

# 한국 아동과 미국 아동의 행동귀인에서의 문화차 연구

## Cross-cultural differences in Korean and American children's behavior attributions

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### < Abstract >

본 연구는 아동의 일상 심리학이 그들의 문화에 따라 다르게 나타나는지를 알아보고자 한 것이다. 이러한 발달적 보편성의 문제를 해결하기 위해, 우선 한국 아동과 미국 아동의 타인 행동에 대한 설명을 비교하였다. 또한 서로 다른 문화를 반영할 수 있는 분석 틀을 고안하여, 이러한 서로 다른 분석 틀에 따라 두 나라 아동의 행동설명이 어떻게 다르게 나타나는지를 비교하였다. 본 연구에서는 미국식 범주인 '내적-외적' 범주와 한국식 범주인 '개인-관계-상황' 범주를 사용하였다. 연구결과, 두 나라의 아동은 타인의 행동설명에서 차이를 보여주었다. 미국 아동은 한국 아동에 비해 심리 '내적' 요인과 '개인적' 요인을 더 많이 사용하였으며, 한국 아동은 타인의 '상황적' 조건을 더 많이 고려하여 행동을 설명하였다. 그러나 두 문화권의 아동은 행동설명 과제에서 모두 '내적' 요인과 '개인적' 요인을 다른 요인보다 더 많이 선호하였으며, 오직 '상황적' 요인의 고려에서만 발달적 차이를 나타내는 공통점을 보여주었다.

**주제어(Key Words):** folk psychology(일상심리학), theory of mind(마음에 대한 이해), social cognition(사회인지), cross-cultural study(비교문화연구)

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## I. Introduction

People seek to understand, explain, predict, or even control others' behaviors in social interactions. Research in this social cognition area has spanned attribution studies(Heider, 1958; Kelley, 1967), studies of self-concept (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Bond & Cheung, 1983) and studies of how people explain others' actions (Miller, 1987). Studies with American and European adults showed that adults tended to interpret others' behaviors in terms of internal attributes (Winter & Uleman, 1984).

Recent cross-cultural studies showed that this attribution pattern had cultural differences (Miller, 1984, 1987; Morris & Peng, 1994). According to these researches, people in collectivist cultures made less dispositional attributions than did people in individualist cultures. Saudi adults used significantly less internal (such as traits and mental states) attributions than did American adults(Al-Zahrani & Kaplowitz, 1993). Similar differences can also be found between Koreans and Americans (Cha & Nam, 1985). The differences between these two cultures appear to be consistent, and can be found in naturalistic settings, including newspaper articles (Morris & Peng, 1994), and self-description (Cousins, 1989). These cultural differences have been explained by cultural relativism, i. e. seeing how much the observed differences are due to the cultural contexts influencing the socialization.

On the contrary, some studies show cultural similarities. For example, a study showed that both collectivist and individualist cultures were willing to attribute dispositional causes to negative behaviors, such as murder (Choi & Markus, 1998). The Korean adults, like Americans, also showed

dispositional attributions more than contextual ones(Gong & Han, 1996).

Besides the above studies, cross-cultural differences in behavior explanations seems to be relatively evident in adulthood. Persons in collectivist cultures attribute dispositions less than do people in individualist cultures, but do not differ much in attributing dispositions for bad behavior. However, few cross-cultural developmental studies regarding behavior explanations set limits on answering the question if similar cultural differences could be found in childhood.

Recent developmental psychologists, especially those interested in theory of mind, began to study children's implicit theories about social events and their development. Many studies about children's development demonstrate that they develop from 'external and physical' understandings to 'internal and psychological' understandings of others' minds and behaviors (Barenboim, 1981; Miller, 1987). This view is adopted by Wellman (1990), who argues that children begin as behavioral psychologists, and develop into more structural/cognitive psychologists.

However, these studies are limited in scope because they focus primarily on Western children. There is little research about intercultural differences, even though it would illuminate the developmental theory formation. Lillard(1998) maintains that there are cultural variations in theory of mind. European Americans believe that the mind is interchangeable with the brain, and believe that it is private. But other models have different concepts about an identity of the mind, and also differ in how important they think the mind is. For example, Korean culture is 'Simjung',

which can be literally translated only as 'mind and affection'. 'Simjung' is an integration of emotion and reason, and contrasts with the dichotomy between emotion and reason in Western culture (Choi, 2000). If children in different cultures show similar developmental patterns, one could consider that 'development' is relatively independent of context. However, if there is a cultural variation among children's responses, then we may endorse a theory such as 'enculturation' or 'socialization'.

One of the notable cross-cultural studies is Avis and Harris's study (1991) about belief-desire reasoning in Baka children, Pygmy. They discovered that Baka children demonstrated a theory of mind understanding at about the same age as Western children. This similarity in development across cultures is also found in children's tendency to talk about the mind (Tardif & Wellman, 2000). Although these studies are not representative of all cultures, they do indicate that the pattern of theory of mind development may be universal in some sphere.

