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The Effect of Ethnicity and Aggression on Value Judgments of Female Aggressors

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Running head: ETHNICITY, AGGRESSION, AND VALUE JUDGMENT

The Effect of Ethnicity and Aggression on Value Judgments of Female Aggressors

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Abstract

The effect of ethnicity and aggression on the value judgments of female aggressors was examined. Aggression was subdivided into two categories, indirect aggression and verbal aggression. Indirect aggression is defined as attacking the target through social manipulation such as gossiping or exclusion from a group with the intent to harm the target. Verbal aggression is defined as attacking the target directly through verbal statements and intending to harm the target. Differences in the expression and acceptance of aggression may be the result of cultural variability due to the individualism/ collectivism dimension. Participants were 64 undergraduate females (45 Caucasian, 19 Asian American). After participants read three vignettes that depicted either indirect or verbal aggression, they were asked to rate the level at which they felt the actions were justified and the level of acceptability of the action. Then participants completed the Orthogonal Ethnic Identity Scale. I hypothesized that Asians would be less accepting of indirect and verbal aggression than Caucasians and that Caucasians would justify verbal and indirect aggression more than Asians. I also hypothesized that indirect aggression would be more acceptable and justifiable than verbal aggression for Caucasians and Asians, but Caucasians would justify and accept verbal aggression more than Asians. Indirect aggression was rated as more acceptable then verbal aggression irrespective of ethnic categories. Thus, counselors may be more aware of aggressive behavior and be better able to treat clients' aggressive behavior in their relationships.

The Effect of Ethnicity and Aggression on Value Judgment of Female Aggressors

In numerous cultures, women have been socialized to temper any tendencies toward expressing aggression and have been portrayed as non-aggressive. This depiction of women as non-aggressive fails to reflect actual behavior. Recent findings have indicated that women are quite capable of aggressing, just not in the manner in which aggression has been typically defined (e.g., Bjorkvist, 1994; Burbank, 1994; Eagly & Steffen, 1986; Harris & Knight-Bohnoff, 1996). Aggression was previously defined as the intent to harm a target utilizing physical or verbal methods (Campbell, Sapochnik, & Muncer, 1997). Other methods women might use to aggress were not considered. Recently, definitions of aggression have been reassessed to include any behavior that a person with an intent to harm a target. This behavior may include employing physical, verbal, or social manipulation tactics (Bjorkvist, 1994; Burbank, 1994; Eagly & Steffen, 1986; Osterman, Bjorkivist, Lagerspetz, Kaukiainen, Landau, Fraczek, & Caprara, 1998).

Now that female aggression has been recognized the question remains why females choose to act aggressively. Numerous factors may contribute to female aggressive behaviors. As culture plays a significant role in establishing standards accepted by individuals within society, exploring the differences attributed to culture may reveal some of the factors that contribute to attitudes toward female aggression. In examining the relevance of cultural contribution toward female aggression, it is essential to consider different perspectives regarding social standards. Both the societal culture and the ethnic culture of the individual must be considered in assessing aggression.

Considering the societal aspect of culture, the ideologies of individualism and collectivism may impact how women view other women's aggression. Individualistic

cultures focus on independence and achieving for the self, whereas collective cultures direct attention toward the collective; family and community (e.g., Bochner, 1994; Feather & McKee, 1993; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1989, 1990). The United States and Asian countries are primary representatives of individualism and collectivism, respectively. Thus, individualism and collectivism must be addressed as societal culture influences social thinking.

The influence of societal culture on the aggressive behavior of women could be a strong contributing factor, but ethnic culture should also be considered in the perceptions of female aggressive behavior. Due to the specific traditions and values of ethnic cultures, the impact of ethnic culture must be taken into account. Ethnic cultures may promote different values than those reflected by society at large, altering the influence of societal culture and shaping the views of female aggression.

Another factor that should be considered is the type of aggression employed by the female aggressor. The suggestion of recent findings that aggression does not have to represent physical harm in any way allows for other possibilities of aggressing (Bjorkvist, 1994; Burbank, 1994, Campbell, Sapochink, & Muncer, 1997; Eagly & Steffen, 1986; Osterman et al., 1998). Researchers (e.g., Bjorkvist, 1994; Burbank, 1994; Eagly & Steffen, 1986; Osterman et al., 1998) have concluded that females tend to use verbal and indirect aggression frequently. These forms of aggression have been discounted by past researchers. The purpose of this present study is to explore the effect that cultural identity and the type of aggression expressed have on the attitudes toward female aggressors.

The Influence of Culture

Societies develop and adopt various social standards that become social norms.

Each set of social standards is unique to those that created them. Thus, each culture expresses a set of values that are representative of that particular culture. These systems of values are complex and multi-dimensional. Numerous researchers (e.g., Feather & McKee, 1993; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1989) have proposed that countries tend to exhibit characteristics that may be placed in one of two categories, individualism or collectivism.

Individualism is comprised of characteristics that focus on the self (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). This concept is a label that describes a person who is autonomous (Bochner, 1994) and derives self-esteem from his or her own internal attributions, rather than from group validation (Markus & Kitayama, 1991;Triandis, 1990). Characteristics of an individualistic society include a large number of in-groups, greater financial independence, cultural diversity, and lack of concern for how the individual's actions impact the group (Triandis, 1989). The importance placed on the fulfillment of the individual and his or her goals takes precedence over group aspirations (Triandis, 1990).

Maintaining different points of view is easier in individualistic cultures because of the emphasis on the self. Homogeneity is not necessary for survival, physically or professionally, as the individualistic societies are complex and do not rely on community operation (Triandis, 1990). Individuals have the freedom to belong to a social group or act independently. Although individualistic cultures have in-groups and out-groups there is little behavioral contrast in interactions between the two types of groups (Triandis, 1990). Belonging to a specific social group does not necessarily provide advantages socially or in the workplace. The abundance of in-groups allows individuals to be self-sufficient and not have to rely on one group for support (Triandis, 1989). Freeberg and

Stein (1996) found that Anglos from the United States reported having more contact with social systems outside the family than their collectivistic counterparts. The flexibility of a variety of social supports provides independence for individuals. They do not have to do things to please one group; they may just switch to another group.

