

WHITE-AMERICAN KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS' RACIAL IDENTITIES
AND THEIR BELIEFS ABOUT THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN SOCIAL COMPETENCE

By

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To my family

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LIST OF TERMS

African-American: all individuals who are of African-American descent a.k.a. Black. Although Black and African-American are often interchangeably used, 'African-American' is going to be used throughout my study except for the use in the 'Social Attitude Scale' which followed the original document.

Awareness: a state of having and/or showing consciousness and sensitivity about any given fact, either tangible or intangible. Cultural awareness refers to how much one is sensitive about both his/her own and others' culture.

Consideration: a state of taking any given fact, either tangible or intangible, into account when formulating an opinion or a plan. Cultural consideration refers to how much one takes culture into account in his/her decision-making process.

Culture: the ideation, symbols, behaviors, values, and beliefs that are shared by a human group to meet their survival needs (adopted from Banks, 1994). Cultural group refers to a group of individuals who shares the same culture.

Race: one's ethnic heritage (i.e., White-American, African-American, Hispanic, Asian-American). Racial identity refers to a sense of group or collective characteristics based on one's perception that he/she shares a common heritage with a particular group (adopted from Helms, 1990).

Social competence: the ability to achieve personal goals in interpersonal interaction while simultaneously maintaining a positive relationship with others over time and across settings (adopted from Rubin & Rose-Krasnor, 1992).

Teacher's beliefs: what an educator holds to be true and his/her disposition with respect to the truth of a proposition (adopted from Smith & Shepard, 1988).

White-American: all individuals who are of White Euro-American descent a.k.a. Caucasian. Although Caucasian and White-American are often interchangeably used, 'White-American' is going to be used throughout my study in order to enhance consistency with the prevalent literatures.

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By

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The purpose of my study is to examine White-American kindergarten teachers' racial identities and their beliefs about the role of culture in social competence, and to examine how they are related. This subject is important because due to the rapid increase of people of color in this country, more students are coming from diverse backgrounds while the majority of teachers are yet homogeneous White-Americans. Additionally, a growing number of teacher education researchers support the importance of examining teachers' identities and beliefs because it has been found that teaching represents teachers' self identities as well as their beliefs. Previously, however, very little attention has been given to early childhood teachers' racial identities and their beliefs about children's social competence.

A total of 95 White-American kindergarten teachers in five school districts in Central Florida completed three questionnaires. Quantitative data analyses revealed that, this group of teachers' racial identities showed positively skewed distribution among contact, reintegration, pseudoindependence, and autonomy statuses suggesting that more teachers had characteristics of advanced White racial identity development statuses. In terms of these teachers' beliefs about the role of culture in social competence, their degree of cultural awareness appeared to be higher than their degree of consideration. Also these teachers took African-American culture into

account when evaluating a child's social competence, but not Asian or Hispanic cultures.

Regarding the relationships between these teachers' racial identities and beliefs, the relationships discovered in this particular study were not statistically significant. In addition, insights such as teachers' personal beliefs about social competence represented low-context cultural beliefs; teachers had varying degree of awareness about the role of culture in social competence; teachers' cultural knowledge and evaluations about children varied widely from group to group; teachers had more professional experience than personal experience regarding diversity; and teachers' beliefs about multicultural education revealed color-blind teaching have emerged through the qualitative data analyses of individual follow-up interviews.

The findings of my study have implications for practice in early childhood teacher education such that teachers need to be provided with more opportunities to become aware about their racial identities and that teacher educators should focus on enhancing multicultural knowledge and skills beyond the level of awareness. Furthermore, several directions for future research are discussed in relation to the limitations of my study in order to better examine and understand these subjects.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

According to the U. S. Census Bureau (2002), there has been a rapid increase in the number of people of color in this nation over recent decades. As more people from diverse racial backgrounds become members of our society, schools must consider this issue of diversification in the work that they do. In fact, the demography among teacher educators reveals a significant divide between the teaching population and student population. More children from diverse racial backgrounds are students in our schools, whereas the majority of teachers are homogeneous White-Americans, especially young, female, middle-class White-Americans (Irvine, 2003; Tatum, 1997; Wilson, Floden, & Ferini-Mundy, 2001). Researchers have found that teaching represents teachers' identity by 'teaching what they are' and it is often impossible to exclude their own racial backgrounds (Howard, 2006; Irvine, 2003; Tatum, 1997). Others have also found that students of minority groups learn and behave differently from those of majority groups, and advocated for a culturally responsive pedagogy (Bernard, 2004; Brantlinger, 2003; Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Weinstein, 2002). There is an urgent need for teacher educators to train teachers to reflect on their own identity development and consider how their perspectives influence their teaching and interaction with students.

Social competence has been recognized as an important set of abilities which begins to develop in the early childhood years. Researchers have tried to identify the definition and important components of social competence (Katz & McClellan, 1997; Kemple, 2004; Rose-Krasnor, 1997; Rubin, Bukowski, & Parker, 1998). Many definitions have been proposed and some of them have adequately described the complex nature of social competence. Within the past couple decades, there has been a growing recognition about and an emphasis on the cultural aspects of social competence. Researchers have shown that certain aspects of social competence

are deeply influenced by one's culture, and that cultural knowledge is a crucial piece when understanding social competence (Kantor, Elgas, & Fernie, 1993; Rose-Krasnor, 1997). This has been further supported by Nisbett (2003), a cultural psychologist who studied individuals' thought process, beliefs, and behaviors in many subject areas, who advocates that there are some profound, systematic differences found in Westerners (i.e., Americans, Europeans) and Asians (i.e., Chinese, Korean). He suggested these differences have implications for educators who wish to design appropriate educational strategies for diverse students. More specifically, several researchers have also investigated the socialization goals and values of early childhood teachers, children's developmental variation of social competence, and the types of behavioral problems experienced by young children in several different countries and among different cultural groups in the U. S. (Chen et. al., 2004; Kistner, Metzler, Gatlin, & Risi, 1993; LaFreniere et. al., 2002; Mendez, McDermott, & Fantuzzo, 2002; Mpofu, Thomas, & Chan, 2004; M. Smith, 2001). They have found that there are both universal characteristics and culturally specific characteristics across different countries and different cultural groups. Such findings are significant because they imply that problems or misunderstandings could occur when little or no cultural consideration is given to different characteristics of social competence.

Few previous researchers have studied early childhood teachers' beliefs about social competence. There has been no research about early childhood teachers' racial identity development. Thus, very little research attention has been given to the relationship between early childhood teachers' racial identities and their beliefs, particularly in the area of understanding and promoting young children's social competence. Because early childhood teachers are generally homogeneous female White-Americans, there is a need to understand their racial identities and how their identities associate with their beliefs about the role of culture in social

competence among diverse children. By exploring the relationship between teachers' racial identities and their beliefs about the role of culture in social competence, particularly among White-American kindergarten teachers, early childhood teacher educators will be able to identify strategies that can assist the teachers in enhancing their racial identity development while supporting children's social competence in a culturally responsive manner. Furthermore, when teachers become culturally responsive in their classrooms, they can more effectively contribute to the children's advancement of their own identities as well as their development of social competence.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of my study is to examine White-American kindergarten teachers' racial identities and their beliefs about the role of culture in social competence. Specifically, my study will explore White-American kindergarten teachers' racial identity statuses, their beliefs about the role of culture in social competence, and the relationship between their identities and their beliefs.

Research Questions

1. What are the racial identities of these White-American kindergarten teachers? Is there any difference in these teachers' (a) educational level, (b) age, (c) teaching experience, (d) self-reported experience of teaching children from other backgrounds, and (e) self-efficacy of teaching children from other backgrounds when compared by the racial identity status groups?
2. What are these White-American kindergarten teachers' beliefs about the role of culture in social competence?
 - 2-a. To what degree are they aware about the role of culture in social competence?
 - 2-b. Do they consider cultural differences when evaluating a child's social competencies?
3. What relationship exists between these White-American kindergarten teachers' racial identities and their beliefs about the role of culture in social competence?
4. What are the characteristics of these White-American kindergarten teachers' beliefs about culture and social competence?

Significance of the Study

Previous studies have neither explored early childhood teachers' racial identities nor their beliefs about the role of culture in social competence. There have been no studies that examined White-American kindergarten teachers' perceptions in terms of their identities and beliefs, and the relationship between them. The lack of research in this arena is of concern in light of the emergent trend in today's schools, where there is a significant racial and/or cultural divide between teachers and students. In addition, many researchers in teacher education and social competence have observed that teachers bring their identities into their teaching and thus their views of social competence are influenced by their own culture. However, little previous research reflects these findings that there are different viewpoints of young children's development of social competence among different cultural groups. Understanding White-American kindergarten teachers' racial identities and their beliefs about the role of culture in social competence and examining the relationship between them is meaningful as teacher educators continue to seek ways to provide culturally responsive education in today's classrooms. The findings of my study will provide empirical evidence about the relationship between racial identities and beliefs about social competence. My findings can also be used to raise an awareness among early childhood teachers about the role of racial identities and how identities relate to their use of instructional strategies in understanding and promoting children's social competence.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to present an overview of the research relevant to my study. The review of literatures pertaining to the following topics will be presented: (a) racial identity development, (b) social competence, and (c) teachers' beliefs. This chapter will conclude with a summary.

Racial Identity Development

Racial Identity Development for White-Americans

Racial identity refers to a “sense of group or collective identity based on one’s perception that he or she shares a common racial heritage with a particular racial group” (Helms, 1990, p.3). The idea of taking into account one’s racial identity development originated in the field of multicultural counseling and therapy several decades ago. At the beginning, this approach was usually used when working with people of color such as African-American, Asian-American, Hispanics, and Native Americans because it was assumed that they had distinct cultural heritages that make each group different from one another (Atkinson, Morten, & Sue, 1988; Cases & Pytluk, 1995; Choney, Berryhill-Pappke, & Robbins, 1995; Cross, 1995; Helms, 1990). Although this approach was promising for those groups, many experts began to emphasize the need for and importance of racial identity development for White-Americans as well (Carter, 1995; Corvin & Wiggins, 1989; Helms, 1984, 1990; Ponterotto, 1988; Sue et al. 1998). Since the majority of counselors and therapists are White middle-class individuals, this notion appears to have importance in both research and practice. A number of models were proposed to understand how White-Americans develop through the racial identity development stages and what the implications are (Hardiman, 1982; Helms, 1984, 1990, 1995; Ponterotto, 1988; Rowe, Bennett, & Atkinson, 1994).

One of the earliest attempts to investigate White-Americans' racial identity development process was made by Hardiman (1982). Based upon the generic stages of social identity theory, she presented a conceptual basis for the existence of White racial identity stages and conducted an exploratory study to examine the existence of it. The study of autobiographies of six White-Americans who attained a high level of racial consciousness led her to propose Hardiman's White racial identity development model with the following five distinct stages.

The first stage is *Lack of Social Consciousness*, which is characterized by a lack of awareness of racial difference and racism. White people in this stage are naïve and ignorant of race. The second stage is *Acceptance*, which is characterized by an unconscious Whiteness and racist belief in the democratic ideal that everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed and that those who fail should be responsible for themselves. People in this stage believe in White superiority and minority inferiority. The third stage is *Resistance*, which is characterized by the rejection of internalized racist beliefs and Whiteness. White people in this stage often have feelings of anger, pain, and frustration, and may develop a negative reaction toward their own cultural group. The fourth stage is *Redefinition*, which is characterized by the development of a new White identity that transcends racism. People in this stage no longer deny their Whiteness, understand the White privilege, and confront their racism. The final fifth stage is *Internalization*, which is characterized by the integration of the new White identity into all other aspects of the identity and behavior. White people in this stage have much more comfort in understanding both themselves and others, and may commit themselves in social actions as well.

Hardiman's model has a few limitations such as the development of the stages is derived from limited samples of White-American; the autobiographies might not be a true representation of those individuals; and the stages are tied to existing social identity development theories.

Despite such cautions and potential limitations, Hardiman greatly contributed to the field of White racial identity development by focusing on racism as a central issue of White-American's identity (Sue & Sue, 2003).

One of the most renowned White racial identity models was proposed by Helms (1984, 1990, 1995). She proposed the theory based on the assumption that White counselors will be able to better understand their clients when they gain better understanding of their own racial identities. Helms also assumed that racism is an integral issue of being a White-American and believed developing a healthy White identity requires moving through two phases: (1) abandoning the racism and (2) defining a non-racist White identity. Helm's initial model included four stages (1984), before it was revised to have five stages (1990). In her most recent revision (1995), she proposed six statuses, changing the term stages to status. It is very important to note that Helms pointed out that racial identity is often situationally influenced, and thus one's identity status should not be considered as a static level but more likely to be a flexible one. Six specific White racial identity statuses are proposed: the first three falling in phase one and the second three falling in phase two.

The first is the *Contact status*. White people in this status are unaware of racism and discrimination, believe that everyone has an equal chance for success, and may have minimal experiences with people of color. The second is the *Disintegration status* that occurs when a person becomes conflicted over irresolvable racial moral dilemmas. As White people become conscious of their Whiteness, they may experience dissonance, conflict, guilt, helplessness, or anxiety. The third is the *Reintegration status*. This status can best be characterized as a regression in that people step back to the basic belief of White superiority and minority inferiority. Generally their White racial superiority gets stronger at this status, moving back to

the second status. The fourth is the *Pseudoindependence status*. There are conscious and deliberate attempts for White people to understand racial differences and interact with people of color, but it remains at the intellectual domain not yet reaching the affective domain. The fifth is the *Immersion/Emersion status*. White people in this status have an increasing willingness to redefine their Whiteness and confront their prejudices. There is also an increased experiential and affective understanding that used to be lacking. The last is the *Autonomy status*. This occurs when White people become knowledgeable about racial differences, value the diversity, and are no longer uncomfortable with the experiential reality of race.

Also, Helms' model has dominant 'information-processing strategies (IPS)' associated with each status, which is basically a coping mechanism that White people typically use to avoid anxiety and discomfort around the issue of race. This IPS has helped the understanding of Helm's White racial identity development, and as a result enhanced the wide application of this model (Sue & Sue, 2003). Table 2-1 introduces the representative examples of White people, particularly the teachers, based on Helms' model.

The primary difference between the above two models is that Hardiman placed more emphasis on racism as the catalyst for identity development whereas Helms placed more emphasis on moral dilemmas in social interactions (Helms & Carter, 1990). Both Hardiman and Helms, however, suggested that White identity development occurred through a stage-wise process in which an individual moves from an oblivious stage toward a racially transcendent stage. Ponterotto (1988) also proposed a very similar stage model with four stages: (a) Pre-exposure, (b) Exposure, (c) Zealot-Defensive, and (d) Integration. Similarities among these White racial identity development models were further supported by Sabnani, Ponterotto, and Borodovsky (1991) when they identified common themes for planning counselor training

programs. The White Racial Identity Attitude Scale (WRIAS; Helms & Carter, 1990) and the White Racial Consciousness Development Scale (WRCDS; Clancy & Parker, 1989) are the two major scales developed to assess White racial identity development based upon Helms' theory. They both focus on White individual's attitude toward and/or experience with African-American people which is occasionally criticized as a serious limitation, but at the same time it is also supported because such comparison can maximize the distinct racial difference in the United States.

In response to the above models, Rowe et al. (1994) proposed an alternative White racial consciousness model proclaiming that theirs is a more parsimonious explanation for racial identity. Instead of adopting the term 'stages' or 'statuses', they preferred to conceptualize the identity as 'types' and defined as "a describable set of attitudes subject to experiential modification, not a fixed personality attribute" (p. 134). They emphasized that there is little evidence to support that an individual's identity process is developmentally sequential, but rather it depends on a various consequences of life experience. Thus, they distinguished that the identity types are not fixed entities but are subject to experiential modification. A total of seven types of White racial identity were proposed.

The first, the *Avoidant types* ignore, avoid, and deny racial issues. Second, the *Dependent types* have minimal or no internalized personal attitudes so that they often follow others' opinions. Third, the *Dissonant types* have uncertain and tentative attitudes. Conflicts and dissonance generally arise between their previously held attitudes and recent incidents. Fourth, the *Dominative types* are very ethnocentric. They typically believe in White superiority and minority inferiority. Fifth, the *Conflictive types* support fairness and oppose obvious discrimination, yet do not wish to alter the status quo. Sixth, the *Reactive types* are aware of

racism in the society but are still ignorant of their individual responsibilities. Seventh, the *Integrative types* have integrated and pragmatic views of racial issues. They value a culturally pluralistic society and have sophisticated understanding of racial issues. Rowe et al. grouped the above types into two main groups: (1) unachieved White racial consciousness group with the first three types and (2) achieved White racial consciousness group with the latter four types. The Oklahoma Racial Attitudes Scale (ORAS; Choney & Behrens, 1996) is the scale developed to assess White racial consciousness according to Rowe et al.'s theory.

Both Helms' White racial identity model and Rowe et al.'s White racial consciousness models attempt to explain the same general phenomena, and thus it is not a surprise that they share many common characteristics (Leach, Behrens, & LaFleur, 2002). Although Rowe et al. (1994) argued that their model is superior to the others, especially Helms' model, Block and Carter (1996) did a critical analysis on these models focusing on both theoretical claims and empirical evidences and concluded that there is no evidence to substantiate Rowe et al.'s claims by stating "a rose by any other name is still a rose" (p. 327). It is also recommended that for future research, more priority should be given to providing the empirical evidence for the application of either approach not the application of theories (Leach et al., 2002).

