Abstract

A cross cultural study on aggressive behaviour in Japanese and Austrian pupils

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Aggressive behaviour in pupils is a pervasive problem both in Eastern and Western countries, although its nature varies considerably between East and West. In Western countries, usually the dyadic nature of bullying (defined as a subcategory of aggressive behaviour) is emphasized and direct forms of behaviour (e.g. physical attacks, verbal insults) are found to be most prevalent. In Japan, one of Eastern countries, ijime (the Japanese term of bullying) could be described as a group interaction process where subtle or indirect forms of behaviour (e.g., social exclusion, ostracism) should be considered mostly.
The main goals of the present paper are twofold: (1) A culturally sensitive questionnaire measuring aggressive behaviour is introduced. (2) Four groups of pupils (grade 4-9) are compared: 270 Austrian pupils living in Austria, 320 Japanese pupils living either in Austria or Germany, 600 Japanese pupils living in Japan and 180 German speaking pupils living in Japan. In line with our hypothesis, these four groups of pupils differed concerning aggressive behaviour. In Austrian or German speaking pupils both dyadic nature and direct forms of behaviours were found most often. Among Japanese older pupils, indirect group based attacks were more prevalent. Moreover, data depicts how Austrian pupils living in Austria are similar with German pupils living in Japan, alongside with how Japanese pupils living in Japan are similar with Japanese pupils living in Austria and Germany. Findings are discussed concerning culture and context dependency of aggressive behaviour.

Image Maps of Life-Exploring Students’ Concepts of Life-Span Development and Lifelong Learning embedded in Cultural Contexts
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As part of the science project of Yamada (2007), which aims at understanding how people visualize their life course, the purpose of this study was to explore naïve concepts of life and time in life images of 40 Austrian students. Collected via Yamada’s freehand drawing method called “The Image Map of my Life (IML)”, the main goals of the qualitative analyses of the drawings were twofold: Firstly (1), we wanted to explore whether four dominant stories (progress, road, event and choice), previously found in large British and Japanese samples (Yamada, e.g. 2004), could also be located in the Austrian sample. Secondly (2), we analyzed the drawings according to the concepts of life-span developmental psychology (linear vs. cyclical, as well as individualistic and collectivistic vs. contextualistic perspectives) and life-long learning (biographical learning and biographicity).

In the cultural comparative analysis of the life images of Austrian, British and Japanese students (1) the fundamental visual life stories as well as new stories (Independent Story, Focused on Present Topos-Story, One-Integrated Story) were
commonly found among all three cultures. From a cultural psychological perspective, the analysis of the concepts in the sample of the Austrian students (2) revealed that they commonly emphasise linear temporality in contrast to cyclical imageries. However, the students also illustrated contextualistic perspectives, and showed that they make use of biographical processes and resources in order to create a meaningful field of learning embedded in life-wide learning contexts. Therefore, even in Western cultures, a variety of naive concepts of life and time can be found in adults’ lives. These results highlight the need to broaden our perspective on life-span development and lifelong learning by not restricting our models on linear progressivism and individualism. Moreover, the finding of similar cultural representations with regard to the aforementioned concepts highlights the significance of focusing on similarities between cultures instead of differences in culture-inclusive research.