The collectivistic mentality is centered on community and one's membership in that community (Freeberg & Stein, 1996; Triandis, 1989, 1990). The self-concept of collectivistic individuals centers on the group more than themselves (Bochner, 1994; Feather & McKee, 1993; Iwao & Triandis, 1993; Markus & Kitayama, 1991;Triandis, 1990). Individuals are viewed as an intregal part of the community, who contribute to life by improving themselves and working with the collective for the good of the community, rather than breaking away and achieving for themselves independently (Kitayama, Markus, Matsumoto, & Norasakkunkit, 1997). In this manner, individuals are encouraged to become members of the community, serving others' interests rather than their own (Kitayama, Markus, Matsumoto, & Norasakkunkit ,1997).

These cultures increase their chances of survival by promoting interdependency (Triandis, 1989). The collectivistic society values family security, restrictive conformity, reliance on in-groups, emphasis on hierarchy, and concern about how their choices affect the group (Freeberg & Stein, 1996; Triandis, 1989,1990). Interdependent people view achievement as being able to maintain harmony within the social group, even if that means sacrificing their personal goals (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Collectivists focus on the in-group and regulate their behavior according to the group with whom they are interacting (Triandis, 1990). Differing opinions and beliefs may have a negative effect on the group because they act as divisive components that split the group rather than unite it.

The cultural differences between individualistic and collectivistic societies appear to have a great impact on the cognitions of the populace. The psyche is unable to act independently of its surroundings and must work with the culture's adopted value system in order to function (Kitayama, Markus, Matsumoto, & Norasakkankit, 1997). The psyche develops through interaction with the culture, while the culture constantly influences the cognitions of the individual (Kitayama et al., 1997). Trafimow, Triandis and Goto (1991) contended that there are two self-cognitions that people are capable of accessing, the collective self and the private self. The self-cognition that is easiest to access will be used more frequently. Primarily, accessibility could be attributed to the culture in which an individual is involved. The probability of choosing one cognition over the other would be heavily influenced by the values upheld by the culture. People from a more individualistic background are more likely to retrieve private self-cognitions rather than collective cognitions because in the individualistic culture independent thought is encouraged and is a value expressed within the culture. People with collectivistic cultural backgrounds are more likely to access the collective self because their culture promotes community values and thinking for the good of the community.

Throughout the world, societies have been grouped into individualistic or collectivistic categories. According to Triandis (1989), societies that tend to have more individualistic inclinations are the United States and Western European countries. This is primarily due to their emphasis on individual goals and lack of duty toward the family or an in-group. Tamura and Lau (1992) found that in Britain the ideas of autonomy and individuality are predominant, displacing the emphasis on connectedness within society. Representing the other side of the dichotomy are Eastern and Hispanic societies, such as

Japan and Mexico. These societies have been classified as collectivistic. These cultures place a stronger emphasis on family relationships and performing duties for the family. Connor (1976) found that Japanese Americans valued family more than Caucasian Americans, with emphasis placed on duty, obligation, and hierarchy in the family system (Connor, 1976). In addition, Tamura and Lau (1992) found that the Japanese value system differed from that of the individualistic British society, as the Japanese stressed the importance of being connected to others and social affiliations, whereas the British did not. Cousins (1989) found that the Japanese defined themselves in terms of social relationships and their place in the social world more than their American counterparts. The Japanese person is not regarded as solely an individual, but considered in the context of the social system (Tamura & Lau, 1992).

The ideal of defining the self from social relationships is reflected in other Asian societies as well. Rhee, Uleman, Lee, and Roman (1995) found that Koreans described themselves using subtle distinctions, but were careful not to differentiate themselves from the group significantly. The Chinese were found to conform more to social groups than people from the United States and Britain (Bond & Smith, 1996). These findings indicate the collectivistic tendencies for Asian societies.

The focus of individualistic and collectivistic societies also affects the cognitions individuals in the society access, which has a bearing on where individuals find their self-esteem (Trafimow et al., 1991). Individualistic cultures adopt an independent construal that may encourage individuals to focus on the self to such a degree that they attribute achievement to themselves and regard failure as a result of external forces (Feather & McKee, 1993; Hamid, 1994). Individuals utilizing independent self-construal dissociate

failure from themselves and attribute praise that is deserved, to hard work, (Feather & McKee, 1993). American self-worth is derived from independent achievement as reflected in success of the individual (Brockner & Chen, 1996). Kitayama et al. (1997) found that people from the U.S. tend to enhance themselves, rather than criticize. They concentrate on boosting their own self- image because it brings them a sense of achievement. Such a tendency would severely impact how they saw themselves and their self-worth (Feather & McKee, 1993).

The greater the achievement tendency to perform well for the self, the more likely the individual comes from an individualistic culture (Sagie, Elizur, & Yamauchi, 1996). Achievement tendencies were highest for U.S. participants and lowest for Japanese participants, reflecting the individualistic and collectivistic tendencies (Sagie et al., 1996). Tafarodi & Swann (1996) reported that Americans scored higher than the Chinese on a self-ratings scale. Chinese students tended to attribute effects of negative situations to internal sources, whereas Americans made external attributions (Morris & Peng, 1994). In addition, American participants provided more idiocentric responses than Chinese participants (Trafimow et al., 1991) and were found to be more assertive than their collectivistic counterparts (Kashima, Yamaguchi, Kim, & Choi, 1995). Both of these studies indicate the presence of individualistic characteristics and the lack of collectivistic tendencies for individuals from the U.S.

The collectivistic cultures promote another type of self-construal, the interdependent self-construal. The Japanese have been influenced and habituated to act in accordance with their cultural idea of self-construal (Kitayama et al., 1997). In a collective society, group achievement takes precedence over individual achievement

(Feather & McKee, 1993; Iwao & Triandis, 1993). The Japanese gain self-worth from their membership within the group. Thus, high achievers should not be set apart from the group, but rather remain as part of the collective. Furthermore, Diener and Diener (1995) found that self esteem and life satisfaction in collectivistic nations was lower than in individualistic countries, specifically in the comparison between Japan and the U.S. The Japanese lower self-esteem indicates their perception of themselves as team players, rather than individuals striving for their own achievement and personal gratification. They have the community in mind and feel better about themselves if they focus on the good of the collective rather than themselves (McFarland & Buehler, 1995). The Japanese indicated that the self should be presented in a more modest way, not like the self-glorifying way of Western societies (Feather & McKee, 1993).