Implications of Racial Identity in Teacher Education

Many people, especially White-Americans believe that racism no longer exists in our society, and do not seem to pay attention to their identities in regards of racial backgrounds (Tatum, 1997). Most White-Americans also believe that race and/or culture is relatively unimportant in one's identity development (Brantlinger, 2003; hooks, 2000). The influence of one's racial identity has been researched in a wide variety of fields besides education. Block, Roberson, and Neuger (1995) studied a group of full-time work employees and examined the relationship between their White racial identity attitudes and reactions to interracial situations at

work. Their findings were congruent with Helm's theory that those individuals with high levels of Autonomy attitudes had more positive reactions to interracial situations at work whereas those individuals characterized by high levels of Disintegration and Reintegration attitudes had more negative reactions. Taylor (1994) reported positive correlation between moral development and the Autonomy status of Helms' White identity development model among employees. Ottavi, Pope-Davis, and Ding (1994) also tested the White counselor trainees' racial identity development and their self reported multicultural competencies. Regression analyses indicated that White racial identity explained variability in multicultural competencies beyond that accounted for by demographic, educational, and clinical variables. These findings all suggest that there could be a correlation between one's racial identity and their attitudes toward other racial groups, attitudes toward complex moral issues (i.e., racism, equality, and social justice), as well as multicultural competencies (McAllister & Irvine, 2000).

Several studies were conducted to examine the relationship between racial identity and multicultural competencies in educational settings as well. Although Sleeter (1992) did not directly utilize the idea of White racial identity status, her narrative anecdotes revealed the changes of teachers after participating in a 2-year in-service program. They showed increased attention to African-American students and increased use of cooperative learning activities. Lawrence and Tatum (1997) also reported that teachers changed their thinking, attitudes, and behaviors regarding race through the 7-month professional development sessions. Most of the participants who had racist oriented identity statuses based on Helm's theory at the beginning moved toward more positive anti-racist identity statuses and took some forms of action to combat racism. Both Brown, Parham, and Yonker's (1996) study and Neville, Heppner, Louie, Thompson, Brooks, and Baker's (1996) study identified a causal relationship between the

intervention courses and the changes of White participants' racial identity. Neville et al.'s findings are especially meaningful because it reported that the changes were sustained over time at the 1-year follow-up survey. They further suggested the need of multicultural trainings in order to develop White-American's racial identity.

Recently, in the field of teacher education, there is a growing demand for teachers to identify themselves and their teaching, and it is generally supported by educational researchers that teaching represents teachers' racial and cultural backgrounds by 'teaching what they are' (Banks, 1994; Howard, 2006; Nieto, 2000; Tatum, 1997). They found that teaching is often based upon where teachers came from (i.e., how they were previously taught) and where they are now (i.e., what they know, believe, and value). In short, teachers are either consciously or unconsciously revealing their identities to the students they teach where there's no way to exclude racial and cultural perspectives. In a study conducted with African-American teachers, Irvine (2003) found that they defined teaching from a more empathetic perspective such as caring, other mothering, and believing than White-American teachers. This perspective of teaching originated from their racial and cultural backgrounds, and not surprisingly African-American students performed better at schools when taught by those African-American teachers (Bernard, 2004). Irvine explained this phenomenon by mentioning 'teaching with a cultural eye'. She suggested that if teachers learn to look through the cultural eye, they are able to see more diverse and different perspectives among students. To this end, there has been a continuous effort to train and help teachers effectively teach diverse students in their classrooms. Given that the majority of teachers continue to be homogeneous White-Americans, teacher educators have used various methods to foster change in teachers' thinking, attitudes, and behaviors regarding cultural diversity and sensitivity. Yet these have yielded mixed results because they often

focused on addressing contents and knowledge rather than the teachers' process of cross-cultural learning (McAllister & Irvine, 2000).

It is noteworthy that researchers have asserted the importance of self recognition and awareness as a prerequisite for effective teaching. Banks (1994), who studied extensively about multicultural and multiethnic education, suggested that individuals do not become sensitive and open to different ethnic groups until and unless they develop a positive sense of self, including an awareness and acceptance of their own ethnic group. It is widely supported that in order to become an effective teacher with diverse students, teachers must confront their own racism and biases (Banks, 1994; C. I. Bennett, 1995; M. J. Bennett, 1993; Gay, 2000; Nieto, 2000; Sleeter, 1992; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). The White racial identity development models provide conceptual insights for both practice and research in this regard, because they not only help teachers self examine their identities but also help teacher educators identify where the teachers stand along the continuum of racial identity development and differentiate the support for those in different statuses (Carter & Goodwin, 1994; McAllister & Irvine, 2000). Teachers need to understand their own level of racial identity development in order to change their perceptions and expectations of students from different backgrounds. It is also necessary for teacher educators to enable the teachers to examine their own understandings from racial identity development perspectives. Lawrence and Tatum (1997) emphasized that professional development programs that are intended to increase teachers' multicultural competencies should, then, attend to the impact that these programs could have on the racial identity development of the participants. J. M. Bennett (1993) also suggested that the structure of the intervention should be designed to provide both support and challenge in reflecting cross-cultural process, and not to merely convey the contents of other cultures.

Many researchers revealed that higher statuses of White racial identity were associated with higher levels of multicultural competencies in a variety of settings (Block et al., 1995; Brown et al., 1996; Neville et al., 1996; Ottavi et al. 1994; Taylor, 1994). They believed that the higher racial identity reflects certain multicultural capacities such as an increased ability to accept racial difference, to exhibit less racist behavior, and to appreciate diversity, all of which could be considered as effective multicultural teaching competencies. Although reflecting on and challenging one's identity is a long term process, constructing multicultural courses using racial identity models and providing on-going professional development for pre-service and in-service teachers will help decrease their resistance and increase their knowledge and skills (Lawrence & Tatum, 1997). Moreover, as Carter and Goodwin (1994) suggest, there is still much to study about the impact that effective antiracist professional development can have on teachers' attitudes and behaviors. They also emphasized the need for research that explores the role of racial identity development in addressing numerous educational, psychological, and social questions within schools. It is important to reiterate that "racial identity theory and research inform us that the task of developing effective skill, competence, and awareness about race and culture is something all educators, White and non-White alike, must undertake" (Carter & Goodwin, p.324).

Social Competence

Dimensions of Social Competence

Social competence has generally been identified as a marker of development and adjustment. Thus, young children's development of social competence has been traditionally emphasized in the field of early childhood education. However, there is much less agreement about the definition of social competence and what constitutes socially competent behavior. In the early 1960s, there was an effort to move away from deficit models of mental health when

viewing social competence. Zigler and Phillips (1961) argued that the focus of social competence should be on individual's success in meeting social standards in multiple domains. In this stage, social competence was broadly defined to reflect an individual's personal and social maturity. One of the benefits of this broad definition is that it allows researchers to examine children from a holistic perspective (Zigler & Phillips, 1961). Yet, due to the developments in this field, definitions of social competence have changed substantially during the last couple decades. In the 1980s and 1990s, there has been a growing interest in topics of children's social development (i.e., social behaviors, social cognition, and social competence). Also, several studies showed that there are relatively weak associations between different dimensions of social competence (i.e., peer relationships, emotional regularity, and school adjustment). The evidence suggested that social competence does not represent a unitary construct (Raver & Zigler, 1997).

Faced with these complex relations among dimensions, researchers turned to a more narrow definition of social competence in each of their own studies. Some examples are: "the ability to perform culturally specified tasks" (Ogbu, 1981, p.414); "the attainment of relevant social goals in specified social context, using appropriate means and resulting in positive developmental outcomes" (Ford, 1982, p.324); "ability to achieve desired outcomes and show adaptability across contexts" (Duck, 1989, p.92); and "the ability to achieve personal goals in social interaction while simultaneously maintaining positive relationships with others over time and across settings" (Rubin & Rose-Krasnor, 1992, p.285). Nonetheless, it is generally agreed that most of the definitions include "effectiveness" as a central aspect of social competence (Rose-Krasnor, 1997; Rubin, Bukowski, & Parker, 1998).

Among many attempts made to analyze the concept of social competence, the 'Prism model of social competence' presented by Rose-Krasnor (1997) is one which provides helpful

ideas in understanding its complex nature. According to Rose-Krasnor, social competence is divided into three sub levels: the top part is called the theoretical level, the middle part is the index level, and the bottom part is the skills level. Each level has a slightly different viewpoint about social competence, but they are interrelated with each other, and each has a unique purpose (Rose-Krasnor, 1997).

From the theoretical level, social competence is viewed as effectiveness in interaction. This is consistent with many researchers' definition and the fundamental aspect of social competence (Guralnick, 1990; Katz & McClellan, 1997; Kemple, 2004; Kostelnik, Whiren, Soderman, & Gregogy, 2006). However, the interpretation of effectiveness could be different based on time, place, and people related to that interaction.

So, the index level takes into account the 'who', 'what', and 'where' issues of the interaction. Since the interaction could not exist by itself and the effectiveness is determined through the transactions with other people, it is divided into two domains: self and others. The self domain reflects effectiveness from the individual's own perspective. It consists of aspects of social competence where individual's own needs take priority such as success in meeting personal goals and feelings of self-efficacy. On the other hand, the other domain reflects interpersonal effectiveness such as good relationships with peers or adults, achieving appropriate group status, and fulfilling society's expectations. Both the self and other domains of social competence are segmented into pieces representing the multiple social contexts. This situation-specific, context dependent nature of social competence is widely accepted by researchers as well.

The bottom skills level represents the specific abilities that have been identified to approach competence such as perspective taking, problem solving, emotional regulation, and

goals and values which provide the motivation for social behavior (Rubin et al., 1998). In contrast to the social nature of the index level, the elements contained in the skills level are located primarily within the individual. Some skills and values contained in the skills level may be relevant across contexts, but certain skills are more valued in some contexts than in others. Culture may be the most distinctive context determining the value of specific abilities or skills because the individual's definition and expectation of socially competent and valued behaviors are deeply influenced by his/her cultural background. In other words, the elements within the skills level could substantially vary across cultures.

In sum, when reviewing social competence through the lens of culture, cultural variability may be greatest at the skills level and decrease while moving up through the prism. At the theoretical level, the general concept of social competence as effectiveness in interaction may be universally accepted. At the index level, social competence is characterized as transactional and context dependent. Behaviors that were effectively valued in one context may not be the same in another context. Similarly, socially competent behavior needed to survive in one context may be different from another context. However, at the skills level behaviors needed to achieve certain social goals may differ substantially across cultures. Social competence is substantially culturally sensitive.

Cross-Cultural Comparisons of Social Competence

Cultural influence on human behavior and thought process has been studied extensively in the field of psychology. Nisbett (2003) and his colleagues, after a series of comparative experiments, proclaimed that there are systematic differences in people's behavior and thought processes among people from Western and Asian culture. At the beginning, such argument was very provocative because it was a serious revoke of many psychologists' fundamental beliefs that human beings' cognitive process and development are universal. Since Hall (1976) had

initially proposed the idea of high-context culture and low-context culture, there have been burgeoning discussions concerning cultural differences in a wide range of human behaviors, including the area of children's social competencies. When researchers investigated the socialization goals and values of preschool teachers, children's developmental variation of social competence, and the types of behavioral problems experienced by preschoolers in several different countries, there were both some universal findings and culture specific finding across countries (Chen et al., 2004; Killen, Ardila-Rey, Barakkatz, & Want, 2000; LaFreniere et al., 2002). While the processes underlying competent behavior was similar across cultures, the specific behaviors associated with social competence showed cultural differences.

LaFreniere et al. (2002) conducted a multi-national study in eight different countries including the United States, Austria, Brazil, Canada, Italy, Japan, China, and Russia, to investigate preschool children's social and emotional development. Gender differences were found in almost all countries, such that preschool boys were universally reported to be significantly more aggressive and viewed as less socially competent than girls. Age differences were also found such that children's social competence increased as they grew older. However, in contrast to such universal trends, there were culture specific trends as well. In high-context cultures such as Japan, China, Russia, and Brazil, social identity and group interest were more valued while in low-context cultures such as United States, Canada, Austria, and Italy, individual identity and personal interest were more valued. While compliance and respectfulness were more emphasized in high-context culture, assertiveness and leadership were more emphasized in low-context cultures. Children in high-context cultures were encouraged to use more subtle cues, but children in low-context cultures were encouraged to use more verbal expressions. Moreover, gender roles and stereotypes were more distinctive in some collectivist and conservative

countries like Russia, China, and Japan. For example, Russian girls who showed aggression were viewed much more negatively than Russian boys. Different evaluations of aggression and withdrawn behavior were also found among countries. High-context cultures usually appreciated withdrawn behaviors rather than aggressive behaviors. As an example, socially anxious and withdrawn behavior is often associated with peer popularity in high-context cultures, but in the low-context cultures it is usually associated with peer rejection.

Another multi-national study conducted by Chen et al. (2004) revealed consistent findings as well. Relations between self perceptions of social competence and social and school adjustment were compared in Brazil, Canada, China, and Italy. In the four countries, social competence and academic achievement were positively associated with self perception. This similar pattern indicated the general nature of relationships. However, the subcomponents of social competence had variant relationships. For instance, significant differences in the relationship between shyness-sensitivity and self perception of social competence were noted. Shyness-sensitivity was negatively associated in Brazilian, Canadian, and Italian children but not among Chinese children. From a slightly different perspective, Killen et al. (2000) examined preschool teachers' perception about conflict resolution, autonomy, and the group in the United States, Colombia, El Salvador, and Taiwan. The findings revealed cultural similarities regarding conflict resolution techniques and providing autonomy in the classroom, whereas cultural differences were evident in teachers' attitude toward maintaining the group and encouraging traditional group values.

Studies were also conducted to compare different racial or cultural groups in one country. One group of researchers supports the findings that even within one country, children of color may value different social behaviors than the mainstream children. Moreover, it is believed that

children of color, especially the low-income children have different opportunities for social interactions, models of success, and preferred methods for achieving social goals than their middle-class White counterparts (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Kaiser & Rasminsky, 2003; Kistner et al., 1993; Klein & Chen, 2001; Mpofu et al., 2004). In an empirical study, Kistner et al. examined elementary school children's sensitivity to specific child characteristics and found that social preferences vary according to their racial background, especially for the girls. Mpofu et al. also reported similar findings in their study with racially integrated schools in South Africa. When students' race and gender were associated with social competence, White students were perceived as socially more competent as compared to their African-American classmates. These findings are consistent with previous studies that racially minority group children are at risk for lower social acceptance in schools, and there could be a linkage between peer sociometric choices and racial minority statuses. Klein and Chen pointed out that culture can influence not only children's social skills and behaviors but also a family's child rearing practice as well as communication skills and styles. Kaiser and Rasminsky also agreed that there are no best universal norms or methods, and thus children naturally develop the characteristics that their own culture values. They both shared each racial/cultural group's characteristics and further suggested culturally responsive teaching strategies in working with diverse children.

On the other hand, some studies reported contrary findings that there were no significant differences found with children of color (Mendez et al., 2002; M. Smith, 2001). M. Smith explored the factors contributing to African-American children's peer acceptance, but reported results that are consistent with those from White-American samples. Mendez et al. examined the differences in African-American children's social competency as a function of age and gender, and found patterns that are consistent with prior studies. Although some researchers argue that

the relationship between certain components (i.e., age, gender, emotional competence) and social competence is consistent regardless of the group, there is considerable support in acknowledging the importance of contextual consideration and different socialization practices for children from different backgrounds (Garcia Coll et al., 1996; Kaiser & Rasminsky, 2003; Kantor et al., 1993; Klein & Chen, 2001).

Teacher's Role in the Development of Social Competence

Early childhood teachers play a significant role in facilitating young children's development of social competence, partly by virtue of the fact that teachers are the adults who oversee children in school settings. While other factors such as the family, the community, and the peers have substantial influence on children's social competence as well, classroom teachers are the adults who observe children most intimately in social peer group settings, and thus could have multiple opportunities to affect children's development (Kemple, 2004). A number of authors have addressed how teachers can guide and support young children's development of social competence. Also, a wide variety of strategies that teachers should employ to promote young children's emerging social competencies have been suggested by both practical and research literatures (File, 1993; Fox, Dunlap, Hemmeter, Joseph, & Strain, 2003; Hazen, Black, & Fleming-Johnson, 1984; Katz & McClellan, 1997; Kemple, 2004; Kostelnik et al., 2006). Generally, in the early childhood years, children do not learn social competencies best through direct instruction. Based on their study with early elementary students' classroom behaviors, Madsen, Becker, and Thomas (1968) asserted that when it comes to managing socially disruptive behaviors, whole group instruction is very unlikely to be effective because it is not well suited to young children's way of learning. Instead, it is generally suggested that individualized guidance works better with young children, because a child can be engaged in understanding and absorbing the new concept when he/she is directly involved in a situation. Individual focus and

the warmth of the interaction are critical in enhancing children's capacity to hear and respond meaningfully to the teacher's guidance (Katz & McClellan, 1997). Katz and McClellan further suggested several principles that teachers are encouraged to keep in mind when dealing with children's social competencies. Some examples are social competence is culturally defined, social difficulties provide opportunities to teach, optimum teacher intervention promotes social competence, and teachers' interactions with children should model social competence.

One of the biggest challenges teachers encounter is to decide what approach or strategy to use for which children. It is important to tailor and adjust teaching strategies according to the individual child's need and capability. File (1993) has utilized the Vygotskian perspective in this realm suggesting that children can develop social competencies when they receive individually appropriate assistance within the zone of proximal development (ZPD). A useful schematic for classifying strategies as well as for making decisions about which strategies to consider first has been proposed by Brown, Odom and Conroy (2001). Based on the intervention hierarchy, they encouraged the interventionist to employ the least intrusive and most normal type of interventions before moving on to more complex and demanding interventions. Shortly after, this was followed by two other models with very similar conceptualization (Fox et al., 2003; Kemple, 2004). Both models consist of four distinct stages. The teaching pyramid includes the four levels of practice: building positive relationships; implementing classroom preventive practices; using social and emotional teaching strategies; and planning intensive individualized interventions (Fox et al., 2003). The teaching continuum has four categories of intervention and support along the continuum from the most to the least naturalistic: environmental arrangements; naturalistic strategies; planned routine activities; and higher intensity interventions (Kemple, 2004). It is commonly suggested that teachers begin with the most natural strategies such as building

positive relationships and creating a supportive classroom environment, and then move toward more specific and individualized strategies and interventions as needed.

