Cross-Cultural Comparison of Self-Esteem among Mainland Chinese, Hong Kong Chinese, British-Born Chinese and White Scottish Children

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Given cultural differences in the construct of self-esteem, this study explores self-esteem across four groups of children (Mainland Chinese, Hong Kong Chinese, British-Born Chinese and White Scottish) in three age groups (ages 8, 11 and 14). In total, 464 children participated in the study. The Modified Harter's Self-Esteem Questionnaire (Hoare, Elton, Greer & Kerley, 1993) was used to measure self-esteem in all four groups of children from six domains. Results reveal significant differences in self-esteem. White Scottish children are found to have the highest self-esteem and Hong Kong Chinese children to have the lowest. Mainland Chinese children have the highest scholastic self-esteem. British-Born Chinese children, though they are an ethnic minority, show positive attitudes towards themselves. From a developmental perspective, there is a different pattern of behavioral self-esteem development across the four cultural groups. Study findings provide new insights into the developmental and cultural differences in children's self-esteem.

Keywords: *self-esteem, cross-cultural comparison, child development, adolescent development*

Introduction

Self-esteem is a widely investigated construct in the field of personality psychology; it refers to a positive or negative evaluation of the self and also indicates the degree of a person's feeling of self-worth (Rosenberg, 1979). The concept of self-esteem from Harter (1982; 1985) draws on two historical theories. Self-esteem is "self-love" in regard to whether one's aspirations are fulfilled. If an individual's level of success is higher than their aspirations, self-esteem will be high, and vice versa. Self-esteem is related to other's opinions, as well. A person may integrate negative opinions into their own perception and develop low self-esteem. From Harter's point of view (Harter, 1990; 1993), self-esteem is also related to the level of social support obtained from parents, teachers and friends.

Understanding the development of self-esteem among children and adolescents is important, as adolescence is a transition period in which people experience changes in the body, in mental abilities and in their social relationships. Typically, adolescence is a time when individuals pay more attention to themselves and are introspective about life. Therefore, it is expected that they may change their evaluation of themselves. In addition, self-esteem greatly impacts adolescents' other aspects of adolescents' lives (Kinnunen, Feldt, Kinnunen & Pulkkinen, 2008). Positive self-esteem has been linked to better mental and physical health (Branden, 1995; Ogden, 2004). Individuals with positive self-esteem cope more easily with difficult situations and negative feedback. They feel they are valued and respected by the society around them, which often leads to good social relationships (Dekovic & Meeus, 1997). By contrast, individuals with low self-esteem have negative perceptions of themselves

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(Tennen & Affleck, 1993). Research shows that low self-esteem is related to distress, depression, loneliness (Tennen & Affleck, 1993) and social behavioral problems among adolescents (Heatherton & Wyland, 2003). Despite the importance of self-esteem in the development of psychological well-being among children and adolescents, and the considerable number of studies devoted to its understanding (Rosenberg & Peralin, 1978), there is no agreement among scholars as to how self-esteem is developed.

Self-esteem derives from an evaluation of self-worth in society. Cross-cultural differences, therefore, may lead to different views of what is considered a valuable person. Culture has a deep impact on children and adolescents' development (Calzada, Brotman, Huang, Bat-Chava & Kingston, 2009). One popular cultural difference is the distinction between individualism (IND) and collectivism (COL) (Triandis, Bontempo, Villareal, Asai & Lucca, 1988). The core distinction between IND and COL is that IND assumes that individuals are independent from each other, whereas the assumption with COL is that individuals are connected to each other (Oyserman, Coon & Kemmelmeier, 2002). Social scientists assume that IND is more prevalent in industrial Western societies, which seek to maintain the independence of the individual through discovering and expressing a unique inner attribute of one's self. COL is considered more evident in Asian societies, which emphasize attending to others, fitting in and creating harmonious relationships with others (Kitayama, Markus, Matsumoto & Norasakkunkit, 1997). Given the cultural differences in constructs of self-esteem, some researchers suggest that interdependent self-esteem is salient to East Asian cultures, and independent self-esteem is salient in Western cultures (Du et al., 2013).

