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Cultural Differences in Relational Aggression in an Elementary School-Age Sample

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CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN RELATIONAL AGGRESSION IN AN
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL-AGE SAMPLE

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of Psychology
Western Kentucky University
Bowling Green, Kentucky

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Specialist in Education

By
Brittany L. Walker

August 2010

**CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN RELATIONAL AGGRESSION IN AN
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL-AGE SAMPLE**

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IN AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL-AGE SAMPLE

Brittany Walker

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The current study addressed whether there were differences in relational aggression in 9- to 10-year-old boys and girls in Hungarian and German samples. There has been very little empirical research conducted comparing children of diverse cultures in their use of relational aggression. The current study used teachers' reports of different aggression styles observed in their 9- to 10-year-old students (N = 269). The purpose of this study was to examine the incidence and styles of aggression used in a 9- to 10-year-old culturally diverse population, as it was hypothesized that culture would be a factor in the incidence of relational aggression as well as a difference in boys' versus girls' relational aggression within native Hungarian cultures. Data were collected from classroom teachers using the Children's Social Behavior Scale – Teacher Form (Crick, 1996). Six sets of analyses were conducted, including the evaluation of teacher reports of relational aggression among all 160 Hungarian and all 109 German students, the evaluation of teacher reports of physical aggression among Hungarian and German students, the evaluation of teacher reports of prosocial behavior among Hungarian and German students, the evaluation of teacher reports of relational aggression among Hungarian boys and girls, the evaluation of teacher reports of physical aggression among Hungarian boys and girls, and the evaluation of teacher reports of prosocial behavior among Hungarian boys and girls. Results confirmed 2 out of 2 hypotheses. Teachers reported greater

incidence of relational and physical aggression among German students. Teachers reported a greater incidence of prosocial behavior among Hungarian students. Hungarian teachers reported a greater incidence of physical aggression among boys and a greater incidence of prosocial behavior among girls. This research failed to find any differences in Hungarian boys' and girls' use of relational aggression in this sample. Overall, the current findings support that cultural differences exist in relational aggression, physical aggression, and prosocial behavior among a 9- to 10-year-olds. It also supported the position that gender differences exist in the use of physical aggression and prosocial behavior among a native Hungarian sample.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Many tend to assume that females are not aggressive due to the vast amount of research that has shown males commit more aggressive acts (e.g., Lagerspetz & Bjorkqvist, 1994; Lagerspetz, Bjorkqvist, & Peltonen, 1988; Rys & Bear, 1997). More recent research, however, has suggested that females are just as aggressive as males, but they use more covert forms of aggression (Crick, Bigbee, & Howes, 1996; Crick, Werner, et al., 1999; Crick & Grotpeter, 1995; Galen & Underwood, 1997; Lagerspetz et al., 1988). These covert forms of aggression often present themselves as relational aggression, although relational aggression can be used overtly as well. Relational aggression comes in the form of behaviors that harm others through damage or the threat of damage to relationships, feelings of acceptance or group inclusion, and friendships (Crick, Werner, et al., 1999).

Ladd and Profilet (1996) argued that younger children may not be able to recognize covert forms of relational aggression, suggesting that there may be age differences in covert and overt forms of relational aggression. Due to this inability to recognize covert forms of relational aggression, younger children are more likely to use overt forms of aggression. Thus, as children get older, covert forms of relational aggression are more likely to be used. In addition to the research on gender differences and age differences in relational aggression, it is important in this study to look at cultural differences in relational aggression. The study of cultural differences in relational aggression can be used for prevention in general, but especially for prevention efforts in

the school setting. In addition, this topic is important to help reduce victimization in the schools by gearing programs toward prevention modes.

The term aggression makes many think of physical violence, something more overt and visible. According to many recent definitions, aggression can include acts that are more covert or subtle in nature as well as those more visible or overt.

Indirect and relational aggression can present as being more covert than direct or physical forms of aggression in older children. Examples of these overt and covert behaviors that are considered to be relational aggression may include: refusing to talk to someone in order to get one's way, socially excluding them from a group as a form of retribution, or threatening to terminate the friendship unless one complies with the group (Crick, Werner, et al., 1999).

