Copyright

By

Sunghun Kim

2010

**The Dissertation Committee for Sunghun Kim Certifies that this is the approved version of the following dissertation:**

**Exploring Naturalistic Conceptions of 'a Moral Person' for Koreans**

**Committee:**

_____
Toni Falbo, Supervisor

_____
Diane L. Schallert

_____
Frank C. Richardson

_____
Edmund T. Emmer

_____
Margaret A. Talyor-Seehafer

# Exploring Naturalistic Conceptions of 'a Moral Person' for Koreans

by

**Sunghun Kim, B.A., M.A.**

**Dissertation**

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy**

The University of Texas at Austin

May, 2010

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Finally, my deepest and special gratitude goes to my family. I am grateful to my parents for "being there always" with their concerns and love.  I particularly thank my parents-in-law for their endless support and love as well as their exemplary lifestyle that they have showed me.  My daughter and son, Zion and Jongnam, are always the root of my joy, happiness, and thankfulness.

I thank my wife, Jiyoung Kim, with all my heart for her insightful comments and every support in the course of this dissertation as well as continuous sacrifice and everlasting love.  With her love and support, every endeavor in my life in the graduate school could turn out to be fruitful.

**Exploring Naturalistic Conceptions of 'a Moral Person' for Koreans**

Sunghun Kim, Ph.D.

The University of Texas at Austin, 2010


Supervisor:    Toni Falbo

In the field of moral psychology, cognitive functioning has long been the main focus of studies.  Many researchers have been interested in moral reasoning ability, its developmental paths, and the process of moral judgment or decision making.  Relatively recently, some moral psychologists started questioning whether people who are not theorists, researchers, or educators in morality also put as much emphasis on the cognitive functions as the core of morality.  According to the literature, laypeople found to include cognitive aspects as one component of morality, and they also emphasize moral characters and virtues as other elements.  In addition, laypeople frequently consider characteristics of 'a moral person' when they are asked to think about morality.  These findings have activated research on naturalistic conceptions of morality and moral exemplars.  However, few studies have examined how laypeople from different cultures other than the United States and Canada conceptualize morality.

The purpose of this study was to explore naturalistic conceptions of 'a moral

person' and to develop a theoretical model of moral exemplars for Koreans based on the gathered conceptions. Twenty two Koreans participated in in-depth, semi-structured, open-ended interviews. A grounded theory approach was used to conduct interviews, analyze data, and achieve the research goals.

Korean laypeople's conceptions included behaviors, personality traits, and psychological functions of 'a moral person' for them. In those behaviors and personality traits, both interpersonal (e.g., helping others or caring) and intrapersonal (e.g., living with integrity or being principled) characteristics were found together. Koreans conceptualize a person as moral when he or she tends to behave morally as an outer revelation of inner morality, personality traits. Using psychological functions (e.g., perspective taking, being compassionate, or keeping social face) appeared to promote the emergence of a moral behavior or make the behavior extraordinary. Finally, Koreans found to think of a person as moral who does moral behaviors even in challenging situations, assuming that his or her moral personality traits are strongly associated with the behaviors. In addition, Koreans tend to more emphasize interpersonal (i.e., other-oriented or community-based) aspects of morality than intrapersonal (i.e., self-centered or individual-based) components. These findings were summarized that 'a moral person' for Koreans is a person who has 'moral heart' and lives 'in harmony with others.'

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

# LIST OF TABLES

# LIST OF FIGURES

# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

## Statement of Problem

Compared to mainstream research in moral psychology, exploring naturalistic conceptions of morality is quite new. The vast majority of moral psychologists (see Kohlberg, 1969, 1987; Kohlberg, Levine, & Hewer, 1983; Lapsley, 1996; Piaget, 1932/1965; Rest, 1986; Rest, Narvaez, Bebeau, & Thoma, 1999; Turiel, 1983) have seemed to assume that a person is 'moral' if she can reason with higher ethical principles (justice, human rights, equality, etc.) and make morally desirable judgments (e.g., toward the greatest happiness of the greatest number of people). A few researchers (Matsuba & Walker, 2004; Quinn, Houts, & Graesser, 1994; Walker & Pitts, 1998a), relatively recently, have suggested that laypeople's conceptions of 'a moral person' are different from those of moral theorists and researchers.

It seems natural to think that human morality is mainly about one's ability to judge, and that the quality of one's judgment is largely based on one's reasoning ability. For instance, in dictionaries, the first definition of 'moral' has to do with judgment or with the distinction between rightness and wrongness or goodness and badness of human behavior or character. In addition, the judgment or distinction is usually reached through a process of 'reasoning' (Editors of the American Heritage Dictionaries, 2006; Sinclair, 2001; Soanes & Stevenson, 2005).

A large number of studies in moral psychology have focused on reasoning ability (Haidt, 2001; Lapsley & Lasky, 2001; Matsuba & Walker, 2004; Quinn, Houts, & Graesser, 1994; Walker & Pitts, 1998a). This preeminence of one theme in an academic

field has been understood as a product of the influences of Kantian ethics and Kohlbergian theory and research on morality (Matsuba & Walker, 2004; Quinn et al., 1994). Kant thought that only rational agents can obey moral law, obligation, or principles (such as justice, equality, etc.) through reasoning (Shuhei, 2004). Influenced by Kant, Kohlberg proposed a theory on morality, which depicts 'a morally matured person' as one who is able to make a desirable judgment within moral dilemmatic situations, using justice-principled reasoning (Lapsley, 1996). Moreover, even some researchers who criticized Kant's and Kohlberg's theoretical orientation have appeared to be still interested in human reasoning: care-oriented reasoning (e.g., Gilligan, 1982), differentiation through reasoning between socio-conventional and moral domains (e.g., Turiel, 1983), cultural differences in moral reasoning (e.g., Miller & Bersoff, 1992; Shweder, Mahapatra, & Miller, 1987), and prosocial reasoning (e.g., Eisenberg, 1995).

Because of this preference in the literature to focus on moral reasoning, researchers have not examined sufficiently alternative conceptions of morality, namely how average people think of morality. Until the mid-1990's, no researcher had investigated laypeople's naturalistic conceptions of morality. Do average people see reasoning as a core element of morality? Do they also think of a person who has higher reasoning ability as more 'moral'? How does the "man on the street" conceptualize 'morality' or 'a moral person?' If the theorists' conceptions of morality are different from those of average people, perhaps it might be said that conceptions of morality based solely on reasoning ability are limited and need revision.

Several studies from over a decade, however, have given us some significant

findings about naturalistic conceptions of 'morality.' The first study investigated the non-expert's conceptions of the term, 'morality.' According to Quinn and his colleagues (Quinn et al., 1994), non-experts are likely to conceptualize 'morality' in broader and more comprehensive ways, and not focus exclusively on reasoning. Other studies on naturalistic conceptions of 'a moral person' or 'moral exemplars' suggest that, to a non-expert, 'moral maturity' means a set of balanced characteristics, which integrate principled-reasoning ability and virtuous characteristics (Matsuba & Walker, 2004; Walker & Pitts, 1998a). Researchers also found that the conceptions of 'a moral person' have at least three different prototypes: just, brave, and caring (Walker & Hennig, 2004).

Nonetheless, all of these studies are limited in that they target the citizens of only the United States or Canada. Almost all participants (over 80%) in those studies were Americans or Canadians of European origin (Quinn et al., 1994; Walker & Hennig, 2004; Walker & Pitts, 1998a). In spite of the fact that each culture may emphasize different aspects of morality (Baek, 2002; Miller, 1994; Miller & Bersoff, 1992; Shweder et al., 1987; see Wang & Leichtman, 2000), no research has been conducted to investigate naturalistic conceptions of morality among people from different cultural backgrounds in North America or those residing various regions over the world.

The purpose of this study is to explore Koreans' naturalistic conceptions of morality. Korea has been understood as one of East Asian countries where Confucian tradition and culture still reside (Berthrong & Berthrong, 2000; Inglehart & Baker, 2000; Kim & Davis, 2003; Koh, 1996; Tu, 1998), which is quite different situation in one of the representative Western culture, the United States and Canada.

I was particularly interested in how Koreans conceptualize 'a moral person.' My primary goals were: (a) to investigate characteristics of 'a moral person' for Koreans and compile a list of these attributes; (b) to discover structural relationships among the attributes of 'a moral person;' and (c) to build a theory about naturalistic conceptions of 'a moral person' for Koreans.

**Research Questions**

The focus of the current study is to build a theory of 'a moral person' solely grounded on data from Koreans. To build a theory, I investigated if there were some significant concepts in Koreans' conceptualization of 'a moral person,' and then, attempted to find differences and similarities, if any, among the concepts. These analytic procedures helped me detect relationships between the concepts and approach to the final goal: to build a theory of 'a moral person' for Koreans. In this research, I endeavored to answer the following questions.

1. ***What are the characteristics of 'a moral person' for Korean laypeople?*** This question was an essential question for the current study. To detect each attribute of 'a moral person' and to make a list of the 'moral' traits of Koreans were the goals of the research. Sometimes, it may be necessary to thoroughly investigate what an individual attribute actually means. For example, 'honesty' as a moral quality for one participant may have quite different meanings for another (some people may conceptualize 'honesty' as just 'not telling a lie at all,' while others may think of a

4

higher level of conscientiousness).

2. ***What is the structure, if any, among the attributes of 'a moral person' for Koreans?***
How are the individual conceptions of 'a moral person' associated with each other?
What kinds of characteristics seem similar and what appear different to each other?
Is there any hierarchy of structure into which the characteristics can be categorized?
Some concepts may be more abstract and dominant, while others may be more
specific and subordinate within a hierarchy of a theory about a construct.
Discovering that kind of meaning system for naturalistic conceptions of 'a moral
person' for Koreans may lead us to a more comprehensive understanding of the
construct.

3. ***Can a Korean theory of 'a moral person' be developed based on a combined
consideration of both research questions?*** A theory refers here to a systematic
structure of meanings showing a sophisticated relationship between meaning units
(concepts) and their inter-relationships. There can be a hierarchical structure of
relation showing how each tangible concept forms as subcategories and how those
subcategories develop into more abstract higher-order categories. Finding one
overarching category with the most explanatory power covering all subordinate series
of meaning units was the final target of this question. This research question was
answered by two analytic endeavors: (1) integrating all the findings about
characteristics of 'a moral person' for Koreans and their structure and (2) analyzing
attributes of 'moral exemplars' for participants and synthesizing the findings with

those from the above integration.

      In addition, asking to identify a moral person or exemplar as a realistic moral agent (living or dead) not only helps to develop the list of the attributes of 'a moral person,' but also provides insights to understand how some set of independent traits are integrated as personal properties of 'a moral person.'  According to the literature, the number of moral attributes found from a study can be several hundred and just listing them in a systematic way seems meaningful (see Quinn et al., 1994; Walker & Pitts, 1998a).  However, investigating how realistic moral people or exemplars, as independent moral agents, show and incorporate their characters is also significant for research on naturalistic conceptions of 'a moral person' (Matsuba & Walker, 2004; Walker & Frimer, 2007).

      I will first review the literature on naturalistic conceptions of 'morality' and 'a moral person' for Americans and Canadians.  A review of the literature on particular value systems that may influence Korean people's conceptions of morality follows.  Next, interpersonal and psychological functions that are found by Korean psychologists to be unique to Koreans will be reviewed.   These functions might be related to Koreans' conceptions of 'a moral person.'  And then, detailed research methods will be discussed. Finally, results and findings of the study as well as discussion about them will follow.

# CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

## Naturalistic Conceptions of 'Morality'

### *Naturalistic Conceptions in General*

In contemporary psychology, the term "naturalistic conceptions" reflects laypeople's conceptualization of specific topics, such as intelligence, wisdom, morality, and so on. Those conceptions are understood to exist in laypeople's mind through informal, unstructured, and non-systematic experiences, whereas the experts' conceptions are the products of formal, systematic, and rational experiences (Sternberg, Conway, Ketron, & Bernstein, 1981). While laypeople's conceptions have been labeled "naturalistic," those of experts' contrasted as "academic" or "theory-based."

Sternberg and his colleagues (1981) suggested that studying naturalistic conceptions was worthwhile in order to fully comprehend some aspects of theoretical constructs. For example, laypeople may informally assess people's 'intelligence' based on what *they* think 'intelligence' is. These naturalistic conceptions of 'intelligence' can reveal differing properties of this psychological construct that are useful to know when trying to understand what goes on during job interviews or parent-child interactions. Walker and Pitts (1998a) pointed out that "naturalistic theories" have been developed and are already playing an important role in expanding our understanding of some complicated psychological constructs, like intelligence, wisdom, love and commitment, and intimate relationships (see Sternberg et al., 1981).

In the literature, however, there is no consensus among researchers on diverse

areas of conceptions as to whether laypeople's conceptions are actually similar to or different from experts' conceptions. For instance, Sternberg et al. (1981) found that naturalistic conceptions of 'intelligence' are quite similar to those of experts. Lonka, Joram, and Bryson (1996), on the other hand, reported differences in conceptions of 'learning and knowledge' between novices and experts.

As for the topic of 'morality,' it has been found that the naturalistic conceptions and those for experts are inconsistent (Matsuba & Walker, 2004; Quinn et al., 1994; Walker & Hennig, 2004; Walker & Pitts, 1998a). According to moral psychologists, laypeople conceptualize 'morality' with a wide-ranging and balanced fashion, using cognitive, emotional, and motivational aspects of the construct, while scholars seem to have conceptions focused on a specific cognitive concept, moral reasoning ability.

### *Naturalistic Conceptions of Morality for North Americans*

Several studies have examined the conceptions of 'morality' for laypeople in the United States and Canada. Researchers have found that the naturalistic conceptions of 'morality' for the people in North America largely consist of the characteristics of 'a moral person' (Quinn et al., 1994). The attributes of 'a moral person' appeared to be comprehensive, complicated, and multifaceted (Matsuba & Walker, 2004; Walker & Hennig, 2004; Walker & Pitts, 1998a), which can be said to be beyond the range of moral reasoning.

Most studies on naturalistic conceptions of 'morality' used both qualitative and quantitative methods. To detect average people's conceptions of 'morality,' researchers have used qualitative inquiry asking participants to generate thoughts about the concept

8

of 'morality' or to list the characteristics of 'a moral person.' Then, through quantitative analyses, researchers determined the degree of commonness of individual conceptions and estimated the relative similarities or dissimilarities between these conceptions.

### *Naturalistic Conceptions of 'Morality'*

In moral psychology, the first researchers to study laypeople's concept of "morality" were Quinn, Houts, and Graesser (1994). These researchers referred to people's conceptions as "naturally occurring conceptions of morality." They examined how the naturalistic conceptions were different from the moral thoughts driven by the hypothetical moral dilemmas that had largely been used in moral psychological research. This approach to moral research was continued by Walker and his colleagues, who explored the naturalistic conceptions of moral maturity in order to more deeply understand moral functioning (Matsuba, 2000; Matsuba & Walker, 2004; Walker & Hennig, 2004; Walker & Pitts, 1998a, 1998b).

To study the naturalistic conceptions of 'morality,' Quinn and his colleagues (Quinn et al., 1994) used a question-and-answer model developed by a cognitive psychologist, Arthur Graesser. Graesser (Graesser & Black, 1984) argued that the structure of a kind of knowledge could be detected if people were asked to generate everything they knew about some concept. They would then be led to answer questions based on their world knowledge and experience. By observing the rules and patterns found in meanings people share, the structure of a kind of knowledge can be uncovered. Based on Graesser's model, Quinn et al. (1994) designed five questions expected to provoke the participants' moral knowledge and thoughts. The five questions were: (a)

9

Write down everything you know about the concept of morality. (b) What does morality mean? (c) What are the typical properties of morality? (d) What use is usually made of morality? (e) What factors affect morality? Participants' responses were coded by two raters to identify psychologically independent meanings of morality. For example, statements like, "Morality is associated with conflict," "Society sets norms for moral behavior," and "Morality is defined by the individual," could all be coded as new, independent psychological meanings.

Quinn et al. (1994) noted that the most frequently generated answers by participants were related to the conceptions of 'a moral person.' In other words, when laypeople were asked to articulate thoughts about morality, they usually thought about how 'a moral person' thinks, feels, and lives rather than produce thoughts related to philosophical, religious, or legal principles and issues. Based on this finding, Quinn and his colleagues' research suggested that naturalistic conceptions of morality revealed a person-based rather than philosophy-based pattern, which is somewhat different from the assumptions of traditional moral research trends.

It is important to note that laypeople answered the question, "What does morality mean," with conceptions of qualities and capacities of 'a moral person' rather than philosophical or legal issues. This finding indicates that the approach and measurements of moral reasoning theories, which are largely based on the philosophical backgrounds of Kant's ethics or Rawls' justice principle (Quinn et al., 1994), may fail to fully capture commonly held conceptions of morality among laypeople.

In their research in 1994, Quinn and his colleagues further examined any structure

from the freely-generated, qualitative data: what conceptions are similar or dissimilar

each other, how much common certain conceptions are to people, and so on. Statements

coded by two raters were grouped into 92 items representing individual, independent

ideas about conceptions of morality. These were indexed (on cards) and used for

similarity sorting. In the similarity sorting procedure, fifty participants from the previous

stage of research were invited to categorize the 92-item cards according to similarity.

Hierarchical clustering and multidimensional scaling methods were then used with the

similarity ratings to detect the structure of the participants' conceptions of morality

(Quinn et al., 1994).

Sorting and hierarchical analysis procedures revealed six "consensual hierarchical

clusters" (Quinn et al., 1994, p. 251). Figure 1 shows how detected clusters were

interpreted and named and what the structure among the clusters looked like.
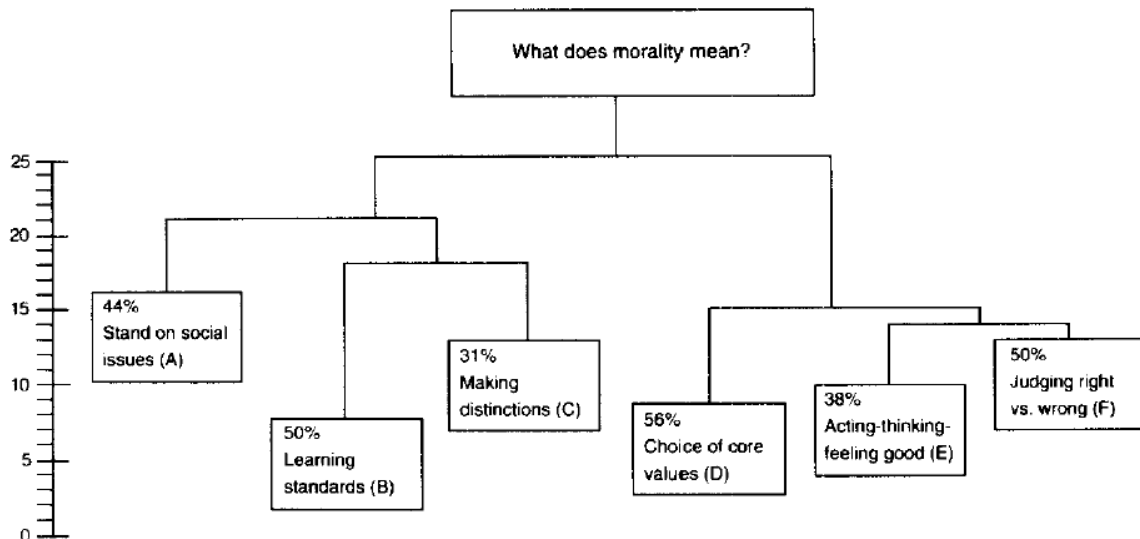


Figure 1. Branching Diagram Representing the Six Consensually Valid Clusters
based on the Rescaled Distances at which Clusters were Combined
(Quinn et al., 1994, p.251)

11

Each cluster was a category to which some statements could belong. For example, *Cluster A*, Stand on Social Issues, contained statements such as "Morality means having some stand on abortion" and "Morality means how people view the electric chair." Those two statements seem to be related to socially controversial issues, such as abortion or capital punishment. Similarly, statements like, "Morality is associated with choice" and "Morality is associated with a person's set of central values" belonged to *Cluster D*. The percentage given above the cluster name indicates the proportion of participants generating answers contributing to each cluster: thus, it can be said that *Cluster D* contains the largest consensual contribution. The length of vertical lines represents the degree of similarity among statements that belong to the clusters. For instance, the statements in *Cluster B* are more similar to each other than those in any other clusters. The characteristics of branching indicate the hierarchical organization among clusters. For example, the first division of the branch shows a rough distinction between social definitions of morality (*Cluster A, B,* and *C*) and individual definitions (*Cluster D, E,* and *F*). The next level of branching specifies the degree of similarity between clusters: *Cluster B* and *C* are more similar to each other than either is to *Cluster A* (Quinn et al., 1994).

A three-dimensional solution was selected after examining the multidimensional scaling data (Quinn et al., 1994). This means that there were at least three dimensions among the morality-related statements in terms of similarities or dissimilarities. In other words, when people were asked to judge how similar or dissimilar a pair of morality-related statements is, they might use three different criteria: 'relativism,' 'individualism,'

12

and 'specificity' in Quinn et al.'s study.  Figure 2 depicts the three dimensions rotated to

provide 'one view of the three-dimensional space,' with the relative positions of

exemplary statements for each dimension.  According to Quinn et al., for example,

*Statement 1* was placed at the opposite end of *Statement 7*.  It was because participants

kept rating the pairs of statements, "Acting moral is being nice and polite to others"

(*Statement 1*) and "People should form their own morals" (*Statement 7*) as dissimilar.

The very dimension that appeared to divide the two above statements into each end was

named, '*relativism*.'  This was the same way of explanation for all the other dimensions

and statements in Figure 2.
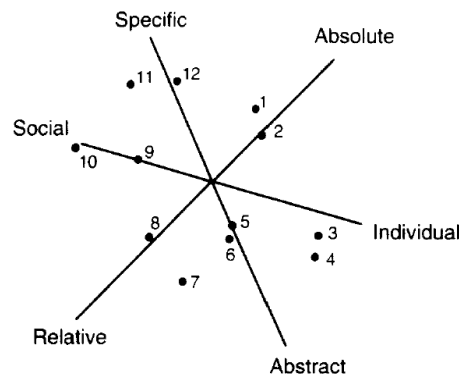


| | Relativism | | Individualism | | Specificity |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Acting moral is being nice and polite to others. | 3 | Morality is the values a person holds. | 5 | There is a distinction between moral and immoral. |
| 2 | Morality determines what is right and wrong. | 4 | Morality is associated with a person's set of central values. | 6 | A person's conception of right and wrong determines how they react to certain things. |
| 7 | People should form their own morals. | 9 | Society sets norms for moral behavior. | 11 | Morality determines how people view prison. |
| 8 | There is no exact definition of morality. | 10 | How people view pre-marital sex has changed over time. | 12 | Morality means being against nuclear arms. |

Figure 2. Three-Dimensional Solution from Multidimensional Scaling Analysis
with Representative Statements Identified on Eeach Dimension (Quinn
et al., 1994, p.254)

13

It seems noteworthy that Quinn and his colleagues (1994) tried to detect a potential structure of naturalistic conceptions of 'morality.' Not only providing a set of conceptions, they also presented (1) possible categories (clusters) into which each conception might be classified, (2) relative relationships among those clusters, and (3) dimensional structures with which people judged how similar a pair of moral statements was to each other. By studying these findings, we come to understand in some depth the naturalistic conceptions of 'morality.'

### *Naturalistic Conceptions of 'Moral Maturity'*

Following Quinn et al.'s work, Walker and Pitts (1998a) studied laypeople's conceptions of 'a moral person' with a concept, called the 'moral exemplars.' In order to examine a layperson's conceptions of a moral exemplar, Walker and Pitts (1998a) asked participants to list on a blank sheet of paper the characteristics of a highly moral person. With the sample of 120 adults, the researchers identified 1,249 concepts of 'a morally excellent person.' With the list of characteristics of moral exemplars, Walker and Pitts asked another sample of 120 adult respondents to rate the degree of "prototypicality" of each moral attributes. They then implemented a similarity-sorting task to detect people's implicit typology of moral maturity. The results of similarity-sorting were used as the data of the researchers' multidimensional scaling analysis.

Walker and Pitts (1998a) found that naturalistic notions of moral exemplars appeared to contain characteristics belonging to the following six categories: 'Principled-Idealistic,' 'Dependable-Loyal', 'Has Integrity,' 'Caring-Trustworthy,' 'Fair,' and 'Confident.' For example, laypeople in Walker and Pitts' study thought a law-abiding,

14

ethically principled, and/or self-disciplined person 'moral' (belong to the category of 'Principled-Idealistic'). A rational, hard-working (belong to 'Has Integrity') person and a sincere, helpful (belong to 'Caring-Trustworthy) person were also regarded as moral by laypeople. These findings suggest that laypeople may think of a person who has integrated abilities of philosophically-based reasoning (e.g., law-abiding or ethically principled) and characteristics of virtues (e.g., sincere or helpful) as a mature moral agent (Walker & Pitts, 1998a).
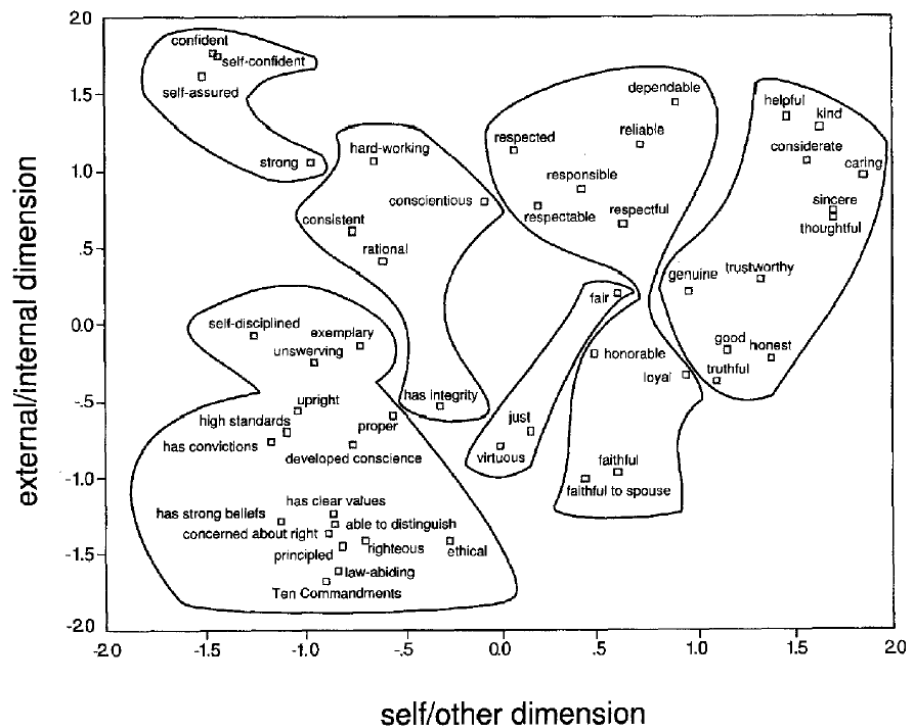


Figure 3. Two-Dimensional Representation of the Attributes for the Moral Person-Concept (the loops drawn on the configuration are based on the hierarchical cluster analysis of these attributes) (Walker & Pitts, 1998a, p. 414).

Figure 3 shows the relative position of each descriptor from the Walker and Pitts' (1998a) study about moral exemplars on a coordinate plane with two dimensions. Six

15

shapes with solid curved lines represented the clusters or categories that were detected by cluster analysis. For example, the largest shape in the lower-left corner is the "*Principled-Idealistic*" category. The descriptors belonging to this cluster appear to be relatively '*internal*' and '*self-oriented.*' For instance, characteristics of moral maturity like '*concerned about right*' and '*principled,*' in the cluster of "*Principled-Idealistic,*" are more internal aspects of morality than are '*helpful*' or '*dependable*' from the upper-right corner of the coordinate in Figure 3. These findings seem to be consistent with those from Quinn et al. (1994) in that the naturalistic conceptions of 'a moral person' also have a complicated structure and can be understood better with, at least, a systematic approach such as multidimensional configuration.

Walker and Pitts' (1998a) findings showed that prevalent conceptions of moral theorists have been limited to one aspect of morality: moral reasoning ability. The moral reasoning ability (principled reasoning ability in Walker and Pitt's study) was just one of the dozens different characteristics of 'a highly moral person' for laypeople. Moreover, there has been no evidence that a philosophy-based, principled moral reasoning is the core of morality, which would be more important than other characteristics. Thus, Walker and Pitts argued that attempts to understand morality should be made from a larger context in which laypeople's conceptions are involved.

***Three Naturalistic Conceptions of Moral Exemplarity***

Walker and Hennig (2004) attempted to expand the research perspective on the naturalistic conceptions of moral maturity found by Walker and Pitts (1998a). Walker and Hennig asserted that one of the limitations of the Walker and Pitts' study is its

16

presumption that there is a single prototype for moral maturity. For example, based on the Walker and Pitts' findings, Martin Luther King Jr., Mother Teresa, and Oskar Schindler may all be regarded as highly moral. The characteristics of their morality, however, can hardly be explained with just one moral prototype. Martin Luther King Jr. seems to be a good exemplar of justice, Mother Teresa is the paragon of caring, and Oskar Schindler may be a good model of bravery. Walker and Hennig examined people's conceptions of those three different types of moral exemplarity: justice, caring, and bravery.

Walker and Hennig's (2004) study was significant in that it attempted a more systematic approach to exploring potentially different conceptions of moral excellence. They were interested in determining how personality traits cluster along the three different types of moral exemplarity. In addition, they wished to clarify what traits are common across types and what traits are unique to each type. Walker and Hennig depicted both the core of morality and some unique traits for the different types of morality.

Walker and Hennig's study (2004) was conducted in three phases. In the first phase, they elicited the attributes of a just, brave, and caring person by the *free-listing* procedure. The researchers asked 805 participants to "write down the characteristics, attributes, or traits of a highly just [or brave or caring] person." The participants, randomly divided into three groups for just, brave, and caring exemplars, generated about 3,000 characteristics for each exemplar. Those descriptors were classified by the researchers through '*descriptor judging processes*' into 113, 120, and 103 descriptors for

17

the just, brave, and caring person concepts, respectively.  There were descriptors that were unique for one type, shared between two types, and common to all three types.  In the second and final phases, the researchers asked different participants to "rate how accurately each word (the descriptors they found through the first phase) describes a highly just [or brave or caring] person," and to "sort these attributes into categories representing your best judgment about which characteristics are similar to each other and which are different."  Phase 2 was used to view how each descriptor is prototypic to the given morality, and phase 3 was designed to uncover people's implicit typologies of just, brave, and caring exemplars by hierarchical cluster analysis and multidimensional scaling methods.

Walker and Hennig (2004) found convergent characteristics and divergent aspects of morality at the same time.  The findings of phase 1 indicated that the core of morality appears to consist of honesty and dependability (*truthful, honest*), personal agency (*confident, strong*), and positive communal emotionality (*helpful, respectful, thoughtful, empathic, generous, kind, sensitive, etc.*).  The findings of phase 2 indicate that the just exemplar is conscientious and open; the brave exemplar is dominant or extroverted, and the caring exemplar is nurturing or agreeable.  They concluded that, despite the convergent evidence from the first phase, "the personality trait attributions regarding just, brave, and caring exemplars are quite disparate."  For example, the most prototypic attributes of the just exemplar cluster around notions of honesty, fairness, and "principledness;" those of the brave exemplar around notions of courage, risk taking, and fearlessness, and those of the caring around notions of loving and altruism.  The

18

topologies (dimensions and clusters) of those three exemplars seem to minimally overlap and to represent distinct moral personalities.

Walker and Hennig's (2004) research showed what particular conceptions of morality are like and how they are related to each other. One interesting finding was that there were descriptors common across all three types of moral exemplars: just, brave, and caring. The set of those descriptors appeared quite integrative and comprehensive, including both self-oriented (e.g., *confident, strong*) and other-oriented (e.g., *helpful, generous, empathic*) characteristics. More interesting, however, was that although there were dozens of common descriptors found across all three moral exemplars, the core attributes for each moral exemplarity were different from one another, meaning that every exemplar is quite distinct.

Walker and Hennig's (2004) study was a significant step in understanding morality in a fuller and more balanced way and in exploring naturalistic conceptions of particular moral exemplars. Their findings also suggested that the naturalistic conceptions of moral exemplars have a multidimensional, complicated structure.