However, contradictory findings are found in research literatures. Although only a limited number of empirical studies have directly examined the teacher's role in young children's social competence development, most of them indicated that teachers are actually not doing a decent job (File, 1994; Howes & Clemente, 1994; Hundert, Mahoney, & Hopkins, 1993; Kemple, David, & Hysmith, 1997). Hundert et al. found that teachers spent less than 3% of their time interacting with children in integrated preschools. File also observed preschool teachers during free play time and found that teachers spent very little time mediating children's interactions. She further noted that even when the teachers intervened, most of the interactions were not individualized in relation to the children's age or ability: they were mostly directive in nature regardless of children's developmental needs. Very similar results were reported by Howes and Clemente who found that teachers mediated peer play during only 2% of the observations, even though the children were in proximity to teachers for almost half the of time. More recently, Kemple et al. studied the frequency and nature of teachers' intervention behaviors in response to children's naturally occurring peer interactions. As a result, they too found that teachers became involved in an average of 5 peer interactions during a 30-minute free play period, their interventions were of very short duration, and teachers seldom followed up on their interactions. In addition, the most commonly observed teachers' behaviors were restrictive interventions such as punishments, statements of rules and commands, and disruption of interaction (i.e., time out), which the teacher terminated peer interaction. These observational data reveal that teachers do very little in their classrooms to actively mediate and support children's social relationships and interactions with their peers, and in turn, children are left largely on their own to manage their

social relationships unless their interactions create serious classroom conflicts or threaten other children's safety. It further appears to be a big concern that children with lower social competence will be repeatedly left out from the peer group while only children with higher social competence will succeed in establishing and maintaining successful social relationships (File, 1993).

Nonetheless, supporting and facilitating children's development of social competence is a valid and important teaching responsibility. Teachers can indeed intervene to maximize children's successful social experiences (Asher & Renshaw, 1981). Yet, it is through careful and methodical observation of a child's interaction style in social situations that teachers can gain insight into which behaviors are contributing to a child's problem or in reverse, development of social competence. Teachers who are knowledgeable in identifying children's social interaction patterns that lead to social acceptance or rejection or isolation can effectively assist children in using strategies associated with appropriate social competence (Hazen et al., 1984). It is also suggested that teachers can play a significant role in supporting social growth and development by improving the program quality and providing appropriate adult-child ratios (Kemple et al., 1997). It should be emphasized again that "teachers who work with young children can have a profound impact on children's social development – an impact that can contribute to the quality of children's lives throughout their life span." (Katz & McClellan, 1997, p. 61).

Teachers' Beliefs

Research on Teachers' Beliefs

According to Clark and Peterson (1986), teaching involves two major domains: teachers' beliefs or thought processes which occur inside teachers' head and thus are unobservable; and teachers' actions and their effects which are observable and readily measurable. It has been recently emphasized that beliefs are powerful cognitive filters through which meaning is

developed, and thus attention to how beliefs about teaching are acquired, maintained, and altered has been one of the fundamental foci in teacher education (Fang, 1996; Nespor, 1987; Richardson, 1996; K. E. Smith, 1997). Generally, the difficulty in studying teachers' beliefs has often been caused by definitional problems and poor conceptualization (Pajares, 1992). There are quite a lot of terms found in the literature that are interchangeably used with beliefs such as attitudes, values, opinions, ideology, perceptions, preconceptions, perspectives, personal theories, and implicit theories. It is suggested, however, that the major confusion generally exists between beliefs and knowledge. Pajares (1992) explained that the most common comparison could be that beliefs are based on evaluation and judgment whereas knowledge is based on objective fact. Beliefs are often contextually bounded as well as derived from personal and cultural experience. Nespor also identified four features that could serve to distinguish beliefs from knowledge: existential presumption; alternativity; affective and evaluative aspects; and episodic storage. Yet, even after understanding and agreeing upon the nature of teachers' beliefs, it is still difficult to examine beliefs because they always comes with another construct, such as teachers' beliefs about 'social competence'. Additionally, because individuals' beliefs are often incompatible and teaching is a blurry field full of contradictions, teachers' beliefs are difficult to pinpoint with precision.

Because beliefs cannot be directly observed or measured, examining teachers' beliefs requires making inferences about teachers' underlying states from what they intend, say, and do (Pajares, 1992). Richardson (1996) mentioned interviews and observations as the two most frequently employed methods in current studies on teachers' beliefs. It is also suggested that both questionnaires and interviews are good avenues to understand peoples' inner-located traits such as beliefs that are not readily observable. Especially, given the unique nature of people's beliefs,

a scaling technique that uses a series of questions to get opinions on one or two specific issues is recommended by psychologists and sociologists to improve researchers' ability to measure attitudes or beliefs (Salant & Dillman, 1994). In the previous studies about teachers' beliefs, sources of data typically included a variety of both quantitative and qualitative methods: questionnaires (Cassidy, Buell, Pugh-Hoese, & Russell, 1995; Charlesworth, Hart, Burts, Mosley, & Fleege, 1993; Kagan & K. E. Smith, 1988; Kemple, Hysmith, & David, 1996; McMahon, Richmond, Reeves-Kazelskis, 2001; Peck, Carlson, & Helmstetter, 1992; K. E. Smith, 1997; Yoo, 2005); interviews (Cassidy & Lawrence, 2000; Lieber, Capell, Sandall, Wolfberg, Horn, & Beckman, 1998; Makin & McNaught, 2001; Marchant, 1995; McMahon et al., 2001; Peck et al., 1992; M. K. Smith, & K. E. Smith, 2000; M. L. Smith & Shepard, 1988; Yoo, 2005); observation records (Cassidy & Lawrence, 2000; Kagan & K. E. Smith, 1988; Kemple et al. 1996; Lieber et al., 1998; M. L. Smith & Shepard, 1988); and additional program documents (Lieber et al., 1998; M. L. Smith & Shepard, 1988). As shown above, usually more than one method is implemented in many studies in order to validate and/or strengthen the findings.

Although there are still two recurring themes of 'consistency' and 'inconsistency' between teachers' beliefs and practices, it has been more supported that teachers' beliefs make up an important part of their practices such as how teachers perceive, process, and act upon information in the classroom (Clark & Peterson, 1986; Isenberg, 1990; Munby, 1982; Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992; Stern & Shavelson, 1983). In a recent study, Nelson (2000) found out that personal factors such as beliefs and training together with past experience and personality types had a greater effect on teachers' practices than environmental factors such as moral support from colleagues and school resources. As a result, Nelson concluded that "if teachers have strong

beliefs, they can overcome obstacles in the environment that make implementing these beliefs difficult” (p. 102). Few people would argue that teachers’ beliefs affect, inform and guide their practices to some degree, albeit the degree could differ by specific issues or content areas. Therefore, it is important to understand teachers’ beliefs not only as an element that largely influences teachers’ practices but also as a foundation in developing appropriate pre-service and in-service teacher training programs (Cassidy & Lawrence, 2000; Lin, Gorrell, & Silvern, 2001; Nelson, 2000; Richardson, 1996; M. K. Smith & K. E. Smith, 2000).

Teachers’ Beliefs about Social Competence

Only a few studies have reported on teachers’ beliefs in the area of social competence. Lane, Givner, and Pierson (2004) examined elementary teachers’ views of social competence by having them identify the essential social skills for classroom success and compared them by grade levels (primary vs. intermediate) and program types (general vs. special education). It was found that cooperation and self control skills were identified as important, while assertion skills were less important at both levels. In addition, both general and special education teachers placed similar value on assertion and self control skills, whereas general education teachers viewed cooperation as more essential for success than did special education teachers. Variations among teachers’ beliefs were further reported in the subsequent study by Lane, Wehby, and Cooley (2006). They explored teachers’ expectations of student behavior in terms of school levels (elementary vs. middle vs. high), program types (general vs. special education), and school types (high risk vs. low risk). Results indicated that teachers had similar emphasis on self control and cooperation skills despite the subtle difference regarding which social skills are needed for school success. Such findings collectively imply that although details of teachers’ beliefs could differ based upon grade level and program and school types, teachers consistently emphasized social skills that facilitate classroom harmony as well as instruction. Another study examined the

influence of teachers' beliefs on children. Chang (2003) examined the influence of teachers' beliefs about aggressive and withdrawn behaviors on middle school children's peer acceptance and self perceived social competence. She found that teachers' aversion to aggression and empathy toward withdrawal enhanced the self perception of both aggressive and withdrawn children. My study is especially meaningful because it expands teachers' influence on dyadic teacher-child relationship to the relationships among children. It is suggested that teachers' beliefs and attitudes can be transcended to the students, and students take cues from teachers' beliefs and attitudes in developing peer relationships. Yet, since most of the studies focused on elementary or higher grade level students, it is unclear whether the finding would be the same for early childhood teachers' beliefs or not.

In a study of beliefs about kindergarten teachers' teaching priorities, Knudsen-Lindauer and Harris (1989) found that teachers ranked children's social skills third in the order of importance out of 10 developmental domains. Listening skills and self confidence were indicated by the teachers as the most important kindergarten skills. However, even though it is assumed that teachers' beliefs are very likely to affect their teaching in early childhood classrooms, very little is actually studied particularly about teachers' beliefs about young children's social competence. It is occasionally embedded in more general inquiries such as teachers' beliefs about developmentally appropriate educational practices (Kemple et al., 1996). In fact, most of the teachers' beliefs studies in early childhood education have been done in limited areas such as developmentally appropriate practices (Charlesworth et al., 1993; K. E. Smith, 1997; K. E. Smith & Croom, 2001), inclusion (Lieber et al., 1998; Marchant, 1995; Peck et al., 1992; M. K. Smith & K. E. Smith, 2000), and literacy (Makin & McNaught, 2001; McLachlan, Carvalho, Lator, & Kumar, 2006; McMahon, Richmond, & Reeves-Kazelskis, 1998; Yoo, 1998, 2005).

In regards to social competence in early childhood, several studies had examined mothers' or parents' beliefs (Hastings & Rubin, 1999; Kennedy, 1992; Kim, 1993; Mills & Rubin, 1990; Mize, Pettit, & Brown, 1995; Rubin, Mills, & Rose-Krasnor, 1989), but only a few studies have investigated teachers' beliefs (Batey, 2002; Kemple et al., 1996). Kemple et al. studied preschool and kindergarten teachers' beliefs about children's peer competence. When teachers were asked to list their goals for young children, it is reported that all of the teachers had at least one goal related to social competence. Teachers also believed that child temperament and parents were most influential factors on children's peer competence. Batey reported similar findings in the study with pre-service early childhood teachers. She investigated pre-service teachers' beliefs about the four areas of social competence (i. e., establishing friendships with peers, resolving conflicts with peers, sharing with peers, and initiating play activities with peers) and their roles in promoting social competence. As a result, it was found that pre-service early childhood teachers believed that developing social competence is important within all of the four areas, but they believed that teachers had the least influence over children's social skills development over children's temperament, parents, and peers. It is interesting to note the similarities of the two studies examining in-service and pre-service early childhood teachers.

Studies about early childhood teachers' beliefs about social competence are extremely scarce. Very little is known about teachers' beliefs about social competence and how they affect teachers' practices as well as children's development of social competence. Goffin (1989) asserted that as the field of early childhood education has traditionally claimed to concern itself with social and emotional competence, it is essential that systematic examinations of the relationships among teachers' beliefs, knowledge, and practices in the classrooms be undertaken. Moreover, if teachers have inaccurate perceptions concerning how a child begins to form

friendships or if they believe certain behavior is universally problematic, then such beliefs may have some influence on the ways they respond to their children. These effects will eventually have some impact on the development of children's social competence (Rubin et al., 1989). This is, therefore, one of the urgent areas that is under studied and thus requires further investigation.

Summary

White-Americans' racial identity development is closely related to the issue of racism, how they abandon racism and redefine a non-racist identity. Helms (1984, 1990, 1995) presented the six statuses model to describe how White-Americans generally develop their identities through each status. In the field of early childhood education where young children's development of social competence has been traditionally emphasized, it has been recently suggested with greater emphasis that social competence should be viewed from a broader perspective through the lens of culture. Rose-Krasnor (1997) presented a prism model to better understand the multi-layers of social competence. Moreover, several cross-national and cross-cultural studies have reported both the universal finding and culturally specific findings in children's development of social skills and teachers' socialization values. Such findings have pivotal implications in the field because they suggest that significant misunderstandings or problems could occur when little or no cultural consideration is given to understanding and promoting children's social competence (Kaiser & Rasminsky, 2003; Klein & Chen, 2001).

Although the importance of one's racial identity development originally emerged from the field of counseling and therapy, its implications are no less important in the field of teacher education (Carter & Goodwon, 1994; Lawrence & Tatum, 1997; McAllister & Irvine, 2000). Furthermore, there is little doubt that the urgent goal of teacher education is to train and support teachers to become cross-culturally competent, and this is not an exception for early childhood teachers who are homogeneous White-Americans compared to the diversifying backgrounds of

young children. In order to help teachers meet the current challenges of diversification and cultural conflicts, it is necessary to understand teachers' beliefs as well as practices. Although it is generally a difficult area to study, teachers' beliefs are believed to be a very powerful cognitive domain to study because they are often related with teachers' practices (Fang, 1996; Richardson, 1996). The importance of studying teachers' beliefs is also supported because it can guide teacher educators to develop appropriate professional development programs (Cassidy & Lawrence, 2000; Nelson, 2000). Additionally, many studies suggest that it is inevitable for teachers to bring their identities into their teaching, and thus it is also necessary to guide teachers to reflect on their racial identities especially when teaching students from different cultural backgrounds and when teaching culturally vulnerable issues (Irvine, 2003; Tatum, 1997; Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Weinstein, 2002).

However, very little attention has been given to examining early childhood teachers' racial identities as well as their beliefs about social competence, not to mention the relationship between them. Given the growing divide between the teaching population and the student population, the lack of research in this arena is a potential concern for early childhood teacher educators. In order to continue advocating the importance of young children's development of social competence and the teachers' role in that development, systematic examination about early childhood teachers' beliefs about social competence should be undertaken (Goffin, 1989). In order to support culturally responsive teaching and enhance teachers' multicultural competencies, the impact of racial identity on early childhood teachers' beliefs and practices should be further investigated as well (Carter & Goodwin, 1994).

Table. 2-1. Helm’s White racial identity development model

Identity Status	Representative Example
Contact*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I grew up in a very sheltered environment. My neighbors were mainly White and I went to school with all my White friends. • Whenever I see the kids, I don’t even think that way to divide them into different racial groups. They are just kids, and they are only five. I teach the same no matter which school I’m at.
Disintegration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I’ve heard stories about African-American parents being disrespectful to White teachers, but I haven’t experienced it. • I’m confused because I think it’s definitely this society that gives me more advantages. I don’t think that anybody looks at me in a suspicious way when I walk into a store, but I have friends who get stereotyped just by walking into a restaurant.
Reintegration*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I don’t think I had any incident that made me think I was taking advantage of being a White person in this society. • African-American children are louder, that’s the main thing when you’re in a classroom with a lot of African-American kids. I’ve seen that they’ll only respond to loud voice because that’s all they are used to a lot of times.
Pseudoindependence*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I was teaching at predominantly African-American school. At the beginning I had a few children saying “My mom doesn’t like White people”, but eventually I was able to work it out. • It was somewhat scary when after the gathering, you walk out the school, it is dark, and you don’t see another White face in the parking lot.
Immersion/Emersion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I probably get a lot more opportunities than other people just being a White person in this society. I didn’t do anything to get anything, I’m just me. But I think there’s definitely an unconscious favoritism and it’s not equal for people from other races. • When I’m within my comfortable private circle, I can probably say something about inappropriate behaviors or words. But as far as confrontation, I don’t like it. So in the public situation, I don’t know.
Autonomy*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I try to bring all of my children’s culture into the classroom. I try to make sure that they are all very respectful of differences regardless of their culture or personal differences. • I try to make sure that we are very aware about the fact that we’re all different but we can still work together to make a community. I think that’s going to be the theme for the whole life because when they live somewhere they’re going to be a part of the community and everybody is going to be different.

* Statures determined by ‘Social Attitude Scale’.

CHAPTER 3 METHODS

My study was designed to examine the White-American kindergarten teachers' racial identities and their beliefs about the role of culture in social competence. The purpose of this chapter is to provide information regarding the participants, instruments, and the data collection procedures of my study.

Participants

The participants of my study included 95 White-American kindergarten teachers from Alachua, Hillsborough, Marion, Putnam, and Seminole counties in Central Florida. Upon acquiring all appropriate entry permissions, research packets were distributed via first-class mail to a total of 258 kindergarten teachers in 52 elementary schools. The researcher received a total of 119 packets. Out of 119 returned, 15 packets (12.6%) were from teachers who are not White-Americans and 9 packets were incomplete, and thus they were not used for my study. Finally 95 data sets were analyzed for my study. Detailed information regarding the participants' demographic and educational background will be described in Chapter 4.

Instruments

Child Vignette and Teachers' Beliefs Questionnaire

Information on teachers' beliefs about the role of culture in social competence was obtained by their ratings on a series of questions and statements that were developed for my study (see Appendix B). The questionnaire is composed of two parts. In the first part, six vignettes each with a hypothetical kindergarten child were presented followed by a series of questions regarding the child's social competencies. Six variables were held constant across all six vignettes: gender, socioeconomic status, physical health, linguistic ability, academic ability, and family background. All six children were described as males, from middle class

socioeconomic status, physically healthy, proficient English speakers given their age although it might not be their first language, among upper 50% of academic level in their class, and living with both parents. Whereas children's racial/cultural backgrounds varied across the six vignettes. Basically there were three different characteristics and each was described in two different children. One White-American child (Eric) was matched up with one African-American child (Jamal); the other White-American child (Chris) was matched up with one Hispanic child (Jose); and another White-American child (David) was matched up with one Asian child (Ming). Teachers were asked to evaluate each child's level of social competence and describe the reason for their judgments. In the second part, a total of 18 statements regarding cultural aspects of children's social competencies were provided in a 5-point Likert-type scale. Teachers were asked to indicate the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with each statement. The two-folded purpose of this instrument is to examine the degree of teachers' awareness about the role of culture in social competence via part two, and to examine whether or not they consider cultural difference when evaluating children's social competence via part one.

