

Impact of Collectivistic Tendencies and Vicarious Grief on Psychological Maladjustment

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This study examined the mediating role of vicarious grief in the relationship between collectivistic tendencies and psychological maladjustment. Participants included 277 Korean adults recruited from an online panel site. The scales used were the Collectivism–Individualism Cultural Dimension, Inventory of Traumatic Grief, and Brief Symptom Inventory. Collectivistic tendencies were positively associated with vicarious grief and psychological maladjustment, while vicarious grief was positively associated with psychological maladjustment. Vicarious grief fully mediated the relationship between collectivistic tendencies and psychological maladjustment. The findings suggest that Koreans experience distress when grieving vicariously in response to others' traumatic life events.

Keywords: collectivistic tendencies, vicarious grief, psychological maladjustment

Introduction

The death of a loved one inevitably brings about intense emotional pain and sadness (Anderson, 2010; Bowlby, 1980). Disconnection due to the death of a loved one result in various negative outcomes, including depression, anxiety, and posttraumatic stress. Individuals experiencing loss are likely to have persistent discomfort and difficulty accepting the reality of death (Prigerson et al., 2008).

Loss experiences manifest distressing and intense emotional responses, which are often referred to as grief or grief reactions (Hwang et al., 2014; Stroebe et al., 1992). In general, grief is a normal response that involves maladaptive physical and psychological symptoms. Such reactions can emerge immediately, be delayed, or

be exaggerated (Lindeman, 1979).


Although grieving due to personal loss is painful, many individuals restore themselves adaptively through grief work. However, besides direct loss and grief, even the sudden death of a person with whom one has never met can also bring about feelings of loss and sadness (Sullender, 2010). For instance, learning of the murder or violent assault of another, non-familiar individual through mass media or on the spot leads many to experience psychological distress. This form of sadness due to indirect loss is termed “vicarious grief” (Kastenbaum, 1987, 1989; Rando, 1997), which refers to grief experienced by empathizing with someone else's loss (Wayment, 2004). Given that many of us are connected by accessible technology, shocking traumatic events spread quickly and widely, and vicarious grief can occur anywhere. In such cases, visual depictions of tragedy can be very salient and produce more persistent memorial components (Sullender, 2010).

Another aspect is the possibility that people will feel guilty when learning of a tragedy, as they were unable to help those in need. There is also the perception that tragedies can happen to anyone, anywhere, and lead people to question whether we live in a world that is at all safe from potential threats and dangers (Anderson,

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2010; Wayment, 2004). The experience of vicarious grief can also be influenced by cultural context. For instance, within collectivistic cultures, the more an individual identifies him/herself with a victim (e.g., gender, age, race, family status, and living environment), the more she/he will be empathetic toward the victim's plight and experience more intense vicarious grief (Chochinov, 2005; Sullender, 2010).

People in collectivistic cultures appear to derive their self-concept from their position within a group to which they belong. For example, in Korea, where high collectivistic values are prominent, many people have a strong sense of "one nation" and "we-ness" (Choi & Choi, 2002); these tendencies are closely related to high levels of group harmony, which is crucial for collaboration and prosocial activities in response to interpersonal conflicts (Parboteeah et al., 2004). In a study claiming that the psychological tendencies Korean adolescents and parents hold towards adolescent achievement experiences are indigenous psychological phenomena related to Korea's collectivistic culture, both adolescents and parents felt shame about adolescent failures, with parents showing even greater shame than adolescents. Parents had higher expectations and desires for future achievement than adolescents themselves. There was a positive correlation between shame due to failure and expectations/desires for future achievement (Park et al., 2005). Researchers interpreted these results as being associated with the collectivistic nature of Korean society. In other words, Koreans tend to prioritize group honor over individual honor, leading to feelings of shame in response to failure, while simultaneously having high expectations for collective achievement, resulting in greater desires for future achievement. In summary, the reliance on parental reactions rather than one's own feelings when failing to meet certain standards, and the greater importance of parental expectations and desires for future achievement over those of adolescents, appear to be influenced by a collectivistic inclination to sensitively perceive others' reactions and then act accordingly, which contributes to experiencing anxiety and shame. Shumaker and Brownell (1984) reported in their research that individuals with high collectivistic tendencies tend to perceive their identity as part of the group, thus they tend to attribute personal unhappiness or failure to the entire group. This can lead to experiencing more negative emotions such as self-blame, shame, and de-

