Adult Attitudes and Beliefs Regarding Play on Lāna'i

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This article describes how adult attitudes toward play on the Hawaiian island of Lāna'i reflect the connection between play and culture. It is based on a study of ninety-two caregivers (parents, grandparents, and other adult custodians), primarily representing individuals of Filipino, part Hawaiian, and Japanese heritages. These respondents completed a survey about the value of play for their children, the types of play they encouraged or discouraged, and the extent and nature of their own involvement in their children's play. The caregivers acknowledged the importance of play for their children and its developmental benefits, particularly those connected to culture. In keeping with the more collectivist ideology of Pacific Rim cultures, the caregivers encouraged types of play that fostered social skills such as cooperation, sharing, and group play. They strongly discouraged types of play that might harm or injure children. And they acknowledged the need for caretakers to set aside time to participate in their children's play.

Introduction

Scholarly pursuits of play have always acknowledged the connection between play and culture. As Roopnarine and Johnson (1994) noted, The Association for the Study of Play (TASP), for example, has a membership that is interdisciplinary in nature. Its fields of study include play, leisure, folklore, education, anthropology, and psychology—a diversity that testifies to the different vantage points from which play is studied. The relationship between play and culture is duly noted in many of TASP's affiliated publications such as its early journal *Play & Culture* and its premier annual series, Play & Culture Studies. Indeed, play scholars have made the notion that play reflects cultural mastery and that cultural values and attitudes are reflected in play a cornerstone of research in the field (Sutton-Smith 1986, 1997; Sutton-Smith and Roberts 1971).

One particular area of inquiry that addresses the intersection of culture and play concerns the way parental attitudes, beliefs, and cultural values shape children's play. In comparison to other topics, however, this area is considerably

underexplored in the play literature (Roopnarine et al. 2003). In 1994 Roopnarine et al. looked at the relationship between play and culture by investigating parent-child play interactions in Southeast India. They noted the interconnectedness between adult attitudes toward play and the cultural belief that play holds no benefit for development. Thus, parents engaged in play and games with their offspring only for their children's enjoyment and did not attach developmental advantages to such parent-child play interactions. Harkness and Super (1996) pursued a similar line of inquiry in their work addressing the relationship between developmental outcomes and the belief systems of parents in diverse cultures.

In their effort to expand the play literature, Roopnarine et al. (1994) considered contemporary criticisms that researchers focus too much on European American children and they too often apply Western values in non-Western and developing nations to interpret and explain play across cultures. Most recently, Gaskins and Miller (2009) echoed the pervasiveness of Western thinking and the use of European American children as the standard in play research. In their view, such a standard is responsible for the dearth of analyses that explore the influence of culture on play.

Roopnarine et al. (2003) noted that not all cultures view play as an important activity. Although Western thinking posits a connection between children's play, learning, and development, some cultures do not recognize these benefits and outcomes. In fact, in some cultures, play has no apparent value and is viewed as a superfluous activity. In Mexican culture, children's participation in work and work-related activities is deemed far more important than their participation in play activities (Tamis-LeMonda, Uzgiris, and Bornstein 2002). Further, in other cultures, play is viewed as an activity in which children will engage naturally. Thus, neither adult intervention nor participation is culturally prescribed (New 1994).

Given these cultural constructions, we can reasonably presume that parental attitudes and beliefs will guide decision-making processes regarding parents' involvement in their children's play activities. Thus, in cultures where play is viewed as a natural occurrence, parents do not see the need to fulfill the role of playmate (New 1994). In some cultures, time may not be formally set aside for play (Lancy 2002, 2007). Lancy clearly demonstrated the cultural variability that exists in mother-infant play interactions and, in fact, the nonexistence of these interactions in many cultures. Westerners view the absence of these interactions as an impediment to developmental progress in such areas as attachment.

In line with this view, Roopnarine et al. (2003) suggested that parental and cultural belief systems govern whether play is viewed as beneficial for children

and decide precisely what types of play cultures value. For example, the connection between play and learning dominates Western thinking (Singer, Golnikoff, and Hirsh-Pasek 2006), and North American and European scholars promote play as an important part of cognitive and social development (Roopnarine et al. 2003). Like views about the importance of play for children, the view that play is linked to learning may vary across cultures. Some non-Western cultures may see no connection between play and developmental benefits; some may support play for its role in facilitating different developmental gains such as those that promote physical or emotional skills and abilities.

Korean and European American cross-cultural comparisons, for example, revealed that Korean cultures place a higher value on early academic instruction and acknowledge the social benefits of play. Korean parental attitudes toward particular play activities reflect these values (Farver, Kim, and Lee 1995; Farver, Kim, and Lee-Shinn 2000; Farver and Lee-Shinn 2000). These beliefs and value judgments are integrated in an Asian collectivist ideology that emphasizes the importance of social relationships within a group and interdependency among members of a group (Triandis 1995a).

Other studies explore the relationship between play, culture, and adult views of play. Parmar et al. (2001) investigated the cultural differences in the perceptions of play benefits between Asian immigrant mothers in the United States and European American mothers. They found that European American mothers placed a higher value on play in overall development and in cognitive development, whereas Asian mothers rated play as more valuable for social and physical development. Pan's (1994) investigation of educated Taiwanese mothers about their beliefs on the benefits of play for their kindergarten children revealed that these parents acknowledged the value of play in cognitive development but not in other areas. Taiwanese mothers encouraged constructive play because they associated it with gains in mathematical ability. Finally, I conducted a cross-cultural comparison of the perceptions of play and playfulness for parents in Hong Kong and parents in the United States (Holmes 2001). Though the findings were inconclusive, I established that play was important for socialization in both cultures. However, only the Hong Kong mothers acknowledged the role of play in self-expression and education; such views did not appear in the U.S. sample. All these studies indicate that cultural beliefs and ideology help determine the play forms parents value.

