

Multicultural Education for Young Children through Information Books

Min-Jin Kim¹⁾

Chung-Ang University

Abstract

This study aims to determine the impact of information book-based multicultural education for young children in terms of their knowledge and attitudes towards other cultures and their positive feelings towards other countries. Fifty-nine five-year-old children were placed into three groups: an information book-based multicultural education group, photograph-based multicultural education group, and control group. To implement multicultural education for the information book-based group, information books were produced on the top five countries of origin of parents of students from multiethnic families in Korea. For the photograph-based group, photographs from the same five countries were used to implement multicultural education. The study found that, compared to the other two groups, the young children from the group that used illustrated information books had greater positive changes with respect to knowledge and attitude towards other cultures and positive feelings towards other countries.

Keywords: multicultural education, multicultural literature, children's literature, information books

Corresponding author, ¹⁾ mjkim@cau.ac.kr

Introduction

As cross-border movement becomes more frequent worldwide, the phenomenon of people from diverse backgrounds mingling and living close together is growing more common. Asian countries, which have generally been composed of single ethnicities, are no exception. Korea, too, is rapidly entering an era of multiculturalism, with a dramatically increasing influx of foreigners who include international marriage migrant women and migrant workers (Grant & Ham, 2013; Kim, 2009; Olneck, 2011). Korea's rapid transition to a multicultural society is evident from the increasing number of foreigners residing in Korea, which rises to 1.14 million in 2010. This number represents a radical increase of about 50.2% from 2006, when there were some 540,000 foreigners living in Korea. It is predicted that in 2020, 20% of all households in Korea will consist of multicultural families (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2012).

Studies have found that not only do foreigners themselves experience difficulty adapting to Korean society, but so do other members of multicultural families. This is attributable to a generally discriminatory attitude and psychological aversion towards foreigners that has long persisted in Korean society. As the number of multicultural families increases, so does the number of multiethnic children. In particular, children under the age of six account for some 60% of children from multicultural families, suggesting that education and support are urgently needed for preschool-aged children from multicultural families. A considerable number of young children from multicultural families who attend preschools experience great difficulty. As in many cases, they may be ostracized due to their weak Korean language skills and different appearance (Seol et al., 2005). It is highly probable that the prejudice shown by children of single-culture families towards young children from multicultural families is the result of their blanket acceptance of discriminatory perceptions they are exposed to in their environments, especially from parents or siblings or from media sources, rather than being informed by their own interactions (Banks, 2008; Berk, 2012; Rogoff, 2003). Therefore, in order to help young children from multicultural families adapt to preschool and, furthermore, to help all young children interact successfully with peers of various cultural backgrounds, we need to educate both mainstream young children and

young children from multicultural families to have better understanding and positive perceptions of other cultures.

Importance of Multicultural Education for Young Children

Early childhood is the period when prejudices or stereotypes regarding other races or cultures start to form, so that is when multicultural education should begin (Brown, 2001; Wham, Barnhart, & Cook, 1996). Children start to recognize differences and similarities based on physical characteristics, clothing, and language around the age of two; the concept of race is solidified between ages three and four; and by age five to six, children start to form racial stereotypes and may display biased behavior (Aboud, 2003; Black-Gutman & Hickson, 1996; Bruce, 2010; Derman-Sparks, 1989; Dunham, Baron, & Banaji, 2006). It has been reported that the prejudices of most children are already fixed by around the age of nine and, once ingrained, they are difficult to change (Aboud, 1988; Aboud & Doyle, 1993; Brigham, 1974; Joyce, 1970; Wham et al., 1996). Therefore, to encourage positive feelings and acceptance of other races and cultures, multicultural education should take place in early childhood.

Research has shown that, while it is a difficult task to change prejudices or stereotypes, if children are exposed to other cultures and if they participate in activities based on concrete information, positive change in their attitudes is possible (Cristol & Gimbert, 2008; Hughes, Bigler, & Levy, 2007; Perkins & Mebert, 2005). Early childhood multicultural education aims to help develop an attitude of understanding, acceptance, and willingness to live alongside people with different appearances, cultures, thinking, and lifestyles from oneself. Among the various teaching strategies used in multicultural education for young children, one the instructional media most often recommend is multicultural literature (Bainbridge, Pantaleo, & Ellis, 1999; Luke & Myers, 1994; Strickland, 2001; Wham et al., 1996).

Multicultural Education through Literature

In young children's multicultural education, picture books have diverse educational value.

First, young children have a strong innate curiosity about the world around them. If they are exposed to other races and cultures normally absent from their daily lives through picture books, their understanding of the world around them can be enhanced (Bainbridge et al., 1999; Derman-Sparks, 1989; Fang, Fu, & Lamme, 1999; Lee & Johnson, 2000; Mendoza & Reese, 2001; Strasser, 2000).

