

## Benefits of Cultural Exposure and Development of Korean Perspective-Taking Ability for Transracially Adopted Korean Children

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*This study investigated the benefits of cultural exposure for transracially adopted (TRA) Korean children's developmental understanding of being Korean. Fifty TRA Korean children living in the United States were interviewed to assess their understanding of the implications of their Korean status for peer relations and personal identities, using a model of perspective-taking ability (PTA). Results showed cultural exposure and chronological age were significant predictors of children's PTA for being Korean. Cultural exposure had a slightly stronger relationship with PTA development for younger children than older ones. Comparison with another sample suggested that non-adopted native Korean children in the United States for an average of 25 months achieved levels of PTA at earlier ages did TRA children but that level of cultural exposure mediated these age differences.*

**Keywords:** transracially adopted, Korean children, perspective-taking ability

Transracial adoption in the United States has a controversial history (Simon & Alstein, 2002). Some have considered transracial adoption a form of cultural genocide (e.g.,

National Association of Black Social Workers, 1972). Indeed, during the 1960s and 1970s American Indian and African American children were disproportionately repre-

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sented in the adoption process. In Wisconsin, for example, American Indian children were 1,600% more likely to be adopted than were non-Indian children (see review by Simon & Alstein, 2002). Concern over the prevalence of White families adopting Black children led to the National Association of Black Social Workers' call in 1971 for an end to transracial adoptions of Black children out of fears that adopted Black children were receiving inadequate socialization in White families (National Association of Black Social Workers, 1972). A subsequent decline in the availability of Black children for transracial adoption by White families led to the cultivation of other sources of infants for adoption (McRoy & Zurcher, 1983). The majority of transracial adoptions in the United States since the 1980s have been across national borders, with predominantly White, Anglo, middle-class families adopting infants from Korea in 1980s and from China and Russia in the 1990s. One of the main arguments against transracial adoption is that it is harmful to transracially adopted (TRA) children (Feigelman & Silverman, 1984).

Research has found that most TRA children show adjustment levels equivalent to, and sometimes higher than, within-race adopted (WRA) children (Alexander & Curtis, 1996; see also review by R. M. Lee, 2003). In their review, Simon and Alstein (2000) indicated that TRA children show equivalent or higher levels of adjustment (e.g., indices of self-esteem, well-being) than WRA children. This pattern holds when TRA children are compared with WRA White children (Feigelman & Silverman, 1983; Simon & Alstein, 1992) and with WRA children of color (e.g., Andujo, 1988). Moreover, this pattern has been supported in long-term longitudinal research, in one case spanning two decades (Simon & Alstein, 1992). Some exceptions to this trend of equivalent or higher levels of adjustment comparing TRA with WRA children occurred when there were significant differences in the circumstances of the adoption (Simon & Alstein, 2000). When these factors (e.g., age of

placement in foster care, age of adoption) were statistically controlled, differences in adjustment between TRA and WRA children disappeared (e.g., Wickes & Slate, 1997).

Nonetheless, some research finds differences in adjustment between TRA and non-adopted children (e.g., Bimmel, Juffer, van IJzendoorn, & Bakermans-Kranenburg, 2003; Lindblad, Hjern & Vinnerljung, 2003). For example, Lindblad et al. found differences in adjustment (e.g., psychiatric problems) between TRA children and their non-adopted siblings (i.e., biological offspring of the adopting parents) in Sweden but fewer differences with a nonadopted immigrant comparison group. R. M. Lee's (2003) review concluded that there do not seem to be psychological risks inherent in transracial adoption, with the majority of TRA children appearing to be well adjusted, but there seem to be some risks associated with adopted children (e.g., preadoption trauma) and in being a racial minority (e.g., experience of social and employment discrimination), which may combine and influence levels of adjustment for TRA children, particularly for ethnic or racial minorities.

A second focus of research has been on TRA children's ideological, behavioral, and social commitment to their culture of origin (Taylor & Thornton, 1996). By definition, TRA children are being raised by parents with a different racial status; consequently, they tend to experience different racial socialization than children who are raised by their biological parents or children adopted within their race. Across several studies, two thirds or more of TRA children fail to identify with their racial status (Andujo, 1988; Feigelman & Silverman, 1984; Kim, 1995). For example, Andujo's (1988) study comparing TRA with WRA children of Mexican descent found that none of the 30 TRA children identified with the term *Mexican American*, compared with 22 (73%) of WRA children of Mexican descent. DeBerry, Scarr, and Weinberg's (1996) longitudinal study found that TRA children had difficulty developing bicultural/biracial competence and were more identified with White than

Black reference groups. In a meta-analysis, Hollingsworth (1997) found that TRA children scored lower than WRA children on ethnic/racial identity across six published studies.