Other cross-cultural inquiries on teacher and parent attitudes toward play show up in the literature. A majority of these are ethnographic in their approach

and provide rich and substantive descriptions of individual cultures. In line with Super and Harkness's (1986) concept of a developmental niche, many of these types of studies focus on characteristics of the physical and social setting in which daily interaction occurs. These studies involve both the macrolevel of the cultural norms of child rearing and the microlevel of attitudes, values, and beliefs that guide caregivers in their daily interactions with children.

New's (1994) excellent work explored the cultural and social contexts in which the play of Italian infants and toddlers occurs in daily interactions and activities. In a small town near Rome, Italy, she investigated infant and toddler interactions in their home and neighborhood with adults and children as well as interactions at a Reggio Emilia early-childhood education center. Her findings suggest that Italian cultural values and views on play shape parent-child and teacher-child daily interactions. The minimal effort and support mothers give to their children's play, New found, reflects the cultural belief that play proceeds naturally. Although adults value play, they do not view being a child's playmate as a necessary role. The lack of distinction between play and work surfaces in social interactions both at home and at school. Patterns of interaction with family and friends make no distinction between play and work activities. Similarly, at school, teachers do not distinguish between play and work. Rather, both activities are seen as collaborative processes that require social interaction.

In a related study, Saar and Niglas (2001) examined the attitudes toward child rearing and play (with an emphasis on play) of Estonian and Russian parents. In their sample of six hundred mothers, they found that educational level and cultural region influenced attitudes toward child rearing. Educational level negatively correlated with control; in other words, mothers with more education were less controlling with their children. However, the researchers did not address the relationship between cultural values and parental attitudes toward play.

Tudge et al. (1999), in their cross-cultural comparison of parental beliefs and preschooler activities, investigated the acquisition of children's cultural competency. They concluded that competency is culturally relative and cultural meaning is extracted from and acquired in collaborative social interactions. Their findings support New's (1994) work on the daily interactions of Italian parents with their children.

Finally, some studies on parental attitudes toward play have concentrated on specific play forms. For example, Costabile et al. (1992) explored how parents felt about war play. They employed a cross-cultural design to investigate parents'

perceptions of war play in Italy and in the United Kingdom. Their analysis of written responses to questionnaires revealed that boys—more than girls—in both cultures were significantly more likely to engage in war play either in solitude or with peers. Media, peers, and parental attitudes influenced children's preferences for war play. Parents in both cultures permitted or discouraged war play and agreed that war toys should not be permitted at school. There was one cultural difference. The attitudes of Italian parents about rough-and-tumble and pretend play were linked to the restrictions—if any—they put on war play. This was not true for the British parents.

Research Questions Addressed in this Study

Johnson and Chang's (2002) model for the cultural analysis of children's play frames the study presented in this article. Their model contains several primary factors that affect both macrolevels and microlevels of analysis to explain the relationship of play in culture. Of particular significance here is their category, Inner Psychology of Agents, which includes the attitudes, values, and beliefs of a culture's members. This article—informed by existing literature on this topic—means to address the following: How are adult attitudes toward play on the island of Lāna'i reflective of the connection between play and culture?

Other questions in the study address the more specific connections between play and culture.

How do adult caregivers (meaning parents, grandparents, and other relatives and custodians primarily responsible for a child's care and well-being) view the role of play in their children's lives?

What is the value of play for children?

What types of play forms do adult caregivers encourage and discourage?

How much time do adult caregivers allocate for play with their children?

What is the nature of adult involvement in children's play?

How are attitudes and beliefs regarding play related to cultural values?

This study explores play and culture in communities and groups of caregivers in the Pacific Rim—a geographic area that has received scant attention in the play literature. One of the smaller, less visited, less commercialized, and more geographically isolated of the Hawaiian isles, Lāna'i offers a unique microcosm. Historically, unlike O'ahu and Maui, which have changed dramatically from tourism and development, Lāna'i has remained relatively unchanged for several

generations. It has resisted pressure to overdevelop its landscape for tourism. There are no high-rise buildings, fast-food establishments, or nightclubs, and the shoreline remains pristine. In this respect it is similar to Moloka'i, which also remains relatively undisturbed.

In addition, the Lāna'ian community has been stable for generations. Many residents claim descent from non-Western cultural groups—the very groups that are underrepresented in the play literature. Community members are primarily Filipino and Japanese descendants of the first wave of Filipino, Japanese, and Korean immigrants who arrived in the early 1900s to work on the island's one, enormous pineapple plantation (Maly and Maly 2007). Individuals who are part Hawaiian represent the second largest ethnic group on the island (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000). Some households are intergenerational, and it is not uncommon to find three generations of relatives still residing on the island.

This community—of primarily Filipino, part Hawaiian, and Japanese native-born residents; people who have lived on the island for more than several years; and recently transplanted residents—is small, approximately twenty-nine hundred in number.

Setting

Many residents describe life on the island as tranquil or calm. Children roam freely and safely through neighborhoods where there is little crime. A noticeable level of friendliness and generosity extends to all on the island.

Daily life on the island nurtures the maintenance and enjoyment of social relationships and hard work. Children attend school, and adults—some, if not most—work at several different jobs. During the day, some of the elderly work, socialize, tend gardens, and assist with child care. After school, children participate in extracurricular activities such as sports, and they play in their homes and neighborhoods and at the community center with their peers and with grown-ups. There is a constant flow of residents in the city center and at local establishments. At night most activity takes place in homes, neighborhoods, or in the community center. The community movie house is open one night a week. As is characteristic in Polynesian societies, families (often in large groups) go to the park or beach when possible (Martini 1995a).

