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Clarifying the Characteristics and Exploring the Collaboration of Citizenship and Character Education in South Korea

- The paper provides the characteristics of citizenship and character education in South Korea.
- It compares the differences and similarities of citizenship and character education.
- It suggests the way of the collaboration and development of the both education..

Purpose: This paper seeks to illuminate the background of citizenship and character education in South Korea in order to better determine a means of collaboration between the two goals.
Method: The paper is based on the qualitative analysis of the official documents and law in relation to citizenship and character education.
Findings: The paper finds the differences and the similarities of citizenship and character education and there are increasing needs for both educational initiatives in terms of social and national development of South Korea.

Keywords:
Citizenship education, character education, democratic movement, national curriculum, young people

1 Introduction

The current Korean government, which is led by the conservative Saenuri Party, proposed the 'Normalisation of School Education' in order to support young people in accomplishing their dreams and capacities through education. One of the major policies from the government is to reinforce character education across the national curriculum. On the other hand, local education authorities, generally having a more progressive political leaning started to introduce legislations to enhance democratic citizenship with the goal of fostering active citizenship and participation (Sim, 2015). Both these new approaches on education seem similar but they are also different. Supporting young people for the future and assisting them to solve their problems are borne of the same intention, but the means through education are different. Whereas the conservative party is focusing on individual and personal development, the progressive parties are interested in social and political development through educating young people (Yang, 2016). In this regard, there are several points of argument (several factors) that lend support to this study and help explain the recent emergence of both character education and citizenship education.

First of all, Korean society is a rapidly aging society due to its having the lowest birth rate among OECD countries as well as the increased longevity of its people (Kim, 2009). The numbers of children and young people's (9-24) population have been fast decreasing over recent years. It is expected that this population imbalance between younger and older generations will cause severe social problems such as financial burdens and inter-generational conflict (Ministry of Family and Gender Equity, 2015). Globalisation and the excessive develop-

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ment of scientific technology are profoundly affecting Korean society and leading us to a life we had never imagined. This shifting and unpredictable society will bring pressure upon younger generations and it will require young people who are equipped with certain key competences such as citizenship and character, much more so than was the case for their parents' generation.

Second, there are other features which might disturb young people in making a successful transition from their youth to adulthood. Traditionally, the family has been the first safety net for young people in Korea; however, by the 1990s, with the increasing numbers of single-parent and loosely-tied family relationships, in many cases there has not been adequate support for young people to be able to development sufficiently (Ministry of Family and Gender Equity, 2015). As the function of the family as the nurturer of an individual's personal, social, and emotional development has weakened and is expected to continue so in the future, Lee, Park, and Cho (2014) stress that environmental, specially family changes should be included in planning youth policy. Apart from the various forms of families, with working hours of parental caregivers being the longest among OECD countries, many parents do not have adequate time to help their children in terms of personal, emotional, and social progress. This urgent predicament is one of reasons for the promotion of character education (Ministry of Family and Gender Equity, 2015). Accordingly, extremely busy Korean life does not provide parents with enough time for building their children's character. According to an OECD report, South Koreans work 40.85 hours a week, ranking third among the OECD countries while the OECD average working hours are 30.94(OECD, 2014). This is why the Ministry of Education wanted to include the character education into the National Curriculum in order to compensate for the perceived lack of character building.

Third, there has been a rapid rise of social exclusion among young people. According to the 2015 White Paper

on Young People in Korea, the physical and psychological health of many young people is threatened because of an overly competitive educational environment, a poor diet, lack of physical exercise, and substance abuse of tobacco and alcohol. The recent global economic crisis affected many segments of the population in Korea, and the high unemployment rates and unstable labour market represent some of the risk factors for young people (Ministry of Family and Gender Equity, 2015). This socio-economic situation directly influences the health and well-being of young people, and which will in turn cause some social exclusion as young people make their transition into adult life. Consequently, this exclusion will hamper young people in their active participation in Korean society. Such social exclusion increases the possibility of there being fewer opportunities for young people with respect to character building and the development of an adequate sense of citizenship.

Fourth, the results of the International Comparative Citizenship Studies 2009 reveal that 16-year-olds in Korea demonstrated high levels of civic knowledge but low levels in the actual practice of citizenship, which clearly implies that education for citizenship, should be implemented both in knowledge and practice.

Fifth, in 2015, the Korean government introduced a Promotion of Character Education Law, which was designed to strengthen human dignity, to secure the values stated in the Korean constitution, and to educate citizens to be better equipped in terms of their character on the basis of the Education Act in order that they may contribute to the development of the society and the nation. The regulations on democratic citizenship education in schools have been legislated in the Gyeonggi Provincial Office of Education, the largest local education authority in Korea. It means that both character education and citizenship education are significant issues in Korean society. However, these two aspects of education are being delivered without clear notions as to their effectiveness; they are guided by the same concept even though the aims of these educational projects are quite different. There are overlapped strands and components; so it is necessary to have a vibrant description for each educational stream. In particular, character education suddenly was advanced from the government to deal with children and young people's problems in order to make 'behaving' and 'obedient' good children. However, historically citizenship education originated from the civil society during the democratisation period. Critically, and for this reason, it was bottom-up delivery from society rather than top-down delivery from government.