***Extraordinary Moral Commitment from Naturalistic Approach***

Matsuba and Walker (2004) examined what the characteristics of moral exemplars are in real-life situations. They recruited 40 morally exemplary young adults nominated by other laypeople based on their outstanding moral commitment towards various social organizations. In addition, another 40 ordinary people were also invited to participate in the study as comparison individuals to the moral exemplars. Semi-structured interviews and several measurements were implemented to all participants.

19

In selecting moral exemplars, Matsuba and Walker (2004) took a '*folk psychological approach*,' in which laypeople were involved in the first step of conceptualizing a psychological construct. The researchers argued that with this approach they were able to avoid an overly narrow conception of moral excellence, which is usually the experts' conceptualization. Matsuba and Walker asked executive directors of social, health, religious, and human and animal rights organizations to nominate young adults within their organization who had shown extraordinary moral commitment. The definition of "extraordinary moral commitment" remained deliberately vague so that nominators could trace their own conceptions of moral exemplars. And in selecting the moral exemplars' counterparts, Matsuba and Walker (2004) tried to find individuals on a case-by-case basis. They used age, gender, ethnicity, and the level of education as matching variables, and recruited people from psychology classes at a large Canadian university. They thus intended to control "potential confounding effects with group differences."

Matsuba and Walker (2004) found that moral exemplars are more likely than individuals from their comparison group to be agreeable, to be advanced in their faith, and to be highly developed in terms of moral reasoning ability. Morally exemplary persons tend to have further developed adult identity and to be more willing to enter into close relationships, compared to their counterparts. Matsuba and Walker's (2004) findings also suggest that the naturalistic conceptions of moral excellence are integrative, combining aspects of moral character with moral reasoning ability. Their research is meaningful also in that they conducted an empirical study of moral exemplars nominated

by other people.

### *Summary*

On the whole, it can be said that the naturalistic conceptions of morality are broader and more inclusive than the scholarly focus on moral reasoning. From the first study on naturalistic conceptions of 'morality,' Quinn et al. (1994) suggested that laypeople frequently conceptualize a variety of characteristics of 'a moral person' when they are asked to think about 'morality.' This tendency of non-academic people in morality seems somewhat different from the academic trend of morality research, within which many researchers have focused on moral reasoning. Moral reasoning ability, based on ethical principles and used to solve dilemma situations, is just one attribute among a comprehensive set of moral attributes for laypeople. There is no evidence that moral reasoning ability is a core, central characteristic of 'a moral person' from the laypeople's point of view (Quinn et al., 1994).

More recently, researchers on naturalistic 'morality' conceptions have come to be interested in investigating characteristics of 'a moral person.' Through the first study on moral exemplars, Walker and Pitts (1998a) confirmed the findings and conclusions of Quinn et al.'s study: Laypeople's conceptions of "moral maturity" consist of various kinds of moral characteristics and not just moral reasoning. Therefore, theoretical assumptions about 'centrality' of moral reasoning for human morality do not fully explain laypeople's conceptions of morality. Furthermore, Walker and Hennig (2004) suggested that particular naturalistic conceptions of moral exemplars' characteristics, like justness, bravery, and caring, are different constructs from each other. That is, the

21

characteristics of morality have multidimensional and complicated meaning structures for laypeople.  Matsuba and Walker's (2004) study on a real sample of moral exemplars, rather than participants' ideas about moral exemplars, also suggested that the naturalistic conceptions of moral exemplars are fairly inclusive of diverse moral attributes, besides moral reasoning ability.

As it might already be apparent, despite the significance of findings from the above studies, cultural specificities that may already exist in the naturalistic conceptions of 'morality' or 'a moral person' have not been the target of empirical research.  The studies reviewed in this chapter so far were all carried out in the United States or Canada. The majority of participants in each project were English-speaking Caucasians.  The studies' participants were usually at least two thirds European American or Canadian: Quinn et al.'s (1994) study was 69%, Walker and Pitts' (1998a) 68%, Walker and Hennig's (2004) 64%, and Matsuba and Walker's (2004) 83%.  Furthermore, no researcher was interested in potential cultural influences on laypeople's conceptions of morality.

The purpose of the current research is to investigate Korean laypeople's conceptions of 'a moral person,' which may be culturally specific for Koreans.  This endeavor is significant in that the potential particularities of Korean people's conceptions could ignite academic debate on cultural variations in naturalistic conceptions of morality. What are the Koreans' conceptions of 'a moral person?'  Since there has been no study on the Koreans' conceptions of a moral person or morality, it is almost impossible to get direct answers from the literature.  However, it may be possible to gather some relevant

22

and potentially useful information from other academic areas like research on values, Confucianism, and the unique psychological aspects of the social relationships of Koreans.  In the following sections, I will try to describe the kinds of persons whom Koreans may regard as moral, based on (1) the values system of Korean people, (2) how Confucianism may have shaped Korean values, and (3) what characteristics are unique to Koreans' views of social relationships.

## Psychological Research on Koreans' Morality

Even though no researcher has ever studied naturalistic conceptions of Koreans' morality, quite a few researchers have been interested in Koreans' morality.  These studies have been cross-cultural studies based on the direct application of Western-constructed theories to the Korean people.  The goals of such studies were generally to compare the Koreans' scores with the scores of people from Western societies using the same research paradigm (See Baek, 2002; Kim, 1998; Park & Johnson, 1984; Song, Smetana, & Kim, 1987; Stimpson, Jensen, & Neff, 1992).

For example, Park and Johnson (1984) attempted to verify whether Korean children show a moral development pattern similar to their American counterparts. Kohlberg's theoretical framework and the Defining Issues Test (DIT), developed by Rest (1975) based on Kohlberg's stage theory of moral development, were used to measure Korean children's moral development.  The results revealed that the overall pattern of development for the Korean sample was the same as the American pattern: The higher the grade-level, the higher the developmental stage.

Turiel's (1983) social domain theory on moral development guided Song and her colleagues' (Song, Smetana, & Kim, 1987) study of Korean children's morality. Turiel argued that social knowledge can be differentiated into moral and conventional. For example, knowledge about moral codes is universal, generalizable, and independent of authority sanction, whereas knowledge about conventional regulations is context-specific, alterable, and reliant on authority. Song et al. (1987) provided Korean children with vignettes containing moral and conventional issues, and intended to ascertain if Koreans also discriminate moral transgressions from conventional. They found that Koreans used reasoning based on justice or other people's welfare when judging moral transgressions (hitting, stealing, or not repaying borrowed money), whereas they relied on reasoning related to social customs, authority, or order when judging conventional transgression (not greeting elders cordially, eating food with fingers, or not following classroom rules). Regarding these results, Song et al. concluded that Korean children differentiated moral issues from social transgressions in a manner similar to American children.

Kim (1998) also aimed to apply Turiel's social domain theory to Korean children. Short stories about property rights (dealing with lost property), distributive justice (sharing candy), and public welfare (disposing of trash) was used to examine whether Korean children utilized moral reasoning under morally problematic situations, regardless the kinds of authority (a principal, a teacher, or a class president) involved in those situations. The results indicated that Korean children tended to follow moral rules. Kim (1998) concluded that the development of Korean children is consistent with social domain theory's developmental pattern.

24

Recently, Baek (2002) conducted a study to examine cultural differences, if any, in developmental pattern of morality and the use of moral reasoning between Korean and British children (aged 7–16 years). Face-to-face interviews with each participant were implemented with Kohlberg's moral dilemmas; and then, the interview transcripts were analyzed based on Kohlberg's scoring manual to rate participants' developmental stage. Baek (2002) founded that (a) overall pattern of moral reasoning development was quite similar for Korean and British children, and that (b) some characteristics of Korean children's responses, however, could not be explained by Kohlberg's manual. Baek (2002) interpreted that the unexplainable responses might be due to the characteristics of Korean society, such as "the emphases on loyalty to the governing class, respect for elders, obedience to one's parents, courtesy in human relationships and duty to the community over individual rights" (Baek, 2000, p.376). She also pointed out that *cheong*[1] could be another reason why Korean children responded differently to Kohlberg's moral dilemmas, compared to their British counterparts.

---

[1] *Cheong* has been understood by Korean psychologists (Choi, 1999; Choi & Choi, 2001) that Koreans uniquely develop as an emotional bondage toward others. Koreans come to have *cheong* when they are establishing interpersonal relationships with each other. *Cheong*, as a positive affect, appears toward (significant) other people, kinds of communities, or sometimes, even on objects as a special affective attachment. According to Korean psychologists, *cheong* is usually formed through social life, but it can define the sort of relationships. More detailed definition and properties of *cheong* will follow at one of later sections.

**Values of South Koreans**

Although no cross-cultural research on the conceptions of 'a moral person' by laypeople has been published in the psychological literature, it seems likely that there may be culturally specific aspects in the conceptions of 'a moral person' for the laypeople. For example, Koreans, when describing their moral exemplars, may differ from North Americans in that they may have different conceptions of justice, bravery, and caring. In order to better understand the morality of Koreans, examining the naturalistic conceptions of 'a moral person' for Koreans ought to be fruitful.

While no cross-cultural research exists on laypeople's conception of moral person in Korea, there has been research on "values" in Korea. The concepts of value are closely related to "being moral" (see Prilleltensky, 1997). According to value theorists or psychologists (see Rokeach, 1973; Schwartz, 1994; Zavalloni, 1980), values are regarded as standards, orientations, or principles for the members of a society to follow to be desirable and socially acceptable. In this respect, values seem to be a large basis of 'moral ought' because morality is also closely associated with social standards or principles that the members of a society should follow.

### *Koreans' Values in Value Surveys*

Empirical research on values has frequently selected value surveys as a research method. In such surveys, researchers asked respondents to rate the degree of importance of value items. For example, Inglehart and his colleagues (Inglehart & Baker, 2000; Inglehart, Basanez, & Moreno, 1998) used survey items representing value statements: "Work is very important in respondent's life;" "Abortion is never justifiable;" "One must

always love and respect one's parents regardless of their behavior;" "Divorce is never justifiable;" "Men make better political leaders than women;" "Respondent rejects foreigners, homosexuals, and people with AIDS as neighbors," and so on. The first four statements represent *traditional* and the last two *survival* values. (If respondents emphasized the opposite to above statements, they were regarded as emphasizing *secular-rational* and *self-expression* values, respectively.) Using those value statements, Inglehart and Baker (2000) carried out three waves of surveys, named "The World Values Surveys," in 1981-1982, 1990-1991, and 1995-1998 with over 165,000 representative international participants from 65 countries, including South Korea. The fourth wave, from 1999-2004, has recently been completed and the raw data as well as basic analytic results are available at the web site of World Values Survey (World Values Survey, 2006).

In brief, Figure 4 below shows the relative position of values systems for each country. On the two-dimensional coordinate plane, countries plotted higher tended to have more *secular-rational* (vs. *traditional*) value systems, while societies around the right side had *self-expressive* (vs. *survival*) values. In other words, for example, people in Zimbabwe, posited in the far lower-left corner on the coordinate plane, were likely to appreciate more the values of religion, sexism, patriarchy, and livelihood than those of equality and self-expression. These preferred values were considered *traditional* and *survival*. Equality and self-expression were *secular* and *self-expressive*.

It is interesting to find the United States and Canada plotted lower than South Korea. These two Western countries turned out to be more '*traditional*' than Korea.
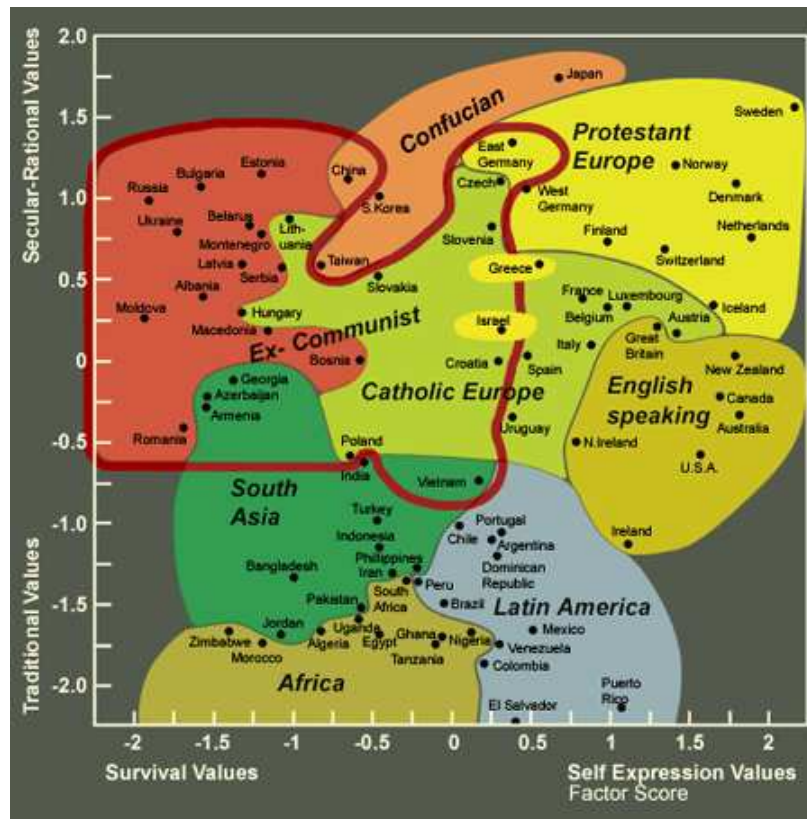
Figure 4. Inglehart–Welzel Cultural Map of the World (World Values Survey, 2006).

This finding seems mainly due, however, to 'traditionality' here was based on the degree of a people's religiosity. In other words, if many people in a society answered positively to the questions, such as "Religion is very important in respondent's life," "Respondent believes in Heaven," or "Respondent attends church regularly," that society was regarded as *traditional* in the World Values Survey. In the same way, Brazil, Argentina, and Colombia, which have long been deeply influenced by Roman Catholicism appeared in Figure 4 to be more *traditional* than the United State and Canada (World Values Survey, 2006) (see Figure 4).

28

***Characteristics of Traditional Values for Koreans***

Nonetheless, the outstanding findings of Inglehart and his colleagues' research (Inglehart & Baker, 2000; Inglehart et al., 1998) indicated that Korea was strongly influenced by its own traditional values system, Confucianism.  Confucian culture does not emphasize religiosity, as do the major religions—Christianity, Buddhism, and Islam (Koh, 1996).  Therefore, if many Koreans emphasized Confucian traditional values (e.g., filial piety, industrious working attitude, or gender differentiation in business or household), such responses might not have been labeled as '*traditional*' in World Values Survey.

Korean participants were actually more likely to emphasize their own traditional values, which are 'non-religious,' in the fourth wave in 2001 (World Values Survey, 2006).  For example, almost all (92.2%) Koreans thought that they must always love and respect their parents, regardless of what the qualities or faults of the parents' are.  About 76 percent of Americans and Canadians felt likewise.  The importance of work also made about 10% point difference between Koreans and the pairs of American and Canadian (62.3% vs. 53.6% and 52.1%, respectively).  That is, the number of Koreans who answered, "Work is very important for respondent's life," was greater than that of Americans or Canadians.  To the proposition, "When jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women," 37.7 percent of Koreans agreed, while only 9.8 percent of Americans and 13.5 percent of Canadians did.  In sum, even though the value system in South Korea was reported to be relatively more *secular-rational* than that of the United States and Canada, in the Inglehart-Welzel cultural map of the world (World Values

Survey, 2006), Koreans' values can be said to be traditional enough in their own way. In addition, the findings of the World Values Surveys indicated that the values of Koreans have hardly changed compared to other countries in the world over the last 15 years (Inglehart & Baker, 2000). Figure 5 shows how each country's overall values have changed in two dimensional space for a certain period of time.  Compared to other countries, South Korean values changed only slightly from 1981 to 1996.  China, for example, was in 1990 the most *secular-rational* (non-religious, so to speak) society in the world.  Chinese values had changed dramatically, becoming moderate in 1995.  Other cases of countries such as West Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, or the United States also indicated that the values systems of some societies changed noticeably over 5 to 15 years.  In China or Poland, for example, the change in values was larger than in any country in just 5 to 7 years.  In Korean society, however, the change appeared to be the smallest even in 15 years.

Korean society seemed to be much more conservative than any other country in the World Values Survey.  Korean values appeared to have changed little in spite of the radical westernization and individualization that swept across all cultures in the late 1990s.  Moreover, if South Korea was quite 'traditional' in its own way during the latest wave in 2001, Koreans might have been under a strong influence of traditional values from the time of the very first wave in 1981.

Those findings of 'traditionality' and conservativeness about the Korean value system imply that a South Korean is generally expected to abide traditional values.  In
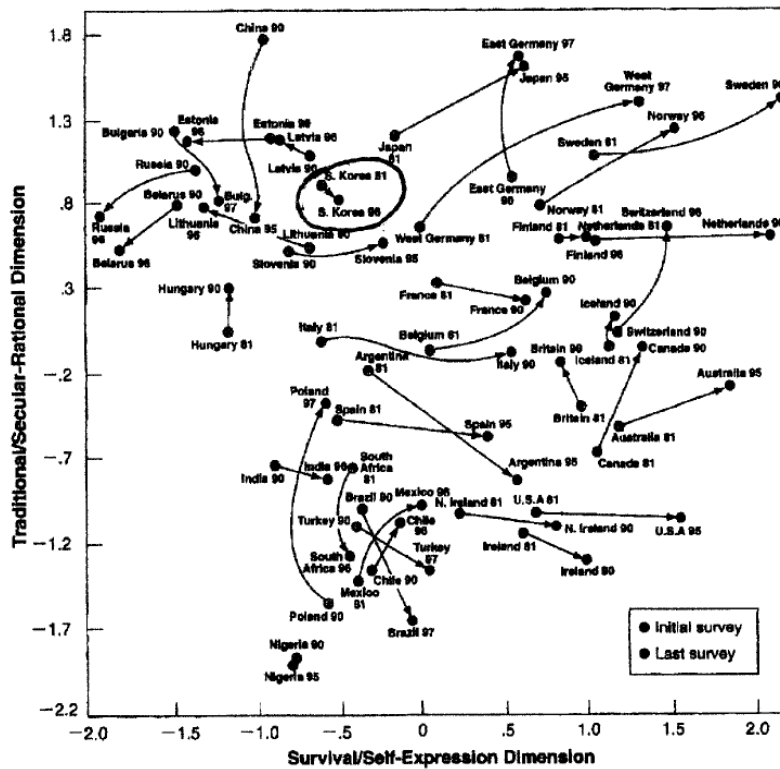
Figure 5. Change over Time in Location on Two Dimensions of Cross-Cultural Variation for 38 Societies (Inglehart & Baker, 2000, p.40).

other words, such a person is more likely to be considered desirable and socially acceptable in Korea than one who tends to defy traditional values. Furthermore, if values play an important role in morality, Koreans' moral conceptions may have much to do with their traditional values.

## Influence of Confucianism on Koreans

### *Introduction of Confucianism and Confucian Ethics*

Confucianism has also been considered the most powerful and influential value system in such East Asian countries as China, Japan, Taiwan, and Vietnam, as well as

31

Korea (Berthrong & Berthrong, 2000; Tu, 1998). Inglehart and Baker (2000) also clustered four countries, China, Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea and labeled their values systems as 'Confucian.' Therefore, it is almost impossible to understand fully any East Asian country without possessing a certain degree of knowledge about Confucianism.

Though it is impossible to define Confucianism in a few sentences, we can outline it by examining its origin, development, propagation, and influence. The word 'Confucianism' was created as a generic Western term to refer to a traditional East Asian lifestyle based on the principles of an ancient Chinese philosopher, Confucius (Latinized form of K'ung-fu-tzu, Master K'ung – Kong or Kongzi – ; 551-479 B.C.) and his followers (Tu, 1998). Confucianism is a worldview, a social ethic, a political ideology, a scholarly tradition, and a way of life, which includes such diverse aspects of philosophy, education, and individual development (Kim & Davis, 2003; Tu, 1998). Although Confucianism is sometimes compared with major religions like Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, and Islam, it is not a typical religion (Berthrong & Berthrong, 2000).

Confucianism can be viewed as a system of ethical or moral thoughts (Roetz, 1993). Since Confucianism has provided a worldview, a political ideology, a scholarly tradition, and a way of life, people in Confucian societies have regarded Confucian values as what their societies should be or what one should do. In addition, because Confucius tried to find a way of reforming society through his lessons, the teachings of Confucius have always contained a model of what a man should do to lead a better life and shape a better society. That is, Confucian thoughts have properties of ethical prescriptions or guidelines.

32

According to contemporary theorists (Berthrong & Berthrong, 2000; Roetz, 1993), the most important and representative concept in Confucianism is 'humanity' or 'humaneness' (the Chinese character: 仁(*ren*)). Confucius taught that, if a person comes to have *ren*, he/she also has a combination of "reverence, tolerance, trustworthiness, keenness, and kindness." He added that *ren* means reverence in private life, respect when entrusted with a task, and benevolence when dealing with others. "If one achieves *ren*, one at the same time masters other virtues, also including courage, prudence, cautiousness in talking, and propriety" (Roetz, 1993, p.120). Humaneness (*ren*), however, was considered such an unattainable ideal virtue that even Confucius himself acknowledged to have failed to achieve it. He established another concept, that of "a gentleman," which laypeople could embody through Confucian efforts. The "gentleman" has also an inclusive character integrating the virtues such as diligence, solidarity, impartiality, and harmony (Roetz, 1993).

In order to be 'a gentleman,' Confucians emphasized the role of self-cultivation in diverse social relationships (Berthrong & Berthrong, 2000). 'Cultivating oneself' is a process in which one keeps trying to learn the meaning of desired virtues and practicing those virtues in a variety of situations and contexts until he or she entirely internalizes them. Through cultivating oneself, a person can be a fully worthy human who serves both him/herself and others.

Becoming a humane human through self-cultivation could only be accomplished within societal settings. Confucians placed a primary importance on the family as a

social relationship, situation, or context for self-cultivation.  The family is the most important local community within which a person is first developed and nurtured.  Through education at home, a person can enter a path to become a civilized, humane human who will work in the service of the broader communities at local, regional, and national levels (Berthrong & Berthrong, 2000).

Many scholars on Confucianism have found that Confucians emphasized filial piety as a virtue that children should learn and practice first and foremost in their family life (Berthrong & Berthrong, 2000; Hwang, 1999; Tu, 1998; Yeh & Bedford, 2003).  The way to enhance personal dignity and identity is not to alienate oneself from the family but to cultivate one's genuine feelings for one's parents.  Filial piety embraces "important ideas about how children should treat their parents" (Yeh & Bedford, 2003, p.215).  However, it does not command that children should obey unconditionally their parents' authority but recommends to recognize the authority and to give reverence to their parents as the source of their life (Tu, 1998).

According to one famous Confucian teacher, Xunzi[2], a person can be a full human being or a fully ethical person, when he or she thinks of all kinds of social relationships as the extension of those among family members (Berthrong & Berthrong, 2000).  Confucians understood the world through the metaphor of the family, expanding the relationships in a family to the community, the country, and the universe.  They called the

---

[2] Xunzi (c. 310-210 B.C) – "The third of the greatest classical Confucians. The most systematic thinker of the group, he was considered a black sheep because he dared to contravene Mencius by teaching that human nature is [originally] evil (Berthrong & Berthrong, 2000, p.197)."

emperor the son of Heaven, the king the ruler-father, and the administrator an official-father.  Through this conceptual framework, Confucians expanded the family ethics to political ideology or the public good.  In this sense, family ethics were not a private or personal concern in Confucian societies (Tu, 1998).

Confucianism teaches an ethical model to be a foundation of social and familial relationships.  The model, expanded from the values in family relations and filial piety to social levels, consists of the "five ethical relations" and the "three cardinal principles" (Chang, 1982; Kim & Davis, 2003).

> The five relations and three bonds [principles] are the most important rules in the model of human relationships. The five relations include the virtues of proper rapport between father and son, separation between husband and wife, proper order between elder and younger, faithfulness between friends, and righteousness between a ruler and his ministers. The three bonds [principles], which provide the context within which the five relations are practiced, are the loyalty from subject to ruler, filial piety from son to father, and faithfulness from wife to husband (Kim & Davis, 2003, p.111).

From the above, it seems obvious that Confucians have constructed their ethical system mainly based on hierarchically-ordered social relationships (Chang, 1982).  In other words, Confucian ethics is based on 'vertical' relationships between societal members embodying virtues like loyalty, obedience, filial piety, and respect.  This system is in contrast to ethics based on 'horizontal' relationships that embody virtues like justice founded on equality (Park & Cho, 1995).  Though some ethical codes regulating the

35

relationships between members in equivalent social status have also been emphasized, a large number of relational rules appear to hypothesize that there are generally the superior and the subordinate. This summary of Confucian ethics implies the possibility that Korean laypeople conceptualize 'a moral person' somewhat differently than a North American: Koreans may tend to value more loyalty, obedience, or respect as moral characteristics, whereas North Americans may tend to value justice, bravery, and caring (Walker & Pitts, 1998a).

### *Korean Confucianism*

Among East Asian countries that have adopted Confucianism, the case of Korea is particularly interesting (Berthrong & Berthrong, 2000; Park & Cho, 1995; Tu, 1998). As the Korean state emerged, the Chosun dynasty (1396-1910) declared Confucianism to be the orthodox philosophy of government. In subsequent centuries, Korean scholars in the dynasty intensively studied and refined the 'Neo-Confucian' tradition. "It is not an exaggeration to say that the best philosophic work of the sixteenth century in East Asia was done in Korea" (Berthrong & Berthrong, 2000, p.5). Korea, by the eighteenth century, was the most Confucian country in East Asia (Berthrong & Berthrong, 2000; Kim & Davis, 2003; Tu, 1998).

Koh's study (1996) of Confucianism in Korea reveals that this Confucian tradition is still alive in contemporary Korean society. According to the *Manual for Religion in Korea*, published in 1984 by the Republic of Korea's Religious Affairs Office of the Ministry of Culture and Information, self-identified Confucians were estimated to constitute only 2 percent of the total population. These self-identified Confucians

seemed to be those who follow Confucianism as a religion. Those people abide by Confucian lessons to the letter even in a modern society in terms of family system, gender roles at home, and attending religious rituals in memory of ancient Confucian teachers. Koh (1996) reported that the majority of Korean Buddhists and Christians tended to identify their convictions and practices as typically Confucian. Thus even devotees of Buddhism or Christianity followed Confucianism in their value system. Koh (1996) gave the results of a survey of 400 persons that investigated Confucian convictions and practices. The results of the interview showed that 100% of self-identified Buddhists, 76.4% of Protestants, 90% of Catholics, and 100% of 'no religion' respondents had been "Confucianized." Since Confucianism is not an organized religion like Buddhism, Protestantism, or Catholicism, it is able to be compatible with those structured religions (Koh, 1996). Though it lost the role of an official ideology of government or education systems in modern times, Confucianism was still a vital code of ethics for Korean people.

### *Implications of Korean Confucianism on Morality*

Koreans are still under the influence of traditional Confucian values. Even the majority of religious people in Korea are 'Confucian Buddhists,' 'Confucian Protestants,' and 'Confucian Catholics.' It is thus reasonable to assume that lay Koreans think of Confucian values as desirable. Hence, the influences of collectives like families bear powerfully on Korean moral conceptualization. Consequently, a person who actively follows Confucian values may be regarded as moral by laypeople in Korea. A moral person in Korea probably lays emphasis on the well-being of family members or other in-

group members over his or her own well-being.  He or she may show a pattern of behavior that is highly consistent with appropriate etiquette in a variety of social situations between elder and younger, parents and children, colleagues in the workplace, and so on.

## Psycho-Social Constructs in Korea

Under the sway of Confucianism, Koreans place a high importance on the family. Maday and Szalay (cited in Choi, Kim, & Choi, 1993) conducted an empirical study examining the psychological connotations of "self" for Koreans and Americans.  The authors found four important themes in the Korean responses, in descending order: (1) family and love, (2) ideals, happiness, and freedom, (3) hope, ambition, and success, (4) and money, material, and goods.  This result indicated that, for Koreans, "family and the love (*cheong*) that binds family members together is the most important part of the conception of self" (Choi, Kim, & Choi, 1993, p.199).

The primary goal of Korean social relationships is to find or organize groups within which a member may feel a sense of belonging, comfort, and security.  The family is the most important group for any Korean.  Because Koreans think that living a life as an independent individual is suffering and not helpful to being a desirable social being, they tend to confirm and try to maintain their membership in a group.  Their self-concept is based on the view that a human being as an "imperfect partial individual," which is similar to that of Markus and Kitayama's (1991) concept of the "interdependent self" (Choi, 1999).

*We-ness*

The first thing that Koreans learn within the family is so-called "we-ness."

Family members are interested in and cooperate with each other, and often willingly

sacrifice themselves for another member's well-being.  Koreans expand this "we-ness" to

relationships within other groups.  This was conceptualized to indicate some unique

characteristics of Korean social relationships by Sang-Chin Choi (Choi, 1999).

According to him, if Koreans have once bonded in a *we-ness* relationship with members

of a group, they start to treat one another like family members.  The relationship is not

limited to sacrificing materialistic interests for each other; it also includes, for example,

being emotionally empathetic towards each other's hardships.  As group members can

easily detect other members' emotional state, they experience a mindful relationship.

Connecting with each other in a *we-ness* relationship means that members are

unified and that others who are not within the relation may be excluded from all manner

of benefits of the relationship.  Sometimes, the concept of 'the other person' in Korea

stands not just for 'the third person' who is not 'I' or 'we' but for a person who is not a

member of the *we-ness* group.  When Koreans treat 'the other person,' they tend to be

indifferent, exclusive, unkind, or, from time to time, hostile.  Seen from the other side, if

a person feels that he/she is being treated like 'the other person' by someone whom

he/she has considered part of a *we-ness* relation, his/her disappointment and sense of

betrayal are beyond what people from other cultures expect (Choi, 1999).

The *we-ness* relationships usually start from a sense of connection or affinity.  A

family automatically has these natural connections and affinity.  Groups outside the

family are formed based on connections such as any kind of kinship, regional relations, and educational relations (fellow alumni).  Even 'the other person' relationship can change immediately into a *we-ness* relationship on the realization of a point of affinity between two people (Choi, 1999).

Choi, Kim, and Choi (1993) found three major themes in Korean *we-ness* relations: positive affect, oneness or wholeness, and the priority of the group over the individual.  This finding was also mentioned by Choi (1999) in the conceptualization of "*We-ness*."  Specifically, the theme of oneness or wholeness is the same as the sense of being unified among members of *we-ness* groups.  The priority of the group over the individual is the basis of sacrifices that are frequently found within the *we-ness* groups.  According to the Korean psychologists above (Choi, Kim, & Choi, 1993; Choi, 1999), the positive affect experienced by the *we-ness* members is the key uniting the members of a group into a whole.  The positive affect, the so-called *cheong,* is the emotional basis of Korean social relations.

Regarding the properties of '*we-ness*' among Koreans, we come to assume that a person who promotes a *we-ness* relationship among group members may easily be regarded as desirable or socially acceptable.  Likewise, values or behavior related to *we-ness* may be said to influence Korean laypeople's conceptualization of morality.  For example, it often seems natural for Koreans to provide more benefits to the members of their *we-ness* group over others, but many people think that it is not always fair in terms of social justice.  In this respect, such value of 'conformity to groups' may potentially be considered as a character trait of 'a moral person' particular to Koreans.

*Cheong*

Choi (1999) argued that *we-ness* and *cheong* are like two sides of a coin. *We-ness* is a cognitive construct of unification, which is established on the emotional premise of *cheong*, whereas *cheong* is an emotional quality, which can be experienced through *we-ness* relationships. Therefore, both concepts form a necessary and a sufficient condition for each other. Actually, Koreans believe that *cheong* is an affective bond that creates *we-ness* as well as a psychological entity that exists in the mind (Choi, 1999). It is experienced for the first time within a family through the parent-children relationship. Korean parents give limitless *cheong* to their children. Parents tend to identify themselves with their children and they willingly live and sacrifice for children (Choi, 1999).

*Cheong* is developed through residing together over a long period of time (Choi, 1999; Choi & Choi, 2001). Choi and Choi (2001) conducted an empirical study to examine how *cheong* is developed. The authors found some specific conditions that are necessary in order for *cheong* to occur. First, a person who feels *cheong* tends to have a history of contacts or associations with an object or person that is the target of the feeling over a relatively long period of time. The history revolves around shared experiences of events or joining in the same activities.

