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Venezuelan Children Temperament Styles and Comparison with their United States Peers

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Abstract

Temperament styles of 411 Venezuelan children are described in reference to possible gender and age differences and compared with those of 2589 U.S. children in light of Jung's theory of temperament as modified by Myers and Briggs, one that highlights four bipolar qualities: extroversion-introversion, practical-imaginative, thinking-feeling and organized-flexible styles. Venezuelan children generally prefer extroverted to introverted style, practical to imaginative styles, thinking to feeling styles, and organized to flexible styles. Gender differences are seen on thinking-feeling. In contrast to males, females are more likely to prefer a feeling style. Age differences are seen only on organized-flexible styles. In contrast to U.S. children, Venezuelan children express higher preferences for extroverted, practical, thinking, and organized styles. Results are discussed in light of possible contextual differences in child development and qualities associated with temperamental styles and its practical implication for parenting and teaching. However, the biological base for temperament should not be overlooked.
Keywords: Temperamental style; cultural diversity; children; age; gender.

Estilo Temperamental en Niños Venezolanos y Comparación con sus Pares Norteamericanos

Compendio

Este estudio describe las preferencias de estilo temperamental en una muestra de niños venezolanos (*n*=411), analiza diferencias por género, edad y compara los resultados con una muestra de niños de los Estados Unidos (*n*= 2589). Se apoya en la teoría jungniana de Myers y Briggs, la cual contempla cuatro cualidades bipolares: extroversión-introversión, práctico-imaginativo, pensador-afectivo y organizado-flexible. Los resultados muestran que los niños venezolanos prefieren los estilos extrovertido, práctico, pensador y organizado. Se encontraron diferencias por género sólo para la bipolaridad pensador – afectivo, donde las niñas prefieren el estilo afectivo en comparación con los niños y diferencias por edad en organizado – flexible. En comparación con los niños de los Estados Unidos, los de Venezuela mostraron mayor preferencia por los estilos extrovertido, práctico, pensador y organizado. Los resultados se discuten a la luz de las diferencias contextuales en desarrollo infantil y cualidades asociadas con los estilos temperamentales en niños con sus implicaciones para la crianza y la enseñanza.
Palabras clave: Estilo temperamental; diversidad cultural; niños; edad; género.

Developmental psychology is devoted to assembling a coherent body of scholarship that describes and explains human development in ways that recognize the interaction between an individual and his or her culture. Applied developmental psychology strives to establish links between scholarship and services in homes, schools, and communities as well as through social policies that address important issues (Aber, Bishop-Joshep, McLearn, & Phillips, 2007). Psychologists working in developing countries typically rely on scholarship from more developed countries that may differ culturally and socially (León, 1998, 2003a, 2003b, 2007).

Developmental psychology has had an abiding interest in temperament (Kagan, 1994; Prior, 1992). A synthesis of temperament literature suggests temperament constitutes a foundation for personality, reflects behavioral tendencies rather than specific behaviors, has an underlying biological base that is common to the human specie, is influenced by developmental qualities (e.g. social, motivational, cognitive, personal choices), helps account for individual differences that emerge in

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early ages, remains relatively stable over time, and includes some emotional reactions (Teglasi, 1998a, 1998b). The study of stability and change of temperamental styles may help to unify psychology's biological, environmental, and intrapsychic interests (Magnusson, 1988). International research on temperamental styles may contribute to our understanding of its origins and universal impact on behaviors (Plomin & McClearn, 1996).

Although the qualities that constitute the construct of temperament may differ by age, there is considerable agreement that, for children and adults, temperament includes the following for bipolar styles (i.e., types): extroversion vs. introversion, practical vs. imaginative, thinking vs. feeling, and organized vs. flexible. The first three styles were proposed by Jung (1971) and the fourth was added by Myers and Briggs (Myers & McCaulley, 1985). Oakland and his colleagues have utilized this mode to examine children's temperament in Australia (Oakland, Faulkner, & Bassett, 2005), Costa Rica (Oakland & Mata, 2007), Gaza (Oakland, Alghorani, & Lee, 2006), Greece (Oakland & Hatzichristou, 2008), Hungary, (Katona & Oakland, 2000), Nigeria (Oakland, Mogaji, & Dempsey, 2006), People's Republic of China (Oakland & Lu, 2006), South Korea (Lee & Oakland, see Oakland & Lu, 2006), South Africa (Oakland & **Pretorius**, 2008) and Zimbabwe (Oakland, Mpofu, & Sulkowski, 2007) in an attempt to add to an understanding of children's temperament.

