



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Journal of Experimental Child Psychology

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/jecp



No one likes a copycat: A cross-cultural investigation of children's response to plagiarism



F. Yang^{a,b,*}, A. Shaw^b, E. Garduno^b, K. R. Olson^b

^a University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA 19104, USA

^b Yale University, New Haven, CT 06511, USA

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 1 June 2013

Revised 7 November 2013

Available online 29 January 2014

Keywords:

Plagiarism

Copy

Ideas

Culture

Intellectual property

Development

ABSTRACT

Copying other people's ideas is evaluated negatively by American children and adults. The current study investigated the influence of culture on children's evaluations of plagiarism by comparing children from three countries—the United States, Mexico, and China—that differ in terms of their emphasis on the protection of intellectual property and ideas. Children (3- to 6-year-olds) were presented with videos involving two characters drawing pictures and were asked to evaluate the character who drew unique work or the character who copied someone else's drawing. The study showed that 5- and 6-year-olds from all three cultures evaluated copiers negatively compared with unique drawers. These results suggest that children from cultures that place different values on the protection of ideas nevertheless develop similar concerns with plagiarism by 5-year-olds.

© 2013 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Introduction

Ideas are an important part of thriving in Western society; from MacArthur grants and TED talks to grade school art shows and high school robotics competitions, good ideas are highly valued. Not only do people in Western societies value ideas (Buccafusco & Sprigman, 2010; Goodenough & Decker, 2009), but they also feel a sense of ownership over their ideas (Ariely, 2010; Kanngiesser, Gjersoe, & Hood, 2010; Kanngiesser & Hood, in press) and create laws to enforce the protection of ideas (Merges, 2000). Although at first blush it may appear that the valuation of ideas might occur in Western societies as a result of the explicit teaching about ideas and their value throughout the school

* Corresponding author at: University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA 19104, USA.

E-mail address: fanyang@gse.upenn.edu (F. Yang).

years, research to date suggests that 5- and 6-year-old children in one Western culture, the United States, already react negatively to others stealing credit for ideas (Olson & Shaw, 2011) and value the creation of ideas over other types of work (e.g., labor; Li, Shaw, & Olson, 2013). Despite an early occurrence of concerns with plagiarism in American children, little is known about how cultural differences may affect people's early intuitions about plagiarism. To date, we know of no research that has investigated children's response to idea theft cross-culturally, the focus of the current article.

All research that has been done on children's understanding of ideas and plagiarism has been conducted on populations from North America, giving us little insight into what relevant experiences are necessary for children to develop a dislike of plagiarism. By the time American children are 6 years old, they apply some rules from physical ownership (Blake & Harris, 2009; Friedman & Neary, 2008; Neary, Friedman, & Burnstein, 2009) to ideas (Shaw, Li, & Olson, 2012). For example, children think that the first person to actually invent a new song, rather than the person who first tried to come up with the song, owns the song. Children in the United States also think that ideas are valuable—rewarding ownership of a picture to a person who came up with the idea for it rather than the person who did the physical work in creating the picture (Li et al., 2013). Furthermore, Olson and Shaw (2011) found that American children evaluate those who copy other people's ideas negatively. They had children watch videos in which a puppet either plagiarized another character's drawing or produced a unique drawing. Children were then asked to evaluate how good or bad the puppets were. The authors found that 5- and 6-year-olds, but not 3- and 4-year-olds, evaluated the plagiarizers negatively compared with the unique drawers. Therefore, in America, by 5 years of age children already demonstrate intuitions that match adult intuitions about plagiarism in their society; that is, they dislike those who copy other people's ideas.

In Western cultures, individual creativity is greatly valued, and there is a strong tradition of protecting intellectual property in these societies (Goncalo & Staw, 2006). Thus, children in Western societies are likely to be exposed to social practices that emphasize protection and respect for ideas. For example, children may receive direct instructions from adults to give credit to other people's ideas whenever necessary, to think independently, and not to copy other people's ideas. Children may also observe that ideas are treated like valuable resources by members of their society and that creativity and innovation are praised and rewarded (Bontis, 1998; Dewett & Denisi, 2004; Fasko, 2001; Miller, 2000; Sprigman, Buccafusco, & Burns, 2013). If children see ideas as valuable, they may come to see plagiarism as effectively stealing another person's valuable reputational credit, which of course would lead them to react negatively to plagiarism (Shaw, Li, & Olson, 2013). The cultural emphasis on ideas and the related social practices may help children to realize the value of ideas and think that it is wrong to copy them.

Not every culture places the same value on ideas and the protection of them. Compared with Western cultures, Asian cultures in general tend to value harmony and conformity more than uniqueness (Kim & Markus, 1999). Take the example of China. Unlike the Western education system that emphasizes the development of original and creative thinking, the traditional Chinese school system is more centralized and focuses on unquestioning acceptance, rote learning, memorization, and drill work (Cheng, 2004; Gardner, 1989). Chinese teachers tend to view some characteristics of creative students—such as dissidence, expressiveness, and challenging authorities—as socially undesirable (Chan & Chan, 1999; Wang & Mao, 1996). During recent years, educational reforms have been introduced due to an increasing concern with the development of students' creativity. Nevertheless, these reforms have encountered many obstacles deeply rooted in the sociocultural traditions, and traditional teaching methods are still widely used (Cheung, Tse, & Tsang, 2003). In addition to not placing much value on ideas, there is also very little value placed on protecting intellectual property. Before the government established its first patent law in 1984 (more than 150 years after the United States and most of Europe did), Chinese people had no legal protection from others taking and using their ideas and inventions. Even today, China has a reputation for producing abundant counterfeit intellectual goods, including movies, music, electronics, and even building designs (FlorCruz, 2013). Given this lack of emphasis on the value and protection of ideas, do Chinese children evaluate plagiarism as negatively as children in Western cultures?

As noted above, existing research on children's understanding of plagiarism has been conducted only with American children. Researchers have investigated the role of culture in children's

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/918080>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/918080>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)