pression. In addition, in a cross-cultural neuroscience study (Chiao et al., 2009) investigating the brain psychology of individuals residing in collectivistic and individualistic cultures, it was found that individuals in Eastern cultures experience more psychological distress compared to Western cultures. This is explained by the prioritization of group harmony over individual happiness due to collectivistic values. The researchers interpreted the higher activation of brain areas associated with social cognition in participants from collectivistic cultures (including the medial prefrontal cortex, posterior cingulate cortex, and posterior superior temporal sulcus) as a tendency to continuously monitor others' mental states and adjust one's behavior according to social situations. They pointed out that this cognitive burden of social monitoring and self-regulation may lead to more psychological stress for individuals in collectivistic cultures. This can be reflected in expressing fierce pain toward a victim's circumstances, compassion toward a victim, and engaging in activities that could help a victim and his/her family (Bang, 2017).

Furthermore, there is literature suggesting that individuals can be negatively affected by intrusive images indirectly encountered through media, even without a direct relationship with the victim or casualty. These images can be persistently remembered or triggered by certain factors, leading to experiences of dissociation and re-experiencing of the event (Murphy et al., 1999). In a qualitative study conducted on people who experienced vicarious grief, there were statements indicating that the more threatening they perceived the traumatic event, the higher their resulting anxiety. This led them to frequently check if something bad might happen to them, worry about receiving ominous news when getting messages, and experience paranoid thoughts such as believing they should not go out often because something bad will surely happen (Jose, 2023). Related research has reported that there was a high tendency to obsessively focus on events that continue to occur nearby or far away, and to develop distrust towards the state, society, and related parties that bear social responsibility (Hur & Rhee, 2017).

Whether the victim is an individual or a group, expressing grief and sadness for a victim can be contagious. Thus, people who learn about victims of tragic incident often grieve together as a way to provide mutual comfort (Dickinson, 2011). Vicarious grief is often typical during tragedies that result in several casualties

and displaced survivors, especially when a vicarious griever can identify with the victims and families. In terms of shared tragic events, social disasters appear to be on the rise recently producing countless victims. For instance, the sinking of the Se-Wol Ferry in Korea on April 16, 2014, was one of the recent social disasters that highlights this phenomenon. Three hundred and four individuals out of 476 either died or went missing, more than half of whom were high school students. In one study, Korean college students reported experiencing vicarious trauma, even though these students had no direct relationship with the victims (Jung, 2015). After the accident, numerous articles and reports poured out, plunging not only the entire nation of South Korea but also people worldwide into shock and sadness. Some media outlets went as far as to describe it as collective traumatization of the entire population, as many individuals experienced indirect trauma and mourned vicariously. This resulted in widespread appeals for the significant psychological difficulties arising from it, highlighting it as a societal issue (Moon, 2015). In a related qualitative study (Han, 2016), in-depth interviews were conducted on individuals with relatively no connection to the victims. Nevertheless, participants stated, “We were all part of the Sinking of Se-Wol (Wikipedia contributors, 2017, p. 122).” Furthermore, participants also claimed being part of a “secondary family” to the victims. Citizen assemblies took place throughout Korea, which included candle-light vigils, concerts, and calls for legislation to help families of the victims and survivors (Han, 2016). One extreme form of grief observed was the uptick in attempted suicides, and a few who completed, leaving notes stating that they felt too much guilt about being alive while so many young students died (Wikipedia contributors, 2017).

Another example of collective loss was the Okawa Elementary School Earthquake on March 11, 2011. Seventy-four students and 10 teachers went missing or died. In reaction to this disaster, families and communities held a memorial event to honor the victims, saying that they regarded the disaster as if it happened to their own families (Park, 2017). Intense emotional pain can be gradually lessened by various socially symbolic activities (i.e., rituals) such as bringing flowers, writing a letter or poem, or singing a song (Doss, 2006). These activities, from a collectivistic perspective, are efforts designed to bring consolation, help with recovery, and sup-

port physical and psychological well-being (Inman & Yeh, 2007).