This research has been aided by using reliable measures of temperament for children (Oakland, Glutting, & Horton, 1996) and adults. The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator ([MBTI], Myers & McCaulley, 1985), a measure of adult temperament, has been translated into at least 16 languages and reportedly is the most widely used measure in the world (Myers, McCaulley, Quenk, & Hammer, 1998). Its information has been applied successfully to career guidance, counseling, employment management, interpersonal relationships, education, and other important applied activities (Keirsey & Bates, 1984; Myers & McCaulley, 1985; Myers et al., 1998).

The Student Styles Questionnaire, developed based on MBTI model, measures temperament preferences for children and youth ages 8 through 17 (Oakland et al., 1996). It provides information on children's preferences for where they draw energy (extroverted-introverted), how they acquire information (practical-imaginative), how they make decisions (thinking-feeling), and when they make decisions (organized vs. flexible). Thus, data from this scale may provide information on children's motivation; how they learn, retain and retrieve information; how they relate to peers and superiors; form values (Horton & Oakland, 1996; Keirsey & Bates, 1984; Lawrence, 1982; Oakland et al., 1996); and select vocations (Keirsey & Bates, 1984; Keogh, 2003; Macdaid, McCaulley, & Kainz, 1991; Oakland, Stafford, Horton, & Glutting, 2001). Although temperament traits are relatively stable, they may change as a function of age, gender, social and cultural experiences, personality, and personal choices (Bates & Wachs, 1994; Buss & Plomin, 1984; Goldsmith & Rieser-Danner, 1986; Keirsey & Bates, 1984; Plomin & Dunn, 1986; Prior, 1992; Rothbart & Jones, 1998; Strelau, 1998; Teglasi, 1998a, 1998b; Thomas & Chess, 1977; Thomas, Chess, & Birch, 1968).

Age Differences

Children in the United States (U.S.) generally prefer extroverted, imaginative, and organized styles. They display age related differences on extroversion-introversion styles (i.e., a preference for extroversion increases from 8 to 13), on practical-imaginative styles (i.e., a preference for an imaginative style generally increases with age) and on organized-flexible styles (i.e., a preference for a flexible style generally increases with age) (Bassett, 2005; Oakland et al., 1996; Thayer, 1996). Studies of age differences in temperament style among Venezuelan children could not be located.

Gender Differences

The New York longitudinal study reported that temperament differences between males and females appear shortly after infancy and increase with age on the following New York longitudinal study qualities: adaptability, approach/withdrawal, activity, and sensory threshold (Chess & Thomas, 1991). During the period from 4 months to 4 years, males are more adaptable and approaching than females. Between ages 8 to 12, males display higher levels of activity and sensitivity (Maziade, Boutin, Cote, & Thivierge, 1986).

Studies on temperamental style of children in the U.S., ages 8-17, confirm the presence of gender differences (Bassett & Oakland, in press; Oakland et al., 1996). More females than males prefer an organized style while more males than females prefer a flexible style. More males than females prefer a thinking style while more females than males prefer a feeling style. Gender differences on thinking-feeling appear early, at least by age 8, are sustained through adulthood, and may be universal (Hammer & Mitchell, 1996; Myers & McCaulley, 1985; Myers et al., 1998). Studies of gender differences in temperament style among Venezuelan children could not be located.

Cross-National Studies of Temperament

Oakland and his colleagues are using emic and etic approaches in their international studies of children's temperament (Berry, Poortinga, Segall, & Dasen, 1992). Emic approaches examine culture-specific traits while

Table 1
Qualities Associated with Temperament (Oakland et al., 1996)

