Predictors of Bystander and Defender Behaviors in Bullying:
Maternal Reactions to Child Emotion and Empathy in the United States and South Korea

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Abstract

The increase in bullying and its detrimental impacts threaten children’s healthy development across the world; however, little research has examined multi-factors related to bullying. Guided by ecological theory, this study examined ecological factors that related to children’s bystander and defender behavior when they witness bullying. Considering the role of culture and maternal emotion socialization in children’s socio-emotional development, cultural differences in the relation of maternal emotion socialization on children’s reactions to bullying through their empathy were investigated.

Children (10-12 years old) and their mothers in the United States (n=165) and South Korea (n=158) participated in an online survey. Mothers completed the Coping with Children’s Negative Emotions to assess maternal unsupportive and supportive reactions to their children’s emotions. Children reported on their empathy (i.e., personal distress and empathic concern) using the Interpersonal Reactivity Index and on their bystander/defender behaviors using the Types of the Conformity Groups in Bullying.

For bystander behavior, mothers’ unsupportive reactions were significantly correlated with children’s bystander behavior through empathic concern in both cultures. Personal distress mediated the relation of maternal unsupportive reactions to bystander behavior only in the American sample. For defender behavior, American mothers’ supportive reactions directly predicted defender behavior whereas the effect of Korean mothers’ supportive reactions on defender behavior was mediated by empathic concern. More personal distress was related to
more defender behavior in the American sample while less personal distress was related to more
defender behavior in the Korean sample.

Results of this study supported cultural differences in the relation of maternal emotion
socialization to children’s reaction to bullying. American children were more likely to help the
victim when their mothers supported their negative emotions. For Korean children, mothers’
supportive reactions were related to their prosocial behavior through their empathic concern.
However, in both cultures, children’s empathic concern was a significant mediator in the relation
between maternal unsupportive reactions and bystander behavior. This finding may provide
educational guidance to bullying intervention programs across cultures.
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General Audience Abstract

More than one out of five students in the United States and more than one out of ten students in South Korea experience bullying. The detrimental effects of bullying can affect not only victims and bullies but also classmates who witness the bullying. I examined factors that related to bystander behavior (ignoring or staying away from bullying) and defender behavior (helping the victim or actively endeavoring to stop bullying) in bullying to help in efforts to stop bullying.

Because positive emotional experiences with mothers can help children develop empathy and empathy tends to elicit helping behavior, I examined how mothers’ reactions to their children’s negative emotions were related to children’s bystander behavior and defender behavior through their empathic abilities. However, research and theories on bullying has been predominantly focused on Western populations. My study addressed this gap, examining cultural differences in the relations between the United States and South Korea to bring attention to the role of culture in parents’ emotional socialization and children’s development. Results from this study will help schools and communities to provide culturally sensitive bullying intervention programs with parents.

Children (10-12 years old) and their mothers in the United States ($n=165$) and South Korea ($n=158$) participated in an online survey. Mothers were asked about ways that they react to their children’s negative emotions. Mothers’ unsupportive reactions refer to minimization, distress and punitive reactions when their children express negative emotions. Mothers’
supportive reactions mean maternal comforting, acknowledgement, and encouragement of children’s negative emotions. In the online survey, children reported on their empathy and reactions when they witness bullying.

Cultural differences in the relations were confirmed. American children were more likely to help the victim when their mothers supported their negative emotions. For Korean children, mothers’ supportive reactions were related to their defender behavior through their empathic concern. However, in both countries, the more mothers displayed supportive reactions, the more children reported empathic concern; children’s empathic concern was an important bridge between maternal unsupportive reactions and bystander behavior.
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Chapter I. Introduction

Children experience bullying globally. More than one-fifth (20.8%) of the children in the United States reported being bullied, and 80 percent of youths who commit suicide are victims of bullying (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2016). The Korean Center of School Violence received 101,524 reports of bullying in 2015, which has increased 26 percent compared to 2012 (Korea National Assembly Budget Office, 2015). Along with the increase in bullying, the rate of suicide among Korean youth has increased by 57 percent in the past ten years due to school violence, bullying, and academic stress (Lee, 2013). The prevalence of bullying continues to rise and callous harassments are especially alarming in both United States and Korea (Park, 2017; Smith & Thompson, 2017).

The detrimental effects of bullying influence not only the victims and the bullies but also the peers or classmates who witness the bullying. A study conducted in the United States found that 60 percent of former school bullies had been convicted of a criminal charge by the age of 24 (Glambek, Skogstad, & Einarsen, 2016). Peers who witnessed peer harassment reported increased emotional isolation, anxiety, and depression (Hutchinson, 2012). Particularly, children who ignored bullying were more likely to participate in bullying over time because bullying became the norm as apathy toward the victim increased and morality became weaker (Olweus, 1993). Cho (2006) also found support for this assertion with Korean children, reporting that more classmates who witnessed bullying in a bystander role related to more perpetrated peer harassment over time. Considering the prevalence and severity of bullying for all children involved, identifying factors that can reduce bullying in schools across the world is crucial.

Bullying has been defined as violence in a group context, in which peers reinforce others’ behaviors in their interaction (Lagerspetz, Björkqvist, Berts, & King, 1982). Within social
relationships in a group, children display diverse roles and behaviors in bullying situations (Salmivalli, 2010), which include bully, assistant, reinforcer, bystander, and defender. Bully refers to the child who is the initiative-taker and leader in the harassment behavior. Assistant is the child who is taking an active role but more like a follower than a leader. Reinforcer describes the child who reinforces the bullying behavior by laughing or supporting the bully like an audience member for the bully. Bystander describes the child who ignores or stays outside the harassment. Defender is the child who shows support and sympathy for the victim or actively endeavors to stop the bullying.

Along with attention to diverse roles in bullying, researchers have identified that peers are powerful contributors that promote or reduce bullying (Espelage, Green, & Polanin, 2012; Orpinas & Horne, 2010; Twemlow & Sacco, 2010). Given the fact that bullying occurs in a structure based on a power imbalance in which peers assign status to its members (Pronk, Olthof & Goossens, 2015), understanding peers' willingness to intervene is a critical step to reduce bullying. Although the power of peer intervention in bullying has been demonstrated, little empirical work has been done on bystanders and defenders. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to provide an evidence-based foundation for not only bullying intervention but also prevention programs by examining predictors that can lead classmates to refuse bullying and stand up for victims.

In order to explore factors that underlie children’s different reactions to bullying, this study examined complex interactions between children’s ecological contexts; child characteristic, parent-child interaction, and culture. One potential predictor of children’s different roles in bullying in terms of mesosystem is maternal emotion socialization. Research on bullying have identified the effect of parent-child interaction on children’s behaviors in
bullying situation (Espelage, Bosworth, & Simon, 2000; Flouri & Buchanan, 2003). Parents foster children’s emotional and social development by encouraging children to experience and express emotions and discussing society belief (Hoffman, 2000). Through parental guidance including expression of emotions, children can learn how to understand, communicate, and build relationship with others. Even though scholars have emphasis on parent’s role in children’s peer relationships (Michalik et al., 2007), very little has been done on the links between parental emotion socialization practice and children’s bullying. According to a heuristic model of the socialization of emotion (Eisenberg, Cumberland, & Spinrad, 1998), parental emotion socialization influences children’s level of arousal and emotional experience, which in turn relates to children’s social behavior. Through emotional experiences with parents, children are able to understand their emotions and the emotions of others and learn how to appropriately deal with their emotions. Based on this model, this study investigated the indirect effects of maternal reactions to the child’s negative emotions on children’s bystander and defender behavior in bullying.

Children’s empathy has been widely known as a predictor of prosocial behavior in bullying. However, mixed results on empathy of bystanders and defenders reflects a need to research multifaceted empathy to be better understood (Gini, Albiero, Benelli, Altoe, 2008; Nickerson, Mele, & Princiotta, 2008; Park, 2013; Shin & Kang, 2013). Although personal distress and empathic concern have been included in empathy, these constructs lead to different social behaviors (Bateson & Shaw, 1991; Eisenberg et al., 1990). Because personal distress focus on an individual’s own adverse emotional responses elicited by other’s distress, children with high personal distress are more likely to stay away from the source of distress. In contrast, considering genuine concern and sympathy for others focus more on other’s emotional status
(Davis, 1980), this other-oriented emotion may lead to prosocial behavior that reduces other’s distress. Therefore, children with high levels of personal distress were expected to display bystander attitude and behavior while children who have high levels of empathic concern are expected to show defender attitude and behavior in response to bullying.

Meanwhile, theories of emotion socialization and bullying have been heavily based on Western populations. Cole et al. (2006) pointed out the need to replicate findings in other cultures to promote external validity of findings. Therefore, cross-cultural comparisons would be meaningful to explore universal and cultural specific aspects of children’s development (Cole, Tamang, & Shrestha, 2006). In particular, comparison between the United States and Korea is meaningful. Even though Korea has been regarded as a collectivist and Confucian culture, socio-historical events, such as the Korean war and rapid industrialization, have brought many changes in traditional values of Korean society (Yoon & Park, 2013). As the most rapidly modernizing country (Alfred, 1999), Korea has displayed a conflict between traditional values and Western values. Nevertheless, contemporary Korean mothers’ emotion socialization and the link to children’s outcomes have been overlooked. This study tried to address this gap in the literature and bring attention to the effects of culture in parents’ emotion socialization through investigation of parental socialization of children’s social behavior within a cultural framework. Therefore, I examined factors that are proposed to curtail bullying by comparing models between two cultures.

Taken together, the aim of this study was to investigate the effect of maternal reactions to the child’s negative emotion and children’s empathy on their bystander and defender behaviors in bullying incidents by comparing the United States and Korean mothers and children. In particular, children in middle childhood show improved cognitive in that they are able to think
logically and process information efficiently through increased memory skills (Feldman, 2018).
School years provide an environment for children to acquire social values related to peer interactions (Feinstein, & Bynner, 2004). Considering that 10 to 12-year-old children display dramatic increases in peer harassment (Pellegrini & Long, 2002; Seo, 2006) and development in multidimensional empathy including personal distress and empathic concern (Litvack-Miller et al., 1997), I explored these associations in middle childhood. Investigating bullying in middle childhood could reduce precursors to bullying in adolescence, suggesting potential protective factors for chronic bullying in later developmental periods. Proposed models are presented in Figure 1 and Figure 2. I proposed to test two models: One examining predictors of bystander behavior and another examining defender behavior.

These models examined the direct and indirect effects of maternal reactions to the child’s negative emotion on children’s behavior in bullying. More specifically, I investigated how mothers’ supportive or unsupportive reactions to the child’s negative emotions predicted different subcategories of empathy (i.e., personal distress and empathic concern) of children, and how the different types of empathy were related to their bystander or defender behaviors in bullying. For bystander behavior, my hypotheses were:

H1: Higher levels of maternal unsupportive reactions to the child’s negative emotions would be associated with more child-reports of personal distress, which would be associated with more bystander behavior.