Others’ tragic losses and vicarious grief within collectivistic cultures are of unique value and worthy of exploration in terms of mental health and adjustment. Experiencing vicarious loss and grief reactions in response to unfamiliar others’ tragedies is a bit more complicated and difficult to grasp than individual grief within collectivistic societies (Anderson, 2010; Sullivan, 1991). Hur and Rhee (2017) stated that when a social disaster occurs, collective trauma can occur among individuals within that community or cultural sphere. Losses such as the death of someone directly related to an individual can evoke significant feelings of loss and mourning, making it easier to receive socially appropriate treatment. However, in the case of a social disaster leading to collective trauma, there is a risk that individuals may not receive appropriate treatment for the pain experienced during the process of vicarious grieving. Therefore, these individuals may overlook the subjective discomfort they experience, which could later act as a risk factor for mental disorders. However, no prior research is available to provide information regarding the relationship between vicarious grief and psychological maladjustment within a collectivistic setting. For this very reason, it is necessary to investigate the effects of vicarious grief due to indirect loss on psychological health. Therefore, the goal of the present study was to expand the concept of vicarious grief and explore its mediating effect on the relationship between collectivistic tendencies and general psychological maladjustment. Based on the previous research findings, the research model was conceptualized as a full mediation model, as illustrated in Figure 1. An alternative model, representing partial mediation, is depicted in Figure 2.

Methods

Participants

A set of questionnaires were administered through an online panel site to participants over the age of 19. Screening questions were provided asking whether the participants had ever experienced indirect loss and vicarious grief and were negatively affected by the experience(s). Data from 277 participants were obtained, excluding those with no indirect loss and instances where answers were either insincere or inappropriate for full analyses. The data

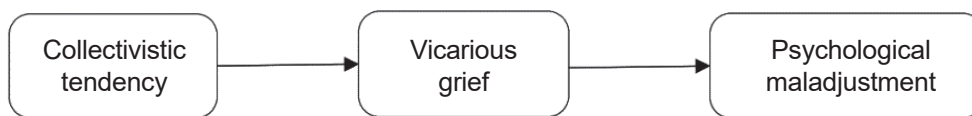


Figure 1. Proposed model of vicarious grief fully mediating the relationship between collectivistic tendency and psychological maladjustment.

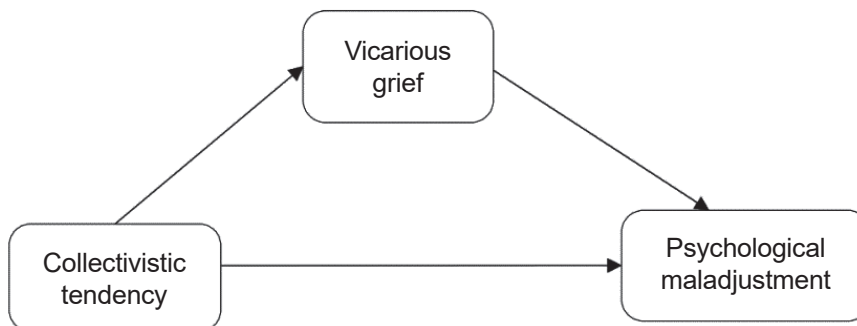


Figure 2. Comparison model of vicarious grief partially mediating the relationship between collectivistic tendency and psychological maladjustment.

for this study were collected from August to September 2017.

Approximately 50.9% of participants were women, and 50.2% were university graduates. The sample ranged in age from 20 to 69 (M= 47.28). Most participants were identified as Atheist (43.0%), followed by Christian (25.6%), Buddhist (18.8%), and Catholic (12.6%). In terms of mass media news exposure, most participants reported watching television (48.0%), followed by using Social Network Services (SNSs) such as Facebook or Instagram (22.7%), and Internet news contents (21.7%). Table 1 shows these general participant characteristics.

