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MOTHERS' EXPECTATIONS FOR EMOTIONS AND BEHAVIORS IN
COMPETENT CHILDREN: A CROSS-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

The present research tests whether the cultural framework for self-construal (independent versus interdependent) of the nation in which a mother resides is associated with her expectations for how a competent first grader feels and acts in situations that are anger-evoking. The participants were 502 mothers from five nations (Germany, India, South Korea, Nepal, and the US). Specifically, it was predicted that mothers from nations known to value an interdependent self-construal, in which relationships prevail over personal goals and needs, would describe competent first graders as non-angry and non-aggressive relative to mothers from nations that value the independence of self. In individual interviews, each mother was asked to think of a competent first-grade-age boy and girl whom she knew and describe how the children feel and act in two situations: 1) the child's toy was snatched by another child and 2) the child's blocks were knocked down by another child.

Mothers' open-ended responses were audio recorded. Child emotions were later classified as angry or not angry and child behaviors as aggressive and non-aggressive. X^2 analyses supported the hypothesis. For both scenarios, fewer mothers from interdependent nations (India and Nepal) expect a competent first grader to feel angry compared to mothers from independent nations (Germany and US). The findings for child behaviors were different, however, for the two scenarios. For the knocked down blocks, the hypothesis was not supported; more mothers from interdependent nations expect a competent first grader to act aggressively. For the snatched toy, there was no relation between the mother's nation and her expectations of child behavior. The findings from this study reveal heterogeneity and context specificity in maternal responses within and between nations and suggest future directions for research on cultural influences on mothers' beliefs about socially appropriate behavior for children.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Parents socialize their children so that their children's emotions and behaviors are in accordance with the parents' beliefs about emotional and behavioral competence, which may be influenced by cultural norms (Trommsdorff, Cole, & Heikamp, 2012). However, there is limited research describing cultural influences in maternal beliefs about children's emotional competence. The study of maternal beliefs about child competence is valuable because it has the potential to reveal why there are cultural differences in parenting practices and why children behave differently in different cultures. A greater understanding of maternal socialization beliefs may also prove to be helpful in assessing or teaching parenting strategies that comply with cultural norms.

The goal of this thesis is to present a cross-cultural view of mothers' beliefs about socially appropriate (competent) emotions and behaviors in first-grade children. Maternal beliefs were assessed in mothers from five nations that are known to have different views of the self, i.e. self-construal, as a first step laying a basis for future research examining cultural influences. It is predicted that specific cultural norms may affect a mother's beliefs about how competent children feel and act when provoked. In order to contextualize these hypotheses, this thesis will first present research related to parenting beliefs about emotions and behaviors, and then the influence that these beliefs have on socialization goals and practices. The effect that cultural influences have on these beliefs will be introduced as well with an emphasis on the importance of an individual's view of the self.

Parental Influence on Child Socialization

Child emotion socialization refers to social influences that shape a child's emotional behavior. In early childhood, parents are thought to be the main agents of socialization (Maccoby, 1992). Parental influences are intended, probably implicitly, to instill in a child the socially appropriate and acceptable emotions that can be felt and displayed in accordance with societal values (Trommsdorff et al., 2012). Trommsdorff and colleagues (2012) suggest that parents' beliefs regarding the appropriateness of specific emotions and behaviors influence the socialization goals they have for their children. These beliefs imply parental conceptions of child competence, although there is a dearth of studies that directly examine parental beliefs about child competence, including emotional competence. Implicit, unspoken beliefs that people develop to explain their experiences and world surrounding them, referred to as "intuitive theories," are thought to have a causal influence on an individual's own thoughts and actions (Gelman & Legare, 2011). Trommsdorff and colleagues (2012) state that parent figures influence children's emotions through their own practices, which are based on the intuitive theories that they hold. In other words, when these implicit beliefs are shared and transmitted across generations, they convey cultural values that influence the socialization practices of parents which in turn influence children to regulate their emotions in accordance with cultural norms (Super & Harkness, 1986). Emotion socialization can therefore promote children to express emotions in a way that is culturally acceptable (Chan, 2011).

In addition to influencing children's emotional experiences, socialization also shapes how children behave in emotion-eliciting situations, preparing them to live in a way that is acceptable within their specific culture (Raval & Martini, 2009). Eisenberg and Mussen (1989) suggest that prosocial behaviors such as helping and sharing are encouraged in most nations. Nonetheless,

differences are evident in how children react when negative emotions are elicited (Raval & Martini, 2009). A child experiencing such negative emotions may behave in a way that exemplifies those emotions, or the child may behave in a way that disguises the experienced emotion (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Raval, Martini, & Raval, 2010). Therefore, in order to predict a child's behavior, it is important to consider parental expectations of how competent children react emotionally and behave in relation to the cultural norms of the society in which the parents and child live.

A Cultural Perspective

There are varied ways in which culture has been conceptualized. For the purposes of this thesis, the framework put forth by Markus and Kitayama (1991) was selected because of its psychological relevance to the development of selves. Parents socialize the kind of self a child becomes. Markus and Kitayama point out that much of the knowledge pertaining to human nature has been based on a Western point of view (which will be discussed in greater detail). According to literature, however, there is considerable cultural variation in what is deemed as appropriate emotion expression (Trommsdorff et al., 2012). McGillicuddy-De Lisi & Subramanian (1996) state that because parents of different cultures have different social experiences, their intuitive theories regarding what emotions are socially appropriate may also vary. Furthermore, according to Ogbu (1981), conceptions of what constitutes competence in a given society is also shaped by cultural norms. The goal of all parents is to help their children become competent members of the society in which they live, such that the competence is a universal goal but its specific nature may be culturally variable. This view is consistent with that

of cross-cultural researchers who state that the cultural differences exist in terms of which emotions should be felt in a given situation and how they should be displayed (Mesquita & Frijda, 1992). As a result, parents socialize children to display and regulate emotions according to their cultural norms (Cheah & Rubin, 2003).

Cultural Differences in Self-Construal

When considering cultural socialization, it is useful to understand the framework with which a parent understands the nature of the self. A culture's conception of the nature of self, i.e. self-construal, influences parental beliefs about socially competent emotional responses and behaviors (Trommsdorff et al., 2012). Markus and Kitayama (1991) illustrate how people from different cultures may think of themselves differently in regards to their identity and relationships. They proposed that there are two major ways the self can be construed—an independent-self and an interdependent self.