H2: Higher levels of maternal unsupportive reactions to the child’s negative emotions would be associated with less child-reports of empathic concern, which would be associated with more bystander behavior.

For defender behavior, my hypotheses were:
H3: Higher levels of maternal supportive reactions to the child’s negative emotions would be associated with less child-reports of personal distress, which would be associated with more defender behavior.

H4: Higher levels of maternal supportive reactions to the child’s negative emotions would be associated with more child-reports of empathic concern, which would be associated with more defender behavior.

Moreover, the relation between parents’ emotion socialization and children’s behaviors in bullying was predicted to be different depending on culture. I hypothesized that the relations from mothers’ reactions to children’s bystander and defender behavior would vary depending on culture (H5). Therefore, I compared the proposed models between the two cultures.
Chapter II. Theoretical Frameworks

Parent-Child Interaction and Children’s Socio-Emotional Development

Researchers have focused on the relations between bullying and individual characteristics of children such as gender and psychosocial variables or direct relations of close relationships. However, understanding factors that explain bullying is needed to investigate the complex relations between the individual and environment (Hong & Espelage, 2012). The theoretical background for effective predictors of bullying has led researchers to become interested in bullying as an ecological phenomenon and examine the reciprocal interplay between the individual and their environmental context. Bronfenbrenner (1986) has focused on interactions between individuals and their environment through adaptation. He insisted that the interaction between biological and environmental forces leads individuals to developmentally appropriate outcomes (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). In this regard, recent literature on bullying discusses that an individual’s behavior in bullying is not only the result of individual characteristics but is affected by transactions between the individual and the multiple settings (Hymel & Swearer, 2015). When individuals adapt and develop, they change their interactions in relation to their environment.

Therefore, Bronfenbrenner’s (1986) concept of the mesosystem, which includes the linkages and processes between two basic units which directly influence the development of children, provides an effective framework presenting how parent-child interaction is related to peer interaction. As Loeber and Dishion (1984) stated “Bullies at school are often victims at home” (p. 172), indicating that parent-child interaction provides a blueprint for children’s social behaviors through emotion socialization. Parents foster children’s emotional and social development by encouraging children to experience and express emotions and discussing...
society’s beliefs (Hoffman, 2001). Through parental guidance including expression of emotions, children can learn how to understand, communicate, and build relationship with others. Based on the idea of interdependence from ecological theory, this study therefore investigated how the relation between parent-child interaction and peer interaction leads children’s diverse social behaviors.

Attachment theory and social cognitive theory explain how parent-child interactions underlie children’s emotional development and prosocial behavior through an internal working model, schema, and modeling. Bowlby (1978) emphasized that early interactions with caregivers are vital for future psychological adjustment because the relationship between an infant and a caregiver lays the foundation for internalized belief and expectations about oneself and others. Because the internal working model is a window to perceive the self, the physical world, and their interactions with others (Ainsworth, 1989; Bowlby, 1988), the working model influences the ways in which children relate to the social world and how they resolve developmental issues in their later lives. Especially, supportive parental responses to children’s distress would satisfy their emotional needs, which in turn foster a secure attachment to parents; the satisfaction of emotional needs, therefore, helps children to pay attention to others and emphasize them. The secure attachment representations to others would be less likely to lead self-focused behaviors but more likely to develop interpersonal skills. Therefore, one way that parental supportive reactions to children’s emotions would foster empathic skills is through secure attachment.

As with parent-child interaction, Bandura (1973) posited that children learn social behavior by actively imitating or modeling. Therefore, parents who understand and support children’s negative emotions could be a model for children’s empathic response and prosocial
behavior. Children learn prosocial behavior by imitation (modeling) of their parents and their empathic response and prosocial behavior may be maintained by the anticipation of future reward (reinforcement). By experiencing parent’s sensitive reactions to their distress, children therefore learn about taking others’ perspectives into account and how to share others negative emotions.

Bandura (1986) also noted that the causes behind an individual’s social behavior are influenced by reciprocal determinism. In his transactional view, all of personal cognitive factors, behaviors, and environmental factors engage as bi-directionally interacting with each other (Bandura, 2006). While expectation, self-awareness, goals, and physiological statement influence behavior, behavior also influence cognitive and physiological aspects. In addition, environmental factors such as modeling and education influence the individual and the individual elicits various reactions from the environment according to his/her personal characteristics (Thomas, 2004). In summary, individuals choose their environment through their behavior, which in turn is influenced by their environment (Bandura, 1986). Applying triadic reciprocity to the development of empathy and prosocial behavior, expectation from positive experiences in expression of empathy leads children to behave empathically. Positive feedback from their environment such as parental supportive responses are more likely to foster the cognitive factors (i.e., expectation or self-awareness) and prosocial behavior. Thus, children who received positive responses from parents would have more chance of developing coping strategies of negative emotions. In turn, their emotional experiences and expectations may contribute to them behaving more empathically than others who did not receive positive emotional experiences. Therefore, more research is needed to explore how their environment (e.g., parents’ emotion socialization), cognitive factors (e.g., perspective taking) and behaviors are related to each other.
Empathy and Prosocial Behavior

Bateson (1991) explained how empathy is related to prosocial behaviors with an empathy-altruistic model, proposing that affective concern for others and vicarious emotional experience elicits altruistic behaviors. When one empathizes with others’ emotions and distress, they tend to be motivated to decrease others’ distress (Batson, Early, Salvarini, 1997). Furthermore, positive emotions such as pride and appreciation from the helping behavior lead later to altruistic behaviors (Batson, 1991). In addition, Eisenberg and Miller (1987) proposed that the relation between empathy and prosocial behavior is based on the functional theory of emotions. According to them, empathy functions as a motivation which develops social and emotional bonds with offspring and social group members. Thus, empathy facilitates prosocial behaviors to improve social bonds. In fact, research has reported associations between empathy and moral behavior, social competence, and prosocial behavior (Cho & Jeong, 2014; Eisenberg, 2007; Hoffman, 2008) and negative relations between empathy and aggressive behavior, depression, and antisocial behaviors both in the United States and Korea (Espelage et al., 2004; Lee, Lee, & An, 2017; Manger, Eikeland, & Asbjornsen, 2001).

More specifically, there has been debate on which part of empathy is associated with genuine prosocial behavior. Based on the idea that empathy consists of a set of constructs, Davis (1980) has proposed an idea that empathy consists of multidimensional constructs: perspective taking, fantasy, empathic concern, and personal distress. The constructs reflect an empathic response to others’ emotional situations but are clearly different from each other. In particular, research has demonstrated that empathic concern and personal distress lead to different prosocial behaviors (Bateson, 1991; Eisenberg et al., 1990). Empathic concern represents more genuine feelings of warmth and sympathy and other oriented feelings, while personal distress is self-
focused and an negative emotional reaction to other’s distress (Davis, 1980). Despite identification of different associations between empathy subscales and prosocial behavior, little research has been done on the specific relation of empathy and bystander and defender behaviors. Therefore, this study explored the specific relations between empathy subscales (i.e., personal distress and emphatic concern) and children’s prosocial behavior in bullying.

**Parents’ Emotion Socialization and Children’s Reactions to Bullying**

A conceptual framework of the proposed models was based on a heuristic model of the socialization of emotion (Eisenberg, Cumberland, & Spinrad, 1998), which proposes how parent’s emotion socialization is associated with children’s social behavior and psychological adjustment. According to the heuristic model, emotion-related parenting practice (e.g., reactions to a child’s emotions and discussion of emotions) influence the child’s level of arousal, which in turn affect children’s social behavior and competence. For example, unsupportive reactions to children’s expressions of emotion are likely to elicit anxiety or anger about the parent’s response, and the induced negative emotions may compromise the quality of social interaction. Hoffman (1983) supported an idea indicating that those who are emotionally over aroused will struggle with focusing on and controlling socio-emotional information due to self-orientation. Since parents’ negative responses cause children’s distress (Valiente et al., 2004), children may focus on their distress when they receive negative messages from their parents. In doing so, children with high levels of self-concern would undermine caring another’s distress and be expressed avoidant or self-protective manner. Therefore, it was hypothesized that parental unsupportive responses to children’s negative emotions would be related to children’s personal distress.

In sum, parents’ emotion socialization directly or indirectly influences children’s emotional experiences, expression of emotions, understanding of emotion and regulation, and
schema about self and relationships (Eisenberg, Cumberland, & Spinrad, 1998). The child’s emotional development, in turn, predicts his or her social behavior and competence. In accordance with the model, this study explored the indirect effect of maternal reactions to their children’s emotion on children’s behavior in bullying through children’s empathy.

**The Role of Culture in Parents’ Emotion Socialization**

Parent’s emotion-related values and beliefs guide the way for their emotion socialization. Since the aim of socialization is to promote children’s competence in the community, parents try to socialize their child in culturally appropriate ways based on their emotional beliefs (Cole & Tan, 2007). Therefore, parental emotion socialization and practice are embedded within culture. According to a model of developmental niche (Super & Harkness, 1986), culture guides parental goals, beliefs, and cultural specific meanings of emotions. Adaptive emotional development and ideal parental emotion socialization may be defined by culture (Bornstein, 1995). In this way, culture conveys messages to children through their parents’ emotion socialization. Considering that culture navigates parents’ beliefs and goals and ideal socialization practices, children’s outcomes may differ depending on culture.

In a similar vein, Whiting and Whiting (1975) proposed the psycho-cultural model, which emphasizes the role of the immediate environment, cultural systems and values. This model explains how the environment (i.e., climate, flora and terrain) and history influence children’s behavior through maintenance systems (i.e., subsistence patterns, social structure and defense mechanisms) and children’s learning environment (i.e., caretakers and teachers). Parents’ emotion socialization and practices, which is a children’s primary learning environment, are also based on the environment and history. In summary, both the developmental niche and the psycho-cultural models highlight culturally specific parents’ socialization and their diverse
effects on children’s behavior. Keeping the theories’ assumptions in mind, this study compared the pathway from parental emotion socialization to children’s social behaviors between the United States and Korea.
Chapter III. Background Literature

In providing empirical support for my models, I investigated how parent-child interactions related to children’s social behaviors in bullying between cultures. In this section, I reviewed studies, conducted in the U.S. and Korea, which addressed bullying in terms of group context, the effects of peers’ intervention and empathy in bullying, parental reaction to their children’s emotion and children’s social-emotional development, and the role of culture in parental emotion socialization.