Another way to ascertain whether theory of mind development is universal, in addition to mental talks and belief-desire reasoning, would be to look at "how children explain others' behaviors cross-culturally". Miller (1984) pioneered a method for the cross-cultural study of how children explain behaviors. She asked Hindus and Americans of various ages to describe and explain why someone had performed a good or bad behavior. While American adults preferred internal (dispositional) causes, Hindu Indian adults preferred external (situational) ones. But 8-year old children didn't differ in behavior explanations; both Hindu and American children used more situational

explanations than dispositional ones. Hindu Indians developed into more situational adults, while Americans became more dispositional. The cross-cultural differences in behavior explanations of Miller's study(1984) were not related with the adults' chosen behaviors, which were similar between the two cultures.

Lillard, Skibbie, Zeljo and Harlan(2003), using Miller's method, investigated children's attributions developmentally and cross-culturally. They included 7, 9, and 11-year-old children in urban and rural areas of Taiwan and America. Children's explanations for why others' behaviors were good or bad were coded as internal, external, or moral. Miller (1984) had analyzed only dispositional attributions as internal reasons and contextual attributions as external reasons, whereas Lillard et al.(2003) took other attributions into consideration. For instance, mental states like mind, emotion, desire and value were analyzed as internal explanations. There were no significant differences between the Taiwanese and American children. Rather, the rural and the urban children showed different behavior explanations. Rural children in both countries preferred external to internal explanations, and didn't change in this preference pattern with age. The difference between two countries was that the Taiwanese children gave more 'cognitive' internal reasons, whereas the American children explained more 'hot (love, emotion)' reasons. Nevertheless, it's not clear whether these findings reflected a more general theory for the children's folk psychology or whether they occurred because of the westernization of Taiwan (Fiske, Kitayama, Markus & Nisbett, 1998). Aside from the above studies little has been discovered developmentally

and cross-culturally in children's folk psychology. This study, constructed to research this topic, compared Korean and American children in the development of their behavior explanations.

Cross-cultural studies in behavior explanations has adopted internal-external framework often. We need to reflect on the basic assumption inherent in this frame. *Internal-external* scheme could not be a natural category adopted universally, but an artificial category only for westerners. It stems from the naive supposition that this scheme might limit the facts, because it was created in the western culture, in which the basic unit of society is an individual (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). The perspective to study behavior explanations with the theory of mind, views people as intentional agents who act by their beliefs or desires (Malle, 2001). But this is not true of another culture with a different theory of behavior (Lillard, 1998). A person is not always an independent being in many Asian countries, including Korea. A human being is an interdependent creature in countries having the Confucian legacy. Lieber, Yang and Lin (2000) said that the independently measured internal and external explanations were more related in the Taiwan subjects than in the U. S. subjects. This implies that internal and external explanations might not be exclusive and might be difficult to differentiate, for non-westerners.

In order to create another coding scheme, it needs to clearly understand the culture under study. Development cannot be understood apart from developmental history and we have to begin with knowledge of values and cognitive socialization in the cultures of origin (Greenfield, 1994). Traditionally, Korean culture has been

different from Western culture in that it has been a Confucian legacy, or collectivism. Collectivism - individualism has been the most influential worldview that differentiates cultures (Triandis, 1995), and is still applicable. Two cultures are different in interrelatedness with others, in that collectivists tend to emphasize in-group goals and harmony rather than individual goals and specialties. These differences are considered to have originated from their different historical and philosophical traditions (Norenzayan & Nisbett, 2000).

Human relationships occupy a central place in the Confucian philosophy of Korea (Chung, 1990). In informal interviews with Korean undergraduate students, which were conducted to get a facial validation of the questionnaire in Korean culture, the students asked the researcher the relationships on which the subject and the object were, before they start explaining the behavior of the subject. This shows a possibility that Koreans' theories on behavior explanation may be different based on relationships. It is because that the distinction between the treatments of in-group and out-group members is greater in collectivistic cultures than in individualistic ones (Triandis, McCusker & Hui, 1990). Because the way we judge a stranger is different from the way we judge a person we know well (Ross & Nisbett, 1991), familiarity could be an important factor in behavior explanations. Therefore it seems important to understand the specific relationship and to identify the nature of the relationship among the individuals involved in Korea.

Cultural features mentioned above leads to constructed a new coding scheme, supposing it reflects Korean culture well, to resolve the

questions of how the children in two cultures explain others' behaviors. The reason for having another scheme have originated from the concern if the *Internal-External* frame could not fit well into the Korean children's responses. The new scheme rooted on the different culture could be helpful in diminishing possible culturally biased conclusion about children's social cognition development.