Measures

Collectivism–Individualism Cultural Dimension

To measure collectivistic tendencies, the Collectivism-Individualism Cultural Dimension scale (Kim, 2007) was used. A cultural analysis frame (Cho, as cited in Kim, 2007) was taken to devise the scale, using results of a pilot survey that was conducted in order to understand and develop collectivism-individualism dimensions. The full scale is a 35-item inventory, scored on a 7-point Likert scale, and original items are presented with both collectivistic and individualistic items, with explanations of each cultural tendency provided. However, because the primary purpose of this study was to examine vicarious grief and psychological maladjustment according to collectivistic frame, we only assessed items represent-

Table 1. General Demographical Characteristics (N = 277)

Characteristics	Classification	n (%)
Gender	Male	136 (49.1)
	Female	141 (50.9)
Religion	Christianity	71 (25.6)
	Catholic	35 (12.6)
	Buddhism	52 (18.8)
	None	119 (43.0)
Educational Level	High school graduate	85 (30.7)
	College graduate	32 (11.6)
	University graduate	139 (50.2)
	Master’s degree graduate	15 (5.4)
	Doctoral degree graduate	6 (2.2)
Marital Status	Single	69 (24.9)
	Married	187 (67.5)
	Separated	1 (0.4)
	Divorced	15 (5.4)
	Bereaved	5 (1.8)
Mass media usage	Social Network Service (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, Instagram)	63 (22.7)
	Television	133 (48.0)
	Newspaper, Magazine, Periodicals	12 (4.3)
	Internet newspaper, Internet magazine, Internet posts	60 (21.7)
	Radio	6 (2.2)
	Etc.	3 (1.1)

ing collectivistic tendencies (e.g., Collectivism: “When I make mistakes, I am afraid I might cause trouble to my family or group,

to which I belong, more than to myself"). Internal consistency on this scale for the present sample was quite good ($\alpha = .92$).

Inventory of Traumatic Grief

The Inventory of Traumatic Grief was first developed by Prigerson and Jacobs (2001) and was validated by Boelen, Van Den Bout, De Keijser and Hoijtink (2003); this validated version was used in the present study. This inventory was translated and adapted for use by the authors of this study. The original scale comprised 29 items measuring how traumatic the participant's loss had been. Item 5 (e.g., "I feel myself longing and yearning for—") was excluded because it was regarded as an inappropriate index for vicarious grief. Thus, the remaining 28 items were used and measured on a 5-point Likert scale. Consistency on this scale for the present study was $\alpha = .97$.

Brief Symptom Inventory (BSI)

The BSI is a 53-item self-report measure with a 5-point Likert scale, used to assess psychological maladjustment. Participants rate the extent to which they have been bothered in the past week by various symptoms. The BSI has 9 sub-scales designed to assess individual symptom groups: somatization, obsessive-compulsive, interpersonal sensitivity, depression, anxiety, hostility, phobic anxiety, paranoid ideation, and psychoticism. In the study by Ihm et al. (2012), the internal consistency was .95. This scale demonstrated high internal consistency in the present sample, $\alpha = .98$.

Results

Homogeneity of Variance Test and Correlation Analyses

Homogeneity analyses indicated no demographic factor differences in main variables. There were also significant correlations

between the main research variables. Collectivistic tendencies were positively correlated with both vicarious grief and psychological maladjustment. There was also a significant positive correlation between vicarious grief and psychological maladjustment. Table 2 shows results of these aforementioned analyses.

Measurement Model

All measurement variables used in the present study met assumptions of normality. In order to confirm whether the measurement variables adequately measured presumed latent variables, a measurement model analysis was conducted. The fit indices suggested good fit to the data: $\chi^2 = 426.988$ ($df = 88$, $p = .000$), TLI = .910, CFI = .924, GFI = .830, RMSEA = .118 (CI = 95% .107- .129).

The resulting path coefficients are shown in Table 3 and the pathways in Figure 3. Factor loadings for each path of the measurement model were significant, ranging from .700 to .997. Considering that a standard factor loading should be beyond a threshold of .50 (Hair et al., as cited in Williams et al., 2010), all variables adequately measured the latent variables. Thus, the measurement model was acceptable for analyzing the structural model.