The independent view of the self emphasizes individuality and uniqueness of self. According to Markus and Kitayama (1991), individuals holding an independent self-construal see themselves as being separate and distinct from others with specific internal attributes (i.e. the attitudes and beliefs that people privately hold about themselves). Markus and Kitayama further suggest that an individual's emotions and behavior are influenced by internal thoughts and feelings; their interactions with others reaffirm those private thoughts. The independent self strives to preserve its sense of individuality and assert its unique identity. According to Markus and Kitayama, who suggest that internal motives are most important when considering the

emotions and actions of somebody holding an independent view, characteristics of the independent self are often generalizable and uphold under various contexts.

In contrast to the independent view of the self, interdependent self-construal emphasizes the individual's position relative to relationships. Markus and Kitayama (1991) propose that an individual with this self-construal feels whole and complete only when considered in relational context. The authors state that individuals with this self-construal often base their actions on what they think others feel or expect. They prioritize harmony and conformity in relationships over and above self-assertion. Individuals with this view of the self may strive to fit in so that they do not challenge social harmony. Their interactions with others define who they are; thus they have situation-specific definitions of themselves rather than viewing themselves with general, overarching attributes.

Markus and Kitayama (1991) propose that many western European and American cultures, particularly those that are economically developed, typically value independent self-construal. Given a Western emphasis on the individual's self-assertion of needs and desires, mothers from Western countries are more supportive of children expressing emotions than Asian mothers (Friedlmeier, Corapci, & Cole, 2011; Trommsdorff, 2012). A mother's support of children's emotional expressions could be attributed to the beliefs that the mother has about how children develop their behavioral tendencies. Mothers from Western societies often attribute children's behaviors to developmental factors, whereas mothers from Asian cultures emphasize the importance of socializing children into socially functional adults (Cheah & Rubin, 2003). Cheah and Rubin suggest that Western mothers believe that a child is simply expected to act in a certain way at a specific age. According to Markus and Kitayama (1991), independent self-construal in children would include the expression of negative emotion; the cultural value would

be that self-expression is not only acceptable, but important for communicating the internal, private self. Therefore, parents expect children to express negative emotions and try to help them learn to express it in age-appropriate ways.

Asian mothers, on the other hand, emphasize the importance of social harmony and children's understanding of their place in the social hierarchy; negative emotions are not expected and are more quickly socialized as part of rearing a child to be culturally competent (Super & Harkness, 1986). That is, although European and American individuals are often characterized as valuing an independent self, Markus and Kitayama (1991) suggest that many Asian, African, and Latin-American cultures are typified by interdependent self-construal. This may explain why mothers from Asian countries are less supportive of children's negative emotions; they do not value self-assertion of individual needs but rather they value children's skill at promoting social harmony (Friedlmeier et al., 2011). Indeed, Wood (2012) reported that mothers, who participated in the larger study from which data for the present thesis was taken, universally viewed social competence as a characteristic of competent first-grade-age children, but that mothers from India and Nepal emphasized social harmony and obedience more than mothers from Germany and the United States. This view is consistent with the influence of the specific teachings in these nations that play a role in promoting the interdependent self. For example, Confucian ideals promote kindness in Chinese culture, and Hindu teachings encourage followers to pay strong attention to others (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

The independent and interdependent self-construals proposed by Markus and Kitayama represent two ends of a spectrum. However, they further posit that individuals within the same culture may view the self with varying degrees of independence or interdependence. A related idea, proposed by Kağıtçibasi (1996), contends that individuals can be both autonomous and

relational at the same time (a self-construal referred to as autonomous-relational). This form of self-construal is suggested to be most evident in nations which are rapidly developing and therefore require individuality and independence outside of the family, but still stress the importance of individuals adhering to traditional values that emphasize the interconnectedness of the self in relationships. The autonomous relational self is often seen in cultures that would typically be thought of as having an interdependent view of the self, but are undergoing modernization and urbanization. As individuals in these societies become more educated with Western ideals in mind and acquire greater financial stability, there becomes less need for the interdependence between generations, and an increasing emphasis placed on autonomy. The societal shifts thus promote the idea of autonomy in these cultures which are typically thought of as being relational (Chan, 2011).

Turkey and South Korea are examples of nations that foster the autonomous-relational self-construal; that is the values that are operative at a given moment, whether independent or interdependent, depend on the situational context (Trommsdorf et al., 2012). Park and Cheah (2005) suggest that South Korea is exemplified by this type of construal because its people are adapting to changing values that accept the independence of self. Individuals from Hong Kong may also be characterized by this autonomous-relational view of the self (to varying degrees) as the inclusion of westernized schools becomes more common in their traditional culture influenced by its Chinese heritage (Chan, 2011). Chan's study shows that persons with a stronger independent self-construal support more assertion of uniqueness than those with stronger interdependent self-construal, who support both relational values and autonomy. In the social context of a first-grade child interacting with a provocative peer, it is possible that mothers

from autonomous-relational cultural orientations may expect the child to behave more like an independent than an interdependent self.

The acceptability of specific emotions varies from one nation to the next and is influenced by the prominent self-construal. Markus and Kitayama (1991) proposed two contrasting types of emotions: ego-focused emotions and other-focused emotions. Ego-focused emotions, such as anger and frustration, focus on an individual's internal attributes. When these attributes are blocked or supported by another person's actions or another specific event (as is the case when someone's toy is stolen or if someone performs the best on a test), ego-focused emotions may be exhibited. These emotions can be harmful to relationships, and are thus described as being more common in societies valuing an independent self. On the other hand, other focused emotions, such as sympathy, are more commonly experienced in interdependent individuals. These emotions take into account the relationships and feelings of others. Because the expression of other-focused emotions may be involved in maintaining relationships, they are often associated with individuals valuing an interdependent self-construal (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

Emotion regulation also reveals information about what is appropriate in different cultures. Raval and colleagues (2010) look at the emotional control exhibited in four groups of Gujarati children. One group was identified as having emotion internalization issues, one had externalization issues, another had somatic issues, and the last was asymptomatic. The study's results show that, across the different groups, children from Gujarat (who would be expected to have an interdependent view of the self) are less likely to directly express anger and sadness than they are to directly express physical discomfort. Hence, they minimize the expression of negative emotions and behave in ways that are more culturally acceptable, which would reflect

competent behavior. The study also supports the notion that it is more acceptable for children to display physical discomfort directly in contrast to negative emotions (Raval et al., 2010).

