The Relationship of Multicultural Acceptance, Community Closeness, Self-Awareness, and Interpersonal Relationship: A Structural Equation Modeling Approach

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to test the hypothesized model connecting self-awareness, interpersonal relationship, community closeness, with adolescent's multicultural acceptance.

Data were collected from the seventh KCYSPS (Korean Children and Youth Panel Survey) of 2016. The participants were college 1ˢᵗ year students. The number of participants was 927 male students.

The 927 participants were all male students. The subjects with sibling were 793 persons (89.5%). The participants who had experience of visiting a foreign country was 147 students (15.9%). Multicultural acceptance was significantly positively related with community sense (r = .33, p<.001), community awareness (r = .10, p=.002), self-esteem (r = .25, p<.001), self-resilience (r = .29, p<.001), communication (r = .23, p<.001), and Peer trust (r = .22, p<.001). To improve the model fit, the final model resulted in a substantially better fit to the data (χ^2 =44.99, df = 10, p < .001, TLI = 0.96, CFI = 0.98, RMSEA =0.06). Sobel's test suggested that community closeness partially mediates the relation between self-awareness and multicultural acceptance (Z=3.41, p<.001), and community closeness fully mediates the relation between interpersonal relationship and multicultural acceptance (Z=2.94, p =.003).

In the era of internationalization and multiculturalism, there should be efforts to develop multicultural acceptance of male college students as well as education to raise community closeness.

Keywords: multicultural acceptance, community sense, community awareness, communication, college students, Korea

I. INTRODUCTION

According to the data released by the Ministry of the Interior and Safety in 2016, as of November 2015, the number of foreign residents in Korea was 1,711,013, which meant 3.4 per 100 people were foreign residents, and it is predicted to increase to 3.2 million in 2030 which will account for 6% of Koreans[1]. Multicultural families are getting more and more through marriage due to rapid globalization and the spread of the internet, low fertility,

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and differences in sex ratio in Korea. Although numbers of multicultural families and foreign residents are increasing,

Koreans have been living in a single nation for a long time, then they have low cultural acceptance and prejudices against other cultures[2]. Thus, such a change in the demographic structure requires Korean to abandon emphasizing a single nationalism in all fields of society, economy and culture and its exclusiveness or dualistic attitude toward multiculturalism, and to take an integrated and receptive attitude[3]. In other words, Korea is rapidly transforming into a multicultural society, but attitudes of the public has not changed. Therefore, it is necessary to develop educational programs to promote a deeper understanding of multicultural acceptance[4].

On the other hand, it is reported that one out of 10 married couples is interracial marriage, and the proportion of Korean males-foreign wives is three times higher than that of Korean females-foreign husbands. This means that a male adolescent who might have possibility to marry with foreign wife should recognize his own and other groups and improve his multicultural acceptance by recognizing of mutual coexistence and respect, without discriminating against specific groups or members on the grounds of cultural differences[3]. In addition, since children of multicultural families are increasing steadily, adolescents who have to live with them in school or social life should recognize other groups and mutually coexist and respect each other, and should have an attitude of accepting groups or members[5]. Therefore, multicultural acceptance of Korean male students is particularly important factor in the success of interracial marriage[6]. Multicultural acceptance is an attitude that recognizes immigrants with other cultures as subjects of coexistence rather than competitors. In previous studies, several factors influencing multicultural acceptance have been explored and gender, self-efficacy, experience of traveling overseas, and intimacy with the community has been treated as a major factors[3-14]. Based on previous researches, this study selected self-awareness, community intimacy, and interpersonal relationship as variables that could affect the multicultural acceptance among adolescents. Especially, it is tried to find out how the community closeness affects multicultural acceptance as a mediator between self-awareness and multicultural acceptance in this study. Since the community is an important environment factor for individual growth and development in the way that it is a physical space where interaction with meaningful others is made, the

community closeness is considered as an important mediator[14]. Kim & Hong also suggested that community closeness improves multicultural acceptance in the late adolescence[2].