With the prevalent emphasis on working with the group and being a member of the community, collectivistic people value traits that help individuals become better group members and traits that achieve and maintain group unity. Chinese people expressed their interest in working with someone who is agreeable (Bond & Forgas, 1984). This trait is valued because of the amount of time the group must spend together and because it makes accomplishing tasks less complicated. Bond, Leung, and Wan (1982) found that the Chinese were more democratic than Americans in the assignment of rewards within the group regardless of how much input a group member contributed. Rewards were distributed equally so that group unity could be maintained. The emphasis on agreeableness and the equal division of rewards are both characteristics that are beneficial for the group. They promote group cohesiveness and maintain harmony.

With the continual emphasis on the group, the self-esteem of Asians appears to suffer. A possible explanation for the low self esteem scores is that the Japanese culture causes individuals to merge the concepts of separate and group identity (Mahler, 1976). Japanese individuals' self esteem may be low because as individuals they lack the motivation to achieve for themselves. Japanese participants scored lower on self esteem scales than American participants (Mahler, 1976). Kitayama et al. (1997) found that the Japanese who live in the U.S., a typical individualistic society, have a weaker self criticizing tendency than their counterparts in Japan. These findings indicate that cultural differences have an impact on the way individuals perceive and learn to evaluate themselves.

The foundation for self-esteem for independent cultures is based on the ability of individuals to express themselves and find validation in their internal attributes (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). This tendency may begin in the family because U.S. families allow children to pursue their own interests, rather than encouraging the child to act in the interests of the family, as the Japanese do (Triandis, 1989). McFarland and Buehler (1995) found that people lacking an individualistic background were less likely to achieve simply for themselves. The group as a whole was more important to them than performing well as an individual. When the overall group performed poorly, the individuals were more upset than when they performed poorly and the group did well overall. These individuals viewed themselves within the context of the group rather than as separate individuals. They felt that the group's achievement should come before their own. Other individuals, who exhibited lower collective self-esteem scored higher in the situation where they were really successful and their group was unsuccessful. These

individuals personal performance had more meaning for them, whereas the overall group performance lacked significance (McFarland & Buehler, 1995).

Aggression

From a social learning perspective, the experiences people have influence their interaction with others. Applying this theory to aggression, people will perform the types of aggressive acts that they have experienced or seen directly. Predominantly, researchers have focused on the effect of aggression toward the target rather than by direct personal observation. Harris (1996) found that there was a strong correlation for women between the amount and type of aggression experienced as the target and the amount and type of aggression performed as the instigator. The more aggressive acts a woman experienced, the more likely she would aggress against another person. In addition, women were more likely to implement the type of aggression that was utilized against them. These findings remained consistent regardless of ethnicity or age. Furthermore, Burbank (1994) found that women choose other women as their targets for aggressive acts. Ninety-one percent of the aggressive acts performed by women were directed toward other women. Integrating the findings of Harris (1996) and Burbank (1994) with the social learning perspective, aggression of females toward other females is a relevant concern as the level of aggression inflicted toward the target affects later behaviors.

Aggression is classified into three types; physical, verbal, and indirect. Women choose to implement two forms of aggression, verbal and indirect aggression, most frequently (Bjorkvist, 1994; Burbank, 1994). Verbal aggression is defined as attacking the target directly through verbal statements without threatening physical violence, whereas indirect aggression is defined as attacking the target through social manipulation

such as gossiping or exclusion from a group. Women rarely use the third type of aggression, physical aggression. Physical aggression is defined as an attempt to harm the target using physical force or threatening physical harm.

As would be predicted by the social learning perspective, girls tend to aggress with the same type of aggression that is used against them. From preadolescence onward, girls are aggressed against most by other girls (Osterman et al., 1998). These female aggressors usually implement indirect aggression when attacking their targets (Osterman et al., 1998). Cross-culturally, girls by the age of eight apply indirect aggression more than any other aggressive style in school settings and continue to use indirect aggression through adolescence (Campbell et al., 1997; Osterman et al., 1998). Researchers propose that other girls may be a contributing source for girls' indirect aggression tendencies (Bjorkvist, 1994; Campbell et al., 1997; Osterman et al., 1998). Indirect aggression, the form used most frequently by women, will be the choice for females because they have a higher probability of encountering it directly than any other form of aggression.

Utilizing indirect aggression, aggressors are able to eliminate a variety of problems that arise due to aggressive behavior. Women view all of their aggressive behavior as a source of guilt and anxiety because they feel their behavior caused others to suffer (Eagly & Steffen, 1986). Indirect aggression techniques allow the female aggressors to remain anonymous so they may aggress without responsibility or guilt since their actions may not be directly connected with their identity by the target they are aggressing against. As hurting the target is the objective of aggression, female aggressors' targets will suffer from the aggressive act, but the aggressor can dissociate herself from any feelings of guilt because others cannot hold her responsible. Bjorkvist

(1994) contends that the aggressor attempts to find the technique that will be effective at harming the target while incurring as little danger as possible for the aggressor. The implementation of indirect aggression fulfills both goals because aggressors can use tactics that may not be traced back to them. This strategy, in turn, also prevents future harm of the aggressor by the target. Female aggressors appear to follow Bjorkvist's principle as they increase the amount of indirect aggression they apply throughout their lifetimes (Bjorkvist, 1994). Another factor that may contribute to the rise of indirect aggression for females is increased maneuverability in the social environment because it allows the aggressor to harm the target while remaining safe (Bjorkvist, 1994). Again, aggressors may hide their identity and use social manipulation and gossip to harm targets. In this manner, targets would not know that aggressors were the origin of the attack.

Female aggressors' second most preferred method of aggression is verbal aggression (Osterman et al., 1998). Verbal aggression is often employed as soon aggressors are able to use words to express themselves (Bjorkvist, 1994). By utilizing verbal aggression, aggressors are able to keep themselves relatively safe by placing a physical distance between themselves and the target (Bjorkvist, 1994). Aggressors are still able to inflict harm, while reducing their risk of encountering danger during aggression. Harris and Knight-Bohnoff (1996) found that when women are able to use verbal tactics they are more aggressive than when they are limited to using physical strategies.