Further, reading multicultural picture books is helpful for young children's socio-emotional development. Generally, when coming into contact with a stranger who has a different skin color or appearance from their own or who exhibits unfamiliar patterns of behavior, young children may become easily stressed and phobic and may even demonstrate rejection. However, when multicultural picture books let them explore people with different skin colors or facial appearance or languages and ways of life different from their own, young children can learn that racial and cultural differences are not the standard for right or wrong and that diversity enriches the lives of all people living on this planet (Brewer, 2007; Cho, 2015; Derman-Sparks, 1989; Freeman & Lehman, 2001; Steiner, Nash, & Chase, 2008). As expressed by Bishop (1997), multicultural literature serves as a window enabling mainstream young children to look into other worlds different from their own.

Multicultural picture books can help the social minority of young, multiethnic children in Korea to form a sense of identity and build self-esteem (Kim, 2011). Children from multicultural families often have a sense of inferiority about the home country and culture of their father or mother; in many cases, they have little knowledge about them (Kwon & Lee, 2018). Therefore, young multiethnic children also need to develop positive perceptions and feelings of acceptance about diverse cultures, including those of their own parents. Accordingly, multicultural picture books can serve as a literacy mirror (Bishop, 1997), allowing them to affirm their identity (Steiner, 2001).

Multicultural Education through Information Books

The informational picture book is one genre of young children's literature that, along with text, provides interesting or useful information through graphic elements such as

photographs or illustrations (Sawyer, 2010). Although most young children's literature takes the form of a narrative, informational text is also suitable for young children's development stages (Duke & Kays, 1998; Maduram, 2000; Moss, 1997; Moss, Leone, & Dipillo, 1997; Oyler & Barry, 1996; Pappas, 1991).

Young children inherently have great interest and curiosity about the world around them, including things like cars, spaceships, and robots. Therefore, informational picture books are a treasure chest of knowledge, appealing to young children because they can satisfy their curiosity about the natural and social world. Information books also aid the development of young children's world knowledge. Multicultural informational picture books can help them expand their interest in the world around them by providing opportunities to come into contact with diverse knowledge and perspectives (Giorgis & Glazer, 2009).

Despite the wide-ranging educational effects of informational picture books, it has been reported that, in kindergartens and at home, the books that are read most often are picture books dealing with fictional stories (Yopp & Yopp, 2006). If young children are not exposed to expository text, it will be difficult for them to acquire its structure and linguistic features, so information books should be included as a genre in literature-based early childhood education (Caswell & Duke, 1998; Kamil & Lane, 1997; Morrow & Gambrell, 2001). In practical terms, it is not easy to give young children direct experiences with other cultures. Enhancing their understanding of languages, food, clothing, and seasons of other countries, informational picture books can reduce children's aversion to other cultures and peoples.

Research Questions

The two research questions guiding this study are as follows:

1. What impact does multicultural education, presented through multicultural informational picture books, have on young children's knowledge and attitudes towards other cultures?
2. What impact does multicultural education, presented through multicultural informational picture books, have on young children's positive feelings about other countries?

Method

Participants

The participants in this study were 59 five-year-old children enrolled in three classes at a kindergarten located in a small city in South Korea's central region. To obtain a more accurate understanding of the educational effect of reading multicultural information books, this study assigned children in three intact classes into three groups: one group receiving multicultural education using the medium of multicultural information books, one group receiving multicultural education using photographs, a commonly used medium for early childhood multicultural education in Korea, and a control group receiving no multicultural education. Since the young children who were selected as research participants attended the same day-care center, all three groups were similar in terms of gender distribution and home environment. All the children lived in the apartment complexes near the day-care center and the majority of the children in all three classes were from dual-income households. None of the young participants came from multicultural families and only two or three children in each class had traveled to any of the countries dealt with in this study. Even though the children in the three groups could be considered homogeneous because they were randomly assigned to the three classes at the beginning of the school year, pre-tests were administered to enhance the internal validity of the study. The pre-test scores were used as a covariate when post-test scores were compared across the three groups. Meanwhile, an analysis of the children's ages in months found average ages of 68.13 months in the experimental group, 67.96 months in the comparison group, and 68.08 months in the control group. The result of one-way ANOVA analysis showed no statistically significant difference in the ages of the three groups ($F = .043, p = .976$).

Procedures

This project began when a group of kindergarten teachers who were searching for multicultural picture books to use in multicultural education found out that there are very few picture books about Asian countries (Kim, 2011) and consequently decided to make

their own books. The study was implemented through the following procedure.

Production of multicultural information books

To begin, informational multicultural picture books were produced. The first step in their development was to select the categories of multicultural education presented in information books by consulting multicultural education-related content suggested by Korea's Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (2012) for early childhood multinational education: the appearances, clothing, food, homes, languages, and customs of people from five selected countries. In relation to customs, it was decided to include information on holidays, dances, festivals, and traditional play activities enjoyed by children.