Cultural values

Given the percentage of Asian (Filipino, Japanese) and Polynesian (Hawaiian) ethnic groups on the island, this study focuses on Filipino and Hawaiian cul-

tural values. Triandis (1993, 1995b) introduced the individualism-collectivism continuum as a dimension for comparing cultures (Triandis et al. 1988). He uses collectivism to characterize cultures that focus on the collective nature of social obligation, and he uses individualism to identify cultures that value the primacy of the individual over the communal good. In a recent work, Oyserman, Coon, and Kemmelmeier (2002) revisited the individualism-collectivism paradigm. They contend that researchers view individualism and collectivism as an antithetical pair. The former is associated with industrialized, Western societies that hold Protestant or Puritan worldviews and value political freedom. By contrast, collectivism is associated with non-Western societies. In this scheme, European Americans in the United States are viewed as individualistic compared to other ethnic groups.

Some, it must be said, find this classification of ethnic groups or societies as individualistic or collectivist too simple and absolute, but Oyserman, Coon, and Kemmelmeier defined individualistic cultures more fully and flexibly as those that emphasize individual choice, personal freedoms, autonomy, and self-accomplishments and that value personal over social relationships. Communication involves open emotional expression with an emphasis on serving the self. By contrast, collectivist cultures define the self by a group identity, relationships are ascribed, interdependent, and obligatory. Emotional expression is restrained or controlled to save face, reduce shame, and maintain group harmony.

Under these definitions, the United States would be decidedly individualistic in its cultural ideology. The cross-cultural, meta-analyses of Oyserman, Coon, and Kemmelmeier, however, suggest that under some criteria, the United States shows increasing collectivist ideals when compared to Asian cultures. They found that Americans do, in fact, attend to others in their social world. Although Americans may focus upon familial relationships, they do not feel obliged to do so, a feeling more often associated with collectivism. Thus, although Americans as a group are individualistic, they also exhibit some collectivist behaviors and attitudes.

Therefore, although I will continue the use of the terms individualism and collectivism for cross-cultural comparisons, the classifications of Filipino and Hawaiian cultures as collectivist takes note that there is variation both within and between individuals, ethnic groups, and cultures with respect to these terms.

Filipino cultural values

As Heras (2007) noted, Filipino culture shares similarities with other Asian collectivist groups—the central position of the family, filial piety and devo-

tion, interdependent family relationships, respect for elders, interpersonal harmony, and a strong work ethic. Filipino culture is similar to other Asian collectivist groups not only in its emphasis on family closeness, but in its avoidance of the direct expression of conflict. Children are socialized to be obedient, respectful, and deferent to authority figures (Church and Katigbak 2000). They are taught to be nurturing, to have a sense of belonging to their family group, to be good community members, and to help others (Venutra 1991). Socialization practices emphasize prosocial skills. These are voluntary, positive behaviors affiliated with assisting others, and they include sharing, cooperation, and getting along with others. These children prefer group play: in Lāna'i, I rarely saw a child playing alone. Finally, the high value parents place on education (Heras 2007) is reflected in the high-school graduation rate. It has been 94 percent for the past three years (Lāna'i High and Elementary School Trend Report 2008–2009), and many graduates leave the island to attend college.

Similar to the social relationships of many Polynesians, Asians, and Southeast Indians, Filipino social relationships are hierarchical with respect to age (Heras 2007). Liane—a Lāna'i school staffer, a parent, and a third-generation Filipino who participated in the study—noted that children are socialized to respect their elders and to not question authority. As is also common in many Polynesian households such as those on the Marquesas Islands (Martini 1994; Martini and Kirkpatrick 1993), Filipino children of Liane's generation responded passively to adult authority and did not engage in adult conversations. The adage "You listen to me and do what I say" characterizes the position of children in the Filipino adult social world. Children's thoughts are neither important nor should they be shared with adults when they are talking to each other.

In parenting her own children, Liane blends traditional Filipino and American values. For example, she notes that she teaches her children to be both assertive and respectful of their elders. She has taught them it is appropriate to question adult authority as long as the interaction proceeds with respect. She, herself, received no such encouragement when she was a child.

Hawaiian cultural views

Native Hawaiians descended from Polynesian seafarers who navigated the Pacific and discovered the island chain. Thus, Hawaiians share many similari-

ties with others in such Polynesian cultures as that of the Marquesas, where scholars believed the Hawaiians originated (McCubbin and Marsella 2009). Native Hawaiians are collectivist, and their cultural ideology emphasizes the central importance of the family (Kanuha 2005). Their sense of self and their worldview are deeply grounded in interdependent social relationships. Native Hawaiians value sharing, contributing to their family, and responding to the needs of others. Concepts of unity and harmony permeate Hawaiian cultural ideology and pertain to individuals, families, communities, and the natural and spiritual worlds (McCubbin and Marsella 2009).

According to Martini (1995a; 1995b), Hawaiians typically travel in large social groups, and children learn that the child world and the adult world are separate domains. Although they belong to a collectivist culture, Hawaiians raise their children to be autonomous in their own social world but compliant and respectful in the adult world. Thus, relationships between young and old are based on age, and children come to learn their place in both worlds. Other Polynesian cultures such as in that of the Marquesas Islands share these same values and teach them to their young (Martini 1994).

Adult views of play

The dichotomy between play and work is culturally relevant for this study. References to play and work and their distinctions commonly appear in various social settings—school, home, and the community. In the study, elder community members commented that work was important to their generation and that play had no value. Their parents did not encourage play, and they instilled a strong work ethic in their children. According to Mahea—one of the study's participants, the preschool director, and a member of the community—second-generation parents did not initially make the connection between play and learning. "Now," Mahea noted, "they're beginning to understand that they"—the children—"are acquiring motor, social, and cognitive skills by playing and that play is important."