Raval and colleagues' study also shows that the expressions of anger and sadness by asymptomatic children (those without any physical or behavioral issues) tend to be indirect, expressed through the delivery of a comment (e.g. the tone) rather than in very direct facial expressions or comments (Raval et al., 2010). That is, children are subtle in how they convey displeasure. Indeed, only the children classified as having regulation problems, i.e. those who were less competent, reported using direct means of expressing anger and sadness, behaviors that are more competent in Western cultures. These findings show that Gujarati children who are rated as not having behavior problems, i.e. who are more socially competent, express emotions and behave in emotion-eliciting situations in ways that are neither angry nor aggressive (Raval et al., 2010). This study did not, however, include children from other cultural backgrounds, and the generality of the findings to other Indian populations or other South Asian populations, e.g., Nepalese, are not known.

As noted, self-construal may organize the ways of responding to emotion-eliciting situations that are deemed to be socially competent. Cross-cultural research about mothers' beliefs has focused on their developmental expectations (Joshi & MacLean, 1997) and socialization goals (Chan, 2011; Cheah & Rubin, 2003), but has rarely focused explicitly on their views of competent emotion and behavior in children. Child emotional competence is implicit in their beliefs. The current study therefore took the novel approach of assessing how mothers from different nations, specifically from nations that tend to foster independent, interdependent, or autonomous-relational self-construal, describe the expected emotional response and behavior of competent children in situations that generally elicit negative reactions.

Among negative emotions, cultural values may influence the degree to which anger and sadness are expected responses of competent children (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Raval et al., 2010). In a previous study using data from the present sample, these two negative emotions were not differentiated, and no differences were revealed between nations (Chen, 2013). However, different negative emotions can have different implications in social interactions; anger, for example, is considered extremely disruptive in social situations (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Saarni, 1999) and would likely be a more inappropriate emotion in a nation that greatly values relationship maintenance and harmony (i.e., a nation valuing interdependent self-construal). Therefore, by analyzing negative emotions in more depth than previous research, cultural variations in mothers' responses are expected to emerge since the acceptability of specific negative emotions would vary by self-construal (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Similarly, even if a child experiences a negative emotion in response to an evocative situation, the child may behave aggressively (assert one's own rights and needs forcefully) or assertively, or a child may be quiet and accepting of the other's behavior.

Some of the studies discussed analyzed emotion and behavioral beliefs within culture, and others looked at variations across two cultures. This study will take a cross cultural look at mothers from five nations (Germany, India, South Korea, Nepal, and the United States) in order to obtain a more comprehensive analysis of maternal beliefs about emotions and behaviors. Based on the literature (Trommsdorff et al., 2012), the nations included in the study were chosen in order to represent mothers holding three different self-construals: interdependent (India and Nepal), independent (Germany and the US), and autonomous-relational (South Korea).

Due to the importance placed on maintaining social harmony in cultures valuing an interdependent self, it is predicted that fewer mothers from nations valuing an interdependent self

(compared to mothers from nations that value an independent self) will expect a competent child to feel angry in situations meant to invoke a negative response. Similarly, because aggressive behaviors are quite disruptive to social interactions (Saarni, 1999), it is predicted that fewer mothers from nations where interdependence is valued will expect a competent child to act aggressively in the two vignettes, whereas more mothers from independent nations will expect a competent child to act aggressively. In addition, because there is very little research on the autonomous-relational self-construal and its implications for parenting young children, exploratory analyses will be conducted comparing the descriptions of child emotion and behavior from mothers in South Korea (an autonomous-relational nation) to mothers from nations valuing the other two forms of self-construal. While it is harder to predict the outcomes for mothers characterized as having an autonomous-relational self-construal, a higher percentage of these mothers is predicted to expect a competent child to express anger compared to mothers from nations valuing interdependence. This prediction is based on the nature of the vignettes; since the situations were intended to portray peer interactions (rather than family interactions), it is expected that someone with an autonomous-relational self-construal would be more autonomous in these interactions. Therefore, the percentage of South Korean mothers' expecting a competent child to express anger is predicted to be similar to the percentage of mother's from nations valuing the independence of self. Using this logic, similar predictions are expected for behaviors; it is predicted that the percentage of mothers from South Korea expecting competent children to act aggressively will be similar to the percentage of mother's from nations valuing interdependent self-construal.

Chapter 2

Method

Participants

Mothers ($N = 502$) who had or recently had a child in first grade were recruited to participate in the present study. These mothers were recruited from five nations: Germany ($N = 104$); India ($N = 100$); South Korea ($N = 100$); Nepal ($N = 100$); and the United States of America ($N = 98$). To be eligible to participate, each mother had to 1) have a 6-7 year old child who was in first grade or who had just completed first grade and 2) be fluent in the national language in which the interview was conducted. In India and Nepal, mothers were recruited by word of mouth. In Germany and South Korea, advertisements were placed in community locations associated with children. In the United States, mothers with eligible children were contacted from a university database of parents interested in participating in child development research.

Mothers' age, years of schooling, economic status, and number of children were recorded in a previous study that used this same pool of mothers (Wood, 2012). This work showed that the average age of all the mothers was 35.45 years, the average number of children that each mother had was 2.14, the average number of years of maternal schooling was 13.97, and the average economic level was 3.04 indicating a middle class status on the 1-5 scale that was used. Wood's research also revealed significant differences between maternal demographics based on their nationality, specifically in regards to average maternal age, years of schooling, and number

of children. Mothers from Germany were significantly older than mothers from each of the other four countries. Mothers from the U.S. were significantly older than mothers from South Korea, India, and Nepal. South Korean mothers were significantly older than Indian and Nepalese mothers who did not differ significantly in age from each other. In regards to average years of schooling, mothers from the U.S. and South Korea did not significantly differ from each other, but they did have significantly more years of schooling than mother from Germany, India, and Nepal. Mothers from the latter three nations did not significantly differ from each other in regards to average years of schooling. Lastly, mothers from the U.S. had significantly more children than mothers from each of the other four nations. German mothers also had significantly more children than South Korean, Indian, and Nepalese mothers who did not significantly differ from each other in the number of children.