In addition, Chinese families are traditionally organized by Confucian values (Chan, 2000). From a very young age, children are taught to be obedient, follow their parents' instructions and learn social norms (Chan, 2000; Smetana, Wong, Ball & Yau, 2014). Compared to American children, Chinese children showed more committed compliance and self-control, and less protest in response to parents' interventions (Chen et al., 2003). It is consistently found that East Asian people report lower self-esteem than Westerners (Cai, Brown, Deng & Oaks, 2007).

Chan (2000) conducted a cross-cultural comparison of self-esteem among British-Chinese, White British and Hong Kong Chinese children. In a sample of 1,303 children, self-esteem was assessed with the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (Coopersmith, 1967). The results did not reveal significant differences in self-esteem between children of different ages. There were, however, significant differences between cultural groups. British-Chinese children possessed significantly higher self-esteem than their Hong Kong counterparts, and demonstrated no obvious differences in relation to White British children. Hong Kong children possessed the lowest self-esteem across the groups, which could have been caused by the encouragement of modesty in Chinese culture. Chan's study (2000) applied the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory to examine children's self-esteem as a unitary global trait, which is a general self-esteem measurement. However, self-esteem is considered a multidimensional trait with different components (Heatherton & Wyland, 2003). Therefore, it is worthwhile to examine cross-cultural differences of children and adolescents' self-esteem by applying a multi-dimensional self-esteem measure.

Apart from research identifying cultural variations in children's self-esteem, other studies suggest that self-esteem is related to school curriculum, school environment, parents and children's age (Lau & Yeung, 1992; Robins & Trzesniewski, 2005; Trzesniewski, Brent & Robins, 2003). A study conducted with 1,668 Chinese adolescents ages 13 to 15 years old measured their self-esteem, delinquency and relationships with their school and parents

(Lau & Leung, 1992). The study revealed that adolescents with better relationships with their parents demonstrated higher self-esteem than their peers. Likewise, respondents with better relationships with their schools were associated with better academic performances. Evidence has also revealed that self-esteem develops with age (Robins & Trzesniewski, 2005; Trzesniewski, Brent & Robins, 2003). Self-esteem is relatively high in childhood, declines during adolescence, and then rises gradually throughout adulthood. One study of 1,850 school-age children examined self-perception achievements in four domains (English, math, social activities and sports) and self-esteem from elementary school to junior high school (Wigfield, Eccles, Mac Iver, Reuman & Midgley, 1991). The results showed that children's self-esteem and self-perceived abilities in English, math, social activities and sports decline after their transition to junior high school, but increase in their seventh grade year. Researchers attributed this fluctuation of self-esteem by age to the changing school environment. This study indicates that from late childhood to early adolescence is a crucial age for the development of self-esteem.

In order to fill gaps from previous studies and contribute to the cross-cultural study of self-esteem among children, the present study examines self-esteem across four cultural groups: Mainland Chinese, Hong Kong Chinese, British-Born Chinese (BBC) and White Scottish children. There are two reasons to compare these four cultural groups. First, these groups are influenced by different cultural contexts: Mainland Chinese children are influenced by traditional Chinese culture; Hong Kong Chinese children are influenced by a hybrid of both Eastern and Western cultures; BBC children are influenced by the dual culture of a Chinese family context within the broader UK society; and White Scottish children are influenced by Western culture. Each of these four groups differs with respect to the cultural influences children have been exposed to in collective and individual cultures.

The other reason for examining these four cultural groups is that they overlap in a unique way. Mainland Chinese and Hong Kong Chinese children share similar origins of the parents of BBC children, whereas White Scottish children have grown up in the same social environment as BBC children. Therefore, it is interesting to explore the self-esteem of BBC children—an ethnic minority group—in relation to ethnic majority groups of peers who share similar cultures. Furthermore, the study considers the developmental changes of children's self-esteem. 8, 11 and 14 year olds were selected as appropriate age groups to examine the developmental changes of children's self-esteem from mid-childhood, late-childhood and early adolescence. Moreover, the study applied the Modified Harter Self-Esteem Questionnaire (Hoare et al., 1993), a multidimensional measurement, to examine children's self-esteem from six different domains: social acceptance, scholastic performance, physical acceptance, athletic competence, behavioral performance and global self-esteem.