Moreover, there are indicators suggesting some TRA children have negative racial experiences (Taylor & Thorton, 1996). For example, a relatively large portion of TRA children (20%) indicate they wished they had a different racial status (Benson, Sharma, & Roehlkepartain, 1994). TRA children reflect lower adjustment relative to comparison groups in acceptance and comfort with their physical appearance compared with WRA children (Andujo, 1988; Kim, 1995). Finally, 25% of TRA children report difficulties growing up connected to their racial status, whereas only 2%–3% of TRA children identified difficulties related to their adoption status (Simon & Alstein, 2000). Taken together, research suggests that most TRA children have levels of general adjustment equivalent to WRA children but that a larger portion of TRA children experience some challenges related to their ethnic and racial identity (for a more complete review, see R. M. Lee, 2003).

Although some continue to investigate general adjustment differences between adopted and nonadopted children (e.g., Lindblad et al., 2003), researchers have recently focused on the processes by which children develop positive conceptions about their ethnic, cultural, and racial status in the context of transracial adoption. To date, most research has focused on connections between parental attitudes toward adopted children's racial status and the children's racial attitudes (e.g., Carstens & Julia, 2000; Friedlander et al., 2000; Vonk, 2001; Yoon, 1997). Although widely assumed, little research has explicitly investigated the benefits of cultural exposure for TRA children. Consequently, the first purpose of this study was to examine some of the benefits of cultural exposure for TRA children.

A second purpose of the present study was to investigate whether developmental models originally formulated for non-

adopted children would be applicable to TRA children. Friedlander et al. (2000) found support for a broad outline of TRA children's development of ethnic or racial cognitions in a small qualitative study that appeared to parallel levels of development for nonadopted children identified by Quintana (1994, 1998). Specifically, Quintana (1994, 1998) and colleagues (Quintana, Castañeda-English, & Ybarra, 1999; Quintana, Chun, Gonsalves, Kaeo & Lung, 2004; Quintana & Segura-Herrera, 2003; Quintana, Ybarra, Gonzalez-Doupe, & de Baessa, 2000) demonstrated that nonadopted children across a variety of ethnic and racial backgrounds (Mexican American, Ladino/Guatemalan, Native Hawaiian, Quiché/Guatemalan) develop increasingly complex and integrated perspectives on their ethnic and racial experiences. Children have been found to progress through physical, literal, social, and group perspectives on their cultural and racial experiences (see Table 1). Young preschool children's understanding of ethnicity and race is focused on superficial physical markers of race (physical perspective), whereas older children in elementary school bring an awareness of nonphysical features, such as heritage and cultural characteristics (literal perspective). The latter perspective is considered *literal* because children at this level tend to associate only cultural characteristics that are literally connected with race or labeled with racial terms, such as having *Korean* ancestry, speaking *Korean*, or eating *Korean* food. Preadolescent youths begin to see their racial status through social dimensions in which awareness of racism and social discrimination has particularly salient roles in their conceptions of race (social perspective). During adolescence, youths develop racial or cultural group consciousness in which there is increased awareness of intragroup and intergroup dynamics (collective group consciousness perspective).

For the present study, we were interested in whether Quintana's model of perspective-taking ability (PTA) could be reliably applied to TRA children. We were particularly

**TABLE 1** Description and Illustrative Responses of Levels of Perspective-Taking Ability (PTA)

<i>Level of PTA</i>	<i>Illustrative response</i>
<p>Level 0: Physical perspective</p> <p>Children understand race based on observable physical manifestations, such as physical features or language usage.</p>	<p>"Korean people have Black hair, brown eyes and [White] Americans have tan hair and different color eyes."</p>
<p>Level 1: Literal perspective</p> <p>Children understand role of ancestry in determining racial status and focus on obvious, literal, and cultural features.</p>	<p>"To be Korean means your parents were Korean. But just because you're Korean on the outside [does not mean] that you're not American on the inside."</p>
<p>Level 2: Social perspective</p> <p>Children can see themselves through the eyes of others and can describe social consequences of racial group membership, including racial prejudice.</p>	<p>"I guess I'm different [from Caucasians] because they treat me differently."</p>
<p>Level 3: Collective group consciousness perspective</p> <p>Children and youths focus less on objective racial features such as racial status and more on subjective racial features such as sense of psychological connection to other members of racial group.</p>	<p>"I believe [what makes me Korean] is the way you feel about it . . . it's more what you know about your culture and how much you believe in it."</p>

interested in whether TRA children progressed through the same developmental levels, attained the same levels of development, and developed through levels at rates equivalent to those of nonadopted children. Although TRA children are of intrinsic interest, we were also interested in investigating the generality of the model to determine if children who were not raised by same-race parents would develop similarly to children raised by same-race parents. This kind of research can contribute to a broader understanding of the role of cultural exposure in a variety of different contexts.