Female Gender Roles and Aggression

Although aggressive behaviors by females are well documented (Bjorkvist, 1994; Campbell et al., 1997; Eagly & Steffen, 1986; Osterman et al., 1998), mixed messages

regarding the acceptance and encouragement of female aggression still remain. In the United States and China, the traditional female gender role conflicts with the promotion of all aggressive behaviors (Campbell, Muncer, Guy, & Banim, 1996; Eagly & Steffen, 1986). Society values women for their role as nurturer and encourages orientation toward caring and responsibility (Bem, 1974; Glasser, 1997; Ruble, 1983). The woman's role is that of a caregiver, which conflicts with the role of the aggressor. The emphasis on nurturing requires the desire to help other and placing the needs of others before your own (Chowdrow, 1978; Eagly & Crowley, 1986). The aims of caregivers fail to meet the goal of aggressors because the aggressors' intent is to meet their own goals by harming a target (Campbell et al., 1996; Chowdrow, 1978; Eagly & Steffen, 1986). Aggressors use their behavior to benefit themselves not to serve others (Chowdrow, 1978; Eagly & Crowley, 1986). Furthermore, the media de-emphasizes female aggression by focusing on other subjects (Campbell et al., 1996). Male physical aggression is more visible in the media and maintains a higher profile (Campbell et al., 1996). Male characters are more likely to carry weapons than female characters (Chu & McIntyre, 1995). In addition, male characters are associated with being aggressive and rough, while female characters are associated with being emotional (Chu & McIntyre, 1995). Models of male physical aggression are prevalent in popular culture from action movies to cartoons to police dramas on television. These types of models are lacking for women in the media. Yet women continue to exhibit aggressive behaviors both verbally and indirectly.

The presence of female aggressive behaviors may originate from the increased rejection of the traditional female gender role. Chia, Moore, Lam, and Chuang (1994) found that women in the United States expressed liberal attitudes regarding marital roles

and the role of other women within society. Women in the United States are shifting away from the traditional female gender role towards a more androgynous role (Novakovic & Kidd, 1988). Novakovic and Kidd found that U.S. females were classified as masculine and androgynous more often then their Yugoslavian counterparts. Accompanying this shift in gender roles has also been the acceptance of traits that were once considered to be only masculine. U.S. women have become increasingly more assertive, formerly a characteristic that was solely associated with male behavior. This assertiveness is viewed as being aggressive (Campbell et al., 1996). Expanding the types of characteristics that are socially acceptable for women, women are able to act more aggressively and not be restricted by the constraints of societal expectations.

The combination of society's attitudes toward female aggression and the new attitudes that are emerging from women themselves generate some confusion concerning women's reports of female aggression, both for themselves and their female peers. Women report viewing aggression as unacceptable and out of control (Campbell, Muncer & Coyle, 1992; Campbell, Muncer & Gorman, 1993; Campbell et al., 1996; Campbell et al., 1997), while simultaneously supporting aggression (Harris, 1995). Public opinion surveys indicate that women do not approve of aggressive behavior (Eagly & Steffen, 1986). Harris (1995) found that women were significantly lower in condoning self-defense, punishment, and retaliation toward an individual who was aggressing against them. Women rated restraint and equity as more important than defending themselves against the aggressor and supported restraint of individuals rather than condoning aggressive behavior (Harris, 1995). In addition, female respondents were likely to exhibit

self-control, rather than aggress (Harris, 1995). Women are less likely to use verbal or physical aggression or respond in an aggressive manner (Harris, 1994).

However, Harris (1995) found that women demonstrated strong support of punishment for an aggressor. Women are more aggressive when resolving problems in dating relationships and report that their friends would approve of both verbal and physical aggression in these situations (Harris, 1994). In addition, Harris (1993) found that women reported feeling aggressive in response to verbal aggression from another female or condescending and insensitive behaviors from either sex. Harris (1996) found that women are inclined to utilize verbal aggression in problem solving situations.

Culture and Aggression

Ethnic culture shapes the social standard and influences what is considered acceptable behavior and what is not for members of a particular culture. When considering the implementation of aggression, ethnic culture must also be examined because of the impact each ethnic identity has on its population. Caucasian families tend to be members of individualistic cultures and reflect values that are characteristic of that type of culture. Confrontation within the in-group is encouraged in individualistic cultures and viewed as a positive way to relieve tension within the group (Triandis, 1990). Individualistic cultures also emphasize achieving for the self, rather than focusing on the needs of the family or community, which contributes to aggressive behavior. The ethnic culture is not as concerned with who might be hurt when the individual is trying to achieve because there is little interest in maintaining group cohesiveness or acting in the best interests of the community. Furthermore, models of aggression are present more often in individualistic cultures. Television shows depict physical, verbal, and indirect

aggressive acts more often in the United States and Great Britain then in Japan or Hong Kong (Chu & McIntyre, 1995; Sutil, Esteban, Takechui, & Clausen, 1995) Caucasian children have more opportunities to learn from aggressive models than Asian children.

In addition to the promotion and greater acceptance of aggression in Caucasian culture, findings have indicated that Caucasians behave aggressively. These tendencies to utilize aggression begin early and continue through adulthood. Zahn-Waxler, Friedman, Cole , and Mizuta (1996) found that Caucasian children behaved more aggressively than Japanese children. Caucasian students reported more aggressive feelings and incidents of aggression than Chinese and Japanese students (Crystal, Chen, Fuligini, & Stevenson, 1994). Adult Caucasians stated that they had instigated the behaviors of calling someone cruel or unethical, using an obscene name/gesture, and treating someone condescendingly more than Hispanics and African Americans (Harris & Knight-Bohnoff, 1996).

Some of these differences between ethnic groups in the application of aggression may be attributed to the messages conveyed through television programming. Chu and McIntyre (1995) performed an analysis of the cartoons Asian and U.S. children watched. They found that cartoons that U.S. children watched contained more verbal and physical violence. Sutil et al. (1995) found a similar trend and reported that U.S. children were more likely than Japanese children to see scenes depicting indirect aggression without physical injury and scenes involving raised voices. The more prevalent models of aggression for U.S. children would indicate that they would be more likely to perform verbal and physically aggressive acts because they have been more exposed to them on television. Asian children would be less likely to perform verbal and physically aggressive acts because they are not as exposed to them on television.

Asians tend to be members of collectivistic cultures that place importance on family and community. Asian families and communities encourage individuals to maintain harmony and not to deviate in opinion from the in-group (Triandis, 1990). Asian cultures believe that differing opinions and beliefs may have a negative effect on the group because they would act as a divider that would split the group, rather than unite it. Acting verbally aggressively or using indirect aggression without assuring anonymity would defeat group cohesiveness because the majority of opportunities to aggress would be with a member of the family or community. Disapproval of aggressive behavior is reflected in the attitudes toward individuals who do aggress. Aggressive and disruptive behavior are linked to rejection and unpopularity among Chinese children (Chen, Rubin, & Sun, 1992). In addition, Japanese mothers show disapproval of their children's aggression (Osterweil & Nagano-Nakamura, 1992).