Materials and Procedure

Mothers were interviewed in their national language using the Criteria of Child Competence (CCC) Interview developed by Durbrow and Masten (1999) to assess their conceptualizations of competence in children. The German investigators, in consultation with the investigators from the other four nations, also developed four vignettes that were added to the open-ended CCC Interview. These vignettes, two of which are the focus of the present study, were added in order to have a more structured assessment of mothers' views of how competent children react and behave in emotionally charged situations. The vignettes occurred after the CCC Interview was completed and before a series of other structured procedures that assessed

maternal reports of their responses to their own children's emotions and their parenting behaviors.

Interviews were conducted in a manner that was most comfortable for the mother, which included interviews in person at a participant's home, over the phone, or in a laboratory setting at the investigator's research university. All interview data were audio recorded for later transcription. Subsequently, the principal investigator either translated or supervised translators fluent in both the national language (the language in which interviews were conducted) and English who provided English language transcripts for coding by the U.S. team. A coding system for categorizing mothers' open-ended responses to the vignettes was developed by the U.S. team, based on cross-cultural theory, emotional socialization research, and the actual responses of the mothers. On a weekly basis, coders' questions regarding translated responses were sent to the co-investigators from the five nations who provided clarifications after re-examining the transcript in the national language.

Design

This study used a group comparison design to contrast differences between nations thought to differ in their cultural orientation toward construing self. Specifically, the study compared independent (U.S. and Germany), interdependent (India and Nepal), and autonomous-relational (South Korea) cultural orientations for each of two levels of nominal variables based on maternal responses to two vignettes. The nominal variables reflected mothers' beliefs about competent children's emotions (anger versus no anger) and competent children's behavior (aggression versus no aggression) in two vignettes involving peer aggression.

Prior to responding to the vignettes, each mother had thought of a 6 or 7-year-old child whom she regarded as doing well (in other words, a child who she considered competent) for the open-ended CCC Interview. If the mother first answered for a boy, she was then asked the same questions about a girl of the same age, whereas if she first answered for a girl, she was then asked the same questions about a boy of the same age. Because each mother reported on two competent children, the total number of data points was twice the number of mothers ($N = 1004$).

For the vignettes, which were introduced after the open-ended format interview was completed, mothers were asked how each of these children would feel and act in peer situations known to be negative-response-provoking for children. The two vignettes that were used in the present study were: 1) Snatched Toy: the target child was just given a lovely toy and it was snatched away by a playmate and 2) Knocked Blocks: the target child built a house with blocks (or rocks) and another child came and knocked it down.¹ These two vignettes were selected from the four total vignettes because previous research (Chen, 2013) showed few to no cultural differences in mothers' beliefs about how competent children feel and behave in these situations; because her interpretation was that she had not examined potential differences in type of negative emotion or type of action, the present study investigated whether a more in-depth analysis would reveal cultural variations. In Chen's research, the mothers' responses for children's emotions in these two vignettes were largely coded as a negative emotion that was focused on the self, and the mothers' responses for children's behaviors in these two vignettes were largely coded as an action taken by the target child on his/her own behalf. However, it is expected that if these emotions were further classified to differentiate between negative emotions such as anger and sadness, differences would appear based on the self-construal commonly valued in the mother's nation (and what individuals with this self-construal deem appropriate). Likewise, if the

behaviors previously coded as actions taken by children on their own behalf were further classified to differentiate between behaviors that were assertive or aggressive, similar differences would be expected to appear.

Variables

In order to test hypotheses that the mothers' cultural framework for self-construal would predict her descriptions of how competent first-grade-age children respond to anger-eliciting situations, mothers were grouped according to the self-construal commonly valued in their country of inhabitation. Mothers from Germany and the United States were categorized as raising children in societies that value the independent self, mothers from India and Nepal were categorized as raising children in societies that value the interdependent self, and mothers from South Korea were categorized as raising children in societies that value the autonomous-relational self. For the sake of concision, Germany and the US will be referred to as independent nations, India and Nepal will be referred to as interdependent nations, and South Korea will be referred to as an autonomous-relational nation.

Emotion variables. The mothers' descriptions of children's emotions in each of the two vignettes were initially categorized into one of six categories (Appendix A). Those previously categorized as negative with a self-orientation were recoded into one of six new categories: 1) anger, 2) sadness, 3) anger/sadness combined, 4) general negative (also referred to as upset/bad), 5) other specific, and 6) other uncodable (Appendix B). In order to report findings on the most significant maternal responses, emotions that made up less than 10% of the total responses were not included in analyses. Because anger is considered to be quite disruptive to relationships, and

would therefore be avoided in interdependent nations, anger and anger/sadness were combined into one category that included any experience of anger. To test the hypothesis regarding expectations of a child feeling anger, emotions categorized as anger in any form (anger and anger/sadness combined) were compared to all other negative emotions, referred to as non-anger emotions. Emotions that were included in the non-anger category were the most frequent non-anger references, specifically, sadness and upset or bad. Because sadness is not harmful to relationships but conveys regret to others and is usually supported by adults (Friedlmeier et al., 2011), and because upset or bad are general colloquial terms that conveyed stress, these two types of references were conveyed to be contrasted with explicit references to anger.

Behavior variables. The mothers' descriptions of children's behaviors in the two vignettes were initially categorized into one of eight categories (Appendix A). Those previously categorized as actions taken on the child's own behalf were recoded into one of four new categories: 1) assertive, 2) aggressive, 3) prosocial and 4) other (Appendix B). Again, maternal responses that made up less than 10% of the total responses were not included in analyses. In order to test the hypothesis regarding aggressive behaviors, those behaviors categorized as aggressive were compared to non-aggressive actions. Non-aggressive actions included all behaviors that made up at least 10% of the total responses and were not considered aggressive.

Inter-rater reliability was determined by calculating a kappa statistic. For both emotion and behavior coding, the reliability was above 90%. Coders met each week to discuss questions or issues with categorizing responses. Case numbers and identifying information about the interview responses were not revealed in order to maintain reliability between the coders.