Galen and Underwood (1997) stated social aggression is "...a tactic directed toward damaging another's self-esteem, social status, or both, and may take direct forms such as verbal rejection, negative facial expressions or body movements, or more indirect forms such as slanderous rumors or social exclusion" (p. 589). When indirect aggression is used, the person behind the act can remain unidentified. Lagerspetz et al. (1988) stated "one feature of indirect aggression is that the aggressor may remain unidentified, thereby avoiding both counterattack from the target and disapproval by others" (p. 404). Through the use of indirect aggression, the perpetrator may make it seem as if they had no intention of hurting anyone (Simmons, 2002). An example of indirect aggression would be anonymously posting a slanderous comment about another person on the internet, thus the victim is never aware of whom the perpetrator is.

Extreme cases of relational aggression can present themselves in the form of bullying. Relational aggression in the form of bullying can include repeatedly teasing and threatening (overt verbal aggression), or shunning and excluding a student by another student or group of students (relational aggression). According to Swearer, Espelage, and Napolitano (2009), relational and social bullying can be just as detrimental as or even more so than physical bullying. Relational bullying can continue for years without being detected by an adult and therefore continue without consequence.

Relational aggression can have a significant impact on an individual's emotional well-being. Students who are the victims of bullying are 5 times more likely to become depressed. According to the Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey taken in 2005, students who had been bullied at least one time in the past year were more likely to have thought about or attempted suicide. These students are also more likely to suffer academically (Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 2009).

Although males are more likely to be the victims of overt forms of bullying, females are more likely to be the victims of covert forms of bullying such as rumors, sexual comments, gossip, and social exclusion (National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center, 2009).

The current study complements other studies that have examined relational aggression; nonetheless, it is the first study to look at cultural differences in relational aggression in children in third-grade using teacher reports.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Literature

What is relational aggression?

Aggression can take many forms which may be exhibited through either physical or non-physical acts toward another person. Physical aggression may be displayed through acts such as hitting or pushing someone, whereas relational aggression may be exhibited by making slanderous comments about another individual. Relational aggression includes behaviors that hurt others through damaging or threatening to damage friendships and social relationships (Crick, Werner, et al., 1999). Physical and relational aggression can be exhibited by either covert or overt aggression. Covert aggression may not be directly observable and may be secretive such as starting a rumor about someone. However, covert aggression can also be physical in nature such as getting someone to beat someone else up. With covert aggression, people may or may not know who started the rumor or who was behind the act of physical aggression. Overt aggression is always observable and done without any attempt of secrecy.

According to Hayward and Fletcher (2003), relational aggression is used as a form of control and as a way to cause harm to others. Crick and Grotpeter (1995) described relational aggression as behavior that may negatively influence the relationships of others and may be expressed as social exclusion, disrupting others' friendships, terminating friendships, and spreading rumors. Relational aggression can be very similar to physical aggression in terms of its negative impact on others. Hayward and Fletcher found that peers tend to nominate girls in response to questions about

relational or covert aggression, and nominate boys in response to questions about physical or overt aggression.

Factors that influence aggression

Researchers have suggested that gender differences exist in the prevalence and styles of aggression. Differences in societal gender roles explain some of the gender differences evidenced. There is a great amount of societal pressure to conform to gender roles, such as the acceptance of boys acting aggressively whereas it is not acceptable for girls to act aggressively. Therefore, girls are more likely to use indirect and/or non-physical forms of aggression (Lagerspetz et al., 1988). In addition to social influences on the type of aggression exhibited is cognitive development. As children mature, they learn ways to deal with their aggression, which may include a decrease in acting out behaviors or overt forms of aggression and an increase in manipulating relationships to release their aggression and achieve what they want, such as covert forms of aggression (Crick, Casas et al., 1999). The age-related maturation of children's social intelligence helps explain the reason social and relational aggression are more prevalent than direct aggression as children get older (Wallenius, Punamaki, & Rimpela, 2007).

Girls tend to place more value on the intimacy of their relationships which allows relational aggression to be more effective in controlling relationships or hurting its victims. Galen and Underwood (1997) explained that girls choose relationally aggressive acts more than boys as a result of the higher value placed on intimate friendships.