Goodness-of-Fit Analysis

As a result of comparing goodness-of-fit between the research model with the full mediation and competing model with partial mediation model, model differences were not statistically significant, $\Delta\chi^2$ ($\Delta df = 1$, $p = .658$) = .196. Given that the difference between the nested models was not significant, with a 95% confidence interval, the proposed model with full mediation was chosen for parsimony.

Structural Model

Pathways with coefficients for the structural model and final

Table 2. Correlation, Mean and Standard Deviation of the Variables

	Collectivistic tendency	Vicarious grief	Psychological maladjustment
Collectivistic tendency	1		
Vicarious grief	.135*	1	
Psychological maladjustment	.137*	.530**	1
Mean	128.89	66.30	100.40
SD	26.65	22.47	36.68

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Table 3. Coefficients of the Measurement Model

Latent variable	Observed variable	B	β	S.E.	C.R.	<i>p</i>
Collectivistic tendency	Variability	1.000	.769			
	Connectivity	1.175	.700	.096	12.298	***
	Inhibition	1.413	.974	.104	13.569	***
Vicarious grief	Factor 1	1.000	.997			
	Factor 2	.350	.788	.017	21.120	***
	Factor 3	.209	.837	.008	25.220	***
Psychological maladjustment	Psychoticism	1.000	.947			
	Somatization	.741	.836	.033	22.162	***
	Depression	.995	.906	.035	28.326	***
	Hostility	.618	.870	.025	24.775	***
	phobia	.623	.885	.024	26.068	***
	Obsessive-compulsive	.753	.889	.028	26.468	***
	Anxiety	.734	.925	.024	30.601	***
	Paranoia	.715	.895	.026	27.133	***
	Interpersonal sensitivity	.465	.884	.018	26.037	***

****p* < .001.

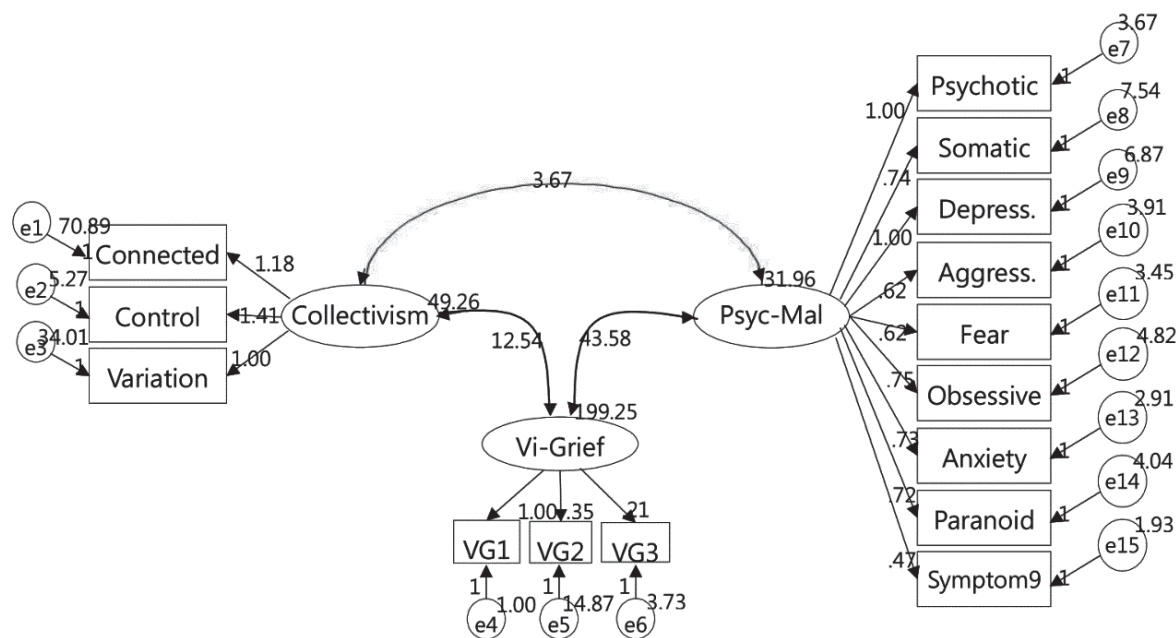


Figure 3. Measurement model.

model are depicted in Figures 4 and 5, respectively. As shown in Table 4, the pathway from collectivistic tendencies to vicarious grief was significant, $\beta = .127, p < .05$. The pathway from vicarious grief to psychological maladjustment was also significant, $\beta = .543, p < .001$. However, the pathway from collectivistic tendencies to psychological maladjustment was not significant, $\beta = .019, p = .655$.