To produce the picture books, a professor specializing in young children's literature and three kindergarten teachers took charge of composing the text, along with searching for and adding photographs. A professional illustrator enrolled in an early childhood education graduate program was placed in charge of the illustrations. A number of advisors also participated, including a children's picture book author who provided feedback on the text, an advisory group of multicultural education instructors from the pertinent countries who evaluated the accuracy of the information, and an advisory group of early childhood education experts who evaluated the books' suitability as instructional materials for young children. The process of producing the books was recursive rather than linear and the groups collaborated closely with one another. In addition to regularly held advisory meetings, issues that arose were also discussed by e-mail or telephone when necessary.

Collection of materials and composition of text

Information about the appearances, customs, clothing, food, languages, and homes of people from the five target countries (China, Japan, Thailand, Vietnam, and the Philippines) was gathered through an analysis of literature on the five countries, including books, travel materials, Internet resources, and books for young children as well as interviews with early childhood multicultural education instructors from the pertinent countries. Next, the text was composed. Heeding the comment that the contemporary view of each country should not be neglected by overemphasizing traditional culture (Kiefer, Hepler, & Hickman, 2007), the books included content related to modern culture and lifestyles along with traditional

culture. In addition, to make the content more relatable and interesting to young children, the multicultural informational picture books featured protagonists who were around the same age as the target audience. These young protagonists travel to visit family or relatives in China, Japan, Thailand, Vietnam, and the Philippines, where they experience the culture of the country. Since all the significant facts about a given country cannot be dealt with in a single book, the content of each book was limited to travel in a certain region.

Photographs and illustrations

In light of the fact that information books actively utilize photographs as well as illustrations (Machado, 2010), this study also utilized photographs. When the needed images could not be found at stock photography agency sites, they were searched for online and the copyright holders' permission was obtained. In cases where permission was not obtained, the images were replaced by illustrations. The illustrators were provided with detailed descriptions as well as photographs and other pictures as cultural references. In order to ensure that authentic and accurate images of people and communities were portrayed without resorting to stereotypes (Mendoza & Reese, 2001), the review process was repeated.

Advisory group review

As explained above, consulting was provided by two key advisory groups before, during, and after the book production. Since the people producing the books were outsiders to the selected cultures, there was an issue of authenticity. Therefore, very detailed research was performed and authoritative advice was given by experts from the countries involved (Giorgis & Glazer, 2009). Advice on the accuracy of the informational picture books' content was sought from four multicultural education experts from China, Japan, Vietnam, and Thailand who were working as multicultural instructors. Meetings were held with advisors at each phase, including at the pre-production stage, to obtain information for the book content; during preparation, to elicit feedback on text content, photographs, and drafts of illustrations; and finally, after the books were completed, to confirm that the information presented in the informational picture books was accurate. Many errors were corrected. For example, the name of a wooden ball played with by Thai children was changed from *sepak takraw* to simply *takraw* and the name of the conical hat worn by Vietnamese people for

protection against sunshine or rain was corrected from *nón quai thao* to *nón lá*. We also sought to eliminate bias against any particular country by having the reviewers evaluate all five information books.

Consultation with early childhood education experts

An advisory group of early childhood education experts, comprised of one expert on young children's literature, one professor of early childhood education, and five kindergarten teachers, was asked to evaluate the completed books to confirm their suitability for multicultural instruction given to young children. The experts were provided with an evaluation checklist based on criteria for evaluating informational picture books (Kiefer et al., 2007; Mallett, 2003) and standards for the evaluation and selection of multicultural literary works (Finazzo, 1997; Wan, 2006). Each evaluation item had a five-point scale and items receiving three points or less, based on an average of the seven experts' scores, were reflected in revisions of the picture books.

Open-ended questions were also used to solicit comments on the photographs and illustrations in the multicultural information books, inquiring as to whether the images were attractive enough to catch the fancy of children under age five, whether the information was either too copious or too difficult, whether the descriptions were at the right level for the children to understand, whether the length of story was appropriate for the attention span of children under age five, and whether the book titles and cover illustrations would arouse young children's interest in the content.

The evaluators' comments indicated that, because all the protagonists were girls, the books would be slightly less effective in attracting boys' interest. In response, male protagonists were added. Another comment suggested that the cultural information requiring detailed descriptions, including explanations of content such as dances, musical instruments, and festivals for each country, was somewhat long for young children. To address this issue, abbreviated descriptions were inserted in a different typeface under the relevant pictures or photos, rather than including them in the main body of the text. Additionally, in response to a comment that the facial expressions of the protagonists in the picture books were a bit too expressionless for young children to relate to, the illustrator was asked to change the eyes and mouths to give the protagonists smiling expressions. The

main texts were also revised. For example, after a reviewer commented that the sentence, “The smell of the tropical durian fruit is like rotting onions,” was too blunt, it was deleted.