This study addresses the following two research questions:

1) Are there differences in self-esteem scores across the four cultural groups?

Hypothesis 1: Based on previous cross-cultural research on self-esteem, it is predicted that White Scottish children will have higher self-esteem than children from the collective cultures of BBC, Mainland Chinese and Hong Kong Chinese.

2) Do four cultural groups' children change their evaluation of self-esteem with age?

Hypothesis 2: Based on previous research examining children's changes in self-esteem across age (Robins & Trzesniewski, 2005), it is predicted that self-esteem will be higher among eight year olds and 11 year olds, but decline among 14 year olds.

Methods

Sampling and Recruitment

The participants were 464 children ages 8, 11 and 14, living in Mainland China, Hong Kong and Scotland. Of these, 148 were Mainland Chinese children, 155 Hong Kong Chinese children, 70 BBC children and 91 White Scottish children. Details about the age distribution for each group are provided in Table 1. Data was collected in 2012. A sample of BBC children was selected, based on age, from Scottish state schools and Chinese communities in Edinburgh and Glasgow. BBC children constitute a numerically small portion of the population in Scotland, and so a number of recruitment methods were used, including approaching mainstream schools, Chinese community schools and distributing flyers. White Scottish children were recruited from mainstream schools in Scotland. The recruitment of Scottish children occurred simultaneously with the recruitment of BBC children in mainstream schools in order to match social economic backgrounds. Twenty-three BBC children and 91 White Scottish children were recruited from 19 primary schools and four secondary schools. The other 47 BBC children were recruited from Chinese communities in Scotland.

Recruitment of Chinese children was conducted in Chongqing, one of the major cities in southwest China. Four schools were selected based on the rank of the school and socioeconomic status of the families. Two primary schools and two secondary schools were contacted and agreed to participate in the research. Invitation letters were sent to more than 200 schools in Hong Kong. After five months of contact and outreach, only four schools agreed to participate. The final sample was age-matched and gender-balanced across Hong Kong Chinese and Mainland Chinese, as well as BBC and White Scottish for the purpose of comparison.

Table 1: Distribution of age among the four ethnic groups

		Mainland Chinese (n=148)	**Hong Kong Chinese (n=155)**	**BBC (n=70)**	**White Scottish (n=91)**
Age 8	Number	48	47	21	25
	Mean	7.87	8.31	8.33	8.53
	SD	0.34	0.35	0.42	0.46
	Range	7.17-8.33	7.75-9.58	7.67-9.33	7.92-9.33
Age 11	Number	50	51	27	38
	Mean	10.94	10.94	11.19	11.48
	SD	0.40	0.60	0.62	0.46
	Range	10.00-11.83	10.00-11.75	9.92-12.25	10.58-12.33
Age 14	Number	50	57	22	28
	Mean	14.19	14.45	14.17	14.66
	SD	0.37	0.29	0.51	0.40
	Range	13.25-14.92	13.75-15.00	13.42-15.00	14.00-15.58

Measures

The Modified Harter Self-Esteem Questionnaire (Hoare et al., 1993) was selected to examine the cross-cultural differences in self-esteem among the four groups of children. The Harter Self-Esteem Questionnaire (1985) was designed as a self-completed questionnaire including 36 items, measuring global self-esteem (questions 6, 12, 18, 24, 30, 36), and five separate

subscales: social acceptance (questions 2, 8, 14, 20, 26, 32), scholastic performance (questions 1, 7, 13, 19, 25, 31), physical acceptance (questions 4, 10, 16, 22, 28, 34), athletic competence (questions 3, 9, 15, 21, 27, 33), and behavioral performance (questions 5, 11, 17, 23, 29, 35). In each subscale, three of the items reflect high competence or adequacy, while the other three items represent low competency.