Goldstein, Young, and Boyd (2008) found that perceptions of school climate had an effect on the prevalence of relational aggression in a sample of African-American and European-American adolescents. Those who perceived their school environment to be

less safe were exposed to higher levels of relational aggression and were less pleased with the social atmosphere of their school (Goldstein et al., 2008). Goldstein's research indicated exposure to relational aggression was correlated with negative outcomes such as depression, substance use, anxiety, and challenges processing social information. Academics also suffer in a school climate that is perceived to be dangerous, but it is unclear as to whether relational aggression contributes to a perceived "unsafe" school environment, or whether it relates to students participating in physically unsafe behaviors (Goldstein et al., 2008).

Cultural differences in aggression

Cross-cultural attitudes about how males and females should act can influence the prevalence of relational versus physical aggression in different cultures, as well as beliefs about how males and females should act in response to aggression, and which types of aggression are most/least acceptable. In Asian cultures, initiation is considered to be more acceptable than retaliation in physical aggression, compared to American cultures who consider them to be equally unacceptable. Girls from Asian cultures also disapprove of relational aggression more than physical aggression, whereas girls in the USA view relational and physical aggression as being equally unacceptable (Fang, Desoto, & Bumgarner, 2007).

It is suggested that Australian children differ from American children in terms of relational aggression (Hayward & Fletcher, 2003). In Australian children, boys were more likely to be classified by peers as being overtly aggressive than girls. When considering the total number of Australian children who were relationally aggressive, boys also outnumbered girls. This total number was found by combining the group who

was only relationally aggressive with the group who was considered to be relationally and overtly aggressive (Hayward & Fletcher, 2003). There were no differences found in American boys' and girls' indirect aggression (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995).

Relational aggression appears to be a significant part of the lives of children in a number of cultures. French, Jansen, and Pidada (2002) compared United States and Indonesian children's and adolescents' aggression in three elementary schools and one junior high school in each country using peer reports. They found significant group differences in physical aggression and three forms of relational aggression including: relationship manipulation, social ostracism, and malicious rumors in both cultures. Boys and adolescents of both cultures, as well as Indonesians overall, mentioned physical aggression more frequently. Girls in the United States and Indonesia described using all three types of relational aggression more when compared to boys. Tomada and Schneider (1997) compared United States and Italian children's relational and physical aggression where they found that boys displayed more physical and relational aggression than girls, whereas girls in the United States displayed more relational aggression than boys. This result suggests that there may be cross-cultural differences in relational aggression for boys, and that the typical finding of boys being more physically aggressive may not replicate to every culture studied. Boys in the Italian culture may observe more relational aggression due to the "...close-knit relational networks of their parents" (Tomada & Schneider, 1997, p. 12). Italian men may be more involved in friendly community relationships than American men as well (Tomada & Schneider, 1997).

Factors including parenting style and marital linkages also played a role in the prevalence of relational aggression in Russian nursery-school-age children. Hart, Nelson,

Robinson, Olsen, & McNeilly-Choque (1998) found that less responsive mothers and fathers, along with maternal coercion were positively correlated with relational aggression. In addition, some of these associations differed for boys versus girls. Marital conflict was related to more overt and covert aggression in boys. In particular, the most important contributors to physical and relational aggression in Russian children included marital conflict, maternal coercion, and less paternal responsiveness.

Overall, research looking at cultural differences in aggression indicates that cultural differences in both physical and relational aggression exist. It also appears that there are gender differences in the styles of aggression used in different cultures.