Bullying as a Group Phenomenon

Given the fact that bullying has been defined as violence in a group context, in which peers reinforce others’ behaviors in their interactions, bullying is based on social relationships in the group (Lagerspetz, Björkqvist, Berts, & King, 1982). As ecological theory proposed, the interactions between children and their environments promote or hamper prosocial and antisocial behaviors (Lerner, Hess & Nitz, 1991). Considering the definition of bullying as “a person is being bullied when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons” (Olweu, 1993, p. 78), research on bullying needs to consider not only individual characteristics but interactions between children and their social relationships. However, over the few past decades, much of the work has focused on individuals such as the bullies and the victims or interactions between them (Blake, Zhou, Kwok, & Benz, 2016; Rodkin, Hanish, Wang, & Logis, 2014; Swearer & Doll, 2001). Focusing exclusively on the bullies and the victims cannot sufficiently account for today’s collective and chronic bullying in schools (Swearer & Doll, 2001). Keeping in mind the role of social reward from peers in maintaining or reducing bullying (Olthof et al., 2011), this study considered more aspects of the
group dynamics by examining more than just bullies and victims, instead focusing on defenders and bystanders.

Since bullies are dependent on peers for the realization of their status goal (Pronk, Olthof & Goossens, 2015), peers’ responses to bullying are determinants of maintaining bullying. In fact, there has been growing body of research suggesting that peers reinforce or inhibit bullying by being involved in the bullying process. Considering a report on the most common motivations to bully are “to feel powerful” or “to look cool” (Farrington, 1993, p. 412), peers’ participation and positive response toward bullying reinforces the bully’s self-esteem and social status. Therefore, peers’ refusal of bullying and their support toward victim would break out of a vicious cycle. One of successful bullying intervention program, Kiva (Salmivalli, Kärnä, & Poskiparta, 2010), has designed to change bystander’s attitude toward bullying and has proven an effective reduction in bullying.

Preventing bullying in middle childhood could contribute to break the longitudinal effects of bullying. Children in middle childhood develop social cognition based on experience with peers (Crick & Dodge, 1994); negative peer interactions are more likely to interrupt interpretation of social cues. According to social information processing theory, a deficit in social cognitive processing may increases the probability of bullying behavior (Camodeca & Goossesn, 2005; Ziv, Leibovich, & Shechtman, 2013). Since peer relationships become significantly important throughout middle childhood as a foundation for social competence and problem-solving abilities (Feldman, 2018), breaking the cycle in middle childhood is crucial.

Although research began to identify a crucial role of peers in bullying, most of the research on bystanders and defenders have focused on individual characteristics such as gender (Seo, 2008; Trach, Hymel, Waterhouse, & Neale, 2010), self-esteem (Robers, Kemp, Rathbun, &
Morgan, 2014), self-efficacy (Kwon & Yang, 2014; Thornberg, & Jungert, 2013), and empathy (Shin & Kang, 2013; Nickerson, Mele, & Princiotta, 2008). However, according to ecological theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1977), individuals develop through bidirectional interaction between individuals and the multiple systems in which they placed in home, school, and society. Hence, individual’s behaviors in bullying is not only the result of individual characteristics, but is affected by multiple interactions with families, peers, and societal influences. Considering the fact that bullying rises out of a complex interaction of children’s ecological context (Swearer & Doll, 2001), more broad investigation from ecological perspective is needed. In order to fully understand factors that underlie children’s different reactions to bullying, I examined both individual factors (e.g., child empathy) and social environmental factors (e.g., maternal emotion socialization and culture) together.

The Power of Bystanders and Defenders

Peer contributions to bullying are a powerful impetus for bullying. In particular, the bystanders and defenders are crucial to breaking the vicious cycle of bullying in the United States and Korea. First, observational research reported that peers are almost always present (more than 85% of the time) when harassment occurs (Atlas & Pepler, 1998; Kwon, 2014). When peers stand up for the victim, they effectively stop the bullying more than two-thirds of the time (Hawkins et al., 2001). In addition, it is found that both bystanders and defenders tend to have an anti-bullying attitude. Previous research reported that both bystanders and defenders are attitudinally against bullying and dislike the bullies (Shin & Kang, 2013; Olthof & Goossens, 2008). They often feel bad for the victims and want to help the victims (Gendron, Williams & Guerra, 2011; Kwon & Yang, 2016). Therefore, understanding peers’ willingness to behave in peer harassment situation is an important step to reduce bullying.
Furthermore, bystanders and defenders typically account for the largest number of students in the classroom. Research reported that bystanders and defenders constitute more than 50% of the children in the classroom (Kwon, 2014; Olthof et al., 2011; Salmivalli, Lappalainen & Lagerspetz, 1998). Therefore, the involvement of children with an anti-bullying attitude would be an essential driving force to reduce bullying by urging them support victims (Twemlow & Sacco, 2010). Once the reward structure changes to support an anti-bullying attitude, supporting and defending the victim would become reinforced and rewarded in their group dynamics.

Considering that anti-bullying attitude and supporting victims effectively contribute to a reduction in bullying (Polanin, Espelage, & Pigott, 2012; Seo, Yu, Kwon, 2011), it is imperative to capture factors that underlie individual differences in children’s reactions to bullying. Even though earlier research has examined factors that influence bystander and defender behavior (Shin & Kang, 2013; Olthof & Goossens, 2008; Robers, Kemp, Rathbun, & Morgan, 2014), research has not examined where the factors come from and how the factors are related to the behaviors. Identifying those factors would provide an evidence-based foundation for educational guideline, which promote children’s ability to stand against bullying.

In sum, I investigated maternal reactions to children’s negative emotions and culture as environmental contributors to individual differences in children’s reactions to bullying. Along with this effect, children’s empathy was examined as an individual factor. While empathy having been identified as potential predictor of helping victims and an inverse predictor of looking on bullying, its distinct subcategories of personal distress and empathic concern has been overlooked. Therefore, I delved into specific relations between those subcategories of empathy and bystander/defender behaviors in bullying.
Empathy

The role of empathy in children’s behavior in bullying

Empathy, “the capacity to share the feelings of others” (Volkmar, 2013, p. 1089), has been widely known as a predictor of prosocial behavior. Compared to children who have low levels of empathy, children who experience others’ emotional states are more likely to have an understanding of others’ feelings (Batson & Shaw, 1991). This understanding would lead children to reduce others’ distress. Since children with high empathy have shown prosocial, cooperative, and sensitive behaviors (Meuwese, Cillessen, & Güroğlu, 2016), they might be more likely to intervene in peer harassment. Research regarding bullying has reported that children who defend victims tend to more empathically respond to others than children who stay away from bullying situations (Nickerson, Mele, & Princiotta, 2008). The affective response of feeling concerned for other people and wanting to alleviate distress may lead helping behaviors toward victims. In this respect, empathy could be a potential predictor of helping the victims in bullying.

In accordance with the Western findings, Korean studies also found the role of empathy in children’s involvement in bullying. Seo (2006) reported that the level of bystanders’ empathy was similar to children who assist peer harassment whereas their level of empathy was significantly lower than defenders’ empathy. In Shin and Kang’s (2013) study, children’s empathy predicted their helping behaviors toward the victim; however, it was not related to bystanding behavior. Likewise, children who stand up for the victim were consistently related to high levels of empathy across cultures (Oh, 2010; Shin & Kang, 2013; Tirza et al., 2014; Van Noorden, Haselager, Cillessen, & Bukowski, 2015).

Personal distress and empathic concern
Meanwhile, the definition of empathy has been confused and controversies exist among researchers. The major conflict has been the distinction between empathy as a cognitive and as an emotional aspect (Davis, 1983). Hogan (1969) defined empathy as “the intellectual or imaginative apprehension of another’s condition or state of mind” (p. 308). Baron-Cohen (2011) has developed cognitive aspect based on Hogan’s definition as “ability to identify what someone else is thinking or feeling and to respond to their thoughts and feelings with an appropriate emotion” (p. 27). On the other hand, some researchers described empathy as a solely affective term. Stotland (1969) defined empathy as “an observer’s reacting emotionally because he perceives that another is experiencing or is about to experience an emotion” (p. 145). In this way, Stoltland distinguished affective empathy from cognitive processes related to accuracy. In addition, Hoffman’s (2000) definition of empathy, “an affective response more appropriate to another’s situation than one’s own” (p. 4), is more focus on outcome-oriented definition rather than process.

Beyond the debate of distinctions between cognitive and emotional aspects, views of construct of empathy has been changed. A multidimensional perspective has been acknowledged among researchers rather than regarding empathy as a unipolar construct (Livatvack-Miller et al., 1997). Davis (1983) insisted that empathy can best be considered a set of distinct constructs. Because acknowledging and understanding other’s emotions can be different from experiencing the emotions, different aspect of empathy would lead different types of prosocial behaviors. Along with this idea, Eisenberg and Fabes (1998) indicated that empathic response can be divided into two emotional aspects: sympathy and personal distress. Sympathy is believed as genuine concern for other’s emotional experience including feelings of sorrow and apprehension of other’s distress (Valiente et al., 2004). Although sympathy is a
different concept from empathy, empathic concern, a component of empathy, represents other oriented feeling and feelings of warmth and sympathy (David, 1983). In contrast, personal distress is regarded as self-focused and aversive emotional reaction such as anxiety and discomfort (Bateson, 1991). Because personal distress leads empathic overarousal and aversive reaction to other’s distress, one feeling personal distress may focus on dealing with his or her own negative feelings; thus, the individual is less likely to help others. In fact, empathic concern and personal distress were differently related to prosocial behavior. Empathic concern has been associated with prosocial behavior, high levels of moral reasoning, and altruism whereas personal distress has been negatively associated or unrelated to prosocial behavior (Bateson, 1991; Eisenberg et al., 1990; Valiente et al., 2004).

Considering the different aspects of empathy, genuine concern for other’s distress is more likely to elicit helping behavior in bullying. In Nickerson, Mele, and Princiotta’s (2008) study, affective concern significantly predicted defender’s behavior. Conversely, children who feel anxiety and discomfort to the victim’s distress may avoid the situation due to focusing on their personal distress. Bystanders’ answer that “The reason why I overlooked peer harassment is anxiety and fear of being the victim” reflects their aversive emotional states to bullying (Robers, Kemp, Rathbun, & Morgan, 2014). Although empathy subcategories have been differently related to prosocial behavior, empathy has been considered one-dimensional construct in bullying research. Considering this situation, I distinguished personal distress from empathic concern and investigate distinct relations between those subcategories and children’s behaviors. Through examining the specific relations, this study would provide empirical evidence for bullying prevention programs to promote bystanders’ empathy.
Parental Reactions to Their Children’s Negative Emotions

As a primary agent of children’s emotional environment, parents play a crucial role in the development of children’s empathy. Barnett (1987) insisted that children’s empathy develops in a family environment that fulfills the child’s emotional needs but discourages excessive self-concern, provides opportunities to experience and express various emotions, and children can observe emotional sensitivity and responsiveness from family members. Since parents are the main context in which children first learn the meaning of emotions, how emotions are typically expressed, and appropriate control them, emotional experience with parents may influence the development of children’s empathy.