Developmental psychologists studying children's theories of mind have argued that children interpret behavior in mental terms because of innate modules that automatically make mentalistic interpretations. Social psychologists, studying attribution, have shown that at least by adulthood, different sorts of behavior interpretations are made in different cultures, with Asians making more situational attributions and Americans more mentalistic ones. The cross-cultural study about children's behavior explanations could be one answer to those debates.

Culture is so pervasive that it underlies all of our actions. It is often difficult for us to examine exactly which actions result from developmental differences and which ones result from cultural differences. Therefore it needs to conduct research in consideration of different contexts and cultures. If children in different cultures show similar developmental patterns, one could consider that 'development' is relatively independent of context. However, if there are cultural variations among children's responses, then we may name a theory such as 'enculturation' or 'socialization'.

Based on the above supposition, the presented research was embarked to solve these; What's different in behavior explanations between the Korean children and the American children? What can we gain by studying children's behavior

explanations with different views of them? Can we have similar cross-cultural development in children's behavior explanations, even with the different frames, or not?

## II. Method

### 1. Participants

The data were collected from American and Korean urban children, 107 in America and 156 in Korea. The American data were collected in Charlottesville, Virginia, a relatively urban area. The city of Charlottesville is located in Central Virginia, approximately 100 miles southwest of Washington, D. C. and the 2000 Census listed the population of the City as 40,009. The American children in this study were attending a private Christian or a Catholic school and a majority of them were from middle class families, and the Korean data were from Daegu city. Daegu is less westernized than Seoul, so it is supposed to have more collectivistic features than Seoul, which is the capital of Korea and has been frequently selected in cross-cultural studies. Most parents of the Korean children in this study belonged to the middle class according to class teachers' personal reports.

Children of age 7, 9, and 11 were selected in each cultures, based on that children's social cognition develop in grade-school age(Song, 1990). The presented study was not focused on the specific age-related differences, rather on general developmental patterns, so simply chose age groups spaced two years apart. <Table 1> shows the number of subjects by culture and age.

&lt;Table 1&gt; subjects by culture and age

age \ culture	Korea	US	Total
7 Y	48	34	82
9 Y	51	43	94
11 Y	57	30	87
Total	156	107	263

## 2. Questions

The same questionnaire as in Lillard et al.'s study(2003) was adopted. The original one is consisted of eight questions to explain others' behaviors and four questions about children's mind-related knowledges. The presented research collected data through whole twelve questions, but analyzed the first half of eight behavior explanations, which had no cues or examples about good or bad behaviors. Children were asked with the first two questions to think about the person who they think behaved well and also asked to explain why that person behaved that way. Similarly the second two questions were provided for bad behaviors. Good and bad behaviors, rather than neutral behaviors, were supposed to think of its' reasons or causes more easily. Therefore questions about good and bad behaviors were simply asked, and children's explanations in both of them were analyzed regardless of behavior valence.

The method, which the subjects pick up others' behaviors they want to explain, was expected not to be influenced by the culturally specific situation of their responses. Different amounts of behavioral information in behavior explanations leads to inferring different traits(Aloise, 1993), and the different cultures might have different scripts about context-to-behavior. Therefore asking about the behaviors that come across participants' minds

could be a more effective method in cross-cultural studies.

Assuming that the school-aged children would be able to read and write, all the children were handed questionnaires to read and answer for themselves. Teachers were requested not to give any hints to children about good or bad behaviors. The presented data were collected through the class teacher in a group. American data were gathered in a more private way, having children put their questionnaires into a manila envelope.

## 3. Coding Scheme

The two different coding schemes, the American coding scheme (Lillard, etc. 2003) and the Korean scheme. The American scheme consists of 4 main categories, *Internal*, *External*, *Moral* and *Other*. The *Internal* category is about the explanations referring to the enduring or temporary traits, or the mental states, of the actor whose behavior is explained. The *External* one is about the outside of an individual, which consists of person-related explanations, God or supernatural forces, physical situation, and laws and norms. The *Moral* category consists of explanations as to why the behavior is good or bad, not why the person did behave in that way. The repetition of the behavior, 'I don't know.', or other uncodable responses is coded into the *Other* category.

The Korean coding scheme also consists of 4 main categories, *Individual*, *Relational*, *Situational* and *Others*. The *Individual* category is for the explanations about an individual and includes the internal and external subcategories, being similar to the American scheme. Relationship and other person (2nd and 3rd person) constitute the

*Relational* category. Relationship is again divided into three types, according to the quality of the relationship (Fiske, 1990). First, the 'stable' relationship is the more stabilized state, or in cases of the special name for a relationship (ex: *because we are friends, because they are in a rival relationship*). This subcategory assumes more internal factors. The 'temporary' relationship is the relationship exchangeable and based on equity (ex: *because he helped me before*), having less internal factors. And the 'future' relationship is about a hypothetical relationship (ex: *because he will get help from them sometime, because he will be our family*). Other person subcategory is not strictly about a relationship, in that it has the least or no internal characteristics. When a child says that "*he helped her, because she asked him to do*", it is an explanation that he is doing it because of her, i. e. another person, not because of the relationship between them. Nevertheless it is about the 'person-to-person' interaction, and so it can be included into the *Relational* category.