The Harter Self-Esteem Questionnaire has several applications. First, it measures age trends of self-esteem for children between ages 8 and 13, providing evidence of continuity and discontinuity of self-esteem. Second, it provides normative values to measure the self-esteem within and between participants. The Harter Self-Esteem Questionnaire shows a realizable Cronbach's alpha reliability values ranged from 0.71 (the behavior subscale) to 0.86 (the athletic subscale) (Harter, 1985). In response to Harter's suggestion of testing the questionnaire among other populations, Hoare et al. (1993) modified the Harter Self-Esteem Questionnaire to apply to Scottish school children ages 8 to 15. The Modified Harter Self-Esteem Questionnaire (Hoare et al., 1993) can be used to measure children's self-esteem between different groups and changes of self-esteem following intervention or psychological adjustments.

Since there is no Chinese version of the Harter Self-Esteem Questionnaire (Hoare et al., 1993), a questionnaire translation and back translation was conducted, following the method of a study that used the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Questionnaire in 53 countries (Schmitt & Allik, 2005). In the current study, the Modified Harter Self-esteem Questionnaire (Hoare et al., 1993) was translated from English into simplified Chinese (for Mainland Chinese children) and traditional Chinese (for Hong Kong Chinese children) independently by one native Mandarin speaker and one native Cantonese speaker. Two additional native speakers checked the translated versions of the questionnaires, and resolved any discrepancies through discussion. The agreed questionnaires were then back-translated into English by a third independent translator. The back-translations were compared with the original English version of the questionnaire in order to ensure that there was no alteration in meanings in the process of translation (Brislin, 1970).

Given the different language versions of the Modified Harter Self-esteem Questionnaire, the reliability of the translated questionnaires was considered. The internal reliability of the translated Modified Harter Self-Esteem Questionnaire was calculated by Cronbach's alpha for each group (.83 for Mainland Chinese; .72 for Hong Kong Chinese; .73 for BBC; .77 for White Scottish). The similarity between these reliability values and those reported by Harter (1985) and Hoare et al. (1993) confirms that the translated questionnaire obtained a normative value.

Procedure

After the initial agreement of the schools to participate in the study, the researcher visited the schools to clarify the process of conducting the study within the school, and how the data would be used. Any questions raised by the schools were fully answered. After the schools approved the questionnaire, consent forms were distributed to the parents of all participating students. The parents were assured in the consent forms that their children's responses would be treated confidentially and anonymously, and that research data would be stored securely. For the 47 BBC children who were recruited through Chinese communities, parental consent was achieved before the study started, and the study was conducted in a place and time that was convenient for the participants.

After the parental consent forms had been returned, appointments were scheduled with the schools or parents. Teachers gathered children in a quiet classroom during school time to complete the questionnaire. It was explained that the researcher was interested in finding out what children thought of themselves. Reassurance was given that this was not a test and that there were no right or wrong answers. They were told that their names and answers would not be revealed to others, and they could withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason (Loewenthal & Snell, 2001). The questionnaires took 20-25 minutes to administer and complete.

Results

Cross cultural differences of self-esteem

One-way ANOVA was used to investigate the different perspectives of self-esteem among the four cultural groups of children. As shown in Table 2, there are significant differences of six subscales of self-esteem across the groups. In the social acceptance subscale, White Scottish children showed significantly higher self-esteem than the other three groups. White Scottish children showed higher self-esteem than the other groups except in the subscale of scholastic performance. Mainland Chinese children scored the highest in scholastic performance. Hong Kong Chinese children had the lowest self-esteem compared to the other three groups. In the scholastic performance subscale, a significant difference only existed between Mainland Chinese and Hong Kong Chinese. Mainland Chinese children have significantly higher scholastic self-esteem than Hong Kong Chinese children. In the physical acceptance subscale, Hong Kong Chinese possessed the lowest self-esteem, Mainland Chinese and White Scottish children showed significantly higher self-esteem than Hong Kong Chinese. In the athletic competence subscale, White Scottish children revealed higher self-esteem than Mainland Chinese and Hong Kong Chinese. In the subscale of behavioral performance, Mainland Chinese and White Scottish showed higher self-esteem than Hong Kong Chinese. In the global self-esteem subscale, there is a significant difference between White Scottish and Hong Kong Chinese. White Scottish children showed higher self-esteem than Hong Kong Chinese peers.