ⁱ **Two other vignettes were analyzed previously: 1) the child saw another child fall on the school yard and get hurt and 4) the child received good marks on school work. However, substantial analyses were conducted on these two vignettes. Therefore, it was suggested that further studies should focus on the first two vignettes meant to invoke negative responses and differentiate between these negative emotions and behaviors.**

Chapter 3

Results

Emotion and behavior data for the two vignettes were analyzed using a series of χ^2 analyses which tested study hypotheses against the degree to which sets of categorical variables were randomly distributed. Initial χ^2 analyses were conducted on responses that accounted for at least 10% of the total maternal responses for that vignette. If a significant difference was detected in these analyses, responses were further categorized into one of two response types (anger or no anger for emotion analyses and aggression or no aggression for behavior analyses) and χ^2 analyses were again conducted across the three self-construal orientations. If a significant difference was still detected, further χ^2 analyses were conducted between two self-construal orientations to specify the nature of the significant difference. Because the classification of emotions and behaviors produced dichotomous variables (anger versus no anger and aggression versus no aggression), a Yates' continuity correction for χ^2 analyses was calculated to provide a more conservative test of hypotheses when only 1 degree of freedom was available. Because mothers were asked to think about a child of each gender, the initial number of first-grade-age boys and girl was equal (N=502 for both boys and girls; a total of N=1004 cases). Gender-based analyses were not conducted, however, since the hypotheses were not gender-specific. Emotions and behaviors that occurred in less than 10% of the total responses were excluded from data analyses due to low frequencies. Therefore, the N of cases can be less 1004.

Mothers' Descriptions of Competent First-Grade-Age Children's Emotions

Initial examination of the cross-tabulation (cultural orientation by type of emotion) revealed that only three emotions appeared in 10% or more of the total responses for each vignette: angry, sad, and the more general category of upset/bad. All other responses accounting for less than 10% of responses were removed from further analyses leaving a new sample size of $N=953$ for the Snatched Toy vignette and $N=965$ for the Knocked Blocks vignette. A X^2 analysis was conducted to determine if there was a significant difference between the three cultural orientations. This test showed a significant difference between the mothers' responses in each vignette depending on their cultural orientation, $X^2(4) = 159.94, p < .001$ for the Snatched Toy vignette and $X^2(4) = 123.87, p < .001$ for the Knocked Blocks vignette.

To determine the nature of the significant difference, these three emotions were analyzed further. Responses categorized as sad and upset/bad were combined into a "no anger" category and contrasted to responses including any anger. X^2 analyses were conducted again, and significant differences appeared for mothers' responses in both vignettes based on their cultural orientation, $X^2(2) = 55.95, p < .001$ for the Snatched Toy vignette and $X^2(2) = 46.91, p < .001$ for the Knocked Blocks vignette. Given this finding, the next step was to determine which cultural orientations contributed to the angry-not angry difference. Therefore, the responses of mothers from independent and interdependent nations were compared using X^2 analyses.

A significant relation between cultural orientation and maternal descriptions of children's emotions was observed for both vignettes. Specifically, as predicted, mothers from interdependent nations less often described competent children as angry when their toy was snatched by another child compared to mothers from independent nations, $X^2(1) = 54.71, p < .001$ (see Figure 1). In parallel, mothers from interdependent nations less often described

competent children as angry compared to mothers from independent nations when the children's blocks were knocked down by another child, $X^2(1) = 45.91, p < .001$ (see Figure 1).

Follow-up analyses were also conducted to compare the responses of mothers from the nation representing autonomous-relational self-construal (South Korea), for which predictions were more difficult to make given the limited research on this cultural orientation. South Korean mothers' responses were compared to the other two groups of mothers from independent and interdependent nations. When comparing South Korean mothers to mothers from independent nations, significant differences were apparent for both vignettes. In each vignette, mothers from independent nations more often expected competent children to feel angry compared to mothers from the autonomous-relational nation, $X^2(1) = 11.94, p = .001$ for the Snatched Toy vignette and $X^2(1) = 8.36, p = .004$ for the Knocked Blocks vignette (see Figure 1). Significant differences were also observed when comparing South Korean mothers' responses to those of mothers from interdependent nations. In both vignettes, mothers from autonomous-relational South Korea more often expected competent children to feel angry compared to mothers from interdependent nations, $X^2(1) = 6.47, p = .011$ for the Snatched Toy vignette and $X^2(1) = 7.12, p = .008$ for the Knocked Blocks vignette (see Figure 1).

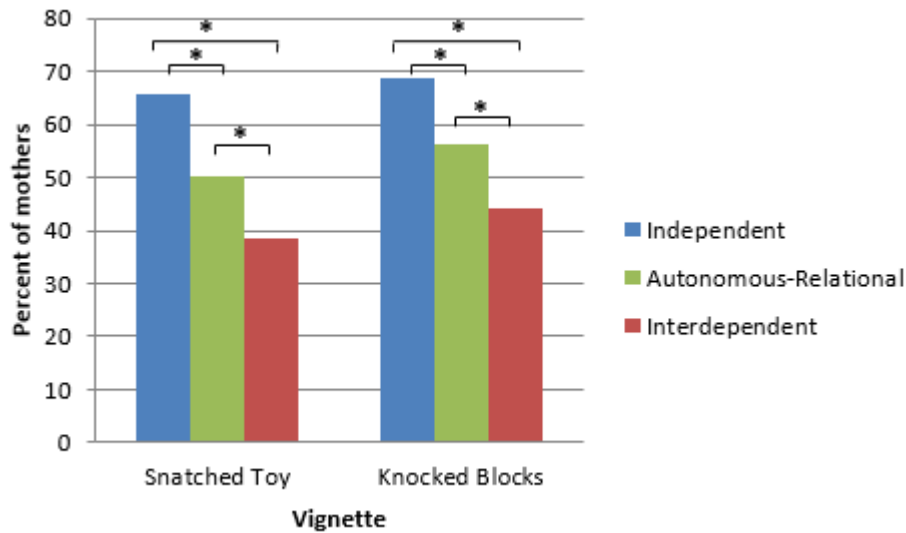


Figure 1. Cultural variation in mothers' predictions of anger. This figure displays the percent of mothers within each self-construal who described competent children as feeling angry in the Snatched Toy and Knocked Blocks vignettes.