The Present Study

The purpose of the present study is to determine if ethnicity and aggression have an effect on the value judgments placed on female aggressors. In order to measure the possible effect, Caucasian and Asian participants completed two measures. One measure addressed ethnic identity, the Orthogonal Ethnic Identification Scale (Bates, Trimble, & Beauvais, 1997). The other measure addressed aggression by having participants read three randomly assigned vignettes and responding to follow up questions based on those vignettes. Based on the previous research cited, I hypothesize that women who identify themselves as Asian, ethnicities that exhibit collectivistic tendencies, and women who identify themselves as Caucasian, ethnicities that exhibit individualistic tendencies, will accept and justify indirect aggression more then verbal aggression. I hypothesize that

both Asians and Caucasians will find indirect aggression acceptable and justifiable, but Caucasians find verbal aggression more acceptable and justifiable then Asians.

Method

Participants

Participants were 65 female undergraduate college students attending Western Washington University. Nineteen participants self-identified as Asian and 44 self-identified as Caucasian. Eleven participants were dropped from the study because they self identified with ethnic groups other than Caucasian and Asian. Participants ranged in age from 18-23 with the mean age of 19 for Caucasians and 20 for Asians. Eight Asian participants reported living in a foreign country (Singapore, Thailand, Mexico, Philippines, or Germany). These participants first lived in foreign countries between 1 year of age to 15 years of age, spending between 1 to 180 months in that country. Five Caucasian participants reported living in a foreign country (Turkey, Japan, Canada, Costa Rica, or Australia). These participants first lived in foreign countries between 1 year of age to 19 years of age spending 1 month in that country. One Caucasian participant and 2 Asian Participants reported living in a second foreign country (United States, Japan, Venezuela). Two participants began living in the foreign country at age 16 and one participant lived in the country at age 1 spending between 2 to 108 months in that country.

Materials

Participants were asked to complete the Orthogonal Ethnic Identification Scale (Bates et al., 1997), rating scales for a set of vignettes that emphasized either verbal or indirect aggression, and a demographic questionnaire where participants could indicate age,

academic major, countries in which they lived, length of time spent in those countries, and their age when they lived in those countries.

The Orthogonal Ethnic Identification Scale. This instrument was utilized to measure the ethnic classification participants identified with the most. The instrument was used to determine if participants deviated from the cultural norms of the Caucasian or Asian ethnicities that they indicated on the self-report. If participants' responses did not reflect the ethnicity that they indicated, this information would be useful in interpreting the results. The scale was abbreviated to contain only 13 items. In order to minimize the length of the experiment, only the essential items required to determine ethnic identification were included. The items were chosen by one of the creators of the scale, Dr. Joseph Trimble, who included items that reflected the primary factors in the scale. For 11 of the items, participants utilize a four-point rating (1= all or nearly all the time; 4 = not at all) whereas the other two items use a five-point rating scale (1= very well; 5= not at all) and a three-point rating scale (1=very likely; 3= will not), respectively. Participants are instructed to answer each scale item for cultures that they identified themselves with the most. Options provided are Anglo/White, Asian/Pacific Islander, Spanish, Black, American Indian with a space provided if their culture has not been listed. An example of an item from the scale is, "How do you see yourself? What is your ethnic identity?" The reliability of the scale is r = .82. No validity measures have been completed at this time. A high score on these items means that they do not identify with the ethnicity(ies) they responded to.

Vignettes and Rating Scales. Participants were also given 3 vignettes that depicted either verbal or indirect aggression. The order of the vignettes was counterbalanced. The

average length of each vignette is 5 lines or approximately 16 words per line. After each vignette, two rating scales are provided. The first scale measures whether the participant thought that the woman was justified in her actions. Participants are asked to answer the items based on a 7 point scale ranging from 1 (strongly unjustified) to 7 (strongly justified) [see Appendix A]. A high score on these items indicated that the woman is justified in her behavior. These scores are summed across vignettes to achieve a final score for the measure. The second scale measures whether the participant felt that the woman's actions were acceptable for the situation. Participants are asked to answer these items based on a 7 point scale ranging from 1 (extremely unacceptable) to 7 (extremely acceptable). A high score on these items indicated that the woman's behavior is acceptable for the situation. These scores are summed across vignettes to achieve a final score for the measure.

In order to eliminate the possibility of physical aggression infiltrating the measure, the verbal statements were constructed in such a manner that physical threats were not included. In addition, names were chosen that were neutral to culture. Names neutral to culture are defined as names that are utilized in both cultures being examined and do not have a stronger affiliation to either culture involved. For example, the name Naomi was chosen because it is used as a first name in the United States as well as in Asian countries. This precaution was taken to prevent participants from identifying the aggressor as a member of a particular culture and thereby influencing their responses.

Procedure

Participants were administered the materials in groups of 2-6 participants. The researcher read and distributed the informed consent form. The researcher asked the

participants to answer the materials to the best of their ability without conferring with anyone else in the room. Participants were instructed to complete the packet in the order in which it was distributed.

Participants were told that they had 30 minutes to complete the packet. The packet of materials was then distributed. The packet included the consent form, three vignettes with two follow up questions after each vignette, Orthogonal Ethnic Identification Scale (Bates et al., 1997), and a demographic response sheet. The vignettes contained scenarios depicting either indirect or verbal aggression. Participants were randomly given packets containing all indirect aggression vignettes or packets containing all verbal aggression vignettes.

Obtaining data from Asian American women was extremely difficult utilizing the procedure described above. In order to increase Asian American participation, instructions and packets were placed in the Ethnic Student Center at Western Washington University so that participants could complete them at any time. The instructions indicated that participants read the cover letter first, read and sign the consent form, and then complete the packet without the assistance of others. Packets were to be completed in the order in which they were received. Packets were ordered so that indirect and verbal aggression vignettes would alternate. When participants were finished they were to place the packet in an envelope marked "Completed Packets" and the informed consent form in an envelope marked "Completed Consent Forms." Debriefing statements were posted on the Ethnic Student Center bulletin board following collection of all the data.