Second, in this sense, "living-in-the-vicinity" is an important component that facilitates the feeling of *cheong* because it provides a natural setting where the experiences are shared. Residing with another person, particularly in bad or hard times, readily helps a person to have *cheong* feelings towards the other person who has been

'being together' in such tough times.  This seems to be so because a person easily feels

*cheong* from the other person who gave understanding, materialistic or emotional support,

and encouragement when the first person underwent the painful experience.  That person

may think that he/she could make his/her way through the difficulties with some support

and help from the person who was 'being together.'  In addition, the same kind of *cheong*

feeling can even occur towards an object as long as it has something to do with some past,

*cheong*-related event.  It is often very hard for Koreans to throw away an object

associated with *cheong*, because of its special meaning.

Third, "some people have personality traits that make them more likely to incur

*cheong* in people with whom they come into contact, while others possess personality

traits that do not readily induce *cheong* in others" (Choi & Choi, 2001, p.73).  If the

recipient of a *cheong* feeling does not have a personality responsive to *cheong*, even a

long interlude of sharing the same space would not help establish it.  The traits helpful for

encouraging *cheong* are warmth, softness, caring, calmness, etc.  An interesting finding

about the personality traits for the feeling was that a cool-headed, rational, altruistic

person who is concerned about the rights of others might have nothing to do with *cheong*.

Koreans require altruistic or charitable acts to be carried out with unskillful,

unsophisticated, and even seemingly-foolish behavior in order to feel *cheong* toward the

actors.  When the givers demonstrate personal weakness or tenderness, their actions are

frequently labeled *cheong*-ful acts.

Last, a *cheong*-ful relationship should include the feature of concealing the

defects of a person.  It can be said that this category points out the characteristics of

relational dynamics among people, whereas the previous category was about the

personality traits of an individual. We can easily find the relational dynamics between

immediate family members. A mother, for example, would not abandon her children

regardless of their shortcomings or faults and would always willingly embrace them.

Likewise, being understood or accepted, broad-minded, and generous are necessary for a

person to feel *cheong* in a relationship.

Based on those four categories, Choi (1999) and Choi and Choi (2001) suggested

a structural topology of *cheong* properties, as Figure 6 depicts. The four categories are so

inextricably related that one cannot separate them. Concurrence rather than

independence is a principal characterization of the relationship among the categories:

time, space, relation, and personality.
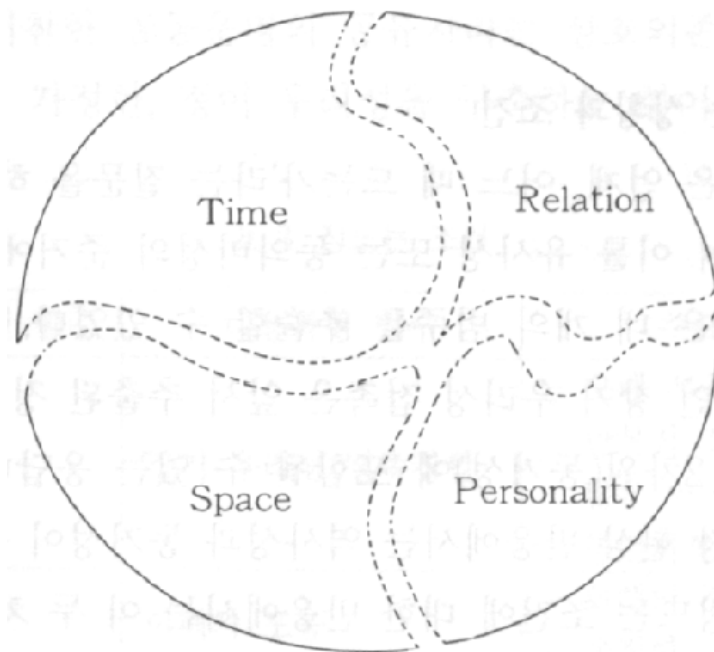


Figure 6. Structural Topography of *Cheong* Properties (Choi, 1999, p.435).

Regarding the psychological construct of *cheong* for Koreans, some characteristics of a person promoting *cheong* can also be simply regarded as desirable, and the desirability may have something to do with the conceptions of a moral person. For example, a person's traits that facilitate *cheong*-ful relationships, like generosity, tolerance, openness, agreeableness, forgiveness, and consistency, may share aspects of a person regarded as moral in Korean society.

### Implications of Korean Psycho-Social Constructs on Morality

Comparing the constructs of *we-ness* and *cheong*, we find some potential differences between the characteristics of 'a moral person' for North Americans and Koreans. For instance, *we-ness* has potential negative aspects in terms of justice or fairness, a moral prototype for North Americans. Koreans sometimes treat 'the other person' outside the *we-ness* group with indifference, unkindness or even hostility, based merely on the fact that the person doesn't belong. This tendency is definitely incompatible with justness or fairness. Justness or equality also requires a person sometimes to be cool-headed and rational to make a judgment and behave properly. Being cool-headed and rational, however, is not always well-matched with the emotion of *cheong*, because *cheong* can be developed through the relational dynamics within which a person is understood and accepted in spite of mistakes or faults.

### Summary

On the basis of research on Korean values, Korean Confucianism, and psycho-social concepts such as *we-ness* and *cheong*, we can expect that Koreans will have

naturalistic conceptions of morality, a moral person, and moral exemplars that are different from that concepts of North Americans.

Elements like the Korean value system, Confucianism, and Korea's unique psycho-social constructs perhaps shed some light on attributes that Koreans value as that of 'a moral person.' For example, a person who follows traditional Confucian values and appears to promote a deep social relationship with *cheong*-ful attitudes might be considered moral, particularly among Korean laypeople.

## CHAPTER THREE: METHOD

### Overall Approach and Rationale

A grounded theory approach, a qualitative research method, was the main scheme of this dissertation study. Through qualitative methods, researchers can study the phenomenon of interest even when there has been little research in an area (Burgess, 1985, cited in Borg & Gall, 1989). In other words, qualitative methods are suitable when a study's purpose is "to explore substantive areas about which little is known" and "to obtain the intricate details about phenomena such as feelings, thought processes, and emotions that are difficult to extract or learn about through more conventional research methods (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.11)." In this regard, it can be said that unidentified, poorly understood, conceptually undeveloped phenomenon would be the better target of qualitative research (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Although several researchers in North America have conducted studies on laypeople's conceptions of 'morality,' 'a moral person,' or 'moral exemplars,' no Korean researcher has ever tried to examine these naturalistic conceptions. Most researchers on Korean morality have applied Western constructed notions of 'morality' to Korean people. Some researchers found similar phenomena (Song, Smetana, & Kim, 1987), whereas others reported considerable differences between the morality constructs of Koreans and Westerners (Baek, 2002). Consequently, it is appropriate to use qualitative research methods for this research.

Borg and Gall (1989) suggested that "qualitative methods are considered more

46

amenable to the diversity of 'multiple realities' one finds in a complex field situation (p. 385)." As the main target of the current study, people's conceptions of 'a moral person' can represent certain types of individuals. There can be complicated realities, such as contexts or incidents, in which a person labels another person as 'moral.' Various people, for diverse reasons, may think of others as moral within different contexts. This complexity of realities in itself was the interest of the current study; hence, qualitative methods seem to be the best way to explore the actual conceptions of 'a moral person.'

A grounded theory approach guided the current study. This approach is used generally when researchers aim to build a theory based on data, "systematically gathered" and analyzed "in-depth" through research processes (Cisneros-Puebla, 2004; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). According to Strauss and Corbin (1998), researchers using grounded theory approach need to be independent from direct influences of the literature so that they try to construct a theory solely relying on gathered data. The current study intended to build a theory about 'a moral person' based upon data that was collected. Verifying or comparing some findings on Americans and Canadians with some on Koreans was not the purpose of this study. Furthermore, as the researcher, I tried not to be influenced by any theoretical or empirical hypothesis that might guide or manipulate the direction of the study. Only data that was scientifically gathered and thoroughly analyzed interacted with the researcher in the research processes (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In this regard, the grounded theory approach seemed to be the best qualitative research method for this study.

## Participants

For this study, I invited Korean laypeople to participate in interviews. The term 'laypeople' here refers to people who are 'not expert' in morality-related academic fields, such as ethics or moral philosophy, moral psychology, moral education, etc. In other words, any moral philosopher, ethicist, moral psychologist, or teacher of moral education, anyone who can be considered a 'professional' in the academic or educational fields of morality, was excluded from the prospective pool of participants. Excluding them kept the participants' conceptualizing processes and their responses 'naturalistic.' Those philosophers, psychologists, and teachers may have 'theory-based' conceptions of 'a moral person,' which are not generally regarded as 'naturalistic.' For similar reasons, graduate students from these areas were also avoided.

Recruiting participants, I also attempted to balance gender. Some researchers have argued that men usually regard individual social success as more important, whereas women concentrate more on the success of all family members (Jensen & Towle, 1991), which means that men and women differ with each other in their values. Though it has been controversial, Gilligan (1982) proposed that women's morality is care-oriented, which indicates that women tend to be oriented toward relationships with others in their moral thinking or emotions; whereas men's morality is justice-oriented, which means that men have a moral orientation toward individual rights and it is equality-centered. Gender difference in conceptions of 'a moral person,' however, was not a target of this study. Rather, I wanted to include perspectives from both genders in conducting my qualitative study.

In the literature on the naturalistic conceptions of morality, the vast majority of

North American participants were in their young to middle adulthood: from early 20's to

late 40's (see Matsuba & Walker, 2004; Quinn et al., 1994; Walker & Pitts, 1998a;

Walker & Hennig, 2004). Therefore, people in their 20's, 30's, and 40's were the

potential pool of participants for this study. The reason that people in 50's and older

were not included in the participating age groups was that recruiting those people was

relatively harder than doing the younger. Because I am in 30's, collecting data with those

three age groups under 50's was much easier.

### *Procedures and Recruitment of Participants*

The approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of

Texas at Austin was obtained before actual recruitment of participants started. A

carefully composed version of consent form was proposed in English first, and then it

was translated into Korean language for the IRB to review both (see Appendix A). The

Korean participants were given to sign two copies of exactly the same Korean version

consent form at the start of the first meeting with me, while being asked to make the final

decision to whether they voluntarily chose to participate in the study. To fully ensure

participants' right to ask any question, express concerns, or even cancel the decision of

participation at any time, one copy of consent form was given to each participant with the

contact information of the researcher.

Recruitment and data collection were conducted in South Korea, during June and

July in 2008. Two weeks before my departure to Korea, five acquaintances of mine in

Korea were contacted, and I requested them to make a pool of potential participants for

49

my study with three to four of their acquaintances. The five acquaintances had their

background in four different regions, as will be explained in detail at the next section:

Metropolitan Capital, central, southeastern, and southwestern areas of South Korea (two

of these are from Metropolitan region). Out of those five acquaintances, two of them also

participated in the study (one from Metropolitan and the other from southeastern), while

the others only helped me recruit participants. All participants were compensated for

their time and contribution to the study with Korean Won which at the time was

equivalent to about $15 US.

### *Demographic Characteristics of Participants*

### *Regions of Recruiting*

Participants were selected from four regions in South Korea: the Metropolitan,

central, southwestern and southeastern areas (See Figure 7). The northeastern region was

the only area where there was no participant for this study. Although South Korea is a

small country in size and the South Korean people do not generally have multiple

ethnicities among them, it has been said that the South Koreans from different regions

show different characteristics, values, and cultures (see Choi, 1998; Kim, 1995; Mah,

2002). For example, people in the Metropolitan Capital area are more liberal than their

counterparts in central or southern regions. Particularly, many Koreans believe that

people residing in southeastern or southwestern provinces have quite different

characteristics and values and even they do not like each other (see Choi, 1998; Kim,

1995). In this study, however, verifying differences in conceptions of 'a moral person'

for people from various regions was not a research goal. Rather, common themes across

Figure 7. Regional Map of South Korea in Relation to Recruitment (Map from
http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/cia08/korea_south_sm_2008.gif)

many people would most be expected to emerge, if any, even though they had different

regional backgrounds.  It was the reason why participants with a range of regional

backgrounds were invited to have interviews.  The actual composition of participants'

regional origins appears at the top of Table 1.

***Other Key Demographic Characteristics***

Table 1 also shows how other basic demographic variables varied across

participants by their gender.  Most of all, gender of the interviewees was evenly divided

by men and women, which nicely met one of original goals of recruitment.

Age spans of participants were another variable that was relatively satisfactorily spread from 20s, 30s, and 40s to contribute each age cohort's thoughts on 'a moral person' to the results. Particularly, the fact that one female interviewees had just turned 30 years old could make imagine a better distribution of age spans overall (Table 1).

Table 3. A Summary of Demographic Characteristics of Participants

| | Gender (n = 22) | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | Male (n = 11) | Female (n = 11) | |
| Regions of residence | | | |
| Metropolitan | 8 | 4 | 12 (54.5%) |
| Central | 1 | 2 | 3 (13.6%) |
| Southwestern | 2 | 2 | 4 (18.2%) |
| Southeastern | - | 3 | 3 (13.6%) |
| Age spans | | | |
| 20s | 5 | 1 | 6 (27.3%) |
| 30s | 3 | 6 | 9 (40.9%) |
| 40s | 3 | 4 | 7 (31.8%) |
| Religions | | | |
| Buddhism | - | 3 | 3 (13.6%) |
| Protestant | 6 | 6 | 12 (54.5%) |
| Catholic | 1 | - | 1 (4.5%) |
| Atheism | 4 | 2 | 6 (27.3%) |
| Other | - | - | - |
| Levels of education | | | |
| High school graduate | 2 | - | 2 (9.1%) |
| Some college or 2 year college | 3 | 1 | 4 (18.2%) |
| 4 year college | 3 | 8 | 11 (50.0%) |
| Postgraduate | 3 | 2 | 5 (22.7%) |

The other two pieces of basic demographic information—levels of education and religion—included in Table 1 were not initially intended to be even or in any kind of balanced way for this study, because it would have been too hard to recruit participants in that fashion.

Religions of interviewees can always be an interesting variable to consider in a study on morality. The number of self-identified Protestant participants was over one half (See Table 1; 54.5%), while the other religions of each (Buddhism, Catholic, and Atheism) were small.[3] Nonetheless, there are two things to point out that Korean Protestants' belief might not significantly impact on the study findings: (1) As already reviewed in Chapter 2 of this study (literature review), according to Koh (1996), generally speaking, Korean Protestants are not radically Christianized or Westernized Christians; rather, they can be said to be 'Confucianized' Christians. In other words, they identified themselves as Christians, but they unconsciously follow and support Confucian values and traditions. (2) The number of Prostestants and that of non-Prostestant interviewees (3 Buddhists, 1 Catholic, and 6 Atheists) appeared to be close-to even (12 vs. 10, respectively). Since the doctrines, lessons, and/or teachings of non-Protestant

---

[3] It may be reasonable to think of Protestantism and Catholic as similar religions under Christianity, but these two religions have some considerable differences in their teaching about Korean traditional culture. Protestants have not been totally welcome to follow, for example, Korean traditional rituals such as conducting commemorative rites for ancestors. On the contrary, Catholics have been relatively liberal to follow such cultural tradition. Because of this tendency, I paid more attendtion to Prostestantism and its potential influence on Korean Protestants' conceptions of morality in the context of culture.

religions besides Atheism have been said to be not necessarily different from Korean traditional values and world views (Koh, 1996), if there are significant common themes in participants' conceptions of 'a moral person' across religions, they would be worthy to be examined and thought of Koreans', not particularly Korean Prostestants'. Moreover, in the actual conceptions that were made by Protestant interviewees did not differ a lot from those by the other participants, although one Protestant selected her moral exemplar among biblical characters. The characteristics of the exemplar from the Bible, however, were very similar to those of other moral exemplars for non-Protestant participants.

Interviewees appeared to have somewhat high levels of education; i.e., 20 out of 22 participants (90.9%) had some college experiences or higher. However, as long as this study focuses on 'naturalistic' conceptions of morality that come from academically non-experts in 'morality,' whatever level of education's potential influences on participants' conceptualization would be minimized.

Table 2 shows participants' majors in their college years. Some majors that might look like to be influential on participants' moral conceptions were liberal arts and social work. Because the nature of academic areas in liberal arts can be said to share their foundations with philosophical perspectives and social work itself has ethical basis, graduates of these majors may show some 'non-naturalistic' but 'theory-driven' conceptions of morality. For that reason, I particularly paid analytic attention to those 4 participants who were from English, French literature, and history—liberal arts—as well as one from social work, but their responses and conceptions did not appear to be much different from those of the other participants.

Table 4. Participants' Self-Reported Major in College Education

| Majors in college level education (n = 20, excluding 2 high school graduates) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Business | 6 | Communication | 2 |
| Science | 4 | Public Affairs | 1 |
| Liberal Arts | 3 | Social Work | 1 |
| Fine Arts | 2 | Family Studies | 1 |

## Data Collection

### *Methods*

I used in-depth interviews as the means of collecting data.  As the target of this study, the naturalistic conceptions of 'a moral person' is not a common theme that anyone can easily explore in everyday life.  In other words, laypeople rarely think about what kind of a person they think of as 'moral' in their routine life, unless they are asked about it with particular questions in certain circumstances.  This does not mean that their normal life has nothing to do with morality at all.  Rather, they may make several judgments on particular behaviors of others, happenings in their society, decisions of government, and so forth whether each one is righteous or not.  However, laypeople might have few opportunities to think seriously about why they regard it as right or wrong, what values would be basis of their judgments, or whether their judgments themselves are desirable or not (see Haidt, 2001; Haidt, 2003).  This is why in depth interviews seemed to be the best way to achieve the research goals of this study over, for example, the participant observation or ethnographical analysis, which seems to be extremely time-consuming method for the topic of this study.

The in-depth interviews for this study were semi-structured and open-ended. They were 'semi-structured,' because there were several 'core' questions that were asked to each interviewee. These core questions were also reviewed and approved by IRB at the University of Texas at Austin, before actual data collection and interviews began in South Korea (see Appendix B). The interviews were also 'open-ended' in that interviewees were allowed to talk about whatever topics came to their mind regarding 'morality,' even if those topics did not seem to be directly related to a particular interview question being asked. Moreover, some participants started their interview by replying that they had never thought about the topic of 'morality' or 'a moral person.' Still some other participants said that their parents had hardly talked about 'morality' and seemed to have little been interested in moral development or maturity for them. These interviewees needed to be asked to tell whatever they thought was related to 'morality' or whoever most influenced them on their current moral values.

For interviews, I and the five acquaintances who helped recruitment discussed the best convenient and comfortable places. Based on those discussions, actual interviews took place in various kinds of spaces such as someone's houses, a conference room of an institution where one of the acquaintances works at, a lounge for military officers, or a café, but all places were quiet and relaxing enough for the interviewer to lead each session of interviews and for the interviewees to concentrate on.

Each interview lasted between 30 and 60 minutes. Reading the consent form, ensuring the willingness of the participation, and signing on the consent form, interviewees were asked whether they would permit audio-recording of their interview.

Every participant agreed to have their interview recorded. Besides the audio-recording, the interviewer conducted note-taking the key components of participants' statements, nuances of individual responses, and specific emphasis from interviewees, which might be hard to be detected from a transcribed verbatim text at later phases of the analysis. When an interview ended, the participant was compensated for their participation. At the end, each one was asked whether he or she would like to voluntarily contribute to a follow-up interview, if requested, and was invited to sign on a form and to provide personal contact information, if agreed. Nevertheless, no follow-up interview was conducted, because I did not think it was necessary.

The gathered interview data from the first few respondents was fully transcribed immediately and briefly analyzed using coding procedures in grounded theory approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The findings of that preliminary analysis guided the following interviews in terms of refining the interview questions and revealing specific properties or dimensions of concepts to be more focused on. For example, based on the findings of preliminary analysis, I recognized that the interviews could be enriched with a couple of probing questions. If an interviewee was a housewife, she was more likely to talk about characteristics of a person who she met as a neighbor or issues of morality in child-rearing and education. Interviewees working with particular jobs tended to think about 'a moral person' within relationships at workplaces. Therefore, in the following interviews, I began leading the participants to think about the interview topics from situations with which they were most familiar.

*Language Issues*

All interviews were conducted in Korean, the native language of the researcher and participants.  Though English was also available as the language of the interviews for a few cases, using the native language was expected to provide both interviewer and interviewees with contexts in which they could interact more fluently and naturally.

For similar reasons, the researcher transcribed the interview data verbatim in Korean and analyzed the transcript in Korean.  Clearly, there may be other ways of handling language issues for this study.  For example, the researcher could have chosen to translate or transcribe the audio-recorded data of interviews into English first, and then, analyzed the English transcript.  However, this kind of procedure might constrain the interaction between researcher and the data from at least two directions.  First, the tone, the mood, or the context of statements can be much more easily lost during translating process of Korean transcript into English than analyzing Korean transcript and then translating the findings in English.  Second, even if the Korean transcript had been translated close-to-perfection into English, limitation would have been imposed on the researcher from fully and efficiently analyzing the data.  Unless the researcher is perfectly fluent in both Korean and English, it would be harder for the Korean analyst to extract exact concepts, precise meanings, appropriate categories, and implicit nuances or contexts from an English transcript than from a Korean one.  Therefore, as long as a Korean researcher conducted the current study and all the participants were Korean native speakers, the procedure of interviewing, transcribing, and analyzing in Korean language and then translating the findings into English may be the best way to handle the

language issues for this study.

Furthermore, to handle these language issues in an even more professional way, a few experts who are proficient in both languages of Korean and English, Korean culture, and/or psychological constructs as well as inquiries were invited to verify the accuracy of translation and the conveyance of the meanings. Specific details about the experts, rationales of inviting them to verify the study processes and findings, and the methodological characteristics of this handling will be discussed in the section of trustworthiness in this dissertation.

## Analysis

Analyzing the transcribed data, the researcher used the coding procedures from a grounded theory approach proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1998): open coding, axial coding, and selective coding.

### *Coding Processes*

### *Open Coding*

The goal of open coding is to identify, name, or label phenomena into concepts. Researchers attempt through open coding to break down the data "into discrete incidents, ideas, events, and acts and then [give] a name that represents or stands for these" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.105). For example, suppose that one interviewee talked about his great-grandmother's attitude to behave according to her own moral choices (to help the poor) as contrary to her husband's attitude ("Nobody can really relieve the poor from poverty; therefore, a small help is useless"). What characteristics of the old lady made

59

her great-grandson think of her as morally excellent?  Obviously, she appeared to have a moral value of 'helping others in need.'  Another possible answer may be her 'bravery.'  Particularly in a context of culture and tradition, many Koreans think of this era—probably, several decades ago—as a time of patriarchy; the old lady's character can be labeled as 'brave.'  In other words, a woman's 'moral' independence of her husband's beliefs during a patriarchal age in Korea can be coded as 'brave,' and it would be considered as one conception of 'a moral person.'

At the phase of open coding, I started the process with a question: "What are characteristics of 'a moral person' that this interviewee tried to convey here?"  Each of the identified characteristics was recorded into a cell of a spreadsheet program, with the ID number of the participant who made that comment, for instance, "honest (11)."

A total of 283 conceptions was identified including all overlapping characteristics.  For example, 'caring' was mentioned 13 different times by 9 participants as a characteristic of 'a moral person,' and I tried to encode each of conceptualization as a cell of a spreadsheet.

Through open coding, analysts also try to discover the 'properties' and 'dimensions' of concepts that are already named.  According to Strauss and Corbin (1998), a 'property' represents general or specific characteristics or attributes of a concept or a category, and 'dimension' indicates the range along which the general properties of a concept or a category may vary.  For instance, 'bravery' from the above case may be interpreted as her willingness to follow a moral code of her own in spite of potential risks or difficulties in her relationship with her husband.  Her readiness to do

something difficult seems similar to Oskar Schindler's 'bravery' through which he saved a number of Jewish people from his government, the Nazis, in World War II—at risk to his own life.  Clearly, the 'property' of moral 'bravery' is a *behavioral tendency to do things that are morally desirable despite possible dangers or difficulties resulting from such behavior.*  Now then, whose danger or difficulty was harder to overcome?  The old lady's or Mr. Schindler's?  This question may be a meaningful one in seeing a 'dimension' of the character 'brave.'  It can be said that the hardship of Oskar Schindler was about life-threatening danger from the Nazis; that of the old lady was a violation of social conventions and/or a relational pressure from her husband.  If there existed a selection board organized of people whose mission was to select an award for 'moral exemplars of bravery,' they would probably discuss individual cases of 'bravery' along with that kind of dimensional information: whose danger was harder to overcome.

Once concepts as well as their properties and dimensions are identified, grouping or categorizing those concepts based on the properties and/or dimensions is possible (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).  Through categorizing, researchers intend to cluster individual concepts with similar properties and/or dimensions to detect common, abstract themes underlying apparent conceptions.  For example, if one respondent talked about 'not telling a lie' while another mentioned 'telling the truth' as characters of moral persons, those two characteristics could be analyzed to share common property: 'honesty.'  Therefore, 'honesty' can be selected as a overarching property of 'not telling a lie' and 'telling the truth,' which is to be one of possible common and abstract categories to which previously identified discrete characteristics of 'a moral person' would belong.

61

The current research attempted to identify and extract substantive characteristics of 'a moral person' from the data. I grouped them into concepts and classified them with properties and dimensions through open coding. As the newly found concepts and their properties and dimensions were gathered, categories were also developed in the same process by naming or labeling those newly found, higher-order concepts. From the total 283 extracts of a moral person's characteristics for Koreans, sixty three categories were found and ready to be analyzed at the next phase of examination: axial coding.

*Axial Coding*

The purpose of axial coding is to systematically "[reassemble] data that were fractured during open coding" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.124). Reassembling data in axial coding may mean linking or combining similar categories found from open coding in order to organize the clusters of categories and find a hierarchical structure to them under which some higher-order, more abstract categories may lead other subcategories.

According to Strauss and Corbin (1998), the structure of categories can form a "more precise and complete explanation about phenomena (p.124)." During the open coding procedures, researchers may be most interested in identifying 'property' and 'dimension' of individual concepts that they named from their data. In axial coding, however, some subcategories may answer questions related to when, where, why, and how certain phenomena happen by whom. In other words, subcategories are derived from data to give categories greater explanatory power.

By answering the above questions, researchers can contextualize a phenomenon; i.e., the analysts come to explain 'how' (through what kind of process), 'why' (under

what kind of circumstances or stimuli), and 'by whom' a certain event happens.  Strauss

and Corbin (1998) suggest that a grounded theory researcher should combine both

structure and process of a happening in order to fully capture the phenomenon in a

dynamic way.  This combination—'structure with process'—can help an analyst produce

what Strauss and Corbin (1998) call a '*paradigm*,' organizational scheme, or perspective

with which he or she "systematically gathers and orders data in such a way that structure

and process are integrated" (p.128).  That is, by developing a paradigm as an analytic

device, researchers may be able to clarify *conditions* (when, where, and why a

phenomenon occurs), *action/interaction* (by whom and how an event or a happening

arises), and *consequences* of action or interaction.

At the phase of axial coding, I kept asking one question:  "What kind of

*circumstances* or *contexts* into which this category was rooted as a characteristic of a

moral person?"  Because the main target of this research was not people's behaviors

themselves, detailed questions about when, where, why and/or how, and by whom the

behaviors occurred were not generally applicable to this study.  Rather, because the focus

of the analysis was to identify conceptions of 'a moral person' and detect the structure of

the concepts, respondents' underlying meanings hidden behind each developed category

were of main interests.

For example, interviewees conceptualized 'not telling a lie' as one of important

moral behavioral characteristics.  For Korean participants, however, 'not telling a lie' was

not merely literally meant to refer to one's behaviors of not telling a lie or telling the truth

in any situation.  It frequently meant for Koreans to be honest in a broad sense, such as

reporting honest tax reports or acting correspondingly with one's words.  These

properties of the conception, 'not telling a lie,' led it to be classified into the same higher-

order category with subcategories of 'resisting temptation' and 'having no patience with

injustice' that might look to share similar properties with it.  The higher-order category

was named as 'living with integrity.'

Strauss and Corbin (1998), however, point out that the researchers should always

note that their ultimate goal through axial coding is to explain the relationships among

categories, not to have clear notions about *conditions*, *actions/interactions*, and

*consequences*.  This is because the *paradigm* in a grounded theory approach should never

be the end, but one of the tools for achieving the research goals.

As such, the ultimate research goal—building a theory of 'a moral person' for

Koreans—was to be achieved beyond the processes of axial coding.  The next phase of

coding, 'selective coding,' would open the final path for the goals of this study.

### Selective Coding

According to Strauss and Corbin (1998), selective coding is the process of

integrating and refining categories for researchers to construct a theory.  Through open

and axial coding, even though concepts and categories are scientifically discovered and

systematically linked to each other, this is not enough for the findings to evolve into a

theory.

Strauss and Corbin (1998) suggested that the first step for integrating categories is

to decide which one is to be a central or core category.  The central category can

"represent a main theme of the research," which can have "the ability to pull the other

categories together to form an explanatory whole" (p.146). Therefore, the central category should (1) be abstract enough, (2) appear frequently in the data, (3) be related to the other categories naturally, logically, and consistently, (4) have explanatory power, and (5) be able to explain all kinds of variations in concepts and categories dimensionally, contrarily, or alternatively. In some sense, it can be said that the central category must contain all the outcomes of the research in a condensed way with a few words or a phrase that can explain what the research is all about (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

After axial coding was done, when there were two levels in the hierarchical structure of data (subcategories and the next level of categories), I found it difficult to find more abstract, overarching categories to capture existing categories in a meaningful way. The list of categories looked like a trivial summation of all different concepts related to morality rather than a significant whole. It seemed to be almost impossible to progress into the selective coding phase. A big turning point in the analytic sensitivity was made through returning to the concepts found by open coding and trying to differentiate if each concept conveyed either behavioral or personality aspects first, and then, focusing on the contents of the concepts. For example, 'not telling a lie' and 'being honest' had been grouped into one same category, but that kind of analysis could not make three or more levels of structures to encompass the categories. After identifying 'not telling a lie' as a behavior and 'being honest' as a personality attribute, and then trying to take classifying steps within the groups of 'behaviors' and 'personality traits,' I could see more hierarchically plausible structure of categories. Detailed and entire dynamics occurred in the coding procedures and will be discussed in the next section.

Results and findings of selective coding that are particularly related to the 'central category' of the study will be uncovered at the last section in the chapter of findings.

## *Dynamics in Analyzing Procedures*

Doing open coding, I gathered all individual conceptions of 'a moral person' found from the transcript on a file of a word processor.  Figure 8 shows one page of the file containing those concepts.  It would be better to be reminded here again that most steps and phases of analysis were done in Korean language, as noted in the section for language issues for this study (See Figure 8, 9, and 10).  Once a prospective structure was discovered, I tried to translate findings into English (See Figure 11).

The reason that I tried to start collecting each conception on a separated file of a word processor was that I found it was so hard to take further steps of analysis with the concepts coded on the transcript itself after many were simply written across hundreds of pages.  Extracting only those concepts from transcript, however, I carefully focused on every process in order not to lose any contextual information where a specific concept was stated, as long as it looked as having importance for the future coding or analyzing processes.  I left an identification number with each concept as the number for the participant, the owner of the statement or concept (Figure 8).

As the phase of open coding went, I started to visualize each conceptions of 'a moral person' from participants on a presentation slide (Figure 9).  The main purpose of this visualization was to find relationships between each piece of concepts along with properties of similarity and difference of the concepts.  By doing this, I expected more clarity and precision might be available in the axial coding phase.  Therefore, individual

다양한 경험(15)—모든 것을 결정적이고 확정적인 것으로 생각
사람됨이 첫째다(15)—현재의 가훈
사람됨이란... 다양한 상황에서도 적응할 수 있는 능력, 됨됨이 (15)
다양한 경험의 중요성—미지의 상황에서도 헤쳐나갈 수 있는 능력이 됨(15)
극단적이지 않고 합리적이고 해결력이 있는(15)
다양한 경험, 열린 사고, 무난한 사회 관계(15) 20

일반적인 사회 기준에 맞추어서 올바르게 행동하는 사람(16)
공중도덕을 잘 지키는 사람(거리에 휴지를 버리지 않고, 교통신호를 잘 지키고)(16)
청렴 결백(16)
양심(16) 길거리에 휴지를 버리지 않고 교통신호를 잘 지키고
정의, 신의, 거짓말을 하지 않고(16)
남을 돕는 삶(16)—물질적 도움
지저분하거나 혐오감을 주는 친구라도 홀대하지 말라고 가르침(16)
왕따도 따돌리지 말고 받아들이라는 가르침(16)
착하고 선한 사람← 많은 사람을 경험하여 성장을 하게되면 스스로 인간이 되어가는(16)
인간다움—이해의 폭이 넓어지는(16)
신앙윤리—병들고 가난한 사람들을 섬기셨던 예수 그리스도(16)
몸으로 가인 봉사(16)
거짓말을 하지 않는다(16)
말을 바꾸지 않는다(16)
약속을 지킨다(16) 15

행동을 선택해야 할 순간엔 갈등하겠지만 결론을 내린 후 '나는 도덕적인 사람인가?'라고 질문(17)
양심에 불편하지 않고 당당할 수 있는 선택을 하는 것(17)
남에게 해가 되지 않은 선택(17)
자신에게 부끄럽지 않고 가치관에 어긋나지 않는 선택(17)
가치관—배워온 것들(17)
가훈 - 정직과 검소(17)

Figure 8. One Page Excerpt of the Word Processor File Containing Cconcepts

concepts were initially clustered into one category if they appeared to share similar properties in the contents of the moral characteristics. For example, all statements about honesty were combined into one category, 'honesty,' and these kinds of categories became the unit of next level of analysis. The small text boxes in Figure 9 depict that kind of categories. Particularly, I marked down what participant mentioned each concept how many times inside the boxes in order for me to keep track of the frequency that might indicate a potential importance of every category.