Our formal hypotheses are as follows:

*Hypothesis 1.* Quintana's (1994, 1998) PTA model and methodology could be applied to TRA children with reliability.

*Hypothesis 2.* TRA children's PTA scores would be strongly predicted by their level of chronological age, consistent with previous research with non-adopted children.

*Hypothesis 3.* Greater cultural exposure and cultural knowledge would predict more advanced levels of PTA development.

*Hypothesis 4.* The rate of PTA development for TRA children would be different from that of children raised within same-race families.

## Method

### Participants

Fifty Korean-born TRA children (27 girls, 23 boys) attending a Korean culture camp on the East Coast participated in the study. The average age was 12.26 years ( $SD = 2.54$ ), with a median of 13 years. Fifty-six percent ( $n = 28$ ) of the Korean adoptees had some limited knowledge of verbal and written Korean, and 60% ( $n = 30$ ) had been back to Korea. Sixty-four percent ( $n = 32$ ) had been involved in cultural activities outside of the camp. Nearly three fourths (72%) of the sample indicated being teased because of their racial status (see Table 2). There were no selection criteria with the exception that each adoptee participate willingly and was able to respond to the study instruments. All camp attendees who had parental consent and who assented to participate were included in the study.

**TABLE 2** Demographic and Cultural Exposure Information

<i>Variable</i>	<i>n</i>
Sex	
Male	23
Female	27
Has adopted siblings	34
Been teased for being Korean	36
Cultural exposure items	
Attended other Korean cultural group activities	32
Has visited Korea at least once	30
Attended Korean school	5
Can speak some Korean	25
Can write some Korean words	17
Eats Korean food monthly	23

*Note.*  $N = 50$ .

### *Instruments*

**PTA INTERVIEW.** The Korean adoptees' PTA for being Korean was evaluated using a semi-structured interview format based on Quintana et al.'s (1999) interview methodology. The original PTA interview questions were modified to reflect the Korean children's cultural and racial status (e.g., questions were asked specific to Koreans). Specifically, questions were phrased to encourage children's reflection on their personal experiences related to race and culture. The PTA interview format has been successfully adapted to a variety of racial contexts and has been translated into five languages while preserving important facets of cultural validity (Quintana, Troyano, & Taylor, 2001). We were optimistic that the PTA methodology provided sufficient flexibility and openness to be adapted to interviews with TRA children while retaining important features of cultural validity.

There were three sections of the interview, including Individual, Friendship, and Family domains. Examples of questions in the domains are: "Do you like being Korean? Why?" (Individual domain), "Do you notice differences between friends who are Korean from those who are not?" (Friendship domain), and "How are Korean fami-

lies different from Caucasian families?" (Family domain). Drawings representing Korean and Caucasian children (one boy and one girl for each race), groups of children (one group of Korean children, one group of Caucasian children, one mixed racial group), and families (one Korean family and one Caucasian family) were used to assist children's understanding of the interview questions and to maintain attention during the interview. The PTA interview is individually administered and lasts 30–45 min. Children's responses to each of the domains were scored according to a manual, with a final score representing the average of the three domain scores as an index of their level of development.

The PTA instrument has demonstrated validity and reliability in previous research (Quintana et al., 1999), based on interrater reliability ( $r = .86$ ) and validity coefficient (eta-squared = .75). To establish reliability in the present study, two raters scored every interview, with one experienced rater from a previous research. The inexperienced rater was trained on a separate pilot sample of interviews conducted with TRA Korean children. Training on scoring was provided until a high level of agreement (e.g., 80% or more) was obtained on the pilot sample. For the present set of interviews, interrater agreement for PTA ratings was high ( $r = .83$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

**CULTURAL EXPOSURE.** Cultural exposure data were obtained via oral questions. Children were asked six questions to index the degree of exposure to cultural experiences: "Have you ever been [back] to Korea?" "Do you go to Korean school?" "Do you speak Korean?" "Do you read Korean?" "How often do you eat Korean food?" and "Have you gone to other group activities for Korean children?" Positive responses were followed up with inquiries about frequency or quantity of experience (e.g., "How many times have you visited Korea?"). These questions were based on items from the Suinn–Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation Scale