The *Situational* category is composed of the 'social' situation and the 'physical' situation categories. The 'social' situation subcategory, which is about the person-to-society interaction, is again divided into the law/norm or social status (ex: *because he is a class leader*) and the moral reason (ex: *he did it because it's a right behavior*). The 'social' situation is outside of the individual and the relationship, and restricts a person. It connotes, however, more internal reasons than the 'physical' situation subcategory. The physical situation is about the non-person-related and nonsocial situation (ex: *because a car was coming*).

The *Other* category is same as the *Others* in the American scheme, except that the *Moral* category in the American scheme is put into the *Other*

category in the Korean scheme. The *Moral* category in the American scheme is not about explanations of behaviors but moral judgements about behaviors, and it implies the possibility of the misunderstanding of the question from the view of the Korean coding scheme.

The illustration mentioned above connotes the American *Moral* and the *Others* categories and the Korean *Other* category could be error responses to be excluded from significance tests. The statistical significances were verified only for the *Internal* and *External* categories in the American scheme, and for the *Individual*, *Relational*, and *Situational* categories in the Korean scheme.

### American Coding Scheme

#### *Internal*

- Personality, traits (mean, nice)
- Temporary traits (just being nice, hungry)
- Mental states
  - Cognitive (belief, knowledge, percept)
  - Value (preference, liking, love)
  - Desire (want, goal, intent)
  - Emotions/feelings (emotionally hurt, happy)

#### *External*

- Person-related
  - Physical (stuck, physically hurt)
  - Enduring behavior pattern (he always do x)
  - Relationship (is best friend, sister)
  - Second person (helped her because she was hurt)
  - Third person (he helped sister cause mother made him)
- God/other supernatural force
- Physical situation (it was raining)
- Law/norm (it's a good thing to do, is supposed)

to, has to)

### Korean Coding Scheme

#### *Individual*

##### Internal

Trait

Temporary

Mind (think/desire/value/emotion)

##### External

Behavior pattern

Physical (body-related)

#### *Relational*

##### Relationship

Stable relationship (saying special relationships or 'knowing each other'<sup>1)</sup>)

Temporary relationship (exchangeable or equity-based relationship)

Future relationship (future stable/temporary relationship)

##### Other person

2nd person

3rd person

#### *Situational*

Social situation (person-related)

Norm/law, Social Status

Moral reason<sup>2)</sup>

Physical situation (non-person-related)

## **4. Coding & scoring**

Another data, which were the American rural data and the Korean pilot data, were used for the training to code. An American coder, who was a graduate student and an researcher of another behavior explanation study, and the author coded data with both the American and the Korean scheme independently. After reaching a

satisfactory agreement (over 90%), all the American and Korean data presented here were coded.

The randomly selected twenty percents of the data in each age group were analyzed for reliability tests. The inter-rater reliabilities were from 86% to 96%, according to the schemes and cultures. The mean agreement was 91% with Korean scheme, and 88% with American scheme. All the Korean data used for checking consistency were translated into English and retranslated into Korean to compare them to the original ones.

Proportion scores on each category calculated by dividing each categorical frequency with total response frequencies per child were used for analyzing data. The reason for using proportion scores was to evade the possibility of children's verbal fluency effects on the results (Miller, 1984; Lillard, etc. 2003). If a child gives total four explanations including one *Internal* and two *External* explanation, he/she gets .25 and .50 in each category of the American scheme. Supposing that the same responses are one *Individual*, one *Relational* and one *Situational* explanation of the Korean scheme, he or she receives .25 in each category. The behavioral valence of good and bad behavior explanations was not considered to integrate. Two-way ANOVAs with culture and age were conducted on each explanation category of two schemes.

1) I've checked about this with Korean undergraduates. It was not in 'mind-cognition', but in 'relationship'.

2) It is different from the *Moral* category in the American scheme. The *Moral* category in American scheme corresponds to the moral judgement of *Others* in the Korean scheme.