In particular, parents’ encouragement and supportive reactions to children’s negative emotion has been found an important contributor to children’s empathic response to other’s emotions in both culture (Brophy-Herb et al., 2011; Eisenberg, Fabes, & Murphy, 1996; Kim & Seo, 2016; Oh, 2015). Broadly, parents’ behavioral responses to their children’s emotions are categorized as supportive or non-supportive (Eisenberg et al., 1998). Supportive responses refer to emotion- or problem-focused coping: parents encourage children’s expression of emotion, try to solve the problem which caused children’s negative emotions, and teach strategies to handle emotions by comforting children (Eisenberg et al., 1998). In general, these responses encourage and support the expression of children’s emotion. In contrast, non-supportive behaviors involve punitive reactions to expression of the child’s negative emotions and distress or minimizing the meaning of the child’s emotions (Eisenberg et al., 1998).

Supportive parental reactions to children’s negative emotion provide opportunities to understand and learn own emotions, which in turn facilitate to empathize others’ emotions. Parents who understand and discuss children’s negative emotions may facilitate their children to
express negative emotions in an appropriate manner and deal with their arousal (Eisenberg, Fabes, & Murphy, 1996; Oh, 2015). Conversely, if children receive negative reaction to their distress, they try to hide their emotions but become physiologically aroused due to the negative reactions (Buck, 1984). Thus, children who have non-supportive parental reactions are more likely to lose opportunities to learn their emotional needs and deal with negative emotions. In fact, research showed that when mothers more accepted children’s emotions, their children were more empathic and showed more emotion knowledge (Brophy-Herb et al., 2011).

More importantly, less understanding and control of emotions undermine empathizing others’ distress and emotions by leading them self-preoccupation. Brayant (1987) proposed that “stressful and distressing experience increase children’s self-concern and challenge the development of satisfying patterns of social interaction” (p. 93). Parental disapproval to express negative emotions may lead their children to feel distressed, foster self-focused, and thereby likely to respond to others’ negative emotions in self-protective manner. Eisenberg, Fabes, & Murphy (1996) found that maternal encouragement of emotion expression was related to children’s prosocial behavior, whereas maternal minimizing reactions were associated with high levels of avoidant coping. A study with Korean elementary school students (Oh, 2015) also found the indirect effect of maternal minimizing reactions in children’s low levels of prosocial behaviors.

Taken together, children’s varying views of emotions would develop different responses to other’s distress and emotions. Although research has identified the link between parents’ reactions and children’s empathy or prosocial behavior regardless of culture (Eisenberg, Fabes, & Murphy, 1996; Robinson et al, 1994; Oh, 2015), specific relation between parents’ reactions and different aspects of empathy (i.e., personal distress and empathic concern) has not been
examined. Also, little is known of how parents’ emotion socialization is related to children’s bystander or defender behaviors. Therefore, this study investigated a specific pathway from parents’ emotion socialization to children’s bystander or defender behaviors through different aspects of empathy. Based on research findings on personal distress and empathic concern, it is hypothesized that parental supportive reaction would be associated with empathic concern while parental non-supportive reaction would be associated with personal distress.

Culture

Culture and parent’s reaction to child emotion

Cross-cultural studies on parents’ emotion socialization have been described along with collectivism and individualism. Since the constructs of collectivism and individualism are characterized primarily differences between cultures, it has been useful to explain discrepancy in the individual personality traits and socialization practice (Chen, Liu, & Li, 2000). Individualist cultures including the United States and Western Europe emphasize personal achievement, autonomy, self-realization, and independence whereas collectivist cultures, such as Korea, China, and Japan, value family and group goals and social harmony above individual desires (Triandis, 1996). Different emotion-related belief leads different emotion socialization practice. In individualist cultures, parent generally believe that self-expression and discussion on ego-focused emotions foster children’s autonomy and assertiveness (Friedlmeier, Corapci, & Cole, 2011). Based on the belief, parents in individualist culture are more likely to encourage children’s expression of emotions and openly communicate on the ego-focused emotions. Research findings in individualist cultures emphasized the role of parental emotion coaching and developed parenting programs which enhance parent’s ability to acknowledge and support
children’s emotion (Brophy-Herb et al., 2011; Gottman, Katz, & Hooven, 1997; Miklikowska, Duriez, & Soenens, 2011).

In contrast, parents in collectivist culture tend to discourage children’s expression of negative emotions based on the belief that negative emotions intervene social harmony and expectations. Thus, parents try to teach keep emotional balance and control excessive emotions in order to promote children’s socio-emotional competence. In a cross-cultural study (Trommdorff, Cole, & Heikamp, 2012), a Korean mother said that “I have a responsibility to reduce my child’s negative emotions and teach how to regulate her negative emotions to prevent the occurrence of bad situations”. This interview suggests that expression of negative emotions is considered as undesirable behavior in that culture. With the parent’s belief about emotions, children internalize an idea that expressing anger and frustration is socially unacceptable and immature behavior (Cole, Tamang, & Shrestha, 2006; Trommsdorff, 2012). Research has shown that Asian mothers tend to more distress when their child show negative emotions (Facshe, 2011), less encourage children’s expression of emotions (Raval, Raval, Salvina, & Wilson, 2013), more minimize and criticize children’s negative emotions compared to Western mothers (Wang, 2001).

**Korean parenting**

Research findings about Korean mothers’ reactions to children’s negative emotions have been mixed. In general, children’s expression of negative emotions is regarded as inappropriate characteristic by Korean mothers. In a research investigating Korean mothers’ belief about infants’ temperament (Yoon & Park, 2013), negative affect ranked the most inappropriate temperament of infants. 54.5% of the Korean mothers replied that the negative affect may decrease social competence or make others uncomfortable. In a similar vein, when their child
showed overt anger, Korean mothers were more likely to change the child’s behavior and expect obedience from their children (Hastings & Grusec, 1998). Furthermore, Korean mothers discourage and try to control even children’s positive emotions in social situation so that maintain group harmony and balance. This result reflects the influence of Confucian cultures in Korean parents’ emotion socialization. In Confucian cultures, controlling excessive emotions for the interest of others has been valued. In this regard, even expression of positive emotions was less valued in Confucian culture (Lee et al., 2009). However, Chung, Lim, and Kim (2011) reported that Korean mothers supportively reacted to children’s negative emotions by focusing on problem which children were faced. In Park’s study (2011), Korean mothers’ also displayed problem-focused response to children’s negative emotions.

The mixed results may come from social, cultural, and political changes in Korea. Even though traditional Korean society based on Confucianism and collectivism, significant historical events such as Korea war and rapid industrialization may have changes in traditional values. Since a modern Korean society characterized by “high competition”, Korean parents value both group harmony and competition, and more focus on individual goal than past (Yoon & Park, 2013). Given the fact that Korea was considered as the most modernizing country (Alfred, 1999), traditional Korean values has been modified with westernization. Trommsdore, Cole, and Heikamp (2012) suggested that contemporary Korean mothers are in turning point of their emotion socialization indicating that half of Korean mothers supported children’s negative emotions and the rest of Korean mothers negatively reacted to children’s negative emotions. Even though rapid and significant changes have been occurred in Korea, Korean mothers’ emotion socialization and children’s outcome have been left out of studies. In order to explore the role of culture and historical events in parent’s emotion socialization, it is important to delve
into similarities and differences between two cultures, and how Korean mothers’ emotion socialization has been changed.

**Conclusion**

“Bullies at school are often victims at home” (Loeber & Dishion, 1984, p. 172). Although scholars have emphasized the parent’s role in children’s peer relationships, very little has been done on the links between parental emotion socialization and children’s different reactions to bullying. Through the investigation of the classroom ecology, this study brought attention to peer contribution and the role of parent-child interactions in bullying.

In this study, I examined how the maternal reactions predict different subcategories of empathy, and how the different empathies are related to bystander or defender behaviors in bullying. For bystander behavior, I expected that higher levels of maternal unsupportive reactions to children’s emotions would be associated with more child-reports of personal distress, which would be associated with higher levels of children’s bystander behavior. In contrast, higher levels of maternal unsupportive reactions to children’s emotions would be associated with less child-reports of empathic concern, which would be associated with higher levels of children’s bystander behavior. For defender behavior, I hypothesized that lower levels of maternal supportive reactions to children’s emotions would be associated with less child-reports of personal distress, which would be associated with higher levels of children’s defender behavior. Contrary, higher levels of maternal supportive reactions to children’s emotions would be associated with more child-reports of empathic concern, which would be associated with higher levels of children’s defender behavior. Moreover, considering the role of culture in parent’s emotion socialization, I hypothesized that the paths from maternal reactions to children’s behavior in bullying would be different depending on culture.
Chapter IV. Method

Participants

Children aged 10 to 12 years old and their mothers participated in this study. The sample included 165 American mother-child dyads and 158 Korean mother-child dyads. Demographic information of the participants was presented in Table 1. In the American sample, children’s mean age was 10.98 years old ($SD = .79$). The majority of mothers’ ethnicity was non-Hispanic or Latino and race was predominantly White. Most mothers in this study were married and graduated from a 4-year or 2-year college. The majority of mothers were employed. The average family income ranged from $60,000 to $75,000. Based on a statistical report from the U.S. Census Bureau (2018), individual who graduated from college across the U.S. was 32.6% and the median household income was $63,179; therefore, American participants in this study represent American averages for education and income.

In the Korean sample, children’s mean age was 10.88 years old ($SD = .71$). Given that South Korea has been described a homogenous race country (the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, 2006), items of maternal race and ethnicity were not included on the demographic questionnaire. The majority of mothers who completed the online survey were married and graduated from a 4-year college. About half of mothers in this study were employed. The average family income ranged from $45,000 to $65,000. Considering that 58% of South Korean individuals earned bachelor’s degree (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2019) and the average family income was $46,000 (Korean Statistical Information Service, 2018), Korean participants reflected South Korean averages in completion of college and income levels.
Procedures

To recruit samples in both countries, I advertised this study through electronic recruitment notices including Facebook, online parenting forums, and online communities (e.g., MacaroniKid in the U.S. and Moms’ clubs in Korea). I also placed flyers and distributed handouts around children’s museums, libraries, recreation centers, gyms, churches, and other child-oriented locations in both countries. A link to an online survey was included in the electronic recruitment notices, and a short online survey address and a QR code were included in the handouts. For the Korean sample, a $5 Starbucks e-gift card was sent to every participant who completed the survey as a compensation. For the American sample, the initial compensation, to reduce the likelihood of robots taking the study, was one in ten participants being drawn to receive a $20 Amazon e-gift card. After 6 months of data collection, the lottery compensation was changed due to a lack of participation. Like the Korean sample, every participant who completed the survey after that point received a $5 Amazon e-gift card.