Preliminary experiment

The revised picture books were all read to a classroom of five-year-old children who were not involved in the study and the suitability of the books was examined through their reactions. Through this process, it was found that the size of the information books needed to be enlarged. While the nature of informational picture books enables information or knowledge to be conveyed through pictures, it was found that, being ordinary picture-book

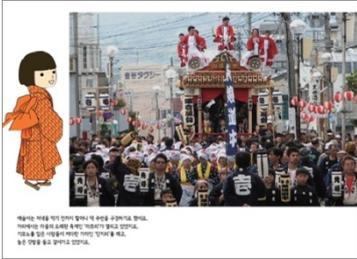
| Category | Example | Category | Example |
|----------------|---|----------|---|
| Games & Dances |  <p>Thai Game</p> | Festival |  <p>Japanese Festival</p> |
| Clothing |  <p>Chinese Traditional Clothing</p> | Food |  <p>Vietnamese Food</p> |
| Homes |  <p>A Home in Vietnam</p> | Language |  <p>Language of the Philippines</p> |

Figure 1. Examples of Categories in Multicultural Information Books

size, the books developed in this study did not allow groups of some twenty children to fully appreciate the pictures in a large group setting. To address this problem, the picture books were produced in e-book form and projected onto a screen. As a result, the young children showed greater interest in the picture books and participating in the reading activity. The topical subcategories and examples from the multicultural informational picture books developed in this study are shown in Figure 1.

Classroom Activities

The experiment was conducted in sixteen sessions and held twice a week for eight weeks, extending from the second week of March to the fourth week of April.

Multicultural informational picture book group

The multicultural informational picture book group underwent four phases of instruction, in keeping with the steps for multicultural education using multicultural books suggested by Fang et al. (1999). In the first step of pre-reading, the books' titles and covers were explored and there was a period for talking about the young children's preliminary knowledge of the book content. In the second step of reading the picture books, the teachers and children read the multicultural information books developed for the study as a group. In the third post-reading step, they held a group discussion about their feelings on the book content and related the content to the children's own experiences. In the last step, to enhance the children's understanding of the book content, the teacher introduced extension activities such as games, art activities, physical activities, and cooking. The follow-up activities that the group took part in included a beanbag toss (Japan), lion mask dance (China), red lantern crafts (China), traditional ball game (Thailand), traditional clothing fashion shows (Thailand and Vietnam), Vietnamese wraps cooking activity (Vietnam), and jar-breaking game (Philippines).

Multicultural photograph group

For children in the group receiving multicultural education using photographs, instructional activities were also conducted twice a week for eight weeks. The multicultural

education was carried out on the same schedule used for the information book group and the photographs used were the same ones that appeared in the multicultural information books. Two sessions were allotted to each topic as well. The first session involved a group discussion about the photographs. In the second session, recall activities were carried out concerning the photographs discussed in the first session and after this, extension activities took place such as games, physical activities, puppet shows, art activities, discussions, fashion shows, and discussion.

The follow-up activities conducted for the children in the comparison group included a matching game with Japanese traditional clothing (Japan), creating traditional architecture using recycled materials (China), puppet shows (China and Thailand), traditional clothing fashion shows (Thailand and Vietnam), Vietnamese wraps cooking activity (Vietnam), and making a national flag (Philippines).

Control group

For the control group, instruction was given on the conventional daily life themes of “My Family and Me” and “Animals.” No multicultural-related topics were presented. While multicultural instruction was presented to the experimental and comparison groups, children in the control group took part in discussion activities about topics related to their own daily lives. After the completion of the study, children in the control group participated in the same multicultural education activities using the multicultural information picture books developed in this study.

Instruments

Testing was carried out face-to-face, individually. The test items included six items about the children’s multicultural knowledge, five items about their multicultural attitudes, and five items to measure their positive feelings towards each of the five countries, with one item per country.

Testing of knowledge and feelings towards other cultures

The test instrument on other cultures encompassed the areas of knowledge and feelings.

In the test of knowledge, the items investigated the children's knowledge about the cultures (games, festivals, traditional clothing, food, homes, and languages) dealt with in the information books developed for this study. Specifically, an item was randomly picked from one country in one of the categories that included festivals, traditional clothing, food, homes, playthings, and languages. The item was presented in a color photo (14cm X 12cm). For each photo, the examiner asked, "What is this photo about?" and recorded the child's response. Each child was shown six items, each of which had a possible score of two points. Item scores ranged from zero points when the child could not give the answer, to one point when the child knew what it was but did not know the exact word for it, and two points when the child knew both what it was and what it was called. Thus, each child could have a minimum score of zero and a maximum score of twelve.