Preferences for the Primary Sources from Which One Draws Energy	
Extroverted	Introverted
Energy from others/environment	Energy from within/own ideas
Many friends	Fewer deep friendships
Many interests	Fewer in-depth interests
Prefer talking, respond quickly	Prefer writing, reserved
Enjoy interruptions	Need own space/privacy
Preferences for Acquiring Information	
Practical	Imaginative
Enjoy facts	Enjoy ideas
Prefer applications first	Prefer theory first
Learn by direct experience	Learn by intuitive hunches
Prefer simplicity	Enjoy possibilities
Preferences for How One Makes Decisions	
Thinking	Feeling
Value honesty	Value harmony
Concerned with justice	Sympathetic
Competitive	Cooperation
Enjoy debate, quizzical	Diplomatic, charming
Decisions on logic	Decisions on personal value
Preferences for When One Makes Decisions	
Organized	Flexible
Prefer planning	Prefer Spontaneity
Like order, systems	Like change, variety
Enjoy routine	Enjoy surprises
Need Closure	Like to keep options open
Impose Standards	Tolerant, adaptive
Strong work ethic	Turn work into play

etic approaches examine whether traits and behaviors are universal and independent of one or more cultures. For example, attempts to establish the frequency children's temperament traits are displayed within a country or region and then to compare their frequency with those found in children from other countries or regions are consistent with efforts by McCrae and Costa (1997) and others (e.g., Berry et al., 1992; Macdaid, McCaulley, & Kainz, 1991; Plomin & Dunn, 1986) to examine the possibility of universal temperament and personality traits through cross-national studies.

Prior research found children in Hungary generally prefer practical, feeling, and organized styles (Katona & Oakland, 2000). Children in Australian generally prefer extraverted, imaginative, thinking, and organized styles (Oakland et al., 2005). Children in Costa Rica are more likely to prefer extraverted, imaginative, and organized styles (Oakland & Mata, 2007). Children in Gaza generally prefer introverted, practical, feeling, and organized styles (Oakland, Alghorani, et al., 2006). Children in Greece generally prefer extraverted, practical, thinking, and organized styles (Oakland & Hatzichristou, 2008). Children in Nigeria generally prefer introverted, practical, thinking, and organized styles (Oakland, Mogaji, & Dempsey, 2006). Children in the People's Republic of China generally prefer extraverted, practical, thinking, and organized styles (Oakland & Lu, 2006) Children in Zimbabwe generally prefer extroverted, practical, feeling, and organized styles (Oakland et al., in press).

A Focus on Venezuelan Children

The influence of temperament and personality on Venezuelan children is recognized widely by practitioners and some scholars. Scholarship on this topic generally comes from three traditions. One relies on essays based on historic documents, professional experience, and social-political conditions (e.g. Capriles, 2007; Carias, 1983; Mijares, 1980; Silva Michelena, 1967). This literature suggests adults prefer extroverted, practical, feeling, organized styles. Other studies by social psychologists rely mainly on psychohistory methodology to examine the impact of ideology, alienation, and national identity (Montero, 1997) on positive and negative attributions, not on temperament. However, this literature suggests an extroverted style may be most common. Studies that examine the impact of poverty on human development generally report 70% or more adults prefer extroverted and externally controlled styles (Oropeza Zambrano, 2002; Ugalde et al., 2004).

Some scholars believe personality must be understood in light of local culture (Triandis & Suh, 2002) while others believe personality is largely independent of cultures (McCrae & Costa, 1997). Additional research with children will add to this literature and may help resolve this difference in opinions. Empirical research that investigates differences in temperament styles between Anglo-American (U.S.) and Latin-South American (Venezuela) countries and Venezuelan children's preferences could not be located.

Proposes of this Study

This research describes temperament style preferences in a sample of Venezuelan students at four age groups, examines possible gender and age differences among them, and compares temperament style preferences of children in Venezuela and the United States. The following questions are addressed in this study: Do Venezuelan children display differences in their preferences for extroversion-introversion, practical-imaginative, thinking-feeling, or organized-flexible styles? Do they display gender and age differences on these temperament styles? Do Venezuelan and U.S. children differ in their preferences for these styles?

Methods

Participants

Venezuelan Sample. Data were collected from 411 children selected randomly from public and private schools located in four main cities in Venezuelan regions: north (Caracas), east (Anzoategui), south (Bolivar), and west (Zulia), divided somewhat equally between males (*N*= 203) and females (*N*= 208) from four age levels: 9 (*n*= 101), 11 (*n*= 100), 13 (*n*= 102), and 15 (*n*= 108). Psychologists and psychology students administered the Student Styles Questionnaire-Venezuelan Spanish translation (Leon, 2005) using standard methods found in the SSQ manual (Oakland et al., 1996).