The online survey was presented through Virginia Tech Qualtrics. Once mothers and children agreed to participate after reviewing the consent form on the first page of the survey, mothers completed questionnaires about demographics, maternal reactions to their children’s negative emotions, and child sympathy. After mothers completed the questionnaires, they were instructed to have their children work on the next set of questionnaires. Children completed questionnaires about bystander/defender behavior in bullying and empathy. Same order of questionnaires was presented in both countries. Since I set every question as a required question in the survey, no missing data was detected in both American and Korean samples.

To reduce occurrence of robots completing the online survey and to serve as a quality check for the data, five survey tools were embedded in the survey. A reCAPTCHA tool was
added at the first part of questionnaire to detect robots. If participants did not pass the reCAPTCHA item, they could not proceed to the survey. Participants eligibility and the quality of data were decided based on child age and the survey duration. If child age was not entered as 10 to 12 years old and the duration of completing the survey was shorter than 15 minutes, the survey was ended. The fastest time spent in the five pilot participants across the two cultures was 15 minutes. In addition, 7 attention-check items (e.g., “For this question, please select more like me”) were added throughout the survey. Data that passed the attention-check items was used in the analyses. In the American sample, 11 participants were eliminated from the data, and in Korean sample, 9 participants were eliminated from the data due to the failure of the attention-check items.

Measures

Maternal reactions to child’s negative emotions

Mothers rated their reactions when their children expressed negative emotions using the Coping with Children’s Negative Emotions Scale (CCNES; Fabes, Eisenberg, & Bernzweig, 1990). The CCNES consisted of 12 scenarios when children could experience negative emotions and six possible responses that parents rated how likely they were to use each response for each scenario on a 7-point scale (1 = very likely and 7 = very unlikely).

Problem focused reactions represent maternal responses that help to solve the problem which caused children’s negative emotions (e.g., “Help my child figure out how to get the bike fixed”; α = .79 in American, α = .84 in Korean). Emotion focused reactions refer to mothers’ ways to comfort their children’s emotion by teaching strategies to handle emotions (e.g., “Comport my child and try to get him/her to forget about the accident”; α = .75 in American, α = .89 in Korean). Expressive encouragement reactions indicate mothers’ reactions that
acknowledge children’s emotions and encourage them to express their emotions (e.g., “encourage my child to talk about his/her fears”; \( \alpha = .71 \) in American, \( \alpha = .86 \) in Korean).

Punitive reactions refer to mothers’ disciplinary responses to children’s negative emotions (e.g., “Tell my child that he/she won’t be allowed to do something he/she likes to do”; \( \alpha = .81 \) in American, \( \alpha = .84 \) in Korean) and distress reaction reflects mothers’ stress and anxiety when their children experience negative emotions (e.g., “Feel upset and uncomfortable because of my child’s reactions”; \( \alpha = .69 \) in American, \( \alpha = .70 \) in Korean). Minimization reactions represent when mothers diminish their children’s negative emotions (e.g., “Tell my child that he/she is being a baby about it”; \( \alpha = .78 \) in American, \( \alpha = .77 \) in Korean). Correlations between the subscales were presented in Table 2.

Following Eisenberg and colleagues (1998), the six subscales were combined into unsupportive and supportive reactions by averaging of the subscales for each broader scale. Unsupportive reactions included punitive, distress, and minimization reactions, and supportive reactions included problem and emotion focused reactions and an expressive encourage reaction.

Kim’s (1994) Korean version of the Coping with Children’s Negative Emotions Scale (CCNES; Fabes, Eisenberg, & Bernzweig, 1990) measured Korean mothers’ maternal reactions to their children’s negative emotions. This measure translated the original CCNES using back translation and reported over .80 Cronbach’s \( \alpha \)s of each scale (Kim & Seo, 2016; No & Jung, 2010).

**Child empathy**

Children completed a modified version of the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI; Davis, 1983). Since the IRI was designed for adults, I used Livatvack-Miller and colleagues’ (1997) modified version for children in middle childhood. As a widely used empathy measure, the IRI
assesses a variety of aspects of empathy: perspective taking, fantasy, personal distress, and empathic concern. For this study, I used 7 items of personal distress (e.g., “When someone is hurt or in bad trouble, I fell afraid and uncomfortable”; $\alpha = .63$ in American, $\alpha = .62$ in Korean) and 7 items of empathic concern (e.g., “I feel sorry for other kids whose lives are not as good as mine”; $\alpha = .65$ in American, $\alpha = .71$ in Korean). Children rated each item using a 5-point scale (1= ‘not at all’, 5 = ‘exactly like me’).

To measure Korean children’s empathy, I adapted Park’s (1994) Korean version of the Interpersonal Reactivity (IRI; Davis, 1983). The IRI has been used cross-culturally in many countries (i.e., the U.S., German, French, Spanish, Chinese, and Korea, etc.) and reported acceptable internal consistency, construct validity, and factor structure of scores (Pfeifer et al., 2008). The IRI is an appropriate measurement to examine specific relationship between empathy and individual differences in bullying situation in that each component has shown different relationship with prosocial behaviors.

Children’s bystander and defender behavior in bullying

Children rated their bystander and defender behavior and attitude toward bullying using the Types of the Conformity Groups in Bullying (TCGB; Kim, 2003) on a 4-point scale (1= ‘never’, 4 = ‘always’). Because this questionnaire specifically measured children’s behaviors and attitudes toward bullying, I chose this measure to assess children’s different reactions and thoughts on bullying. Original scale has five roles of children in bullying: bully, victim, assistant, bystander, and defender. For this study, subscales of bystander and defender were used. Bystander behavior consisted of three subscales: self-defense, indifference, and both to blame (12 items; e.g., “When I see bullying, I pretend not to acknowledge it and leave the situation” and “I do nothing in bullying situation because I can be the next victim”; $\alpha = .78$ in
American, $\alpha = .89$ in Korean) and defender behavior included two subscales: supporting the victim and normative orientation (7 items; e.g., “I comfort the victim after they were bullied.” and “The victim and I spend recess together”; $\alpha = .75$ in American, $\alpha = .88$ in Korean).

The questionnaire for children’s bystander and defender behavior in bullying, Types of the Conformity Groups in Bullying (TCGB; Kim, 2003), was initially developed in Korean. This measure is the first and most popular Korean measure for assessing children’s different involvement in bullying and was developed from theory, literature, self-report of Korean children, and consultations with a team of teachers and therapists. An English version of the TCGB was developed using translation and back–translation procedures (Brislin, 1980). I translated the Korean questionnaire to English, and a Korean-American translator who majored in Psychology translated the questionnaire back to Korean. We compared and discussed our translation and resolved differences. Lastly, three American graduate students and a Korean professor in Human Development and Family Science reviewed the questionnaire.

**Reliability of the Translated Questionnaire.** Since the questionnaire of children’s bystander and defender behavior was translated from Korean to English for this study, this questionnaire needed to be examined to establish if it measured the same psychological constructs across cultures. Testing measurement invariance allows for confirmation that participants from different cultures conceptualize the same meanings to the scale items (Gouveia, Milfont, Fonseca, & Coelho, 2009).

Multi-Group Confirmatory Factor Analyses (MGCFA) were conducted to test the measurement invariance of the items in the bullying questionnaire across samples using maximum likelihood estimation in MPlus 7.11. The MFCFA, which compares between the theoretical model and the observed structure in two groups, is a widely used for testing
measurement invariance in cross-cultural data (Steenkamp & Baumgartner, 1998). Following Millsap and Yun-Tein (2004), three models that examined relationships between latent constructors and observational variables were tested; configural model, metric model, and scalar model. The configural model is a basic step to test factors between two samples, indicating that participants from the two cultures interpret the constructs in the same way. The metric model set loadings from the constructs to items across cultures. If the metric model provides acceptable fit, cultural comparisons of items are defensible because the loadings between the construct and items are same across two samples (Milfont & Fischer, 2010). Lastly, the scalar model should provide acceptable fit to compare means across cultures by constraining the item intercepts to be equivalent across samples. Model comparison based on chi-square test was conducted to determine the restricted model was not significantly worse than less restricted model.

In order to assess model fit, Chi-square statistic, Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker–Lewis index (TLI), Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) were estimated (Bollen, 1989). As fit indices in SEM, small chi-square value and the insignificant p-value would suggest a good model fit. However, it has been recognized the limitation of the chi-square test due to its sensitivity to sample size (Browne & Cudeck, 1993; Milfont et al., 2010). The limitation that chi-square test can calculate significant results with large sample size (Bentler & Bonett, 1980) suggests significant association may not calculated with small sample size. Therefore, other model fit indices were considered to assess model fit. The value of RMSEA less than .05 indicates that the model fits well and less than .10 indicates acceptable fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The values of CFI and TLI should be equal to or greater than .9 and the SRMR value should be less than .10 to indicate a good model fit. When the chi-square test was not satisfied, model fit was acceptable if the
values of $\text{CFI} \geq .90$, $\text{RMSEA} < .10$, and $\text{SRMR} \leq .08$ because these fit indexes were recommended for model misspecification and small sample size (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Kline, 2010; MacCallum et al., 1996).

**Bystander scale.** Since the configural model of the bystander subscale did not provide good fit, 6 of the 18 items that displayed insignificant $R^2$ and low factor loadings (i.e., item 1, item 12, items 16 to 19) were deleted. The configural model of the revised bystander scale provided acceptable fit, $\chi^2 (141, N = 323) = 225.42, p = .00, \text{CFI} = .92, \text{RMSEA} = .06, \text{SRMR} = .07$. Although the chi-square test was significant, scholars have recommended to consider other model fit indices to overcome limitations of the chi-square test (Brwone & Cudeck, 1993; Hu & Bentler, 1995, Mulaik et al., 1989). The metric model of the bystander scale also provided acceptable fit, $\chi^2 (141, N = 323) = 268.33, p = .00, \text{CFI} = .91, \text{RMSEA} = .08, \text{SRMR} = .07$. According to the chi-square difference test, metric model did not significantly differ from the configural model indicating that the loadings between factor and items were the same across the two samples. The scalar model of the bystander scale provided acceptable fit, $\chi^2 (140, N = 323) = 272.63, p = .00, \text{CFI} = .90, \text{RMSEA} = .08, \text{SRMR} = .07$. However, model comparison test indicated that scalar model was significantly different from the metric model; thus, mean scores cannot be compared across the two samples.