The next analysis of axial coding was to cluster those boxed categories (now they were subcategories) into higher-order categories according to the properties and contents of the subcategories. For example, perspective taking and caring for others, which were both subcategories, were categorized into one bigger concept. The oval shapes in Figure

9 show the bigger concepts emerged.
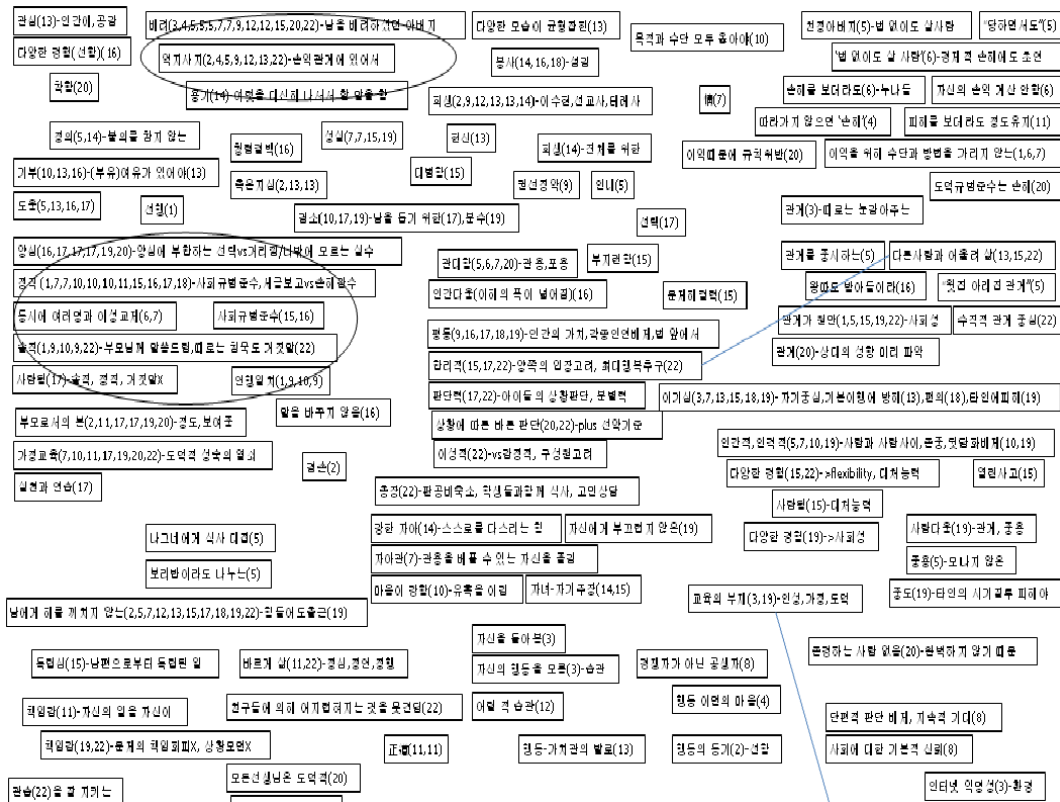


Figure 9. Initial Phase of Open Coding on a Presentation slide

After this point of analysis, however, I found it was difficult to progress into

further phases with the type of visualization of the presentation slide. Specifically, as

analysis went on, moving or rearranging the categories (i.e., the type of text-box or oval

shape) for the analytical purposes turned out to be difficult because of the crowdedness

on the 2D space of the slide. Thereafter, I tried to transfer all the findings to a

spreadsheet program where multiple levels of hierarchy can be clearly structured (Figure

10). As shown in Figure 10, column *C*, *F*, and *I* contain individual pieces of

subcategories, while column *B*, *E*, and *H* include emerged higher-order categories based

68

on the subcategories.  The next phase of analysis could have tried to find more abstract categories based on the emerging higher-order ones and added each column to the left side of column *B*, *E*, and *H*.

| B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 남에게 해를 끼치지 않는[10] | | | 공평한[5] | | | | | |
| 남을 의식하는 | 타인의 존재를 의식하는-아파트 층간 소음 | | | 합리적인[3] | | | | | |
| | | | | 판단력이 있는[2] | | | | | |
| | 남을 배려하는[9] | | rational | 융통성이 있는 | | 받아들이는/관대한/고집없는 | 열린사고를 하는 | | |
| | 역지사지[7] | | | | | | | | |
| | 인간적/인격적인[4] | | | | | 작은 것에 얽매이지 않는 | 대범한 | | |
| | 관대한[4] | | | | | | | | |
| | 공감하는 – 인간애 | | | 겸손한[3] | | | | | |
| caring | 나그네를 대접하는(보리밥이라도 나누는) | | | 청렴결백한 | | | | | |
| | | | 과하지 않은/욕심없는 | 겸손한 | | 참을성이 있는 | 인내하는 | | |
| | 인간관계가 원만한[5] | | | | | | | | |
| | 다른 사람과 잘 어울려 사는[3] | | | 모나지 않은(중용) | | | | | |
| 인간관계를 잘 | 관계를 중시하는[3] | | 튀지 않는/중도를 지키는 | 다수의 의견에 따르는 | | 판단력/지혜/책임감 | 문제 해결력이 있는 | | |
| | 말을 바꾸지 않는 | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | 다양한 모습이 균형잡힌 | | 정감/사람 사랑/인간관계 중시 | 情이 있는 | | |
| | 예절바른[5] | | 균형 잡힌 | 균형을 갖춘-원칙과 융통성 | | | | | |
| | 어른을 공경하는[3] | | | | | | | | |
| 공경심이 있는 | 권위에 대해 공경하는[2] | | | | | | 정직한[8] | | |
| | | | | | | | 솔직한[4] | | |
| 전통가치를 | 사람의 도리를 다하는[3] | | 책임감 | 책임감이 있는[3] | | | 거짓말을 하지 않는[4] | | |
| 중시하는 / | 효도하는 | | | | | | 양심적인[4] | | |
| 겸손한 / | 부모에 순종하는 | | | 성실한[3] | | | 자신에게 부끄럽지 않은 | | |
| | | | 성실한 | 부지런한 | | | 자신을 돌아보는 | | |
| | | | | | | integrity | 강한 자아-유혹을 이기고 스스로를 다스림 | | |
| | 남을 돕는[4] | | | | | | | | |
| | 봉사하는[3] | | | | | 신중한/신뢰할만한/정직한 | 언행이 일치하는[3] | | |
| 선행을 하는 | 선행을 하는 | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | 기본을 지키는[5] | | |
| | 희생하는[5] | | | | | 원칙에 충실한 | 원칙을 지키는[2] | | |
| 희생적인 | 헌신적인 | | | 정의로운[2]-불의를 보고 참지 않는 | | | | | |
| | | | 정의감이 투철한/자아감 | 용기있는 | | | 공중도덕을 잘 지키는[4] | | |
| 나누는/돕는/욕 | 기부하는[3] | | | | | 지킬 것을 지키는 | 사회 규범을 준수하는[2] | | |
| | | | | | | | 배운 것을 지키는 | | |
| 손해를 | 착한 | | | | | | | | |

Figure 10. A Phase of Analysis on a Spreadsheet

Now at the first phase of axial coding, as I mentioned at the end of previous section, I encountered a problem in interacting with my data and findings.  The two levels' hierarchical structure of findings looked fine, but more abstract, general categories that would possibly cluster similar categories in the second level were hardly meaningful. Particularly regarding the ultimate destination of this explorative study—building a theory of 'a moral person' for Koreans, I could not simply proceed any further with the findings that I had up to the phase.  In other words, a theory of 'a moral person' with just a quite bit number of moral characters, values, and virtues under a few shallow levels of hierarchical structure would have drawbacks and blind-sides in explaining Koreans'

69

morality as a theory.

By going back to the individual concepts and their superior categories and examining their properties, I came to recognize that each concept basically indicated one of three aspects of morality of a person: behavior, personality, and psychological function. As a matter of fact, behavioral and personality format of concepts were discovered first with ease. And then, through the 'constant comparison' in the grounded theory approach, some concepts of 'a moral person' that did not fit well in the categories of 'behavior' or 'personality' were found (e.g., perspective taking, reflective thinking, etc.). They required an analytic endeavor to make another category into which those new group of concepts would be placed. I made one, named it 'psychological function,' and tried to plug in those concepts.

At any rate, these newly identified properties—behaviors, personality traits, and psychological functions—seemed to have been hidden behind the content of morality as a construct. For example, 'not telling a lie' is a concept showing a behavior, but the behavioral aspect of the concept was ignored while the analytical focus was solely on the content of the concept, 'honesty' in this case.

When I began taking into account those three aspects—behavior, personality, and psychological function—in analysis, further steps of investigation seemed promising and productive. As it appears in Figure 11, the entire structure of the conceptions found could be meaningfully organized as three hierarchical levels of categories. The hierarchy among categories means that those levels show each category's degree of abstractness, explanatory power, and in turn, the relationships between subordinate and superior ones.

1. 도덕 행동
   a. 기본적 도덕 행동, 도덕성의 기본
      i. 남에게 해를 끼치지 않는
      ii. 공중도덕을 잘 지키는
   b. 다른 사람을 돕는
      i. 다른 사람을 돕는 행동의 의미
      ii. 기부하는, 물질적으로 돕는
      iii. 자원봉사 하는
      iv. 자신을 희생하는
   c. 효도하는, 효의 사회적 확장
      i. 부모를 공경하고 부모에 순종하는
      ii. 부모와 자녀 간의 동일시
      iii. 효의 확장으로서의 어른 공경
   d. 집단, 단체, 공동체 안에서의 중용
      i. 집단의 결정이나 다수의 행동을 따르는
      ii. 검소와 절제를 실천하는
   e. 진실하게 행동하는
      i. 거짓말을 하지 않는
      ii. 유혹에 빠지지 않는
      iii. 불의를 참지 않는
   f. 문제를 해결하는
2. 도덕적 성격 특성
   a. 타인 중심의
      i. 타인을 배려하는
      ii. 중도를 지키는, 겸손한
      iii. 관대한
   b. 인간관계가 좋은
      i. 사회성이 있는
      ii. 타인과 잘 어울리는
   c. 진실한
      i. 정직한, 신뢰할만 한
      ii. 원칙을 고수하는
      iii. 공정한
   d. 책임감 있는
      i. 책임감이 있는
      ii. 성실한
      iii. 인내심이 있는
   e. 선한
      i. 착한
      ii. 융통성이 있는
3. 심리적 작용
   a. 인지 작용
      i. 타인의 입장을 고려하는
      ii. 인간관계를 중요시 하는
      iii. 자신을 돌아보는
      iv. 타인과 더불어 사는 삶의 의미를 깨닫는
      v. 상호성에 대해 고려하는
   b. 정의적 작용
      i. 측은지심이 있는
      ii. 도덕적인 것을 즐기는
      iii. 청렴결백한
      iv. 여유가 있는
   c. 동기 작용
      i. 체면을 지키기 위해
      ii. 의지와 결단력이 있는

Figure 11. A Three-Level Hierarchical Structure of Naturalistic Conceptions of 'a Moral Person' at Earlier Phase of Analysis

71

From Figure 11, for example, the highest level of categories, such as 'Visible Behaviors,' are the most abstract and superior one having more explanatory power than any other lower level categories.  By contrast, the categories in the lowest level, such as 'Not doing another person harm,' contains the most concrete descriptors that showed specific behaviors of 'a moral person' in a situation.

As it can easily be noticed, identifying what aspect that each concept would indicate among the three was the easiest task in the coding process.  Therefore, I firstly grouped each descriptor along with whether it showed behavior, personality, or psychological function.  From Figure 11, 'Visible Behaviors,' 'Personality Traits,' and 'Psychological Functions' are the groups that were developed to classify individual descriptors according to the aspect.  The second step of categorizing was to make subcategories from individual concepts (descriptors).  In Figure 11, 'not doing another person harm, misconduct, or mischief,' 'observing 'public morality' or civil virtues,' and so on are the subcategories emerged from the group of descriptors found through the second step of categorizing.  The third step was to cluster those subcategories to find more abstract, superior categories.  So, the middle level categories from Figure 11, such as 'moral basics, foundation of morality for Koreans,' 'helping other people,' 'practicing filial piety and beyond,' and so forth are the outcomes of the third step of analysis.

The structure in Figure 11 can also be used as that of text body for the findings section of this study.  Therefore, detailed exploration of the concepts, categories, and structure will be discussed at the next chapter: "Findings."

After the third step of categorizing, the structure of categories as of Figure 11

72

remained for a while until I started analyzing the data about 'moral exemplars' for Korean participants. Coding the characteristics of 'moral exemplars,' I found that Koreans generally think of people with multiple moral characters as 'exemplars.' In addition, those characters for a moral exemplar tended to be balanced in a certain way where individual morality (e.g., honesty or bravery) and relational morality (e.g., generosity or sacrificing) co-exit in a person. These findings led me to establish another level of category under 'Visual Behaviors' and 'Personality Traits,' and the final results of the structure look like Figure 14. More detailed description about the characteristics of 'moral exemplars' and the entire structure of the conceptions of 'a moral person' will be discussed in the chapter of findings in this dissertation.

Note that in the process of categorizing—specifically from organizing categories as Figure 10 to Figure 11, I came to think that translating all levels of categories into English at that phase would be optimal for the next phases of analysis (Figure 12). As the analysis went on more abstract levels, I, as the analyst, encountered difficulties in finding a best matching label for a category between Korean and English. For example, the concept of 'integrity' that was used as a higher level category for honest behaviors and conscientious personality traits does not have a Korean matching concept with the same level of abstractness. So, translating categories in that step of analysis and continuing coding in English was the solution for the language issues for this study.

1. Visible Behaviors
    a. Moral Basics; Foundation of Morality for Koreans
        i. Not doing another person harm, misconduct, or mischief
        ii. Observing 'public morality' or civil virtues
    b. Helping Other People
        i. Helping others for Koreans (in a broad sense)
        ii. Helping others in needs (materialistically); Donating
        iii. Volunteering
        iv. Sacrificing Oneself for the Good for Others
    c. Practicing Filial Piety and Beyond
        i. Respecting parents; Obedience to parents
        ii. Identifying parents and children
        iii. Extension of filial piety to other elders
    d. Being and Staying Just One of the Majority (Modesty)
        i. Conforming group decisions or following majority's behaviors/opinion
        ii. Living a thrifty life
    e. Living with Integrity
        i. Not telling a lie
        ii. Resisting temptations
        iii. Having no patience with injustice
    f. Solving Problems
2. Personality Traits
    a. Others Centered; Others Oriented
        i. Caring others
        ii. Modest; Humble
        iii. Generous; Broad-minded
    b. Having Good Relationships with Others
        i. Friendly; Sociable; Having social skills
        ii. Harmonious
    c. Having Integrity
        i. Honest; Trustworthy
        ii. Principled; Disciplined (Humane; Duty-based)
        iii. Impartial; Fair
    d. Responsible
        i. Having responsibility
        ii. Diligent; Hard-working
        iii. Perseverant; Enduring
    e. Goodhearted
        i. Good; Nice
        ii. Flexible; Elastic
3. Psychological Functions
    a. Cognitive Functions
        i. Perspective taking
        ii. Putting importance on interpersonal relationships
        iii. Reflective thinking
        iv. Having a sense of 'living together with others'
        v. Reasoning (on reciprocity)
    b. Emotional (Affective) Functions
        i. Being compassionate
        ii. Valuing to be moral; Enjoying being moral
        iii. Being morally firm; Incorruptible
        iv. Room in mind
    c. Motivational Functions
        i. To keep social face
        ii. Having a strong willpower

Figure 12.  English Version of the Three Level Hierarchical Structure of
Naturalistic Conceptions (Figure 11)

**Establishing Trustworthiness**

*Basic Rationales for Trustworthiness of Empirical Research*

To make research findings trustworthy has long been a common goal for researchers. Conducting quantitative research with a conventional paradigm, researchers try to ensure the validity and reliability of the methods of data gathering, and the validity and reliability is the key criteria of the plausibility and persuasiveness of the study (Golafshani, 2003; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In brief, the validity for quantitative research generally indicates how accurate the measurement methods are and whether they actually measure what they are intended to measure. The reliability in quantitative research refers to whether the research findings are replicable (Golafshani, 2003). Lincoln and Guba (1985) explained the validity and reliability in conventional quantitative research with other words: (1) Whether the findings reflect the "true" causal relationship between two variables (*internal validity*), (2) Whether the findings can be applicable to other contexts with other participants (*external validity*), (3) Whether the findings would be repeated if the study was conducted with similar participants in similar contexts (*reliability*), and (4) Whether the findings are free from possible "biases, motivation, interests, or perspectives" of the researcher (*objectivity*). These terms, concepts, and restrictions for quantitative research, however, seem not to be directly applicable to qualitative research due to the paradigmatic differences between the two research trends (Golafshani, 2003; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), *credibility*, *transferability*, *dependability*, and *confirmability* are four criteria of trustworthiness in qualitative research, matching

75

those for quantitative research: *external validity*, *internal validity*, *reliability*, and *objectivity*, respectively.

### *Trustworthiness of Qualitative Research and This Study*

*Credibility*

*Credibility* means how credible the qualitative research findings are for the participants or respondents of the study, who are considered as constructors of 'realities' in the paradigm of naturalistic inquiries. Unlike the research in a conventional quantitative paradigm, qualitative research does not assume one tangible 'true' reality (parameters, population, true values, etc.); therefore, the findings of a study must be approvable for the agencies that construct the realities and provide research data. Hence, to have enough time to study and observe phenomena (*prolonged engagement*) or to invite one or a few participants to check the authenticity of the findings or conclusions (*member checks*) are recommendable strategies for augmenting credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

In the process of making this study's findings credible, I engaged in the analysis of the data for about one and a half year, representing the period from the time when the data gathering was completed to the point when the analysis was roughly done. Although the length of time of 1.5 year was not in my deliberate plan at the initial phase of the study, developing a theory from qualitative data with a reliable fashion actually took time. I did not 'literally observe' phenomena of 'a moral person' for Koreans for such a long time, I 'lived with' the gathered data relatively long enough to find credible results.

For the credibility of the findings, I also decided to do a *'quasi' member check.*

76

The original meaning of *member check* is to achieve some of study participants' check and confirmation whether the research findings reflect the reality for their life situations. For this study, however, even though I conducted the data collection in Korea with South Korean people, most of my other research activities have been executed in the United States. This physical distance between me and the participants made it hard to do *member check* with actual participants. Moreover, at one point of time of analysis, all study findings were written in English, not the native language for Korean participants. I could have requested a few participants for *member check*, but it must have been very difficult tasks to deal with for them.

Therefore, I chose to request a 'member-check' sort of task to a Korean-American person who is very familiar with Korean culture and language as well as Americans' ways of thinking and English. He has lived in the United States since he was an elementary school student. He graduated from a university and has been working for a company for about 20 years in America. At the same time, he has been a member of a Korean church for his life time. He has met, been acquainted with, communicated, and 'lived together' with Koreans and Korean-Americans with a wide variety of backgrounds. So, I was comfortable in asking him to check whether the research findings make sense for his perspective and other Koreans' viewpoints that he knows of. In addition, he was also helpful to adjust and find proper English expressions for the findings from Korean people in Korean language.

### Transferability

*Transferability* in itself is not a serious responsibility for a qualitative researcher,

because any naturalistic inquirer only focuses on the specific sites or contexts of interest, not any other context where the findings might be applied in the future (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Again, as long as qualitative researchers essentially conduct their studies based on the 'multiple realities' assumption, it is impossible for them to consider another set of realities which is not the direct target of their research. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that a person who intends to transfer particular findings of qualitative research to different sites may have more responsibility in accumulating "empirical evidence about contextual similarity." That is, "the responsibility of the original investigator ends in providing sufficient descriptive data to make such similarity judgments possible [by the person who want to apply those findings to different contexts]" (p.298).

For the transferability of this study, I provided detailed information about the process of data gathering and demographic characteristics of participants in the previous section of 'participants.'

### Dependability

As far as qualitative research is fundamentally rooted in the presupposition of 'multiple realities,' *reliability* or replicability of one study to another has no meaning in qualitative research. That is, naturalistic inquiry basically understands 'realities' as "ephemeral and changing;" there are few things consistent, unchanging, and replicable in reality in qualitative research. Rather, the naturalist comes to integrate observed changes and stimulating factors of those changes as the target of investigation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Consequently, how dependable the findings are on particular participants in specific contexts (*dependability*) seems the proper conceptions of 'reliability' of a

78

qualitative study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

### *Confirmability*

Lincoln and Guba (1985) define *confirmability* in qualitative research as the 'quality' of data. They point out that *objectivity* in quantitative research requires unbiased and neutral—free from values—characteristics of the researcher for the findings of the study to be 'objective.' It is also widely agreed, in the conventional paradigm, that if some findings are based on the experiences of just one person, they would be 'subjective' or biased. Therefore, to ensure 'objectivity' of findings, researchers need to increase as much as possible the number of participants. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), however, this quantity-based *objectivity* cannot be directly applied to qualitative studies. The qualitative sense of 'objectivity,' they argue, is similar to a conception people may have when they say, "The quality of this report is really good," or "you nicely summarized the whole passage." In relation to qualitative research then, the question that asks about the 'objectivity' of data (*confirmability*) is, "Are these data *confirmable*?" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

To establish trustworthiness of the methodology and findings for this dissertation research, I also conducted another activity, part of which Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommend as enhancing trustworthiness for qualitative research: '*reflexive journal.*' *Reflexive journal* is an activity of the researcher to 'keep a kind of diary' about every activity, feeling, and thought—about 'method' and 'self'—related to conducting research. The term 'reflexive' implies the purposes of keeping the journal: to check whether the

outcomes are free from any bias on the part of the researcher.  It can include (1) the

schedule of daily activity and "logistics" of the study, (2) personal diary of the researcher

showing how individual values or interests may be growing or changing, (3) "a

methodological log in which methodological decisions and accompanying rationales

(Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.327)."  Although *reflexive journal* is just an activity, it can be a

broad-ranging strategy for researchers to enhance all four areas of trustworthiness

(Lincoln & Guba, 1985).


## Stance as the Primary Researcher

As a researcher using the grounded theory approach, I tried to do my best to keep

myself from allowing any of my presuppositions to impact data gathering, analyzing

steps, or summarizing the findings.  However, as a qualitative researcher, I have to accept

that this study could not be perfectly free from the personal aspects of mine, such as my

assumptions or biases.  Therefore, I had better describe every factor that potentially

influenced this study.  Following paragraphs in this section may be helpful to better

understand the findings of the study.

I am a 38 year-old Korean male, with a B.A. in Education from a University in

Korea and a Masters in Educational Psychology from a graduate program in the United

States.  I had lived in Seoul, the capital city of Republic of Korea (South Korea),

throughout my life in Korea, and then, moved to the United States and spent 8 years in

my doctoral program.

Growing up in a highly competitive education system where most students live a

stressful life, I wanted to be a professional in education to make a big difference in Korean education system.  During college years, however, I kept asking myself three questions; "What is education?"  "Is teaching and learning within school settings the only characteristic of education?"  "If there are other aspects of education to think about, what are they?"

One day, when I was in a passenger cabin of a subway train, I came across a situation where a few five and six year old children were bothering other passengers with all kinds of mischief and loud voices but their parents did not try to stop them.  It was the first moment for me to start seriously pondering socio-moral education and development as my future direction of study in education.  So, I went into a graduate school in Korea and took courses in educational psychology, focusing on moral development and education.

During my graduate school years in Korea, I established the academic foundation for my morality research in a broad context of social development of children.  Particularly through the weekly research team meeting with the other graduate students under Dr. Yong-Lin Moon's supervision, I was able to widen the scope of my research interests not only into the area of moral development and education but also into the areas of multiple intelligences [MI] and emotional intelligence [EQ].

In those days during the research meetings, I became interested in Koreans' unique characteristics of psychological phenomena.  I was enjoying every opportunity of reading and conducting research, but one big question came to my mind, "Are those research findings about socio-moral development and education from Western cultures

directly applicable to Koreans?" However, this inquiry was not thoroughly pursued for a while, although Dr. Moon encouraged me and I was excited very much to find some school of Korean researchers in psychology who had been already contributing to the literature with findings of Koreans' unique psychosocial phenomena.

Since I began my doctoral courses in the United States, I revisited the topic of cultural differences in moral development. As a way of expressing cultural differences, differentiating cultures into individualistic and collectivistic was really interesting to me at that time. The topic of my term projects for the courses that I was taking those days tended to have something to do with the framework of Individualism-vs.-Collectivism. Those works on cultural differences turned out to be an early phase of the literature review for my dissertation research.

Two big topics that I also explored within the paradigm of cultural difference were value studies and Confucianism. Studies on value for people from different cultures were interesting to me in that value system for each culture seemed to be able to reflect cultural specificities very well, particularly in relation to morality. In the course of exploring value system of cultures, I encountered the topic of Confucianism as a powerful framework in explaining Korean culture. As a Korean, I had frequently heard that Korean culture was mainly based on the Confucian world view and doctrines, but it was impressive that I found some scholarly works from non-East Asian scholars saying South Korea is the most Confucian country among the contemporary societies in the world.

Taking the course of *Qualitative Research Methods*, I met the grounded theory

82

approach as a powerful qualitative research paradigm. The idea of being solely grounded into the gathered data rather than findings from the literature or theoretical hypotheses fascinated me. It seemed to be a scientific, systematic paradigm to qualitatively approach the phenomena of interest. Through discussion with my academic advisor, Dr. Toni Falbo, I decided the grounded theory approach was the main research method for my dissertation study.

At last, in the process of my qualifying examinations, I set up the topic of my dissertation as Koreans' morality in the context of culture. Because the topic of "morality" seemed too broad to examine with a qualitative study, I decided to focus on the naturalistic conceptions of 'a moral person' for Koreans.

The pilot study for this dissertation research was a stepping stone for the main study. Four Korean graduate students who were studying in the United States were invited to participate in semi-structured interviews discussing their moral values and the data was analyzed with the grounded theory approach. Through the study, I could say that Koreans have something unique in their thoughts in relation to morality. The study was also helpful to refine the process of translating languages (I will discuss the language issues more in detail in the "Method" chapter of this dissertation).

During the early years in my doctoral program, I had an informal group of several Korean graduate students who had a similar background from Korea; for example, they were from the same graduate program when they were in Korea. With this group of students I used to meet once a week to discuss various topics from their life experiences in the United States and the challenges and struggles in their school life as doctoral

students.  This experience was very useful for me to understand Koreans' thinking and its orientation in relation to moral conceptions and judgments.

I have been a Christian (Protestant) for about more than thirty years.  I have not only attended the worship service in my church every Sunday, but also actively joined in many kinds of extra activities such as bible studies, choir practices and performances, and small group gatherings with other members.  This did not chang in the United States since I arrived as a new doctoral student.  Generally Korean Christians attend Korean church when they are abroad, and I have also been a member of a Korean church.  I have attended three different Korean churches during my doctoral years, and I spent at least one and a half year in each church; therefore, I had experience with many different Koreans in the United States.

Finally, I have to talk about the research experiences in the School of Nursing.  I was fortunate to have both quantitative and qualitative research studies as a graduate research assistant for multiple projects.  A qualitative study with the other researchers on ethnic-specific contexts of health-related concerns (Sterling, Fowles, Kim**,** Latimer, & Walker, under review; Walker, Sterling, Kim, Latimer, & Garcia, under review) led me to understand how fundamentally different cultural specificities are in people's daily life.  Another qualitative study keeps inviting me to think about proper attitudes or ethics that are required for a qualitative researcher and all kinds of language issues for a study with multicultural and multi-linguistic backgrounds.

# CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

## Rationale for the Findings Chapter

Through the process of open coding, a total number of 283 descriptors of 'a moral person' from 22 South Korean interviewees were found. These initial concepts were collected from interviewees' responses to the questions, such as, "What kind of person seems to be moral to you?" or "What are the characteristics of a moral person for you?" Answering these questions, Korean participants mostly discussed behavioral patterns or personality tendencies of 'a moral person' for them. Therefore, descriptors found naturally appeared to explain the behavioral or personality characteristics of 'a moral person' for participants.

These explicit properties of descriptors (showing either personality or behaviors) were helpful to take next steps where I tried to categorize them into higher order, more abstract concepts and themes. Frankly speaking, at earlier phases of examination, analytic efforts were exclusively focused on what kind of moral character that each descriptor indicated. In other words, the first and foremost interest then was to identify what kinds of moral characters (e.g., helping others, honesty, caring, etc.) were mentioned by participants and what each character meant for the respondents. This analytic focus, however, seemed to allow me to cluster descriptors of personality and those of behaviors together into one bigger category. It then became very hard to take further analyzing steps any more. Hence, an early classification between behaviors and personality traits for 'a moral person' was crucial for further analyses.

That identification of conceptions between personality and behaviors was very

clear and obvious, and in turn, it was relatively easy to classify them into those two higher order categories.  It was because descriptors of behaviors showed a moral person's behaviors with a kind of sentence format, "A person who does A, B, and C is moral," while personality appeared as an adjective in participants' responses: "A moral person is _____ person," or "A person who is _____ is moral."

Through the process of constant comparison in the grounded theory approach, some descriptors that had been classified as behavioral characteristics did not seemed to be ordinary, value-oriented examples of moral behaviors.  Rather, they appeared to be relatively neutral (value-free) and represent how people with morality psychologically function (cognitively, emotionally, or motivationally) in particular contexts.  For example, *perspective taking* that is not always regarded as a moral behavior was mentioned by Korean participants as one aspect for 'a moral person' for them.  It can be labeled as a cognitive function that may promote moral behaviors or emotional outcomes.  As I collected these kinds of descriptors, another higher order category of 'psychological functions' emerged as the same level of hierarchy with 'behaviors' and 'personality.' Therefore, the descriptors could be organized into three highest order categories, 'behaviors,' 'personality,' and 'psychological functions,' and these categories played a significant role to build a theory of 'a moral person' for Koreans in the later phases of analysis.

So, categories of *behaviors*, *personality*, and *psychological functions* emerged from data and were ready to contain subcategories or descriptors.  *Behaviors* here refer to physical activities and visible actions that anyone can view and understand as they are

seen.  Particularly for this study, therefore, the category for *behaviors* mainly contains the concepts describing certain behaviors that many Korean participants agreed upon them as 'moral' actions.  For example, if an interviewee mentioned that a person who joins in and volunteers at a social service organization can be regarded as moral, 'volunteering at social service organization' is counted as one of visible behaviors.

Another group of conceptualizations by participants can be classified into the category of *personality*.  The concepts belonged to this category were types of descriptors representing personality traits of 'a moral person' for Koreans.  Personality traits indicate some set of characters of a person that are relatively abstract, long-lasting, and non-conditional (McAdams, 1995), which are expressed as adjectives describing a person's characteristics.  For instance, 'extrovert,' 'agreeable,' 'conscientious,' and many more similar kinds of attributes were frequently used and investigated in psychology to understand human personality, whereas 'honest,' 'thrift,' and 'diligent' were some examples of descriptors showing the kinds of personality traits that Koreans might think of as a moral person's.

As the name of the last category, *psychological functions* refers here to cognitive, emotional, or motivational functions that 'a moral person' can reveal in certain circumstances.  Some of these functions look morally value-free.  For example, reasoning, keeping social faces, or having strong willpower does not seem to be directly related to morality.  It seemed, however, that they can lead a person, in morality-related situations, to take moral actions and to make morally appropriate judgments.  It was unclear, nonetheless, based on the data, that all moral persons necessarily show these functions in

most situations.

