

*The Effects of Growth Mindset, Multicultural Efficacy, and Peer Relationship on Democratic Citizenship of Elementary Students in South Korea*

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**Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to verify the effects of growth mindset, multicultural efficacy and peer relationship on democratic citizenship of elementary students. The subjects were 212 4th~6th grade elementary students in South Korea, surveys were conducted from November 2022. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis was performed using SPSS 27.0 for data analysis. The results of this study are as follows. First, democratic citizenship showed a significant positive correlation with growth mindset, multicultural efficacy, and peer relationship. Second, the explanatory power of growth mindset, multicultural efficacy, and peer relationship on democratic citizenship was 43.7%. Particularly, multicultural efficacy was a greatest influential factor on democratic citizenship. The findings have implications that efforts to improve growth mindset, multicultural efficacy and positive peer relationship in order to strengthen democratic citizenship of elementary students.

Keywords: Democratic Citizenship, Growth Mindset, Multicultural Efficacy, Peer Relationship, Elementary Student

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## Introduction

Democratic Citizenship Education (DCE) has increasingly become a hot issue in educational, social, and political discourse, not only across countries, but also within countries including different dimensions of the societies (Biesta & Lawy, 2006; Byeon, 2012; Crick, 2002; Holford & Edirisingha, 2000; Saha, 2001). According to these circumstances, citizenship education has been integrated in many national curricula (EURYDICE, 2017; Roberts, Nganga, & James, 2019; Shim, 2018). It comprises in sets of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values, also stimulating participation (Ruud, 1997; EU, 2006). Thus, citizenship education usually deals with students' values and attitudes of equality, liberty, rights, responsibilities, autonomy, diversity, and harmony in a democratic society.

The Korean government has officially tried to promote citizenship education in its formal education system since the late 2000s. The Ministry of Education (MoE) set out the national curriculum and through the 2007 curricular reform, citizenship and international understanding of education-related contents have become embedded in the regular school curriculum in elementary, middle, and high schools (Lee & Kim, 2010). In 2018, Korean Ministry of Education announced a plan to revitalize democratic citizenship education.

The plan for democratic citizenship education by Korean Ministry of Education shows the vision, purpose, and the top priority project that will be worked on for the next five years. The vision is that fostering democratic citizens who practice autonomy, respect, and solidarity. The purpose is that strengthening the capacity of democratic citizens by creating a democratic education ecosystem. The top five priority project are strengthening democratic citizenship education in school, enhancing teacher expertise and supporting educational activities, creating democratic school culture, revitalization of student autonomy, and establishment support system for democratic citizenship education.

Traditionally, Korea has regarded itself as a mono ethnic society. A mono ethnic society has been associated with positive images in South Korea. However, the growing number of immigrants to South Korea means that Korea is not a single ethnic and homogeneous country anymore. In South Korea society 2021, approximately 213 million foreign nationals lived in Korea, which was more than 4.1% of the total population. The number of foreign nationals increased more than 4 times from 2006 to 2021 (Ministry of Public Administration and Security, 2022). Also, the number of children from multicultural families has increased more than one million every year, currently 16 million multicultural students, and foreign students has increased approximately 13% from 2021 to 2022 (MoE, 2022). Thus, citizenship education has considered not only Korean students, but also foreigners in Korean public education system.

Democratic citizenship education is the most important goal of education in a democratic country. The ability as a democratic citizenship is an essential element of the constitutional right to education. In terms of legislation, however, the concept of democratic citizenship education has not been established or formally adopted in spite of the long argument. For many years, the subject 'morals' is a major vehicle through which democratic citizenship is taught in South Korean school system. The democratic citizenship education in South Korean schools has been criticized for failing to teach democratic behavior and practices, and concentrating on delivering knowledge of promoting understanding (Bae, 2000). Especially, a few researches related in effective factors to democratic citizenship for elementary students has been studied.

Elementary education is focused on basic experience, attitudes for becoming a good citizen and teachers have tried to diverse teaching and learning methods to improve their student's citizenship. But above all, teachers need to know which factors could be affect citizenship for children. One of the factors that could affect democratic citizenship is growth mindset.

Mindset is a set of attitudes and beliefs about abilities, such as intelligence. Psychologist and author Carol Dweck coined the terms fixed and growth mindsets to describe the attitudes and beliefs people have about learning and intelligence (2006). Students with a fixed mindset believe that they are born with their abilities and that they are unchangeable. In contrast, students with a growth mindset believe that their abilities can be developed and improved over time with practice. According to Dweck (2006), students' mindsets influence their learning behaviors. The learning behaviors related to psychological wellbeing of students. Building a classroom culture of growth mindset changes how students approach learning and helps them develop strong work habits that lead to democratic communication and classroom culture.

Multicultural education rests on democratic values, maintenance of cultural identity, social justice, and learner's development of critical thinking skills (Nieto & Bode, 2011). Accordingly, democratic values and beliefs are the premise of multicultural education in that democratic values depend on common and universal values which all citizens share across the world. Drawing from this aspect, democratic values and beliefs establish a foundation of students' multicultural efficacy as students' belief about their ability and skills. Thus, multicultural efficacy could affect democratic citizenship included respect for human rights, responsibility, cooperation, and democratic process in democratic society.

A number of important changes occur in children's peer-relevant social worlds during the primary school years. These shifts produce both new demands and new opportunities for social and emotional growth. Children's peer interactions, relationships and groups are not only relevant insofar as psychological and emotional adjustment are concerned but also clearly important entities as children attempt to make their way through their everyday lives in school (Rubin, Chen, Coplan, & Buskirk, 2005). Researchers have shown that friendship can promote or support positive adjustment, particularly during stressful times of transition (Berndt & Keefe, 1995). Positive peer relationship in childhood and quality of children's friendships also plays an important role in children's feelings of loneliness. Features such as the degree of companionship, help, and guidance, intimacy, conflict, and ease of conflict resolution can all be reliably measured among elementary school children. Research on children's peer relationships is conducted almost exclusively in schools, and children's experiences with peers in school have been linked to other aspects of their developing social competence as well as to academic success. But researches on relationship between children's peer relationships and democratic citizenship have not been studied.

Hence, the purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship and relative influence among growth mindset, multicultural efficacy, and peer relationship on democratic citizenship of elementary students. This study will provide the greatest influential factor among psychological, cognitive and social factors on democratic citizenship and suggest effective citizenship education for elementary school teachers.

The following questions guide my work:

1. What is the correlation between growth mindset, multicultural efficacy, and peer relationship on democratic citizenship of elementary students?

2. What is the relative influence of growth mindset, multicultural efficacy, and peer relationship on democratic citizenship of elementary students?

## **Method**

### **Participants**

The study group of the research consisted of 212 elementary students, 101 females (47.6%) and 111 males (52.4%), 70 4th grade (33.0%), 73 5th grade (34.4%), 6th grade (32.5%), who were selected by random sampling method from elementary school in city of Daegu, South Korea. The data of this study were obtained from class teachers after children filled out a questionnaire in the classroom, after researcher's explanation about the research purpose, 1-16, November 2022.

### **Data Collection Instruments**

*Growth Mindset:* The scale is 5-point Likert type and consists of 8 items and 2 sub-dimensions (growth and fixed belief). The growth belief question example is 'If you work hard, you can change your ability as much as you want'. Fixed belief question example is 'Ability is already determined, so it is difficult to change even if you try'. The Cronbach's alpha internal consistency reliability coefficient of the whole scale was found .911. The corrected item-total correlation coefficients ranged from .897 to .918.

*Multicultural Efficacy:* The scale is 5-point Likert type and consists of 15 items and 4 sub-dimensions (consideration for multicultural families, enhancement of human relations, generalized function, and learning ability function). The consideration for multicultural family question example is 'I can help friends from multicultural families be confident'. The human relations question example is 'I have a mutual respect for my friends from multicultural families'. The generalized function question example is 'I can find my prejudice against multiculturalism'. The learning ability function question example is 'I can find misconceptions about different races and ethnicities in the textbook'. The Cronbach's alpha internal consistency reliability coefficient of the whole scale was found .927. The corrected item-total correlation coefficients ranged from .768 to .905.

*Peer Relationship:* The scale is 4-point Likert type and consists of 13 items and 2 sub-dimensions (positive and negative peer relationship). The positive relationship question example is 'I can tell my friends my secret' and negative relationship question example is 'When I fight with my friend, I don't make up well'. The Cronbach's alpha internal consistency reliability coefficient of the whole scale was found .812. The corrected item-total correlation coefficients ranged from .543 to .828.

*Democratic Citizenship:* The scale is 5-point Likert type and consists of 20 items and 4 sub-dimensions (respect for human rights, responsibility, cooperation, and democratic process in democratic society). The respect for human rights question example is 'I think everyone is as precious as me'. The responsibility question example is 'I make an effort to do what I do in class'. The cooperation question example is 'I am living with my friends at school helping each other'. The democratic process question example is 'When I disagree with my friends, I solve it through conversation'. The Cronbach's alpha internal consistency reliability coefficient of the whole scale was found .892. The corrected item-total correlation coefficients ranged from .627 to .725.

## Analysis of Data

The data obtained from the participants were analyzed through the SPSS 27.0, statistical analysis software. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient analysis was used to examine the relationships among the variable, and multiple regression analysis was used to determine the relative influence between the variables. Durbin-Watson was 2.039.

## Results

First, table 1 shows that result of descriptive statistic analysis among the variables. Mean score of students' growth mindset was 4.073( $SD=.823$ ), fixed belief ( $M=3.951$ ,  $SD=.977$ ) was higher than growth belief ( $M=2.997$ ,  $SD=.871$ ) among sub-variables. Mean of multicultural efficacy is 3.934( $SD=.633$ ), consideration for multicultural families ( $M=4.415$ ,  $SD=.699$ ) was the highest score and learning ability function ( $M=3.577$ ,  $SD=.811$ ) was the lowest score among sub-variables. Mean score of peer relationship was 2.977( $SD=.401$ ), positive relationship ( $M=2.948$ ,  $SD=.500$ ) was higher than negative relationship ( $M=1.818$ ,  $SD=.504$ ) among sub-variables. Mean score of students' democratic citizenship was 3.871( $SD=.479$ ), respect for human rights ( $M=4.103$ ,  $SD=.598$ ) was highest score and democratic process ( $M=3.713$ ,  $SD=.581$ ) was the lowest score among sub-variables.

Variable	Sub-variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	skewness	Kurtosis
Growth mindset	Growth belief	2.997	.871	-1.265	1.515
	Fixed belief	3.951	.977	-.988	.691
	total	4.073	.823	-1.049	1.143
Multicultural efficacy	consideration for multicultural families	3.691	.743	.073	.437
	enhancement of human relations	4.145	.699	.546	.027
	generalized function	3.860	.705	.193	.256
	learning ability function	3.577	.811	.044	.200
	total	3.834	.633	.009	.331
Peer relationship	Positive relationship	2.948	.500	.434	1.007
	Negative relationship	1.818	.504	.540	.818
	total	2.997	.401	.405	.955
Democratic citizenship	Respect for human rights	4.103	.598	-.527	-.039
	responsibility	3.777	.591	-.114	.115
	cooperation	3.891	.607	-.454	.245
	Democratic process	3.713	.581	-.185	.557
	total	3.871	.479	-.161	.171

Table 1: Means and standard deviations of subscale scores on variables

Second, table 2 shows that result of correlation analysis among the variables. Democratic citizenship showed a significant positive correlation with growth mindset, multicultural efficacy, and peer relationship. The correlation coefficient between growth mindset and multicultural efficacy is .353( $p<.001$ ), peer relationship is .402( $p<.001$ ), democratic citizenship is .472( $p<.001$ ). The correlation coefficient between multicultural efficacy and peer relationship is .453( $p<.001$ ), democratic citizenship is .592( $p<.001$ ). The correlation coefficient between peer relationship and democratic citizenship is .447( $p<.001$ ).

Variable	1	2	3	4
1.Growth mindset	-			
2.Multicultural efficacy	.353***	-		
3.Peer relationship	.402***	.453***	-	
4.Democratic citizenship	.472***	.592***	.447***	-

\*\*\* $p<.001$

Table 2: Results of correlation analysis among variables

Third, table 3 shows that result multiple regression analysis of student's democratic citizenship. The first, growth mindset only put in model 1 and next, growth mindset and multicultural efficacy put in model 2. And then, growth mindset, multicultural efficacy and democratic citizenship put together in model 3. The explanatory power of growth mindset was 21.9%, the explanatory power increased 42.5% when add multicultural efficacy. Finally, the explanatory power of growth mindset, multicultural efficacy, and peer relationship on democratic citizenship was 43.7%. Particularly, multicultural efficacy ( $\beta= 0.434$ ) was a greatest influential factor on democratic citizenship than growth mindset ( $\beta=0.261$ ), peer relationship ( $\beta=0.145$ ).

Model	Variable	Unstandardized		Standardized	<i>t</i> ( <i>p</i> )	adj. <i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>F</i> ( <i>p</i> )	<i>TOL</i>	<i>VIF</i>
		Coefficients		Coefficients					
		<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	$\beta$					
1	(constant)	2.753	.147		18.736				
	Growth Mindset	.275	.035	.472	7.763***	.219	60.261***	1.000	1.000
2	(constant)	1.750	.171		10.248				
	Growth Mindset	.175	.032	.301	5.390***	.425	78.820***	.876	1.142
	Multicultural Efficacy	.367	.042	.486	8.711***			.876	1.142
3	(constant)	1.476	.204		7.238				
	Growth Mindset	.152	.034	.261	4.520***			.802	1.247
	Multicultural Efficacy	.328	.045	.434	7.333***	.437	55.670***	.760	1.316
	Peer Relationship	.173	.072	.145	2.402*			.728	1.374

\**p*<.05, \*\*\**p*<.001

Table 3: Multiple regression analysis of student's democratic citizenship

## Conclusion

The findings showed that higher multicultural efficacy can play an important role in children's democratic citizenship. This showed relations between multicultural education and citizenship education in South Korea. Also, children's multicultural efficacy enhancement is important for citizenship education in multicultural Korean society. This study has implications that efforts to improve growth mindset, multicultural efficacy and positive peer relationship in order to strengthen democratic citizenship of elementary students.

This study was based on self-reported data and had limitations. These limitations should be considered when interpreting the data and finding. First limitation, typical in self-efficacy studies, was the reliance on self-reported data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). While childrens were asked to rate their confidence level in multicultural efficacy, their answers may not reflect their true abilities to deliver these practices. Another limitation, the sample used in this research is limited to 212 students in the 4-6th grade, however, this number is still on a small scale. Therefore, there is a need to monitor other determinants outside the research variables.

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