Aunt Nani—another participant in the study, a second-generation Filipino, and a school staffer—explained, "Parents valued work." She said that she had been working since she was fourteen and that her earnings were added to the family income. She emphasized that a strong work ethic is a dominant theme in Filipino culture. When she was not working, she played outside and spent a great deal of time with her family. She claimed that parenting has changed since she was a child. Contemporary parents do not work on the

pineapple plantation. Instead, they have found jobs in tourism, in education, in mercantilism, in food service, and in other private enterprises and governmental services. They work longer hours and later shifts. They do not have "much quality time with their kids. They feel guilty because they don't spend a lot of time with the children." To compensate, parents give their children material possessions.

Subsistence and economic pressures are responsible for changes over time in parent-child interactions, in perceptions of play, and in the amount of time parents spend with their children. When the island was a pineapple plantation, parents worked hard all day in the fields "on the line," and so did older teens. Work ended at three thirty in the afternoon; parents stayed home in the evening; children played in groups free of adult supervision. The weekend was family time when families spent from Friday afternoon until Sunday evening either camping at the beach or going for drives.

The transition from harvesting pineapples to handling tourists, the increase in the cost of living on the island, and the recent downturn in the economy have affected family life. Many contemporary parents must hold multiple jobs to keep their homes and provide for their families. The expanded work week leaves little time for the children. Parents manage to carve out time to play with them but nothing like the time the parents of past generations spent. As one elderly member of the community explained, "The younger parents feel guilty that they don't spend time with their children so they buy them things. In our day, it was WORK WORK WORK."

The life experiences of earlier generations and current generations of parents reflect their expectations for their children. Some elderly community members believe that contemporary children are spoiled because most, if not all, children do not work outside the home. They note that contemporary children do not have to work or earn their way; they do not contribute to the household economy. Some of the study's elderly Hawaiians believe that contemporary children have far more material possessions than past generations of children, especially more than children during the days of the great plantation. This contributes to the perception that contemporary children are spoiled. However, during plantation times, the adult workday ended in midafternoon, making it comparatively shorter than the modern workday on the island. In the twenty-first century, a period of economic uncertainty and instability, most parents work particularly long hours and hold multiple jobs. These economic conditions separate parents and children.

Method

Participants

Most of the sample population for this study consisted of adult primary caregivers whose children attended the local public elementary and high school. The sample also included individuals (teachers and staff) who were part of the school community, two long-time residents of the community who no longer had children in school, and two alumni who had young children. The latter two groups accounted for less than 10 percent of the total sample. Adult participant characteristics reflect the population for the island (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000). Some respondents did not provide complete information with respect to participant characteristics.

Ninety-two adults participated in the study, and they represented the diversity of the island population. Participants who recorded their characteristics included 25 Filipinos; 12 part Filipinos (Japanese, American, Chinese, Korean); 16 part Hawaiians (Filipino, Chinese); 9 Asians (Japanese, Okinawan, Korean, Chinese); 5 European Americans; one native Hawaiian; and three adults from other groups. There were 47 mothers, 14 fathers, 11 grandparents, and 4 aunts or uncles. Ages ranged from 22 to 72 years with a mean age of 42.6 years. Frequencies for dependent children were one newborn, two infants, nine preschoolers, 15 kindergartners, 16 first graders, 15 second graders, 17 third graders, 7 fourth graders, 9 fifth graders, 2 sixth graders, 1 seventh grader, 2 eighth graders, 9 secondary students, 4 college students. The survey also represented 10 adult children and 8 grandchildren. The children's ethnicity parallels that of the caretaker sample. Participants were treated according to the ethical codes of conduct for psychologists (American Psychological Association 1992). Consent forms were distributed in both English and the Filipino dialect, Ilocano. Approval for this project was granted by an institutional review board, the sponsoring school, and adult respondents.

Design and procedure

This study used a qualitative design, and information was collected through surveys and interviews. Adults participated in this study as part of a broader project covering children's play preferences. Written surveys containing several open-ended questions were sent home in the same packet that included consent forms for both adults and children. The survey consisted of five open-ended questions. Two of them had multiple parts.

1. How do you view play in your child's life?
2. What value does play have for your child?
3. What types of play do you encourage/discourage?
4. How often do you play with your child? What types of activities do you do with your child?
5. What types of games and activities did you play as a child? What types of play or activities did your parents do with you? Has play on Lāna'i changed since you were a child? Please explain.

Prior to distributing the survey instrument, researchers assessed its face validity. First, the questions appeared to measure the intended topic, that is, adult attitudes regarding their children's play. Second, face validity was confirmed when there was a agreement among researchers (Bernard, 2006). For this project, several researchers reviewed the questionnaire for both face and content validity. Finally, the concept of *play* offered to the participants of this study was verified in an earlier pilot study on the play preferences children and adults.

Surveys were distributed in fall 2008 and returned in January 2009 and again distributed in fall 2009 and returned in January 2010. Teachers distributed and collected the completed forms, which they turned into the school's director of behavioral health. The parents' facilitator and the home-school liaison were staff members who also distributed and collected the adult questionnaires in the school and, in a few cases, at community gathering places.

In twenty-five cases, participants gave their survey responses in face-to-face interviews. Middle-aged women conducted these interviews. Two of the interviewers claimed European American descent, and one claimed Filipino heritage. This article's author, as one of the European American interviewers, conducted fifteen interviews, seven of them with the school's director of behavioral health as a co-interviewer. The home-school liaison conducted ten interviews. We conducted the interviews in places both familiar to and convenient for the respondents. Thus, we interviewed some school staff and personnel on school premises in the behavioral-health office, we interviewed one mother at the park while she played with her children, and we interviewed one teacher at home.