Social Attitude Scale

Information on teachers' racial identities was obtained from their self report ratings on the Social Attitude Scale (see Appendix C). The original title of the scale is 'White Racial Consciousness Development Scale-Revised (WRCDS-R)', but for my study in order to minimize the respondents' reaction to the title, it was retitled as 'Social Attitude Scale' by the researcher with the permission from the original authors. The original WRCDS was initially developed by Claney and Parker (1989), and it was recently revised to improve the psychometric properties of the scale (2004). WRCDS-R is to measure White individuals' racial identity development based on Helms' theory. WRCDS-R consists of a total of 40 Likert-type items: 8 contact items, 14 reintegration items, 9 pseudoindependence items, and 9 autonomy items. These items provided a

series of scores for each of the four identity statuses, and the analyses of the scores were used to determine the participants' racial identity status.

Lee et al. (2007) reported the entire process of revising the scale and provided the reliability and validity of this WRCDS-R. Reliability coefficients of the subscale of WRCDS-R were .81 for contact, .86 for reintegration, .84 for pseudoindependence, and .71 for autonomy, respectively. Total reliability of the scale was not provided because, according to the Helms' theory, each identity status represents a distinct construct and thus it is not an appropriate procedure for this scale. With regard to the validity of the WRCDS-R, Lee et al. conducted both exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis to assess the goodness of fit of the items to each subscale and showed satisfactory construct validity. They also reported the evidence of contrasted group validity by comparing a counselors group and an undergraduate students group through structural equation modeling. When the subscale scores were compared, the counselors group had significantly lower scores than the undergraduate students group in the lower statuses (contact and reintegration status) but had significantly higher scores in the advanced statuses (pseudoindependence and autonomy statuses), meaning that the counselor group's racial identity statuses are higher than the undergraduate students group.

Teacher Information Questionnaire

Participating teachers were asked to complete the Teacher Information Questionnaire developed by the researcher for my study (see Appendix D). The purpose of this instrument is to obtain demographic and background information about the participants. Teachers provided information about their educational background and their teaching environment. Agreements regarding future contact were also obtained through this questionnaire in order to contact them again later for the follow-up interview.

Follow-up Interview

The purpose of this follow-up interview was to obtain qualitative data regarding the characteristics of participants' beliefs about culture and social competence. After the preliminary data analyses, a sub-sample of the participants was asked to have an interview with the researcher. Once all of the participants were classified into four identity statuses based upon their responses to the Social Attitude Scale, 4 participants from contact status were randomly selected and invited for the follow-up interviews. The teachers from contact status were selected because, according to the teacher education literatures, this group is considered to need the most attention and support in becoming culturally responsive teachers. The interview protocol remained almost the same from the Child Vignette and Teachers' Beliefs Questionnaire, but additional probing questions derived from the preliminary analyses of the data were included in order to help the participants better debrief and express their ideas (see Appendix E). A few questions were improvised at the spot to facilitate the conversation, due to the nature of the individual interview.

Data Collection Procedures

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted to develop the Child Vignette and Teachers' Beliefs Questionnaire instrument. The first phase of the pilot study was to examine the content validity of the instrument. The participants at this phase were six kindergarten teachers from Alachua County in Florida. Upon getting the IRB approval, an elementary school was identified and appropriate entry permission was obtained from the principal. Then the researcher communicated with kindergarten teachers via mail to obtain the consents (see Appendix F). Necessary phone calls were made to both give them a reminder and to set up a time and date for the meeting. During the meeting, the researcher met with the kindergarten teachers to discuss the study and distribute the materials. The participants were asked to read each of the six vignettes and respond

to the questions. The vignettes were presented in random order. Immediately after the participants completed the vignette questionnaire, the researcher conducted a focus group. The purpose of the focus group was to obtain participants' feedback on the Child Vignette and Teachers' Beliefs Questionnaire items. For example, the researcher asked whether or not any of the statements were confusing and whether or not enough information was provided in the vignettes. This feedback was used, in conjunction with the committee members' feedback, to prepare the final draft of the child vignettes and questionnaires to be used in the next phases. The participants at this phase were compensated with a \$20 gift card as an appreciation from the researcher.

The second phase of the pilot study was to examine the reliability of the Child Vignette and Teachers' Beliefs Questionnaire instrument. The participants were pre-service early childhood teachers who are currently enrolled as collegiate students in the Early Childhood and Elementary Proteach program in the College of Education at the University of Florida. After securing IRB approval, the researcher obtained permission from five course instructors to ask their students to participate. Then the researcher met with the students during their class periods in order to discuss the study, obtain written consents (see Appendix G), and distribute the materials. These participants were asked to read each of the six vignettes and respond to the questions. The vignettes were presented in random order. Among approximately 130 students who received consent letters and the materials, 114 volunteered to participate. The internal consistency reliability using Cronbach's Alpha for the 18 items of Part 2 was .86 ($n=114$). According to Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996), internal consistency scores that yield a reliability coefficient of at least .80 are considered sufficiently reliable for most research purposes. Therefore, analyses supported the use of this instrument in the main research study.

Study

Data for the study were collected from four instruments: (a) Child Vignette and Teachers' Beliefs Questionnaire, (b) Social Attitude Scale, (c) Teacher Information Questionnaire, and (d) Follow-up Interview. Permission to conduct the study was received from both the University of Florida Institutional Review Board and the school board of each county prior to data collection. The researcher was available to discuss my study with the school board research director in person or via phone or e-mail as necessary, and got the approval from the above 5 counties. Initially, 6 school counties were invited but one county declined to participate in this research. Upon obtaining the school board approval, the researcher was asked to get entry permission from each elementary school principal. A total of 237 elementary school principals were contacted via first class mail, email, phone, and/or fax. At least two different avenues of contacts were made, but 139 principals did not respond. Among 98 principals who responded to the invitation, 52 principals allowed the researcher to contact his/her kindergarten teachers while 46 principals did not provide entry permission. Most principals who did not give permission indicated that the teachers were already involved in many other research projects. A few also indicated that this research topic was either not interesting or too sensitive for them.

All kindergarten teachers were treated fairly regardless of their participation as prescribed by the 'Standards for educational and psychological testing' (AERA, APA, & NCME, 1999). Moreover, although my study was focusing only on White-American kindergarten teachers, the research packet was distributed to all the kindergarten teachers in elementary schools where the principal gave permission. Instead, one item on the Teacher Information Questionnaire asked the participants' racial background, and after identifying the White-American kindergarten teachers, other data were not used for the purpose of my study.

Upon acquiring all appropriate permissions, research packets were distributed via first-class mail to a total of 258 kindergarten teachers in 52 elementary schools: 2, 20, 10, 11, and 9 in Alachua, Hillsborough, Marion, Putnam, and Seminole counties, respectively. Research packets included individual consents (see Appendix A), 3 research instruments, and a pre-stamped return envelop. At least one follow-up contact was made to remind and encourage the teacher to participate in the study. Participating teachers were asked to read and respond to the six vignettes and a series of questions about each child. The six vignettes were presented in random order. Also, they were asked to complete a Social Attitude Scale as well as a Teacher Information Questionnaire, and return all the completed materials via enclosed pre-stamped envelope in order to receive a \$20 gift card as an appreciation from the researcher. All the quantitative data were entered in the excel document and exported to SPSS software (version 11.5) for all of the descriptive and inferential statistics such as chi-square, t-test, ANOVA, and MANOVA. In addition, sub-sampled individual interviews were conducted to collect additional interview data from the participants after the preliminary data analyses. Based on the responses from the Social Attitude Scale, the participants were classified into four statuses. 4 participants from contact status were randomly selected for follow-up interviews, based upon their agreement. Interview participants were asked to meet with the researcher and conduct an individual debriefing interview about their beliefs about culture and social competence. These interviewees were compensated with a \$20 gift card as an appreciation from the researcher. Each individual interview was tape recorded and transcribed by the researcher for the qualitative data analyses.

CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

My study examined White-American kindergarten teachers' racial identities and their beliefs about the role of culture in social competence. The purpose of this chapter is to present the findings of my study in relation to the research questions.

Participants Background

The participants of my study included a total of 95 White-American kindergarten teachers in Central Florida. Figures 4-1 to 4-7 and Table 4-1 provide a summary of the demographic and educational background information provided by the participants.

The participants were a total of 95 White-American kindergarten teachers from Alachua(5), Hillsborough(31), Marion(14), Putnam(20), and Seminole(25) counties in Central Florida. All of the participants were female and ranged in age from 23 to 63 ($X=40.26$, $SD=12.21$). The majority held a bachelor's degree (73.7%) and had elementary teaching certificate with an early childhood endorsement (54.7%). Participants' overall teaching experience ranged from 0 to 32 years ($X=12.78$, $SD=9.65$), and their experience teaching kindergarten ranged from 0 to 29 years ($X=8.97$, $SD=7.72$). Based on this 2006-2007 academic year, the participants currently had a range from 15 to 24 children ($X=17.86$, $SD=1.97$) in their kindergarten classrooms, and the children's background were as follows: Caucasian/White-Americans (60.5%), Black/African-Americans (13.2%), Hispanic/Latino-Americans (17.7%), Asian/Pacific Islanders (2.3%), and others (6.3%). Additionally, most of the teachers self reported their experience of teaching children from different background as frequently or always (80.1%), and self reported their self-efficacy of teaching such children as moderate and high (75.8%).

Teachers' Racial Identities

The first research question was as follows: What are the racial identities of these White-American kindergarten teachers? Is there any difference in these teachers' (a) educational level, (b) age, (c) teaching experience, (d) self reported experience of teaching children from other backgrounds, and (e) self-efficacy of teaching children from other backgrounds when compared by the racial identity status groups?

For research question one, these White-American kindergarten teachers' racial identities were examined through their responses to the Social Attitude Scale. Each participant got a series of numeric scores representing the characteristics of each of the four identity statuses, and the status with the highest score was identified as one's racial identity. The results are as shown in Figure 4-8. As seen in Figure 4-8, this group of White-American kindergarten teachers' racial identity showed positively skewed distribution among four identity statuses. 18.9% of the White-American kindergarten teachers had characteristics of the contact status. These people are considered to have naïve thoughts about racial issues and tend to ignore differences between racial groups. They typically have minimal experiences with people of color and believe that everyone has an equal chance in this society. Another 22.1% of the participants had characteristics of the reintegration status, in which they are considered to realize their Whiteness, feel anger and resentment toward racial minorities and see them as inferior to Whites themselves. 24.2% of these teachers were identified to be at pseudoindependence status, They usually have increased awareness and understanding of White dominance and privilege as contributing factors in racist attitudes and behaviors, and thus often make deliberate efforts to interact with other racial group members and understand racial differences. However, their consciousness remains at the intellectual domain not yet reaching the affective domain. Last 34.7% of these White-American kindergarten teachers had characteristics of autonomy status. They are considered to

have established a non-racist White identity in which similarities and differences between racial groups are truly appreciated, and further they are no longer uncomfortable with the racial diversity in our society.

Moreover, additional analyses were conducted in order to examine whether or not any difference exists in these White-American kindergarten teachers' (a) educational level, (b) age, (c) teaching experience, (d) self reported experience of teaching children from other backgrounds, and (e) self-efficacy of teaching children from other backgrounds when compared by the racial identity status groups.

First, Pearson's chi-square analysis was conducted in order to examine differences in these teachers' educational level and racial identity status because both variables are categorical. As a result, there was no statistically significant difference in these White-American kindergarten teachers' educational level when compared by their racial identity status ($\chi^2 = 3.608$, $df = 3$, $p = .307$). Table 4-2 presents the statistical findings.

Second, a series of one-way between subject analysis of variance (ANOVA) were conducted in order to examine differences in these teachers' age, teaching experience, self reported experience of teaching children from different backgrounds, and self-efficacy of teaching children from different backgrounds compared by racial identity status groups. As presented in Table 4-3 to 4-6, all of the variables such as age, teaching experience, self reported degree of teaching children from different background, and self-efficacy of teaching children from different background were found to have no statistically significant effect on teachers' racial identities. Teachers' self reported degree of teaching children from different background, however, was approaching statistical significance ($F_{(3,91)} = 2.182$, $p = .096$) which implies that there could be some different tendency of racial identity among teachers with different

experience of teaching children from different backgrounds. Post-hoc independent sample t-tests with a Bonferroni adjustment were conducted to examine the nature of the potential relationship, and it appears that teachers with more experience of teaching children from different backgrounds may be in the pseudoindependence or autonomy statuses.

Teachers' Beliefs about the Role of Culture in Social Competence

The second research question was as follows: What are these White-American kindergarten teachers' beliefs about the role of culture in social competence? To what degree are they aware about the role of culture in social competence? Do they consider cultural differences when evaluating a child's social competencies?

For research question two, these White-American kindergarten teachers' beliefs about the role of culture in social competence were examined through their responses to the Child Vignette and Teachers' Beliefs Questionnaire. For question 2-a, White-American kindergarten teachers' degree of awareness was examined through part two. To control for the response set bias, 9 items (items 1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 10, 13, 16, and 18) were reverse coded, and then summed up to generate the quantitative composite score. The possible range was from 18 to 90, with higher scores indicating higher level of cultural awareness in social competence. Table 4-7 presents the range, mean, and the standard deviation for these teachers' degree of awareness about the role of culture in social competence.

For question 2-b, in order to find out whether or not these White-American kindergarten teachers consider cultural differences when evaluating a child's social competence, a series of dependent t-tests were conducted. Teachers' evaluation level for Ming (Asian) and David (White-American), Jose (Hispanic) and Chris (White-American), and Jamal (African-American) and Eric (White-American) was compared to see if there were any differences among teachers' responses. The possible evaluation scores range from 1 to 4 with higher scores indicating the

higher level of social competence. Table 4-8 presents the descriptive statistics and Table 4-9 presents the dependent t-test results.

With the alpha level of .01, the mean difference between Jamal and Eric was statistically significant, such that these White-American kindergarten teachers evaluated Jamal's level of social competence higher than Eric's level of social competence, $t_{(94)} = 4.808$, $p < .000$. This indicates that even though both Jamal and Eric had similar characteristics of social competencies, the teachers took Jamal's African-American cultural background into account in their evaluation. In other words, it suggests that teachers were able to evaluate social competence differently depending on a child's background, when it was an African-American child. However, the mean differences between Ming and David, and Jose and Chris were not statistically significant suggesting that teachers did not take Asian and Hispanic cultural background into account in their evaluation for Ming and Jose, respectively. Furthermore, examples of White-American kindergarten teachers' responses regarding the reasons for their evaluation are presented in Tables 4-10 to 4-15.

Relationship between Teachers' Racial Identities and Beliefs about the Role of Culture in Social Competence

The third research question was as follows: What relationship exists between these White-American kindergarten teachers' racial identities and their beliefs about the role of culture in social competence?

For research question three, the relationship between these White-American kindergarten teachers' racial identities and their beliefs about the role of culture in social competence were examined in two different phases. First, the relationship between teachers' racial identities and their degree of awareness about the role of culture in social competence was examined through one-way between subject analysis of variance (ANOVA). Teachers' racial identities were

entered as independent variable and their degree of awareness were entered as dependent variable. Table 4-16 and Figure 4-9 present the results. As shown, mean score for teachers' awareness appears to be lower at reintegration and pseudoindependence statuses than contact and autonomy statuses. However, there were no statistically significant differences in teachers' awareness about the role of culture in social competence among teachers in different racial identity status groups ($F_{(3, 91)} = 1.075, p = .364$).

Second, the relationship between teachers' racial identities and their consideration of cultural differences in child evaluation was examined through one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). Teachers' racial identities were entered as independent variable and their evaluations about Ming, Jose, and Jamal were entered as dependent variables for overall cultural consideration. Table 4-17 and Figure 4-10 present the results. As shown, mean score for teachers' child evaluation appears to be lower at reintegration and pseudoindependence statuses than contact and autonomy statuses. However, again there was no significant effect of the teachers' racial identity status on the combined dependent variable of overall cultural consideration ($F_{(9, 216)} = 1.161, p = .322$; Wilks' Lambda = .892).

Characteristics of Teachers' Beliefs about Culture and Social Competence

The fourth research question was as follows: What are the characteristics of the White-American kindergarten teachers' beliefs about culture and social competence?

For research question four, characteristics of these White-American kindergarten teachers' beliefs about culture and social competence were examined through the qualitative individual follow-up interviews. The participants for the follow-up interview were 4 White-American kindergarten teachers' who were characterized to be in the contact status of their racial identity development. These teachers were selected because it is suggested from the teacher education literatures that this group is considered to need the most attention and support in becoming

culturally responsive teachers. Among 18 teachers in the contact status group, 4 teachers were randomly selected based upon their agreements and availabilities. Following is brief information about the teachers as well as the researcher.

As the researcher, I was born in South Korea and have been in the field of early childhood education for about 15 years. Having both my bachelor's and master's degrees in early childhood education, I am currently pursuing the doctorate degree, also in early childhood education. I have taught young children for 5 years in both South Korea and the United States. As an individual who has experienced cultural differences regarding social competence both in my early years and as an adult, I came to believe in the importance of understanding and appreciating cultural aspects of social competence. I also believe that teachers should understand culturally influenced variations of children's social competence in order to demonstrate developmentally and culturally appropriate practices.