U.S. Sample. Data for U.S. children were drawn from the SSQ standardization sample. The standardization sample of 7,902, public and private school children, ages 8 through 17, was stratified on five categories to reflect the 1990 U.S. Bureau of the Census data (Oakland et al., 1996): age, gender, race/ethnicity, geographic region, and school type. A sample of 2,589 children was selected from the standardization group to form the following four age groups for this study: ages 9 (*n*= 648), 11 (*n*= 650), 13 (*n*= 652), and 15 (*n*= 639). Fifty-one percent were females. Three racial/ethnic groups were represented proportionately to the 1990 U.S. census: Anglo-Americans (73%), African-Americans (16%), and Hispanics (11%).

A discussion of temperament preferences among U.S. children by age and gender differences is not a primary focus of this study. This research can be found elsewhere (Bassett & Oakland, in press; Oakland et al., 1996; Thayer, 1996). Data on U.S. children are included to provide a cross-national comparison.

Instrumentation

Student Style Questionnaire (SSQ). The SSQ (Oakland et al., 1996), a self-report paper and pencil group administered measure of temperament type for children ages 8 through 17, can be completed within approximately 20 minutes. Each of its 69 forced-choice items has two alternatives that provide for an assessment of preferred behaviors associated with one of four bipolar traits: extroversion (E) or introversion (I), practical (P) or imaginative (M), thinking (T) or feeling (F), and organized (O) or flexible (L). An example of an item assessing extroversion-introversion follows: After school, I most prefer to (a) spend time with others; (b) spend time alone. The EI scale has 23 items, the PM scale has 16 items, the TF scale has 10 items, and the OL scale has 26 items. Additionally, 6 items provide information simultaneously on two scales.

Test-retest reliability coefficients, derived over an 8 month period, are .80, .67, .70, and .78 for EI, PM, TF, and OL respectively. Results of factor analyses studies indicate the SSQ's factor structure is consistent and stable for U.S. children who differ by age, gender, and racial-ethnic group (Stafford & Oakland, 1996a, 1996b). Factor analytic studies of data from children from seven countries found a stable factor structure and thus support the use of the SSQ internationally (Benson, Oakland, & Shermis, in press). External validity, using contrasted groups, convergent validity, and divergent validity, provides additional strong support for the SSQ's validity (Oakland et al., 1996).

The Venezuelan Spanish version was developed and validated using the following procedures. A prior Spanish translation of the SSQ used in the Costa Rica research (Oakland & Mata, 2007) was reviewed independently by four experienced Venezuelan schools psychologist. Language modifications were made based on 80% inter judge agreement. The resultant version was edited to closely resemble the published version of the SSQ. This edited version also was reviewed by 16 psychologists, 4 in each of the four Venezuelan regions that participated in this study, to determine whether the translated version was appropriate for use in each of the four participating regions. Additional changes were judged to be unnecessary.

Data Analysis

The percent of Venezuelan and U.S. children expressing a preference for each of the eight traits was determined in the following fashion. Raw scores rather than scale scores were used. Individual responses on each of the 69 items were examined with the goal of determining whether a student selected more options from one of the two bipolar traits. For example, children who selected more extraverted than introverted options on the 23 extraversion-introversion items were classified as extraverted. Conversely, children who selected more introverted options were classified as introverted. Children who selected an equal number of options on a scale (e.g., extraversion-introversion) displayed no discernable preference on that bipolar trait and thus were excluded from subsequent analyses on that scale. The total number of children displaying a particular preference on each scale was divided by the total number of children displaying any preference on the scale. Thus, sample sizes reported above differ somewhat (i.e., < 3% for any one of the four bipolar traits) from the *n* used in the statistical analyses.

Data were analyzed using frequencies and are reported using percentages to promote understanding. Tests for significance of a proportion was calculated using chi-square analyses both with Venezuela and cross-national data, testing whether the frequency of children who preferred either extroversion or introversion, practical or imaginative, thinking or feeling, and organized or flexible styles differs significantly. Possible differences between Venezuela and U.S. children in reference to the total group, gender, and age are examined through chi-square analyses. A significance level of 0.05 was set for all analyses. Thus, *p*-values equal to or less than .05 indicate groups differ statistically on a temperament dimension.