(Suinn, Khoo, & Ahuna, 1995) and the Children's Acculturation Scale (Franco, 1983), with modifications made to accommodate TRA Korean children. The responses were scored according to fixed codes. For example, *0 return visits to Korea* was scored as 0, *one visit* was scored as 1, *2 to 4 visits* was scored as 2, and *more than 4 visits* was scored as 3. The item about eating Korean food was indexed to approximate the number of times the child ate Korean food per year (e.g., once per week = 52 times per year). Because the scoring format for cultural exposure items varied, the items were standardized to zero mean and unity variance before being summed into a total score. The coefficient alpha across these six items was .70, which is respectable given the relatively small number of items.

**CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE.** The instrument used to index cultural knowledge was an adaptation of Bernal, Knight, Ocampo, Garza, and Cota's (1990) measure originally developed for Mexican American children and included items analogous to other age-appropriate cultural knowledge scales for other ethnic/racial groups (e.g., Native Hawaiian Cultural Scale; Hishinuma et al., 2000). The original instrument involved asking children to imagine two towns, one Mexican town and one Anglo American town. Items depicted cultural activities, and children were asked how many people in each town would be involved with the activity. Response formats ranged from *none* (0), *a few* (1), *some* (2), *most* (3), and *all* (4). There were 6 activities characteristic of Mexican culture and 6 activities characteristic of Anglo American culture. These 12 items were asked in the context of the Mexican town and then the Anglo town, for a total of 24 items, with half of the items congruent with the town (e.g., Mexican cultural activity asked in context of Mexican town) and half of the items were incongruent with the town (e.g., Mexican cultural activity in context of Anglo town). The total score is computed by summing across scores for congruent items

and subtracting scores for incongruent items. Higher scores indicate higher ratings were given to congruent than to incongruent items. This instrument was modified for the present study by substituting a Korean town and Korean cultural activities (e.g., eat *kimchi* and know *Tae Kwan Do*) for the Mexican town and Mexican activities. The comparison town was described as Caucasian or White rather than Anglo, to be appropriate for a Korean sample. In previous research, Bernal et al. reported strong relationships for ethnic knowledge with acculturation ( $r = .51, p < .001$ ) and children's ethnic identification ( $r = .30, p < .05$ ). For the present study, the reliability, using coefficient alpha procedures, was .66. This reliability coefficient may seem low, but because coefficient alpha assumes homogeneity of items and because the cultural knowledge scale was developed to assess knowledge of different cultural activities, the reliability may be underestimated as a result of heterogeneity of items.

**SELF-ESTEEM.** Rosenberg's (1979) Self-Esteem Scale was also administered to provide evidence of discriminant validity given that the cultural variables were not expected to be significantly related to self-esteem. Rosenberg (1965) defined self-esteem as "the evaluation which an individual makes and customarily maintains with regard to himself; it expresses an attitude of approval or disapproval" (p. 5). Rosenberg's scale measures how the individual evaluates his or her abilities, attributes, capabilities, and some form of attitude of approval or disapproval of self (self-worth). The reliability coefficient of this instrument is .92 (Rosenberg, 1965, 1979). The method for scoring involved assigning scores ranging from 1 point for *strongly disagree* to 4 points for *strongly agree* on the Likert-type scale. Of the 10 questions in the scale, the 5 negative self-esteem questions were reverse scored. The scoring method was applied so that high scores reflected positive esteem.

Procedure

The TRA Korean children were administered study materials by three Asian American adults, two men and one woman, to be consistent with previous PTA research. Each interviewer was provided an orientation to the interviewing procedures, including what instruments were to be used, the order in which they were to be administered, how questions were to be asked, and how participants were to be identified and coded for confidentiality purposes. The order of administration of instruments was randomized to control for order effects. Interview sites were mainly outdoors on picnic tables away from the activities of other children. Interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed. There were no reports of discomfort experienced by TRA children during the interviews or study procedures. Participating children were offered a T-shirt in consideration of their involvement in the study.

between Level 1 (literal perspective) and Level 2 (social perspective). The cultural exposure items were standardized to sum across items with different response formats. There were large relationships (sharing over 25% of variance) between PTA and chronological age and between PTA and cultural exposure. Cultural exposure was also significantly related to chronological age. Cultural knowledge was significantly, albeit modestly, related to PTA. Finally, self-esteem had only nonsignificant relationships with other study variables. As part of the larger dissertation study (D. C. Lee, 2000), children's responses were content analyzed and could be compared with nonadopted children's responses from other studies. The most interesting and common content category was that nearly half of the sample ( $n = 24$ ) reported having pride in being Korean because this status made them distinctive in an otherwise mostly White environment.