Mediation Analysis

The structural model verified that vicarious grief mediated the relationship between collectivistic tendencies and psychological maladjustment. A bootstrapping was conducted to verify the mediating effect of vicarious grief. Total, direct, and indirect effects are presented in Table 5. The confidence interval of the direct effect was $-.088-.130$. Given that 0 falls within this interval, the path

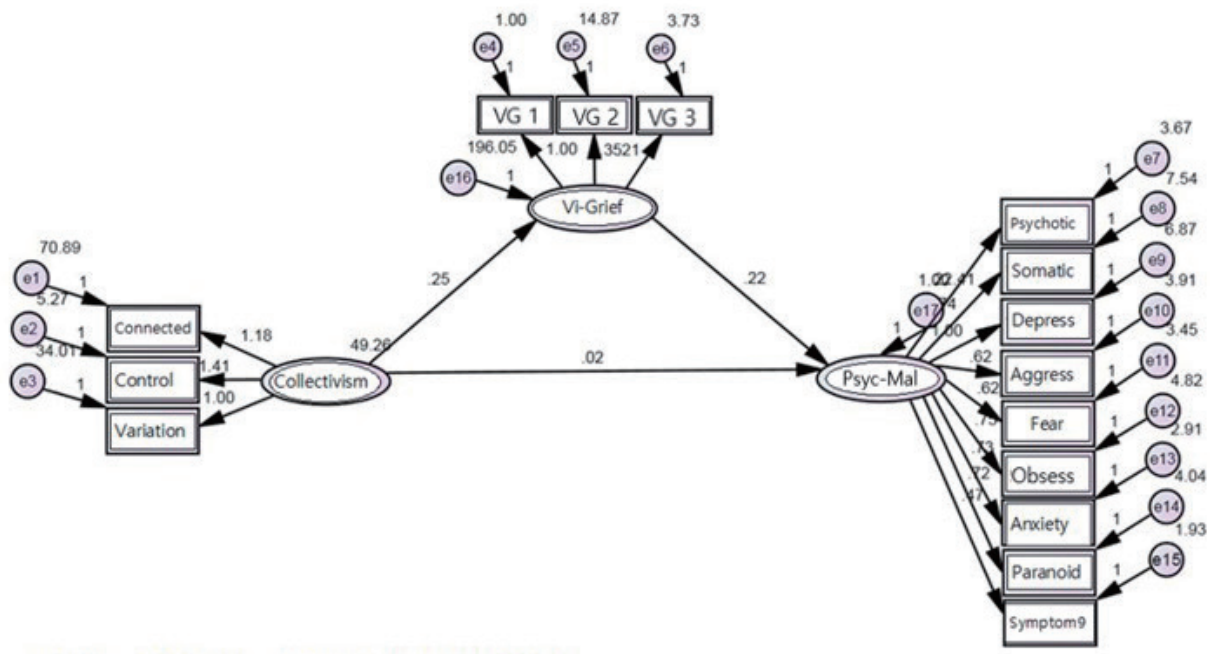


Figure 4. Analysis of the structural model.

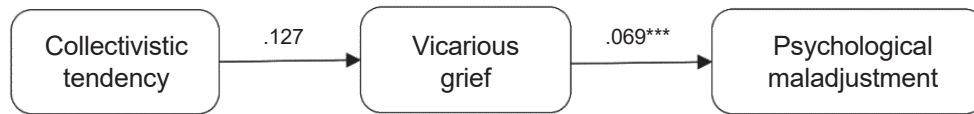


Figure 5. Proposed fully mediated model.