Table 2: Mean score, standard deviation and significance of the Modified Harter Self-Esteem Questionnaire subscales among the four ethnic groups

Subscale	Mainland Chinese (N=148)	Hong Kong Chinese (N=155)	BBC (N=70)	White Scottish (N=91)	Sig.
Social acceptance	2.70 (.54)	2.64 (.46)	2.79 (.59)	3.01 (.56)	F=10.336, df=3, p<.001
Scholastic performance	2.91 (.57)	2.63 (.61)	2.84 (.59)	2.82 (.68)	F=5.586, df=3, p=.001
Physical acceptance	2.70 (.70)	2.45 (.63)	2.62 (.57)	2.81 (.73)	F=6.443, df=3, p<.001
Athletic competence	2.60 (.70)	2.49 (.66)	2.62 (.56)	2.85 (.62)	F=5.683, df=3, p=.001
Behavioral performance	2.95 (.53)	2.71 (.52)	2.86 (.62)	3.06 (.71)	F=8.131, df=3, p<.001
Global self-esteem	2.92 (.65)	2.79 (.62)	2.94 (.49)	3.09 (.60)	F=4.557, df=3, p<0.01

Note: Minimum score is 1 and maximum score is 4.

Development of self-esteem among four cultural groups of children

Two-way ANOVAs were conducted to investigate the six domains of self-esteem among four cultural groups of children across age. (See Figures 1-6.)

Social acceptance: There was a significant main effect of cultural groups on social self-esteem ($F(3, 444)=10.29$, $p<.001$, partial $\eta 2=.67$). There was no significant effect of age on social self-esteem ($F(2, 444)=1.21$, $p>.05$, partial $\eta 2=.01$) and no significant interaction between age and cultural groups ($F(6, 444)=0.91$, $p>.05$, partial $\eta 2=.01$).

Scholastic performance: There was a significant effect of cultural group on scholastic self-esteem ($F(3, 445)=5.58$, $p<.001$, partial $\eta 2=.04$). There was a significant effect of age on scholastic self-esteem ($F(2, 445) = 1.49$, $p<.05$, partial $\eta 2=.02$). LSD post hoc tests revealed significant differences between age 8 and age 14 ($p<.001$), and between age 11 and age 14 ($p<.001$). There was no significant interaction between age and cultural group on scholastic self-esteem ($F(6, 445) = 1.87$, $p>.05$, partial $\eta 2=.03$).

Physical acceptance: There was a significant effect of cultural group on physical self-esteem ($F(3, 440)=6.56$, $p<.001$, partial $\eta 2=.04$). There was also a significant effect of age on physical self-esteem ($F(2, 440)=9.30$, $p<.001$, partial $\eta 2=.04$). Least significant difference (LSD) post hoc tests revealed significant differences between age 8 and age 14 ($p<.001$), and between age 11 and age 14 ($p<.01$). Children's physical self-esteem reduces with age. There was no significant interaction between age and cultural groups in physical self-esteem ($F(6, 440)=1.23$, $p>.05$, partial $\eta 2=.02$).

Athletic competence: There was a significant effect of cultural group on athletic self-esteem ($F(3, 444)=5.58$, $p<.001$, partial $\eta 2=.04$). There was also a significant effect of age on athletic self-esteem ($F(2, 444) = 6.27$, $p<.001$, partial $\eta 2=.07$). LSD post hoc tests revealed significant differences between age 8 and age 11 ($p<.05$), between age 8 and age 14 ($p<.001$), and between age 11 and age 14 ($p<.001$). There was no significant interaction between age and cultural group on athletic self-esteem ($F(6, 444) = 2.02$, $p>.05$, partial $\eta 2=.03$).

