NEWS | POSTED DECEMBER 4, 2019

Child Development Special Section on Specificity and Commonality: Sociocultural Generalizability in Social-Emotional Development

Child Development invites manuscripts for a Special Section, *Specificity, Commonality, and Generalizability in Social-Emotional Development*. The Special Section Editors are Tina Malti (University of Toronto) and Charissa S. L. Cheah (University of Maryland, Baltimore County). ***Please note that LOI timelines and feedback may be impacted by COVID-19.***

The generalizability of findings from child development studies across different populations and cultural groups is a subject of ongoing debate. Developmental processes are inherently sensitive to context, vastly heterogeneous, and all too often nonlinear. These characteristics require attention to specificity and in-depth explorations of what is specific to history, context, and exposure to different experiences in development. Yet, developmental processes can also be characterized by homogeneity, follow similar normative paths, and allow for some predictability, suggesting that there may be some commonality in child development across time, context, and space. What are the implications of this seeming contradiction for the generalizability of empirical findings? Is it possible to identify common principles of development? And what is inherently specific to child development in different settings?

In this Special Section of *Child Development*, we would like to highlight our sociocultural policy by bringing together state-of-the-art papers that focus on illustrating the specificity and commonality principles in the domain of social-emotional development. We are interested in papers that examine the development of core

social-emotional processes, such as empathy/sympathy, emotion regulation, trust, or guilt, associated biological and cognitive mechanisms (e.g., physiological arousal, epigenetic processes, attentional control), and that either illustrate 1) the specificity principle (Bornstein, 2017), i.e., how do environmental characteristics, such as exposure to violence, and timing (when in life does it occur, and how), affect specificity in social-emotional development; 2) the commonality principle, i.e., common features in select domains of social-emotional development across environmental settings, and timing (when in life does it occur, and how), or 3) both principles. In addition, all papers should provide substantive examples and explicitly discuss methodological considerations (best practices to elucidate specificity and/or commonality), and the implications for generalizability in child development findings. Data including non-US samples and meta-analyses that conform to our sociocultural policy and highlight sociocultural specificities, commonalities, or both in social-emotional development across setting are especially welcome.

We seek submissions that make novel contributions to the understanding of specificity and commonality in child social-emotional development and generalizability in findings pertaining to child social-emotional development research. We are open to different theoretical and methodological approaches, statistical analyses, and research populations to illustrate the specificity and commonality principles in child social-emotional development. Studies may include comparisons across individuals, cultures, or nations, show the adaptation of psychological interventions across communities, populations, or contexts, and/or adopt multidisciplinary perspectives and methodological advancements to create new insights into the specificity and commonality of social-emotional development.

Authors who plan to submit a manuscript for the special section are asked to **submit a letter of intent by March 1st, 2020**, that includes a (1) tentative title, (2) brief description (500 words or less, excluding references) of the proposed submission; (3) brief explanation (100 words or less) of how the proposed submission makes a unique contribution to the specificity and/or commonality principles in social-emotional development; (4) names and affiliations of all anticipated authors; and (5) contact information for the corresponding author. Authors may include up to 2 tables or figures in their letter of intent. The guest editors will review letters of intent for fit with the section and work to provide the broadest representation of high-quality papers.

Letters of intent should be sent electronically as Word documents to cdev@srcd.org. In the accompanying e-mail, please include “Special Section on Generalizability in Social-Emotional Development” in the subject line. Following a review of received letters (roughly 1 month), potential contributors will be contacted to

submit full manuscripts that will be due by **August 1st, 2020**. In general, individual manuscripts should aim to be 25-30 pages in length, inclusive of everything (body text, references, tables/figures, etc.), but extensive use of web supplements is strongly encouraged. Complete manuscripts will be subjected to full peer review, to be conducted via *Child Development*'s submission site.

Questions concerning the substance of submissions should be directed to Tina Malti (tina.malti@utoronto.ca) and/or Charissa S. L. Cheah (ccheah@umbc.edu); questions concerning the submission process should be directed to the Publications Manager at cdev@srcd.org.

References

Bornstein, M.H. (2017). The specificity principle in acculturation science. *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 12*(1), 3-45. doi: 10.1177/1745691616655997