Results

Table 2
Temperament Preferences for Children from Venezuela and the United States for Total Group, Gender, and Four Age Groups (by Percent)

	Venezuela								United States							
	E	I	P	M	T	F	O	L	E	I	P	M	T	F	O	L
Age 9	76	24	54	46	67	33	95	5	46	54	41	59	54	46	84	16
Age 11	79	21	45	55	60	40	87	13	54	46	41	59	53	47	77	23
Age 13	73	27	43	57	60	40	79	21	64	36	41	59	52	48	64	36
Age 15	67	33	45	55	55	45	69	31	56	44	46	54	50	50	53	47
Male	72	28	57	43	78	22	83	17	57	43	43	57	74	25	64	36
Female	75	25	53	47	41	59	82	18	56	44	41	59	30	70	76	24
Total	74	26	55	45	60	40	82	18	56	44	42	58	52	48	70	30

Notes. E = extroverted; I = introverted; P = practical; M = Imaginative; F = feeling; O = organized; L = flexible.

Venezuelan Children's Temperamental Preferences

Venezuelan Children's Extroverted-Introverted Styles Preferences. More Venezuelan children prefer an extroverted than an introverted style (χ^2 (1, N = 405) = 90.08, p < .001). Gender (χ^2 (1, N = 404) = 0.47, p < .49) and age (χ^2 (3, N = 405) = 3.94, p < .27) differences are not significant.

Venezuelan Children's Practical-Imaginative Styles Preferences. More Venezuelan children prefer a practical than an imaginative style (χ^2 (1, N = 332) = 3.90, p < .05).

Gender (χ^2 (1, N = 331) = 0.58, p < .45) and age (χ^2 (3, N = 332) = .10, p < .99) differences are not significant.

Venezuelan Children's Thinking-Feeling Styles Preferences. More Venezuelan children prefer thinking than a feeling style (χ^2 (1, N = 319) = 13.25, p < .001). More males than females prefer thinking style (χ^2 (1, N = 318) = 44.43, p < .001), and more females than males prefer feeling style (χ^2 (1, N = 318) = 44.43, p < .001). Age differences were not found.

Venezuelan Children's Organized-Flexible Styles Preferences. More Venezuelan children prefer an organized than a flexible style (χ^2 (1, N = 391) = 163.71, p < .001). Age differences among four groups were significant (χ^2 (3, N = 391) = 25.30, p < .001): between 9 and 11 (χ^2 (1, N = 196) = 3.92, p < .05), 9 and 13 (χ^2 (1, N = 194) = 10.69, p < .01), 9 and 15 (χ^2 (1, N = 197) = 22.66, p < .001), and 11 and 15 (χ^2 (1, N = 197) = 9.25, p < .01).

Cross-National Findings

Extroverted-Introverted Styles Preferences. Although both Venezuelan and U.S. children prefer extroverted to introverted styles, their preferences differ in magnitude χ^2 (1, N = 4028) = 45.31, p < .001. More Venezuela than U.S. children prefer an extroverted style; fewer Venezuelan than U.S. children prefer an introverted style. More Venezuelan than U.S. males prefer an extroverted style χ^2 (1, N = 2011) = 17.19, p < .001; more Venezuelan than U.S. females prefer an extroverted style. Cross-national differences were significant at ages 9 (χ^2 (1, N = 748) = 30.58, p < .001), 11 (χ^2 (1, N = 1272) = 22.73, p < .001), and 15 years (χ^2 (1, N = 745) = 4.22, p < .05).

Practical-Imaginative Styles Preferences. More Venezuelan than U.S. children prefer a practical style (χ^2 (1, N = 3441) = 22.42, p < .001). More Venezuelan than U.S. males prefer a practical style (χ^2 (1, N = 1723) = 11.92, p < .001) and more Venezuelan than U.S. females prefer a practical style (χ^2 (1, N = 1717) = 10.19, p < .01). Cross-national differences were significant at ages 9 (χ^2 (1, N = 642) = 4.81, p < .05), 11 (χ^2 (1, N = 1070) = 6.03, p < .01), and 13 (χ^2 (1, N = 1082) = 8.12, p < .01).

Thinking-Feeling Styles Preferences. More Venezuelan than U.S. children prefer a thinking style (χ^2 (1, N = 3351) = 7.62, p < .01). More Venezuelan than U.S. females prefer the thinking style (χ^2 (1, N = 1676) = 8.20, p < .01). Cross-national differences were significant only at age 9 (χ^2 (1, N = 603) = 4.50, p < .05).