Behavioral performance: There was significant effect of cultural groups on the behavior subscale of self-esteem ($F(3, 444) = 8.41$, $p <.001$, partial $\eta 2=.05$). There was no significant effect of age on behavioral self-esteem ($F(2, 444) = 2.29$, $p>.05$, partial $\eta 2=.01$). There was, however, a significant interaction between age and cultural group in behavioral self-esteem ($F(6, 444) = 3.35$, $p<.01$, partial $\eta 2=.04$). Pair-wise comparison shows significant differences for the BBC children between age 8 and age 14 ($p<.05$), for the Mainland Chinese children between age 8 and age 11 ($p<.01$) and between age 8 and age 14 ($p<.001$). For the White Scottish children, the significant difference is between age 8 and age 14 ($p<.01$). There were no age differences for Hong Kong children ($p>.05$).

Global self-esteem: There was a significant effect of cultural group on global self-esteem ($F(3, 444)=4.06$, $p<.01$, partial $\eta 2=.04$). There was a significant effect of age on global self-esteem ($F(2, 444)=3.67$, $p<.05$, partial $\eta 2=.02$). LSD post hoc tests revealed significant differences between age 8 and age 14 ($p<.01$). There was no significant interaction between age and cultural group on global self-esteem ($F(6, 444)=1.93$, $p>.05$, partial $\eta 2=.03$).

Figure 1: Mean score of social acceptance subscale among the four ethnic groups across age

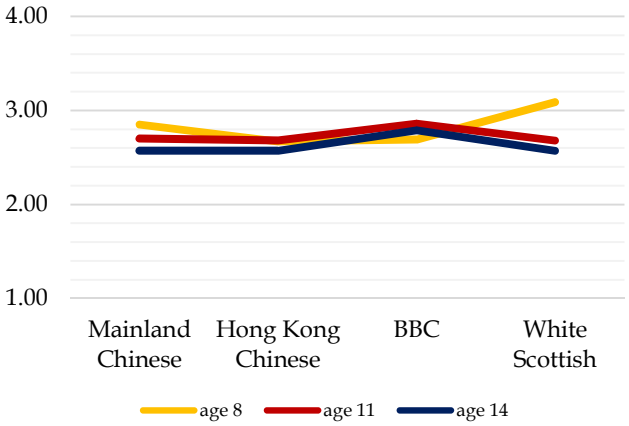


Figure2: Mean score of scholastic performance subscale among the four ethnic groups across age

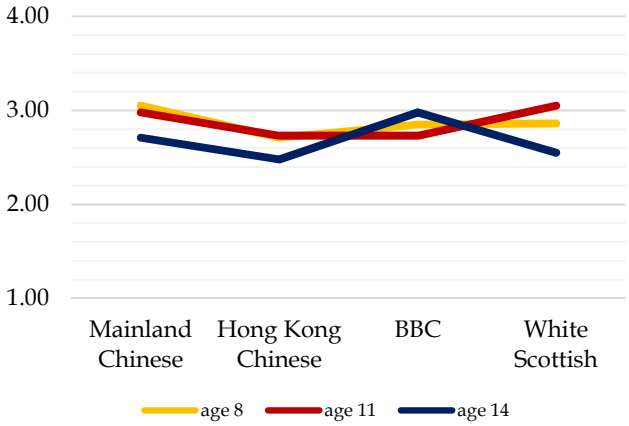


Figure 3: Mean score of physical acceptance subscale among the four ethnic groups across age

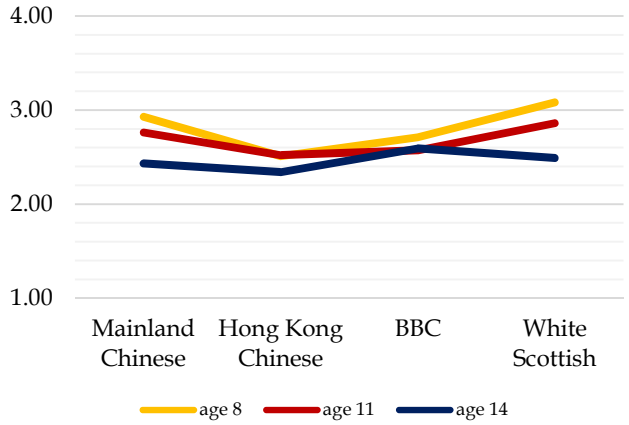


Figure 4: Mean score of athletic competence subscale among the four ethnic groups across age

