 2 years.

^c City for Oslo, Ankara, and Seoul; State for Lincoln.

YOUNG CHILDREN'S CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS OUTSIDE THE FAMILY

Table 2

Means, standard deviations, MANOVA, and ANOVA for cultural effects concerning parental descriptions of own child's close relationships, favourable beliefs about such relationships, and judgments in favour of preschool continuity and care

	<i>Oslo, Norway</i>			<i>Lincoln, USA</i>			<i>Ankara, Turkey</i>			<i>Seoul, Korea</i>			<i>ANOVA</i> <i>Main effects, culture</i>		
	<i>M</i>	<i>(SD)</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>(SD)</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>(SD)</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>(SD)</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
<i>I. Description of own child:</i>															
Has/had a best/close friend at preschool	0.68	(0.47)	163	0.59	(0.50)	87	0.49	(0.50)	144	0.80	(0.40)	110	3, 480	7.53	.000
Has/had a best/close friend in the neighbourhood	0.57	(0.50)	163	0.41	(0.50)	87	0.58	(0.49)	144	0.36	(0.48)	110	3, 480	5.06	.002
Has/had an adult attachment at preschool	0.35	(0.48)	163	0.47	(0.50)	87	0.28	(0.45)	144	0.35	(0.48)	110	3, 480	3.47	.016
Has been attached to an adult family friend or neighbour	0.39	(0.50)	163	0.54	(0.50)	87	0.44	(0.50)	144	0.34	(0.47)	110	3, 480	2.28	.079
<i>MANOVA for culture main effect</i>										(12, 1262.32)		= 4.69		.000	
<i>II. Favourable beliefs about close relationships outside the family:</i>															
Lost friendship/attachment is missed	2.95	(0.69)	146	3.11	(0.73)	75	3.23	(0.71)	132	3.08	(0.71)	93	3, 422	0.97	n.s.
Takes a long time and is hard to replace	2.50	(0.53)	146	2.59	(0.57)	75	2.60	(0.53)	132	2.58	(0.51)	93	3, 422	0.41	n.s.
Does not harm relations within family	2.52	(0.44)	146	2.38	(0.44)	75	2.16	(0.46)	132	2.54	(0.49)	93	3, 422	9.65	.000
<i>MANOVA for culture main effect</i>										(9, 1022.32)		= 4.45		.000	
<i>III. Judgments in favour of preschool continuity of care:</i>															
Rationales related to continuity of care	2.98	(0.19)	165	2.75	(0.51)	92	2.66	(0.63)	144	2.55	(0.72)	110	3, 487	15.67	.000
Reasons involving setting and schedule	0.53	(0.87)	163	1.66	(1.15)	89	1.12	(1.16)	138	1.53	(1.09)	99	3, 465	24.74	.000
Reasons involving trusting the teachers	1.52	(1.0)	163	2.08	(0.94)	89	2.17	(0.91)	138	1.29	(0.94)	99	3, 465	17.08	.000
Reasons involving friendship groups	1.85	(0.94)	163	1.15	(0.98)	89	1.99	(0.90)	138	2.38	(0.88)	99	3, 465	24.15	.000
Reasons involving moving with neighbourhood	2.11	(1.0)	163	0.96	(1.12)	89	0.55	(0.73)	138	0.57	(0.91)	99	3, 465	65.48	.000
<i>MANOVA for culture main effect</i>										(12, 1222.63)		= 26.17		.000	

Table 3*Varimax rotated factor loadings for the PCPC items*

<i>Items</i>	<i>Factor 1: RCR</i>	<i>Factor 2: VCR</i>	<i>Factor 3: MLR</i>	<i>Factor 4: NA</i>	<i>Factor 5: CS</i>
RCR 1	.64	.24	.17	.17	.20
RCR 2	.59	.02	.52	-.11	-.04
RCR 3	.78	.15	-.10	-.06	.13
RCR 4	.71	-.12	.25	-.09	-.16
VCR 1	.13	.80	.13	.03	.06
VCR 2	.08	.83	.13	.01	-.05
VCR 3	.19	.23	.08	-.58	.11
VCR 4	-.06	.45	.10	-.32	.04
MLR 1	.13	.32	.68	.02	.08
MLR 2	.16	.10	.84	-.07	-.10
CS 1	.05	-.02	-.06	.75	-.13
CS 2	.03	.14	.06	.57	.29
NA 1	-.13	.08	.33	.38	.57
NA 2	.03	-.17	-.13	-.02	.70
NA 3	-.14	.22	.26	-.27	.38
NA 4	.19	.16	-.06	-.07	.57

RCR: replacing close relationships; VCR: values of close relationships; MLR: missing lost relationships; NA: needs for attachments; CS: communication skills.

Eigenvalues for each factor were > 1.0. Factor 1 accounted for 20.11% of the variance, Factor 2 accounted for 10.65% of the variance, Factor 3 accounted for 9.78% of the variance, Factor 4 accounted for 8.67% of the variance, and Factor 5 accounted for 6.52% of the variance.

Table 4
Means, standard deviations, MANOVA, and ANOVA for cultural effects concerning parental beliefs, values, and judgements about advantages of different ways of organising primary school and the social dimensions of preschool most important for young children by each of the four communities

	Oslo, Norway		Lincoln, USA		Arkans, Turkey		Seoul, Korea		ANOVA					
	M	(SD)	N	M	(SD)	N	M	(SD)	N	M	df	F	p	
<i>I. Advantages of a system where children change teachers and classmates every year (usual in the United States and Korea).</i>														
Children get experience in dealing with new adults	1.06	(1.16)	158	2.01	(1.16)	86	1.84	(1.26)	134	0.99	(1.14)	104	3, 458	19.20 .000
Children get experience in dealing with new children	1.09	(1.16)	158	1.50	(1.06)	86	1.57	(1.03)	134	1.72	(1.20)	104	3, 458	3.87 .009
System helps newcomer students enter and become part of the group	0.67	(0.94)	158	0.74	(0.81)	86	1.02	(0.91)	134	1.22	(1.26)	104	3, 458	8.00 .000
<i>MANOVA for culture main effect</i>														
										(9, 1109.94)			= 10.40	.000
<i>Advantages of a system where children stay with same teachers and classmates from one year to the next (usual in Norway and Turkey)</i>														
Teacher can create a better learning situation when she knows children well	1.48	(1.14)	156	1.81	(1.32)	86	1.99	(1.19)	140	1.99	(1.15)	109	3, 467	6.23 .000
Children get fond of teacher & classmates; classroom feels more homelike	1.91	(1.16)	156	1.08	(1.15)	86	0.84	(1.08)	140	1.28	(1.08)	109	3, 467	17.63 .000
Developing close-knit classroom community takes more than a year	1.07	(1.22)	156	0.41	(0.74)	86	0.09	(0.41)	140	0.10	(0.41)	109	3, 467	30.13 .000
<i>MANOVA for culture main effect</i>														
										(9, 1131.84)			= 16.37	.000
<i>II. Social dimensions of preschool</i>														
Dimensions rated as important (M = 2.0 or above) in all cultural communities:														
Class groups are small enough that teachers can give individual attention	2.72	(0.52)	160	2.70	(0.57)	88	2.14	(0.56)	127	2.39	(0.67)	106	3, 457	17.45 .000
The school has enough teachers and space	2.41	(0.59)	160	2.28	(0.57)	88	2.02	(0.64)	127	2.32	(0.68)	106	3, 457	5.00 .002
Activities build on children's expressed ideas and interests	2.32	(0.65)	160	2.45	(0.62)	88	2.04	(0.62)	127	2.70	(0.48)	106	3, 457	17.05 .000
Dimension rated as important in some communities:														
Children experience a sense of belonging in the classroom	2.54	(0.58)	160	2.74	(0.49)	88	1.96	(0.67)	127	2.63	(0.56)	106	3, 457	22.17 .000
Many experienced teachers stay at school for a long time	2.47	(0.63)	160	2.18	(0.74)	88	1.97	(0.71)	127	1.79	(0.69)	106	3, 457	14.58 .000
Parent-teacher relationships become close over time	1.96	(0.72)	160	2.16	(0.74)	88	1.97	(0.66)	127	2.12	(0.67)	106	3, 457	1.55 n.s.
School leadership is stable and provides direction	1.98	(0.66)	160	2.27	(0.64)	88	1.93	(0.74)	127	2.31	(0.61)	106	3, 457	6.06 .000
Activities connect from one day to the next and develop into long-term projects	1.94	(0.83)	160	1.99	(0.73)	88	1.88	(0.71)	127	2.43	(0.65)	106	3, 457	8.76 .000
The school has a history known to the families who have been through it over the years, and this gives it a special identity														
Dimensions rated as important in no communities:														
Class groups are stable because few children come and go	1.15	(0.45)	160	1.48	(0.68)	88	2.07	(0.83)	127	1.56	(0.65)	106	3, 457	31.08 .000
Class groups are stable because few children come and go	1.85	(0.72)	160	1.65	(0.64)	88	1.94	(0.89)	127	1.46	(0.62)	106	3, 457	8.00 .000
Children play with the same few friends every day	1.94	(0.68)	160	1.55	(0.64)	88	1.78	(0.88)	127	1.51	(0.69)	106	3, 457	7.45 .000
Friendship groups stay together from one year to the next	1.76	(0.68)	160	1.51	(0.64)	88	1.92	(0.83)	127	1.75	(0.70)	106	3, 457	1.68 n.s.
Parents get to know each other well and become a group	1.31	(0.57)	160	1.50	(0.59)	88	2.00	(0.92)	127	1.50	(0.64)	106	3, 457	16.00 .000
<i>MANOVA for culture main effect</i>														
										(39, 1318.49)			= 9.39	.000