In the test of feelings, the items inquired about the children's feelings about the games, festivals, traditional clothing, food, homes, and languages of the five countries involved. As above, items pertaining to a particular country were selected at random and five questions were prepared. For example, in the category of games, a photo of a plaything used by young Chinese children might be presented, followed by the question, "If you could play with this, what kind of feeling do you think you would have?" To indicate their expected emotion, the young children could select one of five face icons (☹, 😞, 😊, 😄, 😁), scores as zero to four points, respectively. Thus, for the set of five questions presented in the area of attitude, scores of zero to twenty points were possible.

Test of positive feelings for each country

The test of positive feelings for each country was intended to evaluate the children's feelings towards the five countries introduced in the information books. The examiner pointed to the location of each country on a world map and asked if they wanted to travel there with their families. Possible responses were "not at all," "no," "neutral," "yes," and "yes, very much." The corresponding assessment scale ranged from zero to four points, with zero points for "not at all" and four points for "yes, very much." Thus, each child could receive between zero and four points for each country.

To measure each child's level of knowledge, the results were independently rated by two scorers, with the average of the two scorers' results applied as the score for each child's

level of knowledge. The degree of rating consistency between the two scorers was .99. Meanwhile, in an estimate of reliability, the evaluation results were found to have a very high degree of reliability, with Cronbach's alphas of .92 and .93 for the areas of knowledge and feelings, respectively, and a Cronbach's alpha of .87 in the test of positive feelings for each country.

Data Analysis

An analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) with Sidak corrected post-hoc comparisons was performed on each of the dependent variables, using the pre-test scores as the covariates. For the ANCOVA, the assumptions of normality and parallel slopes were checked. For all tests, the significance level was set at the alpha value of 0.05.

Results

Participants' Knowledge and Feelings towards Other Cultures

In order to determine how the children's knowledge and feelings towards other cultures was affected by the multicultural informational picture books reading activities, a one-way ANCOVA was performed to analyze whether there was a statistically significant difference between the three groups' post-test scores while controlling for the pre-test scores.

The descriptive statistics shown in Table 1 indicate that the multicultural information book group had by far the highest point average for the area of knowledge, with an average score of 10.55. The average scores of the comparison and control groups were not significantly different from one another, measuring 5.03 and 5.15, respectively. Meanwhile, in the area of feeling, the multicultural information book group again had by far the highest average score, 14.70, followed by the comparison group with an average score of 7.47. The control group had the lowest average score among the three groups at 5.90.

Table 1. *Multicultural Knowledge and Feelings: Descriptive Statistics and ANCOVA Results*

| | Group | N | M | SD | Adjusted M | F |
|-----------|------------------|----------|----------|-----------|-------------------|----------|
| Knowledge | Information Book | 20 | 10.55 | 1.57 | 9.48 | 33.25* |
| | Photograph | 19 | 5.03 | 1.81 | 5.75 | |
| | Control | 20 | 5.15 | 1.42 | 5.56 | |
| Feelings | Information Book | 20 | 14.70 | 2.03 | 13.23 | 46.01* |
| | Photograph | 19 | 7.47 | 2.04 | 8.26 | |
| | Control | 20 | 5.90 | 1.41 | 6.62 | |

* $p < .05$; Maximum Score of Knowledge Section = 12; Maximum Score of Feelings Section = 20

In the areas of both knowledge and feelings, a statistically significant difference was found in the three groups' post-test responses. When a post-analysis was performed to determine the specific differences among the groups' post-test answers, it was found that the difference between the experimental group's average score and those of the comparison and control groups was statistically significant. Meanwhile, no statistically significant difference was found between the comparison (photo) group and control group in the area of knowledge, but in the area of feelings, there was a significant difference between the two groups' scores.

These results show that early childhood multicultural education using multicultural informational picture books yields a positive difference in young children's knowledge and understanding of other cultures. Further, multicultural education using information books is more effective than multicultural education using photographic materials. In the area of feelings, multicultural education using photographs is also effective, though not as effective as information books.

Participants' Positive Feelings towards Each Country

The descriptive statistics for the results of testing on the children's positive feelings for each country are reported below. As Table 2 shows, the experimental group again had the highest average scores, followed by the comparison group, while the control group had the lowest scores for all the countries except Thailand. Meanwhile, for Thailand, the experimental group again had the highest score, but the control group had a slightly higher average score than the comparison group.

To determine whether there was any difference in the three groups' positive feelings

towards each country, a one-way ANCOVA was performed. For all the countries, a statistically significant difference was found between the groups' positive feeling scores, as seen in Table 3. When a post-hoc analysis was performed to identify any statistically significant differences between any of the groups, the experimental group's scores were found to be significantly higher than those of either the comparison or control group for every country. However, no statistically significant differences were found between the scores of the comparison and control groups with respect to positive feelings towards any of the countries.