There are not many studies on multicultural acceptance and community closeness among early college students. Some researchers analyzed a correlation between multicultural acceptance and self-esteem separately[9,10]. Therefore,

structural equation studies to develop verification of strategies are needed to improve the multicultural acceptance of college students at the beginning of adulthood. The purpose of this study is to test the model developed in order to determine there is a casual relationship among multicultural acceptance, community closeness, self-awareness, and interpersonal relationship (See Fig. 1).
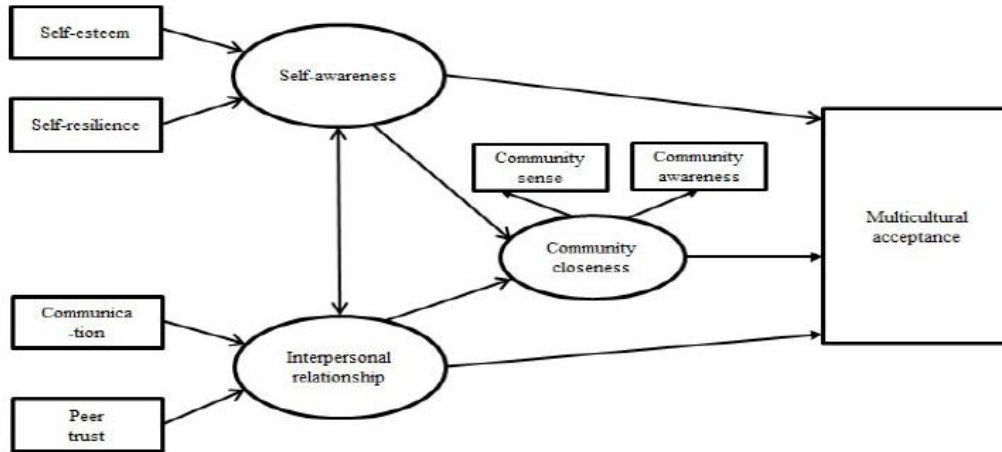

Fig 1. Hypothesized path model

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1. *Participants*

Data were collected from the seventh KCYSPS (Korean Children and Youth Panel Survey) of 2016. The participants were college 1st year students. The number of participants was 927 male students

2.2. *Study Design*

The purpose of the study was to test the hypothesized model connecting self-awareness, interpersonal relationship, community closeness, with multicultural acceptance of adolescent.

2.3. *Measurement*

2.3.1. *Multicultural acceptance*

Multicultural acceptance scales used by Yang and Chung[15] were used in this study. It was composed of 4 items asking about a degree of multicultural acceptance (e.g., "I can marry someone who has a different cultural background."). Each item was evaluated with the 4 point Likert scale. The higher the score meant the higher multicultural acceptance of the student. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was .84.

2.3.2. *Self-esteem*

Self-esteem scales made by Rosenberg[16] were used in this study. It was composed of 10 items asking about a degree of self-esteem (e.g., "I have a lot of good points.", "I am very

competent person."). Each item was evaluated with the 4 point Likert scale. The higher score meant the better level of self-esteem of the student. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was .84.

2.3.3. *Self-resilience*

Self-resilience scales used by Yoo and Shim[17] were used in this study. It was composed of 14 items asking about a degree of self-resilience (e.g., "I am generous to my friend.", "I give a good impression to people."). Each item was evaluated with the 4 point Likert scale. The higher score meant the better level of self-resilience of the student. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was .85.

2.3.4. *Communication*

Communication scales made by Armsden and Greenberg[18] were used in this study. It was composed of 3 items asking about a degree of communication (e.g., "I tell my friends about my troubles and problems."). Each item was evaluated with the 4 point Likert scale. The higher the score meant the higher level of communication of the student. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was .76.

2.3.5. *Peer trust*

Peer trust scales made by Armsden and Greenberg[18] were used in this study. It was composed of 3 items asking about a degree of peer trust (e.g., "I believe in my friends."). Each item was evaluated with the 4 point Likert scale. The higher the score meant the higher level of peer trust of the student. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was .80.

2.3.6. Community sense

Community sense scales used by Kwon[19] were used in this study. It was composed of 4 items asking about a degree of community sense (e.g., "If you have friends who are in trouble, you can actively help them"). Each item was evaluated with the 4 point Likert scale. The higher the score meant the higher level of community sense of the student. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was .73.