It is impossible and unnecessary to explain every piece of concepts of 283 descriptors in this section. The concepts that appeared to share basic properties (behavior, personality, or psychological function) and meanings (honesty, helping others, etc.) were combined with each other and reduced into a category that was of a lower order and dealt with as a subcategory to a higher one. So, the basic unit of analysis here in the findings section was this subcategory developed from clusters of concepts. Some concepts out of those 283, the actual unit of analysis of this research, were introduced as quotes in each section, as supportive evidence of research findings.

It seemed natural that frequently mentioned concepts were easily developed as a category, while those pointed out by one or two interviewees were sometimes dropped from analytic interests. Concepts stated many times actually constituted the main body of this findings part, but the other concepts were also thoroughly examined and included in the findings if they had something to do with already emerged themes and had possibility to make some statements stronger.

Each subcategory was also able to be clustered based on its meaning(s) into more abstract categories that were interpreted as emerged themes. For example, subcategories of such behaviors as 'not telling a lie,' 'resisting temptations,' and 'having no patience with injustice' were found to be linked and placed into a theme of 'living with integrity.'

As mentioned in the earlier section, 'method,' of this dissertation, trying to find best matching English words for the findings was one of the most challenging tasks in this research. Efforts were focused on how to convey Korean meanings as full as

possible instead of just mechanically matching corresponding English words.  For instance, there was a personality trait by Koreans, '사회성이 있는 [*Sa-Hoe-Šung*],' which was often directly translated into an English word, 'sociable.'  A sociable person for English speaking people is one who enjoys accompanying with others and having conversations.  Sometimes the term is used interchangeably with words like 'friendly' or 'affable' (American Heritage Dictionary, 2006).  However, this personality characteristic for Korean participants appeared to have a broader sphere of meanings.  Including all meanings of an English word, 'sociable,' it seemed to indicate for Koreans a type of person who has a wide variety of social skills, including generosity and/or sacrifice, with which a person can make every interpersonal relationship wonderful and significant.  Many times, 'sociable' is regarded Koreans as a fundamental ability to be successful in the society.  Even it tended to be interpreted as an essential human nature; i.e., a 'sociable' person for Koreans was said to be often considered as humane person.  In sum, regarding this kind of cases, every conception from Korean participants was deeply investigated in terms of its meaning(s) to sufficiently capture the meaning(s) in English language.

### Characteristics of 'a Moral Person'

*VISIBLE BEHAVIORS*

***Community Based Moral Behaviors***

Moral behaviors included in this section appeared to have something to do with the existence of other people in society.  Broadly speaking, those other people for Korean

participants seemed to be somebody else in general, but sometimes they were parents or

members of an in-group to which interviewees belonged.  In a sense, therefore, all these

'other people,' no matter what kind of relationships that they shared with the participants

could be named as members of kinds of community for South Koreans.  Many

participants talked about this kind of 'other-oriented' moral behaviors much more

frequently than about different kind of behaviors.

***Moral Basics; Foundation of Morality for Koreans***

South Korean participants most frequently mentioned these behavioral

characteristics—'not doing another person harm' and 'observing public morality'—for

those of 'a moral person.'  Some people used these two types of behaviors

interchangeably and other people pointed out the behavioral examples from 'observing

public morality' (e.g., 'strictly following traffic signs and signals') for those for 'not

doing another person harm.'

### *Not doing another person harm, misconduct, or mischief*

This was the most common behavioral characteristic of 'a moral person' for the

participants of this study.  Ten out of twenty two people (45.5%) talked about this

behavior.  What does "doing other people harm" mean for the South Korean participants

of this study?  It does not exclusively mean for them that an immoral person physically

hurts another person or deliberately does some evil behaviors that can cause severe harm

to people.  Rather, "doing other people harm" here appeared to indicate behaviors that

may bring about inconvenience or annoyance.  In other words, behaviors of doing other

people harm represent not only crime-level ones that can make physical, materialistic,

and/or mental damages happen but also a break of social customs, conventional rules, or public morality, which can generate emotional discomfort to others.

Intvr: What do you mean by 'not doing another person harm?'

P02m: For example, when you come to make a phone call in a coach of subway, of course, I know you're always very busy and you can use your cell phone anywhere. However, in a kind of space like inside a coach of subway, you have to volume down your voice and make the call as short as possible. If you loudly chat over the phone long time, it would bother others keeping silent in there. … If you behave with a consideration of other people's position, you can avoid behaviors that might do another person harm. I think this is essential. It is really a fundamental principle for us to keep not only toward our acquaintances but also toward strangers.

P07f: … My mother emphasized me 'not doing another person harm,' and now I myself put importance on that value like, "I'd better not do another person harm.' … For example, if you borrowed something like, money or stuff, you have to return it on time. When you moved something for your convenience in public space, for instance, chairs or things like that, you need to return them to the original status. You have to be silent in a library. In sum, you have to be considerate other people's existence and care for their need.

P19f: I think living a life of 'not doing another person harm and practicing basic courtesy and proprieties' is moral. … A moral person is a person who does not do another person harm.' … In order not to do another person harm, for example, you must not make a loud noise in public places, not physically hurt another person intentionally, or not gossiping about others behind their backs.

For Korean participants as laypeople for the academic areas of morality, the

91

phrase, 'not doing certain things that are morally wrong,' automatically mean 'doing something morally right.' Actually, people who mentioned 'not doing another person harm' took examples of doing righteous behaviors, such as 'strictly following traffic signs and signals,' 'observing the rules for trash-can-emptying,' or 'going to work even when you don't feel good a little bit.' Therefore, it can be said that some people tended to talk interchangeably about 'not doing another person harm' with 'observing public morality.'

> P18m: In everyday life, we frequently see people doing another person harm. As I said, a person who violates rules or regulations, for example, ignores traffic signals, cuts in the line, or dumps trash somewhere unallowed is one of them.
>
> P19f: Even when I'm tired or feel a little bit bad, I usually go to work. If I take a rest, my absence would give a bad influence on other colleagues' work and might bother someone who also wants to be off. That might do others harm.

### *Observing 'public morality' or civil virtues*

'Public morality' for Koreans means some rules that members in the society should follow in order for the great number of people (public) not to lose their benefit or to ensure them to keep their safety. Generally, public morality appears to be a form of explicit behavioral codes and enforced by law or social pressure. "Do not litter on the street with your waste tissue," "strictly follow traffic signs and signals even when nobody is there," or "do not waste materials at a public place (e.g., bath tissues in public restrooms)" are popular examples of 'public morality' for Korean participants.

92

P06m:  I am bothered by some people who waste bath tissues in public

   restrooms.  They behave like that, thinking the materials in public place are

   not their own.

P16f:  I think a person who observes 'public morality' is moral.  'Observing

   public morality' is, for example, not to litter on the street with my waste

   tissue or to strictly follow traffic signs and signals when nobody's there.

P20f:  A person whose behaviors are righteous is a moral person. … For

   example, righteous behaviors means here, like what we have been taught

   from the courses of moral education in elementary years, that 'not littering

   on the street with my waste tissue,' 'not spitting on the street,' or

   'observing traffic regulations.'

### Helping Others

Behaviors of helping other people were counted as moral behaviors by many

Korean respondents.  These helping behaviors included various ones such as helping the

needy materialistically (donating) and physically helping at social work organizations

(volunteering).

#### Helping others for Koreans (in a broad sense)

Because Korea was a traditionally agricultural country until 1960s, one of the

basic social interactions in neighborhoods was helping each other in farm work.  This

tradition seemed to still remain when Koreans are conceptualizing relationships with

neighbors.  Specifically, one interviewee talked about her father's behaviors toward

neighbors that were helping, sacrificing, and enduring.  The father used to say to his

daughter, "to endure, tolerate, and help neighbors and others as far as you can go,"

hoping that she could internalize a basic helping attitude toward neighbors.  She, in turn,

93

who now became a mother, also emphasized helping behaviors to her children.

> P05f:  … I have given moral lessons to my children.  The emphasis of my
> lessons was on "being generous to others as much as you can and helping
> them with anything that you have or anything that you're good at.
>
> P13m:  I think that an important aspect of human morality is to care for people
> in need, pay attention to them, and help them. … Generally speaking, 'a
> moral person' for Koreans would be a person who practices good deeds
> [helping needy people].
>
> P17f:  … Another moral exemplar of mine is a 70-year-old cook in my
> kindergarten.  She conducted a lot of good deeds; e.g., she had a small,
> second job to help other people in need.  She always cares for others.  She
> is a conscientious person.

### *Helping others in needs (materialistically); Donating*

Helping people in need by donating money or resources was another type of

moral behaviors for Koreans.  According to some participants, they had a hard time to

take moral behaviors or to make moral decisions particularly when they have to give up a

materialistic benefit or they expect any form of damage in their belongings as a result of

the morality.  Thus, it seems natural for them to conceptualize this behavioral pattern of

donating as moral, because this behavior means that the person willingly gives up some

part of their materialistic benefits for others' well-being.

> P10f:  … I met a Korean business man living in Canada and an elder of a
> church there.  He makes an honest tax report every year, gives some of his
> profits back to the community—I think he does it anonymously—, and
> lives a simple, thrifty life.

P16f:  … My mother has shown me her helping behaviors many times.  She
helped orphanages or people in need.  So, I thought that her behaviors
were morally good when I was young. … My mother helped them through
donating some money.  She collected small amount of money everyday,
and then, regularly donate something they need with the collected money.
She also used to send some amount of money to a few elderly people who
were living by themselves every month.

### *Volunteering*

Volunteering here indicates behaviors of helping other people in need by joining
in a kind of activities of outreach at any social-work organizations without any
materialistic compensation for their time and effort.  This means for Korean participants
that volunteers willingly sacrifice their time and costs whatever they spent to join in and
execute the service activities for the needy.  One participant pointed out that if a person
who regularly does volunteering at social justice organizations and even thinks of the
volunteering as rewarding itself, he or she would be morally exemplary.

P14f:  A moral person is one, for example, who volunteers to lead a social
movement at a social service organization.  Any person can spend one's
time for personal use, but those volunteers give up some of their own time
for others.

P16f:  … One friend of my mother's goes to a nursing home once every
month and volunteers there.  She is not a perfect person, but her behavior
like that is exemplary.

P18m:  A person who volunteers to do something for others is exemplary.  I
mean by 'volunteering' here that to provide service activities or spend
some time and energy for people in need without expecting any reward or

benefit.  If a person does a 'volunteering' and comes to be fully satisfied with one's own volunteering efforts, not with any materialistic reward, that would be moral.

### *Sacrificing oneself for the good for others*

Various behavioral outcomes of 'sacrificing oneself for the good for other people' seemed to be another expression of 'helping others,' because all kinds of sacrifice (time, energy, and/or money) can be said to be hidden behind the behaviors of 'helping.'  Some participants actually mentioned examples of morally exemplary life in relation to this moral behavior of 'sacrificing' from a wide variety of backgrounds.  Those were, for example, the case of Soohyun Lee, Mother Teresa, a life of a missionary, and so on. Specifically, Soohyun Lee was a South Korean young man who sacrificed his life during in an effort to save a Japanese drunken man's life who had dropped from a subway station's platform to the railway in Tokyo, Japan in 2001.  One reason that Soohyun Lee's sacrifice particularly surprised and impressed Koreans was that ordinary Koreans do not like very much Japan or Japanese people because Japan colonized Korea for about 35 years in early 1900's.

> P02m:  Soohyun Lee comes to my mind right now.  You know, in Japan, he was trying to save another person's life on the rail road at a subway station and finally sacrificed his life for that.  I think that sacrifice is important [for a moral exemplar].
>
> P06m:  I've seen a group of women who are a little bit older than me and they're friends each other.  They willingly sacrifice themselves to help the other members in the friends group and don't seem to hesitate to give up

96

one's own stuff even when they see potential materialistic costs.

P12m: My father is a Christian missionary. I think his life has been dedicated to the good for others. I've frequently seen my father cared for others and sacrificed himself for them. For example, in a training camp for missionary families, he used to give nicer rooms to the other families.

P13m: A good example of 'a moral person' to me is Mother Teresa. Particularly in my view, she sacrificed her life for the sick and the poor and was devoted herself to do it.

### *Practicing Filial Piety and Beyond*

As reviewed in the Chapter 2 of this dissertation, filial piety has been a very important moral value in Korea traditionally and contemporarily. It was particularly because Korea has been a country of Confucian culture and tradition. Some Korean respondents emphasized practicing filial piety as moral. Their statements about specific ways of respecting parents were different, but all of them were rooted into the same moral value, filial piety.

#### *Respecting parents; Obedience to parents*

The first and foremost behavioral practice of filial piety may be obedience to parents' moral lessons. Many Koreans think that parents are responsible for children's moral development and education, particularly in children's early childhood. Therefore, Korean parents usually try to be involved deeply in their children's life in every aspect, while children are required to obey parents at any circumstances by various forms of social pressure. Sometimes, participants shared their childhood's experiences about behaviors that were not clearly moral, unmoral (morally neutral), or immoral (e.g.,

pulling out some money from his or her own piggy bank and using it or eating candy bars alone that a neighbor gave them), but parents punished them only because the children didn't tell everything to them.  So, it can be said that one way of practicing filial piety for Koreans is to obey parents' lessons and to communicate actively with the parents, not to leave any hidden part of children's life to parents.

> P07f:  I think the principles that people must follow are certain virtues, such as filial piety, fraternal love, and proper courtesy, which come from interpersonal relationships with family members.  There seem to be Confucian values involved. … When I was an elementary student, I pulled out some money from my piggy bank and used it by myself.  A few days later, my mother came to know what I did.  She was really angry with me and punished me for that. … I didn't think that I stole the money or told a lie to my mom.  What I learned was that I'd better avoid doing what my parents hate and keeping nice relationship with parents is important to me.
>
> P09f:  When I was a young girl, my family lived in the countryside.  One day, when I was at home alone, a relative came and gave me a jar filled with candy bars that were special snack at that time, you know.  I hid the jar and started eating it alone, and a few days later, I finally found out that the candy bars were gone by a half of the jar and it became very hard for me to tell the truth to mom.  At last, my mom got to know about it and punished me hard. … I came to think that the best policy is to talk everything to parents as it is.

Another interviewee who had experienced authoritative parents-self relationship in her childhood emphasized that she would make an every effort to communicate effectively with her own children for them to 'open up' their minds before her and help

them tell anything to her (parents). She stated that children 'close off' their minds when parents put everything as requirements or duties for children without listening children's opinion or preference.

> P14f: … I read a book, saying "you [parents] need to listen to your children first [before teach them a lesson]." I agree that book, because if you're going to be mad to your children first, then they become silent against you. I think that leading them to talk to you about whatever in their mind at any situations is one of the most important things in the parent-child relationship.

### Mutual identification between parents and children

Relationship between parents and children under the value of filial piety often appeared to be the behaviors of identifying parents (by a child) or identifying children by parents. One female participant revealed her respect for her father who made sacrifice in order to keep a good relationship with his neighbors, but in her adolescence, she had a hard time to see her father's sacrificing behaviors because she thought her father was always disadvantageous compared to the other people in the neighborhood. Even she once argued against a selfish neighbor for her father. This behavior can be regarded as a case of identifying parent(s) by the child.

> P05f: … My father was so gentle that, in my eyes, he didn't care about any disadvantage he got from the relationships between neighbors. As a daughter, I was not that happy to see my father voluntarily accept disadvantages without speaking up to anyone about the selfishness of the neighbors. One day, he was also silently hearing what an old lady living

99

at the next door was complaining something about water usage, but in my view, it sounded totally unreasonable and very selfish. … So, I, as a high school student who could be more reasonable than any other neighbor at that time I thought, jumped in and made all arguments for my father and against that lady.

Another interviewee uncovered the relationship with her parents that could be said to be an example of identifying a child by the parents. The parents desperately wanted their daughter to be a teacher because they thought it was the best way for her to be an economically more independent woman, which seemed to be their dream for the daughter, even though it was not necessarily the daughter's dream of her own. So, her parents always put what she had to do for being a teacher on her shoulders without listening to her preference or opinion throughout her adolescence. The ultimate goal of her undergraduate years was, of course, to achieve a teacher's certificate. Her college years, however, ended up without any certificate due to one mistake by her in calculating course credits. It was natural that her parents became very disappointed. As a result, the interviewee came to have a kind of 'permanent' guilty feeling toward her parents. Putting aside a controversial issue whether the parents' long-lasting expectation was right or wrong, we can say that this kind of relationship may create morality-related feelings and emotions ('permanent' guilty feeling in this case) for Koreans.

At the same time, it can also be said to show how influential the moral value of filial piety for Koreans. Apart from the appropriateness of the parents' attitudes toward her, the daughter had the guilty feeling anyway toward her parents, because she thought she did not meet her parents' expectation after all, which can be interpreted that she did

not realize a core aspect of filial piety.

### *Extension of filial piety to other elders*

Many Korean participants said that respecting elders by showing them full courtesy or greeting well with proper manners is one of the important behavioral codes of morality.  For Koreans, the principles of respecting parents are easily applied to extended family members such as grandparents, aunts and uncles, and so forth.  This expansion can be enlarged to distant relatives, friends of grandparents or parents, and old people in grandparents' age or elders in parents' age in general.  Koreans' moral lessons about respecting elders are all based on this kind of extension of filial piety.

> P04f:  My parents emphasized me to have and practice courteousness and proprieties.  They kept saying, "Bow to adult acquaintances whenever you come across them in appropriate manners."  … I think that parents wanted me to have a mind of respecting adults. … I, as a parent, also put importance for my children on courteous greeting to other adults.
>
> P06m:  I frequently tell my son that he has to greet to adult acquaintances properly when he meets them.
>
> P19f:  I think a moral person is one who has proprieties.  In other words, a person who actually follows and practices principles and regulations as what he or she has been taught and who greets courteously to elders or adults is regarded as moral. … It is so natural for a person in Korea to bow to adults courteously and respect elders, and I think it is what we have been taught from childhood.

### Being and Staying Just One of the Majority (Modesty)

One of very popular Korean proverbs—"A cornered stone meets the mason's chisel."—may represent this moral behavior for Koreans: Staying modest. Although 'a cornered stone' in this proverb is generally used when people want to depict a type of personality whose characteristics are so idiosyncratic that they think of the person as not ordinary but extreme, it sometimes represents one who often goes beyond the boundary of the majority. As a whole, this proverb shows a cultural tendency in Korea where people dislike this type of person. This tendency was told by many participants in various ways.

#### Conforming to group or majority

Korean people rarely want to feel alone in a group, for example, with a unique opinion, a distinctive behavior, or even an eye-catching appearance so that everyone else in the group can notice the difference from the majority. At the same time, as one member of the majority in a group, Korean individuals do not want to encounter a minority group of people (usually smaller number than the majority) who appear not to comply with the majority. Sometimes a kind of social pressure and/or unspoken demand is generated in the interactions among people in smaller number and the larger.

> P20f: There is a tendency that people follow the majority's opinions and
> decisions.
> P22m: I think a rational and disciplined person is one who behaves under the
> consideration of the other members in the group. … I hate a type of person
> who thinks and demands what can be obstacle to the harmony with the
> other members in the group.

According to the participants, however, this behavioral tendency of 'conforming group decisions' or 'following majority's behaviors' for Koreans sometimes seemed to hinder a person from making a moral decision or carrying out a moral behavior based on one's own moral choice.  For example, when a larger number of people behave in socially or morally undesirable way, those behaviors put unspoken pressure on a smaller number of people who did not want to violate any regulation or to go morally wrong. Even some Korean participants said that they felt 'a sense of disadvantage' when they remained moral, because such deviated behaviors of the majority seemed to give advantages in terms of time, convenience, or money to the other people but oneself.

> P04f:  … At the crosswalk, all people but me were just crossing the street on red light for the pedestrians. … I didn't want to violate any rule, but I couldn't help doing like all the others, because I hated having a feeling that I was disadvantageous alone.
>
> P18m:  If many people violate a traffic signal, I tend to follow them. Otherwise, I come to have a sense that I am disadvantageous and foolish alone compared to others.  If I follow them, it makes me feel easy.
>
> P19f:  In order for you to keep principles and not to have a sense of disadvantage at the same time, there should be a lot of people who are committed to the principles. … We have to raise many number of that kind of people through education.
>
> P20f: … If you are the only one who sticks to a rule or regulation, you may feel that other people see you as a bizarre person.  I don't want to be in that kind of situations.

103

*Living a thrifty life*

Keeping materialistically simple and thrifty life styles is considered as a moral behavioral pattern for Korean participants. Particularly, the thrift of really wealthy people would be one expression of their humbleness and efforts to be moderate in Korean society. In other words, by being humble and thrifty, people in success and rich can show their respect for other people of majority who may not be so successful or be in need.

> P10f: … I met a Korean business man living in Canada and an elder of a church there. He makes an honest tax report every year, gives some of his profits back to the community—I think he does it anonymously—, and lives a simple, thrifty life.
>
> P17f: The family precept in my childhood was honesty and thrift. … My parents used to say, "Once you start living a 'giving life,' you will not use all of what you have only for yourself [you will live a thrifty life]."
>
> P22m: I respect the president of my college in my student years as my moral exemplar. He eliminated his expediency fund and used to sit on a bench in the campus and loved to listen to students' stories about their worries and hardships. He frequently had his lunch with students at the students' cafeteria.

From the other side of coin, Korean participants pointed out that a squandering, thriftless life style of some people who are not actually wealthy but are willing to be boastful with their belongings is immoral. It makes sense for Koreans that the wasteful behaviors are actually opposite to 'economic humbleness' that they think of as moral. In other words, Korean participants thought of behaviors similar to 'cutting one's coat

according to one's cloth' as moral, too.

> Intvr: You once said that your family precept in your childhood was
> "courtesy, sincerity, and thrift." Do you think thrift has something to do
> with morality?
>
> P19f: Yes. If you have a life style of spending beyond your means, you
> surely become more likely to do immoral behaviors. You may come to
> have a greedy mind and may have more chance to be captured by an
> undue desire for others' belongings. You have to 'cut your coat according
> to your cloth.'

### *Conscience Based Moral Behaviors*

Moral behaviors explored here were not always associated with the relationships with other people in society; all of them seemed to be related to the conscience as a strong foundation of the behaviors. Rather, at some points, if these behaviors were done only to keep one's social face or because other people may be watching, they were not often regarded as much desirable. I do not neglect a positive role of various kinds of invisible social pressures on people that make them keep doing moral behaviors, but it seemed obvious that Korean participants assumed that people who did these behaviors were mainly based on their conscience than others' eyes set on their behaviors. This is particularly true when the last subcategory, '*having no patience with injustice*,' was considered. The behavioral example included into the category was to break bravely the silence of the majority of people even when there could be a risk involved or potential uncomfortableness due to the behavior. This kind of behavior can be made based on a strong foundation of conscience.

105

*Living with Integrity*

Conceptions and categories included in this section, 'living with integrity,' were some behavioral characteristics of 'a moral person' for Korean participants. As a matter of fact, a person with integrity could be explained by a broader sense, for example, 'a person with honesty, disciplinedness, and/or fairness. All of these virtues of a person can be revealed to other people through either specific kinds of behaviors in certain situations or personality traits that are more abstract and long-term characteristics. In this section, to explain how those particular behaviors of integrity were understood for Korean participants was the goal, and that of personality traits will be discussed later.

### *Not telling a lie*

"Do not tell a lie!" It was one of the most frequently mentioned behavioral lessons for Korean participants that they heard from their parents. "Not telling a lie" narrowly means that "only telling the truth" at even certain circumstances where any inconvenient, awkward, or dangerous situations might break up through the behavior. At the same time, it also indicates, broadly speaking, 'being honest'; e.g., establishing truthful tax report for a business owner (See also the quote about a Canadian business man included previous sections for 'helping others in need; donating.').

P12m: The parents' words that I heard most was that "do not tell a lie."

P16f: … A conscientious person is one who is honest, trustworthy, and not telling a lie.

P17f: I think my first priority for my students (kindergarten) is to help and educate them become a humane human. So, I keep emphasizing them not to tell a lie and to be frank and honest.

106

P18m: The family precept when I was a young boy said, "Be honest. Don't tell a lie."

P22m: I have a childhood memory that I was severely punished by parents when I told a lie.

### *Resisting temptations*

It was surprising to find one interviewee who had habitually made a raid on a neighbor's property (usually fruits from a fruit farm or garden) for fun (out of a mischievous motive) in her childhood said that she did the similar behavior in her college years. Although she was not free from a legal responsibility for her behavior in that young adulthood, only her parents punished her for the socially unacceptable behavior under the generosity of the neighbor, the owner of a fruit farm. She finally said that she realized if she had been a person with strong moral sense, she could have resisted to the temptation, which can be counted as a moral behavioral pattern for Koreans (summarized the statements from a female participant – P10f).

### *Having no patience with injustice*

It is uncommon for us to find a kind of person who dares speak up with what everyone else is not willing to say, because there is always possibility that a difficult situation might occur. One participant specifically talked about a person who did this type of behaviors. She picked that person as her moral exemplar. Koreans usually call this behavioral pattern as "having no patience with injustice," and interpreted those behaviors as bravery and/or self-sacrifice for all the other people.

P14f: … Years ago, I was studying to prepare for a civil service examination

in a classroom at a private institute.  Suddenly, a strange man with bizarre clothes and a grim appearance entered and stood in front of the classroom. He surely didn't look like any person related to the institute: a student, instructor, staff member, or whatever.  For a while, everybody seemed to be aware of his existence and bothered by the awkward situation, nobody talked to him even though there were quite a few men who looked older than him.  While I couldn't focus on studying and didn't know what to do, one of my [female] friends who was studying with me broke the silence and said, "Excuse me, I've never seen you in this class, and I don't think you're a student here.  Don't you see everyone studying now?  We are being bothered because you're here.  Could you please go out of this room?"  I was a bit surprised because she had appeared to me to be docile always.  After that, he stepped out of the room immediately, and I felt that I wanted to model her bravery.

## *PERSONALITY*

Korean interviewees made many statements related to the personality traits of 'a moral person.'  Compared to the behavioral characteristics of 'a moral person' for Koreans, personality traits appeared to be more invisible, abstract, and long-term characters of a person.  Consequently, personality traits can be detected by or revealed to others through series of behaviors over time and/or interactions in long-time relationships. In this section, a moral person's personality traits for Korean participants and emerged themes will be discussed.

### *Interpersonal Traits*

First group of traits includes those personality attributes that are reveled from the situation where interpersonal relationships are involved.  In other words, personality traits

in this section are all about how 'a moral person' for Koreans shows personal patterns or tendencies toward other people and the relationships with them.

These traits also look like to be personality bases of the behaviors described in the 'Community Based Moral Behaviors' under the previous section of 'Visible Behaviors.' Detailed explanation of found relationships between personality traits and behaviors of 'a moral person' for Koreans will be discussed later sections in this study.

### Other-Centered; Other-Oriented

Personality traits belonging to this theme have common background of 'other-people-centered' or 'other-oriented.'  According to participants' statements, people with these personality attributes appeared more likely to consider other people's positions, benefits, and/or well-being over theirs.

#### Caring for others

For Koreans, 'caring for others' is close to considering other people's positions, situations, or standpoints and to willingly adjusting one's own perspectives or behaviors for others' convenience and well-being.  Sometimes it can appear to be one's deep, real interest and concern for other people in need.  Respecting others' emotions, time, and/or energy can be a basic attitude representing this characteristic.  As an interviewee, a soldier took a behavioral example of this: If a soldier makes every effort to minimize noise for other fellow soldiers' deep sleep when he prepares for a sentry duty in the middle of the night, he would be considered as a person who is 'caring of others.'

> P03m:  A person who cares for other people is moral. … I think it is an era of
>        self-centeredness and selfishness.  A proper level of character education,

family education, or moral education lacks.

> P04f: … I respect my oldest sister-in-law.  She really cares other people very much and always thinks from their perspectives [She is good at being in others' shoes].  Even grandmother-in-law often praises that kind of her personality as humane.

> P12m: … In order to live a life of 'not doing another person harm,' I always try to be in others' shoes.  For example, preparing for a sentry duty in the middle of a night, I keep thinking that I should minimize any noise not to bother other solders' deep sleep.

> P22m:  I think that a person who cares others and keeps thinking about others' positions is moral. … That kind of person doesn't always do things as oneself just would like to.  Instead of following his or her desires or pursuing own pleasures, that person is constantly aware of other people's positions.

### *Modest; Humble*

'Being modest or humble' is understood as a personality character of 'staying in the middle' or 'not being boastful' for Korean participants.  On the one hand, if a person with socio-economic success shows this kind of personality by, for instance, a simple life style and/or constantly helping others, it would be easy for him or her to be recognized as moral by Koreans.  On the other hand, among socio-economically ordinary people, those who keep a personality trait of 'knowing oneself' and 'putting oneself in one's place' tend to be considered as 'humble,' and in turn, as 'moral.'

> P02m:  If a person is really moral, that person will turn out to be humble.  Sometimes celebrities are reported to make a huge donation for something or some people, but a really moral person "does not let his left hand know

what his right hand is doing." That seems to be a real morality.

P19f: … I want my child to be a person who is not so intelligent or too
distinguished, because I don't want him to be lonely, which is often the
case for the people with outstanding abilities. … I have frequently seen
that distinguished people get out of favor with others.

### *Generous; Broad-minded*

Participants of this study conceptualized a person who shows generosity to others
as 'a moral person.' If a person shows generosity to others, he or she overlooks or passes
over other people's mistakes. Sometimes it can appear to be pretending not to see
misdeeds or forgiving wrong behaviors by understanding that human beings are not
perfect. Because a generous person for Koreans does not try to take credit him- or herself
for the generosity or not be in a sulk after showing generosity, the person can also be
considered as broad-minded. Some participants also pointed out this personality trait as
an essential characteristic of a person for him or her to have a successful relationship with
other people.

P03m: … I learned from experiences that to ignore subordinates' mistakes by
pretending as if I know nothing about the mistakes is another way of
caring for my subordinates.

P06m: I have been acquainted with a man who is known as 'a person who can
live without a law.' … He keeps generous even in a situation where his
materialistic damage happens. … I was with him in his car when he was
rear-ended. Instead of getting mad or demanding to the wrong-driver, he
first asked the driver whether he was all right and kept kind and generous
to him. After a while, I asked him, "Why were you so kind to him? You

111

can look strict and cold-blooded to him, because he drove wrong." He replied, "A man makes mistakes. It can happen in anyone's life." I learned a real generosity from him.

P07f: One of my friends is my moral exemplar. … She actually enjoys being generous to others. She is pleased to give her generosity to people.

P20f: It [Being good] means caring and generosity that a person should use in interpersonal relationships. This kind of person tends to be generous to another person's teasing, to be tolerant toward others' defects, and to show broad-mindedness to another who loses one's temper or 'throws a fit.'

### *Having Good Relationships with Others*

There is a type of person who has good relationships with many other people. People frequently see that kind of person always being surrounded by friends, colleagues, or neighbors at any social situation. Korean interviewees conceptualized this personality trait as that of 'a moral person's.'

#### *Friendly; Sociable; Having social skills*

A 'sociable' person for Korean participants seemed to be one who has many kinds of social skills, and in turn, 'has good interpersonal relationships with other people.' In order to be 'sociable,' a person needs to put importance on social relationships, to be generous to other people's mistakes, teasing, or annoying behaviors, and to actively avoid any situation where interpersonal conflicts might occur.

P03m: I learned from experiences that to ignore subordinates' mistakes by pretending as if I know nothing about the mistakes is another way of caring for my subordinates. It was a lesson from social relationships that helps me have better relationships with others.

P05f: … As a daughter, I was not that happy to see my father voluntarily accept disadvantages … So, I … jumped in and made all arguments against that lady [a neighbor who lived next door] for my father. … After that happening, I was severely scolded by my father. He said that he had never taught me to behave like that. He said, "I have kept a good relationship with that lady by doing things in a natural and reasonable manner. A neighborhood relationship became in trouble today because of you." … Since then, I have tried not to be involved any kind of argument or quarrel with acquaintances. I try to tolerate others' wrong-doings or not to lose my temper in any circumstance.

One interviewee (P22m) said that this sociability is the core of morality. He also pointed out how people can achieve the core of morality: People need to realize that they are living their life in a society or community where others live their life, too. Then, they can try to give up idiosyncratic thoughts or demanding that might hinder from having good relationships with other members in their society.

Another interviewee emphasized this kind of social competence as one that she wants her (future) children to possess or achieve throughout childhood and adolescence. She also valued this 'sociability' over cognitive intelligence and conceptualized it as "humanity" or "humaneness" that means a fundamental characteristic to be a humane human. To develop social skills, according to participants, people need to have a wide variety of experiences where they can get acquainted and interacting with many different people. Those experiences may lead them to have open-mindedness and humbleness that are essential to have good social relationships.