These results demonstrate that multicultural education using information books had a more positive impact than multicultural education using photographs on young children's perceptions of the countries involved as desirable places to travel with their families.

Table 2. *Positive Feelings towards Each Country: Descriptive Statistics and ANCOVA Results*

| Country | Group | <i>N</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | Adjusted <i>M</i> | <i>F</i> |
|-------------|------------------|----------|----------|-----------|--------------------------|----------|
| China | Information Book | 20 | 2.8 | 0.69 | 2.83 | 14.30* |
| | Photograph | 19 | 2.53 | 0.61 | 2.28 | |
| | Control | 20 | 1.95 | 0.69 | 2.15 | |
| Japan | Information Book | 20 | 2.6 | 0.59 | 2.68 | 10.99* |
| | Photograph | 19 | 2.37 | 0.59 | 2.17 | |
| | Control | 20 | 1.9 | 0.91 | 2.01 | |
| Thailand | Information Book | 20 | 2.65 | 0.81 | 2.73 | 17.33* |
| | Photograph | 19 | 1.74 | 0.65 | 1.76 | |
| | Control | 20 | 2.1 | 0.64 | 1.99 | |
| Vietnam | Information Book | 20 | 2.65 | 0.59 | 2.67 | 13.44* |
| | Photograph | 19 | 2.05 | 0.52 | 1.98 | |
| | Control | 20 | 1.85 | 0.67 | 1.89 | |
| Philippines | Information Book | 20 | 2.25 | 0.55 | 2.29 | 6.60* |
| | Photograph | 19 | 1.89 | 0.66 | 1.83 | |
| | Control | 20 | 1.7 | 0.80 | 1.72 | |

* $p < .05$; Maximum Score of Feelings toward Each Country = 4

Discussion

This study was conducted with the goal of developing multicultural information books for early childhood multicultural education and verifying the effectiveness of the books. The results showed that, compared with the other two groups, the information book group had significantly higher scores on tests of their knowledge and feelings towards other cultures and positive feelings towards the countries involved. This finding is in line with previous studies, suggesting that young children's feelings towards other cultures and other races can undergo positive changes when they receive multicultural education (Kwon & Lee, 2018).

The findings of the study also showed that the educational efficacy of early childhood multicultural education activities using information books was much greater than the common practice of using photographs. This outcome also supports existing research findings that, when it comes to early childhood multicultural education, multicultural literature is an instructional medium well-suited for young children's development stage (Wham et al., 1996). One important implication of this study is that, while it is widely accepted that young children should be helped to acquire accurate knowledge of other cultures by offering them opportunities to experience diversity through multicultural education, the educational effectiveness can vary noticeably according to the method used to deliver the information. It appears that, because the information books developed in this study presented knowledge and information about other cultures within a given context, that is, a picture book, they were able to gain the interest and attention of the young audience. They also enabled the children to learn about other cultures in a meaningful and interactive way.

Despite concerns that young children may have difficulty comprehending information books, the participants in this study were able to grasp information by taking part in book reading activities. This point is especially noteworthy for its concurrence with previous studies showing that young children enjoy reading information books that are properly produced for their developmental stage and can comprehend the content.

This study is significant for its demonstration of the educational effectiveness of multicultural information books. However, in interpreting the findings, we must consider

potential limitations to generalizing the results. First, the number of children who participated in this study was small. Next, although various efforts were made to ensure the authenticity of the information books developed in this study, they were not actual published books. Lastly, some of the follow-up activities conducted in the photograph group were different from those in the informational picture book group. It would be the potential source the difference in the learning outcomes between the two groups.

Implications for Policy and Practice

Multicultural literature offers teachers a way to provide multicultural education as a routine part of children's ongoing, daily learning environment and experiences, rather than as a multicultural "tourist" curriculum. The lack of young children's multicultural literature has been noted in many studies and, in fact, information books on multicultural topics are even scarcer. Although a great deal of high-quality multicultural literature is published, it may be a difficult task to find multicultural literature related to the backgrounds of all the young children in the classroom. Another problem is that many books are published in English, so they cannot be read by young children whose mother tongue is not English. Therefore, as was done in this study, it seems a desirable measure for teachers to produce their own multicultural information books to use in the classroom.

Many aspects of the process of producing multicultural information books are quite challenging as explained. When it comes to multicultural literature, including information books, the accuracy of the information is by far the most important factor. However, it is impossible for teachers who produce such books to know everything about any given foreign country. The process of collecting information is difficult and, after the information has been arduously obtained, numerous processes are required to verify its accuracy. In this study, even though a research grant allowed the task to be conducted with the cooperation of advisory groups composed of multicultural instructors or advisors from the countries involved and early education experts, collecting accurate information and relevant photographs was initially quite challenging. There was even one case where a visit to an embassy was necessary to obtain materials for a certain country. This kind of difficulty is something that any teacher wishing to conduct multicultural education might have to face.