2.3.7. Community awareness

Community awareness scales made by Carolina Population Center[20] were used in this study. It was composed of 6 items asking about a degree of community awareness (e.g., "I know most of the people in my neighborhood."). Each item was evaluated with the 4 point Likert scale. The higher the score meant the higher level of community awareness of the student. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was .77.

2.4.Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences and the Analysis of Moment Structures statistical software programs.

III. RESULTS

3.1. Demographic characteristics

The participants were all male students. The subjects who had sibling were 793 persons (89.5%). The participants who had experience of visiting a foreign country was 147 students (15.9%)(Table1).

Table 1. General characteristics   (N=927)

Variable	Category	N (%), Mean±SD
Gender	Male	927 (100.0%)
Age	-	19.92±0.32
Economic status	High	190 (20.5%)
	Normal	565 (60.9%)
	Low	172 (18.6%)
Religion	Christian	135 (14.6%)
	Catholic	37 (4.0%)
	Buddhism	49 (5.3%)
	Others	3 (0.3%)
	No	703 (75.8%)
Sibling	Yes	793 (89.5%)
	No	93 (10.5%)
Overseas visits	Yes	147 (15.9%)
	No	780 (84.1%)
Health status	Very healthy	322 (34.7%)
	Healthy	523 (56.4%)
	Not healthy	74 (8.0%)
	Not very healthy	8 (0.9%)

3.2. Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics for participants' multicultural acceptance, community sense, community awareness are shown in Table 2. The level of multicultural acceptance and community sense was 3.10±.60, 2.90±.52 point each.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for variables (N=927)

Variable	Mean±SD
Self-esteem	3.00±.45
Self-resilience	2.90±.41
Communication	3.13±.48
Peer trust	3.21±.51
Community sense	2.90±.52
Community awareness	2.80±.48
Multicultural acceptance	3.10±.60

3.3. Correlations between main variables

Correlations among multicultural acceptance, community sense, community awareness are shown in Table 3. Multicultural acceptance was significantly positively related with community sense ($r = .33$, $p<.001$), community awareness ($r = .10$, $p=.002$), self-esteem ($r = .25$, $p<.001$), self-resilience ($r = .29$, $p<.001$), communication ($r = .23$, $p<.001$), and Peer trust ($r = .22$, $p<.001$).

Table 3. Correlation between main variables (N=927)

	Self-esteem	Self-resilience	Communication	Peer trust	Community sense	Community awareness	Multicultural acceptance
Self-esteem	1						
Self-resilience	.58***	1					
Communication	.41***	.42***	1				
Peer trust	.39***	.37***	.72***	1			
Community sense	.27***	.36***	.32***	.27***	1		
Community awareness	.27***	.29***	.30***	.30***	.33***	1	
Multicultural acceptance	.25***	.29***	.23***	.22***	-.33***	-.10**	1

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

3.4. *The model testing*

The initial analysis of the hypothesized model revealed adequate fit to the data χ^2 = 44.94, *df* =9, *p* < .001, TLI = 0.95, CFI = 0.98, RMSEA =0.07) (See Table 6). All specified paths were significant, except the path from the interpersonal relationship to multicultural acceptance, and in the expected direction, providing initial support for the model (Table 4). To improve the model fit, we explored a competing model (full mediation model) which did not have a direct path of the interpersonal relationship to multicultural acceptance within the model. A competitive model (final model), based on theoretical reasoning, did not have a direct path from the interpersonal relationship to multicultural acceptance within the hypothesized model (Table 5, Fig.2). The final model resulted in a substantially better fit to the data (χ^2 =44.99, *df* = 10, *p* < .001, TLI = 0.96, CFI = 0.98, RMSEA =0.06) (Table 6). Comparing the hypothesized model with the final model ($\Delta\chi^2_{df=1}$=0.05), the former is more limited. Sobel's test suggested that community closeness partially mediates the relation between self-awareness and multicultural acceptance (Z=3.41, *p*<.001), and community closeness fully mediates the relation between interpersonal relationship and multicultural acceptance (Z=2.94, *p* =.003).