Mothers' Descriptions of Competent First-Grade-Age Children's Behaviors

Initial examination of the cross-tabulation (cultural orientation by type of behavior) revealed that four common behaviors appeared in at least 10% of the total responses for each vignette: get help for self, no action, assertion, and aggression. Additionally, each vignette also had a fifth behavior that appeared in at least 10% of the total responses: behaviors categorized as "other" for the Snatched Toy vignette and prosocial behaviors for the Knocked Blocks vignette. All other responses accounting for less than 10% of the total responses were removed from further analyses leaving a new sample size of $N=932$ for the Snatched Toy vignette and $N=965$ for the Knocked Blocks vignette. For each vignette, X^2 analyses revealed a significant difference in the mothers' responses based on their cultural orientation, $X^2(8) = 94.14, p < .001$ for the Snatched Toy vignette and $X^2(8) = 59.173, p < .001$ for the Knocked Blocks vignette.

Similar to the emotion analyses, responses had to be further categorized to determine the nature of the significant difference. Responses were categorized as either aggressive or non-aggressive (non-aggressive consisted of all other behaviors besides aggressive ones that accounted for more than 10% of responses). χ^2 analyses were then conducted again. The pattern of findings for children's behavioral responses differed across the two vignettes. First, for the Snatched Toy vignette, no significant relation was observed between mothers' cultural orientation and their responses regarding competent children's behaviors, $\chi^2(2) = 0.68, p = .71$. In contrast, there was a significant difference in mothers' responses about behavior in the Knocked Blocks vignette depending on their cultural orientation, $\chi^2(2) = 15.45, p < .001$. In order to determine which cultural orientations contributed to the aggressive-not aggressive difference, the responses of mothers from independent and interdependent nations were compared using χ^2 analyses.

Differences in maternal responses were still present across the two vignettes. In the Snatched Toy vignette, still no significant relation was observed between cultural orientation and maternal descriptions of competent children's behavior, $\chi^2(1) = 0.53, p = .47$ (see Figure 2). In the Knocked Blocks vignette, however, a significant relation was observed. Specifically, and contrary to prediction, mothers from independent nations less often described competent children as acting aggressively compared to mothers from interdependent nations, $\chi^2(1) = 14.62, p < .001$ (see Figure 2).

Again, follow-up analyses were conducted to compare the responses of South Korean mothers to mothers from independent and interdependent nations. South Korean mothers' descriptions of children's behavior did not significantly differ from the responses of mothers from independent nations for either vignette, $\chi^2(1) = .007, p = .935$ for the Snatched Toy

vignette and $X^2(1) = 1.25, p = .264$ for the Knocked Blocks vignette (see Figure 2). Similarly, South Korean mothers' descriptions of children's behaviors also did not significantly differ from the responses of mothers from interdependent nations for either vignette, $X^2(1) = 0.15, p = .697$ for the Snatched Toy vignette and $X^2(1) = 3.64, p = .056$ for the Knocked Blocks vignette (see Figure 2). It is worth noting, however, that a X^2 analysis that did not include the Yates continuity correction yielded a significant difference in the Knocked Blocks vignette; mothers from the autonomous-relational nation more often expected competent children to act aggressively compared to mothers from interdependent nations, $X^2(1) = 4.00, p = .046$. This suggests that future research is needed to determine whether there is or is not an effect of the autonomous-relational orientation on maternal expectations associated with aggressive responses to peer conflict.

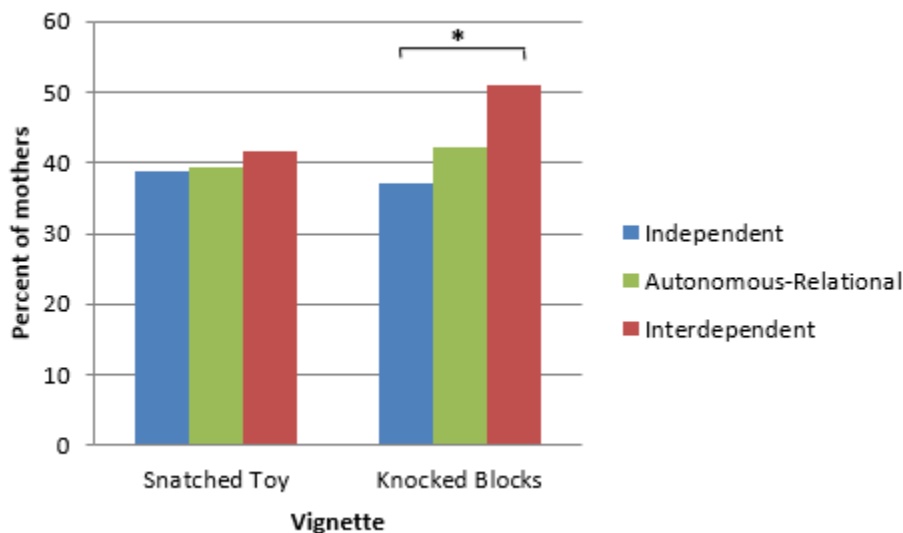


Figure 2. Cultural variation in mothers' predictions of aggression. This figure displays the percent of mothers within each self-construal who described competent children as behaving aggressively in the Snatched Toy and Knocked Blocks vignettes.

Chapter 4

Discussion

Results for both vignettes support the hypotheses regarding mothers from independent and interdependent nations and their expectations of a competent first-grade-age child's emotions. As predicted, mothers from interdependent nations less often describe competent children as feeling angry compared to mothers from independent nations. These findings support the notion that mothers from nations characterized as valuing an interdependent view of self expect competent children to behave in ways that better promote social harmony. If a mother's beliefs regarding appropriate emotions in young children are indeed influenced by the self-construal that she values, mothers from interdependent nations should not expect a child to express any emotion that may cause conflict (such as anger). Furthermore, the evidence is also consistent with the premise that mothers from nations that value the independence of self include anger in their views of competent first-grade-age children. As predicted, they expect competent children to assert their feelings and show the child stealing the toy that they are angry about having their right to play with the toy blocked.