Ms. Amy (23 years old) just graduated from college with her master's in education, and this is the very first year of her teaching career. She is currently teaching 20 children from at least 6 different backgrounds at a suburban area school.

Ms. Bona (35 years old) has 10 years of teaching experience. She has taught in a primarily African-American school for 5 years before coming to the current school where the majority of the students are White. The school is located in a very sheltered rural area.

Ms. Clara (54 years old), who is originally from the Midwest region of the country, has been teaching for 25 years in 3 different states. Although she has been teaching for many years, she has little experience of teaching children from diverse backgrounds.

Ms. Danielle (42 years old) worked as a nurse assistant for several years before she decided to go to college to study early childhood education. This is her 7th year of teaching. Her

first school was a small neighborhood Title 1 school where most of the population was Hispanic. The next school was kind of a mix, and now she's teaching at the upper-middle class area school where most of the children are from affluent White families.

For the data analyses, all the follow-up interviews were tape recorded and transcribed by the researcher. Initially each interview was analyzed separately to capture the main ideas of each teacher. The important and/or interesting phrases were highlighted, underlined, circled, and labeled with preliminary codes. Some of the initial codes at this stage were as follows: high verbal, low shy, medium Hispanic experience, accommodation, and neutral teaching. Then the four interviews were reanalyzed simultaneously once again. As the interview was led by the series of questions from the researcher, responses from four different teachers were edited under the same question and were cross checked to find any commonalities as well as differences among them. Again similar ideas were highlighted with same colors while different ideas were highlighted with different colors, and the overarching themes were labeled. Most of the themes were corresponding with the topics of the questions asked, and the following are some examples that emerged at this point: personal beliefs, degree of awareness, child evaluation, cultural knowledge, personal experience of diversity, professional experience of diversity, and beliefs about multicultural education. At this stage, in order to pursue the trust-worthiness of the data analyses, the researcher shared the transcripts and the potential themes with another early childhood professional who is also a doctoral candidate in early childhood education and has expertise in qualitative research methods. There were few disagreements regarding the major themes. As a result, informative findings drawn from the teachers' follow-up interviews are described as the following insights.

Teachers' personal beliefs about social competence represented low-context cultural

beliefs: It was found from all of the teachers that their personal beliefs about social competence reflect the typical beliefs of so-called low-context Western culture, which indeed is these teachers' cultural background. Verbal expression was valued more than nonverbal expression, independence was highly emphasized, and socially withdrawn or shy behaviors made a negative impression by all the teachers. Following are a few examples of their narratives.

Ms. Clara: I think both verbal and non-verbal expressions are important in social competence, but probably verbal is more important for me. I certainly think it is an asset in their development that they can feel free to express themselves. I would rather want to see a child who's overly talkative than the other extreme who's introverted and not very verbal. And when I seen them more verbalizing, to me that's an indicator of growth.

Ms. Bona: I think independence is the key factor in social competence. Especially when you have a child who's a follower and he ends up following the wrong crowd, I would rather want a child who is very independent, who can value his own thoughts or ideas, and who can stand up in front of other people who don't agree with them. I think it's a very good thing to be independent even in very early ages, because it raises their self confidence too....I think socially withdrawn or shy behaviors hinder their peer relationships. I've had kids who are really shy, don't get involved, and tend to be left behind in many activities. I hate to see kids too shy. Whenever I see their hands go up, I always try to give the shyest child a chance to talk because it's very important for them to learn that.

Teachers had varying degree of awareness about the role of culture in social

competence: Even though most of the teachers' personal beliefs about social competence reflected the values of White-American cultural background, their awareness about the role of culture in social competence had a wide range. Some of them seemed to understand and accept the idea of cultural differences in social competence, whereas the others expressed only superficial understandings. The first two excerpts are from the former group of teachers and the next two excerpts are from the latter group of teachers.

Ms. Amy: I don't think a child who is perceived to be socially competent in one cultural group will be the same in any other cultural group. Some culture may value a child who does speak their mind but some may not. So that's going to vary as what role a child plays inside the family or with the adults.

Ms. Bona: I definitely think it's true that socialization goals and values can be different by different cultures and families. In fact, from my years of teaching, I've seen a lot of family differences depending on schools I've worked at. The school I worked before was 90% Black, and this school here is 90% White, and there's a huge difference in what I see and hear from parents.

Ms. Clara: I'm not sure about the different socialization goals and values from families from different background. It may be true, but I don't think I've had any experience with my parents. Maybe I was very fortunate because every family I've worked with was very easy to deal with. Again, I'm not sure that some behaviors are interpreted differently by people from different cultural groups. I know what you're talking about, but nothing really stands out in my mind. This community is pretty narrow in terms of diversity, so to speak.

Ms. Danielle: I think that a child who is considered to be socially competent in one cultural group will be the same in any other group. I think it might vary a little bit depending upon the situation if it's something brand new to them or if they are going into the brand new group, but other than that I think it's pretty much even and overall no matter what culture. Once they have achieved a certain level of social competence, it can be easily adaptable into any other situation.

In the meantime, some teachers expressed the view that children of color need to learn the culture of school and the larger society in order to succeed. For instance, one teacher reflected that she learned about cultural diversity through professional teacher trainings and is able to take that into account, but most of the lay persons may not go through those trainings. And thus, she worried that if we don't help children coming from different backgrounds to assimilate into the majority culture, it will be those children who eventually could get into trouble. Another teacher also mentioned about the role of school and teacher in encouraging the process of mutual accommodation. Their narratives are as follows.

Ms. Bona: I think different cultures do have different socialization goals and values, and that's fine. But when they grow up they'll have to learn that different cultures may have different values and not to take it offensively. In a lot of trainings I've been taught about culturally differences and sensitivities, for example most Hispanic or Asian kids when they get in trouble they don't look in your eyes. So I try to keep that in the back of my minds when I teach my children of color. But I do worry about that child because when they get older and they meet someone who haven't had such training, they might take it that you're being disrespectful, and then it's our children who get in trouble.

Ms. Amy: I try to bring other people's culture in my classroom. But they do need to assimilate in some ways to the school culture: this is what we do and these are the rules,

you can do whatever at home but this is school. I try to make sure that we are all very aware and respectful about the fact that we're all different but yet we can work together to make a community. Actually, I think when people move into an area from another culture, they might want to try assimilate into the new culture when they still want to maintain their own language, traditions, and stuffs. And for their child, I think they'll want them to maintain their cultural beliefs but also to compromise to fit into the society. I think that's part of our job as a teacher to make that balance because that's going to be the theme for their whole life.

Teachers' cultural knowledge and evaluations about children varied widely from

group to group: First, with regards to Asian culture, with the exception of Ms. Amy, the teachers' didn't have any real experience with Asian children in their classroom, and thus most of their cultural knowledge was based on stories they heard or multicultural sessions they attended. For instance, they believed that Asian children tended to be smart, they don't make eye-contact, and their parents are usually well involved in school activities. Moreover, all of them, except for Ms. Amy, evaluated Ming and David at the lower level of social competence. It was also found that Ming's Asian cultural background didn't really affect their judgments.

Ms. Bona: When his ideas don't get accepted he easily backs down, and that would worry me for his poor skills. Every time he's confronted he'll back down and become quiet, and if he'll hover around you that's probably going to mean that he still wants to be accepted by the group, which I believe is not right, it's scary. I would worry about him falling under peer pressure as he gets older. He might become a teenager who smokes because all of his other friends are smoking.... If I knew the cultural background of Ming, it might have made some difference as far as I understand certain behaviors such as why he doesn't want to make eye contact or why he chooses to back down because I know some of these behaviors are cultural traits. So it would be helpful to know where they are coming from in that regards, but it wouldn't make a difference in terms of how I would want to move them up and make them more accepted.

Ms. Clara: I guess some culture thing could be involved here. But maybe I might want to say to Ming 'Look at me when I'm speaking. Look at my face and let's talk about this.' Because the little ones are so easily distracted and you've got to have that eye contact or you might just go sailing over their head. I probably would try to work on that to have him make eye contact with me when I have to communicate with him.

Second, with regards to Hispanic culture, all of the teachers mentioned that they had experiences with Hispanic children and thus have more cultural knowledge about Hispanic

culture. However, their evaluations regarding Jose and Chris showed some different viewpoints, as can be seen in the following excerpts.

Ms. Clara: Jose is a people pleaser. I think with these types of children who are so dependent on pleasing his parents, it would probably be a good thing to stress to him it's a good thing to make decisions that will make him feel good. I once had to tell my Hispanic child 'Tell your parents that you're feeling mad at those times.' He will need to build up some more self confidence and think about his own good not for the others.

Ms. Amy: I think the thing that most sticks out to me between Jose and Chris is the thing about parents, what parents want. I think a lot of times in Caucasian backgrounds, we don't always follow up with what our parents want us to do, but in the Hispanic background, it is possible that the parents may wish a little more.

Ms. Danielle: I don't want to put Jose in a lower end just because he's not a leader. Not all kids are going to be leaders and that's part of our life as well. He can be still contribute good ideas and get along very well. He knows what's expected for him by the others, so guided in the right way I think he can grow up to make his own decision such as 'I know my parents what me to become a doctor, but I want to become a ...' because to me it looks like he can see the difference between what others want for him and what he wants for himself. The first thing I would like to do with Jose is to do writing. When you write a journal I ask them a lot about things what they think, what they want to be when they grow up and why. In that way when they are writing something, they can get more emotions and expressions out. So instead of asking verbally it might be better to ask them through writing.

Third, with regards to African-American culture, all of the teachers said they had worked with African-American children and families and seemed to have no difficulty understanding their cultural background. Although they generally rated Jamal's level higher than Eric, they didn't explicitly mention Jamal's African-American background as the main reason for their judgments. Instead, they tried to explain more about how much they tried to accept African-American culture and use their knowledge to guide their teaching practices. Following are a few examples.

Ms. Amy: I've seen that African-American kids are louder. I've seen that they'll only respond to the loud voice at first because that's all they are used to a lot of times. But as long as you are very consistent with it, and probably I have to say that 500 times, in the end they kind of tune out any kind of yelling and loud voices. Also I found that with a lot of my African-American students, the best way to win them over is by using a softer but firm voice, and setting my expectations high and not accepting anything less. I usually think I may have to start with what they are used to, but move to one more.

Ms. Bona: Jamal is a natural born leader. Kids like this especially those with a leader quality, other kids just love him. And I like to see kids become a leader but I do think it's important to think about a good leader vs. bad leader. I guess as a teacher you just need to be a mediator when he does get angry so that the other children don't go along with what he wants to do. Well, I think he's one of those kids if you can get him to do right things for the right reason in the right way, he'll be a wonderful role model for the class and makes things much easier for the teacher. Also, that's very astute for a child in that age to be so tuned in non-verbal cues from other children. That's pretty observant.

Teachers had more professional experience than personal experience regarding

diversity: Teachers' experience regarding diversity has been investigated in two streams, one from a personal level and the other from a professional level. From a personal perspective, these teachers' overall experience of diversity was very limited. All of them grew up in a homogeneous White environment and were not exposed to different culture until older when they went to college or started working. Although they tend to say they are fairly comfortable in multicultural or multiracial relationships, their lack of experience was frequently revealed in their narratives. The following is a typical example.

Ms. Danielle: In terms of cultural diversity, I was very sheltered. I grew up in a very White Anglo-Saxon community. I lived mainly around White neighbors, and I went to school with just a few percentages of people from different cultural groups. But of course when you're in middle school and high school, you tend to move toward your own cultural group. And outside the school I was in sports teams where typically White students were in my team. Actually I think it was when I was in high school that I was in a mixed culture for the first time, and I guess it was kind of a cultural shock for me. But after high school, it just became a natural common thing of our society, and now I wouldn't say that I'm uncomfortable in a situation with people from other cultures.... However, even now, I have to admit that I'm mostly around people from my culture. It's just probably not the thing I spent most of my time in. I mean, besides school I'm more around my culture than others and my other social circle is predominantly White. But still I feel comfortable with it.

From a professional perspective as a teacher, these teachers' teaching experience regarding diversity was somewhat different from their personal experience. Even though the degree of diversity varies, they all had and/or currently have children from different backgrounds. Moreover, they all mentioned that teaching experience had influenced their beliefs about

multicultural education the most than personal experience or college learning experience. In fact, it was found that most of them didn't have relationships with people from different backgrounds before they started teaching. These findings are described in the following excerpts.

Ms. Clara: Throughout all of my teaching experience across different states, I wouldn't say that I've encountered diverse children very much. I guess I had a kind of protective teaching environment in that sense. Especially this is a very much community based school, and we don't have a real diversified culture thing here. However, still, I just think teaching experience had helped me the most in my teaching because I've probably encountered more different cultures of children and family under the teaching umbrella. I've taken classes about multicultural teaching and we've had quite a few trainings along those lines. And if I were in a different environment and if I had to deal with children from more different cultures than what I have now, I would definitely make more efforts to learn about different cultures where the children come.

Ms. Amy: I would say I have a good amount of experience teaching children from different backgrounds than myself, including all my practicum and internship experience. I know there's definitely a lot more I can learn, but I would say for the most part I had a lot of positive experience, which is good. And I think this is going to help me when I have more families who aren't as responsive in the future.... I definitely think teaching experience had helped me the most. Spending more time in real classrooms and having as much hands-on experience with different students and parents as possible was extremely helpful.

Teachers' beliefs about multicultural education revealed color-blind teaching: When prompted about their beliefs as well as their practices of multicultural education, some teachers' narratives revealed ethnocentrism or color-blindness philosophy. As seen in the following narratives, these teachers referred to children's age level or curriculum as a shield to justify their attempts of color-blind teaching.

Ms. Bona: In terms of multicultural teaching, I'm not sure. Besides that Black history month, and I guess it's because it's February and my mind is filled up with that, but I still teach the same here (primarily White school) as I taught in the other school (primarily African-American school). Whenever I see the kids I don't think I really want to divide them into different racial groups. I mean, they are just kids, and they are only five, they are babies.

Ms. Clara: I thought I was pretty knowledgeable but after talking to you, maybe I don't know as much as I should.... I try to be objective in my teaching. I mean, I try to be very objective by just presenting the facts and the basic knowledge about things which you have to teach these little ones. Especially, when you're teaching kindergarten you know you can't really go in depth about anything. I don't want my children to go back home and say

'That's not right mom and dad because Ms. Clara said so and so.' So I really try not to influence them with my personal thoughts about anything.

Ms. Danielle: In terms of my current student ratio, I don't even think that way to group my kids like that. Well, this year what I'm newly trying to learn in terms of different culture is the Arabic. I have a boy who speaks Arabic and he's actually having a difficult time socializing with other children. And what I've learned is that in the Arabic culture, boys are babied. I think that's their culture, and due to that he's having a difficult time because there's no independence or responsibility at home and you need those in school.... I think there are things that I may not directly teach, but just comes out and influences the classroom community. Maybe in more older grades you might have to think more about those issues, but in the kindergarten I don't think there's that much. Everything is wonderful when you're five. And regardless of what grades, in the education everything is theory based and research based. Yes, I do have my own beliefs but I think my teaching more fits into what I learned as far as what's appropriate for the child or not."

As describe in above insights, the characteristics of these White-American kindergarten teachers were found such that they personally had low-context cultural beliefs about social competence, however, they were aware about the role of culture in social competence to some varying degree. Their cultural knowledge and evaluations about children also revealed to have wide range of difference from one group to another. In addition, teachers had limited personal experience than professional teaching experience regarding diversity, and claimed to be color-blind when teaching young children.

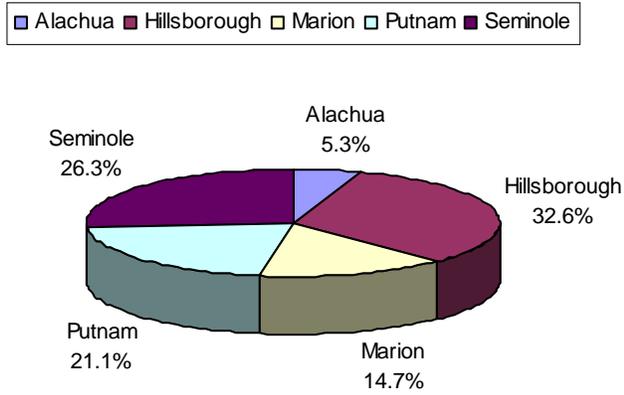


Figure 4-1. School districts of teachers.

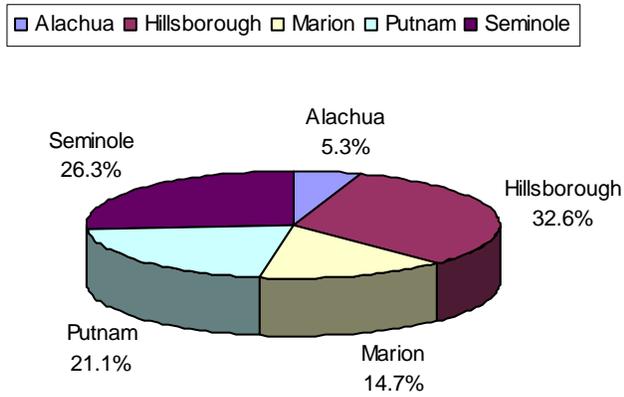


Figure 4-2. Teachers' age.

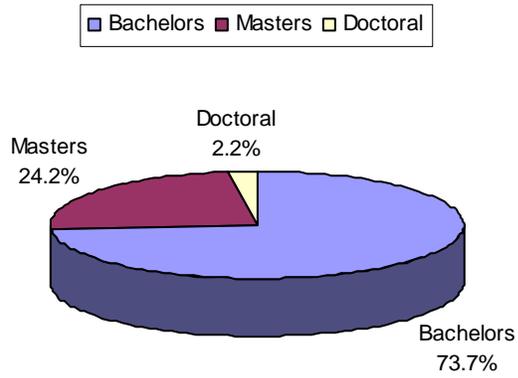


Figure 4-3. Most advanced educational degree of teachers.