Table 4. Regression weights of hypothesized model

	Estimate (unstandardized)	Estimate (standardized)	S. E	C. R
Self-awareness --> Community closeness	.51	.49***	.07	6.87
Interpersonal relationship --> Community closeness	.24	.29***	.052	4.52
Self-awareness --> Self-resilience	1.00	.80***		
Self-awareness --> Self-esteem	1.00	.73***	.06	16.35
Interpersonal relationship --> Peer trust	1.00	.81***		
Interpersonal relationship --> Communication	1.03	.89***	.05	19.73
Community closeness --> Community sense	1.00	.65***		
Community closeness --> Community awareness	.72	.51***	.07	10.08
Community closeness --> Multicultural acceptance	.56	.31***	.16	3.54
Self-awareness --> Multicultural acceptance	.28	.15*	.13	2.16
Interpersonal relationship --> Multicultural acceptance	-.02	-.01	.08	-.22

***P<.001, *P<.05

Table 5. Regression weights of final model

	Estimate (unstandardized)	Estimate (standardized)	S. E	C. R
Self-awareness --> Community closeness	.51	.49***	.07	6.97
Interpersonal relationship --> Community closeness	.23	.29***	.05	4.55
Self-awareness --> Self-resilience	1.00	.80***		

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Self-awareness --> Self-esteem	1.00	.73***	.06	16.34
Interpersonal relationship --> Peer trust	1.00	.81***		
Interpersonal relationship --> Communication	1.02	.89***	.05	19.73
Community closeness --> Community sense	1.00	.65***		
Community closeness --> Community awareness	.72	.51***	.07	10.08
Community closeness --> Multicultural acceptance	.54	.31***	.14	3.86
Self-awareness --> Multicultural acceptance	.27	.15*	.13	2.16

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

Table 6. Model fitness index for hypothesized model and final structure model

Model	χ^2	df	p	TLI	CFI	RMSEA	$\Delta\chi^2$
Hypothesized model	44.94	9	0.00	0.95	0.98	0.07	-
Final Study model	44.99	10	0.00	0.96	0.98	0.06	0.05

Table 7. Direct and indirect standardized coefficient for the final model

	Standardized direct effect	Standardized indirect effect	Standardized total effect	SMC
Self-awareness --> Community closeness	.49***	-	.49	
Interpersonal relationship --> Community closeness	.29***	-	.29	.50
Self-awareness --> Multicultural acceptance	.15*	.15***	.30	
Community closeness --> Multicultural acceptance	.31***	-	.31	.18
Interpersonal relationship --> Multicultural acceptance	.00	.09***	.09	