We used face-to-face interviews for several reasons. First, some of the respondents preferred the face-to-face interaction to a printed survey. Second, certain locations were necessary for some of the respondents—mothers with small children, respondents who were unable to complete the surveys due to time demands at work, and respondents who found the surveys limiting and wanted to give more expansive answers.

When the author conducted interviews, the director of behavioral health introduced her to the respondents, coordinated meeting times, and attended all interviews except two. In some instances, the home-school liaison also attended the interviews. These school staff members were familiar to and respected by the community. Their involvement in the survey and interview process made the study successful. Their support of the project helped the author establish a rapport with the respondents. In all interviews, respondents received the same set of questions as those that appeared on the printed survey and in the same order. Many of the interviews went well beyond the open-ended queries, and they ranged in duration from about fifteen to forty minutes.

Text analysis and coding

Written responses from the surveys and transcribed interviews were subjected to a content analysis in which phrases and words were compressed into content categories based on well-established objective and systematic rules (Stemler 2001).

The methodological literature provided guidelines for the coding procedure (Bernard 2006; Côté, Salmela, and Russell 1995). First, we extracted verbatim phrases from each participant's responses. Next, we grouped together phrases that contained a single idea or thought. Then we used these phrases to form subordinate categories. The categories were labeled using verbatim words or phrases. For example, to the query "How do you view play in your child's life?" individuals responded in phrases like "highly important," "very important," and "important." We categorized these verbatim phrases in the larger, broader category labeled *Important*. Finally, subordinate categories that shared common criteria and features were subsumed into several higher-level categories or themes. All coded material was transposed into an Excel 2007 document, and this file also included raw frequencies.

In some instances, a response included multiple criteria. For example, to the query, "What types of play do you encourage?" a response such as "board games and dress-up" contained different criteria. These were tallied as separate responses—one for "board games," which was a higher-order category, and one for "pretend play," which was a separate, higher-order category. Text from every response was placed into a respective higher-order category and counted separately. Social and emotional play were treated as separate constructs. Social play included interactive and cooperative behavior and social skills (Parten 1932). Inclusive elements were friendship, cooperation, sharing, and getting along well

with others. Emotional play included emotional self-regulation, impulse control, expressing emotions, and self-reliance (Berk, Mann, and Ogan 2006). Other studies employing semistructured interviewing and open-ended questioning used this coding procedure (Dupuis, Bloom, and Loughead 2006; Holmes 2005; Holmes et al. 2008).

To ensure that the coding was uniform, the author disseminated the transcribed field notes along with the questionnaires to the other coders. Prior to coding, the author conducted several practice sessions that involved coding randomly selected responses from the questionnaires. The three coders worked independently, then compared their results, discussing any discrepancies. After seven trials, they had eliminated the discrepancies, and they began actual coding. During coding, 20 percent of each transcription was subjected to a reliability check among the three coders, and intercoder reliability proved 90 percent.

Results

This section presents the coded adult-caregiver responses for the five open-ended questions pertaining to adult attitudes regarding play. These appear respectively in tables 1 through 6. In instances where we knew the caregiver's age, ethnicity, and relationship to the child, we have included this information.

Adult views of the role of play in children's lives

Table 1 presents the frequencies of coded adult-caregiver responses to the question of how they viewed play in their child's life. The responses to this question reflected the importance of play for children and represented 26 percent of all responses, the highest response rate. As one caregiver noted, "In my child's life, I view play as an essential element of natural and progressive development. It is part of physical, mental, and emotional health." Phrases that supported the importance of play in children's lives included those involving developmental outcomes such as "social skills," those facilitating friendship and "bonding," those providing "physical benefits," those promoting "creativity" and "imagination," and those contributing to "overall health." One caregiver focused on the importance of play in relieving stress. She suggested that from "a therapeutic view, . . . this is one way of relaxing for my child from school stress, or any other form of stress he may encounter from everyday living."

The importance of play in promoting social development appeared in 18 percent of all responses. Caregivers noted its role in "socialization," in "teaching social skills," in "being patient," and in facilitating "peer interactions." A twenty-three-year-old Japanese Filipino Chinese mother responded, "This is free time for my child to play with peers in the neighborhood. It is her social time with kids her age and close to her age group." These caregivers viewed play as an activity connected to learning, and the relationship between play and learning surfaced in 15 percent of all their responses. A Hawaiian Korean Filipino mother viewed play as "very important for social, emotional, and intellectual development." Phrases supporting this connection included ones focused on social matters, such as social and peer interactions, and on things cognitive, such as creativity, imagination, curiosity, and wonderment.

Although less frequently reported, some other responses also deserve mention. Some caregivers viewed play as an activity that was fun for children. One father viewed play as "having fun with others, sharing is caring, and a valuable learning tool they find in life." Some caregivers included their own view of play: "Play is a natural part of childhood. It makes the child develop his motor skills, sense of enjoyment and makes learning fun." Play as enjoyment appeared in 9 percent of all responses. Some caregivers noted the importance of play in helping their children acquire a "good attitude" in sports, "sportsmanship," and leadership skills. Four percent of respondents voiced such opinions. Other caregivers linked play to emotional development. The phrases they used for this association revealed a view of play as helping children acquire and practice the skills and abilities they need to express their feelings. These kinds of observations accounted for 3 percent of all responses. An additional 3 percent of respondents also viewed play as a natural occurrence; another 3 percent emphasized the role of play during family gatherings and barbecues.

Adult notions of the value of play for children

Table 2 presents the raw frequencies of caregiver responses to the question of what value they placed on play in their children's lives. Responses to this question echoed those reported in the previous section. The majority of caregiver responses emphasized the value of play in developing social skills, using such phrases as "sharing and cooperation," and "form friendships." These accounted for 29 percent of all responses. Phrases indicating the caregivers considered play very valuable and important appeared in 10 percent of all responses. Those indicating they believed play enhanced social- and emotional-development skills, abilities, and outcomes accounted for an almost equal 9 percent of all responses.