Organized-Flexible Styles Preferences. More Venezuelan than U.S. children prefer an organized style (χ^2 (1, N = 3758) = 26.22, p < .001). More Venezuelan than U.S. males prefer an organized style (χ^2 (1, N = 1674) = 1.08, p < .30).Cross-national differences were significant at ages 9 (χ^2 (1, N = 710) = 8.29, p < .01), 11, (χ^2 (1, N = 1210) = 5.20, p < .05), 13 (χ^2 (1, N = 1167) = 8.88, p < .01) [Note: there should be no period after the 0.01)], and 15 (χ^2 (1, N = 671) = 8.25, p < .01).

Discussion

Temperament Styles of Venezuelan Children

Extroversion-Introversion Styles. Venezuelan children display a decided preference for extroverted rather than introverted styles. This preference is consistent for males and females and for all for age groups. This result is consistent with scholarship that emphasizes Venezuelan adult's extroverted styles, literature that generally attributes this preference to result from the country's social organization and commitment to extended family (Carias, 1983; Mijares, 1980; Montero, 1997; Oropeza Zambrano, 2002; Ugalde et al., 2004). However, equally plausible is the belief that their extroversion may cause and support the formation of social organizations and close family ties, not result from them.

Extroverted children generally derive energy from being with others, need considerable affirmation and external encouragement, prefer to have many friends, and assume the characteristics of those around them. Academically, they generally prefer cooperative group work, class presentations, group seating, and active classrooms-qualities congruent with innovations in education recommended at the national and international levels (Moreno, 2001, Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Educación, la Ciencia y la Cultura [UNESCO], 2000). Socio-educational changes such as the new basic educational curricula (Venezuelan Basic Education Curricula, 1997; Venezuelan Initial Education Curricula, 2005) recommend more participative and socially oriented instructional strategies. Students who prefer an extroverted style may have more opportunities to succeed under these new reform methods than students who prefer an introverted style.

Parents and teachers also must attend to the needs of the 26% who prefer an introverted style. They generally derive their energy from themselves. They prefer to have a few close friends, have a few well-developed interests, and enjoy spending time alone. They are inclined to be hesitant to share their ideas with others. They appreciate acknowledgement of their careful work and reflection. They learn best by having time to think about and reflect upon what they have learned.

Practical-Imaginative Styles. Although Venezuelan children display some balance in their preferences for practical and imaginative styles, both for males and females and all four age levels are more likely to prefer a practical style. These findings are consistent with Caprile's (2007) belief, based on Jung's perspective, that Venezuelan adults tend to display a practical style prefe-rences. He believes Venezuela's Spanish and African origins, including knavery and African mythology, may explain the presence of this archetype in Venezuelan behavior, one characterized by an interest in and capacity to survive and win in the fact of personal difficulties.

Parents and teachers working with children who prefer this style are encouraged to recognize that they tend to focus their attention on what is seen, heard, and experienced through their senses. Academically, they tend to base their decisions on facts and personal experience, observe details carefully, and reach conclusions in a step-by-step manner. They value facts and personal experiences that have practical applications. They learn better using step-by-step approaches and upon realizing what they are learning is applicable to their lives. They tend to become discouraged when work seems irrelevant or too complex, leading to a decrement in interest and thus motivation.

Parents and teachers also are encouraged to recognize that 45% of Venezuelan children prefer a more imaginative style. Children who display this style prefer theories to facts and focus their attention on generalizations and global concepts. They often base their decisions on intuitive hunches, and may overlook details when learning or doing work. They learn best when given opportunities to use their imagination and contribute their unique ideas. They appreciate others who value and praise their creativity.

Thinking-Feeling Styles. Venezuelan children are more likely to prefer thinking than feeling styles. Gender differences confirm that more males than females prefer a thinking style and more females than males prefer a feeling style, a finding consistent with other studies (Hammer & Mitchell, 1996; Myers & McCaulley, 1985; Myers et al., 1998; Oakland et al., 1996). Age differences were not significant among Venezuelan children.

Parents and teachers are encouraged to recognize children with a thinking preference want to be treated fairly and desire truth be told accurately. Thus, they tend to express themselves in a blunt fashion and may hurt others' feelings in the process. They do not praise others frequently and may be uncomfortable openly expressing their emotions. These students tend to enjoy competitive activities and learn better when information is logically organized and presented.