Results

Descriptive Results

Table 3 lists descriptive information for chronological age, PTA, cultural exposure, cultural knowledge, and self-esteem. The average level of PTA for study participants was

Test of Hypotheses

The hypothesis that the PTA methodology could be applied to this sample of TRA Korean children with reliability and validity (Hypothesis 1) was supported with the large interrater correlation coefficient reported earlier ( $r = .83, p < .001$ ) and with the large relationship between PTA and chronologi-

TABLE 3 Means, Standard Deviation, Correlation Coefficients for Age, Perspective-Taking Ability (PTA), Cultural Exposure, and Self-Esteem

Variable	M (SD)	1	2	3	4	5
1. Age	12.26 (2.54)	—				
2. PTA	1.84 (0.77)	.63***	—			
3. Cultural exposure	0.00 (3.78)	.37**	.52***	—		
4. Cultural knowledge	19.34 (6.89)	.25	.28*	.13	—	
5. Self-esteem	7.74 (3.69)	.14	.16	-.02	.07	—

Note. N = 50. Cultural exposure has a mean of 0 because the items were standardized to have 0 mean.  
\*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

cal age ( $r = .63, p < .001$ ). The latter finding is particularly important because chronological age is measured with relatively little error, given that school-age children can report their age and birth date with accuracy. Because chronological age and PTA share little or no method variance, the large correlation coefficient between these two constructs suggests that a significant portion of PTA variance is unassociated with measurement error, including rater, interviewer, and transient specific error (see Heppner, Kivlighan, & Wampold, 1999, on sources of measurement error).

The hypotheses that PTA would be significantly associated with chronological age (Hypothesis 2) and with cultural exposure and cultural knowledge (Hypothesis 3) were evaluated by regression analyses. Because of the significant intercorrelation between age and cultural exposure, we were interested in the unique contributions of cultural exposure and chronological age to predicting PTA scores. An interaction term (Age  $\times$  Cultural Exposure) was also entered into the regression equation, according to guidelines described by Aiken and West (1991). These guidelines require that, in this situation, age and cultural exposure variables be centered (i.e., mean set at zero) to interpret the interaction coefficient. PTA shows a developmental trend with older children and those children with high levels of cultural exposure demonstrating advanced levels of

PTA development. The significance of both these regression coefficients suggests that chronological age and cultural exposure were unique predictors of PTA, even after variance associated with other variables was controlled. The multiple  $R$  for Step 1 indicates that the predictor variables accounted for about 51% of the variance associated with PTA. The interaction term, entered on Step 2, was significant, suggesting that age moderates the relationship between cultural exposure and PTA (see Table 4).

Following Aiken and West's guidelines, the negative interaction was probed with plots and tests of regression slopes at  $\pm 1$  standard deviation and the mean of age (see Figure 1). The negative valence for the interaction indicates that the slope is steeper for younger children than for older ones. Note, for example, that there was an increase of almost a full developmental level (1.02 to 1.97 PTA) for 10-year-old children from low to high cultural exposure, but just only a half level of development (1.99 to 2.55) for 15-year-old children from low to high cultural exposure. Although the increase of a single developmental level appears small, by focusing on those with low cultural exposure, there is about 5 years difference in chronological age between those scoring at 1.02 level of PTA (10.13 years) and those scoring at 1.99 level of PTA (15.21 years). Another comparison is that 10-year-old children with high levels of cultural ex-

**TABLE 4 Regression Analyses Investigating Direct and Moderator Relationships of Age and Cultural Exposure on Perspective-Taking Ability**

Predictor	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i> (45)
Step 1 <sup>a</sup>				
Chronological age	.146	.034	.483	4.24***
Cultural exposure, total	.066	.023	.330	2.92**
Cultural knowledge	.013	.012	.121	1.13
Step 2 <sup>b</sup>				
Age $\times$ Cultural Exposure	-.013	.006	-.257	-2.18*

*Note.* Variables were centered, and cultural exposure scores were standardized.

<sup>a</sup> Multiple  $R = .714, F(3, 46) = 15.92, p < .001$ . <sup>b</sup> Multiple  $R = .742, F(4, 47) = 13.80, p = .001$ .  $R$  change = .028,  $p < .05$ .

\*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .



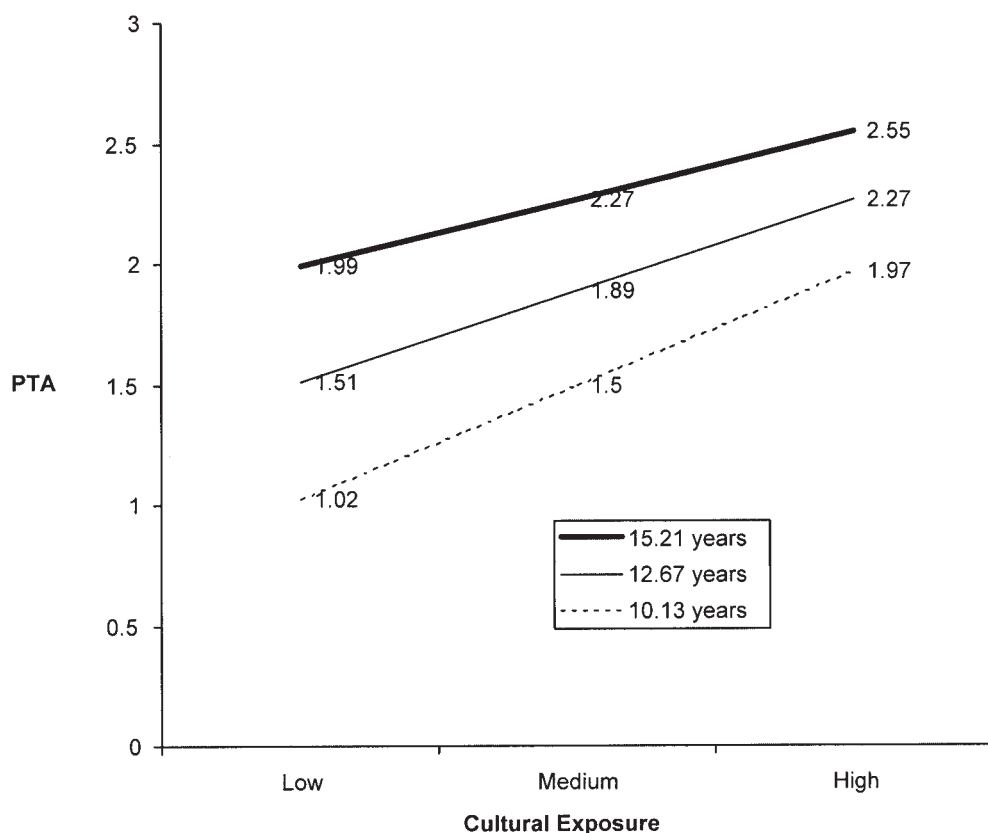


Figure 1. Interaction of age and cultural exposure. PTA = perspective-taking ability.

posure (1.97 PTA) scored nearly as high as 15-year-old children with low levels of cultural exposure (1.99 PTA). It is important to note that the slope for cultural exposure predicting PTA at each of the levels of age is positive and significant ( $t_s > 2.82$ ,  $p_s < .007$ ). In short, cultural exposure was slightly more important for younger children than older children in predicting levels of the PTA development, but at low, average, and high age levels, there was a significant and positive relationship between cultural exposure and PTA.

To test Hypothesis 4 that TRA children would develop PTA at a different rate than nonadopted Korean children, we compared previously collected data on a sample of nonadopted Korean children (Quintana & Kim, 1998) with the present dataset. The nonadopted Korean children ( $N = 24$ ) were

international sojourners, native to Korea, raised by biological parents, and currently residing in the United States. The nonadopted children had been in the United States an average of 25 months. Out of the 24 nonadopted children, 13 were girls. They were interviewed by an Asian adult and followed procedures similar to those for TRA children. Table 5 lists the mean ages for children classified at each level of PTA for the TRA and nonadopted Korean children. The average age at each level of PTA was higher for TRA children. The nonadopted Korean children appeared to develop through PTA Levels 0–2 at a faster rate than did TRA children. Analysis of variance confirms that the age differences across the levels of PTA were significant,  $F(1, 66) = 12.62$ ,  $p = .001$ , eta squared = .16. This result suggests that nonadopted chil-

**TABLE 5 Breakdown of Mean Age by Level of PTA for TRA (*N* = 50) and Nonadopted (*N* = 24) Korean Children**

<i>PTA level</i>	<i>TRA children</i>	<i>Nonadopted children</i>
0	8.75	7.15
1	10.72	8.17
2	13.21	9.64
3	14.81	12.91

*Note.* Nonadopted Korean children were collected for a separate study. PTA = perspective-taking ability; TRA = transracially adopted.

dren progress through the levels more rapidly than TRA children. Because this analysis is based on a comparison of nonequivalent groups, a number of sample characteristics could be responsible for these differences.