An interesting cultural variation is the autonomous-relational self-construal (Kağıtçibasi, 1996). This form of self-construal is believed to represent rapidly industrializing nations in which there is still maintenance of traditional values within families, but socialization pressures on children to be competent in the workplace and in the global, industrialized economy. There is a dearth of research on this set of cultural values; the thesis predicted that South Korean mothers, who are from a nation that has dramatically advanced in its presence as an economic force but is still a traditional culture in terms of family life (Park & Cheah, 2005), would have similar expectations as mothers from independent nations because the vignettes were intended to

exemplify interactions with peers, i.e. non-family members. The results, however, do not support this hypothesis in regards to maternal expectations of competent children's emotions. Although mothers from South Korea more often described competent children as acting angry compared to mothers from interdependent nations, they described them as angry less often than mothers from independent nations. In other words, South Korean mothers described competent children as feeling angry at an intermediate frequency in relation to mothers from independent and interdependent nations. This finding may be partly attributable to the fact that (despite the interview intentions) some mothers interpreted the vignettes as an interaction between the target child and a peer, while others interpreted the interaction to involve the target child and a sibling. Because autonomy is more prevalent outside of the home in non-familial interactions, those mothers who described competent children's emotions in peer-interactions would be more likely to describe them as feeling angry since autonomous relations are more acceptable in such relationships. On the other hand, mothers who described children in sibling-interactions would be more likely to predict an interdependent or relational emotion—one that is less harmful to a relationship than anger—since the interdependent or relational self prevails in familial interactions. Given the disparities in mothers' interpretations of the vignettes, it is reasonable that South Korean mothers described competent children as feeling angry at an intermediate frequency compared to mothers from the other two cultural orientations.

In contrast to the findings for maternal expectations of young competent children's emotions when faced with a peer problem, the findings do not show support for the hypotheses regarding competent children's behaviors. For the Snatched Toy vignette, there was no relationship between cultural orientation of the mother's nation and her expectations for competent children's behavior. Perhaps in this vignette, all mothers consider the initial

snatching of the toy to be an inappropriate action that is harmful to a relationship. If this assumption is true, then mothers from interdependent nations may not expect a competent child (the target child) to respond with actions that promote social harmony since the peaceful relationship was already disrupted. Mothers from independent nations would still expect competent children to act aggressively in order to assert their feelings of being wronged. If these assumptions are true, then it would be logical for there to be no significant difference between the responses of mothers from independent and interdependent nations.

The Knocked Blocks vignette yielded significant effects of cultural orientation, but not as predicted. Contrary to the hypothesis, data show fewer mothers from independent nations expect competent children to act aggressively compared to mothers from interdependent nations. If mothers from interdependent nations consider the act of knocking down another child's blocks to be more inappropriate than mothers from independent nations, they may be more likely to expect a competent child to act aggressively. Again, if social harmony was already disrupted, mothers from interdependent nations may consider there to be no need to account for the other's feelings. Therefore, they may expect a competent child to act aggressively. If mothers from independent nations do not consider the act of knocking over blocks to be exceptionally inappropriate, they may not expect a competent child to feel the need to assert his anger by acting aggressively.

The responses of South Korean Mothers did not differ from the responses of mothers from independent or interdependent nations. As a whole, these findings may imply that a mother's view of self more predictably aligns with her expectations for a competent child's emotions than it does with her expectations for a competent child's behavior.

Limitations and Future Research

While the present research does provide a cross-cultural view, there are limitations with the method. It is important to note that not every individual within a given culture holds the exact same view of the self. This idea is illustrated through the work of Raval and Martini (2009) which found that mothers within the same Indian state have differing views on the acceptability of anger expression depending on whether they were from the higher class urban area or the lower-caste old city. In the present study, a mother's self-construal was assumed based on her country of inhabitation. Even though these assumptions may be reasonable based on the understanding that certain self-construals are typically valued in specific societies, it may not be accurate to assume that each mother within a country holds a single view of the self. Further research should attempt to include a survey or other method to determine the view of self valued by each mother.

It is also important to note that this research only focuses on mother's beliefs regarding competent first-grade-age children. This age group was specified because, according to Trommsdorff and colleagues (2012), it represents an important developmental transition period in a child's life regardless of nationality. Children at this age also experience similar emotional demands as opposed to younger children who may have different experiences due to different cultural influences. Because the mothers' in this study were asked to think about first-grade-age children only, it is possible that the results of this study would not be generalizable to younger or older children. This idea is supported by the work of Joshi and MacLean (1997) who found that mothers of different nationalities have varying expectations regarding the age at which children should develop certain competencies.

Additionally, the present study only looks at mothers' expectations about how a competent child would feel and act in two specific vignettes. The results from this study may not be generalizable to other specific situations or even other nations. Furthermore, because the vignettes are hypothetical, the child's actual emotions and behaviors cannot be analyzed. Future research could analyze the actual emotions that children report feeling and the behaviors that they exhibit. These observations could then be compared to mothers' expectations of emotions and behaviors to determine if there is agreement between what is expected and what is observed.

Conclusion

This study adds to the literature regarding parental beliefs about the emotions and actions of competent children, and does so through a cross-cultural lens. The findings from this study provide valuable insight into the relationship between a mother's self-construal and her expectations of how a competent child would feel and act in situations meant to invoke negative responses. This information could prove useful when trying to understand how mothers conceptualize appropriate emotions and behaviors given their cultural norms. The results of this study should be considered when designing culturally-sensitive programs aimed at developing specific parenting practices.