*** $P<.001$, ** $P<.01$
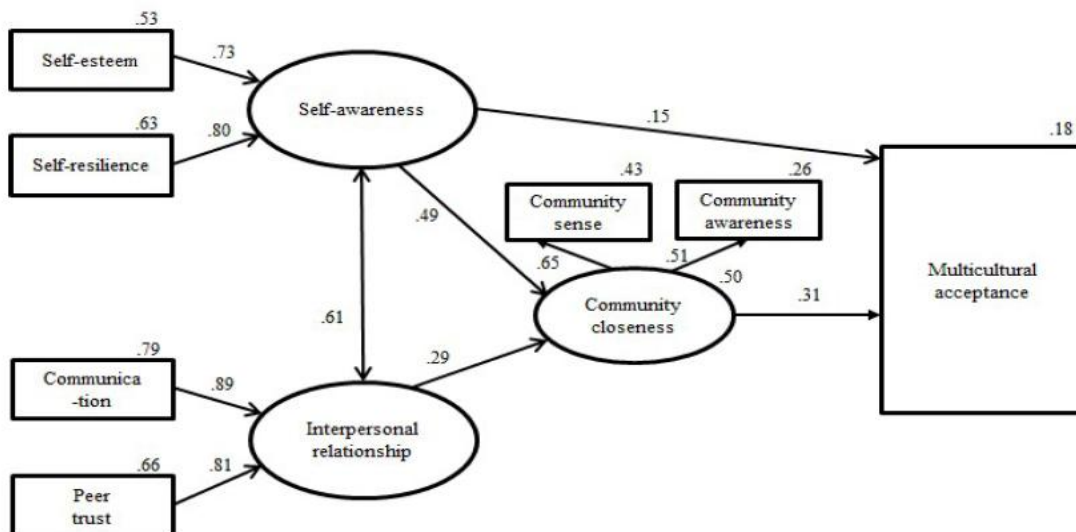
Fig 2. Final study model

IV. DISCUSSION

This study focused on structural relationships of self-awareness, interpersonal relationship, and community closeness that affect multicultural acceptance of college students. The structural model developed based on the causal correlations between self-awareness, interpersonal relationship, community closeness and multicultural acceptance was verified. Firstly, it showed that self-awareness significantly

positively affect multicultural acceptance of college students. The result is consistent with the previous study about stressing self-awareness[8]. The more positive the self-awareness is, the more respect and consideration for others will be added, and this can be considered as increasing the multicultural acceptance that people live well together. Secondly, this study showed the mediating effect of community closeness in the relationship among self-awareness and multicultural acceptance of college students. Self-awareness indirectly influence multicultural acceptance of college students via community closeness. The higher the self-awareness, the higher the community closeness. And as a result of this, a level of multicultural acceptance increases. The result is consistent with the previous study about stressing community closeness[10]. A study reported that the higher the self-esteem, the higher the multicultural acceptance[12]. On the other hand, Lee's study showed that self-esteem has an effect on multicultural acceptance by mediation of peer attachment rather than the direct influence to multicultural acceptance[10]. Based on the positive perception of oneself, various social participation can be made. And through this participation, he or she can understand the community which is a space where people can live together, can increase the multicultural acceptance based on this understanding. Although most adolescents currently have limited activities in the limited space of home and school, they will be able to raise the community awareness through voluntary activities and experiences of various human relations, and this will again serve as a cyclical link to enhance multicultural acceptance[8]. In order to increase adolescents' multicultural acceptance, it is necessary to enhance the self-esteem of adolescents and to interact with students with different cultural backgrounds through enhanced self-esteem, and to help them to accept others positively[10].

Thirdly, this study showed the mediating effect of community closeness in the relationship between interpersonal relationship and multicultural acceptance of college students. Interpersonal relationship indirectly influence multicultural acceptance of college students via community closeness. The higher the interpersonal relationship, the higher the community closeness. And as a result of this, a level of multicultural acceptance increases. The result is partly consistent with the previous study about stressing community closeness[10]. People with good interpersonal relationships can have a wide and deep range of communication in private relationships with family members, neighbors, colleagues, and in public relations at schools and workplaces. The higher the quality and quantity of interpersonal relationships, the greater the interest in the community, the higher the consciousness of community and the greater the scope of vision, rather than being trapped in oneself, it can be seen as a growing interest in the community and the global community, and a rise in multicultural acceptance. In this study, interpersonal relationships did not have a direct influence on the multicultural acceptance, but had indirect influence on the multicultural acceptance via community closeness. It is interpreted that interpersonal relationship enhances

community sense and community awareness, thereby enhancing multicultural acceptance. It can be explained that the relationship and the degree of openness and feeling of bond with the people in the community where they live than with current friends has a greater influence on the multicultural acceptance. When adolescents form a psychological solidarity for the community as a member of the community, they can form more attitudes to coexist with others who have different cultural backgrounds[10].

These findings imply that self-awareness, interpersonal relationship, and community closeness are important variables of multicultural acceptance and can be used as critical intervention factors that promote multicultural acceptance among college students[13]. Based on the results of these studies, a specific welfare program will be proposed to increase multicultural acceptance.

V. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to examine a structural relationships of self-awareness, interpersonal relationship, and community closeness that affect multicultural acceptance of college students in Korea. This study showed the mediating effect of community closeness in the relationship among self-awareness and multicultural acceptance of college students. In addition, this study showed the total mediating effect of community closeness in the relationship among interpersonal relationship and multicultural acceptance of college students. These findings may provide insight into the preliminary effect of community closeness on multicultural acceptance among Korean college students

VI. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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