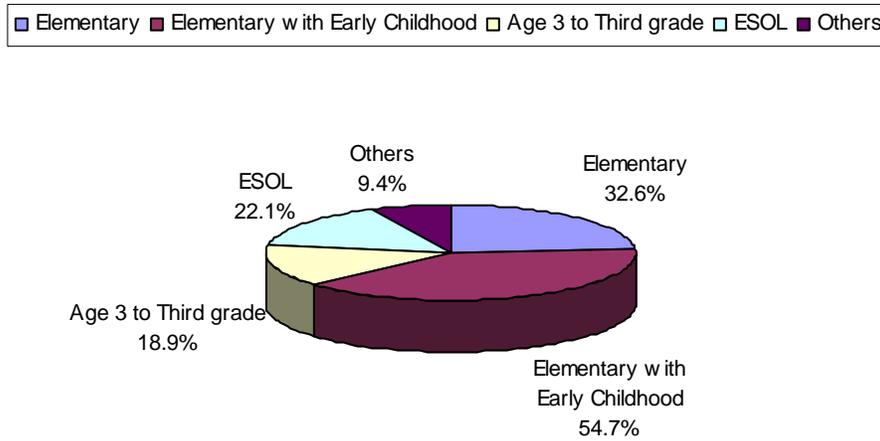


Figure 4-4. Types of teaching certificate of teachers.

* Total percentage exceeds 100% as some teachers had more than one teaching certificate.

Table 4-1. Teaching experience and number of children.

Participants (n=95)	Mean	Standard Deviation
Years of teaching experience	X = 12.78	SD = 9.65
Years of kindergarten teaching experience	X = 8.97	SD = 7.72
Number of children in current class	X = 17.86	SD = 1.97

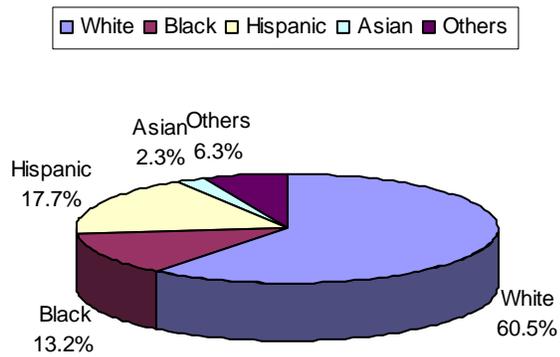


Figure 4-5. Current children's background.

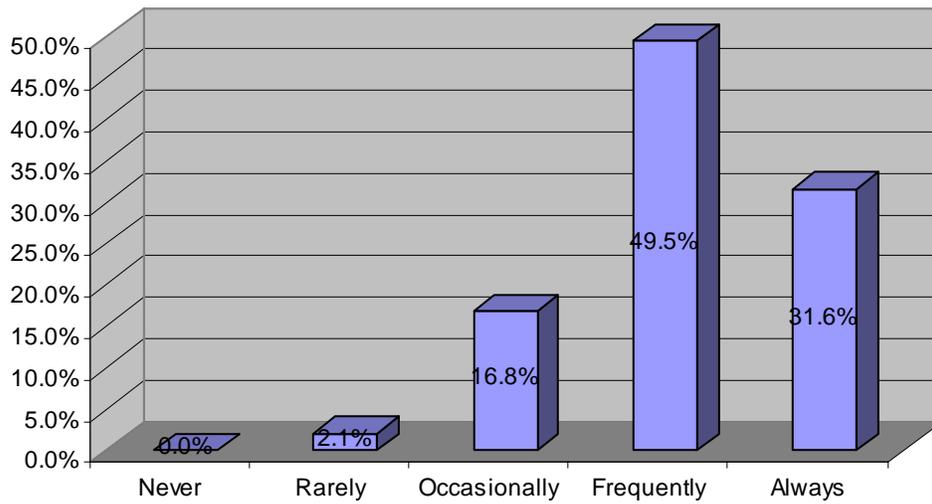


Figure 4-6. Experience of teaching children from different background.

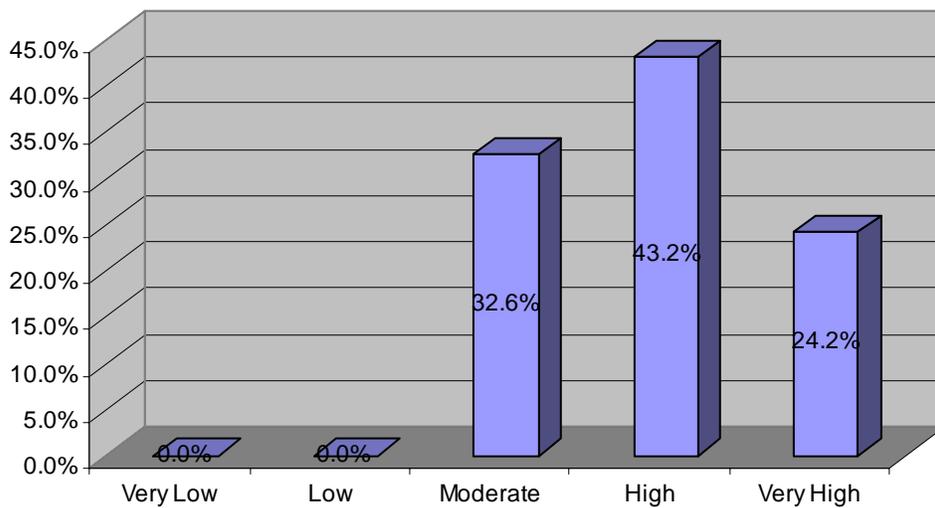


Figure 4-7. Self-efficacy of teaching children from different background.

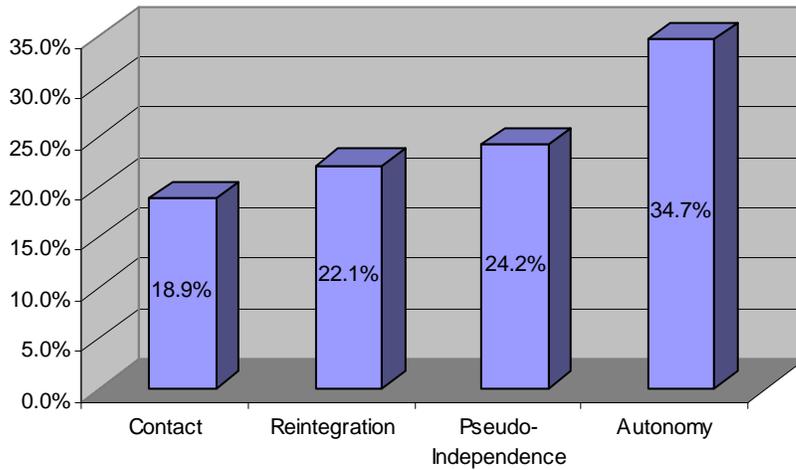


Figure 4-8. Racial identity status.

Table 4-2. Chi-square test for educational degree.

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.608*	3	.307

* 1 cell has expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.74.

Table 4-3. Summary of ANOVA for age.

	SS	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	501.625	3	167.208	1.126	.343
Within Groups	13518.796	91	148.558		
Total	14020.421	94			

Table 4-4. Summary of ANOVA for teaching experience.

	SS	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	562.531	3	187.510	2.082	.108
Within Groups	8193.827	91	90.042		
Total	8756.358	94			

Table 4-5. Summary of ANOVA for self reported experience of teaching children from different backgrounds.

	SS	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3.553	3	1.184	2.182	.096
Within Groups	49.394	91	.543		
Total	52.947	94			

Table 4-6. Summary of ANOVA for self-efficacy of teaching children from different backgrounds.

	SS	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.705	3	.568	1.002	.396
Within Groups	51.621	91	.567		
Total	53.326	94			

Table 4-7. Descriptive statistics about degree of awareness.

Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
37	85	67.54	7.742

Table 4-8. Descriptive statistics about child evaluation.

	Ming	David	Jose	Chris	Jamal	Eric
Mean	2.49	2.57	2.68	2.60	2.65	2.34
Std. Dev.	.563	.558	.623	.554	.541	.497

Table 4-9. Summary of dependent T-tests for child evaluation.

Pair	Mean	Std. Dev.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Ming-David	-.07	.733	-.980	94	.330
Jose-Chris	.08	.613	1.339	94	.184
Jamal-Eric	.32	.640	4.808	94	.000 *

* $p < .01$

Table 4-10. Reasons for evaluating Ming.

Very Low or Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He needs to stand up for himself and learn to express his needs. • His upbringing must have led him to believe that eye contact and questioning adults is disrespectful. • He is unable to make his own decision and follows others lead.
High or Very High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He displays compliance which could be the social competence in his cultural group. • He tries to blend in with the group. He fits into his class just fine. • He must have been raised and taught to exhibit respect, maybe just in a slightly different way than most students.

Table 4-11. Reasons for evaluating David.

Very Low or Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He can't handle confrontation and has difficulty handling criticism. • He easily withdraws his ideas and is too concerned about what others' think. • He becomes an observer and follower. He is too shy.
High or Very High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even though he backs down, this is only to avoid argument. • He doesn't want to ruffle anyone. • He enjoys being a part of a group, and can adapt his behaviors.

Table 4-12. Reasons for evaluating Jose.

Very Low or Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He is a people pleaser. He has low self esteem. • He needs help with independent thinking. He needs to learn to think for himself. • He doesn't have leadership. He prefers to watch others handle situations.
High or Very High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He works well in a group. Maybe he values others' input. • He lives up to the high expectations set for him from his parents. • He maybe more comfortable following others, which is fine. Not everyone needs to be leader.

Table 4-13. Reasons for evaluating Chris.

Very Low or Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He is too shy and doesn't like leader role. • He depends too much on adults and has low self esteem. Maybe he wants attention. • He is extremely concerned about pleasing his parents.
High or Very High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He is well liked by his friends and works well in a group. • He enjoys helping and interacting with the teacher. • He wants to satisfy his parents, which is very normal. Most children this age tend to value their parents' opinions.

Table 4-14. Reasons for evaluating Jamal.

<p>Very Low or Low</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He can't communicate how he feels. He can't explain when he gets into trouble. • He is too egocentric and can't take others' view. • He wants to make all the decisions. He wants his decision to be the final answer.
<p>High or Very High</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He has developed leadership skills at such a young age. Leaders occasionally have disagreements with others. • He is very inquisitive. Asking lots of questions indicate his interest in others' perspectives. • He is very observant. He notices and interprets social cues.

Table 4-15. Reasons for evaluating Eric.

<p>Very Low or Low</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He needs to listen to others, learn how to compromise, and develop cooperative play skills. • He cannot verbalize his frustration. • He is too sensitive about others' watching him.
<p>High or Very High</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He is very confident and enjoys taking a leader role. • He is good with nonverbal communication. He notices other children's nonverbal cues. • He seems friendly and well liked.

Table 4-16. Summary of ANOVA for degree of awareness.

	SS	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	192.896	3	64.299	1.075	.364
Within Groups	5440.725	91	59.788		
Total	5633.621	94			

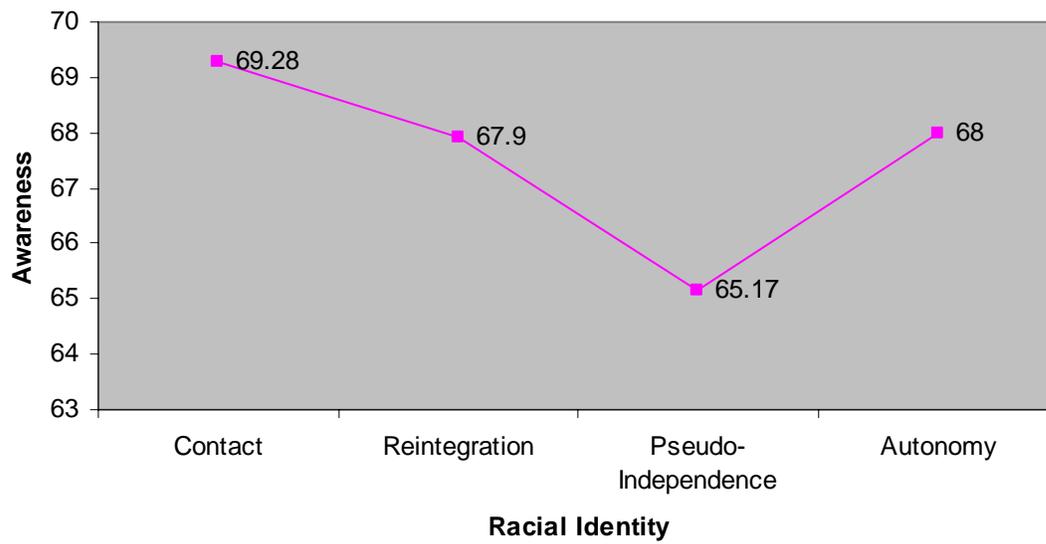


Figure 4-9. Mean Plots for ANOVA for degree of awareness.

Table 4-17. Summary of MANOVA for child evaluation.

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.
Status	Wilks' Lambda	.892	1.161	9	216	.322

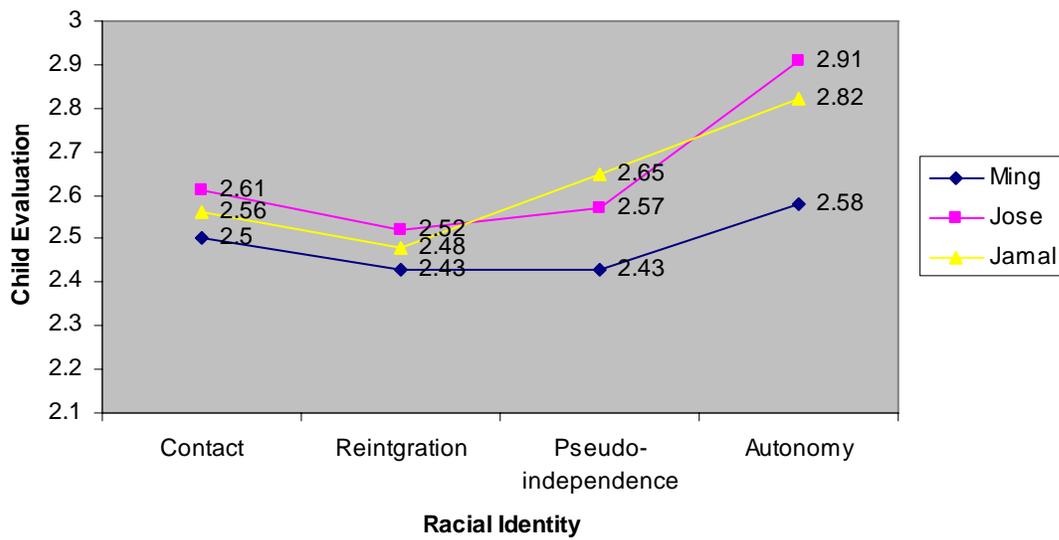


Figure 4-10. Mean Plots for MANOVA for child evaluation.

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the findings about White-American kindergarten teachers' racial identities, their beliefs about the role of culture in social competence, and the relationships between them. The limitations of my study will also be discussed followed by the implications for practice as well as the implications for future research.

Teachers' Racial Identities, Beliefs, and the Relationships

Teachers' Racial Identities

The nature of the positively skewed distribution among the participants found in my study raises a few questions. The first discussion is about this phenomenon that more than half of these White-American kindergarten teachers (58.9%) showed the characteristics of pseudoindependence and autonomy statuses, and especially the largest number of individuals were identified as autonomy status. There are several potential explanations for this finding. On the one hand, the sample may not be representative of White-American teachers of our society due to the following reasons. First, there could have been a sampling bias which contributed to the positive skewness. The teachers in this sample maybe exposed and/or forced to consider diversity more frequently than others. In addition, these teachers volunteered to participate in my study which implies that there could be some systematic differences between participants and non-participants. Perhaps those who agreed to participate had more positive thoughts about the issues of race, and thus have developed their racial identities more than average White-Americans. Second, it is well known that self reported measures are vulnerable to social desirability attitudes by respondents (Cone & Foster, 1993). Since the issue of race and culture is yet a very sensitive and emotionally charged topic for so many people in our society, it could be especially true with this kind of study. Some people would show very strong resistance to such

topic, whereas others would show strong demand characteristics. Therefore, it is feasible that these teachers could have endorsed items that support the desirable social characteristics because they did not want to appear prejudiced. On the other hand, this finding could be valid due to the recent focus on multicultural teacher education in early childhood. A growing number of researchers are emphasizing the need and importance of multicultural teacher education and have been providing various professional development workshops. As a result, multicultural education could have been transferred into many pre-service or in-service teacher education programs. It is, therefore, possible to assume that such trainings are helping White-American teachers to reflect on themselves and eventually to develop through their White racial identity development more readily. Furthermore, it could also be a result of combined effect of social desirability bias and multicultural teacher education such that as teachers are more exposed to multicultural education programs, they feel more pressure to become multiculturally competent which in turn led them to endorse socially desirable attitudes.

Another discussion could be made about White racial identity development theory and the measuring instrument. Both theories of White racial identity development (Helms, 1995) and White racial consciousness (Rowe et al., 1994) concur that one's identity does not necessarily develop as a hierarchical or linear stages. Both theories also make the similar point that one's racial identity could be flexible and situationally dependent (Leach et al. 2002). The data from my study may align with those theoretical frameworks because there were a few teachers who had similar characteristics of more than one status, and sometimes those two statuses were not in the order of Helms' theory. It may be true, then, that not all people move fluidly through a progression of statuses. Along this line, further questions regarding the construct of the instrument could be raised. Although Lee et al. (2007) had provided evidence of reliability and

validity of the Social Attitude Scale (originally White Racial Consciousness Development Scale-Revised), this instrument may have failed to distinguish the subtle differences within a single status. Also, it could be deemed unclear whether this instrument is measuring the respondents' accurate racial identity status or the respondents' self perception of their racial identity status.