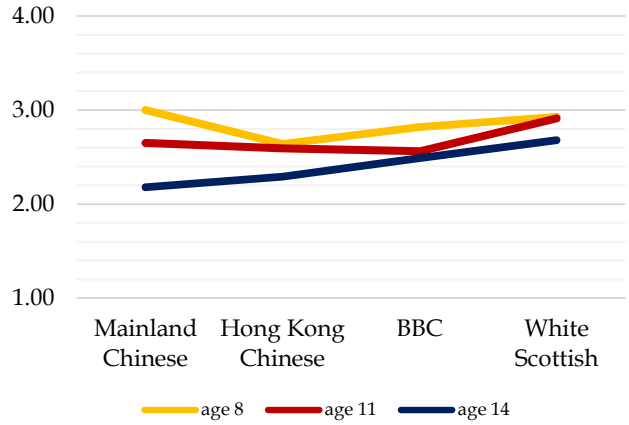


Figure 5: Mean score of behaviour performance subscale among the four ethnic groups across age

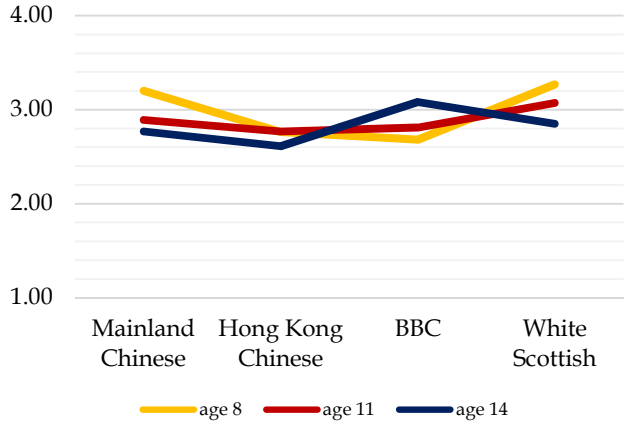
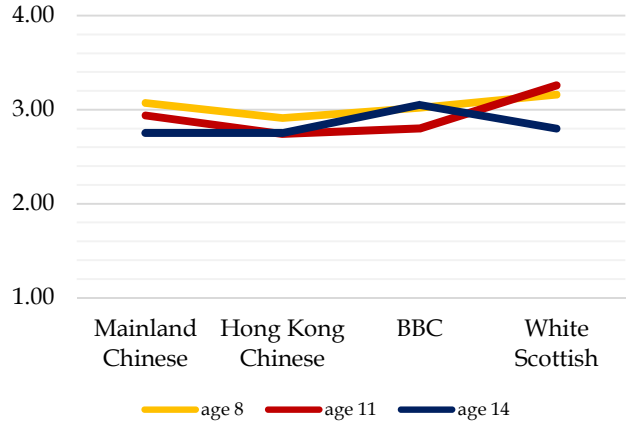


Figure 6: Mean score of global self-esteem subscale among the four ethnic groups across age



Discussion

Results revealed in this study provide evidence of cultural differences in self-esteem among children ages 8, 11 and 14. The study data shows that White Scottish children have the highest self-esteem and Hong Kong Chinese children have the lowest self-esteem. Mainland Chinese children have the highest scholastic self-esteem. BBC children, as an ethnic minority group, show no differences of self-esteem compared to both their Chinese peers and White Scottish peers. From a developmental perspective, results suggest there is a different pattern of behavioral self-esteem development across the cultural groups.

The study shows White Scottish children have higher self-esteem than children from the collective cultures of BBC, Hong Kong Chinese and Mainland Chinese. This is consistent with other cross-cultural self-esteem studies. Westerners report higher self-esteem than East Asian people (Cai, Brown, Deng & Oakes, 2007). Particularly, this finding is in line with Chan's study (2000), which revealed that White British children have a higher level of self-esteem than that of their BBC and Hong Kong peers.