Parents and teachers also are encouraged to recognize that 40% of Venezuelan children prefer a feeling style. Children who display this style tend to rely on their feelings and own subjective standards when making decisions. They generally are compassionate and sensitive to the feelings of others, and value harmony. Children with a feeling style tend to learn best when engaged in cooperative activities that help personalize their learning.

Organized-Flexible Styles. Venezuelan children have a decided preference to make decisions based on an organized rather than a flexible style. Age differences are apparent only between 9 and 11. Gender differences are not apparent. These finding is consistent with Silva's Michelena (1967) description that Venezuelan adults generally display an organized style, one that involves the use of step-by-step procedures guided by external rules-similar to the behaviors of most public employees. However, persons who display flexible styles may be better able to function during periods characterized by social and political disorganization as in Venezuela. Children who prefer an organized style may not receive the structure and order they desire when external conditions appear to be unstable.

Parents and teachers are encouraged to recognize children who display an organized style tend to make decisions as soon as possible. They do not cope well with surprises or changes to their routine and are likely to respond better to a more structured and organized setting. Expectations that others have of them should be communicated clearly and schedules established and followed. Students with this style like to know the rules and perform activities by the rules and enjoy receiving praise for completing work in a timely manner.

Parents and teachers also are encouraged to recognize that 18% of Venezuelan children prefer a flexible style. They tend to delay decision-making as long as possible and feel that they never have sufficient information to make decisions. They prefer a flexible, open schedule, enjoy surprises, and adapt well to new situations. They may not respond well to externally imposed rules and regulations. The manner in which they learn best is somewhat complex. They are most highly motivated when given some flexibility in their assignments and are able to turn work into play. However, teachers and parents may have to provide structure and assist them in other ways to complete assignments on time. Among the eight styles, children with this style tend to have the greatest difficulty in families and schools that are rigid and rule-bound.

Among the 16 psychological types possible from these four bipolar temperament styles (Keirsey & Bates, 1984; Myers & McCaulley, 1985, Myers et al., 1998), Venezuelan children often prefer those characterized by extroverted, practical, thinking, and organized styles. Those with these style preferences generally derive energy from being with others; focus their attention on what is seen, heard, and experienced through their senses; rely on objective and logical standards when making decisions, and prefer an organized lifestyle, and to make decisions as soon as possible based on a structured process. Thus, they perform best when parents and teachers use structured strategies. Children with these temperament preferences generally develop best in an organized environment, so significant adults, mainly parents and teachers, needs professional support in order to accomplish their mission in a Latin-American social and cultural reality.

Cross-National Similarities and Differences in Temperamental Styles. Children from Venezuela and

U.S. generally prefer extroverted, thinking, and organized styles. Thus, there is considerable similarity between these two American countries. Nevertheless, compared to those in the U.S., Venezuelan children tend to express a higher frequency of preferences for extroverted, practical, thinking, and organized styles. Conversely, U.S. children tend to express a higher frequency for introverted, imaginative, feeling, and flexible styles. Those who prefer a social psychological explanation may attribute these differences to cultural differences. However, one should not overlook the prevailing belief that temperament has biological roots (e.g., Telesis, 1998b, see Teglasi, 1998b).

The Need to Honor all Temperament Style Preferences. Although the prevalence of temperament style preferences may differ, between and within countries, one must remember all temperamental styles deserve to be recognized and respected. Adults responsible for children's care, specially parents and teachers, should be encouraged to promote social and personal justice by recognizing and respecting the developmental needs expressed thought children's temperament preferences, including attempts to promote children's knowledge of their and others' styles (Oakland et al., 1996).

Findings of both within and between country differences in this cross-national study on children's temperament style preferences in two American countries confirm the need to use emic and etic approaches when researching on human development. The data from Venezuelan children help confirm the extroverted temperamental style that has been described for Venezuelan adults and offer preliminary information related to children's extroverted and introverted, practical and imaginative, thinking and feeling and organized and flexible styles, useful for parenting and teaching. The results obtained with the Venezuelan sample are contrary to the belief that Latin Americans prefer a style characterized by disorganization and improvisation. This is the first known study of children's temperament in Venezuela or other South American counties. Thus, replication studies examining children's temperament style in these countries are needed.

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