Response	Frequency of response
Very important	47
Social benefits	
Good for socialization, social skills, and peer interactions	33
Enjoyment and fun	16
Sportsmanship, character, and leadership	7
Family time spent singing, playing, and interacting	6
Cognitive benefits	
Learning: creativity, imagination, and problem solving	24
Emotional benefits	
Skills and abilities to express feelings and emotions	6
Physical benefits	
Recreational, leisure, and time to get outdoors	8
Lets kids be active and engage in activities	3
Multiple developmental benefits such as cognitive, physical, and personal	14
Other benefits	
Natural, part of growing up	6
Exciting, stimulating, and moving	4
Shows kids it is okay to get dirty	2
Parent modeling	2
Not needed all the time; not a right; it is a privilege	2
Total	179

Table 1. Adult responses to How do you view play in your child's life?

As one mother noted, "Play helps build imagination. It helps bring joy to life. It is often social so it helps solidify friendships."

One Hawaiian Filipino mother reported that "my children laugh first thing in the morning. . . . Playtime helps them discover who they are, what they can do, and how they express themselves." The notion that play helps children "express emotions" appeared in many responses. For example, one caregiver noted of his boy that play "allows him to express himself freely, i.e., pretending to be an animal, a superhero, a daddy."

Slightly less frequently, caregivers reported that they valued play for overall development and included several references to motor development, health, and growth. These observations accounted for 7 percent of all responses. Some also focused on the value of play in helping children enjoy sports (7 percent) and on its role in building character and team spirit (6 percent). Finally, some noted the value of play as a diversion from schoolwork and an activity that could teach children about their cultural heritage.

Types of play encouraged and discouraged

Table 3 presents the raw frequencies of adult-caregiver responses to questions about the types of play they encouraged and discouraged. Their responses indicated that the kinds of play they encouraged varied widely, ranging from active forms of play such as sports to quieter forms such as reading books. As a group, these caregivers encouraged their children to engage in a variety of different play activities, particularly activities that involved outdoor play. Responses emphasizing outdoor activities accounted for 38.6 percent of all responses, and these comments reflected worries about their children being too engaged in sedentary, electronic play that kept them indoors. One mother of mixed ethnicity noted, "Anything outside is good, anything computerized not so good."

Among outdoor activities, parents focused on sports most frequently (15 percent). On the island, children can participate in both recreational and formally organized sports such as PopWarner Football. One Chinese Filipino mother encouraged "outdoor play like soccer and tennis." A fifty-seven-year-old Korean Hawaiian father encouraged "sports and outdoor activities." A fifty-year-old Filipino aunt encouraged, "camping, tennis, baseball, any outdoor activities."

Caregivers reported that they highly encouraged types of play that involved imagination and creativity. For example, a thirty-four-year-old mother of mixed ethnicity encouraged any play for which her children "use their imagination." Caregivers who specifically described peer play as promoting social skills used terms like cooperation, kindness, and respect, and these accounted for 12 percent of all responses. Pretend play, dress-up, and play that involved object substitution accounted for 8 percent of all responses. Caregivers also supported outdoor games such as tag and hide-and-seek (10 percent), active play such as exercise or running (6 percent), board games (5 percent), educational games (5 percent), and games of creativity (4 percent).

Other activities worthy of mention included swimming and going to the beach and traditional Filipino games such as San Pedro (a competitive, team

game like hide-and-seek) and *sungka* (a board game similar to mancala). Some responses included all types of play. One thirty-seven-year-old Filipino mother noted, "I encourage him/her with educational games, constructive play and some physical activities." Other caregivers encouraged play forms that offered broader benefits. For example, one noted, "Types of play I encourage are those that develop the well-roundedness of my child such as the emotional, mental, and physical aspect."

Table 4 presents a list of adult responses to questions about the types of play they discouraged. As a group, these adult caregivers reported that they did not condone violent, unsafe, hurtful, or aggressive play with or without toys, a response voiced by for 73 percent of all respondents. One mother of Hawaiian, Korean, Filipino, and Chinese descent did not permit her child to play "violent

Response	Frequency of Response
Social development: social skills, socialization, conflict resolution, and develop friendships	48
Highly or very valuable	17
Cognitive development: imagination, creativity, problem solving, and decision making	15
Emotional development: expressing feelings and emotions, self-expression, compassion, and self-discovery	15
Overall health, motor development, and growth	12
Joyful or happy life and enjoys fun	11
Cooperation, team building, sportsmanship, and builds character	10
Learns unspecified skills and abilities	9
Family activity, family togetherness, and intergenerational activities	7
Relaxing, calm, leisure, and balances out schoolwork and work	6
Teaches life skills and lessons that lead to a productive adult	5
Teaches about cultural heritage and the world	
Expends energy	3
Acting, role playing, and parent modeling	3
Total	**161**

Table 2. Adult responses to How do you value play in your child's life?a

games that hurt, harm self, and others." A twenty-four-year-old Japanese Filipino mother discouraged "violent, harmful, and unsafe play, play that will have negative results." A Filipino Chinese mother discouraged "any violent play." Some caregivers named specifically the activities they did not condone. One noted, "We discourage play that may cause harm to another person, hitting, pushing,

Response	Frequency of response
Sports like football, softball, tennis, volleyball, and soccer	37
Outdoor games and activities	23
Games of imagination, pretend, and make-believe	20
Social, group, and peer play	15
Active play, exercise, walking, and running	13
Positive play, positive behaviors, fair play, and cooperative play	13
Board games like Monopoly, Scrabble, and Candyland	13
Educational games, thinking games, and mental activity	13
Fun games	9
Games of creativity	9
Water play like swimming, pool, beach, fishing, and camping	7
Filipino games like San Pedro, and kickball	6
Arts and crafts, coloring, and drawing	4
Video games, and electronic play	4
Play on playground like tetherball, dodgeball	4
Play with construction toys like Tinker Toys and LEGO sets	4
Play with handmade toys	4
Problem-solving games and independent problem-solving games	4
Safe games in which no one gets hurt	4
Japanese card games like *hana fuda* and *sakura* cards	3
Bike riding	3
Games of concentration (Picture Icons)	3
Baby dolls	2
Community activities and intergenerational activities	2
Read books and other materials	2
Total	**241**

Table 3. Adult responses to What types of play do you encourage?

teasing, etc." The caregivers did not specifically mention electronic games with violent content in any of their responses.