Conclusion

As we can never learn everything about all cultures, collecting and verifying the accuracy of materials are necessary challenges faced by teachers in charge of multicultural education, or indeed by anyone who produces instructional materials. The parents of multicultural children can be a fine source of information and there is also a need to form networks of preschools and kindergartens to share information and materials. Ways should be explored to create and use databases for information- and material-sharing, just as the multicultural information books produced in this study are now being used at other preschools and the traditional clothing that was used for this study's post-activities was borrowed from other preschools.

Although the importance of multicultural literature has long been emphasized, the reality is that empirical studies on the impact of multicultural literature on young children's attitudes and perceptions of other cultures are categorically lacking (Bainbridge et al., 1999). The scarcity is even more striking for literature about Asian countries, especially given that Asians constitute the largest proportion of minority residents in Korean society.

When multicultural information books are not readily available, like the teachers who participated in this study, it is advisable for teachers to first conduct research on their own and then develop instructional materials for their students. Producing classroom materials is something teachers do often and do well and it is the teachers, after all, who best know the backgrounds of their students.

References

- Aboud, F. E. (1988). *Children and prejudice*. Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell.
- Aboud, F. E. (2003). The formation of in-group favoritism and out-group prejudice in young children: Are they distinct attitudes? *Developmental Psychology*, 39(1), 48-60. doi:10.1037/0012-1649.39.1.48
- Aboud, F. E., & Doyle, A. B. (1993). The early development of ethnic identity and attitudes. In M. E. Bernal, & G. P. Knight (Eds.), *Ethnic identity: Formation and transmission*

- among Hispanics and other minorities* (pp. 47-59). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Bainbridge, J. M., Pantaleo, S., & Ellis, M. (1999). Multicultural picture books: Perspectives from Canada. *Social Studies, 90*(4), 183-188.
- Banks, J. A. (2008). *An introduction to multicultural education* (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Berk, L. E. (2012). *Infants, children, and adolescents* (7th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Bishop, R. S. (1997). Selecting literature for a multicultural curriculum. In V. J. Harris (Ed.), *Using multiethnic literature in the K-8 classroom* (pp. 1-20). Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon.
- Black-Gutman, D., & Hickson, F. (1996). The relationship between racial attitudes and social-cognitive development in children: An Australian study. *Developmental Psychology, 32*(3), 448-456. doi:10.1037/0012-1649.32.3.448
- Brewer, J. A. (2007). *Introduction to early childhood education: Preschool through primary grades*. Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Brigham, J. C. (1974). Views of black and white children concerning the distribution of personality characteristics. *Journal of Personality, 42*(1), 144-158. doi:10.1111/j.1467-6494.1974.tb00562.x
- Brown, B. (2001). *Combating discrimination: Persona dolls in action*. Stoke-on-Trent, UK: Trentham Books.
- Bruce, T. (2010). *Early childhood: A guide for students*. London: Sage.
- Caswell, L. J., & Duke, N. K. (1998). Non-narrative as a catalyst for literacy development. *Language Arts, 75*(2), 108-117.
- Cho, H. (2015). The effect that education of multiple cultures utilizing a picture book influences on awareness and attitude about multiculturalism. *The Treatise on The Plastic Media, 18*(2), 277-286.
- Cristol, D., & Gimbert, B. (2008). Racial perceptions of young children: A review of literature post-1999. *Early Childhood Education Journal, 36*(2), 201-207. doi:10.1007/s10643-008-0251-6
- Derman-Sparks, L. (1989). *Anti-bias curriculum: Tools for empowering young children*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

- Duke, N. K., & Kays, J. (1998). "Can I say 'Once upon a time'?" Kindergarten children developing knowledge of information book language. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 13*(2), 295-318. doi:10.1016/S0885-2006(99)80041-6
- Dunham, Y., Baron, A. S., & Banaji, M. R. (2006). From American city to Japanese village: A cross-cultural investigation of implicit race attitudes. *Child Development, 77*(5), 1268-1281. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8624.2006.00933.x
- Fang, Z., Fu, D., & Lamme, L. (1999). Rethinking the role of multicultural literature in literacy instruction: Problems, paradox, and possibilities. *The New Advocate, 12*(3), 259-276.
- Finazzo, D. (1997). *All for the children: Multicultural essentials of literature*. Albany, NY: Delmar Publishing Itp.
- Freeman, E., & Lehman, B. (2001). *Global perspectives in children's literature*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Giorgis, C., & Glazer, J. (2009). *Literature of young children: Supporting emergent literacy* (6th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Grant, C. A., & Ham, S. (2013). Multicultural education policy in South Korea: Current struggles and hopeful vision. *Multicultural Education Review, 5*(1), 67-95. doi:10.1080/2005615X.2013.11102898
- Hughes, J. M., Bigler, R. S., & Levy, S. R. (2007). Consequences of learning about historical racism among European American and African American children. *Child Development, 78*(6), 1689-1705. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8624.2007.01096.x
- Joyce, B. R. (1970). Social action for primary schools. *Childhood Education, 46*(5), 254-258.
- Kamil, M., & Lane, D. (1997). *A classroom study of the efficacy of using information text for first grade reading instruction*. Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association Meeting, San Diego, CA.
- Kiefer, B., Hepler, S., & Hickman, J. (2007). *Charlotte Huck's children's literature* (9th ed.). Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill.
- Kim, A. E. (2009). Global migration and South Korea: Foreign workers, foreign brides, and the making of a multicultural society. *Ethnic and Racial Studies, 32*(1), 70-92.
- Kim, M. J. (2011). Analysis of multicultural picture books for young children in South