<Table 2> Percents of category changes from the American category to the Korean category

American code → Korean code	Percent	Examples
Internal → Individual	91	<i>Because he has a black mind</i>
Internal → Relational	4	<i>To get along with her</i>
Internal → Situational	5	<i>To save our nation</i>
External → Individual	14	<i>Because he has no money</i>
External → Relational	69	<i>Because they are friends</i>
External → Situational	16	<i>Because he is a class leader</i>

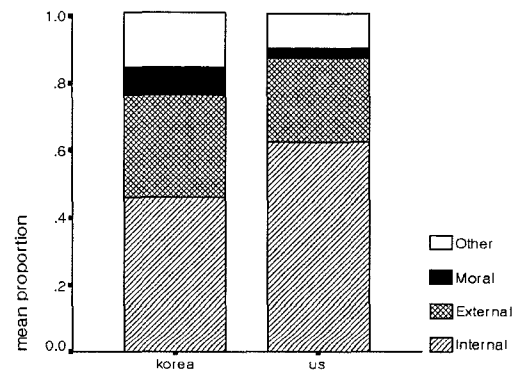
### III. Results

Two coding schemes were compared by checking how *Internal-External* responses of the American scheme moved to *Individual - Relational - Situational* responses of the Korean scheme. The *Moral* and *Others* categories of the American scheme moved to the *Other* category in the Korean scheme, so children's responses presented below have the same pool between two schemes. <Table 2> is proportions of transfers from the American category to the Korean category. It shows that most of the *Internal* responses moved into the *Individual* category, while the *External* responses didn't converge into only one category as much as the *Internal* ones did.

#### 1. Internal-External Explanation

Here are presented mean proportions of the American whole categories in <Figure 1> to examine rough responses. It shows that children in two cultures used *Internal*, *External*, *Others* and *Moral* explanations in order.

<Table 3> is mean proportions of each explanation category. Both of them in two cultures preferred *Internal* explanations to *External* explanations. The Korean and the American children tended to be different in *Internal*

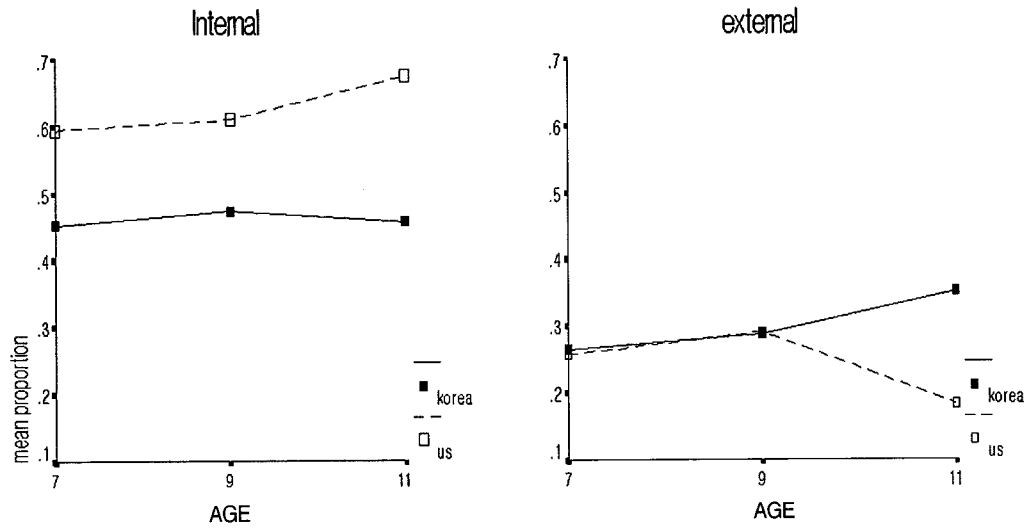


<Figure 1> cumulative proportions on the American four categories by culture

explanations from the start. But in their *External* explanations, they seemed to be very close to each other at age 7 and 9, and they tended to make a difference at age 11. The American children of age 11, especially, used *Internal* explanations almost three times of *External* explanations, which was the biggest difference(50%) between two explanation types. The Korean children of age 11, however, showed the least difference(11%) between two categories. Here are some examples to show this comparison. The American 11-year-old children's explanations for good behaviors which were typical to their own culture included following; "My dad fixed my lunch for five days straight, because my dad loves me", "Samantha asked every kid in the class to her birthday party, because she didn't want to

<Table 3> proportions on *Internal-External* category with culture by age

	Korea		US		Total	
	Internal	External	Internal	External	Internal	External
7Y	.45	.27	.60	.26	.51	.26
9Y	.47	.29	.61	.29	.54	.29
11Y	.46	.35	.68	.18	.53	.29
Total	.46	.30	.62	.25	.53	.28

<Figure 2> Proportions on *Internal-External* Categories with Culture by Age

*hurt anyone else's feelings*". Although, like the American children, the Korean 11-year old children also preferred internal explanations to external ones, external explanations like "A teacher teaches academics, because he (she) has a right as a teacher", "lent me an eraser, 'cause I don't have an eraser and she is my friend." were more frequent in the Korean 11-year old children rather than in the American 11-year old children.