Teachers' Beliefs

Based upon the descriptive statistics about teachers' beliefs about the role of culture in social competence, these White-American kindergarten teachers' degree of awareness was higher than the medium level whereas their consideration was at the medium level. In other words, it appears that these White-American kindergarten teachers have a higher degree of awareness than perceived actual consideration with children from other backgrounds (i.e., Ming, Jose, and Jamal). This means that although the teachers claim to know about the role of culture in social competence, they do not draw on that awareness when making a judgment about the children. This is an interesting phenomenon in many ways. First, it could be a typical reflection of one's self evaluation system that individuals tend to be more generous in reporting what they know. Thus, there could be some questions regarding these teachers' degree of awareness such as how much they actually know versus how much they claim to know; do they know what they know or do they know what they don't know. Second, on the contrary, it could represent the true natural sequence of one's acquisition of multicultural competence (Sue & Sue, 2003). The three steps often suggested by researchers in order to become multiculturally competent are awareness, knowledge, and skills. The findings indicate that these White-American kindergarten teachers probably have acquired the multicultural awareness, but not yet acquired the multicultural knowledge particularly about children's social competence.

Another interesting finding from my study is that teachers were more knowledgeable about the impact of African-American culture on children's social competence than about the impact of

the other cultures. According to the dependent t-test results, these White-American kindergarten teachers took into account only the African-American cultural background in their evaluation of children's social competence, but not the Asian or Hispanic cultural background. This could be easily understandable given the historical issues of our education. Since that African-Americans have been the largest minority population in this country but yet often marginalized, majority of the discussions about educational diversity, equity, and achievement gaps have been focusing on African-American students (Irvine, 2003; Tatum, 1997). In fact, it's often been a concern for some educators because of the disproportionate representation of African-American children in the child welfare system (Dennette, Mark, & Poertner, 2005). Teachers, therefore, are exposed to and possibly trained to become more culturally sensitive and knowledgeable about African-American children compared to any other minority groups. This was a consistent theme found from personal interview narratives as well. Teachers may not have explicitly mentioned knowing about African-American culture, but they did mention a lot about how they are doing well in accepting African-American child's (i.e., Jamal) characteristics and even utilizing them as strengths. It is, however, very important to remember that Hispanics and Asians are the fastest growing minority population in this country. Although this could vary depending on the regional location, teachers should expect and be ready to teach more children from Hispanic or Asian cultural backgrounds. In fact, these particular participants were working with more Hispanic (17.7%) than African-American (13.2%) children at the time of the study. Therefore, teacher educators should make teacher preparation programs truly multicultural rather than focusing on one or a few minority groups.

Relationships between Teachers' Racial Identities and Beliefs

The data revealed a distinct though not significant relationship between these teachers' racial identities and their beliefs about the role of culture in social competence. This finding

replicates that of two prior studies done about White individuals' racial identities (Claney & Parker, 1989; Block, Roberson, & Neuger, 1995). Claney and Parker (1989) found correlations between White college students' racial identity statuses and their perceived comfort with African-American individuals. The relationship was such that White people who have had very little or no contact with African-American people are as comfortable in situations with African-American as are the individuals who have developed a mature level of racial identity, whereas Whites who have had some contact but not to the same extent as those in the later status feel less comfortable. These findings led the researchers to discuss the importance of White people's gaining more than minimal experience and knowledge regarding African-American people, because insufficient knowledge and experience appear to be correlated with a high level of prejudice. Similarly, Block et al. (1995) studied White master's level students and found that both contact and autonomy statuses have a positive relationship with their reactions to interracial relationships at work. Again, contrary to their assumptions, contact status showed a positive association toward interracial relationship, and they concluded it reflects the naïvete of White individuals at the contact status.

In my study, teachers whose racial identity is characterized as contact status showed the highest level of cultural awareness while those at pseudoindependence status showed the lowest level of cultural awareness. Just like the prior studies, it could be explained through Helms' identity development theory that people in the contact status are often too naïve and do not take race or culture seriously, whereas people in the pseudoindependence status tend to have cocooned beliefs such as 'I already know about racial differences, and I do not need more information', even though they are still limited in their understanding (Helms, 1995). The fact that teachers in the autonomy status regained the level of cultural awareness also supports

Helms' theory that when people are fully willing to redefine their Whiteness, they can confront their prejudices and can truly value the diverse reality of our society.

Additionally, teachers' cultural consideration about Ming, Jose, and Jamal showed a similar pattern. Teachers in the reintegration status gave lower evaluation scores than those in the contact status. This finding could be explained through Helms' theory as well because reintegration status is often characterized as a regression period when people return to the basic belief of White superiority and minority inferiority (Helms, 1995). It is not surprising to see that teachers in the autonomy status gave the highest scores as this is when people become knowledgeable and appreciative about racial and cultural differences. Moreover, among those three children, teachers consistently evaluated Ming's social competence level the lowest. This could be due to their lack of cultural understanding about Asian culture and minimal experience of teaching Asian-American children, as further supported from their individual interview data.

The insights found from the qualitative interviews also support the main themes. Based upon the personal narratives from teachers who are in the contact status, issues of ethnocentrism and color-blindness emerged. Most of them had very limited experience with different cultures, had naïve beliefs about racial differences, and claimed they were color-blind. They often referred to kindergarten children's young age as an excuse for their color-blind teaching, and a few also mentioned the curriculum or developmentally appropriate practices as their justification. However, it is widely supported from the teacher education literature that teachers' personal beliefs and identities are embedded and revealed in their everyday teaching (Brantlinger, 2003; Irvine, 2003; Tatum, 1997). In fact, one of the teachers admitted this by saying, "I think there are some things about me that just fall into the classroom without my realizing it, like I act that way and I do things that way". Since it would be almost impossible to completely separate teachers'

personal beliefs and professional beliefs, teachers' color-blind beliefs should be a concern no matter what age level they are teaching.

Nonetheless, the findings from my study reveal that there was no statistically significant relationship between White-American kindergarten teachers' racial identities and their beliefs about the role of culture in social competence. This opens a door for another discussion. Rowe et al. (1994) had discussed the transition points between different attitudes where people are not fully committed to one type but go back and forth with their thoughts of race. The individual interviews with the teachers who are in the contact status did reveal that the teachers' beliefs about different cultures were fluctuating. In fact, Helms mentioned that one's racial identity is situationally influenced. Rowe et al. also discussed that people react differently to race or racial issues according to not only their own behaviors, cognitions, emotions, and attitudes but also others behaviors, cognitions, emotions, and attitudes. Thus, when a person's reaction is a result of a combination of factors, and especially when teachers were asked to think about young children, teachers' personal racial disposition and identity may not be consistently reflected in their classroom interactions with young children. Moreover, one's identity is composed of not only racial identity but also gender identity and/or socio-economic identity. Given that the current theories of racial identity development do not explain the intersection of all the above identities, it would be very difficult to tease out the influence of racial identity itself and thus the investigation of one's racial identity may not provide a full explanation of their teaching beliefs as well as practices.

Limitations of the Study

My study has several interesting and significant findings, however, its limitations must also be considered. First, there could be an issue of sampling bias. Since the samples were restricted to kindergarten teachers who were willing to participate in my study, the findings only

reflect these participants' views and may not represent the entire population of White-American kindergarten teachers. Second, there could be an issue of social desirability bias especially due to the sensitivity of topics such as race and culture. Although survey design and self reported measures are yet one of the most frequently used indicators of personal beliefs or attitudes in educational research, the absence of observable data to accompany the self reported statements remains as another limitation of the study. Third, there could be some questions regarding the instruments. Teachers' beliefs about the role of culture in social competence were examined through a newly developed instrument Child Vignette and Teachers' Beliefs Questionnaire, and therefore there are limited data to support its validity and reliability. Moreover, in spite of the authors' argument, the validity of the Social Attitude Scale is also a concern because it categorizes people into a single status group, which is not likely to be the case in the real world. If this instrument is to be used as a high inference measure, this should be carefully reconsidered and additional research needs to be conducted to support it as a reliable and valid measure. Fourth, my study did not investigate teachers' practices. Teachers' actual practices will need to be studied in order to compare the findings about their beliefs, because teachers' practices may or may not be contingent with their beliefs. Lastly, my study is also limited to White-American kindergarten teachers. A wider range of teachers in terms of racial backgrounds (i.e., African-American teachers, Hispanic teachers) will need to be investigated to thoroughly understand the entire early childhood teaching population in the United States.

Implications for Practice

As one of the few empirical investigations about early childhood teachers' racial identities and beliefs, findings from my study provide several important implications for practice in the field of early childhood teacher education. Due to the growing number of students of color in the U.S. schools and the homogeneous teaching population, an increasing number of teacher-

student/parent relationships will be cross-cultural. Increased awareness of their own White racial identity for White-American teachers is therefore crucially important and helpful in improving such relationships (Carter & Goodwin, 1994). Examining White-American kindergarten teachers' White racial identity status may assist them in gaining awareness of their own perceptions of race, culture, and multicultural education. To this end, one possible solution to take care of sampling bias among teaching population is to gain institutional support. For instance, if the department of education and/or school districts require that all teachers respond to such racial identity questionnaires (not necessarily the one used for my study), then we would be able to randomize the sample and that would yield a more accurate representation of all the teachers. Furthermore, if the teachers are asked to respond to such questionnaires in a regular intervals (i.e., every year, every 3 years... etc), then the results could provide the changes of teachers' identities which the teacher educators could use as a springboard for any professional development program.

In terms of teachers' beliefs about the role of culture in social competence, it was found that teachers showed a higher level of awareness than their perceived actual consideration. This finding implies that teachers are aware that cultural differences in social competence exist, but they are simply not yet knowledgeable enough to distinguish how exactly different they are and what needs to be done to embrace such differences. Teacher preparation institutions and teacher educators have to provide sufficient opportunities and supports for both pre-service and in-service teachers. Teachers should be equipped with accurate and appropriate knowledge and skills to understand and guide social competence for all students including those from culturally diverse backgrounds. They should also be able to recognize the subtle differences amongst similar cultural groups (i.e., Chinese, Indian, Mong... etc) in order to be truly responsive.

Furthermore, given that family environment is the most influential factor impacting children's cultural transmission of social competence, connecting home and classroom could be a direction to step forward. Utilizing parents as 'funds of knowledge' such as considering parents as a helpful resource, listening to parents' ideas, and finding ways to get the parents actively involved could be some potential things to do in order to establish home-classroom connection (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Conzales, 2005).

My study also suggests that teachers should be aware of their own racial identities and beliefs which could influence their reactions to and interactions with students, so that some children are not put at a disadvantage. This is particularly important for kindergarten teachers, as kindergarten children's experiences impact their long-term school adjustment (Rusher, McGrevin, & Lambiotte, 1992). If teachers are aware of themselves, they can work to ensure that their identities and beliefs do not negatively impact their young children. This can be especially important when working with children from different backgrounds different from their own. To this end, in order to become aware and competent, reaching out for other available resources could be one possibility. For example, teachers can partner with school counselors as consultants when facing identity issues. Interdisciplinary work among counselor educators and teacher educators could further assist such collaborations. Nonetheless, it is important to remember that it is often difficult to investigate such topics without offending the participants or interviewees not to mention that it is very hard to examine what exactly are their attitudes and beliefs. Therefore, teacher educators should be very careful when planning and implementing any kind of teacher education programs on these topics. They must establish an environment that is trusting and open. As much as a caring climate is essential for young children to learn effectively, a cooperative and supportive atmosphere is necessary for teachers too.

Implications for Future Research

My study provided perspectives about White-American kindergarten teachers' racial identities, their beliefs about the role of culture in social competence, and some possible relationships. Although the relationships from this particular study were not statistically significant, additional exploration could provide further information.

First, my study could be replicated to a wider range of early childhood teachers such as teachers from different backgrounds besides White-Americans, teachers from geographically different regions, and teachers of preschool or higher elementary grades. It would also be very interesting to compare the responses of pre-service teachers and in-service teachers to find commonalities and differences, since this could provide directions for appropriate pre-service and in-service teacher education.

Second, teachers' racial identities could be examined through a different methodology. As it is well known that there are both strengths and weaknesses in any given method or instrument, it would be a good idea to try another approach in order to provide more in-depth information regarding teachers' racial identities. For example, analyzing teachers' written journals could be one way since writing, instead of talking, may be a more comfortable and safe way for some people to disclose their honest thoughts. In the meantime, more interdisciplinary studies and trainings including teachers and school counselors, teacher educators and counselor educators are needed to augment identity development of teachers. Also, longitudinal studies that focus on the changes among teachers could be another idea to further expand this topic. Nonetheless, again it would be important to remember that rapport and a caring climate should be established before such discourse.

Finally, my study focused on teachers' beliefs and perceived consideration through the evaluation of a hypothetical child in the vignettes, but not their actual practices. An additional

implication for future research includes looking at teachers' practices. As an example, the researcher(s) might go into these teachers' classrooms and observe how they respond, interact, and/or intervene with children and families from cultural backgrounds different from their own. It could be the case that teachers who believe in the importance of cultural consideration fail to reflect it in their actual teaching, and there could be multiple reasons for it, such as goodness of fit between a teacher and a child, or more complicated family issues. Therefore, studies that examine teachers' real practices would provide a broader perspective about teachers' multicultural competencies.

APPENDIX A
PARTICIPANT CONSENT LETTER

**School of Teaching and Learning
P.O. Box 117048
University of Florida
Gainesville, FL 32611-7048**

Dear Teacher

My name is Heejeong Sophia Han and I am a doctoral candidate in School of Teaching and Learning at the University of Florida. I would like to invite you to participate in a doctoral study that will explore the relationship between kindergarten teachers' social attitudes and their beliefs about the role of culture in social competence.

You will be asked to complete three questionnaires. First, you will be asked to read six scenarios about hypothetical children, and after each scenario you will be asked to respond to a series of questions about the child presented. Second, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire that will provide information about your social attitudes. Finally, you will be asked to respond to a questionnaire asking about your personal information (i.e., age, educational level, teaching experience). These three questionnaires should take no more than 30minutes to complete.

You have been selected to participate based on your status as a kindergarten teacher upon approval from your school board. There will be no risk to you, and your refusal to give consent will not in any way affect your status at school. You are free to withdraw your permission to participate at any time without consequence. You will be assigned a confidential number, and all of your personal information will be kept completely confidential. In appreciation of your participation, you will receive a \$20 gift card. A benefit of participation includes the opportunity to further research about cultural difference and children' social competence. I will also share a copy of the research results with you when the study is completed upon request.

Please indicate your consent to participate in my study below. If you choose to participate, please complete the attached questionnaires and return it to me in the enclosed envelope together with your consent form. Additional copy of this letter is yours to keep. If you do not choose to participate, please also let me know by simply returning the blank questionnaires in the enclosed envelope. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me at (352) 392-9191, ext 249 or my advisor Dr. Kristen Kemple at (352) 392-9191, ext 250. Questions or concerns about research participant's right may be directed to the UFIRB at (352) 392-0433 or P.O.Box 112250, Gainesville, FL 32611-2250. Thank you very much in advance for your support.

Sincerely

Heejeong Sophia Han, M. A.
College of Education
University of Florida

Please read the above description, sign below, and return.

I, _____, have read the procedures described above and voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the above description.

Signature

Date

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

APPENDIX B
CHILD VIGNETTE AND TEACHERS' BELIEFS QUESTIONNAIRE

PART 1.

The following descriptions are about hypothetical children. Each child has certain characteristics in common. They are all males, from middle class socioeconomic status, physically healthy, and proficient English speakers given their age although it might not be their first language. Academically, they are among the upper 50% of the class, and they all live with both parents.

As you read each vignette, assume that the child is one of the kindergarteners in your classroom, and it is the end of the March grading period. Also assume that you have worked hard with each and all of these children to help their development of social competencies. Please read each vignette and answer the questions based on the information presented. There are no right or wrong answers, so please respond based on your first reaction.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

MING

Ming turned 6 years old in late October. His parents are Chinese and they moved to the United States when Ming was 1 year old. Usually Ming gets along well with other children and the teacher. He typically is a good listener, takes directions well, and works hard to complete any task he is told to do. However, when challenged by others, Ming quickly backs down in order to avoid conflicts and easily follows others' directions. He becomes disappointed and refuses to make eye contact with you when you correct his mistakes. Also, when he is rejected by his peers he often wanders around them without words.

1. How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about Ming?

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4

a. He avoids confrontations.	1	2	3	4
b. He is passive and socially withdrawn.	1	2	3	4
c. He is compliant.	1	2	3	4
d. He is too compliant.	1	2	3	4
e. He follows group interest over his own to become cooperative.	1	2	3	4
f. He lacks confidence and assertiveness.	1	2	3	4
g. He shows respect by avoiding eye contact.	1	2	3	4
h. He shows disengagement by avoiding eye contact.	1	2	3	4

2. On average, how would you evaluate Ming's level of social competence?

Very low	Low	High	Very high
1	2	3	4

3. Please describe why you think so.

DAVID

David celebrated his 6th birthday at the beginning of November. Both of his parents are Caucasians. David is a very good listener and takes directions well. He is usually the first child in class to finish any task he is told to do. Also, David is verbally expressive and enjoys interacting with other children and the teacher. However, David prefers to back down and easily takes back his words to avoid troublesome situations when confronted by an adult or a peer. Similarly, when his idea is not accepted from his peers, he often becomes quiet and chooses to hover around them. David also refuses to make eye contact with you whenever you try to correct his misbehavior.