Mainland Chinese children showed the highest scholastic self-esteem, which might be attributable to parental expectations regarding academic performance. One cross-cultural study found that children's academic achievement is the most important concern among Chinese parents, whereas it did not appear to be a central concern of American mothers (Crystal et al., 1994). Compared to American parents, Chinese parents have higher standards for their children's academic achievement and gave more realistic evaluations for children's academic performances. American parents placed more emphasis on the innate ability of their children and were generally satisfied with children's accomplishments. Chinese parents' higher academic expectations may influence Chinese children to become higher academic achievers.

Consistent with the findings in Chan's study (2000), Hong Kong Chinese children in this study reported the lowest self-esteem across all of the subscales of self-esteem. Chan (2000) explained that lower self-esteem among Hong Kong Children may be attributed to the Confucian values of being moderate, humble and conforming in behavior. However, Mainland Chinese children are also influenced by Confucian values, but do not show lower self-esteem than Hong Kong Chinese children. Therefore, this study suggests that modesty and humbleness in collective culture cannot be considered a threat to children's self-esteem. An alternative explanation may be that the colonial history of Hong Kong and its consequent hybrid society has somehow affected children's self-esteem. Hong Kong children's confused sense of identity of being Chinese or being a "Hong Konger" may be a reason they report lower self-esteem (Leung & Lee, 2006).

Despite the social disadvantage that BBC children may face in everyday life, they still have positive self-esteem. This is in line with Chan's study (2000) that there is no significant difference of self-esteem between BBC and White Scottish children. In the current study, apart from White Scottish children's higher score in social acceptance self-esteem, there is no difference in the other types of self-esteem between BBC and White Scottish children. One possible explanation of BBC children's positive attitudes towards themselves may be that they are well integrated into Scottish society (Berry, 2005). Alternatively, although they may suffer social disadvantages in society, they might still have a positive feeling about themselves because of their strong sense of ethnic identity (Phinney, 1990; 2003).

In terms of developmental sequences of children's self-esteem, most aspects of self-esteem show little variation across cultural groups. There was, however, a significant relationship between age and cultural groups in behavioral self-esteem. There is a reverse pattern in the development of self-esteem across the groups. BBC children have higher self-esteem regarding their behavior as they are getting older. In contrast, White Scottish and Chinese children have higher self-esteem about their behavior when they are younger. One possible explanation is that BBC children, as an ethnic minority group, may have different behavioral self-esteem than ethnic majority groups. As they grow older, they have ability to understand their identity and their behavior better.

Conclusion

This study explores self-esteem among four cultural groups of children with different exposures to Eastern and Western ideals. It also examines four cultural groups of children's self-esteem across three age groups. In addition, the study not only compares Hong Kong Chinese, BBC and White British children, as Chan (2000) did, but also compares those three groups of children with Mainland Chinese children. Each of these four groups differs with respect to the cultural influences children have been exposed to in Western and Eastern cultures. The current study thus extends the range of cross-cultural comparison beyond that of Chan's (2000) study and, in doing so, constitutes a substantial addition to the literature. However, a few limitations must be considered for future studies.

Children from different cultural backgrounds may have different values and expectations of themselves and, thus, their understanding of the concept of self-esteem may differ across cultures. Although Hoare et al. (1993) suggested that the Modified Harter Self-Esteem Questionnaire can be used among different cultural groups, its applicability should be further evaluated. However, the sample size of the current study is too small to conduct some statistical analysis after it is divided into groups. Another limitation is that BBC children were recruited from different venues. Those recruited in language schools, churches and cultural clubs could have been involved in activities and in an environment where self-esteem is promoted, which might influence their self-esteem. Also, participants' family information was not fully considered in the study. The socioeconomic status of families, as well as parents' education, may impact self-esteem, although school catchment areas were considered. The future research will benefit from incorporating other type of measurements that examine the self-esteem of multi-cultural groups of children in order to confirm the conclusions drawn from this study and shed light on cultural similarities and differences in self-esteem construct.

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