Separate ANOVAs were conducted on each of the *Internal* and the *External* responses to see if there were statistically significant cultural differences. <Table 4> is a summary of separate ANOVAs. Comparing the two cultures, the only

cultural difference was on the *Internal* explanations. The American children explained others' behaviors with *Internal* reasons, i. e. traits or mental states, more than the Korean children did. However, children in the two cultures were not different on the *External* explanations. In addition they didn't show developmental changes in both explanations.

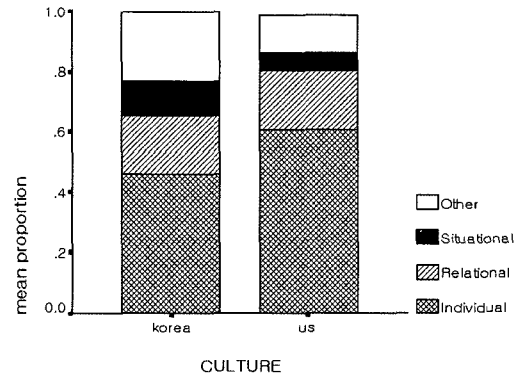
## 2. *Individual-Relational-Situational* Explanation

<Figure 3> displays mean proportions of the whole categories of the Korean coding scheme.

Both children in two cultures generally used *Individual* explanations most, followed by the *Relational* and then *Situational* explanations in order.

More specifically, proportions of three categories for each child were averaged by culture and age in <Table 5>. Overall there was a trend that the American children used *Individual* explanations more than the Korean children did, and the Korean children used *Situational* explanations more than did the American children did.

The same analyses were conducted onto the Korean codes to test statistical significances, with separate ANOVAs on each of the *Individual*, *Relational*, and *Situational* responses. <Table 6> is the summary of these analyses. It shows that there



<Figure 3> cumulative proportions on the Korean four categories by culture

are cultural differences on some categories of Korean coding scheme. First of all, the American children used more *Individual* explanations than

<Table 4> ANOVAs on *Internal-External* category by culture and age

		<i>Internal</i>			
Variable	SS	df	MS	F	
Culture	1.722	1	1.722	12.401**	
Age	.068	2	.034	4.243	
Culture x Age	.086	2	.043	.309	
Error	35.691	257	.139		
		<i>External</i>			
Variable	SS	df	MS	F	
Culture	.207	1	.207	1.903	
Age	.037	2	.019	.172	
Culture x Age	.371	2	.186	1.705	
Error	27.970	257	.109		

\*\*p<.01

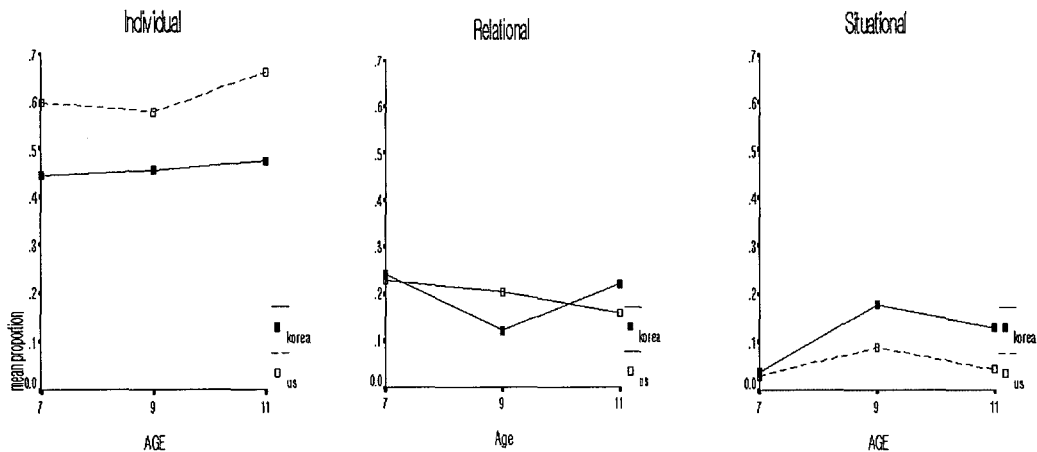
<Table 5> Proportions on *Individual-Relational-Situational* category with culture by age

	Korea			US			Total		
	<i>Individual</i>	<i>Relational</i>	<i>Situational</i>	<i>Individual</i>	<i>Relational</i>	<i>Situational</i>	<i>Individual</i>	<i>Relational</i>	<i>Situational</i>
7Y	.44	.24	.04	.60	.23	.03	.51	.23	.03
9Y	.45	.12	.18	.58	.20	.09	.51	.16	.14
11Y	.47	.22	.13	.66	.16	.04	.54	.20	.09
Total	.46	.19	.12	.61	.20	.06	.52	.20	.09