**Defender scale.** The configural model of the defender scale was saturated. In order to make a parsimonious model, I checked items that displayed insignificant $R^2$ and low factor loadings. Items estimated insignificant $R^2$ and low factor loadings were included in the subscale of the normative orientation (e.g., “I think a person who harasses a weaker friend should be punished”) in the defender scale. Since items in the normative orientation subscale contributed to measurement variance and in order to reduce parameters, I deleted 12 items of the normative
orientation (i.e., items 28 to 39), leaving 7 items remaining in the defender scale. After deleted
the items, the configural model provided acceptable fit, $\chi^2 (47, N = 323) = 101.76, p = .00$, CFI =
.92, RMSEA = .08, SRMR = .08. The metric model of the defender scale also provided
acceptable fit, $\chi^2 (45, N = 323) = 87.28, p = .00$, CFI = .95, RMSEA = .07, SRMR = .06.
Nonsignificant chi-square changes between the metric and the configural models supports
cultural comparisons of items are possible. Accordingly, the scalar model of the defender scale
provided acceptable fit, $\chi^2 (47, N = 323) = 119.84, p = .00$, CFI = .91, RMSEA = .08, SRMR =
.08. However, chi-square difference test indicated score comparison between two samples was
not defensible, displaying significant difference between the metric and the scalar models.
Chapter V. Results

Preliminary Analyses

Using Preacher and Coffman’s (2006) online software and following MacCallum Browne, and Sugawara’s (1996) methods of power analysis, it was calculated that sample size of 155 was needed for each culture. In this study, 158 Korean mother-child dyads and 165 American mother-child dyads participated; thus, a sample size of this study was above the necessary sample size.

Data screening was conducted based on the duration of completing the survey and attention-check items for the quality of the data. After data screening, I conducted descriptive data analyses using SPSS software to check for normality and outliers. Normal Q-Q plots and a skew and kurtosis following Kline (2005) was used to review the normality of data. All study variables in the both samples were normally distributed displaying a skew and kurtosis of less than +/- 2.0. Mahalanobis distance (Mahal D) statistic, which calculates the distance from observation scores to the mean of the variables, was used to detect outlier. Two participants in the Korean sample were above the critical values for single multivariate outlier. The participants were eliminated from the Korean sample.

To test for potential covariates, t-test were conducted for child sex, mother’s ethnicity, and mother’s employment status in the American sample. Significant sex differences were found for children’s bystander, $t(163) = 1.16, p < .05$, and defender behavior, $t(163) = -1.07, p < .05$, with boys reporting more bystander behavior and girls reporting more defender behavior.

Empathic concern was different depending on children’s sex, $t(163) = 1.89, p < .05$, with girls reporting more empathic concern. Bystander behavior also differed based on ethnicity, $t(163) = 1.12, p < .05$. Hispanic or Latino children rated more bystander behavior than Non-Hispanic or
Latino children. In addition, maternal reactions to children’s negative emotion and children’s personal distress were different depending on mothers’ employment status. Mothers who were employed rated higher levels of supportive reactions than unemployed mothers, \( t(163) = .98, p < .05 \), and their children reported more personal distress than children who had unemployed mothers, \( t(163) = 1.91, p < .05 \). In the Korean sample, child sex and mother’s working status were examined. Child empathic concern and bystander behavior significantly differed based on mothers’ employment status. Children who had employed mothers reported more empathic concern, \( t(156) = 1.51, p < .05 \), and more bystander behavior, \( t(156) = .29, p < .05 \).

Continuous variables including child age, family income, and mother’s highest degree earned were examined (see Table 3). Maternal education level and family annual income were significantly correlated with study variables. Considering correlation among study variables and prior research (Eisenberg et al., 2001; Lee, 1999; Shin & Kang, 2014; Trach et al., 2010) in both cultures, child sex, maternal education level, maternal employment status, and family annual income were added as covariates in the proposed models.

Descriptive statistics and correlation among study variables controlling child sex, family income, and mother’s highest degree earned were presented in Table 4 and Table 5. Mean scores of study variable in both samples were presented in Figure 3. In both samples, higher levels of maternal unsupportive reactions were related to more children’s bystander behavior while higher levels of maternal supportive reactions were associated with more defender behavior. Higher levels of children’s empathic concern were correlated with more defender behavior and less bystander behavior. However, cultural differences were found in other correlations. Higher levels of American children’s personal distress were associated with more bystander and defender behavior but not in the Korean sample. Higher levels of Korean mothers’ supportive
reactions were related to more personal distress and less bystander behavior. Also, the more Korean children who reported bystander behavior, the less they were shown defender behavior.

**Path Analysis Predicting Bystander Behavior**

To test my first hypothesized model (Figure 1), I examined a path model including the indirect effects of maternal unsupportive reactions on children’s bystander behavior through their personal distress and empathic concern using maximum likelihood estimation in MPlus 7.11. Mplus can be less affected by the condition of non-normality (Wang & Wang, 2012) and the maximum likelihood estimation test has been commonly used for Structural Equation Model (Bollen, 1989). Child sex, mother’s education level and employment statuses, and family income were added to the model as covariates. The proposed bystander behavior model was examined separately for the American and Korean samples. However, the proposed bystander model in both samples did not provide acceptable fit. The insignificant results of the models in the American sample, $\chi^2 (10, N = 165) = 45.04, p = .00$, CFI = .77, RMSEA = .15, SRMR = .07, and the Korean sample, $\chi^2 (10, N = 158) = 74.82, p = .00$, CFI = .37, RMSEA = .20, SRMR = .14, indicated that the proposed bystander models were not supported in these samples.

Based on previous findings identified the relations between parent-child interactions and bullying (Espelage et al., 2000; Flouri & Buchanan, 2003; Han & Yoon, 2010), a direct path from maternal unsupportive reactions to bystander behavior was added in the proposed model. The revised model provided good fit in the American sample, $\chi^2 (9, N = 165) = 16.75, p < .00$, CFI = .95, RMSEA = .07, SRMR = .05, whereas the model did not provide acceptable fit in the Korean sample, $\chi^2 (9, N = 158) = 70.46, p = .00$, CFI = .40, RMSEA = .21, SRMR = .13. In order to find parameters that might omitted from the model in the Korean sample, modification index test further conducted. The modification index test estimated significant improvement of
model fit, indicating which parameter contributed to the improvement. The modification index indicated significant improvement of the model fit when a correlation between personal distress and empathic concern was released. According to this result, the correlation between personal distress and empathic concern was added to the previous model.

A final path model including the direct effects of maternal unsupportive reactions on bystander behavior, the indirect effects of maternal supportive reactions on bystander behavior through children’s personal distress, and empathic concern, and a correlation between personal distress and empathic concern was examined. In the American sample (see Figure 4), the model provided acceptable fit, $\chi^2 (8, N = 165) = 23.62, p = .00$, CFI = .90, RMSEA = .09, SRMR = .05. Higher levels of maternal unsupportive reactions were significantly related to more bystander behavior, $B = .37, p < .001$, more personal distress, $B = .38, p < .001$, and less empathic concern, $B = -.41, p < .001$. In addition, higher levels of personal distress, $B = .19, p < .01$, and lower levels of empathic concern, $B = -.23, p < .01$, were associated with more bystander behavior. Mediation analyses demonstrated that maternal unsupportive reactions had significant indirect effects on bystander behavior through personal distress and empathic concern. Higher levels of maternal unsupportive reactions were associated with more personal distress and less empathic concern in children, which were related to more bystander behavior in the American sample. Bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals based on 5000 bootstrapped samples were [.01, .11] and [.02, .15] respectively.

In the Korean sample (see Figure 5), the final model provided good fit, $\chi^2 (8, N = 158) = 7.12, p = .52$, CFI = 1, RMSEA = 0, SRMR = .04. Higher levels of maternal unsupportive reactions were significantly associated with more bystander behavior, $B = .13, p < .10$, and less empathic concern, $B = -.14, p < .10$. Like the American sample, higher levels of personal
distress, $B = .38$, $p < .001$, and lower levels of empathic concern, $B = -.47$, $p < .001$, were significantly related to more bystander behavior. In addition, more personal distress was significantly correlated with more empathic concern, $r = .58$, $p < .001$. Mediation analyses identified that maternal unsupportive reactions had a significant indirect effect on bystander behavior through empathic concern. This result indicated that more maternal unsupportive reactions were associated with less empathic concern, which were related to more bystander behavior in the Korean sample. Bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals based on 5000 bootstrapped samples were [.00, .14].

**Path Analysis Predicting Defender Behavior**

To examine my first hypothesized model (Figure 2), I tested the indirect effects of maternal unsupportive reactions on children’s defender behavior through children’s personal distress and empathic concern. Child sex, mother’s highest education level, mother’s employment status, and family income were included as possible covariates in the proposed models of both samples. Like the proposed bystander model, the proposed defender model did not provide acceptable fit in both samples. The insignificant results of the models in the American sample, $\chi^2 (10, N = 165) = 39.46$, $p = .00$, CFI = .71, RMSEA = .13, SRMR = .08, and the Korean sample, $\chi^2 (10, N = 158) = 67.99$, $p < .00$, CFI = .32, RMSEA = .19, SRMR = .11, indicated that the proposed defender model was not supported.

Following the previous bystander model, maternal a direct path from maternal supportive reactions to defender behavior was added in the proposed model. The revised model provided good fit in the American sample, $\chi^2 (9, N = 165) = 10.99$, $p = .00$, CFI = .98, RMSEA = .04, SRMR = .04 whereas the model did not provide acceptable fit in the Korean sample, $\chi^2 (9, N = 158) = 67.99$, $p < .00$, CFI = .32, RMSEA = .19, SRMR = .11. Like the bystander model, the
modification index test examined. The modification index also estimated significant improvement of model fit when a correlation between personal distress and empathic concern was released. Based on this result, the correlation between personal distress and empathic concern was added to the previous model.

A final path model involving the direct effects of maternal supportive reactions on defender behavior, the indirect effects of maternal supportive reactions on defender behavior through children’s personal distress, and empathic concern, and a correlation between personal distress and empathic concern was examined. In the American sample (see Figure 6), the final model provided good fit, $\chi^2 (8, N = 165) = 12.15, p = .14$, CFI = .95, RMSEA = .06, SRMR = .04. More maternal supportive reactions were significantly associated with more defender behavior, $B = .37, p < .001$, and more empathic concern in children, $B = .40, p < .001$. Also, higher levels of personal distress, $B = .18, p < .05$, were significantly related to more defender behavior. There was no significant indirect effect of maternal supportive reactions on defender behavior.

