

CULTURE AND PRESCHOOLERS' ACTIVITIES: THE UNITED STATES AND KOREA. Lee, S. E. Department of Child Development and Family Studies, Seoul National University, Seoul 151-742, Korea.

The purpose of this study was to explore the variation in children's daily activities both within and across the US and Korea. For this purpose, observations were made of the types of activities available for young children, the extent of children's participation in those activities, their partners, the respective roles taken by children and their partners, and the location in which children's activities took place.

Participants, ranging in age from 28 to 48 months, were drawn from four cultural groups: middle and working class communities of the US and Korea. Data were obtained through the observation of children's daily life in natural settings. A total of 5725 observation from 32 preschoolers (20 from the US and 12 from Korea) were used in the analyses. To test the differences between nations and/or classes, phi coefficient tests were employed.

The results indicate that preschoolers' activities varied as a function of class differences as well as societal differences. US and Korean children experienced different types of daily activities that reflected socio-cultural values of their respective communities, i.e., independence in the US and interdependence in Korea. Korean children were less exposed to daily conversation and interpersonal lessons, and spent more time with their mothers than US children. In both societies, however, middle class children were more likely than their working class counterparts to be self-directed, and to be more involved in academic lessons and play with academic objects.