<Table 6> ANOVAs on *Individual-Relational-Situational* category by culture and age

<i>Individual</i>				
Variable	SS	df	MS	F
Culture	1.463	1	1.463	11.362**
Age	.131	2	.066	.510
Culture x Age	.043	2	.021	.166
Error	33.382	257	.129	
<i>Relational</i>				
Variable	SS	df	MS	F
Culture	.069	1	.069	.926
Age	.222	2	.111	1.401
Culture x Age	.231	2	.116	1.457
Error	20.381	257	.079	
<i>Situational</i>				
Variable	SS	df	MS	F
Culture	.230	1	.230	6.120*
Age	.420	2	.210	5.603**
Culture x Age	.088	2	.044	1.177
Error	9.642	257	.038	

\*\* p&lt;.01 \*p&lt;.05

<Figure 4> Proportions on *Individual-Relational-Situational* Categories with Culture by Age

the Korean children. More American children thought that others did something good and bad because of their *Individual* reasons, such as internal traits, mental states, or behavioral-physical features. This was expected in that 91% of the

*Internal* explanations in American scheme moved into the *Individual* ones in Korean scheme.

A cultural difference was also found in *Situational* explanations. Korean Children in the two cultures were unexpectedly not different in

explaining behaviors with the *Relational* reasons. The Korean children explained others' behaviors with the *Relational* reasons as much as the American children did. Rather the Korean 9-year olds showed the lowest score of the *Relational* category, as we can see in <Figure 4>. It might be due to their highest scores on the *Situational* explanations.

Developmentally, children in both cultures showed changes in the *Situational* category with age. It was from the post-hoc with Dunnet's C, revealing that more 9-year old children(14%) used situational reasons than 7-year old children(3%;  $p < .05$ ). From age 7 to age 9, children came to consider more *Situational* reasons, and this developmental pattern was similar in both Korean and American cultures. However, there were no age-related effects on the *Individual* explanations.

In sum, children in two cultures showed a developmental universality, by adopting the *Individual* and the *Internal* reasons for behavior explanations first and most frequently without any age-related interaction effects. At the same time, the Korean and the American children manifested 'enculturation' by explaining others' behaviors in culture-specific ways. American children reasoned *Individual* or *Internal* factors more than Korean children did, but more Korean children than American children used *Situational* reasons. There was also a developmental increase only on the *Situational* explanation of the Korean scheme.

#### IV. Discussion

This study was performed to find out cross-cultural differences in children's behavior

explanations. Culture is so pervasive that it is like the air we breathe. It underlies all of our actions and yet we do not think about it in the daily course of events. It is often difficult for us to examine exactly which actions result from developmental differences and which ones result from cultural differences. Therefore it needs to conduct research in consideration of different contexts and cultures. If children in different cultures show similar developmental patterns, one could consider that 'development' is relatively independent of context. However, if there is a cultural variation among children's responses, then we may name a theory such as 'enculturation' or 'socialization'.

The study reported here adopted the American *Internal-External* framework first to analyze children's behavior explanations. This split way has frequently and usefully been accepted in previous cross-cultural studies. It is true that there are some arguments against it and recommendations of alternative frames. Kruglanski (1975) proposed an endogenous-exogenous partition, and Dweck and his colleagues(1993) discriminated entity theorists from incremental theorists. Despite these alternative frames, it was expected that the *Internal-External* scheme would be enough to show cross-cultural differences, if any exist. In a culture such as America, where people act as independent agents, people are more likely to consider internal causes in behavior explanations. However, in a culture such as Korea, where people seem to be more constrained by circumstances, people are likely to resort more to external causes(Lillard, 1998).

Considering cultural features in Korea and trying to lessen the possible culturally biased

interpretations in children's social cognition development, another coding scheme of the Korean *Individual-Relational-Situational* scheme was constructed. The *Internal-External* schemes, which are exclusive in America, might be inclusive in Korea, like in Taiwan(Lieber, et al., 2000). When Koreans do something because of the 'we' relationship, they do so due to internal as well as external factors. We-ness, which reflects Korean collectivism very well, requires a subjective presumption of a certain binding force among people. It is an internal-grounded labeling. The westernized thought of the relationship might be close to 'group' which does not necessarily entail an internal binding assumed by the members, just as people who are waiting at a bus stop, and close to external(Choi & Choi, 1990). However the Korean relationship is about 'we' and has an internal factor. From a westernized view, children's explanations that include 'relationships' or 'in-group things' can be coded as *External*, existing outside individuals. The Korean explanations, however, certainly have *Internal* factors. Additionally it needs to consider different *Relational* factors, because there are diverse kinds of relationships in human societies(Fiske, 1990).