In the Korean sample (see Figure 7), the final model also provided good fit, $\chi^2 (8, N = 158) = 10.02, p = .26$, CFI = .98, RMSEA = .04, SRMR = .04. Higher levels of maternal supportive reactions were significantly associated with more personal distress, $B = .16, p < .05$, and more empathic concern, $B = .23, p < .01$. Lower levels of personal distress, $B = -.18, p < .10$, and higher levels of empathic concern, $B = .37, p < .001$, were related to more defender behavior. In addition, more children’s personal distress was significantly correlated with more empathic concern, $r = .55, p < .001$. Mediation analyses indicated that maternal supportive reactions had a significant indirect effect on defender behavior through children’s empathic concern. Higher levels of maternal supportive reactions to the child’s negative emotions was
related to more child-reports of empathic concern, which were associated with more defender behavior. Bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals based on 5000 bootstrapped samples were [.02, .11].

**Multi-Group Analysis Across Two Cultures**

Multi-group analysis following Mann, Rutstein, and Hancock (2009) were conducted to examine whether the relations of models differed depending on culture. Mann, Rutstein, and Hancock (2009) used an asymptotic approximation to the parameter difference test and coded the difference test to be estimated directly within the maximum likelihood framework. Then, they created additional parameters that represented the differences between each corresponding pair of theoretically interesting paths. The benefit of this analysis was that it did not impose any constraints on the model that could cause traditional strategies to have problems (Mann, Rutstein, & Hancock, 2009). The covariate variables including child sex, mother’s education level, mother’s employment status, and family income were entered into the multi-group analyses.

The final bystander behavior model had acceptable fit, $\chi^2 (16, N = 323) = 30.74, p = .01$, CFI = .94, RMSEA = .08, SRMR = .04 (see Figure 8), indicating cultural differences in the relations from mothers’ unsupportive reactions to children’s bystander behavior. Relations of maternal unsupportive reactions to children’s personal distress and empathic concern were significantly different between the two samples. In the American sample, higher levels of maternal unsupportive reactions were related to more personal distress, whereas, the relation was not significant in the Korean sample. The effect of maternal unsupportive reactions on children’s empathic concern in the American sample was significantly bigger than the one in the Korean sample. In contrast, the effects of personal distress and empathic concern on bystander
behavior in the Korean sample were significantly bigger than those in the American sample. Also, the correlation between personal distress and empathic concern was significant only in the Korean sample.

The final defender behavior model provided good fit, $\chi^2 (16, N = 323) = 22.17$, $p = .14$, CFI = .96, RMSEA = .05, SRMR = .04. The relation of maternal supportive reactions to children’s defender behavior varied depending on cultures. More maternal supportive reactions were significantly related to more defender behavior in the American sample, but the relation was not found in the Korean sample. In addition, relations of maternal supportive reactions to children’s personal distress and empathic concern were significantly different between the two samples. Higher levels of maternal supportive reactions were significantly associated with more personal distress in the Korean sample, whereas, the relation was not significant in the American sample. In addition, cultural differences in the relations between empathy subscales and defender behavior were found. Higher levels of personal distress were related to more defender behavior in the American sample while lower levels of personal distress were associated with more defender behavior in the Korean sample. Moreover, more empathic concern in Korean children was significantly related to more defender behavior, but the relation was not found in the American sample. The correlation between personal distress and empathic concern was also significant only in the Korean sample.
Chapter VI. Discussion

To investigate a path from parents’ emotion socialization to children’s roles in bullying, I examined the direct and indirect effects of maternal reactions to children’s negative emotions on children’s bystander behavior and defender behavior in bullying. This study demonstrated the important role of maternal emotion socialization practices and different relations of children’s personal distress and empathic concern to their reactions to bullying in both American and Korean cultures.

Regarding bystander behavior, children who had mothers who did not support expression of their negative emotions showed a higher likelihood of bystander behavior in both cultures. Children’s empathic concern significantly mediate this relation between maternal unsupportive reactions and children’s bystander behavior. However, cultural differences were found in the other relations. Children’s personal distress was another mediator of the relation between maternal unsupportive reactions and bystander behavior in the American culture but not in the Korean culture. A significant correlation between two empathy subscales, personal distress and empathic concern, was found only in the Korean culture.

I also found cultural similarities and differences in children’s defender behavior in both cultures. In both cultures, more maternal supportive reactions were associated with more empathic concern in children. However, maternal supportive reactions were significantly related to defender behavior only in the American culture. The correlations of personal distress to defender behavior were opposite depending on culture; children who showed high levels of personal distress were more likely to report defender behavior in the American culture, while Korean children who showed high levels of personal distress were less likely to report defender behavior. Based on statistical reports from two cultures (Korean Statistical Information Service,
participants in this study reflected American and South Korean averages in completion of college and income levels.

The Proposed Mediation Model

The initial models examining the indirect effect of maternal reactions on children’s bystander/defender behavior in bullying were not supported in two cultures. After adding the direct effect of maternal reactions and a correlation between personal distress and empathic concern, the alternative models were significantly supported in both cultures. This result identified the role of mothers’ emotion socialization in children’s peer relationships, supporting prior findings that parent is a primary contributor to shape children’s social environment (Baker, Fenning, & Crnic, 2011; Oh, 2015). Mothers’ emotion socialization practices might lead prosocial behavior in bullying in that parental sensitive response to children’s negative emotions could be a role model of empathic skills. As social learning theory proposed, children develop through modeling and the observation and the internalized modeling guide children to react in similar situations (Bandura, 1973). In addition, mothers’ supportive reactions to distress might contribute to secure attachment with their children, which contributed to adaptive and sensitive view of self and others. Securely attached children generally formed the internal working model that their emotions were valued through sensitive responsiveness (Cozolino, 2006), whereas insecurely attached children developed an idea that their emotions are not valued and might not learn the skills to deal with their negative emotions in appropriate ways.

The correlation between personal distress and empathic concern in the alternative models indicated both empathic subscales, personal distress and empathic concern, might be needed to explain children’s bystander/defender behavior. Although the effects of each subscale on bystander/defender behavior were varied, the combined effects of two subscales might be a
potential contributor to children’s reactions in bullying, especially in the Korean culture. The more personal distress was reported, the more empathic concern was rated only in the Korean culture. It is possible that Korean children might experience both personal distress and empathic concern when they face others’ distress due to the collective aspects of Korean culture. Because Korean culture values group awareness over individual concerns (Farver et al., 2000), they might be confused between self and other-oriented feelings. Personal distress is regarded as a self-focused emotional reaction because individuals feeling personal distress tend to focus on their own negative feelings elicited by other’s distress (Bateson, 1991). In contrast, empathic concern represents more genuine feelings of warmth and sympathy to other’s distress. Thus, individuals who experienced empathic concern are more likely to care about other’s distress (Davis, 1980). Confusion between group and self-awareness was likely to lead them to correlate each other in Korean culture. Another possible explanation could be related to the empathy measure, which developed by Western scholars. Even though the empathy measure has been supported and widely used in Korea, the measure was developed by emotional experience and values in Western populations. It is possible that the concept of personal distress and empathic concern can be different depending on culture. For example, as indicated, Korean children may have different concept of group and self-awareness. More culturally sensitive empathy measures are needed for future research.

**Maternal Unsupportive Reactions, Child Empathy, and Bystander Behavior**

**Cultural similarities**

Children who had mothers who reported using responses that dismissed and punished children’s negative emotions were more likely to ignore or stay away from bullying in both cultures. This finding supported prior research about the role of parents’ emotional socialization
practices in children’s social responses to bullying (Espelage et al., 2000; Flouri & Buchanan, 2003) by identifying that mothers’ emotional experience with their children predicted children’s bystander behavior in bullying. As noted earlier, it may be because of the lack of the empathic role model as proposed by social learning theory. Since children may not experience empathic responses from parents and may not have models who deal with other’s negative emotion at home, they may be more likely to diminish or get stressed other’s negative emotions in peer interactions. Also, maternal unsupportive responsiveness to children’s distress might be associated with insecure attachment, which in turn, could relate to children’s bystander behavior when they witness others’ distress. Considering this result suggesting the relation between parent-child interaction and children’s peer relationship, factors that address the connection between home and school need to be explored. Based on prior research identified the buffering role of educational curriculum (Kim et al., 2011; Wolfe & Hirsch, 2003), schools and communities can provide parent education and social-emotional learning programs to support for optimal emotional development from parent-child relationships and children’s peer relationships.

As expected, children’s personal distress and empathic concern were differently related to their bystander behavior in both cultures. When children displayed high levels of personal distress, they reported more bystander behavior. In contrast, children with high levels of empathic concern reported less bystander behavior. These findings demonstrated the distinct effect of the empathy subscales in bystander behavior by supporting the multidimensional perspective of empathy (Davis, 1983; Eisenberg & Fabes, 1998). Children who were stimulated by the victim’s distress were more likely to focus on their aversive emotional reaction; thus, they were more likely to become self-oriented and stay away from the source of distress. However, other-oriented feelings of sympathy and genuine concern about the victim’s emotional state may
lead to prosocial behavior toward the victim in bullying situation. Based on this finding, bullying prevention and intervention programs need to consider the distinct role of empathy constructs and future research need to further explore factors that promote empathic concern.

Moreover, children’s empathic concern was a significant mediator of the relation between maternal unsupportive reactions and children’s bystander behavior regardless of culture. According to the heuristic model of the socialization of emotion (Eisenberg, Cumberland, & Spinrad, 1998), mothers’ minimizing and punitive reactions to the children’s negative emotion were associated with their children’s empathic concern, which in turn predicted children’s bystander behavior. Specifically, the more children who received maternal unsupportive reactions, the less they reported empathic concern. The lower level of empathic concern was related to more bystander behavior. Given that parents’ negative emotional responses elicited children’s distress (Valiente et al., 2004), children may lack the opportunity to learn other-oriented empathy due to dealing with their own distress, and thus, they were likely to react in avoidant or self-protective manner when they witnessed bullying. The indirect effect of maternal unsupportive reactions to the child’s negative emotions suggests the important role of parental emotion socialization practices in the development of genuine empathy and social behavior in both cultures.

**Cultural differences**

The mediating effect of personal distress on the relation of maternal unsupportive reactions to bystander behavior was different depending on culture. Personal distress significantly mediated the relation of maternal unsupportive reaction to children’s bystander behavior only in the American culture. American mothers, who reported unsupportive reactions to their children’s negative emotion, had children who felt more anxiety and discomfort toward
others’ distress. This personal distress, in turn, may lead them to ignore or stay away from the source of negative emotion when they witness bullying. However, Korean mothers’ emotion socialization practice was unrelated to children’s personal distress when predicting children’s bystander behavior. In regard to the children’s personal distress, the heuristic model of the socialization of emotion (Eisenberg et al., 1998) was supported only in the American sample. These results suggest the different cultural effects of parents’ emotion socialization on children’s socio-emotional outcome. Perhaps there were other factors such as children’s personalities (Kim & Han, 2017) or school norms that were more associated with Korean children’s personal distress than parental factors. More work on factors that related to children’s personal distress in the Eastern sample is needed.