Results

Utilizing a 2 x 2 between subjects ANOVA, I found a main effect of aggression such that indirect aggression ($\underline{M}$ =2.56, $\underline{SD}$ =0.81) was rated as more acceptable than verbal aggression ($\underline{M}$ =2.02, $\underline{SD}$ =0.62), $\underline{F}(1, 59) = 2.79$, $p<.05$, $\underline{MSE} = 31.64$, no main effect of ethnicity on acceptability of aggression, and no interaction. (see Table 1 for Means and Standard Deviations of Aggression)

In addition, using a 2 x 2 between subjects ANOVA, I found no main effect of ethnicity on the justification of aggression, no main effect of aggression on the justification of aggression, and no interaction. (see Table 2 for Means and Standard Deviations of Justification)

Discussion

Consistent with my research, there was an effect of aggression on acceptability where indirect aggression was found more acceptable than verbal aggression. This finding is consistent with the findings of Campbell et al. (1997) and Osterman et al. (1998) who found that cross- culturally indirect aggression is the most applied aggressive style for females. Individuals are influenced by their interactions with others and females encounter indirect aggression more often than any other type of aggression (Burbank, 1994). Thus, women are more likely to use indirect aggression than any other form of aggression (Bjorkvist,1994; Campbell et al., 1997; Osterman et al., 1998). Bjorkvist (1994) contends that the appeal of indirect aggression is the anonymity that it provides, while allowing aggressors to harm targets. Indirect aggression allows women to aggress without conflicting with their role as caregiver. Women are able to hide their aggressive acts and not be held accountable by others for their aggression. This creates an

opportunity for women to dissociate themselves from their aggressive acts so that they may avoid conflict with their role as caregiver.

Although the findings of this study indicate that indirect aggression is more acceptable, it should be noted that the scores for acceptance of verbal and indirect aggression were both fairly low. The scores indicate that overall women do not find aggression in either form an acceptable method to utilize in a situation. This tendency toward a low acceptability of aggression may be accounted for in the manner in which cross-culturally most women are socialized. Women are encouraged to become nurturers and to take responsibility for others (Bem, 1974; Glasser, 1997; Ruble, 1983). The expectations for the role of caregiver make exhibiting aggressive tendencies socially undesirable because the aggressive behavior fails to enhance the role as caregiver. In fact, the role of aggressor conflicts with the interests of the role as caregiver because aggressors are interested in inflicting harm and furthering the self, whereas caregivers encourage the growth of others and places others needs before their own (Campbell et al., 1996; Chowdrow, 1978; Eagly & Steffen, 1986). With societal messages expressing the desirability of caregivers and worthlessness or disregard for aggressors it would seem that women would benefit most by adapting to fit the role of caregiver. Women's attitudes and values would be shaped by society's message that women are socially acceptable and pleasing when they are caregivers and are detested, rejected, or ignored when they are aggressive.

The hypotheses that Caucasians would find verbal aggression more acceptable than Asians and that Caucasians would find aggression more justifiable than Asians were not supported. Neither group found aggression very acceptable as reflected by the means.

These findings may be attributed to the new evidence that indicates that the concepts of independent and interdependent self- construals may not accurately reflect societies. Matsumoto (in press) contends that the empirical evidence that claims to support independent and interdependent self-construals makes assumptions that may not be accurate of individuals in Asian countries and the United States. The presentation of the construal concepts by Markus and Kitiyama (1991) were promptly accepted by researchers and utilized in viewing cultural differences as well as interpreting results. However, once these ideas were adopted researchers failed to test the underpinnings of the theory. Matsumoto (in press) cites several studies that present evidence that counters independent/ interdependent self-construal. Thus, the concepts that Markus and Kitiyama (1991) proposed may not be accurate interpretations of present day behavior in Asian countries and the United States. The differences that once may have been characteristic of these two countries may no longer exist due to industrialization and closer contact with other cultures. Industrialization often leads to more focus on the self because individuals are not interacting with an in-group, but rather groups of people with whom they have little to no intimacy (Triandis, 1989). Individuals in these situations would be less concerned about acting in the interests of others because they have little personal involvement with the people with whom they are interacting. The industrialization has contributed to a more independent social environment that does not have to rely as much on the community and close in-groups. In addition to industrialization, Asian countries, such as Japan, have been in closer contact with Western culture. Individuals have adopted some aspects of Western culture in their daily lives. Matsumoto asserts further investigation is needed in order to determine if cultural differences as described by

Markus and Kitiyama (1991) truly characterize individuals from Asian countries and the United States or if other dimensions of culture may better describe the origins of the psychological differences between Americans and Asians.

The results of this study are limited by several factors. The sample used in this study were primarily Asian Americans who had lived only in the United States. Their experience with Asian culture might be limited to the traditions and values their parents and Asian American community expressed. These values and traditions might differ from those held by individuals who live in an Asian country. Also, these Asian Americans may have adopted United States culture and values that may have effected their responses. Due to lack of a female Asian population at Western Washington University, it was difficult to obtain a representative population. The Asian population used in this study may not have reflected Asian culture as most of these women have lived only in the United States and not in an Asian country. In addition, the data was not collected in a uniform manner due to the low representation of Asian women. Asian women were given open access to the packets through the Ethnic Student Center and allowed to complete them on their own time. They received only written instructions so one can only infer that they read the instructions before completing the materials and that they completed the materials in the correct order. Also, one must also infer that the materials were completed without help and were not influenced by others. Furthermore, this study measured attitudes and judgments of female aggressors utilizing vignettes that may not have been an accurate measure. These vignettes lacked mundane realism because they are a projective technique and measure what participants think that they would do rather than their actual responses to a real life situation. In addition, the length of the vignettes was

quite short so the emotional engagement of readers was less likely to be involved. This lack of personal involvement may have affected the response of the participants and may not accurately reflect their behavior or attitudes towards female aggressors.

Future research should consider field testing and examining women's reactions to other women's aggression to obtain more accurate information of their acceptance of aggression. Field testing may reflect the females' attitudes toward aggression better than a projective, vignette technique. In addition, future research could account for some of these sample limitations by using a larger sample of Asian women that live in their native country, perhaps examining a single group of Asians such as Koreans, Japanese, or Chinese, to determine if nationality plays a role in acceptability of aggression. As a further extension of this study, researchers might consider how women view other women's aggression towards men.