P15f:  The first priority for my children is to help them have 'humaneness.'  I
        want them to have the ability to adapt to any kind of situations or any kind
        of people. … A person who doesn't have good social relationships doesn't
        look humane to me. … To be an adaptive person, having various
        experiences in diverse circumstances with many types of people would be
        essential, I think.  Through those experiences, a person comes to have
        open-mindedness and fairly good interpersonal relationships.  I want my
        children to be like that.

P19f:  I want my child to develop as a humane person.  It means to me a
        person who is sociable and harmonious with others. … I want my child to
        be a person who is not so intelligent or too distinguished, because I don't
        want him to be lonely, which is often the case for the people with
        outstanding abilities.  Of course, if he can be competent and sociable at the
        same time, it would be perfect.  However, if I have to choose one of the
        two for my children, I prefer sociability.  I have frequently seen that
        distinguished people get out of favor with others.

### *Harmonious*

The conception of 'harmonious' is understood as another personality character for a person to have good interpersonal relationships.  A 'harmonious' person for Korean participants has 'no corners to be rounded off' in personality.  For example, if a person who behaves based on moral principles shows flexibility to others' preferences or even misdeeds, he or she would be regarded as 'not too extreme' (having 'no corners') and 'balanced.'  This 'harmonious' personality between characters help people live in harmony with their neighbors, Korean interviewees thought.

P05f:  I think I have shown a harmonious life style and character to my

114

children. For example, a few weeks ago, I heard from my son that one

classmate ran away from home. I said to my son, "Bring him to our home.

I will talk to him. How heart-broken his parents are now!"

P20f: … A person has to follow principles and keep disciplined, but at the

same time, has to be flexible. That would appear to be balanced and

harmonious. That kind of life style is going to be turned out cool and

remarkable to others.

### *Intrapersonal Traits*

The personality characteristics classified into this group, 'Intrapersonal Traits,'

are the ones that appeared to show how 'a moral person' defines oneself (e.g., honest or

goodhearted) and what kinds of mental status that he or she would like to have or keep

(e.g., principled, fair, or responsible). Although the traits of 'fair' or 'responsible' here

have something to do with relationships with others (as interpersonal traits do), they are

essentially more about oneself, which is often independent from relational situations.

Specifically, personality of 'fair' could sometimes require internalized principles of

justice and objectivity that should be free from personal relationships involved with

people of interests in a situation. A 'responsible' person for Koreans also indicates one

who consistently shows responsibility and diligence regardless of certain situations or

relationships with people.

#### *Having Integrity; Conscientious*

Personality traits belonging to this emerged theme, 'having integrity,' are ones

that were most frequently mentioned by most interviewees (68%; 15 out of 22) at

different contexts. As such, it can be said that these traits, 'honest,' 'principled,' and

'fair,' may be a good candidate for the cornerstone of Koreans' morality.

### *Honest; Trustworthy*

Being honest and trustworthy was one of the most popular and traditional codes for family precepts or home discipline of Koreans. While this moral code has often been given as an abstract term with a declarative format to young children in each family (e.g., "Be honest"), adults have emphasized behavioral guidelines, such as "Do not tell a lie," or "Do not go against your own conscience at any circumstance."

> P01m: Most of all, I think of an honest person as moral. … When I was in military service, senior comrades constantly said that I must follow regulations of duties, but I found some of them committed wrong behaviors against work ethics. What they're saying is not consistent with what they're doing; it's not honest.
>
> P17f: The family precept in my childhood was honesty and thrift. My parents put more emphasis on honesty.
>
> P20f: … For example, I felt the pangs of conscience, when I didn't speak up to colleagues that I had made a mistake. Of course, based on the mechanisms of the work in my team, nobody could detect or they didn't have to know about the kind of mistake that I had made as long as I kept silent about it, but my conscience reproached me somehow.

According to participants, Koreans seem to know that being honest may cause inconvenience, shame, or disadvantage in diverse ways. Deciding to be honest in any situation, therefore, requires strong-mindness or high level of willpower to resist temptation and to pursue moral values.

P11m: … My father kept saying to me, "Stay in the right path and break
through obstacles with your integrity. Even if you might be faced with
disadvantages or damages, don't try to avoid them with sneaky ways."

P17f: Honesty is to keep making decisions based on one's conscience, even
though there may be a momentary, temporary awkwardness,
inconvenience, or risk that you're expecting.

P19f: To behave according to one's conscience, to observe social orders and
rules, and finally to keep away from kinds of behaviors for which one can
feel mean or shameful composite the core of morality, I think.

Since this moral character has been traditionally important and frequently
included in family precepts, whether parents themselves appeared to be honest in
children's eyes was critical for the moral lesson to be effective for the children. One
interviewee said that she has seen her parents' honest life; so, being an honest person was
so natural for her. She also mentioned that her parents were her moral exemplars.

P17f: My parents have been morally exemplary to me. They have shown
their life of honesty and following conscience. Seeing parents' life, I
came to think of a moral life as a matter of course.

Some interviewees talked about honesty in the contexts of interpersonal
relationships or social life. It is clear for Koreans that honesty is not only abstract and
declarative but also tangible and concrete enough. One respondent mentioned honesty in
a context of a romantic relationship between a man and a woman, whereas another
conceptualized that abiding social rules, regulations, or conventions is also a form of
honesty.

117

P07f: … I have not experienced by myself such a morally bad guy, but one of my friends has.  She had a boy friend whom she wanted to marry.  He said he was a divorced man while she had not been married yet [In Korea, a marriage of a couple with a divorced and one who has not been married is culturally and conventionally very hard to be acceptable for significant others of the couple.].  But he turned out to be a married man who had another girl friend besides his wife.  Such an unpardonable man he was.

P10f: I think that an honest person is moral.  You have to be honest in no matter what areas of your life: You're in private places or at your business.  You also have to think about honesty in social relationships.  To abide by the law and to follow social rules and regulations are also considered as honesty [because, in most situations, you already know what is required and enforced].  So, in order to be socially honest, you need to be interested in a new rule or regulation is administered.

### *Principled; Disciplined (Humane; Duty-based)*

A 'principled' or 'disciplined' person for Korean participants was one who is deeply oriented to follow what they have learned or have been taught as moral principles. As described in earlier sections, many Korean parents try to introduce basic moral values, such as honesty, sincerity, courtesy, etc., to their children as family precepts.  They want their children to internalize those values and behave based on those virtues.  Furthermore, in South Korea, there are series of mandatory courses in elementary school years designed to execute moral education for children in K-6 grades, and one participant stated that she received fundamental moral lessons mainly through the courses.  Therefore, behaving morally is just practicing what they learned from parents and schools for Koreans and is considered as a very basic requirement to be a humane human.

118

P11m: … My father is a professor at a university. … He always tries not to stray from the right path.  I have seen from time to time that people around put some pressure of injustice on my father and he had to suffer sort of disadvantage, but he has kept the right path.

P17f:  A conscientious person doesn't do another person harm, doesn't do things that make one be ashamed of oneself, and hold fast to one's principles. … Principles are what people have learned and been taught.

P19f:  Most people are going to agree what fundamental aspects of a human life are.  One important thing of them would be living a life of practicing principles.

P20f:  A person who tries to follow every principle, for example, strictly keeps one's own working hours or lunch time.  That kind of person arrives at the office in time in the morning and doesn't go home from work before he fully fills up the designated working time.

Because this personality trait of 'principled' is basic characteristic for a person for Koreans, the participants sometimes conceptualized it with a similar term, 'duty-based,' for them.  'Duty' implies here a moral value that everyone has to keep or promote, although there are obstacles, inconvenience, or sense of having disadvantages to do. Interviewees' statements revealed this point well.

P17f: … One married friend of mine emphasized her children to be moral, and I put importance on morality for my students. … Sometimes she and I talked about a sense of disadvantage that we come to have toward people who don't seem to behave based on moral duties. … She does her every duty as a younger member of her husband's extended family, because she is in that position as a daughter-in-law and sister-in-law, whereas the other wives of her husband's brothers do not always do that.  They choose to

119

behave for the sake of their advantage or convenience.

P19f:  If you keep a life style of behaving for the sake of your convenience, you might come to do another person harm. … As a matter of fact, if you try to strictly practice ethical principles, you're going to be faced with wide variety sorts of inconvenience or disadvantage.

### *Impartial; Fair*

If there is a person who treats everyone else surrounding him or her in an impartial and fair way, the person is likely to be 'a moral person' for Koreans.  One participant as a parent tried to give a moral lesson to her young children to accept a victim of bullying and not to discriminate peers based on their appearance (the way they look).  Another interviewee as an early childhood education teacher kept showing her students that she listened to both sides of children's conflicting opinions or standpoints impartially before making her own decision about the disagreeing situation.

P16f:  … I keep saying to my children that they must not neglect or look down on any of your peers who look untidy or stink and they should even accept a victim of bullying and get along with the victim.

P17f:  … When a problem happens in relationships or interactions among my students, I try to show them that I want to listen to the both sides of positions first and lead the young children to think about the situation together and invite them to make a decision or judgment.

### *Responsible*

Generally speaking, being 'responsible' is one of the representative codes of work ethics for Koreans.  Having sense of responsibility on one's own work, hard working, and

keeping steadfastness under any adverse conditions are all good examples of 'a responsible person' in South Korea. Based on these characteristics, 'a responsible person' for Koreans is also reliable and trustworthy.

### *Having responsibility*

One subject as a soldier described his experiences with some senior comrades tended to leave over their duties to their subordinates, which appeared to be irresponsible and therefore immoral for him. Other interviewees portrayed types of person who had a sense of responsibility on what he or she once said or tried to willingly take responsibility for, for instance, mistakes of the group where he or she belongs to.

> P09f: I think that a person who is responsible for what she once said is moral. … It means to me that the person generally holds her [morally desirable] course even if she has to take a kind of disadvantage in it, but when she recognizes that a problem happens or she makes a mistake, she immediately confesses and admits her faults.
>
> P11m: You know that the army is a hierarchical society. But I have frequently seen that the higher the rank is, the more soldiers are likely to shift their responsibilities to subordinates or rookies.
>
> P19f: My father said that I should not think about how to avoid taking any responsibility from a difficult situation, for example, at work even if it is unclear whose responsibility the problem is. Rather, he said, I always have to think about how to solve the problem by myself.

### *Diligent; Hard-working*

Similar to 'honesty' as a moral value, 'sincerity' has been one of the most popular virtues that Koreans have frequently selected for family precepts. The concept of

121

'sincerity' has meaning faithfulness; a 'sincere' person for Korean participants is faithful, particularly because the person is diligent and hard-working, and in turn, responsible.  A few respondents pointed out this diligent and hard-working as a moral personality trait.

> P07f:  One of my friends is my moral exemplar.  She is diligent to her own business and caring for other people.
>
> P15f:  The family precept in my childhood was to be sincere and honest. Sincerity here means diligence.  My parents wanted me just to work [study] hard.
>
> P19f:  When I was a child, one virtue that was included in my family precept was to be diligent.  Trying to be diligent became one of my habits and it maintained until adulthood.  For example, I got perfect attendance from the first grade to twelfth, because I tried to go to school even when I was really sick.

### Goodhearted

As a characteristic of a person, a conception of 'good' or 'nice' is a general personality trait of 'a moral person.'  Based on interviewees' statements, two categories emerged: 'benevolent' and 'flexible or elastic.'

#### Good; Nice

In the Korean language, there is one of the most popular and general expression indicating a character of a person that is very close to 'nice' in English language. Although this expression is just one word in Korean language, it has multiple meanings and represents quite a few images of a person, particularly in relation to his or her morality.  Interviewees of this study also conceptualized this one word as a characteristic

of 'a moral person.'  According to their statements, at least these conceptions can be said to have something to do with this: principled, humane, diligent, obedient, altruistic, respecting elders, caring, and generous.

> P06m:  I believe that most people are good and nice.  They are people who actually observe what they have to observe.
>
> P16f:  I want to my children to be good and nice.  To be that kind of person, they have to experience a lot of types of people, which can make them mature, and then, at last, they can be a humane person.
>
> P18m:  I would like to say to my future children that they should be a good and diligent person.
>
> P20f:  "Be good, follow public morality, and respect elders."  This is what I want to say to my future children. … Being good and nice means caring and generosity that a person should use in interpersonal relationships.

### *Flexible; Elastic*

Although Koreans generally agree that practicing moral values and following ethical principles are important characteristics of 'a moral person,' relying too strictly on those values or principles with a 'no-exception' manner is hardly regarded as desirable. Rather, having and showing flexibility under a thought, for example, that "there is no rule without exceptions" is frequently acknowledged more morally preferable by Koreans.

Participants conceptualized following types of persons as moral and I categorized them as 'flexible': people who (1) take proper actions or responses in various situations; (2) behave reasonably or rationally in any circumstance and do not go extreme; (3) have fairly good interpersonal relationships with open-mindness; and (4) keep principled but

123

show flexibility from time to time.  One interviewee specifically thought of this character as the core of humaneness.

> P14f:  I think of a person who takes proper behaviors anywhere.  It can sometimes mean flexibility and a tendency of not going extreme.
>
> P15f:  Humaneness is a character or ability with which a person can be adaptive to various circumstances.  If you have various experiences, you're going to be able to break through after all even if you're in an unfamiliar situation.
>
> P20f: … A person has to follow principles and keep disciplined, but at the same time, has to be flexible.  That would appear to be balanced and harmonious.  That kind of life style is going to be turned out cool and remarkable to others.

### *PSYCHOLOGICAL FUNCTIONS OF A PERSON*

Among conceptions that participants made, there were a number of characteristics of 'a moral person' that seemed not to fit into the categories of visible behaviors or personality traits.  At the early phase of this analysis, they were put aside from the coding processes and hardly attracted analytic interests.  As the constant comparison kept going on, however, between concepts that were already classified and those were not, a new theme emerged particularly for the concepts left over.

The new theme was named as 'psychological functions.'  Topics and categories under the section, visible 'behaviors,' appeared to show how a moral person behaves or what behavioral examples of a moral person are.  'Personality' attributes contains characteristics of a moral person that can be detected through the person's long-term

124

patterns of behaviors or cognitive/emotional tendencies. Conceptions belonged to 'psychological functions' portrayed cognitive, emotional, or motivational operations of 'a moral person' that can promote moral behaviors in certain contexts.

These psychological functions have three properties, at least. First, they seemed to be generally neutral (value-free) functions. In other words, the functions mentioned by Korean participants looked like ordinary psychological operations that did not seem to have something to do with morality. For example, perspective taking, reflective thinking, keeping social face, or practicing a strong willpower are barely identified as moral in other contexts, although many interviewees of this study mentioned these in relation to human morality. Second, psychological functions can reveal dynamic aspects of moral behaviors. For instance, if a person with the personality trait of 'caring' is 'helping other people' in a particular situation, the behavior might be triggered by 'having compassion toward others in need' or 'perspective taking' at that moment. Third, contrary to personality traits that are stable over time, these functions may momentarily operate in specific circumstances but can motivate moral behaviors or decisions. For instance, one participant talked about the role of 'keeping social face' in a setting where morality is involved: A woman may want to show off her morality by putting a fair amount of money into a charity pot, particularly when she is being accompanied with her boy friend, though she usually does not behave like that if she is with her family members.

### Cognitive Functions

#### Perspective taking

'Perspective taking' for Korean interviewees is frequently expressed as 'putting

oneself in others' shoes.' By taking other people's perspectives, a person comes to understand their positions or situations and to have sympathy for them. Particularly, if this function of perspective takings happens in relation to others' difficulties, hardships, or needs, it becomes a basis of another function, 'having compassion to others in need,' as one subject mentioned.

> P04f: … I think I basically care for others first [and then, myself]. I always try to think from other people's point of views. … I respect my oldest sister-in-law. She really cares other people very much and always thinks from their perspectives [She is good at being in others' shoes].
>
> P09f: Another [moral] character is caring for others. Not differentiating others from the self, in other words, regarding others' positions as that of mine is important. One must be able to think, 'If I am a valuable person by its own nature, other people are, too.' This would be particularly true in situations where materialistic advantages or disadvantages are involved. A person who thinks and behaves as such is moral.
>
> P13m: A moral person should be one who thinks of others' difficulties and sufferings as those of oneself.

### Reflective thinking

One of the closest words in Korean language to this thinking is "Know yourself." One interviewee emphasized that to practice 'reflective thinking' is to be moral. He meant by 'reflective thinking' to be introspective about one's behaviors in the context of relationships with other people and constantly checking whether his or her behaviors stay within the principles that are required to keep those relationships good and desirable. For example, at one's workplace, a person who keeps self-examining his or her behavior by

126

thinking if it bothers the other colleagues or hurts others' feeling is considered as moral.

> P03m:  I think that a person who is able to take a look at oneself is a moral person.  People nowadays cannot recognize how their behaviors look, because they have not habitualized to reflectively think back on what they have been doing.  Therefore, many people actually don't realize that problems in their group, community, or society may happen because of themselves, not because of others.
>
> P21m:  To be moral, people have to establish their worldview on political and economical realities through a reflective thinking on oneself and one's place in relation to the current state of the society.

### *Having a sense of 'living together with others'*

There is a popular saying for Koreans showing how they view another person's success: "An envious man waxes lean with the fatness of his neighbor."  An interviewee pointed out that this kind of societal atmosphere in South Korea where many people basically think of others as competitors, not as 'commensals,' makes it very hard for people to be moral.   As a matter of fact, he said, people live together helping each other unconsciously or consciously, which indicates they are actually commensals, not just competitors with one another.  The more Korean people become aware of this fact, the more they can help each other and even sacrifice themselves for other people.

> P08m:  You have to be aware of the fact that your success is not just for yours or of your own family, but for all people involved in your work, and everybody is not a competitor for you but one who is living together with you [symbiotically].  It seems particularly true because we had been suffered from the era of Japanese colony where Korean people didn't trust

127

each other and didn't develop basic social relationships as cooperative and helpful.

### *Reasoning*

There were three different contexts where South Korean participants seemed to imply reasoning (ability) to make socially desirable judgments as a moral function. First, relatively generally speaking, one participant said that she prefers her children making situationally appropriate, flexible judgments rather than exclusively sticking to moral principles. Another participant, also talking about his future children's morality, mentioned a kind of judgment that can generate "the greatest happiness of the greatest number" in various situations. These judgments can be said to require a morally advanced reasoning with which a person considers all different viewpoints, positions, and interests of individuals involved in a setting.

> P20f: … I'd rather want my children to be able to make proper, situation-specific judgments and decisions than to be too good or too strictly moral with a style of 'no exceptions.'
>
> P22m: … I'd like to teach my future children to be able to make judgments that can best facilitate 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number' of people in each context. … I want my children to be a person who can make the most reasonable decision at any situation.

Second, one interviewee gave examples of situations where reciprocity needs to work. In Korea, school-aged (K-6) young children or even younger (4~6 years old) are allowed to play with peers without adults' supervision at playgrounds nearby their homes.

128

For this reason, people can see children playing with peers anywhere in residential areas, and also sometimes see children being in a conflict, such as a quarrel or an argument with playmates.  Parents of those children need to be as impartial and fair as they can when they have to intervene in the conflict.  If a parent tries to defend his or her own child(ren) over the other child(ren) without fair consideration of all positions involved, it would not help those children learn reciprocity, and in turn, the situation will not promote morality.

> P15f: … You can let your children and their playmates make their own
> decisions and judgments whenever some conflicts happen among them.
> But there are always some parents who get into the children's conflicting
> situation carrying 'the blindness to the causes of their own children' with
> adult authority.  There are also some parents who send their children to the
> others' home to play together while they don't invite other children to
> their home.

Particularly this reciprocity may be an outcome of moral reasoning, because a person have to overcome selfishness or instinct of "Men are blind of in their own cause" with objective consideration.

Third, as implied at the last paragraph, reasoning can best promote fairness among a number of moral characteristics.  Korean respondents appeared to know how reasoning is indispensable to make judgments and decisions of justice; particularly, an interviewee as a kindergarten teacher showed her way of inviting her students to make impartial judgments through reasoning (See quotes included in the sub-section of 'impartial; fair' under the higher-order section of 'personality' for detail.)

*Emotional (Affective) Functions*

**Being compassionate**

One interviewee talked about a moral lesson from Confucianism—'being compassionate or having sympathy'—as an important aspect of morality. By being sympathetic and compassionate toward others' hardships and suffering, this emotional function, according to his statements, seems to contribute a person to take helping behaviors for the needy.

> P13m: I'd like to give my future children a moral lesson of being compassionate or merciful to other people, because it becomes somewhat hard to find someone who shows sympathy. Moral education that helps children have sympathy and compassion is now more needed. … I came to have interests in and pay attention to human sufferings, in a broad sense, through literary works and also have sympathy and humanity.

**Valuing to be moral; Enjoying being moral**

If a person identifies him- or herself as generous and the person enjoys the self-concept, he or she will be highly likely to be actually generous and moral, particularly for Koreans. One participant pointed out this kind of sense of self in relation to morality. Among respondents who emphasized the role of moral education by parents at home, one interviewee particularly highlighted home education through which children can attain a high level of moral standards and moral self-concept.

> P07f: One of my friends is my moral exemplar. … She has a kind of sense of self with which she enjoys herself giving generosity to other people.

P11m: Home education in childhood is really important in that children can establish their own moral values and can set high expectation and standard for themselves in terms of morality.

### *Being morally firm; Incorruptible*

Korean participants conceptualized the world and their society as a place where temptations exist and the majority of people's immoral behaviors sometimes play a role of social pressure. In this kind of situations, as they mentioned, 'a moral firmness' is necessary for one to keep being moral. To stay moral or to make moral decisions, it is essential to have incorruptible mind with which a person will not internalize social irregularities or decay.

P10f: … I came to think that temptation comes to my mind at anytime and anywhere and can lead me to make unethical or immoral decisions. I think, any person can take a moral behavior on one day and fall into temptation on another. … I also came to think that if tricky situations and tempting chances are given, you can commit immoral behaviors habitually and repeatedly. Grown up, I realized that if I had had a stronger moral sense, I could have resisted temptations.

P21m: Having a strong moral sense means that a person has an incorruptible mind and denies accepting social irregularities and refuse to take widespread social decay.

### *Having spare resources*

This conception of an emotional function may assume a type of person who is not so absorbed in his own affairs that he can pay attention to other people. Actually, an

interviewee mentioned his experiences of relationships with others where he recognized that people who were caring for other people had been relatively well off and had been having some 'room in mind' since their childhood.

> P13m: … I'm not sure whether it can be generalized or not, because it is solely based on my personal experiences with people; I've seen that people who care for others' difficulties or sufferings were those who have middle or upper class childhood family backgrounds and they themselves are living an affordable life. It made me think that a 'learned or experienced breadth or easiness of mind' may help people to pay attention to others' well-being.

***Motivational Functions***

### *To keep social face*

According to an interviewee, some people do moral behaviors so that they will appear to be moral to somebody else. She particularly mentioned that this kind of intention is generally stronger when people accompany with a boy/girl friend or colleagues at workplace than it is when they are with family members.

> P20f: For example, people tend to exaggerate their moral behaviors such as putting some money into a charity pot on the street when they're with friends. Of course, they can do the same thing when they're passing by the pot alone, but many people are more likely to do the donation or put more money when friends accompany them, expecting cheers from friends. Personally, I once made a donation to a beggar in a subway station when my boyfriend was with me. Although I had done the same kind of behavior, being alone, I intentionally did it at that time, hoping that he

132

might think of me as a nice girl. … This tendency might not come up when they're with family members.

### *Having a strong willpower*

Talking about social justice and morality of Korean people, one participant put importance on the role of free will or willpower to make a person moral. He said that education is fundamental for a society to morally develop, but education by itself cannot change societal members. According to him, if majority of people choose to do moral actions or make moral decisions with their own free will and have enough willpower to practice what they learned through education, that society may be very close to be moral. He concluded that morality is not a matter of education, but people's free will or willpower.

> P21m: It [Trying to follow moral exemplar's life or living a moral life] is up to individuals. I don't think education can make the world moral. If it can, the world already became a paradise. People get education, but to live an educated life or not is not a matter of education but individuals' free will.

## Characteristics of 'Moral Exemplars'

Among all of 22 participants, sixteen people mentioned that they had at least one moral exemplar (one interviewee responded that she had two exemplars). Table 3 is a summary showing the number of exemplars and what kind of relationship they had with participants of this study.

Table 3. Summary of Participants' Relationships with Moral Exemplars

|  | Number of exemplars | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Parents or Relatives | 7 | 41.2% |
| Friend or Acquaintance | 6 | 35.3% |
| Historical character | 4 | 23.5% |
| Total exemplars mentioned | 17 | 100.0% |
| No exemplars | 4 | – |
| Don't know | 2 | – |

Among all 17 moral exemplars mentioned, family members of participants were 7 (41.2%) and friends or acquaintances were 6 (35.3%). Therefore, it can be said that the majority of moral exemplars were people around interviewees whose lifestyle, behavioral patterns, or characters have been well known to the interviewees. On the other hand, the number of historical or biblical characters as moral exemplars was 4 (23.5%) with whom participants only had indirect experiences regarding their lives or characteristics.

Many exemplars appeared to have multiple moral characters in a balanced way (See Table 4). For example, the exemplar of a participant (P10f) who is a Korean-Canadian business man was described with descriptors as honest, helping others, and humble. Some interviewees (P17f and P19f) chose their parents as their exemplars who showed an exemplary honesty and filial piety throughout the lives. Interviewees who mentioned historical or biblical characters (P02m, P09f, P13m, and P21m) also talked about two or more outstanding level of moral characteristics of the exemplars. The sets of characteristics of them were devotion and sacrifice, caring and sacrifice, and justice

and sacrifice (Table 4).

Table 4. Summary of Reported Characteristics of Moral Exemplars

| Participants | Characteristic 1 | Characteristic 2 | Characteristic 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| P02m | Sacrificing | | |
| P04f | Perspective taking | Caring | |
| P05f | Sacrificing | Other-centered | |
| P06m | Generous | | |
| P07f | Generous | Balanced | |
| P09f | Sacrificing | Dedicated | |
| P10f | Honest | Helping others | Humble |
| P11m | Having integrity | Moral firmness | |
| P12m | Sacrificing | | |
| P13m | Sacrificing | Caring | |
| P14f | Brave | | |
| P15f | Open-minded | | |
| P17f – 1 | Honest | Having filial piety | |
| P17f – 2 | Helping others | Caring | |
| P18m | Volunteering | | |
| P19f | Having filial piety | Exemplary | |
| P21m | Justice | Sacrificing | |
| P22m | Humble | Humanity | |

Particularly those exemplars of historical or biblical characters showed an extraordinary level of sacrificing their life to death or devoting their entire life to other people's needs, according to participants.  A Korean student who was studying abroad in Japan sacrificed his life to save a Japanese drunken man who fell on the rail way at a

subway station (P02m).  According to a participant, from the New Testament of the Bible, Paul the Apostle fully dedicated his life to teaching and spreading good values to people whom he loved (P09f).  Mother Teresa devoted her whole life time to care for the poor and sick (P13m).  Finally, a Korean laborer and labor agitator, Tae-il Jeon, lived a life of justice himself and at last sacrificed his life to let people know about the urgency of critical problems in Korean labor systems in the 1960s (P21m).  As such, some moral exemplars for Korean participants had revealed an extreme degree of morality through their lifestyle or certain incidents.

It was notable to find that 14 moral exemplars out of 17 (82.4%) showed other-people-oriented characteristics, such as caring, sacrificing, generosity, and so forth.  On the contrary, only 3 moral exemplars seemed to be solely based on the characteristics that were not necessarily other-oriented morality, for example, bravery, honesty, moral firmness, etc.  Although this study is not a quantitative one and the sample size of 22 looks very small to generalize anything relied on numbers, this finding may shed some light on the popular moral exemplary characteristics for Koreans: those that are more oriented to other people's well-being or needs.

It was also remarkable to see relationships between some moral exemplary characteristics, particularly among those related to other-oriented ones.  For example, perspective taking that was a characteristic of the exemplar for one participant (P04f) can be regarded as a foundation or a facilitator of caring, broad-mindness, giving generosity, and other-centered heart and good-hearted, which were told by many participants as exemplars' traits.  Furthermore, all of these can be said to be the basics of sacrificing that

136

seemed to be one of the most extraordinary format of other-oriented morality. This relationships may be expressed a format of diagram like Figure 13.
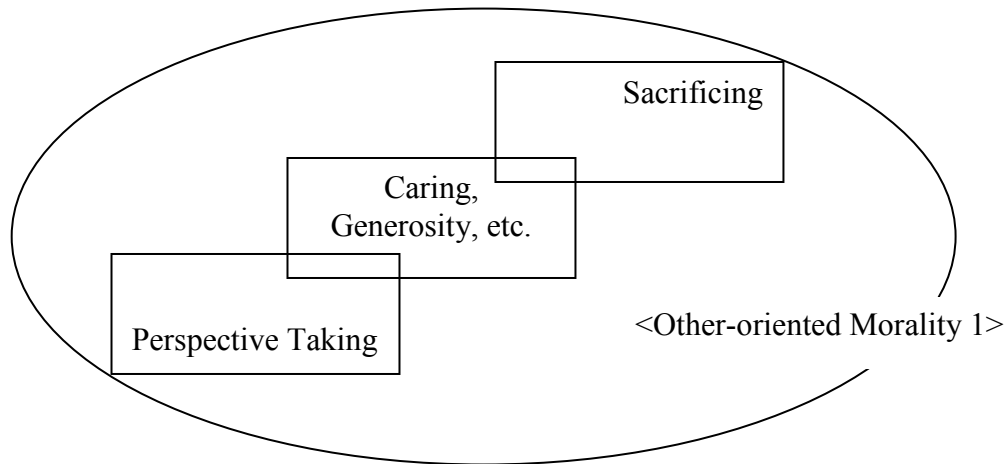


Figure 13. One Diagrammic Expression of Relationships among Moral Exemplary Characteristics

Though it is beyond the scope of this study to thoroughly investigate the relationships between these characteristics of moral exemplars with the gathered data for this study, one procedure in open coding in the grounded theory approach, detecting 'dimension' of a 'property,' allowed to capture a brief overview of the relationships presented in Figure 13. For example, perspective taking, caring, generosity, etc. as well as sacrificing can be categorized into a bigger concept, an other-oriented morality. Specifically, the name of the concept (other-oriented morality) was labeled following the common characteristics of the properties of subconcepts: *Perspective Taking*, *Caring* and *Generosity*, and *Sacrificing*. Regarding the dimension of the property, *Perspective Taking* can be considered as a close-to-neutral characteristic, while *Sacrificing* is at an extreme level of other-orientation. The relationships between each set of characteristics,

however, may contain overlapping areas which cannot be differentiated.  In other words, the overlapped areas between the boxes in Figure 13 may symbolize the likelihood that *Perspective Taking* is hard to separate from *Generosity* or *Caring*, for example.

These finding about the relationships between the characteristics above was very helpful for the analyst to take further steps to build a theory of 'a moral person' for Koreans that is one of the final goals of this study.  The following section will discuss detailed relationships between characteristics found.

## A Theory of 'a Moral Person' for Koreans

### Framework of 'a Moral Person'

### Relationship among Behaviors, Personality Traits, and Psychological Functions

### Emergence of the relationship

Up to this point, I have tried to list the characteristics of 'a moral person' for Koreans.  In addition, I tried to explain the meanings of the characteristics for Koreans. In my analytical work, I have relied on my interpretations of the response of my Korean participants, based on our shared cultural background.

Exploring moral exemplarity, however, I had an additional analytic focus.  I wanted to detect how exemplary moral attributes were combined in the description of individual exemplars.  In other words, to investigate how participants conceptualized one real person's moral characteristics was the goal of analysis on moral exemplars.  Through the investigation, I expected to discover the kinds of moral characteristics that exemplars had and the ways their characteristics worked together within this person.

138

The findings through those foci and interests apparently became the foundation of detecting the relationships between higher level categories, and in turn, building up a theory of 'a moral person' for Koreans. Better understanding of each moral characteristic helped me find hierarchical relationships among the emerged themes, and findings with moral exemplars gave some insights how to combine the characteristics as if one moral person had those, which are essential in building a theory of 'a moral person.'

Regarding the naturalistic conceptions in the context of 'one moral person,' the emerged themes and categories of behaviors, personality, and psychological functions might be defined by the roles that they respectively play when the person functions in a morality-related situation. Here is one example of the situation that was hypothesized based on the findings from the list of moral characteristics and exemplarity for Korean participants. It was designed to help better understand the roles of behaviors, personality traits, and psychological functions in a hypothesized-but-close-to-realistic situation and explore a possibility to establish a theory of 'a moral person' for Koreans. Some evidence that seemed to be supportive enough for the story below will follow after the story.