**Maternal Supportive Reactions, Child Empathy, and Defender Behavior**

*Cultural similarities*

More mothers’ supportive responses to their children’s negative emotions were related to more genuine sympathy and concern for others in both cultures. These findings supported previous findings about the role of parents’ emotion socialization practices in children’s empathy across two cultures (Brophy-Herb et al., 2011; Eisenberg, Fabes, & Murphy, 1996; Oh, 2015). As Barnett (1987) suggested, children developed their genuine empathy through emotional experiences with their parents. Maternal ways to express empathic feelings and responses to their children’s negative emotions may help children internalize empathic concern for others’ distress. Because mothers acknowledged, encouraged, and taught expressions of negative emotion in appropriate ways, children could experience and manage a variety of emotions with their mothers (Eisenberg, Fabes, & Murphy, 1996). The positive experience in parents’ emotion
socialization was likely to facilitate the development of children’s empathic concern across cultures.

**Cultural differences**

Although the direct effect of maternal supportive reactions on children’s defender behavior was significant in the American culture, Korean mothers’ supportive reactions were indirectly related to children’s defender behavior through children’s empathic concern. As mentioned, the result from the American culture suggests the importance of maternal models who empathized with their children’s negative emotional responses toward the victim in bullying. While the heuristic model of the socialization of emotion (Eisenberg et al., 1998) was supported only in the American culture for the bystander behavior, this model was supported by Korean children’s defender behavior. Korean children who received mothers’ supportive reactions to their distress were more likely to display high levels of empathic concern, which in turn, was associated with more defender behavior when they encountered school bullying. The cultural differences in the direct and indirect effects may indicate different types of transition from mother-child interaction to peer interaction. American children were more likely to internalize their parents’ model when they interacted with peers, whereas Korean children tended to act on their own individual characteristic that was associated with their parental factors.

Cultural differences in the different correlations between personal distress and defender behavior was an interesting result from this study. As hypothesized, higher levels of children’s personal distress were related to less defender behavior in the Korean culture. However, the more personal distress was reported, the more defender behavior was shown in the American culture. For the American children, there could be other factors that moderated the relation of their personal distress to defender behavior. It may be the American children, who experienced
feelings of anxiety and discomfort from others’ distress, regulated the aversive reactions and were able to stand up for the victim. Other factors including social efficacy (Gini et al., 2008) or an anti-bullying classroom norm (Juvonen & Galvan, 2008) encouraged them to actively intervene to stop bullying. Pöyhönen, Kärnä, and Salmivalli (2008) found that the relation of empathy to defender behavior significantly varied between classrooms. Considering that bullying occurs based on group dynamics, a class norm, “a rule, value or standard shared by the members of a social group” (Turner, 1991, p. 3), is likely to be associated with children’s defender behavior by interplaying with their empathy. If classroom members agreed with an anti-bullying classroom norm, children in that classroom were more likely to stand up for the victim to stop bullying. Future works for classroom norms or school culture needs to be explored.

Meanwhile, empathic concern was a significant contributor to Korean children’s defender behavior. When Korean children reported more empathic concern, they were more likely to display defender behavior. This result demonstrated that empathic concern elicited more prosocial behavior (Bateson, 1991; Eisenberg et al., 1990). In the American culture, empathic concern was not significantly related to defender behavior; rather, personal distress was associated with their defender behavior. This may be explained by different cultural values that they have internalized. Children in individualist cultures have been encouraged to express their emotions and openly communicate about the ego-focused emotions (Friedlmeier, Corapci, & Cole, 2011). Damon also (1995) pointed out that America’s homes and schools have fostered the culture of indulgence in their children. Based on the belief, children who got stressed from the victim’s distress may intervene bullying to actively get rid of their source of distress.
In contrast, collectivist cultures regard that expressing negative emotions is socially inappropriate and immature (Cole, Tamang, & Shrestha, 2006; Trommsdorff, 2012), suggesting one of the socialization goals is to minimize social conflict (Farver et al., 2000). With this social belief about expressions of emotion, children in collectivist cultures may try not to upend social harmony and expectations. Therefore, if Korean children empathically experienced negative emotions due to the victim’s distress in bullying, they were likely to ignore or remove themselves from the situation to not intervene in group dynamics. Indeed, prior research has shown that disengagement in social conflict is preferred among Korean and Chinese adolescents since they want to avoid argument or confrontation with peers (Rubin, Oh, Menzer, & Ellison, 2011). These results suggest cultural differences in empathy subscales and its’ effects on defender behavior. Empathic concern may be more a powerful motivation for helping the victim in the Korean sample; whereas, getting rid of personal distress may be a driving force for stopping bullying in the American sample. Future research is needed to elaborate more on cultural differences in personal distress to utilize empathy as a trigger of helping behavior.

**Strength, Limitations, and Future Directions**

Despite the important findings, this study includes a few limitations to address. First, participants of this study limited the generalizability of the findings. Most of participants came from middle class and typical marriage status (91.5% of American mothers and 98.7% of Korean mothers were married). The findings can be generalized through replication with more diverse participants. Also, only mothers were included in this study to represent parental emotion socialization practices. Considering diverse types of caregivers who contribute to parenting (Barker, Iles, & Ramchandani, 2017), fathers or other caregivers need to be included for future research. Another limitation includes measurements of this study. All study variables were
collected using self-report questionnaires. However, self-report may have the limitation of social desirability bias and reference bias (Donaldson & Grant-Vallone, 2002). Observational measure for future research will capture the mother-child interaction and psychological characteristics objectively. Lastly, the bidirectional relation between parental factor and child factor need to be considered for future research. Maternal reactions to the child’s negative emotions may be related to children’s temperament or previous mother-child interactions. Longitudinal research to explore the bidirectional relation or interaction between mothers and children would advance our understanding of factors that underlie children’s individual differences in prosocial behavior in bullying.

However, this study is the first study to conduct a cross-cultural comparison demonstrating how maternal emotion socialization was related to children’s reactions to bullying. The results identified universal and cultural aspects of children’s socio-emotional development and maternal emotion socialization, adding to the current literature that largely focused on Western populations. Although this study was limited by self-reporting, children reported about their behavior in bullying anonymously. The anonymous reporting environment might have helped children address bullying situations honestly in a space where parents and teachers were not involved. Lastly, investigating bullying in middle childhood would contribute to prevention of bullying in adolescence, which is a developmental period when bullying is more aggressive and chronic than in middle childhood. A number of studies (Turner et al., 2013; Volk et al., 2015; Wang, Iannotti, & Luk, 2012) have found that the frequency of bullying increases during adolescence and most of the research on bullying focuses on adolescents. By comparison, few studies have examined bullying in middle childhood. Given that children’s concerns regarding group acceptance and social interactions within peer groups are highly salient during
middle childhood, it is crucial to investigate bullying in middle childhood in order to prevent bullying in adolescence.
Chapter VII. Conclusions

The finding of the role of maternal emotion socialization practices in children’s differences in bullying may allow us to provide valuable evidence for the importance of parents’ participation in bullying intervention programs. In addition, it supports the multidimensional perspective of empathy by identifying different roles of empathy subscales and cultural differences in their effects. These findings inform which aspects of empathy need to be given more focus in bullying research. In doing so, educators and parents may be able to make specific, culturally sensitive education guidelines to promote children’s abilities to stand up for victims.
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<td>.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>$15,000-$30,000</td>
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<td>4.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>$30,000-$45,000</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
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<td>$45,000-$60,000</td>
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<td>22.8%</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>over $100,000</td>
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</table>
Table 2

*Correlations between CCNES subscales*

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<th>6</th>
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<td>.81**</td>
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<td>.04</td>
<td>.24**</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Distress reaction</td>
<td>.66**</td>
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<td>.61**</td>
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<td>-.19*</td>
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<td>.43***</td>
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<td>.07</td>
<td>.23**</td>
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<td>-.42**</td>
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<td>-.08</td>
<td>.60**</td>
<td>.64**</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Notes.* Numbers above the diagonal are for the American sample, and numbers below the diagonal are for the Koran sample. * p < .5, ** p < .01, *** p < .001.
Table 3

Correlations among Demographics and Study Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Child age</th>
<th>Maternal education</th>
<th>Family income</th>
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<tr>
<td>Maternal reactions</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>.04</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>.26**</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.40***</td>
<td>.25**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal distress</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathic concern</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>.17*</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bystander behavior</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defender behavior</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.24**</td>
<td>.18*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Korean sample</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal reactions</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsupportive reaction</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.20*</td>
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<td>Supportive reaction</td>
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<td>.06</td>
<td>.07</td>
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<td>Empathy</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.10</td>
<td>.05</td>
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<td>.13</td>
<td>.12</td>
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</table>

* * p < .5, ** p < .01, *** p < .001.
Table 4

*Descriptive Statistics*

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<td>$Max$</td>
<td>$Mean$</td>
<td>$SD$</td>
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<tr>
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<td>$Min$</td>
<td>$Max$</td>
<td>$Mean$</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean sample</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Maternal reactions</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.60</td>
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<td>Empathy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>158</td>
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<td>4.29</td>
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</table>
Table 5

Partial Correlations among Study Variables Controlling Child Sex, Maternal Education Level, Maternal Employment, and Family Income

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<tr>
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<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
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<td>1. Maternal unsupportive reactions</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.37***</td>
<td>-.44***</td>
<td>.54***</td>
<td>.18*</td>
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<td>.35***</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.00</td>
<td>.35***</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.37***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Personal distress</td>
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<td>.17*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>.34**</td>
<td>.17*</td>
</tr>
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<td>-.28***</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>.17*</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.28***</td>
<td>-.47***</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes. Numbers above the diagonal are for the American sample, and numbers below the diagonal are for the Koran sample. * p < .5, ** p < .01, *** p < .001.
Figure 1

Proposed Bystander Behavior Model

- Personal Distress
- Maternal Unsupportive Reaction
- Bystander Behavior
- Empathic Concern
Figure 2

Proposed Defender Behavior Model

Maternal Supportive Reaction

Empathic Concern

Personal Distress

Defender Behavior
Figure 3

Mean Scores of the Study Variables in the American and the Korean samples
Figure 4

Final Bystander Path Model in the American Sample

Note. Standardized coefficients are presented. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001.
Figure 5

Final Bystander Path Model in the Korean Sample.

Note. Standardized coefficients are presented. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. 
Figure 6

Final Defender Path Model in the American Sample

Note. Standardized coefficients are presented. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. 
Figure 7

Final Defender Path Model in the Korean Sample

Note. Standardized coefficients are presented. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. 
Figure 8

Multi-Group Analyses for Bystander Path Model across Two Samples

Note. Standardized coefficients are presented. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. 

85
Figure 9

Multi-Group Analyses for Defender Path Model across Two Samples

Note. Standardized coefficients are presented. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$. 

86