A separate, smaller group of adults reported that they did not sanction violent play of any kind, and—for a few adults—this included sports such as football and boxing. This accounted for 35 percent of all responses. Those mentioning unsafe play that included playing with fire and other dangerous behaviors accounted for 15 percent of all responses.

In this community, socialization focused on respect, kindness, and the encouragement of social relationships. The adults of the community opposed play in which "children could harm themselves or others." Caregivers discouraging this type of play accounted for 13 percent of all responses. They also disapproved of play with weapons and toy guns almost as frequently, accounting for 12 percent of all responses. Other noteworthy groupings included those disapproving of technologically based play such as video games and of bad behavior, specifically cheating and bullying. These appeared in equal percentages, and each showed up in 8 percent of all responses.

Allocated play time with child

Table 5 presents the raw frequencies of adult-caregiver responses to questions about how often they played with their children and what activities they did together. As a group, the adults reported that they carved out time to play with their children. A father of Filipino and mixed ethnicity responded that he played with his offspring "365 days if possible." Approximately 63 percent of all respondents stated that they played with their children on a daily basis. One Asian mother commented that she and her first grader played "everyday ☺ and the appropriate activity for that time (hands on, reading, drawing, exploring outdoors, beach activities, cooking/baking and much, much, more) ☺."

A forty-year-old European American mother wrote about her preschooler: "Every day we play some. Not as much as I would like on some days but at least a bit. We do various arts and crafts, dance, listen to music, play with dolls and various toys, and outdoor sports." Adults believed in the importance of serving as play partners for their children and reported they managed to find the time to do so.

As has been mentioned, with the recent economic downturn and the high cost of living on the island, many adults hold more than one job. Some adult respondents expressed concern about the limited time they had to play with their children and tried to spend whatever free time they had with them. One

Response	Frequency of response
Violent physical play, games, sports, and fighting	38
Dangerous or unsafe play like playing with fire and destructive play	16
Games that can hurt or harm self or others	14
Play with weapons, knives, guns, and toy guns	13
Technology play, computerized, electronic, and video games	9
Play that allows cheating, bullying, and negative attitudes	9
Watching tv, cartoons, and animations	3
Cooking	2
Traditional gender-specific games and play	2
Hunting, play with scope gun, and shooting birds	2
Competitive play	2
Total	**110**

Table 4. Adult responses to What types of play do you discourage?

thirty-eight-year-old Filipino father wrote, "I play with my children on my days off and every chance I'm not at work—walking, soccer, fun wrestling, and judo." One grandparent responded: "Not as often as I'd like. We play quiet games, card games, and games that identify numbers. We work on math problems together too." A Filipino grandparent commented on the amount of time spent in play as the grandchild aged: "At present we do it [play] twice or once a month because he is now a teenager. When he was an infant I played with him every day."

A seventy-two-year-old Filipino grandfather noted of his grandchildren: "Once in awhile now that they are growing up, I teach them cooking, cleaning the house, hanging and folding clothes, cooking rice and eggs and easy things to cook. We watch movies together. I teach them how to garden and plant vegetables. We go to the beach and play with sand."

Adult involvement in children's play

Table 6 presents a list of the play activities in which adult caregivers participated with their children. As a group, these caregivers lamented their children's lack of outdoor play. It seems logical then that the majority of the activities in which they engage with their children take place outdoors. As a category, outdoor

activities accounted for 50 percent of all responses and included sports, playing catch, hiking, going to the beach, playing hide-and-seek, riding bikes, and hula dancing. A forty-three-year-old Filipino mother noted that she played with her children "every day, sports, the beach, and family gatherings." A twenty-four-year-old, part Hawaiian aunt wrote: "We play basketball, volleyball, and play catch. We also go walking and swimming together."

Indoor play also surfaced in the caregivers' responses and included card games, reading books, playing dolls, completing puzzles, and playing board games. Some parents engaged with their children in both indoor and outdoor activities. For example, a Japanese Filipino mother and father played *sakura* cards indoors and hide-and-seek with their fifth grader outdoors. A twenty-nine-year-old mother of Hawaiian, Filipino, European, and American heritage responded: "We try to play with our children (first and third graders) every day depending on our schedule. We enjoy card/board games, golf, basketball, fishing, singing. Most of all we enjoy going to the beach. We try to keep them active." A majority of caregivers stated they tried to accommodate their children's interests when they engaged them in play.

Discussion

Responses from these adult caregivers suggest that as a group they share certain attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs regarding children's play. These are influenced by cultural, economic, and historical factors. For example, the caregivers acknowledge the importance of play for children, particularly as an activity that has specific developmental goals and outcomes. Caregivers primarily emphasized how play—by promoting the acquisition of social skills such as cooperation, sharing, and leadership and by fostering friendships and peer interactions—was valuable to social development. Their attitudes and beliefs illustrate the connection between play and culture in several ways.