To further explore reasons for age differences in PTA levels between the samples, we developed an abbreviated cultural exposure variable from available data. Specifically, nonadopted children's level of cultural exposure could be indexed from existing data on children's report of their written and oral skills with Korean language and exposure to Korea. Similar data from TRA Korean children were combined into an abbreviated cultural exposure variable. Subsequently, we used an analysis of covariance to investigate age differences between TRA and nonadopted Korean children, using the abbreviated cultural exposure variable as a covariate. When the level of exposure to Korean culture was controlled, the age differences at levels of PTA were nonsignificant,  $F(1, 65) = 3.85$ , *ns*, eta squared = .056. The reduction in effect size for the difference in the analysis with and without controlling for cultural exposure was significant ( $z = 1.88$ ,  $p = .03$ , one-tailed). This result suggests that age differences between TRA and nonadopted children at levels of PTA were due to differences in cultural exposure. In other words, cultural exposure mediated the differences in average age of PTA across the two samples. In this case, the Korean language skills and exposure to Korea served as proxies to broader exposure to

Korean culture. These results support the hypothesis that nonadopted Korean children appear to progress through the levels of PTA at a younger ages than TRA Korean children but that these differences appear to be related to differences in levels of cultural exposure.

## Discussion

Taken together, the results suggest some similarities and differences between TRA children in this study and previous research conducted on nonadopted children of color. TRA children appear to develop PTA about their cultural and racial status in ways similar to nonadopted children. The PTA interview procedure was applied to TRA children with support for its reliability and validity. The breakdown of ages across level of PTA suggests that TRA children had attained levels of PTA in the same pattern, with younger children predominantly classified in lower levels and older children in higher levels of PTA. Moreover, TRA children were classified in each of the levels from Level 0 through Level 3, again suggesting similarities with nonadopted children of color who are raised within same-race families. As suggested in previous research (Quintana et al., 2000), maturational factors associated with chronological age appear to be important factors contributing to the development of PTA for TRA and nonadopted children. Although not explicitly measured in the present study, previous research has indicated that social-cognitive development mediated the relationship between children's age and PTA (Quintana et al., 2000). The findings herein suggest PTA development is similar for TRA Korean children and other populations—Mexican American, Guatemalan Ladino, Guatemalan Quiché, Native Hawaiian—to which the PTA model has been applied (Quintana, 1998; Quintana et al., 1999; Quintana et al., 2003).

In the present study, TRA Korean children appear to be in levels of PTA at older

ages, compared with nonadopted Korean children raised within same-race families. This is a novel finding for research on TRA children, which has not previously demonstrated developmental differences for TRA children in their understanding of their racial status (see review by Simon & Alstein, 2000). This finding is, nonetheless, generally consistent with previous research on TRA children who show relatively low levels of ideological commitment to their racial group (Benson et al., 1994). Further study results indicated that cultural exposure mediated the age differences in PTA development between TRA and nonadopted Korean children. These results suggest the reason for developmental differences between TRA and nonadopted Korean children is due to differential levels of cultural exposure. One implication, albeit somewhat speculative, is that the developmental differences may be overcome if TRA children receive greater exposure to their culture of origin.

The results also suggested that cultural exposure had a particularly critical role for TRA children's development of PTA. Cultural exposure was an unique predictor of PTA after controlling for variance associated with chronological age and cultural knowledge. The finding of a significant relationship between cultural exposure and development of PTA is novel. Previous research has failed to find significant connections between contextual or cultural factors in predicting PTA. Specifically, acculturation and general forms of parental ethnic socialization were not significantly predictive of PTA scores for Mexican American children (Quintana et al., 2000). Quintana (1994) originally theorized that cultural exposure was a critical component of children's development of PTA. Integrating the results from the present and previous research suggests that very low levels of cultural exposure appear to hinder PTA development but that cultural exposure beyond a relatively small amount does not appear to hinder PTA development. Nonadopted children raised by same-race families are likely to have exposure to their culture of origin that exceeds

the minimum required to support PTA development. Conversely, the amount of cultural exposure for TRA children may be around the critical levels necessary to support PTA development.