- Korea. *Children's Literature and Education Research*, 12(1), 43-63.
- Kown, K., & Lee, S.(2018). An exploration on practical for bilingual education of a Vietnamese multicultural family's mother. *Journal of Early Childhood Education*, 38(2), 27-29.
- Lee, G. L., & Johnson, W. (2000). The need for interracial storybooks in effective multicultural classrooms. *Multicultural Education*, 8(2), 27-29.
- Luke, J. L., & Myers, C. M. (1994). Toward peace: Using literature to aid conflict resolution. *Childhood Education*, 71(2), 66-69.
- Machado, J. M. (2010). *Early childhood experiences in language arts* (9th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Maduram, I. (2000). "Playing possum": A young child's responses to information books. *Language Arts*, 77(5), 391-397.
- Mallett, M. (2003). *Early years non-fiction: A guide to helping young researchers use and enjoy information texts*. New York, NY: Routledge Falmer.
- Mendoza, J., & Reese, D. (2001). Examining multicultural picture books for the early childhood classroom: Possibilities and pitfalls. *Early Childhood Research & Practice*, 3(2), 1-33.
- Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. (2012). *Yua segye simin gyoyuk hwaldong jaryo* [Early childhood multicultural education activity resources]. Seoul: The Ministry.
- Morrow, L. M., & Gambrell, L. B. (2001). Literature-based instruction in the early years. In S. B. Neuman, & D. K. Dickinson (Eds.), *Handbook of early literacy research* (pp. 348-360). New York, NY: Guilford.
- Moss, B. (1997). A qualitative assessment of first graders' retelling of expository text. *Reading Research and Instruction*, 37(1), 1-13. doi:10.1080/19388079709558251
- Moss, B., Leone, S., & Dipillo, M. L. (1997). Exploring the literature of fact: Linking reading and writing through information trade books. *Language Arts*, 74(6), 418-429.
- Olneck, M. R. (2011). Facing multiculturalism's challenges in Korean education and society. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 12(4), 675-690. doi:10.1007/s12564-011-9180-y
- Oyler, C., & Barry, A. (1996). Intertextual connections in read-alouds of information books. *Language Arts*, 73(5), 324-329.

- Pappas, C. C. (1991). Fostering full access to literacy by including information books. *Language Arts, 68*(6), 449-462.
- Perkins, D. M., & Mebert, C. J. (2005). Efficacy of multicultural education for preschool children: A domain-specific approach. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 36*(4), 497-512. doi:10.1177/0022022105275964
- Rogoff, B. (2003). *The cultural nature of human development*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Sawyer, W. E. (2010). *Growing up with literature* (5th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Seol, D. H., Kim, Y. T., Kim, H. M., Yoon, H. S., Lee, H. K., & Yim, K. (2005). *Foreign wives' life in Korea: Focusing on the policy of welfare and health*. Gwacheon: Ministry of Health and Welfare.
- Steiner, S. F. (2001). *Promoting a global community through multicultural children's literature*. Greenwood Village, CO: Teacher Ideas Press.
- Steiner, S. F., Nash, C. P., & Chase, M. (2008). Multicultural literature that brings people together. *The Reading Teacher, 62*(1), 88-92.
- Strasser, J. K. (2000). Beautiful me! Celebrating diversity through literature and art. *Childhood Education, 77*(2), 76-80.
- Strickland, J. (2001). Multicultural literature in rural schools: A social studies unit that promotes cultural awareness. *Southern Social Studies Journal, 27*(1), 20-37.
- Wan, G. (2006). Teaching diversity and tolerance in the classroom: A thematic storybook approach. *Education, 127*(1), 140-154.
- Wham, M. A., Barnhart, J., & Cook, G. (1996). Enhancing multicultural awareness through the storybook reading experience. *Journal of Research and Development in Education, 30*(1), 1-9.
- Yopp, R. H., & Yopp, H. K. (2006). Informational texts as read-aloud at school and home. *Journal of Literacy Research, 38*(1), 37-51. doi:10.1207/s15548430jlr3801_2