Appendix A

Original Coding Manual for Emotions and Behaviors

EMOTION CODES (justifications below should be used to guide emotion coding)

Focus on self as individual: Codes 1 & 2 emphasize emotions the child has on behalf of herself/himself

1. **Focus on self as individual—positive**, such as pride in own accomplishment,
2. **Focus on self as individual—negative**, such as anger, sadness for self, upset for self

Focus on self in relation to others: Codes 3 & 4 emphasize emotions the child has on behalf of other(s)

3. **Focus on self in relation to others—positive**, such as happy that parents are happy, curious/interested in the hurt child
4. **Focus on self in relation to others—negative**, such as shame, concern, empathy, compassion

NB. If child is distressed for self because other child is hurt, code as focus on self as individual—negative

Focus unclear: When self as individual or in relation to others cannot be detected (including in considering justification), code 5 or 6

5. **Other:** Use this for emotion that does not fit in above categories, e.g. happy (which may not be clearly for self or others)
6. **Additional:** Use this for additional emotion(s) that mother mentions in addition to a codable emotion

JUSTIFICATIONS (use justification to help you determine what emotion code to use)

Focus on self as individual involves an emphasis on how child feels relative to the child's rights, needs, wants, accomplishments for sake of self

Focus on self in relation to others involves an emphasis on how child feels relative to the child's duties, responsibilities, sense of relationships (with parents, teachers, friends)

BEHAVIOR CODES

1. **Action taken by the child on his/her own behalf**, e.g. snatching toy back, showing the homework to parents, boasting, ask the parents to buy him/her a new toy, just pass by/keep walking/keep playing
2. **Action taken by the child to get someone else to act on child's behalf**, e.g. asking mother to get toy back, asking mother to take target child home when other child was hurt

3. **Action taken by the child on someone else's behalf or taking other's needs into account as well**, e.g. offering to share snatched toy, trying to help the hurt child, go over and watch the fallen child, thanking the teacher/praising the teacher (in the praise scenario)
4. **Action taken by the child to get someone else to act on other's behalf**, e.g. asking someone to help the two children share snatched toy or to help the hurt child

When the response cannot be categorized by the above 4 codes, then code 1 of the following 4.

5. **Expression of emotion**, e.g., cried, yelled (but if there is action included code with action, e.g., yelled at child to give back toy); waits irritatingly.
6. **Inaction—future orientation**, child did nothing but it is implied will do differently in the future, e.g., will try to do better next time, studies more (in the praise scenario)
7. **Inaction—no information**, no evidence of any action, present or future, or of expressed emotion, e. g. does nothing, seems to not know what to do , ignores the fallen child, put the paper away, just watch (in the hurt child scenario), refuse to do something (without saying anything)
8. **Other**, use for any behavior that does not fit above categories. E.g. communicate to others the news that they are praised (It is too neutral to be coded)

Appendix B

Recoding Manual for Emotions and Behaviors

EMOTION CODES

Recode negative emotions previously coded as (2): Focus on self as individual—negative (e.g., anger, sadness for self, upset for self)

RECODE AS:

11. **Anger (this can include frustrated, irritated, mad, hostile)**
12. **Sadness (this can include hurt)**
13. **Anger/Sadness combined** (mother says both, can either say “and” or “or”)
14. **General negative (this can include upset, bad, distressed, stressed)**
15. **Other specific (this can include disgusted, afraid)**
16. **Uncodable**

SEE FOLLOWING PAGE 2 FOR ADDITIONAL GLOSSARY FOR EMOTION TERMS

BEHAVIOR CODES

Recode behaviors previously coded as (1): Action taken by the child on his/her own behalf, e.g. snatching toy back, showing the homework to parents, boasting, ask the parents to buy him/her a new toy, just pass by/keep walking/keep playing

RECODE AS:

11. **Act on own behalf assertively:** i.e. acting on own behalf without causing any potential threat or harm to the other child, e.g., saying “put that building back together” or “give me back my toy, it’s not your turn”
12. **Act on own behalf aggressively:** i.e. acting on own behalf with potential threat or harm to the other child, e.g. hitting, beating, threats such as “I won’t play with you” or “I am never playing with you again”
13. **Act on own behalf prosocially:** i.e. resolve the situation, build it over/again, keep playing
14. **Other:** use this code if response is unclear as to whether child is assertive or aggressive

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2011-2014 Dean's List

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

2015-Present **Dr. Eric Post Biology Lab Research Assistant:** *Penn State Biology*; University Park, PA
Conduct counts and family-level identifications of aquatic invertebrate samples.

2014 **Dr. James Marden Biology Lab Research Assistant:** *Penn State Biology*; University Park, PA
Conducted metabolic analyses and caterpillar dissections. Responsible for rearing and collecting food for caterpillars and butterflies.

2012-Present **Dr. Pamela Cole Developmental Psychology Lab Research Assistant:** *Penn State Psychology*; University Park, PA
Collaborate with Dr. Cole and undergraduate team on cross-cultural psychological studies regarding parents' beliefs on child socialization. Developed coding manual to categorize mothers' responses regarding children's emotions and behaviors. Analyze data using SPSS software.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- 2014** **Undergraduate Teaching Assistant:** *Penn State Biology*; University Park, PA
Instructed a weekly biology lab and ensured student safety. Held weekly office hours to address student questions and concerns. Graded student work and maintained grade book throughout the semester. Attended weekly meetings to discuss material and laboratory techniques.
- 2013-2014** **Curriculum Mentor:** *Penn State Science-U*; University Park, PA
Attended weekly meetings regarding camp curriculum and activities. Instructed, monitored, and assured safety of science campers grades 2-12.
- 2013** **Human Resources Intern:** *Aggreko*; Houston, TX
Created a project-tracker designed around the ADDIE model of organizational development. Attended webcast regarding tools and tips for conducting webinars and taught development team about the ideas introduced.
- 2012** **Summer Tour Guide:** *Penn State Admissions*; University Park, PA
Lead tours of campus and answered questions about student life.

ACTIVITIES

- 2014-Present** **Adult ESL Tutor**
Create lessons and meet weekly with Malaysian adult learner to improve his grammar and conversational skills.
- 2012-Present** **Science LionPride Member**
Act as a student ambassador through alumni and recruitment events for the Eberly College of Science.
- 2012-2015** **Penn State Dance Marathon (THON) Volunteer**
Volunteered as a Rules & Regulations committee member to help assure the safety of those attending THON. Volunteered as a Donor and Alumni Relations committee member to conduct THON tours and reached out to thank donors. Acted as the Recycling and Environmental Effort Chair to promote recycling initiative. Initiated and led the fundraising of over \$20,000 as an independent dancer.
- 2012-2014** **Schreyer Honors College Orientation Mentor**
Introduced incoming scholars to Penn State and served as a student resource.

2011-Present Schreyer Honors College Student Council Member

Participate as a recruitment committee member and tour guide.