Generally summarizing the data evidenced here, the Korean and American children were not totally different in behavior explanations. First of all, both of them had a tendency to prefer *Internal* and *Individual* explanations to any other explanations. Most of the children in two cultures seem to consider actors' inter-psychological or individual reasons first to explain behaviors. They, except the Korean 9-year olds, also preferred *Relational* reasons to *Situational* ones. The commonality in two cultures is that the reasons to explain other's

behavior come across the children's mind in a similar order.

They also showed a developmental likeness in that there were not any interaction effects including age. Additionally, from age 7 to age 9, children in both cultures came to give more *Situational* reasons. Social cognition contains the understanding of self, others, and social relationships and each understanding shows developmental differences(Flavell, Miller & Miller, 1993). Likewise children's folk psychologies of behavior explanations seem to display different developmental paths. They resort to the social roles and status, law and norm, or moral reasons more and more in making their own theories of behavior, especially in their early childhood of experiencing school life. However, except the consideration of the *Situational* reasons, children's theory of behavior seems to be stable during the childhood. From age 7 to age 9, children enter into the formal socialization in school and adults impose more social(public) responsibilities or duties on them. These experiences can shape children to consider social or situational reasons more in behavior explanations.

Nevertheless, the Korean children reported the *Internal* and the *Individual* reasons less than the American children did, and it was expected from the former studies(Miller, 1984, 1987; Morris & Peng, 1994). According to these researches, people in collectivist cultures made less dispositional attributions than did people in individualist cultures. Saudi adults(Al-Zahrani & Kaplowitz, 1993) and Koreans(Cha & Nam, 1985) used significantly less internal (such as traits and mental states) attributions than did American adults. These cultural differences can be explained by

cultural relativism, i. e. seeing how much the observed differences are due to the cultural contexts influencing the socialization. *Individualistic* perspectives view people as intentional agents who act by their beliefs or desires (Malle, 2001).

Children in two cultures were also different in the extent of using the *Situational* reasons. The Korean children explained others' behaviors with the *Situational* reasons more than the American children did. That is, the Korean children considered the actor's social status or moral reasons more than did the American children. Choi and his colleagues(1999) said that the cultural difference between the East and the West in attribution originated from a belief in the importance of the context of the behavior in East Asia. The unexpected result was in the *Relational* category. There was not a statistically significant main effect with culture, which was against the expectation that the Korean children would show higher *Relational* attributions. One of the main interests in this study was to figure out the cross-cultural differences in the *Relational* explanations, if any. The *Relational* explanations contain person-to-person interactions, which is peculiar to Korean culture(Choi, 2000) and different from the person-to-society interaction(law/norm), the *Situational* explanations. The Korean culture is usually called as the 'Relationship' culture, and the Korean folk psychology is expected to reflect this cultural feature. The Korean children in current study, however, didn't show more relationship-oriented folk psychologies than did the American children.

One possible reason for non-cultural effects on *Relational* explanations may be that the Korean children leaned to the *Situational* explanations and

it led to the cultural difference in the *Situational* category discussed previously. The Korean elementary school children seem to be more sensitive about social norms and laws in behavior explanations relative to the American children, but not to account of person-to-person relationships much against the former expectation. The other reason could be that it is because the children in this study are in a developing period to the folk psychology peculiar to their own cultures. Miller(1984) said that American adults preferred internal(dispositional) causes and Hindu Indian adults preferred external(situational) ones, while 8-year old children in two cultures did not differ in behavior explanations.

In addition, there is a possibility that Korean children have two steps in behavior explanations. When they explain others' behaviors, they seem to consider the relationship between the subject and the object into consideration first. The distinction between the treatments of in-group and out-group members is greater in collectivistic cultures than in individualistic ones (Triandis, McCusker & Hui, 1990). These hint that the Korean also may apply different theories to explain behaviors according to the relational status. The future works can examine whether children apply their folk psychologies differently according to their familiarity to or the relationship with persons to be explained.

A benefit of adopting various frameworks in cross-cultural studies seems to be clear. When children's behavior explanations were eyed through the Korean frame, more cross-cultural differences could be caught. It may just reflect the Korean's view to think them to be more different from persons in other countries. More importantly, the American scheme based on Western culture,

which is mainly interested in intentional agents who act by their beliefs or desires and views people as an independent and psychological being(Malle, 2001), may have less needs to find any differences, leading to be less sensitive, on the *External* reasoning. The reversed interpretation is also possible on the Korean scheme. It seems likely that it is important to reach on a universal consensus, but also must value the researcher's or the folk's own perspective in cross-cultural studies.

This study should be interpreted and applied with some limits. Alike to other cross-cultural studies, the Korean children at Daegu and the American children at Charlottesville might not represent each culture in a strict sense. It is also inevitable to think of different, more culturally appropriate schemes, even though the Korean and the American scheme in this study were based on previous studies and frequent discussion between the Korean researcher and the American researcher.

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