> Suppose a man gave a homeless person all his change on a street and some
> people watched his behavior at that moment and started to think about it.
> Those people who watched the behavior but did not know the man at all
> might think of him as 'a moral person' solely based on the behavior.
> Those people's judgment, however, might well come from their
> assumption that the giver had some kind of morality inside. Because it is
> natural to think that one behavior does not happen from nothing, if a man
> showed a 'helping behavior,' he might well have a kind of personality

attribute like 'caring for others.' If one of his acquaintances who knows him well watched the behavior, the acquaintance might be certain that it came from his personality. However, if the acquaintance did not think the man had that kind of personality, his behavior might be interpreted in various ways: (1) if the weather at that moment was so windy and cold, a cognitive function for this study, 'perspective taking,' might work for him. (2) If the man intended to give other people a good impression by his behavior for any reason, it might be facilitated by a motivation related to keeping his social face, and so forth.

As such, behaviors are clear criteria for people with which they make a judgment whether the owner of the behaviors is moral. For example, one interviewee, who had a minor collision with a taxi, said that the taxi driver seemed not to be moral because the driver only focused on defending himself. The taxi driver said he was not responsible for the accident, and he showed no concern for the condition of those who were involved in the accident (P05f). She appeared to think that the taxi driver's behaviors only to defend himself and not to care other people's conditions at that kind of moment showed that he is not humane, and in turn, not moral.

Personality traits or psychological functions were frequently regarded as the basis of the behaviors by many participants. For instance, a soldier interviewee said that such a behavior of slamming the door in the middle of a night while the other comrades were in a deep sleep would come from the lack of personality trait of 'caring for others' or a psychological function of 'perspective taking' (P12m).

Now, it became a little bit clearer that a theoretical model of 'a moral person' for Korean participants includes moral behaviors, personality traits related to human morality,

and psychological functions facilitating moral behaviors.  In addition, participants appeared not only to make a judgment directly on a person's morality based on visible behaviors but also to assume that those behaviors would come from the person's morality-related personality traits or psychological functions.

### *Supporting evidence for the relationship*

Then, it would now be necessary to see whether all participants made at least one statement about behaviors, personality, and psychological functions or not.  If any of those category was based on some part of participants—not most of them, to say those relationships between moral behaviors, personality, and psychological functions is hard to be widely accepted and should never be used to build a theory of 'a moral person' for Koreans.

Table 5 shows how many statements for each interviewee made for every aspect of morality.  It has to be noted that the number of statements included here were only clearly definable concepts in relation to behaviors, personality traits, and psychological functions found and were actually used in the analysis of the study.  So, these numbers do not reflect those of all statements that the relative participants actually made.

Another purpose of Table 5 was to show whether participants' statements had any pattern where they were exclusively made about a specific category among behaviors, personality, and psychological functions.  Although every interviewee's tendencies of number composition for each category were various, majority of participants (17 out of 22; 77.3%) mentioned at least one aspect of morality.  It may indicate that Korean participants appeared to have perceptions on all of the three: moral behaviors, personality,

and psychological function.  Even though it is not obvious from the data whether they were clearly aware of those three categorizations available in morality or not, to think that they might be unable to noticeably discern them would be more reasonable.

Table 5. Number of Participants' Statements Related to Aspects of Morality

| Participants' ID | Behaviors | Personality Traits | Psychological Functions |
|---|---|---|---|
| P01m | 3 | 2 | - |
| P02m | 5 | 3 | 2 |
| P03m | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| P04f | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| P05f | 6 | 9 | 1 |
| P06m | 8 | 1 | 1 |
| P07f | 12 | 4 | 2 |
| P08m | 2 | 4 | 3 |
| P09f | 3 | 3 | 2 |
| P10f | 9 | 3 | 1 |
| P11m | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| P12m | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| P13m | 6 | 5 | 2 |
| P14f | 5 | 1 | 1 |
| P15f | 10 | 6 | - |
| P16f | 10 | 5 | - |
| P17f | 9 | 5 | 3 |
| P18m | 8 | 1 | - |
| P19f | 14 | 6 | - |
| P20f | 9 | 6 | 4 |
| P21m | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| P22m | 9 | 5 | 4 |
| Total | 140 | 80 | 36 |

Regarding that all conceptions from respondents were 'naturalistic,' it can be said that Korean participants used behavioral, personality, and psychological characteristics of 'a moral person' interchangeably. In other words, they might be thinking about behaviors of 'a moral person,' assuming those behaviors had some kinds of basis such as personality or psychological functions. A few respondents revealed this kind of underlying premises of them during their interview.

> P10f: If one has a strong moral sense or morally firm mind, the person can resist any temptation, even if she has every reason and circumstance that she can easily yield to the temptation.
>
> P13m: … No one can exactly know how noble and lofty her [Mother Teresa's] mind and character were, but I think her behaviors and her life itself show that her mind or morality was one of the highest of all people's. … One's behaviors play a role of a window show the person's values.

### Complexity in the relationship

Keeping in mind that this relationship between behaviors, personality, and psychological functions would be a basic framework of a theory of 'a moral person,' I found some exceptional but remarkable statements about the relationship from a few participants.

> P04f: … I think there might be intentions at the back of one's behaviors. Although behaviors don't always reflect well those intentions, but you have to be aware of there may be something hidden in people's mind behind their visible behaviors.
>
> P08m: I don't try to make any judgment on one's morality with the person's

superficial behaviors.  Rather, I keep waiting to see if there is something

else from the person.  I wait until I can know better about the person.

These responses indicate that some Korean participants may understand reality as a

complex entity in a context of interacting between behaviors, personality, and

psychological functions such a way that human behaviors are not always plain reflections

of what exists inside of a person.  From the above quotes, the latter interviewee (P08m)

seemed to delay any kind of morality-related judgments on one's behaviors until he

would be enough acquainted with the person (and maybe with the person's personality),

which can be considered as a mature attitude toward others.  It can be said that Korean

participants recognized the fact that any person's visible behaviors can be unstable,

compared to personality, and in turn, they cannot be perfect manifestation of the person's

inner self.

Now, there is one question left: if Korean participants had some ideas about the

exceptions where behaviors do not directly come from a person's personality or

psychological functions, why those kinds of situations happen and what generate those

situations?  Quite a few participants actually mentioned about the contexts.  They pointed

out those societal environments that can be referred to outer influences against inner self

play a main role of leading people to choose not to follow their internal moral voices

(P02m, P03m, P04f, P06m, P13m, P17f, P18m, and P19f).  For example, interviewees

frequently indicated that they might violate a moral rule even if they do not want to,

when most people surrounding them do (P02m, P04f, P06m, and P18m).  Respondents

seemed to know that characteristics of 'a moral person' are dynamics of relationships

144

between behaviors, personality, psychological functions, and environments.

### *Summary of the framework of 'a moral person' for Koreans*

In sum, the relationships between human behaviors and the other two aspects of morality have emerged. First, the majority of participants in this study appeared to make at least one statement about each aspect: behaviors, personality traits, or psychological functions. This can indicate that they might have some ideas about all three aspects with a kind of balanced fashion—Eight out of 17 interviewees who made at least one conception about every aspect (roughly half of them) showed relatively even numbers of statements across aspects. Second, according to respondents, it seems plausible that Korean participants might assume a basic kind of relationships between those three aspects: behaviors tend to be the results of inner aspects' operation. Third, still according to participants, they may even understand a dynamic in the relationships between behaviors and the others; i.e., behaviors cannot always be driven by what is inside a person and factors outside of oneself can manifest human moral behaviors.

Finally, specifically based on the findings from conceptions of moral exemplars, the stronger the relationships between behaviors and the others would be, the more a person is likely to be regarded as a moral one or a moral exemplar. As mentioned above, anyone can have a hard time to keep doing moral behaviors under a situation where, for example, most people around the person do selfish, immoral behaviors. Therefore, a person who shows an exceptional level of morality at any circumstances can be said to have strong relationships between behaviors and inner moral characteristics and be regarded as moral.

Regarding all findings up to this point, the framework of 'a moral person' for Koreans (1) found to consist of three areas: visible behaviors, personality traits, and psychological functions and (2) these three aspects of morality seemed to have relationships where each component impact to one another in specific ways.

### *Contents of Koreans' Morality*

While the above summary of the components for the theory is mainly about the framework of 'a moral person' for Koreans, the contents of the framework—the kinds of behaviors, personality traits, and psychological functions that constructed the framework—were described in detail in previous sections of this chapter.  Therefore, in this section, I will focus on explaining the characteristics of the contents of the framework from a more abstract perspective.

### *Emergence of Hierarchical Structure*

The contents of Koreans' morality appeared to be a hierarchical structure of individual conceptions of 'a moral person.'  It is natural that findings through grounded theory approach emerge as a hierarchical structure, because the coding systems of the approach—open coding, axial coding, and selective coding—are designed to discover from the most concrete level of descriptor or concept to the most abstract level of 'core category.'  With the core category, a researcher can describe the target phenomena with the strongest explanatory power overarching every level of categories and concepts detected within the study.

Figure 14 depicts the hierarchical structure.  The highest level of categories contains the

components of the framework of 'a moral person': visible behaviors, personality traits, and psychological functions.

### Balance and orientation between 'other-' and 'self-centered' morality

It was particularly interesting to find that the next level of categories for the *Visible Behaviors* and *Personality* appeared to have both 'other-centered' and 'self-centered' characteristics at the same time. More in detail from Figure 14, from the first level category of *Visible Behaviors*, the next level category of 'Community Based Moral Behaviors'[4] includes all kinds of 'other-centered' moral behaviors, whereas the other category in the same level, 'Conscience Based Moral Behaviors,' has moral behaviors of 'self-centered' ones. Another first level category of *Personality* also showed to group moral personality traits into 'other-centered' and 'self-centered' ones: 'Interpersonal Traits' and 'Intrapersonal Traits,' respectively.

This balanced fashion of emergence of 'other-centered' and 'self-centered' behaviors and personality traits seems to indicate that Koreans may conceptualize moral behaviors and personality traits comprehensively. They may have both areas of morality in mind when they judge others' morality or make their own moral decisions.

---

[4] The category for the 'other-centered' moral behaviors here was labeled 'Community Based Moral Behaviors,' because all behaviors seemed to require a kind of 'a sense of community' for the agents of the behaviors. In other words, to be moral in Korea, a person had better consider other people as members of various kinds of communities to which he or she belongs. One of the representative communities was family in which moral behaviors of practicing filial piety are emphasized, and Koreans tended to think of their society as an extended family in a broad sense (See the section of 'Practicing filial piety and beyond' above).

1. Visible Behaviors
    a. Community Based Moral Behaviors
        i. Moral Basics; Foundation of Morality for Koreans
            1. Not doing another person harm, misconduct, or mischief
            2. Observing 'public morality' or civil virtues
        ii. Helping Other People
            1. Helping others for Koreans (in a broad sense)
            2. Helping others in needs (materialistically); Donating
            3. Volunteering
            4. Sacrificing Oneself for the Good for Others
        iii. Practicing Filial Piety and Beyond
            1. Respecting parents; Obedience to parents
            2. Identifying parents and children
            3. Extension of filial piety to other elders
        iv. Being and Staying Just One of the Majority (Modesty)
            1. Conforming group decisions or following majority's behaviors/opinion
            2. Living a thrifty life
    b. Conscience Based Moral Behaviors
        i. Living with Integrity
            1. Not telling a lie
            2. Resisting temptations
            3. Having no patience with injustice
2. Personality
    a. Interpersonal Traits
        i. Other-Centered; Other-Oriented
            1. Caring for others
            2. Modest; Humble
            3. Generous; Broad-minded
        ii. Having Good Relationships with Others
            1. Friendly; Sociable; Having social skills
            2. Harmonious
    b. Intrapersonal Traits
        i. Having Integrity
            1. Honest; Trustworthy
            2. Principled; Disciplined (Humane; Duty-based)
            3. Impartial; Fair
        ii. Responsible
            1. Having responsibility
            2. Diligent; Hard-working
        iii. Goodhearted
            1. Good; Nice
            2. Flexible; Elastic
3. Psychological Functions of a Person
        i. Cognitive Functions
            1. Perspective taking
            2. Reflective thinking
            3. Having a sense of 'living together with others'
            4. Reasoning
        ii. Emotional (Affective) Functions
            1. Being compassionate
            2. Valuing to be moral; Enjoying being moral
            3. Being morally firm; Incorruptible
            4. Having spare resources
        iii. Motivational Functions
            1. To keep social face
            2. Having a strong willpower

Figure 14. Final Finding of a Four-Level Hierarchical Structure for Naturalistic Conceptions of 'a Moral Person' for Koreans

It was also interesting to notice that the number of subordinate categories under the *Community Based Moral Behaviors* is much larger than that of under the *Conscience Based Moral Behaviors* (Figure 14). This tendency may reveal that Koreans are more likely to be comfortable in conceptualizing 'other-centered' moral behaviors than 'self-centered' ones. Nonetheless, it would be hard to say that 'other-centered' moral behaviors that belong to the *Community Based Moral Behaviors* are much more important for Koreans over the other behaviors under the *Conscience Based Moral Behaviors*. It is because, for instance, 'not telling a lie' as one of the conscience based moral behaviors was a subcategory that was most frequently mentioned by participants. Korean participants, however, obviously showed their familiarity with moral behaviors oriented to others.

This tendency of outnumbering of 'other-centered' morality over 'self-centered' one in visible behaviors was not the same in personality traits (Figure 14). Two subordinate categories under the *Personality*, 'Interpersonal Traits' and 'Intrapersonal Traits,' had relatively even number of their sub-categories. Interpersonal traits are moral personality characteristics associated with the relationships with other people, similar to the community based behaviors in terms of their other-centeredness. Intrapersonal traits are a collection of personality attributes with which 'a moral person' defines oneself as an autonomous, independent, mature person who is honest, fair, responsible, flexible, and so on.

Now, it is worthwhile to look into how many times that each subcategory was mentioned by participants from different contexts, because the number of frequency of

149

each category can show how typical or common one moral characteristic is for Koreans (Figure 15).  In other words, if there is one subcategory that were discussed many times by more number of participants, while another subcategory that were pointed out fewer times by smaller number of interviewees' statements, it can be said that the former subcategory may be a more common conception of 'a moral person' than the latter.

In Figure 15, I used various parentheses and brackets to identify the frequencies of subcategories classified into different first and second levels of categories.  The numbers in Figure 15 indicate the frequencies that topics under each subcategory were explicitly discussed from different contexts.  It means that if one participant kept talking about "not telling a lie" for a while, the situation was counted as "1," even though the actual number of times that the participant literally stated the phrase "not telling a lie" could be much more than "1."  However, if the same participant mentioned the same topic of "not telling a lie" from different context during his or her interview, it was counted as another case and I added "1" to the total number for the subcateogry.

It is clear that there are subcategories that were mentioned more often (e.g., 10 or 13 times) than the others (e.g., 1 to 4 times).  In addition, the tendency in moral behaviors that participants were more likely to commonly conceptualized community-based moral behaviors than conscience-based behaviors appeared to be obvious from Figure 15.

Furthermore, considering the structure of the conceptions (Figure 14) with the frequencies of each subcategory mentioned (Figure 15) may help us have clearer picture of the structure.  Figure 15 shows that the structure is organized in a balanced way. Suppose that if a few categories had been mentioned extremely often and all the others

1. Visible Behaviors
   a. Community Based Moral Behaviors
      i. Moral Basics; Foundation of Morality for Koreans
         1. Not doing another person harm, misconduct, or mischief [10]
         2. Observing 'public morality' or civil virtues [4]
      ii. Helping Other People
         1. Helping others for Koreans (in a broad sense) [5]
         2. Helping others in needs (materialistically); Donating [4]
         3. Volunteering [3]
         4. Sacrificing Oneself for the Good for Others [8]
      iii. Practicing Filial Piety and Beyond
         1. Respecting parents; Obedience to parents [6]
         2. Identifying parents and children [5]
         3. Extension of filial piety to other elders [7]
      iv. Being and Staying Just One of the Majority (Modesty)
         1. Conforming group decisions or following majority's behaviors/opinion [7]
         2. Living a thrifty life [3]
   b. Conscience Based Moral Behaviors
      i. Living with Integrity
         1. Not telling a lie ⟨10⟩
         2. Resisting temptations ⟨5⟩
         3. Having no patience with injustice ⟨3⟩
2. Personality
   a. Interpersonal Traits
      i. Other-Centered; Other-Oriented
         1. Caring for others (13)
         2. Modest; Humble (4)
         3. Generous; Broad-minded (7)
      ii. Having Good Relationships with Others
         1. Friendly; Sociable; Having social skills (10)
         2. Harmonious (4)
   b. Intrapersonal Traits
      i. Having Integrity
         1. Honest; Trustworthy {10}
         2. Principled; Disciplined (Humane; Duty-based) {7}
         3. Impartial; Fair {5}
      ii. Responsible
         1. Having responsibility {3}
         2. Diligent; Hard-working {4}
      iii. Goodhearted
         1. Good; Nice {4}
         2. Flexible; Elastic {6}
3. Psychological Functions of a Person
      i. Cognitive Functions
         1. Perspective taking ⌈7⌋
         2. Reflective thinking ⌈3⌋
         3. Having a sense of 'living together with others' ⌈2⌋
         4. Reasoning ⌈5⌋
      ii. Emotional (Affective) Functions
         1. Being compassionate 《3》
         2. Valuing to be moral; Enjoying being moral 《2》
         3. Being morally firm; Incorruptible 《3》
         4. Having spare resources 《1》
      iii. Motivational Functions
         1. To keep social face ⟦1⟧
         2. Having a strong willpower ⟦1⟧

Figure 15. Hierarchical Structure with Numbers of Frequency Showing How Many Times the Conceptions in Each Subcategory were Mentioned

151

pointed out few times, the structure could not have been said to reflect the phenomena of the conceptions well. If this had been found, I would have rather exclusively focused on explaining those a few categories most frequently emerged. However, relatively evenly distributed frequencies across categories indicated the structure found in Figure 14 is meaningful as an explanation about the organization of Korean participants' conceptions of 'a moral person.'

### *Characteristics of psychological functions*

Whereas a form of balance between 'other-centered' and 'self-centered' morality in *Behaviors* and *Personality* was discovered, a kind of comprehensiveness across cognitive, emotional, and motivational functions related to morality was revealed in *Psychological Functions*. Those functions appeared to be regarded by Korean participants as to increase (1) the likelihood of a person's choice to do moral behaviors (e.g., perspective taking can cause caring for others; P04f), (2) the level of certain behaviors (e.g., being compassionate can lead an extreme level of sacrificing; P13m), or (3) a motivation of a person to stay within a moral path (e.g., by being morally firm or having strong willpower; P10f and P11m, respectively).

### *A Theory Emerged: A Person with 'Moral Heart' is Moral.*

### Moral Heart

Now that this study has summarized the results and findings from naturalistic conceptions of 'a moral person' and tried to integrate those into a theory of 'a moral person' for Koreans, a *central category* emerges: 'A moral person' for Koreans is one who has 'moral heart' with which he or she voluntarily chooses to behave morally, based

152

on his or her own moral personality, at any situation, particularly where acting morally is difficult.

'Moral heart' here tries to capture a strong connection between the outer expression and the inner components of morality. With this 'moral heart,' 'a moral person' for Koreans sometimes decides to increase the intensity of moral behaviors to an extreme level such that he or she gives up his or her own life for the good of other people. Many ordinary Korean people may have some number of moral personality attributes to some degree, but actually doing moral behaviors in certain contexts is not so common for many people. This is why the connection between morality of a person and behavioral expressions of the morality, what 'moral heart' tries to depict, is important for a Korean to be regarded as moral.

'Moral heart' does not exclusively or necessarily represent emotionality of human morality, although the term itself seems to do. As a matter of fact, various kinds of 'heart' for Koreans (in Korean language, '마음 [ma:eum]') can be explained as a longing for an enthusiastic state, a passionate drive to achieve certain goals. It appears to be some forms of motivation, but closer to a sort of zeal to take action that is strong and effective. Therefore, 'moral heart' represents the dynamics of a person, an empowerment, connecting the inner morality to the outer behaviors and making moral behaviors as a lifestyle pattern.

### Orientation of 'Moral Heart'

The other aspect of a *central category* for this study was related to the orientation of the 'moral heart.' 'Moral heart' may be understood as a framework of 'a moral

153

person.'  As explained earlier, a framework of 'a moral person' found through this study

was consisted of three components—behaviors, personality, and psychological

functions—and their relationships.  So, regarding the three elements and their

relationship together, I can summarize the properties of moral heart as follows: "Moral

heart shows how the inner voice of 'a moral person' (personality) strongly drives

behavioral expressions in a wide variety of situations.  Moral heart can clearly emerge

particularly when a moral person faces many contextual barriers for doing moral

behaviors, because if the person does a moral behavior even under such challenges, it

may indicate that the person has moral heart, a strong connection between inner morality

and outer moral actions."  However, the concept of moral heart does not explain what

direction or orientation it aims.  In other words, moral heart does not answer such

questions, "What kind of moral personality traits or behaviors Koreans have," "Are they

oriented to justice or caring, for example," "Is their morality right-based or duty-based?"

All of these questions are related to contents of morality, but the properties of moral heart

do not contain aspects that can be the answers to the questions.

Orientation of the moral heart, as the contents of morality for Koreans, can be

portrayed as 'living in a desirable harmony with others.'  Therefore, it can also be labeled

as 'lifestyle' of 'a moral person' for Koreans.  This finding was based on the fact that the

majority of conceptions of 'a moral person' were made from the context of 'living in

harmony with each other.'  From Figure 14 and Figure 15 again, most behavioral

descriptors of 'a moral person' had something to do with Korean participants' 'sense of

community,' broadly defined.  This meant that Korean participants appeared to be

154

strongly aware of other people's existence as members of various communities, when they think about moral behaviors.  Such subcategories of 'not doing another person harm,' 'observing public morality,' 'conforming group decisions,' and 'living a thrifty life' are all directly associated with the orientation toward 'living in harmony with others.'  'Practicing filial piety' and understanding various kinds of social courtesy as extension of filial piety to other older members of community or general elders are also thought of another form of requirements for harmonious living for Koreans.  It is just their culture that defines many sorts of interpersonal relationships differently and requires different socio-moral roles for members in each relation, but these settings are the way for them to live harmoniously with each other.

Moreover, even some intrapersonal traits of personality that were found to be differentiated from interpersonal ones appeared to have contextual aspects that have something to do with other people.  For example, some participants (e.g., P07f is one of them) described their thoughts on honesty—which is basically defined as intrapersonal traits of personality—in the contexts of interpersonal relationships or social life. Impartiality or fairness was another example similar to the case of honesty.  Among psychological functions, many conceptions looked to be based on other-oriented situations.  'Perspective taking,' 'reasoning on reciprocity,' 'being compassionate,' and 'to keep social face' seemed to directly come from relationships with people.  Although such functions of 'reflective thinking' and 'room in mind' initially appeared to reside intrapersonal sphere of participants' thoughts, they were actually explained from circumstances of interpersonal relationships by participants.  One participant meant

155

'reflective thinking' by thinking about one's own behaviors in relation to other people and their behaviors.  Another participant mentioned 'having spare resources' as a facilitator for behavior of 'helping others.'  As such, the revelation of Koreans' morality is largely rooted in the relationships with other people, and it can be described that 'a moral person' for Koreans lives a harmonious life with others.

Sometimes, 'living in harmony with each other' appeared to impact so powerfully but morally undesirably on Koreans' moral life.  As mentioned earlier in this section, many Korean participants are not willingly keeping and practicing their moral behavioral choices when most people around them do not follow moral rules.  On the one hand, this tendency can open up a discussion of appropriateness of Korean style of 'living in harmony' regarding observance of moral principles; on the other hand, it can be a proof from the other side of a coin that shows how strong the orientation of 'living in harmony with others' is for Koreans.

In conclusion, 'a moral person' for Koreans can be said to make every effort 'to live in harmony with other people' with a powerful moral drive of 'moral heart.'  This statement is in the most abstract level of explanation with overarching explanatory power about the moral orientation and inner dynamic of 'a moral person' for Koreans, which is established grounded on the gathered data for this study.

This illustration of 'a moral person' who has 'moral heart' and 'lives in harmony with others' can be more easily explained with examples of moral exemplars for Koreans. For instance, considering the case of Soohyun Lee who took the risk of his life for saving another person's life, we may find his moral heart as a strong connection between his

moral personality attribute of 'caring for others' and his moral choice of 'risk taking in a challenging situation, and in turn, sacrificing.' His personality and behaviors were obviously other-centered and described with 'living in harmony with others,' broadly speaking.

### *A Diagram of the Theory*

Figure 16 is a diagrammic representation of 'a moral person' who has 'moral heart.' It was impossible to draw a figure that represents all the concepts and their relations to each other, as described my participants. For these reasons, I tried to sketch a sort of sample picture of the theory emerged in Figure 15 with some number of examples of conceptions.

First of all, many rectangular boxes symbolize each conception made by participants, and they are arranged along with the three basic types found in this study: visible behaviors, personality traits, and psychological functions.

The underlying arrows from each personality attribute to visible behaviors, sometimes through psychological functions, demonstrate the direction and process how a behavior might be made. They were already stated in previous sections of the study by relationships between the three components of morality: moral personality traits usually drive visible behaviors, and the behaviors are sometimes promoted or intensified via psychological functions. The thicker the arrows become, the stronger the causal effects of personality and psychological functions are.

Inner circle represents one's moral personality traits, which has two different types of attributes: interpersonal and intrapersonal. The line in the center of the circle

157

depicting personality is not a solid one, because sometimes one trait appeared to be inclusive to both categories for Korean participants. For example, 'honest' was basically regarded as one of intrapersonal traits, but one participant mentioned it with interpersonal aspects, such as 'honest' relationship between a man and a woman as romantic partners.
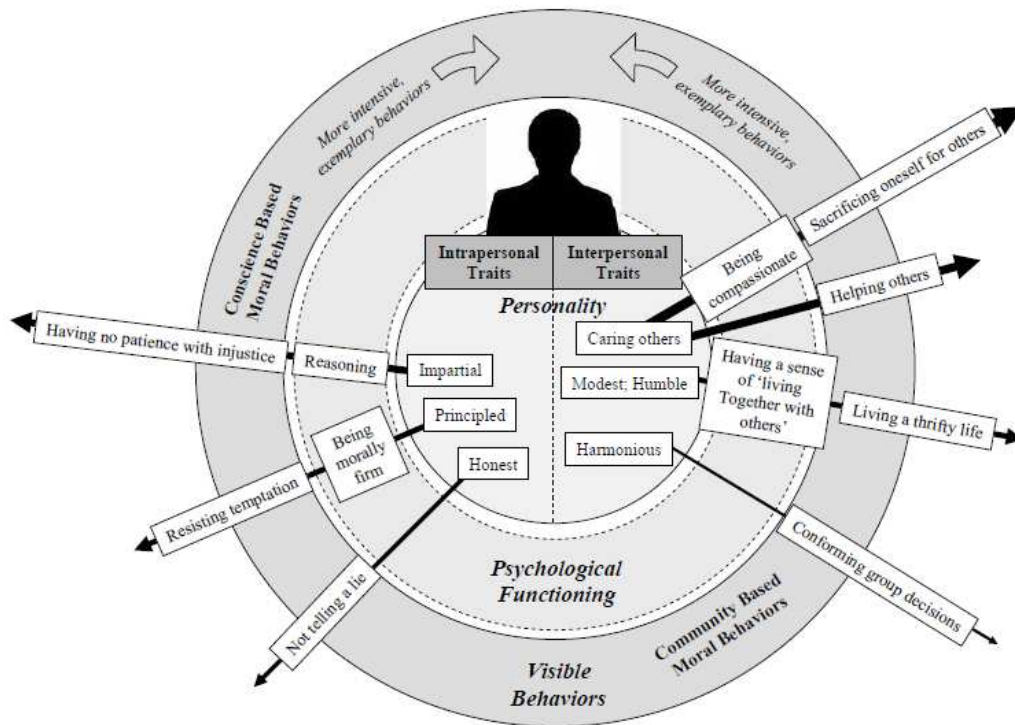


Figure 16. A Diagrammic Expression of aTtheory of 'a Moral Person'

Overall, following the center line in the personality circle in Figure 16, the right side of space includes community based moral behaviors and interpersonal personality traits, whereas the opposite side conscience based moral behaviors and intrapersonal personality attributes.

A doughnut-shape circular object placed in the middle stands for psychological functions that can sometimes facilitate moral behaviors or link between moral personality

traits and visible behaviors.  The shape was also drawn with dashed circles, because

psychological functions do not always play their roles between personality and behaviors.

So, as Figure 16 shows, 'not telling a lie' was an expression of personality attribute,

'honest,' and 'conforming to group decisions' was that of 'harmonious' without

engagement of any psychological function.

The concentric circle symbolizes visible moral behaviors that were explicit

criteria that Korean participants used to evaluate the morality of an individual.  Figure 16

portrays the level of difficulty or the hierarchy of intensity for moral behaviors.  As

behaviors are placed at the upper area of the circular object, the behaviors indicate more

difficult and exemplary level of actions to take.  Two curved-block arrows on the top of

the object illustrate the hierarchy.  Note also that as behaviors go up along with the outer

doughnut objects, the arrows become thicker, meaning that the behaviors need more

powerful 'moral heart' in order to be manifested.

## CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

### Significance and Implications of the Study

This study was the first attempt to investigate Koreans' conceptions of morality from culturally specific perspectives with a systematic qualitative approach. I tried to uncover the conceptions of 'a moral person' for Koreans through 'emic' and qualitative perspectives. My research indicated that 'honesty' for Koreans has to be understood more within the context of interpersonal relationships or 'social life' than within the individual realm where it is frequently regarded as an autonomous, personal, or independent. For example, in the mind of one of my Korean participants, 'justice' was represented by his moral exemplar's lifestyle of sacrificing and commitment to social justice, not just through his 'justice-oriented' reasoning or judgment.

My finding about characteristics of Korean morality, in which individual or intrapersonal moral values (e.g., honesty, good-hearted, etc.) are defined in the context of relationships with other people, suggests that Koreans' conceptions of 'a moral person' are largely oriented toward human relationships. This finding further suggests that the Confucian tradition, which emphasizes social context, is still influential in Koreans' morality (Koh, 1996). Particularly, as reviewed in the chapter of the literature review in this study, Confucianism for Koreans emphasizes ethical principles for various relations among people and significant others, such as father and son, husband and wife, between the elder and the younger, among friends, and so on (Kim & Davis, 2003). Therefore, it seems natural for Koreans to think of a person who properly follows those relational principles as morally desirable.

160

I also found that Confucian ethics influenced Korean morality in terms of my participants' statements about filial piety and conformity to groups or communities. Specifically the relationships between the elder and the younger were frequently regarded as the extension of the parent and child relationship. This finding shows how important the proper parents-children relationship is for Koreans as a moral principle that has been one of the most emphasized from Confucianism (Berthrong & Berthrong, 2000; Tu, 1998).

Conformity to groups or communities can not only be considered as a Confucian virtue but also as one representation of Korean's unique psycho-social construct—'*we-ness*,' as reviewed in previous chapter of the literature review (Choi, 1999). As Koreans expand a within-family relationship where members of a group or a community willingly sacrifice themselves for the other members' well-being or goodness, members of any kind of group or community can easily develop family-like relationships with each other, and consequently, require conformity to the group.

Although the contents of Koreans' conceptions of 'a moral person' appeared to be based on their cultural tradition—Confucianism—and their unique psycho-social construct—'*we-ness*,' some characteristics of their conceptions were found to be consistent with those for North American laypeople. Naturalistic conceptions of morality for Canadians or people from the United States have been reported to be broader and comprehensive than those for scholars or researchers in the academic areas of morality. In other words, whereas scholarly conceptualization of morality has tended to be mainly focused on rational aspects of morality (moral reasoning, making moral decisions or

161

judgments, and cognitive development of moral thinking), conceptions of morality from laypeople in North America have been found to be balanced between personality and rationality (Matsuba & Walker, 2004; Quinn et al, 1994; Walker & Hennig, 2004; Walker & Pitts, 1998). Conceptions of 'a moral person' for Koreans are also inclusive and balanced in multiple aspects of morality, though the representation of the balance or inclusion is not exactly same as for North Americans. Koreans tended to comprehensively conceptualize moral behaviors, personality, and psychological functions as individual and relational components in intrapersonal and interpersonal realms of morality at the same time, with emphasis on relational aspects in interpersonal morality.