Based on the data of the present study, counselors treating female clients may become more aware of indirect aggressive behavior. This data indicates that women are more likely to endorse actions that they probably will not be held accountable for and this can help counselors as they look for destructive behavior in relationships that might not have been considered aggressive previously. Indirect aggression may be difficult to pinpoint because there may be no evidence indicating that aggressors have behaved in an aggressive manner. By raising women's awareness of the tendency to aggress indirectly, women may become more aware of their interactions with others and be better able to redirect their indirect aggressive behavior. This would increase positive communication and problem solving.

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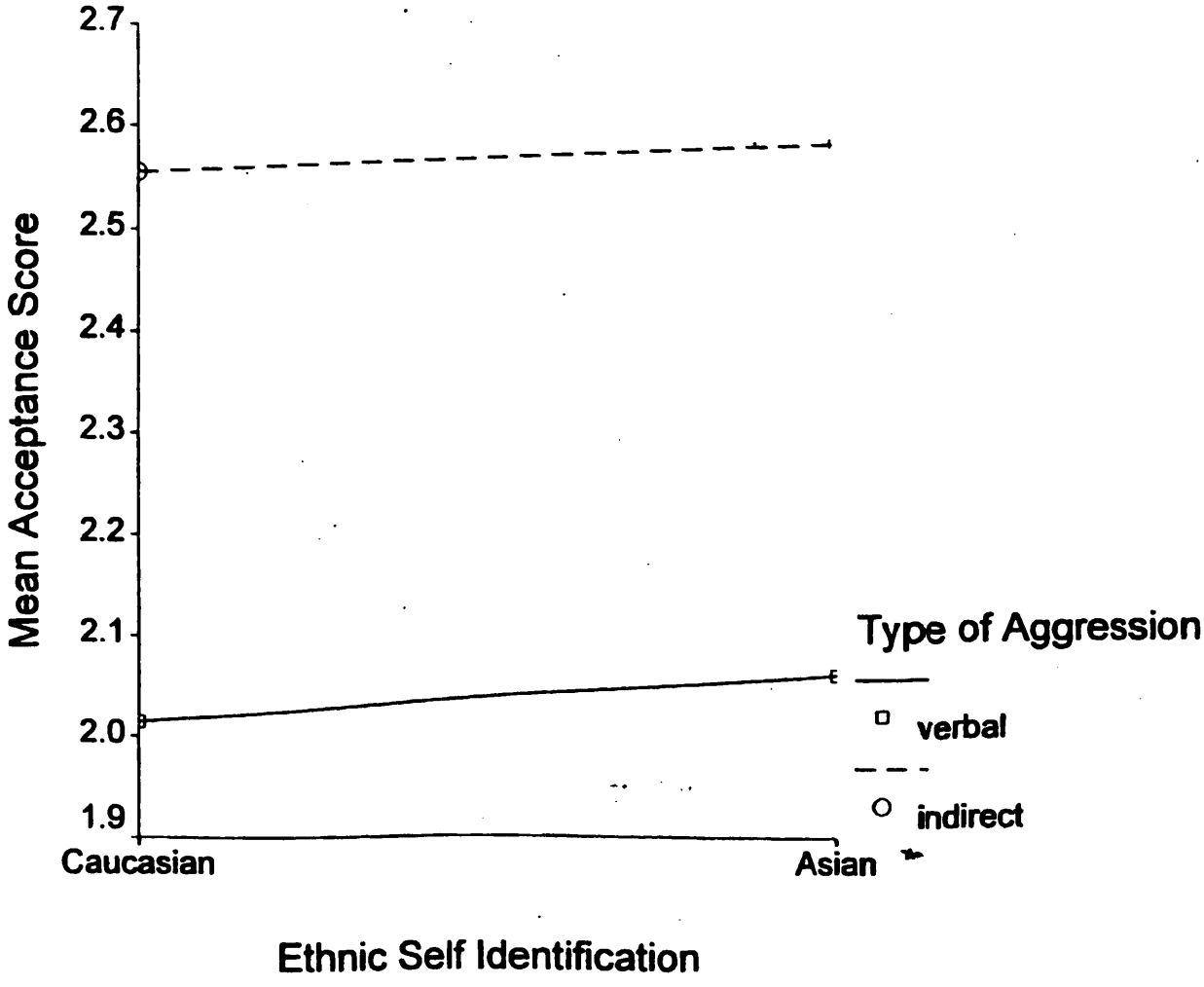
Figure Caption

Figure 1. Mean acceptance score as a function of type of aggression (indirect vs. verbal) and ethnic self identification (Asian vs. Caucasian).

Figure 2. Mean justification score as a function of type of aggression (indirect vs. verbal) and ethnic self identification (Asian vs. Cauasian).


2.7
2.6
2.5
2.4
2.3
2.2
2.1
2.0
1.9
Mean Acceptance Score
Caucasian
Asian
Ethnic Self Identification
Type of Aggression
verbal
indirect