First, the majority of the adult caregivers are members of non-Western cultural groups, primarily represented by Asian (Filipino, Japanese) and Polynesian (part Hawaiian) traditions. These groups share a collectivist ideology in which group harmony, interdependent social relationships, and respect for others are of central importance (Heras 2007). As a group, the adults value play because it helps their children learn to live harmoniously as members of the community (Holmes 2001; Parmar et al. 2001). The caregivers note the role of play in

Response	Frequency of Response
Every day, 24–7	52
Every opportunity, on days off, and weekends	9
Two to four times per week	7
Often	5
Not as often as I would like	5
As often or as much as possible	3
Once or twice a month or sometimes	3
Total	**84**

Table 5. Adult responses to How often do you play with your child?

the emotional development of their children along with the gains it offered in social skills. These attitudes support the existing literature on parental beliefs regarding play in collectivist cultures. For example, in my comparison between parental beliefs regarding play in Hong Kong and the United States (Holmes 2001), I found that only Hong Kong parents emphasized the role of play in self-expression and emotional development. By contrast, individuals in collectivist cultures are socialized to restrain direct emotional expression (Oyserman, Coon, and Kemmelmeier 2002).

Second, the types of play these adult caregivers encouraged and those they discouraged matched their cultural values and their attitudes toward play in general. For example, caregivers had positive views of a variety of play activities, particularly those that took place outdoors. Many caregivers reported their children engaged in and preferred electronic forms of play, play performed indoors and inherently sedentary. Adult caregivers encouraged sports participation, pro-social peer play, traditional games (San Pedro, hide-and-seek), active play, and going to the beach. Indoor play in the form of card, board, and educational games was also reported.

The emphasis on outdoor play and team- or group-oriented activities reflects both their culture and their history. In their responses about sports and peer play, caregivers noted the importance of building character, kindness, and respect, and of learning social skills such as sharing and cooperation—values linked to collectivist thinking (Heras 2007). The fact that the majority of caretakers had negative views of

Response	Frequency of response
Outdoor activities, playing catch, and exploring	40
Sports like golf, baseball, and basketball	33
Learning activities and word games	22
Going to the beach, fishing, swimming, and camping	21
Board games	21
Arts and crafts, drawing, and coloring	17
Walking, running, and hiking	16
Music, singing, hula dancing	13
Games like hide-and-seek, tag, and monkey in the middle	10
Card games	10
Reading books and other materials	9
Construction toys like Tinker Toys and LEGO sets	9
Filipino games	8
Pretend play like house, dress-up, and tea party	8
Riding bikes and scooters	7
Playing with dolls	7
Puzzles	6
Video games	6
Active play and rough-and-tumble play	5
Teach cooking, cooking activities, and baking	5
Watching TV	4
Family dinners, family gatherings, or outings	4
Watching movies and videos	3
Volunteering at community outreach and other church activities	2
Riding around in the car	2
Quiet games	2
Total	**290**

Table 6. Adult responses to What types of things do you play with your child?

electronic play and games is linked to the notion that this type of play is sedentary, often solitary, and takes place indoors. Most adults preferred their children to engage in types of play that provide social interaction, that have learning outcomes, and

that afford children the opportunity to be physically active.

Finally, as a group, the caregivers discouraged any type of violent, hurtful, or harmful play. Although diverse responses occurred with other questions, approximately 75 percent of all responses noted the undesirability of this type of play. In this community, socialization practices focus upon interdependent relationships, kindness, and respect for others (Heras 2007). Thus, it seems logical and culturally appropriate that caregivers did not condone these types of play.

Regarding adults' attitudes of their own roles as playmates for their children, 63 percent of all respondents noted that they made time to play with them. Even prior to the recent economic recession, the high cost of living on the island forced many caregivers to hold multiple jobs, and they expressed their desires to have more time to play with their children. The desire of caregivers for more play time with their children characterizes many cultures as Singer et al. has reported (2009).

For caregivers on Lāna'i, their role as one of their children's play partners is connected to their views about play. They make time to play with their children and engage them in a variety of activities, particularly those that take place outdoors. Contemporary adult caregivers consider play important, and they link it to developmental progress and overall health benefits. For these adults, play activities are linked to better learning outcomes in both cultural and educational domains. Their emphasis on activities that enhance creativity, imagination, and other cognitive skills supports findings from existing literature (Pan 1994; Parmar et al. 2001).

These attitudes stand in marked contrast to the views of parents about play when the island economy was based on plantation work. Back then, parents viewed play as the antithesis of work and set no formal time aside for play. They saw play as an activity that kept children occupied when parents returned from the field. The primary playmates of their children during the week were children from the neighborhood. Parents interacted playfully with their children only on the weekends during family time, and it was then that parents taught their children skills such as fishing and sports.

This study presented some challenges and limitations that need to be addressed. First, the sample was relatively small and homogenous with respect to socioeconomic status. Second, the written measure contained only open-ended questions. One noticeable difference in the completed written questionnaires was the length of response. Some caretakers provided long, full responses whereas others provided clear, yet abbreviated responses. Perhaps a mixed-format, short,

simple, and clear questionnaire would have produced additional information on parental attitudes.

The study also revealed that Filipino and Hawaiian cultures emphasize social relationships and face-to-face interactions. Although printed questionnaires are more convenient and help facilitate adult participation, perhaps interviewing all respondents would have yielded more insights on parental attitudes toward play. During the interviews, participants were able to elaborate on their responses and provide avenues for further discussion. This opportunity did not exist for those participants who only completed the printed questionnaires.

Future research might explore parental attitudes and beliefs regarding play with larger, more diverse samples. Given the ethnic diversity in the Hawaiian Islands, a comparative study involving several islands seems worthwhile. Another interesting aspect for further study might be the exploration of intergenerational differences in parental attitudes. Given the paucity of play research in the Pacific Rim (Martini, 1994), comparative studies would expand our knowledge about less-studied groups and broaden our understanding of the connection between play and culture.

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