Table 4. Coefficients of the Structural Model

Path	B	β	S.E.	C.R.	p
Collectivistic tendency					
→ Vicarious grief	.255	.127	.124	2.055	*(.040)
Vicarious grief					
→ Psychological maladjustment	.218	.543	.021	10.274	***
Collectivistic tendency					
→ Psychological maladjustment	.019	.024	.043	.446	.655

* $p < .05$, *** $p < .001$.

Table 5. Mediation Analysis

Path	Effect	β	S.E.	95% CI Bootstrap percentile
Collectivistic tendency → Psychological maladjustment	Total effect	.092	.067	.042–.224
	Direct effect	.024	.056	-.088–.130
	Indirect effect	.069	.036	.001–.143

from collectivistic tendencies to psychological maladjustment was not significant. However, the confidence interval of the indirect effect was .001–.43, meaning that vicarious grief fully mediated

the link between collectivistic tendencies and psychological maladjustment. Significance of the mediating effect is also evidenced by the goodness of fit indices for the proposed model in compari-

son to the competing model with partial mediation, $\Delta\chi^2 (\Delta df=1, p=.658)=.196$. Given that differences between the nested models were not significant, and the fit indices were more acceptable for the proposed model, the full mediation model was chosen. The final model is depicted in Figure 5.

Discussion

This study investigated the relationship between collectivistic tendencies and psychological maladjustment, and whether vicarious grief plays a role as a mediator. Discussion on the results are as follows.

First, there were significant correlations among all three. That is, higher levels of collectivistic tendencies were associated with increased vicarious grief and psychological maladjustment. Furthermore, increased vicarious grief was associated with greater psychological maladjustment. Individuals within collectivistic cultures generally determine their identity in connection with the tendencies and values of their family, community, and nation, which fosters group responsibility (Valdivia et al., 2005). The outcome that collectivistic tendencies tracks with psychological maladjustment facilitates an understanding that others' tragic loss can be as painful as one's own loss experiences. Moreover, because it is not a direct loss, it may be difficult to properly or effectively cope with others' negative experiences. Thus, when individuals with high collectivistic tendencies experience others' suffering as their own, this distress can extend into serious psychological maladjustment.

The structural equation analyses revealed that vicarious grief fully mediated the relationship between collectivistic tendencies and psychological maladjustment. That is, a greater collectivistic tendency was closely related to experiencing high levels of psychological maladjustment through vicariously grieving for another's loss. This finding suggests that collectivistic tendencies do not always lead to psychological maladjustment but, rather, feeling connected and identifying with others reinforces collectivistic ideals (Chochinov, 2005; Sullender, 2010). This is considered to be a natural characteristic within collectivistic cultures, whereby "w^eness" is a virtue, which could account for the painful emotions experienced when empathizing with someone else's loss. This enables individuals to vicariously grieve for others' loss, whether

overt or covert, which can lead to psychological maladjustment until the distress is resolved.

This grief reaction is apparently different from what is experienced in the context of Western individualism. Individuals within a Western culture likely feel a sense of pressure to do something useful and engage in prosocial activities in order to overcome emotions of sadness and powerlessness due to others' loss. This is done in order to regain personal well-being rather than staying in a grief state (Finkelstein, 2010; Jackson & Usher, 2015). In contrast, individuals with highly collectivistic tendencies choose to share in others' distress during grief work, as they regard others' loss as "my event, my loss." Here, there is a natural drive to "grieve together" (Triandis, 2001). From this perspective, it seems that people may want to grieve for survivors they have never met, but it is very difficult to do so. As they are physically and emotionally far away from the victim(s), they may not know how to appropriately respond. This perspective is consistent with other findings suggesting that collectivism is associated with altruistic motivation from which individuals engage in volunteer activities (Finkelstein, 2010). The finding highlights the need to develop interventions that can provide support for individuals with highly collectivistic tendencies who may experience clinically significant distress related to vicarious grief following an indirect loss. For example, as vicarious grief is more social than personal, people suffering from an indirect loss may use SNSs, such as Facebook or Twitter, to express their distress. By doing so, these individuals may find consolation and deliver messages to victims and the bereaved so as to grieve collectively (DeGroot, 2004). Although this kind of approach has some limitations in that such contact is not as direct and intimate as what a close loved one could provide, there are social benefits that could facilitate on/offline-based interventions in the face of distressing and traumatic situations.

Another important suggestion relates to the need to seek professional help. Other than trying to let out vicarious grief through SNSs and sharing grief work with close others, it is very helpful to find professional psychological practitioners in order to better process an indirect loss. It should be noted that people with the individualistic tendency feel compassion and sadness toward the bereaved, but they are not likely to experience grief as directly or intensely as the bereaved. Rather, people who are more individualis-

tic overcome sadness by going back to their normal lives. Conversely, most people in collectivistic cultures identify with others' grief reactions and try to let the bereaved know that they are not alone, and pain can be shared together (Moore & Constantine, 2005). Especially, sadness has a characteristic of being more easily contagious compared to other basic emotions, and this characteristic is likely to be pronounced in societies with strong collectivist tendencies. This is because in collectivist cultures, individual emotions tend to spread more easily throughout the entire community. The biological mechanism where expressions of sadness, such as tears or crying sounds, stimulate the empathetic nerves of others operates more strongly in collectivist societies. It is also noteworthy that the emotional contagion of sadness can play a crucial role in group cohesion and survival, which likely contributed to the formation and maintenance of collectivist cultures. In this context, vicarious grief can manifest as a more natural response, especially in societies with strong collectivist tendencies. Thus, individuals with high collectivist tendencies may be more vulnerable to the emotion of grief in the process of vicarious grief. This is because they tend to feel the pain and loss of others as deeply as their own, and have a strong tendency to internalize the community's pain as their personal sorrow. Therefore, in situations of collective trauma or social disaster, people with high collectivist tendencies may experience stronger grief even if they have not been directly affected. This has a positive aspect of strengthening community consciousness and increasing social solidarity, but it also has a duality that can burden individual mental health. This state of mind is associated with understanding others' loss and grief experiences by living with their struggle. To help this activity be more tolerable and adaptive, group interventions and psychological education are necessary for vicarious grievers to share and express these distressing emotions, receive validation for their grief reactions, learn that vicarious grief is not forever, and they will have an opportunity to reconcile their unresolved grief.

Meanwhile, a few study limitations should be noted. This study was conducted within only one country (Korea) that happens to be one of collectivistic cultures. Although collectivistic tendencies apply similarly to other collectivistic countries, each and every culture has their own unique norms and values. For example, "we-ness" in Korea is more family-oriented and has relational bound-

aries that are less obvious. In contrast, "we-ness" in Japan is more hierarchy-oriented, and individuals are very sensitive to maintaining individual roles and responsibility, which produces stricter relational boundaries (Choi & Kim, 2011). Therefore, further research is still needed to confirm how collectivistic tendencies impact vicarious grief and psychological health across a broader cultural context.

Third, our sample comprised a significant number of individuals in their 60s. Individuals at various developmental, social, and educational levels will likely demonstrate different degrees of collectivistic tendencies, vicarious grief, and psychological outcomes. For instance, educational experiences of older relative to younger adults are vastly different in terms of quality and emphasis. Thus, future research needs to examine, by controlling for education level, vicarious grief within various age cohorts.

Despite these aforementioned limitations, the present study is highly significant as it is the first to examine vicarious grief among South Korean citizens and how this impacts psychological maladjustment.

When applying such interventions, psychological counselors should have a level of cultural competence that takes into consideration how a collectivistic identity could lead to vicarious grief following indirect loss and traumatic experiences. The present study provides important basic knowledge regarding the relationship between vicarious grief and psychological health among individuals with a collectivistic self-construal. The present findings could be compared with further research on the manifestation of vicarious grief both in other collectivistic, as well as individualistic, countries. By doing so, we will better understand how indirect traumatic experiences are impacted by cultural tendencies and influence grief work. This will help us more properly improve the health and well-being of individuals experiencing indirect loss.

Author contributions statement

Hyeji Lee, a graduate student at Chonnam National University who is now a doctor and lecturer at Chonnam National University, served as the principal investigator of the research, collecting and analyzing data and led manuscript preparation. Young-Shin Kang, a professor at Chonnam National University, gave impor-

tant advice and feedback and helped design the study.

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