Effects of victimization

Relational aggression can have damaging and long-lasting effects on its victims. Many researchers have found that all forms of relational aggression, including indirect aggression and social aggression, cause just as much harm to the victim as direct or physical aggression (Buhs & Ladd, 2001; Crick, 1996; Crick, Casas, & Mosher, 1997; Crick, Casas, & Ku, 1999; Crick & Nelson, 2002; Crick, Werner et al., 1999; Kochenderfer-Ladd & Wardrop, 2001; Ladd, 1990; Ladd & Burgess, 1999). These victims experienced loneliness, emotional dysregulation, and social anxiety that had damaging effects on their emotional well being (Kochenderfer-Ladd & Wardrop, 2001; Xu & Zhang, 2007). Children who were victims of relational aggression faced greater peer rejection than those who were victims of physical aggression. In addition, those children were more likely to become fearful, anxious, and depressed (Crick, Casas et al., 1999). Children who were involved in forms of relational aggression tended to accept it, thus not taking an initiative to stop it (Crick & Nelson, 2002). According to Crick and

Bigbee (1998), those who were victimized by relational aggression were more likely to suffer from low self-esteem, emotional distress, and problematic friendships.

There are numerous negative effects on academic success as a result of being the victim of relational aggression. Goldstein et al. (2008) found that academics suffered when children were exposed to a school climate that felt threatening, whether through relational aggression or physical aggression. Classroom participation, achievement, and emotional adjustment decreased in students who had been victimized or rejected. Victimized and rejected children tended to avoid class activities that involved aggressing peers, which therefore diminished their interest in schoolwork (Buhs & Ladd, 2001). Students enjoy school more when they have friends in this environment; therefore, increasing school performance and smoother transitions into higher grade levels. Those who were rejected tended to dislike school more and had lower academic and school performance (Ladd, 1990).

Assessing relational aggression

There are many methods that have been found to be effective when assessing school-age relational aggression. Among these methods, the most used ones include: self-reports, peer reports, direct observation, and teacher reports.

Self- and peer reports. Self-report in relational or social aggression requires students to rate themselves on many aspects of aggression. Peer report requires students to rate their peers on different aspects of aggression. One of the most used peer reports includes students selecting up to three peers on a particular measure of aggression (Ladd & Kochenderfer-Ladd, 2002; McNeilly-Choque, Hart, Robinson, Nelson, & Olsen, 1996; Rys & Bear, 1997).

Neither peer reports nor self-reports are considered to be reliable measures to be used with children at all age levels. According to a study done by Ladd and Kochenderfer-Ladd (2002), young children such as kindergartners and first graders may not have the cognitive skills to distinguish and remember specific relationally aggressive interactions. The peer and self-reports given by these young children were not in agreement as to the prevalence and type of victimization that was occurring (Ladd & Kochenderfer-Ladd, 2002). It may be easier for young children to associate more overt acts, such as hitting or pushing, with aggression but still more difficult for them to recognize covert acts as being aggressive (Ladd & Profilet, 1996).

Peer reports may be easily influenced by the child's perception of each individual peer. If a child dislikes a peer, then the child may be more likely to remember an act of aggression, whereas if a child likes a peer, then the child may not remember instances of aggression because the child views the overall picture instead of individual instances of aggression (Ladd & Profilet, 1996). Although teacher, child, and observer reports of physical aggression agree very well, McNeilly-Choque et al. (1996) found that teacher reports and observations were better in measuring and distinguishing between covert and overt aggression than peer or self-reports in young children.

Teacher reports. Teacher reports of relational or social aggression require the use of a teacher rating scale for measuring aggression, prosocial behavior, and withdrawal. There has been empirical support found in using teacher rating scales to measure relational aggression.

In using both teacher and peer reports to measure victimization, stability, and future adjustment in third- through sixth-grade students, Crick (1996) created a teacher

rating scale of children's behavior called the Children's Social Behavior Scale – Teacher Form (CSBS-T). The CSBS-T measured overt aggression, relational aggression, prosocial behavior, and acceptance by peers. For both the overt and relational aggression subscales, the CSBS-T yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .94, and a Cronbach's alpha of .93 for the prosocial behavior subscale. These results suggested that the CSBS-T reliably measured both relational and overt aggression. Analyses that examined the correlation between the peer measure and the teacher measure yielded $r = .57, p < .001$ for boys and $r = .63, p < .001$ for girls. For the subscale of overt aggression, analyses of the relationship between peer and teacher reports yielded $r = .69, p < .001$ for boys, and $r = .74, p < .001$ for girls. Based on these findings, teacher assessments of relational aggression may reliably serve as a substitute for peer assessments (Crick, 1996), and teacher reports may be better in measuring and distinguishing between covert and overt aggression than peer or self-reports in children under second grade (McNeilly-Choque et al., 1996). Crick (1996) stated:

In past research, investigators have relied on peer informants to assess relational aggression. Other informants have not been employed because relationally aggressive behaviors have been considered too subtle and too dependent on insider knowledge about the peer group for those outside the group to reliably assess. However, the association between peer and teacher reports of relational aggression reported here are encouraging, and they indicate that teacher assessments of relational aggression may serve as a valid substitute for peer assessments when peer informants are unavailable. (p. 2325)

Crick concluded that there was support for using teacher reports in children by showing that teacher-report data was comparable to peer and self-report data. Furthermore, she concluded that teacher reports were as good as peer and self-reports in assessing relational aggression in children above second grade.

Purpose

There is relatively little information available from studies on cultural differences in relational aggression among elementary children, particularly third grade (ages 9- to 10-years-old). Studies that have been done regarding relational aggression have focused primarily on the effects and causes of peer exclusion, victimization, and gender differences, rather than assessing the differences in the prevalence and expression of relational aggression among different cultural groups and backgrounds. Due to the increasing numbers of students from different cultural backgrounds attending schools, it is important to study both the school and social environment in which these children interact on a day-to-day basis. Teacher reports of cultural differences in relational aggression in a third-grade population were the focus of this study. Previously, there have been a limited number of studies that could be found which have looked at relational aggression among students of different cultures in this elementary age group.

In this study, teacher reports were used to study the prevalence of relational aggression in two different cultures. To assess relational aggression in a 9- to 10-year-old sample (third grade), the Children's Social Behavior Scale – Teacher Form (CSBS-T, Crick, 1996) which is a scale that was developed for use with children in third through sixth grades was used. Janoski (2005) conducted research with a kindergarten through second grade population using items from this measure as well as items from the

Preschool Social Behavior Scale – Teacher Form (PSBS-T, Crick et al., 1997).

Relational aggression was found to exist in that early elementary school population.

The purpose of this study was to examine the incidence and styles of aggression used in a third-grade population by examining the following hypotheses. Hypothesis I stated that culture would be a factor in the incidence of relational aggression. Hypothesis II stated that there would be a difference in boys' versus girls' relational aggression within native Hungarian cultures. It should be noted that Hypotheses I and II were exploratory hypotheses due to lack of previous research on this topic.

CHAPTER THREE

Method

Participants

This study included 160 students ages 9- to 10- years from Hungary (Budapest region) and with 109 students ages 9- to 10-years from Germany (Hessen-Frankfurt region) whose teachers were asked to rate each student in their classroom. This age range was approximately equivalent to third and fourth grade. The raters used questions from the Children's Social Behavior Scale – Teacher Form (CSBS-T, Crick, 1996) to measure students' use of relational aggression, physical aggression, and prosocial behavior. School principals were contacted to give consent for their teachers to participate in the survey. Identifying information was obtained only for students' age, sex, and culture, therefore parental consent was not necessary.

Materials

The Children's Social Behavior Scale – Teacher Form (CSBS-T, Crick, 1996) was created in a previous study by Crick (1996) to include questions that measure relational aggression, physical aggression, and prosocial behavior. The original scale was used to assess third through sixth grade children. This scale had a Cronbach's alpha of .94 for relational aggression (Crick, 1996).

The Children's Social Behavior Scale – Teacher Form (CSBS-T, Crick, 1996) consisted of 16 items which included five items that measured relational aggression, four items that measured physical aggression, and four items that assessed prosocial behavior (see Appendix).

The first three items requested demographic information, and the other 13 items asked for information concerning students' social behaviors in the classroom. These questions were scored on a 5-point Likert scale where 1 = this is never true of this child and 5 = this is almost always true of this child.