Korean laypeople's naturalistic conceptions of 'a moral person' seem to be essentially based on virtue ethics rather than on deontological discussions of moral principles in situations that are decontextualized from real life (See Richardson, 2003). In other words, while many number of scholastic approaches involve making decisions about hypothetical dilemmas, Korean participants' interests always came from their experiences observing someone's behavior and personality in the realistic situations. For example, the participants' judgments on others' morality were frequently made from the whole life or people's personality traits, not from a single visible behavior or thinking (or reasoning) style alone, as many scholars have been focused on. It shows that direct applications of universal or North American paradigms to Koreans' morality may not be helpful in fully understanding Koreans' morality.

However, it should be clearly noted that this discussion does not suggest that Koreans ignore moral reasoning or do not engage in processes of moral judgments or

decisions making.  In addition, it does not imply that findings from the literature on Koreans' moral thinking, reasoning, judgments and decision makings, or cognitive moral development are meaningless, either.  Koreans do make moral judgments and decisions through cognitive reasoning processes (Park & Johnson, 1984; Rest et al., 1999) and Korean children appeared to follow cognitive developmental path in their morality in a similar fashion with findings from Western cultures (Song et al., 1987), even there might be a slightly different pattern for Koreans (Baek, 2002).  These findings are all important in understanding Koreans' morality.  The findings discovered through this study imply that there are more aspects to explore in Koreans' morality, and these aspects might be more essential in understanding their morality.  Therefore, to fully understand Koreans' morality, having comprehensive perspectives is necessary.

The central category found from the study (i.e., a person who has 'moral heart' and 'is living in a harmony with others' is moral for Koreans) was a culturally specific morality, but it seems to have common ground with one of the oldest inquiries in moral psychology, specifically studies investigating the relationship between moral behaviors (actions) and underlying morality (personality) inside a person (See Blasi, 1980; Blasi, 1983; Candee & Kohlberg, 1987; Frimer & Walker, 2008; Haan, Smith, & Block, 1968; Lapsley, 1996; Walker & Frimer, 2007).  Particularly, the 'moral heart' for a Korean moral person illustrates a strong connection between personality and behavior; therefore, morality for Koreans seemed to reflect consistency between moral personality and moral behavior.

Regarding the issues of the relationships between moral actions (behaviors) and

the inner morality of a person, Koreans' conceptions appeared to emphasize personality

as the inner moral aspect influencing moral behaviors. According to Lapsley (1996),

there have been at least two schools of thoughts about psychological factors impacting

moral actions. One was moral rationality (reasoning) and the other was personality. As

reviewed in the previous chapters, most moral psychologists seemed to have assumed

that moral reasoning and its development play the main role in moral judgment and

decision making. Those moral judgments and decisions have been believed to be critical

for actual moral behaviors (See Candee & Kohlberg, 1987; Haan et al., 1968; Kohlberg,

1987; Kohlberg et al., 1983). Meanwhile, some researchers (e.g., Blasi, 1980; 1983)

suggested personality traits are the main potential factors guiding moral behaviors. Blasi

(1980) specified the personality traits and their integrated entity as 'moral self' with

which a person defines him- or herself as a moral being and operates moral functions.

Koreans' conceptions of 'a moral person' were more similar with those of personality-

oriented researchers than those of rationality.

As a lifestyle of a moral person, 'living in a harmony with others,' is a unique

moral orientation for Koreans. This other-oriented morality of a Korean moral person

was multi-faceted. For example, Koreans regard a person who tries to be thrifty and

simple, even if he or she is wealthy enough to be luxurious and showy as moral. To be

moral in Korea, a person with higher socio-economic status needs to be humble and

continuously considers other people in need. Practicing filial piety and, as its extension,

respecting elders are one of the basic principles in Korean morality. Sometimes, Koreans

behave morally to keep their 'social faces' (i.e., to deliberately show their morality to

164

significant others, such as boy- or girlfriend).  As such, relationship with others and other

people's existence are so strong in the revelation of Koreans' morality that they seem to

essentially define and control Koreans' moral principles and behaviors.  This uniqueness

was summarized with the phrase, a person who is 'living in a harmony with others' is

moral for Koreans.

The finding of other-centered life style with a strong connection among moral

behaviors, personality traits, and psychological functions of a moral person for Koreans

can be compared to that of Walker and Frimer's (2007) study on Canadian moral

exemplars' personality.  The Canadian moral exemplars were people who received a

civilian award either for exceptional level of bravery or caring.  Exemplars of bravery

risked their lives to save others.  Caring exemplars voluntarily showed extraordinary

commitment in caring for individuals or groups.  Walker and Frimer suggested that both

exemplars commonly have personality of 'agency' and 'communion.'

> [M]oral exemplars in general tended to have stronger motivational themes
> of both agency and communion in their life narratives than ordinary
> individuals. … The agentic aspects of personality here reflect the fact that
> these exemplars, both brave and caring, are engaged in action, in often
> challenging and adverse contexts.  Such action requires control and
> awareness of the self, a willingness to assume responsibility and to pursue
> goals, and a sense of empowerment.  The communal aspects of personality
> here reflect exemplars' focus on helping others [and] other-orientation
> (p857).

It should be noted that Walker and Frimer's (2007) finding was based on quantitative

results of personality measurements and their focus was to detect any difference of moral exemplars' personality characteristics compared to those of non-exemplary, ordinary people. In spite of this dissimilarity between their study and this dissertation in initial approach, it is interesting to find that Canadian moral exemplars also appeared to have strong motivational aspects of acting morally in adverse circumstances and being other-oriented.

It is now worthwhile to evaluate this study's approach and findings considering Frimer and Walker's (2008) theoretical suggestions for the research in moral psychology. According to these authors, moral psychological research needs to be *personological*, *comprehensive*, *parsimony*, and *predictive*. In other words, Frimer and Walker proposed that research in moral psychology has to (1) have a foundation on person-based variables (*personological*), (2) include more variables to explain moral functions (*comprehensive*), (3) be simplest in terms of the number of primary variables (*parsimony*), and (4) have substantial predictive validity for moral behaviors (*predictive*).

Explaining the first criterion of '*personological*' in detail, however, Frimer and Walker (2008) did not restrict the scope of the research within person-based variables (e.g., personality, cognition, self or identity, and so forth). Rather, they insisted that *personological* research is "not to diminish or ignore the powerful ways that culture and context shape personhood and behavior (p.350)." Therefore, a study in moral psychology can be labeled as '*personological*,' when it pursues person-based explanation for moral functioning "that is non-reducible to contextual determinants (p.350)."

Comparing the criterion and the findings of this study, we can say that this study partly meets the criterion of '*personological*.' I found that Korean culture defines people's conceptions of moral personhood (having 'moral heart') and behaviors (living in a harmony with other people). The function of 'moral heart,' however, is not solely determined by the culture or other contextual factors. Regarding the finding that 'moral heart' indicates a 'strong' connection between inner morality (personality) and its outer expressions (behaviors), we come to conclude that there may be a continuum from 'weak' to 'strong' function of 'moral heart.' It is a person that determines the functioning of 'moral heart.' This is the reason that this study can be included in a category of '*personological*' research.

In spite of this personological property of the study's findings, judging this study as *personological* or not is not perfectly applicable, because I did not directly study the characteristics of a moral person or moral exemplars, as in Walker and Frimer's (2007) study. The focus of the study was to investigate conceptions of 'a moral person' residing people's thoughts and to build a theory of 'a moral person.' Hence, personological aspects of this study cannot be comparable to those from studies on a moral person or moral exemplars.

The second and third criteria of *comprehensive* and *parsimony* seem to be incompatible (Frimer & Walker, 2008). *Comprehensible* research considers inclusiveness in adopting more variables to explain phenomena, whereas *parsimony* research regards selectiveness in terms of number of variables included in the study.

According to Frimer and Walker, however, a study can meet these criteria at the same time by "holding some variables as primary or foundational and demoting other variables to secondary, consequential status (p.351)." One of findings of this study, on the one hand, was reported as balancedness and inclusiveness in that multiple aspects of morality (e.g., behaviors, personality, and psychological functions or variables of inter- or intrapersonal morality) has emerged from the data (*comprehensive*). On the other hand, the findings were organized as a hierarchical structure in which there are more abstract and higher-order variables overarching concrete and subordinate ones (See Figure 14). In addition, the core finding of the study was built as the most abstract variable with strongest explanatory power to represent what the 'primary' or 'foundational' finding of the study was (*parsimony*). This structural nature of findings of the study in which there are primary and secondary categories organized in conceptions of 'a moral person' for Koreans shows that this study also meets the criteria of *comprehensive* and *parsimony* in Frimer and Walker's suggestions.

Frimer and Walker (2008) seem to have established the last criterion of '*predictive*,' focusing on quantitative research tradition. They explained and took examples of '*predictive*' research by presenting the percentage of the variability in moral behaviors accounted for. As long as this criterion is based on the conventional paradigm of quantitative studies, evaluating this study using the criterion is not directly applicable. Furthermore, because real people or exemplars nominated as moral were not the primary target of research, predictivity of this study, if any, is hard to be approached. Rather, it is clear that empirical evidences supporting the findings of this study are necessary in the

168

future.  In other words, future research is needed to examine the characteristics of a real person or exemplars who are 'moral' for Koreans.

## Limitation and the Future Directions of the Study

This study has a few limitations.  First, there are limitations based on the challenges inherent in translating from Korean to English.  Although many researchers have tried to minimize those issues in various ways, there has been no established guidance how to better handle the issues or agreed criteria to evaluate which process is better than the other(s).  I was fortunate to have a pilot study for this dissertation research, and it was helpful for me to find a better way to handle the issues: conducting data gathering, analyzing, and summarizing the findings in Korean, and then, translating them into English as a final process.  With limited time and financial resources, however, trying and taking steps to find 'a best' way to negate language issues could not be carried out.

If there are available resources of time and finance in the future, one considerable direction of handling language issues for this kind of research would be to take procedures of translating and back-translating.  Note that the process of language issues handling for this study was to interview, transcribe, analyze in Korean, and then to summarize the findings in English.  However, it is reasonable to do the interviews and transcription in Korean, to translate the transcripts into English, and then, to take every possible process (including back-translation) to ensure the Korean and English transcripts are consistent.  Analysis can be done either with Korean language or English, or both at

the same time.  This may not only be one way of reducing language issues, but also be a good approach to compare the analyzing methodologies in Korean and in English with Korean interviews.

Second, the data relied on single interview for each participant.  Because data collection was done in Korea and the analysis of data was conducted in the United States, gaps in time and space made it hard for me to use the other format of data gathering, for example, participant observation, multiple interviews with each participant, or small group discussion.

If it is possible, therefore, using participant observation and small group discussion as other sources of data would be interesting and meaningful additions to make the data and the findings more credible.  Particularly, regarding the fact that thinking and talking about idealistic morality and actual behaviors or functioning in realistic situations with morality issues may often be different, participant observation to investigate participants' 'naturalistic' moral thinking, behaviors, and judgments or decisions will lead researchers to a better understanding of people's naturalistic conceptions of morality.

Small group discussion with three or four people would be another substantial help to build more trustworthy data.  During the interviews in this study, participants frequently mentioned that they have not deliberately or seriously thought about morality or 'a moral person' in their daily life.  So, I as the interviewer spent some time to help them engage enough in the topics of interviews.  If discussions as series of a small group of three or four participants would be obtainable, topics or issues of one participant can

trigger the thoughts or opinions and memory in experiences of the other participants in

the discussion, and in turn, it will make the discussion and the data much richer.

# APPENDIX

## A. Sample questions

1. What adjectives or characteristics come to your mind when you think of 'a moral person?'
   a. Among them, what does ____*characteristics*____ mean for you? Do you have any example(s) or specific situation(s) that can show who a __*adjective*__ person is or how a __*adjective*__ person behaves?
   b. Among them, what do you think the most important attribute for a person to be 'moral' and why do you think like that?
2. What aspects or attributes can differentiate between the people who are moral and those who are not?
3. Do you think many other Koreans also think of the characteristics that you selected as those of 'a moral person' for them? If you think there are any different attributes from yours, what are they, and what do you think about them?
4. Do you think your parents wanted you to be 'a moral person?' Did they have any specific lessons for you to be 'a moral person?' If they did, what kind of person they wanted you to be? What were their moral instructions?
   a. Did you have any 'family precepts' or 'motto of family' in relation to morality, which your parents or ancestors emphasized? What were they and how they worked for you or your family? If you have a particular episode associated to the family's moral lessons, let's talk about it.
5. Do you have children? If you do, what kind of moral lesson(s), if any, you want your children to learn or internalize? In other words, what kind of person do you want your children to be as 'a moral person?' Why did you specifically choose that kind of characteristics for your children?
6. What does 'being moral' or 'to be moral' mean to you?
   a. Is 'being moral' valuable for everyone in Korea? Why or why not do you think like that?
   b. Should anyone be trained to be moral? That is, 'to be moral,' is anyone required to have gradual developmental process or have one-time insightful enlightenment? Why do you think like that?
   c. Can anyone claim that he or she now becomes 'moral' or others usually judge, consciously or unconsciously, a person is moral or not?
7. Do you want to be 'moral?' Why or why not do you think like that?
8. Do you think you are 'a moral person?' Why or why not do you think like that?
   a. What aspects or situations do you think are critical to be 'moral' or 'not moral?' That is, what makes you or a person 'moral' or 'not moral?'
9. Who are your moral exemplar(s) who once lived or are living in the world? Why he or she is your moral exemplar? What aspect(s) made them morally excellent?

## B. Consent Form

**Consent form** *(This form will be translated into Korean for use with the research participants.)*

Exploring Naturalistic Conceptions of 'a Moral Person' for Koreans

You are invited to participate in this study investigating Koreans' conceptions of 'a moral person.'  My name is Sunghun Kim and I am a doctoral student in Educational Psychology at The University of Texas at Austin.  This interview is a part of my dissertation research project and will last for about an hour.  The purpose of this study is to understand people's conceptions of 'a moral person' specifically for Koreans.  Thinking and talking about your thoughts about images of 'a moral person,' you may be able to clarify your ideas about 'a moral person' and to better understand how you conceptualize 'morality' by yourself.  It may also be helpful for you to define social issues on morality and to identify 'a moral' or 'an immoral' person easily.  Besides these potential benefits of being in the interview, you will be given $15/hour for the appreciation of your participation and contribution.

Your participation is voluntary.  Your decision to participate or not participate will not affect your relationship with me or the University of Texas.  During this interview, you may encounter challenging questions.  You can discontinue the interview at any time.  In addition, you can choose to decline to reply to any question.

If you decide to participate in this interview, I would like to audio-record it.  The recordings will be used solely for research purposes.  Your private, identifiable information (either from this form or from recorded audio clip) will be kept in confidence throughout the process of the research and never be used for any other purpose than this study.  All publications related to this interview will exclude any identifiable information of you as a subject.

If you have any questions about the study, please ask me.  You may contact me through email at s.hunkim@mail.utexas.edu or also call me at 1-512-708-8237.  Or, you can contact my supervisor, Dr. Toni Falbo, through email at toni@prc.utexas.edu or call her at 1-512-471-0603.  If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, complaints, or concerns please contact Dr. Jody Jensen, Chair, The University of Texas at Austin Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Participants at 1-512-232-2685 or the Office of Research Support at 1-512-471-8871 or email: orsc@uts.cc.utexas.edu.

You are making a decision whether or not to participate.  Your signature below indicates that you have read the information provided above and have decided to participate in this study.  If you later decide that you do not want to participate in the study, please tell me.

You will be given a copy of this consent form for your records.

_____
Printed name of participant

_____          _____
Signature of participant              Date

_____          _____
Signature of interviewer              Date

173

## 연구 참여 동의서 (Consent Form in Korean)

한국인에 있어서의 '도덕적인 사람' 개념에 대한 연구

당신을 어떤 특징의 사람을 한국인들이 '도덕적인 사람'으로 여기는가를 알아보는 연구에 초대합니다. 저는 미국 어스틴 소재 텍사스 주립대학 교육심리학과 박사과정 학생인 김성훈이라고 합니다. 이 인터뷰는 제 박사학위 논문 연구의 자료수집을 목적으로 합니다. 이 연구를 통해서 저는 한국 사람들이 생각하는 '도덕적인 사람'은 어떤 특징 갖는지를 정확하고 체계적으로 기술하고자 합니다. 이 인터뷰에 참여하심으로써 당신은 지금까지 어떤 사람들을 '도덕적인 사람'이라고 생각해 왔는지를 스스로 좀 더 분명히 알게될 수 있으며, 사회에서 논의가 활발한 도덕성에 관련된 논점등을 잘 이해함으로써 다른 한국인들이 생각하는 '도덕적인 사람' 혹은 '비도덕적인 사람'을 좀 더 잘 구별할 수도 있을 것입니다. 연구에 참여해 주신다면 당신의 기여에 대한 사례로 ₩15,000/시간을 지급해 드리겠습니다.

인터뷰에 참여 결정은 오직 당신의 자유로운 선택에 달려 있습니다. 바로 이 시점에서 참여하지 않기로 결정하실 수도 있습니다. 인터뷰 중간에 있을지도 모르는 예상치 못했거나 경험하지 못했던 질문들에 의해 혹 불편한 상황에 처하게 될 수도 있습니다. 당신에게 어떤 이유에서든 중단하시고 싶은 마음이 생긴다면 인터뷰 중간의 어떤 시점에서든 그렇게 하실 수 있습니다. 또한, 당신은 인터뷰에 관련하여 답변하고 싶지 않은 어떤 질문이나 주제에 대해서도 답변을 거부할 수 있습니다.

당신이 인터뷰에 참여하시고자 하신다면, 또 한 가지, 인터뷰 내용 전체를 음성 녹음하는 것을 허락하실 것인지 결정해 주십시오. 이 동의서에 표기될 혹은 인터뷰 중간에 언급될지도 모르는, 당신의 개인적인 신상정보를 담은 어떤 내용도 연구 과정 내내 또는 논문자체에 공개되지 않을 것임을 알려드립니다. 또한, 이 연구의 목적 이외에는 이 자료가 사용되는 일이 없을 것입니다. 추후 연구 결과가 발표될 때에도 당신이 인터뷰에 참여했음을 드러낼 수 있는 어떤 정보도 포함되지 않을 것입니다.

혹, 연구의 내용이나 인터뷰에 관련하여 추후에라도 질문이 있으시면 저나 제 지도교수에게 연락해 주십시오. 제 전자메일은 s.hunkim@mail.utexas.edu 이며 전화번호는 1-512-507-5869 입니다. 제 지도교수의 이름은 Dr. Toni Falbo 이며 전자메일은 toni@prc.utexas.edu, 전화번호는 1-512-471-0603 입니다. 만약, 연구에 참여자로서의 권리 등에 관련하여 어떠한 불편이나 어려움을 느끼신다면 텍사스 주립대학의 연구참여자 권리 보호기관의 책임자인 Dr. Jody Jensen (전화번호 1-512-232-2685) 이나 연구지원부서 (The Office of Research Support, 전화번호 1-512-471-8871, 전자메일 orsc@uts.cc.utexas.edu) 로 연락하실 수 있습니다.

이제 인터뷰 참여여부를 결정해 주십시오. 아래 공란에 서명하심으로써 당신은 위의 내용에 관하여 정보를 제공받아 스스로 연구참여를 결정했다는 사실에 동의하시는 것입니다. 혹, 이 시점 이후에라도 더 이상 참여하시지 않기를 원하신다면 언제든 말씀해 주십시오.

당신의 편의를 위해 이 동의서의 사본이 당신께 지급될 것입니다.

_____
Printed name of participant (연구 참여자 성명)

_____          _____
Signature of participant (연구 참여자 서명)              Date (날짜)

_____          _____
Signature of interviewer (연구자 서명)                   Date (날짜)

# REFERENCES

American Heritage Dictionary (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). (2006). sociable. *The American Heritage®*

    *Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition.* Retrieved October 21, 2009,

    from Dictionary.com website: http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/sociable

Baek, H.-J. (2002). A comparative study of moral development of Korean and British

    children. *Journal of Moral Education, 31*(4), 373–391.

Berthrong, J. H., & Berthrong, E. N. (2000). *Confucianism: A short introduction.* Oxford:

    Oneworld Publications.

Blasi, A. (1980). Bridging moral cognition and moral action: A critical review of the

    literature. *Psychological Bulletin, 88*(1), 1-45.

Blasi, A. (1983). Moral cognition and moral action: A theoretical perspective.

    *Developmental Review, 3*(2), 178-210.

Borg, W. R., & Gall, M. D. (1989). *Educational research: An introduction* (5th ed.). New

    York: Longman.

Candee, D., & Kohlberg, L. (1987). Moral judgment and moral action: A reanalysis of

    Haan, Smith, and Block's (1968) Free Speech Movement data. *Journal of*

    *Personality and Social Psychology, 52*(3), 554-564.

Chang, S. C. (1982). The self: A nodal issue in culture and psyche – An eastern

    perspective. *American Journal of Psychotherapy, 36*(1), 67–81.

Choi, J.-H. (1998). Filial piety and familism of the married-children and consciousness

    for supporting their parents. *Korean Gerontology, 18*(2), 47-63.

Choi, S.-C. (1999). Koreans' mind. In S.-C. Choi, H.-G. Yoon, D.-W. Han, G.-H. Cho, &

S.-W. Lee (Eds.), *Oriental psychology: Toward an alternative of western psychology* (in Korean). Seoul: Ji-Sik-San-Up-Sa.

Choi, S.-C., & Choi, S.-H. (2001). Cheong: The socioemotional grammar of Koreans. *International Journal of Group Tensions, 30*(1), 69–80.

Choi, S.-C., Kim, U., & Choi, S.-H. (1993). Indigenous analysis of collective representations. In U. Kim, & Berry, J. W (Eds.), *Indigenous psychologies: Cross-cultural research and methodology series v.17* (pp.193–210). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Cisneros-Puebla, C. A. (2004, September). To learn to think conceptually: Juliet Corbin in conversation with Cesar A. Cisneros-Puebla. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research* [On-line journal], *5*(3), Art. 32. Retrieved September 24, 2007, from http://www.qualitative-research.net/fqs-texte/3-04/04-3-32-e.htm

City-data.com. (n.d.). Retrieved September 23, 2007, from http://www.city-data.com/city/Austin-Texas.html

Editors of the American Heritage Dictionaries. (Eds.). (2006). *The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language* (4th Ed.). Retrieved October 06, 2007, from Dictionary.com website: http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/moral

Eisenberg, N. (1995). Prosocial development: A multifaceted model. In W. M. Kurtines & J. L. Gewirtz (Eds.), *Moral development: An introduction* (pp.401–429). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Frimer, J. A., & Walker, L. J. (2008). Towards a new paradigm of moral personhood.

*Journal of Moral Education, 37*(3), 333–356.

Gilligan, C. (1982). *In a different voice: Psychological theory and women's development.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Golafshani, N. (2003). Understanding reliability and validity in qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report, 8*(4), 597–607.

Graesser, A. C., & Black, J. B. (Eds.). (1984). *The psychology of questions*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Haan, N., Smith, M. B., & Blcok, J. (1968). Moral reasoning of young adults: Political social behavior, family background, and personality correlates. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 10*(3), 183-201.

Haidt, J. (2001). The emotional dog and its rational tail: A social intuitionist approach to moral judgment. *Psychological Review, 108*(4), 814–834.

Haidt, J. (2003). The emotional dog does learn new tricks: A reply to Pizarro and Bloom (2003). *Psychological Review, 110*(1), 197-198.

Hwang, K.-K. (1999). Filial piety and loyalty: Two types of social identification in Confucianism. *Asian Journal of Social Psychology, 2,* 163–183.Inglehart, R., & Baker, W. E. (2000). Modernization, cultural change, and the persistence of traditional values. *American Sociological Review, 65,* 19–51.

Inglehart, R., Basanez, M., & Moreno, A. (1998). *Human values and beliefs: A cross-cultural sourcebook.* Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Jensen, L. C., & Towle, C. A. (1991). Religion and gender differences in the perception of success. *Psychological Reports, 69,* 415-419.

Kim, J. M. (1998). Korean children's concepts of adult and peer authority and moral

    reasoning. *Developmental Psychology, 34*(5), 947-955.

Kim, E., & Davis, K. (2003). Conceptualizing unmarried motherhood in South Korea:

    The role of patriarchy and Confucianism in the lives of women. *Journal of Social*

    *Work Research and Evaluation, 4*(1), 107–120.

Kim, H.-S. (1995). An empirical study of Korean patriarchal values(Ⅱ), *The Journal of*

    *Social Sciences, 14*(1), 197-216.

Koh, B.-I. (1996). Confucianism in contemporary Korea. In W.-M. Tu (Eds.), *Confucian*

    *traditions in East Asian modernity: Moral education and economic culture in*

    *Japan and the Four Mini-Dragons* (pp.191–201). Cambridge, MA: Harvard

    University Press.

Kohlberg, L. (1969). Stage and sequence: The cognitive-developmental approach to

    socialization. In D. Goslin (Ed.), *Handbook of socialization theory and research*

    (pp. 347–480). Chicago, IL: Rand McNally.

Kohlberg, L. (1987). The development of moral judgment and moral action. In L.

    Kohlberg, R. DeVries, … (Eds.), *Child psychology and childhood education: A*

    *cognitive-developmental view* (pp. 259–328). New York, NY: Longman.

Kohlberg, L., Levine, C., & Hewer, A. (1983). *Moral stage: A current formulation and a*

    *response to critics.* Basel, NY: S. Karger AG.

Lapsley, D. K. (1996). *Moral psychology*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Lapsley, D. K., & Lasky, B. (2001). Prototypic moral character. *Identity: An*

    *International Journal of Theory and Research, 1*(4), 345–363.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Lonka, K., Joram, E., & Bryson, M. (1996). Conceptions of learning and knowledge: Does training make a difference? *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 21*(3), 240–260.

Mah, I. S. (2002). Ideological reconfiguration and democracy in South Korea. *New Asia, 9*(3), 13-31.

Markus, H., & Kitayama, S. (1991). Culture and the self: Implications for cognition, emotion, and motivation. *Psychological Review, 98*(2), 224–253.

Matsuba, M. K. (2000). *Caring for their community: Study of moral exemplars in tradition to adulthood.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, The University of British Columbia, Vancouver.

Matsuba, M. K., & Walker, L. J. (2004). Extraordinary moral commitment: Young adults involved in social organizations. *Journal of Personality, 72*(2), 413–436.

McAdams, D. P. (1995). What do we know when we know a person? *Journal of Personality, 63*(3), 365–396.

Miller, J. G. (1994). Cultural diversity in the morality of caring: Individually oriented versus duty-based interpersonal moral codes. *Cross-Cultural Research: The Journal of Comparative Social Science, 28*(1), 3–39.

Miller, J. G., & Bersoff, D. M. (1992). Culture and moral judgment: How are conflicts between justice and interpersonal responsibilities resolved? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 62*(4), 541–554.

Park, I. H., & Cho, L.-J. (1995). Confucianism and the Korean family. *Journal of*

*Comparative Family Studies, 26*(1), 117–134.

Park, J. Y., & Johnson, R. C. (1984). Moral development in rural and urban Korea. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 15*(1), 35-46.

Piaget, J. (1932/1965). *The moral judgment of the child.* New York, NY: Norton.

Prilleltensky, I., (1997). Values, assumptions, and practices. *American Psychologists, 52*(5), 517–535.

Quinn, R. A., Houts, A. C., & Graesser, A. C. (1994). Naturalistic conceptions of morality: A question-answering approach. *Journal of Personality, 62*(2), 239–262.

Rest, J. (1975). Longitudinal study of the Defining Issues Test of moral judgment: A strategy for analyzing developmental stage. *Developmental Psychology, 11*(6), 738-748.

Rest, J. R. (1986). (Ed.) *Moral development: Advances in research and theory*. New York: Praeger.

Rest, J. R., Narvaez, D., Bebeau, M. J., & Thoma, S. J. (1999) *Postconventional moral thinking: A neo-Kohlbergian approach*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Pub.

Richardson, F. (2003). Virtue ethics, dialogue, and "reverence." *American Behavioral Scientist, 47*(4), 442-458.

Roetz, H. (1993). *Confucian ethics of the axial age: A reconstruction under the aspect of the breakthrough toward postconventional thinking.* Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Rokeach, M. (1973). *The nature of human values.* New York: Free Press.

Schwartz, S. H. (1994). Beyond individualism and collectivism: New cultural dimensions

   of values. In U. Kim, H. C. Triandis, C. Kagitcibasi, S.-C. Choi, & G. Yoon

   (Eds.), *Individualism and collectivism: Theory, method and applications* (pp.85–

   122). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Shweder, R. A., Mahapatra, M., & Miller, J. G. (1987). Culture and moral development.

   In J. Kagan & S. Lamb (Eds.), *The emergence of morality in young children*

   (pp.1–83). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Shuhei, G. (2002/2004). *Chul-Hak-Sa-Yeo-Hang 2* [The history of philosophy 2] (J. Bang

   Trans.). Seoul: Gandhi Seo-Won.

Sinclair, J. (Ed.). (2001). *Collins Cobuild English dictionary for advanced learners* (3rd

   ed.). Glasgow: HarperCollins Publishers.

Soanes, C., & Stevenson, A. (Eds.). (2005). *Oxford dictionary of English* (New Ed.).

   London: Oxford University Press.

Song, M., Smetana, J. G., & Kim, S. Y. (1987). Korean children's conceptions of moral

   and conventional transgressions. *Developmental Psychology, 23*(4), 577-582.

Sterling, B. S., Fowles, E., Kim, S., Latimer, L., & Walker, L. O. (under review).

   Perceived personal control among low-income postpartum women: Ethnic-

   specific psychosocial contexts relevant to weight loss interventions. *Health Care

   for Women International.*

Sternberg, R. J., Conway, B. E., Ketron, J. L., & Bernstein, M. (1981). People's

   conceptions of intelligence. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 41*(1),

   37– 55.

Stimpson, D., Jensen, L., & Neff, W. (1992). Cross-cultural gender differences in

    preference for a caring morality. *Journal of Social Psychology, 132*(3), 317-322.

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and*

    *procedures for developing grounded theory.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Tu, W.-M. (1998). Confucius and Confucianism. In W. M. Slote & G. A. De Vos (Eds.),

    *Confucianism and the family* (pp. 3–36). Albany, NY: State University of New

    York Press.

Turiel, E. (1983). *The development of social knowledge: Morality and convention.* New

    York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Walker, L. J., & Frimer, J. A. (2007). Moral personality of brave and caring exemplars.

    *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 93*(5), 845–860.

Walker, L. J., & Hennig, K. H. (2004). Differing conceptions of moral exemplarity: Just,

    brave, and caring. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 86*(4), 629–647.

Walker, L. J., & Pitts, R. C. (1998a). Naturalistic conceptions of moral maturity.

    *Developmental Psychology, 34*(3), 403–419.

Walker, L. J., & Pitts, R. C. (1998b). Data can inform the theoretical skew in moral

    psychology: A rejoinder to Hart. *Developmental Psychology, 34*(3), 424–425.

Walker, L. O., Sterling, B. S., Kim, S., Latimer, L., & Garcia, A. A. (under review).

    Postpartum weight loss interventions for low-income women: A case study of

    ethnic-specific outcomes. *Public Health Nursing.*

Wang, Q., & Leichtman, M. D. (2000). Same beginning, different stories: A comparison

    of American and Chinese children's narratives. *Child Development, 71*(5), 1329–

1346.

World Values Survey, (2006). Retrieved November 4, 2007,

http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/

Yeh, K.-H., & Bedford, O. (2003). A test of the dual filial piety model. *Asian Journal of Social Psychology, 6,* 215–228.

Zavalloni, M. (1980). Values. In H. C. Triandis, & R. W. Brislin (Eds.), *Handbook of cross-cultural psychology (Vol.5): Social psychology* (pp.73–120). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

**VITA**

Sunghun Kim was born in Seoul, South Korea on August 11, 1971, the eldest child and only son of Sangki Kim and Minja Lee.  After graduating from Sangmoon High School in Seoul, Korea, in 1990, he entered Seoul National University.  After he received his Bachelor of Arts degree in Education at the University, in 1995, Sunghun went to work for a company of network service and computer software developing for three and a half years.  He entered the Graduate School of Seoul National University in March 1999, and completed the coursework requirements of the Master's program in Educational Foundation.  In September 2002, he entered a doctoral program in the Department of Educational Psychology of The University of Texas at Austin.  He earned his Master of Arts degree in Educational Psychology in May 2006.

Permanent Address: LG Xi 1-cha Apt. 102-1102, Sinbong, Sooji, Yongin, Gyeongki,
#448-533, Republic of Korea

This manuscript was typed by the author.

184