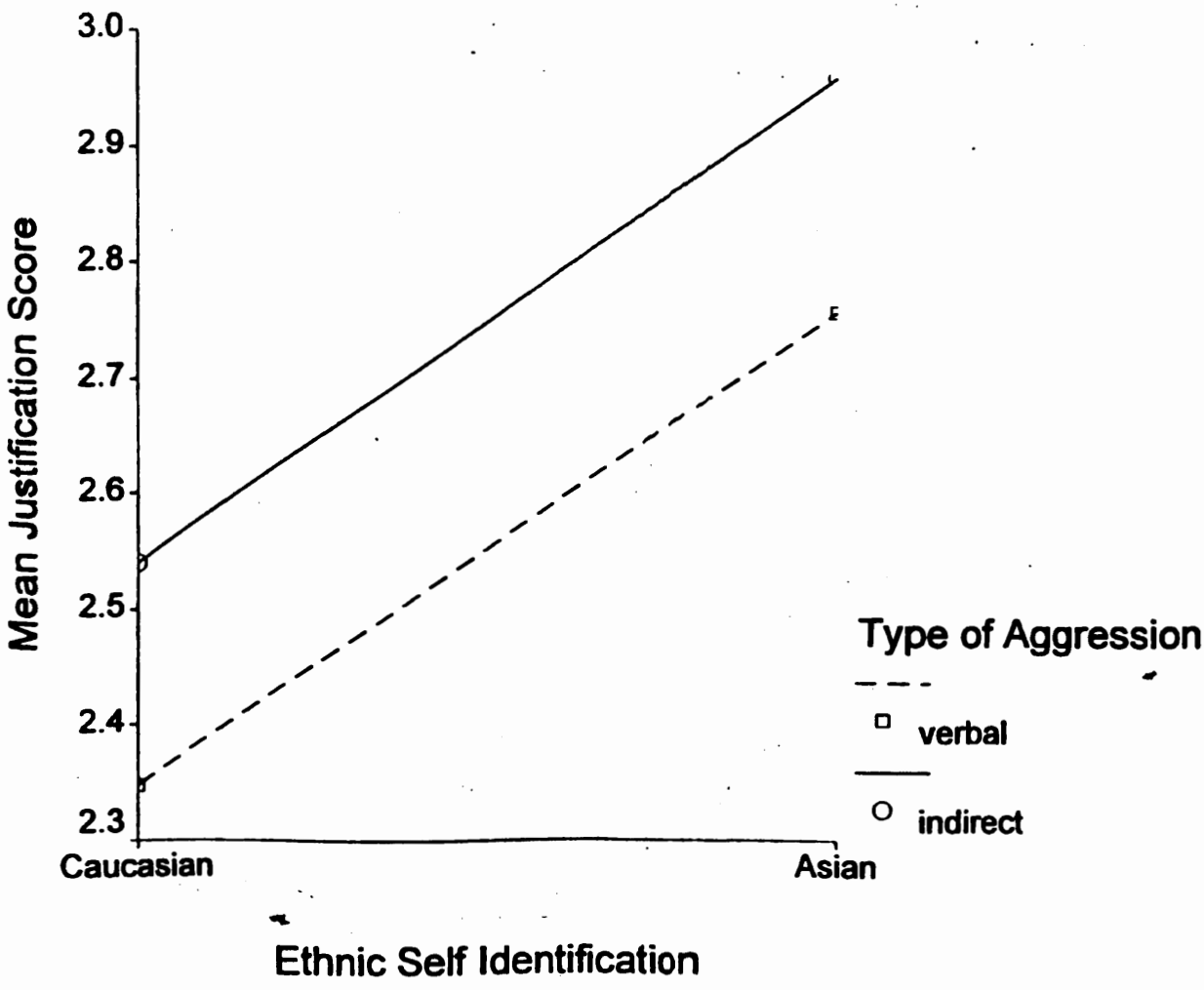

3.0
2.9
2.8
2.7
2.6
2.5
2.4
2.3
Mean Justification Score
Caucasian
Asian
Ethnic Self Identification
Type of Aggression
verbal
indirect

Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations for Measures of Acceptability of Aggression

	n	M	SD
Verbal Aggression	34	2.02	0.62
Indirect Aggression	29	2.56	0.81

Table 2
Means and Standard Deviations for Measures of Justification of Aggression

	n	M	SD
Verbal Aggression	34	2.30	0.60
Indirect Aggression	30	2.54	0.71

Appendix A

Verbal Aggression Vignettes

You will be given brief descriptions of three incidents. Following each incident you will be asked to respond to two questions based on the definitions that follow:

Justified means that the individual had a direct caused for action.

Acceptable means that the individual's actions were appropriate for the situation.

Kim is standing in line to buy tickets when a woman approaches her. The woman steps in front of Kim saying, "Get out of my way!"

1) To what degree is the woman justified in her actions?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not at all Justified **Strongly Justified**

2) To what degree are the woman's actions acceptable?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Extremely Unacceptable **Extremely Acceptable**

Naomi is called into her professor's office. The professor proceeds to accuse Naomi of plagiarizing her term paper. Naomi remains in the office and begins to answer the professor's accusations. Naomi says, " Accusing your students of cheating is no way to secure tenure especially when you can't teach or write a decent paper. Everyone hates you and I am going to have you fired for this."

3) To what degree is Naomi justified in her actions?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not at all Justified **Strongly Justified**

4) To what degree are Naomi's actions acceptable?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Extremely Unacceptable **Extremely Acceptable**

Kim and her best friend, Lynn, are shopping for costumes for the disco party later that night. Lynn confides that she is an alcoholic and is concerned that she might be tempted to drink at the party. At the party, Lynn sees Kim and her other friend whispering in the corner together. Lynn approaches Kim and tells her that she knows that Kim has been telling everyone that she is an alcoholic. Lynn says she can't believe that Kim could violate her trust like that and she never wants to speak to Kim again. Kim walks over to her other friend and says, "You are the worst friend! You are trying to turn everyone against me. You were never supportive and you are always doing things to get me in trouble. I hate you and never want to see you again!!"

5) To what degree is Kim justified in her actions?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not at all Justified — **Strongly Justified**

6) To what degree are Kim's actions acceptable?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Extremely Unacceptable — **Extremely Acceptable**

Indirect Aggression Vignettes

You will be given brief descriptions of three incidents. Following each incident you will be asked to respond to two questions based on the definitions that follow:

Justified means that the individual had a direct caused for action.

Acceptable means that the individual's actions were appropriate for the situation.

Kim is standing in line to buy tickets when a woman approaches her. The woman ignores Kim and steps in front of her in line.

1) To what degree is the woman justified in her actions?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Not at all Justified — **Strongly Justified**

2) To what degree are the woman's actions acceptable?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Extremely Unacceptable — **Extremely Acceptable**

Naomi is called into her professor's office. The professor proceeds to accuse Naomi of plagiarizing her term paper. Naomi leaves the office without answering the professor's accusations. Naomi sees some acquaintances on campus and tells them what a jerk her professor is and that none of them should take that class. During evaluation at the end of the quarter, Naomi gives the professor a bad rating.

3) To what degree is Naomi justified in her actions?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all Justified						**Strongly Justified**

4) To what degree are Naomi's actions acceptable?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Extremely Unacceptable						**Extremely Acceptable**

Kim and her best friend, Lynn, are shopping for costumes for the disco party later that night. Lynn confides that she is an alcoholic and is concerned that she might be tempted to drink at the party. At the party, Lynn sees Kim and her other friend whispering in the corner together. Lynn approaches Kim and tells her that she knows that Kim has been telling everyone that she is an alcoholic. Lynn says she can't believe that Kim could violate her trust like that and she never wants to speak to Kim again. Kim marches over to all her friends and tells them what her other friend has done and how it has ruined her life. Kim's friends were also good friends with Kim's other friend. Kim's friends decide not to talk to Kim's other friend anymore because of that Kim had told them.

5) To what degree is Kim justified in her actions?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all Justified						**Strongly Justified**

6) To what degree are Kim's actions acceptable?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Extremely Unacceptable						**Extremely Acceptable**