Procedure

First, the principal of each participating school was contacted and permission was obtained to use teachers from the school. Participating teachers were given a copy of the Children's Social Behavior Scale – Teacher Form (Crick, 1996). The scale was translated into the native language of teachers from each country. Data were collected during the second half of the school year to make sure that the teacher was familiar with the students and to allow appropriate time for these behaviors to have become apparent. There was no identifying information obtained about any child; the only demographics obtained were gender, age, and culture. The teachers were given approximately ten to fourteen days to complete the scale for each child in their class. It should be noted that there was no German sex data reported in this study. When the CSBS-T was translated into German, the sex variable had been left out; however, cultural data from the German sample was still examined.

Data Analysis

The hypothesis that culture would be a factor in the incidence of relational aggression was evaluated using an independent-measures *t*-test. The hypothesis that there would be a difference in boys' versus girls' relational aggression within native Hungarian cultures was evaluated using an independent-measures *t*-test.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results and Discussion

Results

Six sets of analyses were conducted, including the evaluation of teacher reports of relational aggression among all 160 Hungarian and all 109 German students, the evaluation of teacher reports of physical aggression among Hungarian and German students, the evaluation of teacher reports of prosocial behavior among Hungarian and German students, the evaluation of teacher reports of relational aggression among Hungarian boys and girls, the evaluation of teacher reports of physical aggression among Hungarian boys and girls, and the evaluation of teacher reports of prosocial behavior among Hungarian boys and girls.

Hypothesis I

Hypothesis I was an exploratory hypothesis and stated that culture would be a factor in the incidence of relational aggression, which was substantiated. These results are illustrated in Table 1. Based on teacher reports, German students were found to engage in relational aggression more than Hungarian students, $t(267) = -3.025, p < .01$. Based on teacher reports, German students were found to engage in physical aggression more than Hungarian students, $t(267) = -3.816, p < .01$. Based on teacher reports, Hungarian students were found to engage in prosocial behavior more than German students, $t(267) = 4.94, p < .01$.

Table 1

Group Means for Hungarian and German Students

Relational Aggression		Physical Aggression		Prosocial Behavior	
Hungarian ^a	German ^b	Hungarian ^a	German ^b	Hungarian ^a	German ^b
$M = 2.08$	$M = 2.46$	$M = 1.52$	$M = 1.99$	$M = 3.99$	$M = 3.50$
$SD = 1.01$	$SD = 1.04$	$SD = 0.86$	$SD = 1.17$	$SD = 0.80$	$SD = 0.80$
$SE^c = 0.08$	$SE^c = 0.10$	$SE^c = 0.07$	$SE^c = 0.11$	$SE^c = 0.06$	$SE^c = 0.08$

^a $n = 160$. ^b $n = 109$. ^cStandard Error of Mean.

Hypothesis II

Hypothesis II was also an exploratory hypothesis and stated that gender would be a factor in the incidence of relational aggression. A t -test of the difference between boy and girl Hungarian students' use of relational aggression was not significant, $t(158) = -1.21, p > .05$. However, based on teacher reports, boys were found to engage in physical aggression more than girls, $t(158) = -5.25, p < .01$, and girls were found to engage in prosocial behavior more than boys, $t(158) = 3.66, p < .01$. These results are illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2

Group Means for Hungarian Boys and Girls

	Relational Aggression		Physical Aggression		Prosocial Behavior	
	Female ^a	Male ^b	Female ^a	Male ^b	Female ^a	Male ^b
<i>Means</i>	1.98	2.18	1.18	1.85	4.21	3.77
<i>SD</i>	1.01	1.01	0.44	1.04	0.76	0.77
<i>SE^c</i>	0.11	0.11	0.05	0.12	0.09	0.09

^a*n* = 80. ^b*n* = 80. ^cStandard Error of Mean.

Discussion

According to current teacher reports, German students were rated higher in relational aggression and physical aggression than Hungarian students ages 9- to 10-years-old. Additionally, Hungarian students were rated as having more prosocial behavior than German students in this age group. The present research suggests there are cultural differences in relational aggression, physical aggression, and prosocial behavior used in 9- to 10-year-old students. These findings support the hypothesis that there would be cultural differences in the styles of aggression used. The present findings also correlate with previous studies on relational aggression in other cultures. For example, in a study of Australian children, boys were more likely to be classified by peers as being overtly aggressive than girls. When considering the total number of Australian children who were relationally aggressive, boys also outnumbered girls (Hayward & Fletcher, 2003). Additionally, French et al. (2002) compared United States and Indonesian children's and adolescents' aggression and found significant group differences in

physical aggression and three forms of relational aggression including: relationship manipulation, social ostracism, and malicious rumors in both cultures.