These research findings can be compared with research (e.g., Portes & Rumbaut, 1996; Zhou, 1997) on other populations of 1.5 generation (i.e., children born outside of the United States but arriving in United States early in childhood). This previous research found that children's adaptation based on a blending of culture of origin or family culture and dominant culture was complex: For some, there were benefits to increased socialization into family culture, but for others, this socialization appeared to pose challenges to their adjustment (Zhou, 1997). In the latter situations, acculturation to the dominant culture may be experienced as threatening to ethnic/racial minority adolescents' identity (Ogbu, 1994). For TRA Korean children raised in otherwise Caucasian families, however, family or home culture mirrors dominant culture while culture of origin differs from family culture. We speculate that the forms and levels of cultural exposure reflected in this study do not undermine TRA children's main cultural orientation, which tends toward their adopted family culture. Instead, the ranges of exposure to Korean culture reflected in this study appear to stimulate TRA children's perspective-taking development about their culture of origin without threatening their commitment to their home culture.

It is interesting to note that there was a small, albeit significant, interaction effect between cultural exposure and chronological age in predicting levels of PTA. This finding indicated that cultural exposure was particularly important for younger TRA children (e.g., 10 years of age). This suggests that the kinds of cultural exposure may need to be tailored to children's age. The kinds of exposure we indexed were somewhat focused on experiences with Korean culture (e.g., food, language), and the kinds of cultural knowledge we assessed were also

focused on more objective features of culture (e.g., cultural traditions). These kinds of cultural exposure may be particularly important for young children at Level 1 of PTA development, which also involves emphasis on historical and traditional features of Korean culture (e.g., language, food, traditions). In contrast, older children at Level 2 of PTA focus more on the racialized components of being Korean, including understanding of racial prejudice. Children's understanding of the racialized components is further integrated and expanded at Level 3 of PTA when they develop greater racial group consciousness about being Korean. Although exposure to traditional and historical features of Korean culture continued to be predictive of PTA development for older children, it follows logically that older children may benefit even more from exposure to different kinds of cultural and racial experiences. Future research could investigate the kinds of experiences that promote TRA children's development as they approach and enter adolescence.

There are study limitations worth noting. Because the study design was cross-sectional and nonexperimental, the results could not address the causal ordering of variables. Additionally, the study sample included children at a cultural camp and may not be representative of TRA children who do not attend such camps. Using Asian American interviewers could be seen as a limitation or confound given that TRA children may be racially Asian or Korean but may be more culturally affiliated with White culture. The interviewers were biculturally skilled and could match the children's preferred cultural style of interaction. Moreover, given that the interviews were administered in the context of a camp specifically for TRA Korean children and staffed by many Asian and Asian American adults, the presence of Asian American interviewers would seem less salient or unusual than if the interviews were conducted in the children's home. Another caveat for the studies is that the participants are likely to have greater cultural exposure than other TRA children who do

not attend Korean camps. However, including only children from a cultural camp may have restricted the range of scores on cultural exposure, which would attenuate or underestimate the size of relationships involving cultural exposures. It is possible that including TRA children with a wider range of cultural exposures would lead to finding even stronger relationships involving the variable of cultural exposure. The comparison of the results from this TRA sample with those from a sample of nonadopted children is somewhat tentative given that a number of sample differences could be responsible for pattern of results. Another limitation is that many instruments had to be adapted for the cultural and racial characteristics of this particular sample. This kind of adaptation contributes to the cultural validity of the results (Quintana et al., 2001) but comes at a cost related to less prior knowledge about the psychometric properties of the instruments used in the study. One particular strength of this study worth noting is its multimethod instrumentation. PTA scores were obtained from scoring of interview responses of the developmental sophistication and content of responses, whereas the predictor variables were based on structured, quantified response formats. Consequently, common problems with shared method variance are minimized in this study.

There are several practical and theoretical implications from this study. There seem to be important benefits to TRA children from exposure to their culture of origin for their development. Professionals working with TRA children and their families could emphasize the importance of cultural exposure, particularly for young children. High levels of cultural exposure may help to minimize differences between TRA children's developmental understanding of culture and race and nonadopted children. Direct exposure appeared more beneficial than knowledge or awareness of differences. We speculate that as TRA children approach adolescence, exposure to Korean traditions and culture may need to be supplemented

with other kinds of socialization and support as they increase their understanding of the racialized components of being Korean. Psychologists could benefit from understanding that many TRA children are racially isolated and many are recipients of racial teasing, but that their racial status affords them with a source of uniqueness and pride. The application of the PTA model to TRA children appeared successful. Familiarity with the levels and progression of development for PTA could help inform professionals' work with TRA children. More generally, examining the various contexts of children's psychological experiences of race, such as transracial adoptions, can contribute to more complex and nuanced understanding of children's ethnic and racial development across a variety of sociocultural contexts.

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