1. How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about David?

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4

a. He avoids confrontations.	1	2	3	4
b. He is passive and socially withdrawn.	1	2	3	4
c. He is compliant.	1	2	3	4
d. He is too compliant.	1	2	3	4
e. He follows group interest over his own to become cooperative.	1	2	3	4
f. He lacks confidence and assertiveness.	1	2	3	4
g. He shows respect by avoiding eye contact.	1	2	3	4
h. He shows disengagement by avoiding eye contact.	1	2	3	4

2. On average, how would you evaluate David's level of social competence?

Very low	Low	High	Very high
1	2	3	4

3. Please describe why you think so.

JOSE

Jose had his 6th birthday at the end of December. Both of his parents are Hispanics, but they moved from Mexico to the United States before Jose was born. He often hovers around you and enjoys helping you with class duties. He is very sympathetic toward his peers, is well-liked, and has two close friends. Jose always prefers to work in a small group rather than by himself. However, Jose is usually too shy to be a team leader and rarely initiates conversation with new children or adults. When asked to choose something, he is often concerned about satisfying his parents (for example, when you ask Jose what he wants to be in the future, he answers “My parents want me to become a doctor.”).

1. How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about Jose?

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4

a. He is compliant.	1	2	3	4
b. He is too compliant.	1	2	3	4
c. He works well with a group.	1	2	3	4
d. He is not independent enough.	1	2	3	4
e. He is humble and modest.	1	2	3	4
f. He does not have good leadership skills.	1	2	3	4
g. He values his parents' opinions.	1	2	3	4
h. He is too dependent on his parents.	1	2	3	4

2. On average, how would you evaluate Jose's level of social competence?

Very low	Low	High	Very high
1	2	3	4

3. Please describe why you think so.

CHRIS

Chris celebrated his 6th birthday at the end of November. Both of his parents are Caucasians. Chris is well-liked by his peers because he is usually very sympathetic. Chris typically wants to work with a small group of peers rather than independently. He also enjoys getting your attention. He frequently volunteers to help you with class duties. However, Chris is frequently concerned about pleasing his parents (for example, when you ask Chris what he wants to be in the future, he answers “My parents want me to become a lawyer.”). Moreover, Chris rarely initiates conversation or interacts with new faces. He is often too shy to take the leader-role among his peers, and even reports that he feels more comfortable when playing with older children.

1. How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about Chris?

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4

a. He is compliant.	1	2	3	4
b. He is too compliant.	1	2	3	4
c. He works well with a group.	1	2	3	4
d. He is not independent enough.	1	2	3	4
e. He is humble and modest.	1	2	3	4
f. He does not have good leadership skills.	1	2	3	4
g. He values his parents' opinions.	1	2	3	4
h. He is too dependent on his parents.	1	2	3	4

2. On average, how would you evaluate Chris's level of social competence?

Very low	Low	High	Very high
1	2	3	4

3. Please describe why you would think so.

JAMAL

Jamal turned 6 in mid November. Both of his parents are African-Americans. Jamal has several friends in the class and enjoys participating in games or group activities. He is usually good at noticing and interpreting social cues during group activity (for example, when a group of children are playing with blocks, Jamal is always the first one who notices another child who stands by them). However, Jamal likes to make decisions for the group, and occasionally gets into an argument with other children for that reason. Also, he tends to ask a lot of "Why" questions, both to you and his peers, and often has difficulty verbally articulating his thoughts. When he gets extremely upset, Jamal puts his head down when you talk to him about his problem.

1. How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about Jamal?

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4

a. He has good leadership skills.	1	2	3	4
b. He wants to be in control.	1	2	3	4
c. He is good at non-verbal communication.	1	2	3	4
d. He has a problem with verbal communication.	1	2	3	4
e. He is good at working with a group.	1	2	3	4
f. He is not good at working independently.	1	2	3	4
g. He puts his head down to show his own disappointment.	1	2	3	4
h. He puts his head down to show disinterest and resistance.	1	2	3	4

2. On average, how would you evaluate Jamal's level of social competence?

Very low	Low	High	Very high
1	2	3	4

3. Please describe why you think so.

ERIC

Eric had his 6th birthday in early December. Both of his parents are Caucasians. Eric is usually very sensitive about understanding others' non-verbal cues (for example, Eric easily notices when another child glances at him during group activity). Moreover, Eric seems to be comfortable working with most of the children in the class, and always likes to play together with them as a group. He enjoys making decisions for both himself and his peers as well. However, when challenged by others, Eric gets extremely upset. Whenever you try to talk to him about his misbehavior, he typically puts his head down. Eric is not very skillful in verbally expressing his thoughts or problems so that he often fails to solve conflicts verbally. He occasionally has arguments with his peers.

1. How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about Eric?

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4

a. He has good leadership skills.	1	2	3	4
b. He wants to be in control.	1	2	3	4
c. He is good at non-verbal communication.	1	2	3	4
d. He has a problem with verbal communication.	1	2	3	4
e. He is good at working with a group.	1	2	3	4
f. He is not good at working independently.	1	2	3	4
g. He puts his head down to show his own disappointment.	1	2	3	4
h. He puts his head down to show disinterest and resistance.	1	2	3	4

2. On average, how would you evaluate Eric's level of social competence?

Very low	Low	High	Very high
1	2	3	4

3. Please describe why you think so.

PART 2.

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree		
1	2	3	4	5		
1.	I think that verbal expressiveness is a prerequisite for socially competent behavior regardless of a child's culture.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	I think that the value of independence varies from culture to culture.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I think that the value of obedience and assertiveness does not differ by culture.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	I think that the way of becoming socially competent varies from culture to culture.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	I think that socially withdrawn and shy behaviors have negative influence on peer relationships regardless of culture.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	I think that approaches to promote children's social behaviors are influenced by culture.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	I think that all children should be given the same guidance and teaching for developing their social competencies.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	I think that the characteristics of effective interaction do not vary by culture.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	I think that families from different cultural groups have different expectations of their children's social skills.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	I think that all cultures place equal emphasis on being independent.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	I think that the ability and frequency of using verbal expression or subtle non-verbal cues is a cultural preference.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	I think that obedience and assertiveness are promoted with different emphasis among different cultural groups.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	I think that the way of achieving social competence is universal.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	I think that the characteristics of effective interaction differs from one culture to another.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	I think that some behaviors are interpreted differently by people from different cultural groups.	1	2	3	4	5
16.	I think that a child who is perceived to be socially competent in one cultural group will be the same in any other cultural group.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	I think that socially withdrawn and shy behaviors associate with either peer popularity or peer rejection depending on different cultural backgrounds.	1	2	3	4	5
18.	I think that socialization goals and values are identical in families from all cultural groups.	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX C
SOCIAL ATTITUDE SCALE

This scale is designed to understand people's attitude about social and political issues. There are no right or wrong answers. Please choose the intensity that most fits you or your experience.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

1. I have had little or no contact with Black people other than seeing them on campus.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Blacks should not be allowed to continue in school unless able to perform at the same level as Whites.	1	2	3	4	5
3. White people think they are better than everyone else just because they are White.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Whenever I witness it, I confront people who make racist comments.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I greatly enjoy cross-racial (involving Blacks and Whites together) activities and I try to participate in them often.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Reversed discrimination is a big problem for Whites in America.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I support the idea of restitution for Blacks based on the history of slavery and oppression.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I do not understand why Blacks are so resentful of White people.	1	2	3	4	5
9. As a White person, I feel it is my responsibility to help eradicate racism and discrimination in our society.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I am afraid that minorities are taking over American society.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I have lived in close proximity to black people.	1	2	3	4	5
12. My family would disown me if I married a Black person.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Dominance over others is a characteristic of White culture.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Black people have brought many of their problems on themselves.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I would feel comfortable dating a Black person.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I have Black friends.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Black people are responsible for their lot in life.	1	2	3	4	5
18. White people should provide some form of restitution to Black people.	1	2	3	4	5

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

19. Slavery stopped a long time ago, Black people should just get over it.	1	2	3	4	5
20. I have never had much contact with Black people.	1	2	3	4	5
21. Racism continues because Black people dwell on the past.	1	2	3	4	5
22. My family would support me if I married a Black person.	1	2	3	4	5
23. Throughout history, White people have been the dominant oppressor.	1	2	3	4	5
24. In America, people pretty much decide their own fate.	1	2	3	4	5
25. None of my friends would look down on me for having an interracial relationship.	1	2	3	4	5
26. I would feel uncomfortable living near Black people.	1	2	3	4	5
27. If Black people weren't so lazy, they wouldn't be in the position they're in.	1	2	3	4	5
28. If the media portrayed Black people more positively, racial tensions would end.	1	2	3	4	5
29. When I hear a racist joke, I say something to show my disapproval.	1	2	3	4	5
30. There are more Black people on welfare than Whites.	1	2	3	4	5
31. I do not have any Black friends.	1	2	3	4	5
32. White people are responsible for putting an end to racism.	1	2	3	4	5
33. I would feel comfortable with a Black physician.	1	2	3	4	5
34. Affirmative action is just reverse discrimination.	1	2	3	4	5
35. I am ashamed of what my Whiteness represents.	1	2	3	4	5
36. When I hear someone make racist comments, I say something to them to show my disapproval.	1	2	3	4	5
37. If Black people wanted to change things, they could take action themselves.	1	2	3	4	5
38. I feel comfortable when I am in close contact with Black people.	1	2	3	4	5
39. I think White people should work hard to give up their advantages.	1	2	3	4	5
40. Blacks must get over the issue of slavery so that we can move on.	1	2	3	4	5

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

APPENDIX D
TEACHER INFORMATION QUESTIONNAIRE

1. **What is your gender?** _____ female _____ male

2. **What is your age?** _____

3. **What is your background? (please check one)**
_____ Caucasian/White-American (Non-Hispanic)
_____ Black/African-American (Non-Hispanic)
_____ Hispanic/Latino-American
_____ Asian/Pacific Islander
_____ Native American
_____ Multiracial
_____ Other (please specify) _____

4. **What is your most advanced educational degree? (please check one and specify)**
_____ Bachelor's in _____
_____ Master's in _____
_____ Specialist in _____
_____ Doctorate in _____

5. **Where did you go for your undergraduate?** _____

6. **Where did you go for graduate school?** _____ or N/A _____

7. **What type of certification do you have? (please check all that apply)**
_____ Elementary certification only
_____ Elementary certification with an early childhood endorsement
_____ Birth to age four certification
_____ Age three to grade three certification
_____ Pre-K handicapped endorsement
_____ Other (please specify) _____

8. **How many years of teaching experience do you have in total?** _____

9. How many years of experience teaching kindergarten do you have? _____

10. Currently how many children are in your class? _____

11. Currently how many children in your class are from the following backgrounds?

- _____ Caucasian/White-American (Non-Hispanic)
- _____ Black/African-American (Non-Hispanic)
- _____ Hispanic/Latino-American
- _____ Asian/Pacific Islander
- _____ Native American
- _____ Multiracial
- _____ Others (please specify) _____

12. Generally speaking, how much experience do you have teaching children from different backgrounds than your own? (see listings of Question 10)

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Always

13. Generally speaking, how much do you consider yourself to be competent when teaching children from different backgrounds than your own?

1	2	3	4	5
Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High

14. If there is a need to obtain additional ideas, can I contact you in the future?

_____ Yes, I can be contacted if needed.

Please provide your phone number or e-mail which you prefer to be reached.

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

_____ No, I do not wish to be contacted again.

15. Please provide me with your address where you wish the gift card to be sent.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

APPENDIX E
FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

PART 1.

What are your personal thoughts about social competence?

Prompted with the following phrases as necessary:

- verbal expressiveness
- independence
- obedience and assertiveness
- socially withdrawn and shy behaviors
- effective interaction
- socialization goals and values

What are your thoughts about each of the following statement, and why?

- I think that the ability and frequency of using verbal expression or subtle non-verbal cues is a cultural preference.
- I think that the value of independence varies from culture to culture.
- I think that obedience and assertiveness are promoted with different emphasis among different cultural groups.
- I think that socially withdrawn and shy behaviors associate with either peer popularity or peer rejection depending on different cultural backgrounds.
- I think that a child who is perceived to be socially competent in one cultural group will be the same in any other cultural group.
- I think that some behaviors are interpreted differently by people from different cultural groups.
- I think that approaches to promote children's social behaviors are influenced by culture.
- I think that families from different cultural groups could have different expectations of their children's social skills.
- I think that the way of becoming socially competent varies from culture to culture.

PART 2.

Show them the scenarios of Ming, Jose, and Jamal without the information about each child's cultural background.

- How would you evaluate the level of social competence about this child, and why?
- How would you intervene with this child to promote his social competence, and why?

Tell them, what if this child was Asian/Hispanic/African-American instead of White-American:

- How much difference would it make with your decision?
- How would you evaluate and intervene, and why?

What kind of knowledge/ideas do you have for certain group of people?

- Asian
- Hispanic
- African-American

PART 3.

As a human being:

- How much experience do you think you have interacting with people from different cultural groups?
- How would you evaluate your multicultural/interracial self-efficacy?

As a kindergarten teacher:

- How much experience do you think you have so far teaching children from different cultural groups?
- How would you evaluate your multicultural teaching efficacy?
- In regards of your teaching efficacy, what do you think has helped you the most? (i.e., personal experience, college education, teaching experience)
- How much influence do you think your personal identity and beliefs has in your teaching?
- What are your thoughts about multicultural education in early childhood?

APPENDIX F
PILOT PARTICIPANT CONSENT LETTER 1

**School of Teaching and Learning
P.O. Box 117048
University of Florida
Gainesville, FL 32611-7048**

Dear Teacher

My name is Heejeong Sophia Han and I am a doctoral candidate in School of Teaching and Learning at the University of Florida. I would like to invite you to participate in the preliminary portion of my doctoral study that will explore the kindergarten teachers' beliefs about the role of culture in social competence.

You will be asked to participate in a focus group to explore the appropriateness of an instrument to be used in the study. First, you will be asked to read six vignettes about hypothetical children, and after each scenario you will be asked to respond to a series of questions about the child presented. Second, you will be asked to participate in a focus group meeting, during which we will discuss the vignettes and questionnaires. Reading the vignettes and answering the questions should take no longer than 15 minutes to complete, and the focus group meeting will take approximately 30 minutes on the same day.

You have been selected to participate based on your status as a kindergarten teacher upon approval from your school principal. There will be no risk to you, and your refusal to give consent will not in any way affect your status at school. You are free to withdraw your permission to participate at any time without consequence. You will be assigned a confidential number, and all of your personal information will be kept completely confidential. In appreciation of your participation, you will receive a \$20 Target gift card. A benefit of participation includes the opportunity to further research about cultural difference and children' social competence. I will also be happy to provide you with a summary of the research results when the study is completed upon request.

Please indicate your consent to participate in my study by signing below, and return it to me in the enclosed envelope. If you agree to participate please let me know your availability as well. Additional copy is for yours to keep. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me at (352) 392-9191, ext 249 or my advisor Dr. Kristen Kemple at (352) 392-9191, ext 250. Questions or concerns about research participant's right may be directed to the UFIRB at (352) 392-0433 or P.O.Box 112250, Gainesville, FL 32611-2250. Thank you very much in advance for your support.

Sincerely

Heejeong Sophia Han, M. A.
College of Education
University of Florida

Please read the above description, sign below, and return.

I, _____, have read the procedures described above and voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the above description.

Signature

Date

=====

If you agreed to participate, please indicate when would be the best time for you to meet for this study. You will be contacted again soon with the confirmed date and place. Thank you very much!

_____ Aug 30 (Wed) 3:00 – 4:00
_____ Sep 1 (Fri) 3:00 – 4:00
_____ Sep 6 (Wed) 3:00 – 4:00
_____ Sep 8 (Fri) 3:00 – 4:00

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

APPENDIX G
PILOT PARTICIPANT CONSENT LETTER 2

**School of Teaching and Learning
P.O. Box 117048
University of Florida
Gainesville, FL 32611-7048**

Dear Pre-service Teacher

My name is Heejeong Sophia Han and I am a doctoral candidate in School of Teaching and Learning at the University of Florida. I would like to invite you to participate in the preliminary portion of my doctoral study that will explore kindergarten teachers' beliefs about the role of culture in social competence.

You will be asked to read six vignettes about hypothetical children, and after each scenario you will be asked to respond to a series of questions about the child presented. Reading the vignettes and answering the questions should take no longer than 15 minutes to complete. You will be asked to complete the same questionnaire twice within a two-week period.

You have been selected to participate based on your status as a pre-service teacher upon approval from your course instructor. There will be no risk to you, and your refusal to give consent will not in any way affect your status in your course or with your instructor. You are free to withdraw your permission to participate at any time without consequence. You will be assigned a confidential number, and all of your personal information will be kept completely confidential. A benefit of participation includes the opportunity to further research about cultural difference and children's social competence. Your participation will be very appreciated. I will also be happy to provide you with a summary of the research results when the study is completed upon request.

Please indicate your consent to participate in my study by signing below and return it to me. Additional copy is for yours to keep. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me at (352) 392-9191, ext 249 or my advisor Dr. Kristen Kemple at (352) 392-9191, ext 250. Questions or concerns about research participant's right may be directed to the UFIRB at (352) 392-0433 or P.O.Box 112250, Gainesville, FL 32611-2250. Thank you very much in advance for your support.

Sincerely

Heejeong Sophia Han, M. A.
College of Education
University of Florida

Please read the above description, sign below, and return.

I, _____, have read the procedures described above and voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the above description.

Signature

Date

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

LIST OF REFERENCES

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Hee Jeong (Sophia) Han was born on July 11, 1973, in Seoul, South Korea, where she grew up for most of her life until she came over to the United States to pursue her doctoral study. She received both her bachelors and masters in Early Childhood Education from Ewha Women's University, and taught preschool and kindergarten children for four years. She also taught early childhood education and child development courses at several colleges for two and a half years. She began her doctoral program at the University of Florida in 2003. Her major area of study includes early childhood teachers' identities and beliefs, children's development of social competence, and cultural/social influence in early education. She currently lives at Louisville, Kentucky with her husband and a daughter, and serves as an assistant professor in the Department of Teaching and Learning at the University of Louisville.