It appears that there were gender differences in the styles of aggression used in native Hungarian students. In this culture, boys were found to engage in more physical aggression than girls, whereas girls were found to engage in more prosocial behavior. However, gender did not seem to have an effect on the use of relational aggression. It is important to note that this study examined only a 9- to 10-year-old (third grade) age group. Therefore, it may not be broad enough to fully see differences emerge in the use of relational aggression within other age ranges. It is possible that the lack of gender differences in relational aggression is a result of the cultural differences that were found in these samples. American students display gender differences in relational aggression where girls were more relationally victimized than boys (Crick, Casas, et al., 2002), but according to the present research, Hungarian students do not show the same gender differences in relational aggression, which could be a direct result of differences in the two cultures. Additionally, the existence of gender differences in other cultures can be illustrated by French et al. (2002) finding that girls in the United States and Indonesia described using all three types of relational aggression more when compared to boys.

It is important to note that this was the first study of cultural differences using a German and Hungarian sample to look at relational aggression in 9- to 10-year-olds using teacher reports. A possibility for future research would be to collect teacher report data from an American sample to compare to other cultural data, as this data is not currently available from Crick. Additional cultures could be studied to add to the findings of this preliminary study which found evidence that there are cultural differences in the types of

aggression styles used. Future studies could examine specifically what kind of cultural differences produce differences in aggression styles. One factor to look at would include traditional versus less traditional gender roles within the culture. Another factor would be whether the culture engaged in a more communal or agentic orientation.

It is also important to consider the sample used in this study. This research used teacher reports of students in Germany and Hungary. Neither sample was selected on a random basis, but was instead selected on convenience of known contacts. Although both countries represent students of different cultures, they are not representative of all cultures, nor are they representative of all Hungarian and German students. Therefore, it may be difficult to generalize these findings to other diverse cultural populations. It would be important to conduct this research with other cultural populations in order to obtain additional information regarding other cultures and their use of relational aggression.

In conclusion, the results of this study gave us preliminary information about cultural differences in relational aggression in 9- to 10-year-old students. The results of the study found significant differences in relational aggression styles among native Hungarian and native German students. It was also revealed that there are significant differences in Hungarian boys' and girls' use of physical aggression and prosocial behavior. The results of this research provided insight into the use of different styles of aggression in different cultures and provided a foundation for the future study of cultural differences in relational and other styles of aggression.

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Appendix

Children's Social Behavior Scale – Teacher Form

Children's Social Behavior Scale – Teacher Report

1. Age: 1 = 7 years 2 = 8 years 3 = 9 years 4 = 10+ years
2. Sex: 1 = Female 2 = Male
3. Culture: 1 = Native Hungarian 2 = Not Native Hungarian (Please indicate country of origin on rating form)
4. This child says supportive things to peers.
5. When this child is mad at a peer, s/he gets even by excluding the peer from his or her clique or play group.
6. This child hits or kicks peers.
7. This child tries to cheer up peers when they are upset or sad about something.
8. This child spreads rumors or gossips about some peers.
9. This child initiates or gets into physical fights with peers.
10. When angry at a peer, this child tries to get other children to stop playing with the peer or to stop liking the peer.
11. This child is helpful to peers.
12. This child threatens to stop being a peer's friend in order to hurt the peer or to get what s/he wants from the peer.
13. This child threatens to hit or beat up other children.
14. When mad at a peer, this child ignores the peer or stops talking to the peer.
15. This child pushes or shoves peers.
16. This child is kind to peers.

Children's Social Behavior Scale Rating Form

Circle Appropriate Answer

Demographic Information

1. 1 2 3 4
2. 1 2
3. 1 2 _____

- | | Never
True | | | Almost Always
True | |
|------------|---------------|---|---|-----------------------|---|
| 4. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |