

Impact of Practice Perception and Teaching Efficacy of Multicultural Education on Its Practice Level in Early Childhood Teachers

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Abstract

Objectives: This study focuses on practice perception, teaching efficacy and practice level of multicultural education and it investigates correlations and effects of these variables. **Methods/Statistical Analysis:** This study sampled randomly 300 kindergarten teachers, working at early childhood educational institutions in the city of Busan and Gyeongsang province. Out of 300 teachers, 260 answered the survey (86.7%) and finally 253 were analyzed. Using Windows SPSS 23.0 program, this study analyzed median, standard deviation and Person correlations coefficients of research variables. Later, step-wise multiple regressions were performed. **Findings:** First, the median of perception of multicultural education practice appeared as 3.56 (SD = .33), multicultural teaching efficacy as 3.50 (SD = .55) and practice level of multicultural education as 3.49 (SD = .54). Second, correlations coefficients of multicultural education practice, multicultural teaching efficacy, and practice level of multicultural education appeared from .50 to .53 ($p < .01$), indicating that these variables are positively correlated. Third, Kindergarten teachers' perception on multicultural education practice and multicultural teaching efficacy were analyzed to explain 68% of practice level of multicultural education. Specifically, multicultural teaching efficacy explains 66%, leaving teachers' perception on multicultural education practice with the rest (2%). In addition, F value (258.69) was found to be statistically significant, indicating this study's model was appropriate ($p < .001$). As a result, multicultural teaching efficacy, followed by perception on multicultural education practice, was analyzed to have a positive impact on practice level of multicultural education. **Improvements/Applications:** These results explained to increase kindergarten teachers' perception on multicultural education practice and multicultural teaching efficacy in order to improve the practice level of multicultural education.

Keywords: Early Childhood Teachers, Multicultural Practice Perception, Multicultural Practice Level, Multicultural Teaching Efficacy

1. Introduction

"Multiculture" can be explained as culture in which different races, different genders, different religions, different actions and different lifestyles go all together. And "a multicultural family" can be defined as a form of family that is based on "multiculture". Western countries have already been multicultural societies due to their multiculturalism that attaches importance to human dignity, equity and freedom. In those countries, education

of "multicultural families" is comprehensive of education for people with disabilities and for those who are regarded in terms of gender, religion or culture as minority races or minority groups^{1,2}.

In Korean society, there has long been a deep-rooted tradition that stresses one-blood nation and this society has faced problems with multicultural families and multicultural society, though educational practice and the way of looking at multicultural remain have not yet changed. There are largely two differences between Korean

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society of the past and that of the present in awareness of multicultural society and related social problems. In the past, social members whose social standing was relatively high were exposed to various foreign cultures and made up multicultural families in that course and the number of multicultural families was very small in comparison with that of the entire families. However, that's no longer the case for these days. Today's multicultural families mostly belong to the disadvantage classes and the number of these families is rapidly on the rise. And the fact their children receive public education is another difference.

Under the circumstances, the understanding of multicultural society and the necessity and importance of child rearing and child education in multicultural families are all emphasized. When it comes to multicultural, understanding and empathy are more necessary than knowledge and the two are totally bound up with emotion. Specifically, teachers who teach preschoolers in early childhood education institutions are requested to understand multicultural, to sympathize with it and to exert their educational competence in this field.

In multicultural society, young children should learn to overcome their bias or fear for others, to be considerate of them and to find it worthwhile to live together. To make it all happen, natural educational approaches are needed. Multicultural education means to approve of different cultures and to teach and learn different cultural beliefs or values in society of co living. To put early childhood multicultural education on the right track, it's important for preschoolers to experience multicultural environments in daily routine life³ and early childhood teachers should improve their teaching efficacy related to multicultural education, their way of looking at it and actual teaching abilities first of all to create the multicultural environments.

A multicultural teaching efficacy refers to what a teacher believes that a multicultural setting can produce good educational results and teachers who are in multicultural environments must be in possession of it⁴. Reference⁵ argued that a teacher whose multicultural teaching efficacy is good is confident of teaching diversity, considers multicultural important and makes teaching plans in consideration of the abilities, culture and interest of students. In addition, multicultural experiences are found to have a firsthand impact on multicultural teaching efficacy⁶.

Multicultural education competence consists of multicultural awareness, knowledge and function and

awareness is the most important factor⁷. In⁸ claimed that multicultural awareness exercises the most direct influence on multicultural education competence and that it depends on the level of multicultural knowledge and function. Reference⁹ also explained that awareness of multicultural is the most direct factor to determine multicultural education competence. Therefore teaching the right awareness of multicultural education is part of multicultural education competence that a teacher should have. Moreover, all the studies found that the practice of multicultural education depends on the teacher himself or herself¹⁰. It implies that the effective practice of multicultural education is closely linked to teacher roles, and that every teacher must have a multicultural competence.

Studies on the influence of teachers on multicultural education in early childhood education institutions^{11,12}, studies on awareness of the importance of teacher roles in multicultural education^{13,14} and a study on the effects of multicultural competence on multicultural education¹⁵ put stress on the necessity of research on how the awareness of early childhood teachers about the practice of multicultural education and their teaching efficacy affect the level of their practice of multicultural education.

This study focuses on practice perception, teaching efficacy and practice level of multicultural education and it investigates their correlations and effects. Its purpose is to review variables having a positive impact on the practice level of multicultural education and to suggest an implication to improve them. Detailed research questions are as follows.

First, how do kindergarten teachers perceive multicultural education practice, multicultural teaching efficacy and practice level of multicultural education? Second, what are correlations of multicultural education practice, multicultural teaching efficacy and practice level of multicultural education? Third, what are effects of multicultural education practice and multicultural teaching efficacy on practice level of multicultural education?

2. Research Method

2.1 Research Subjects

This study sampled randomly 300 kindergarten teachers, working at early childhood educational institutions in the city of Busan and Gyeongsang province. Out of 300

teachers, 260 answered the survey (86.7%), and finally 253 were analyzed.

2.2 Research Method

2.2.1 Multicultural Education Practice

To investigate kindergarten teachers' perception on multicultural education practice, in¹⁶ tool was used.

2.2.2 Multicultural Teaching Efficacy

In¹⁷ tool was used to find the level of multicultural teaching efficacy of participants.

2.2.3 Practice Level of Multicultural Education

In¹⁸ tool was used to identify the practice level of multicultural education of participants.

2.3 Data Analysis

Using Windows SPSS 23.0 program, this study analyzed median, standard deviation and Person correlations coefficients of research variables. Later, step-wise multiple regression was performed.

3. Results

3.1 Perception on Multicultural Education Practice, Multicultural Teaching Efficacy, Practice Level of Multicultural Education

As Table 1 shows, the median of perception of multicultural education practice appeared as 3.56 (SD = .33), multicultural teaching efficacy as 3.50 (SD = .55) and practice level of multicultural education as 3.49 (SD = .54).

Table 1. Perception

Variable	Sub-variable	M	SD
multicultural education practice	Total(1)	3.56	.33
	General life(2)	3.47	.58
Multicultural teaching efficacy	Teaching function(3)	3.49	.55
	Relations(4)	3.53	.60
	Total(5)	3.50	.55
Practice level of Multicultural Education	Class application(6)	3.50	.56
	Understanding(7)	3.59	.57
	Use of resources(8)	3.37	.64
	Total(9)	3.49	.54

3.2 Correlations of Variables

Table 2 shows correlations coefficients of multicultural education practice, multicultural teaching efficacy and practice level of multicultural education appeared from .53 to .82 ($p < .01$), indicating that these variables are positively correlated. To be specific, there was the closest correlation between multicultural efficacy and the level of practicing multicultural education (.82, $p < .01$), followed by between awareness of the practice of multicultural education and multicultural efficacy (.54, $p < .01$) and between awareness of the practice of multicultural education and the level of practicing that education (.53, $p < .01$).

Table 2. Correlations

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
(1)	1								
(2)	.52**	1							
(3)	.55**	.87**	1						
(4)	.46**	.82**	.85**	1					
(5)	.54**	.97**	.96**	.94**	1				
(6)	.51**	.75**	.74**	.69**	.77**	1			
(7)	.53**	.76**	.75**	.70**	.78**	.82**	1		
(8)	.42**	.68**	.68**	.94**	.70**	.73**	.74**	1	
(9)	.53**	.79**	.79**	.74**	.82**	.92**	.92**	.91**	1

** $p < .01$

3.3 Relative Effects of Perception on Multicultural Education Practice and Multicultural Teaching Efficacy on Practice Level of Multicultural Education

Table 3 shows kindergarten teachers' perception on multicultural education practice and multicultural teaching efficacy were analyzed to explain 68% of practice level of multicultural education. Specifically, multicultural teaching efficacy explains 66%, leaving teachers' perception on multicultural education practice with the rest (2%). In addition, F value (258.69) was found to be statistically significant, indicating this study's model was appropriate ($p < .001$). As a result, multicultural teaching efficacy, followed by perception on multicultural education practice, was analyzed to have a positive impact on practice level of multicultural education.

Table 4 shows kindergarten teachers' perception on general life, teaching function and relations were analyzed to explain 67% of practice level of multicultural education. Specifically general life explains 63%, leaving teachers'

Table 3. Relative effect

Dependent	Independent	B	β	t	R ²	ΔR^2	F
Practice Level	(Constant)	.18			.68		258.69***
	Teaching efficacy	.73	.04	17.39***		.66	
	Perception on practice	.21	.07	2.95**		.02	

** $P < .01$, *** $p < .001$ **Table 4.** Sub-variable relative effect

Dependent	Independent	B	β	t	R ²	ΔR^2	F
Practice Level	(Constant)	.68			.67		168.46***
	General life	.37	.40	5.25***		.63	
	Teaching function	.31	.31	3.71***		.03	
	Relations	.13	.14	1.97*		.01	

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

teaching function with the rest (3%) and leaving teachers' relations with the rest (1%). In addition, F value (258.69) was found to be statistically significant, indicating this study's model was appropriate ($p < .001$). As a result, on general life, teaching function and relations, was analyzed to have a positive impact on practice level of multicultural education.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

This study focuses on practice perception, teaching efficacy and practice level of multicultural education and it investigates their correlations and effects. Its purpose is to review variables having a positive impact on the practice level of multicultural education and to suggest an implication to improve them. Discussion and conclusion of the study are as follows.

First, perception on multicultural education practice, multicultural teaching efficacy and practice level of multicultural education appeared positively. This finding is in line with the finding of^{f19} study that the emotional intelligence, multicultural sensitivity and multicultural teaching efficacy of early childhood teachers were above average. It could be interpreted that early childhood teachers take a relatively positive view of multicultural education as they learned about multicultural education as preservice teachers and have a chance to be exposed to or teach that education. Preschoolers are able to change their own bias or stereotype or may have another prejudice in the course of modelling their teachers²⁰. As they are in a critical period to build ego-identity, teachers

should have multicultural competence as their role models and develop teaching methods and educational setting tailored to their characteristics. Also, they should be open-minded enough to understand and accept how others feel and should take multicultural education courses to foster their own personal multicultural competence.

Second, these variables showed statistically significant positive correlations. To be specific, there was the closest correlation between multicultural efficacy and the level of practicing multicultural education (.82, $p < .01$), followed by between awareness of the practice of multicultural education and multicultural efficacy (.54, $p < .01$) and between awareness of the practice of multicultural education and the level of practicing that education (.53, $p < .01$). It implies that better awareness of the practice of multicultural education leads to a higher level of practice and that systemized and regular teacher education should be provided for early childhood teachers to offer better multicultural education. This finding lends credibility to the findings of²¹ study that teacher training in multicultural education makes it possible for teachers to take the right attitude to that education and be aware of their own roles and that it's closely bound up with the level of practicing multicultural education.

Third, teacher's perception on multicultural practice and multicultural teaching efficacy influenced the practice level of multicultural education positively. These results explained to increase kindergarten teachers' perception on multicultural education practice and multicultural teaching efficacy in order to improve the practice level of multicultural education. A wide range of materials

for multicultural education and how to make use of the materials should urgently be developed in consideration of the opinions of teachers and the materials should be offered for teachers in the form of teaching guide or manual²¹. Simply learning about theories, experiencing another culture or cultural exchange activities isn't helpful for teachers to teach without frustration or to overcome their limits. Instead, region-specific new attempts such as hands-on programs are necessary to help preschoolers to assimilate themselves with students from multicultural families.

Finally, this study has the following limitations: First, the geographic scope of this study was confined to some regions by examining the early childhood teachers who worked in the city of Busan and South Gyeongsang Province. To produce more generalizable results, more sampling is required from broader regions, but it's not possible in this study to do that. In the future, sampling from more extended areas is required²². Second, a survey was conducted in this study, which is a quantitative research method, but it's not quite possible to look into the awareness and opinions of the early childhood teachers about the research theme in depth. In the future, a qualitative research should be implemented by having an in-depth interview to produce more detailed, precise results.

5. References

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