With the above research background, I will compare the characteristics of citizenship education and character education and explore the most effective ways to implement the two educations. This study begins from the assumption that non-formal education such as the field of youth work and NGOs can play an important role in delivering the citizenship education and character education in collaboration. Firstly, this study looks at the relevant key perceptions and contents within citizenship and character education. Second, it clarifies the

similarities and differences between citizenship and character education. The historic background, contexts, and provision will be compared. Third, this study aims to raise the issue for bridging and collaborating with the two educations through both formal and non-formal ways so as to reduce the overlapping concepts and mis-understandings. I argue that citizenship education has many focal points of social and political responsibilities for people as members of their society, but that character education is more related to personal and individual development, which can be built through informal and non-formal modes of learning rather than as a subject in a formal educational site.

2 Methodology

The research methodology for this paper is qualitative involving documentary analysis. While there might be some potential problems and limitations of my understanding of the research, this study proceeds from an in-depth understanding of the recent key documents such as National Curriculum for Social Studies and Government Reports on Character education rather than generalisation. I cannot deny all the possible limitations were removed, but I have tried to minimise the possible limitations and maximise the validity and reliability.

3 Education in Korea

In order to understand the perception and practices of both citizenship and character education, I need to present briefly an outline of education in Korea to demonstrate one of the reasons that citizenship and character education is popular at the moment. The current education system originated after the liberation from Japan in 1945 and education policies were included within the framework of the Constitution (Korea Educational Development Institute, 2007). The Ministry of Education claims that the remarkable and fast economic growth of Korea is due to the investment in human resources through Education and believes that education will play a primary role in national development in the future (Ministry of Education, 2016). It is true that the growth of qualitative and quantitative education and investment in education were one of the significant national developments since the Korean War in 1950; however, we should not forget the negative side-effects of mass education on children and young people. One of the side-effects is the increasing suicide rates among young people. Suicide is the number one cause of death in young people in Korea (Lim, Ha, & S, 2014). Korea has the highest suicide rate among OECD countries in 2015, and unfortunately the death rates from suicide have increased over the past two decades (OECD, 2015). Consequently the happiness index is at the bottom among the OECD countries (Ministry of Family and Gender Equity, 2015).

Korean education expanded in numbers until the 1970s. For instance, there were rapid increases of student population and enrolments as well as the number of educational facilities according to the economic improvement. This rapid escalation of the education system

caused overcrowded classrooms, a shortage of teachers, and rigorous competition for universities (WENR, 2013). With the aim of solving the educational problems, there were several educational reforms for quality education improvement. The qualitative development of education was carried out in the 1980s through education reforms, concentrating on raising wholesome citizens of society (Korea Educational Development Institute, 2007, p. 17).

According to the framework of the curriculum design, the aims of education are

to assist every citizen in building up one's character based on humanitarianism
to manage a humane life by developing autonomous life skills and the qualifications needed as a democratic citizen
to contribute to the development of a democratic country and realize the public idealism of humankind
(Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2009. p.1)

Even though the national curriculum sought to educate a democratic citizen, the 2009 ICCS study presented that Korean students showed the lowest participation rates in social and political issues among the 38 countries (Schulz, Ainley, Fraillon, Kerr, & Losito, 2010). Social studies education was regarded as a citizenship education in the 2009 ICCS studies as the study introduced the different names of education for citizenship education in different countries. Educating a democratic citizen is also one of the aims for social studies education; this is why I debate that social studies education is not sufficient to be substituted as a citizenship education in Korea.

4 Citizenship education

Han (1998) argues that the term of democracy has been used much regarding the political and social controls of Korea. However, Article 1 of the Education Act illuminates the aims of education as Hong Ik In Gan (Maximum Service to Humanity with one another) which means that education should meet the needs of individuals as well as society as a whole, and individual persons should have the right to pursue their well-being. The Education Act lays emphasis on the development of abilities and the forming of character as the path to personal fulfilment since liberation from the Japanese occupation (Han, 1998).

Park (2002, p. 122) draws a distinction between civic virtues from Confucianism and Liberal Democracy in a South Korean context and explains the background of citizenship education in Korea. Since the democratisation movement in the middle of the 1980s, the concept of citizenship and democratic education has been introduced into the school curriculum as an independent subject called 'moral education'. First of all, the virtues from 'moral education' in Korea have been constructed on the basis of Confucianism, which have been a traditional philosophy and a civic virtue in Korea for a long time. 'Moral education' in Korea embraces ten civic virtues which are: law-abidingness, care for others, sensitivity to environmental protection, justice, sense of community, citizens as members of a liberal democratic society, love for the country, love for the nation, sense of national security, commitment to peaceful reunification, and love for humanity (Ministry of Education, 2016)

There are different reasons for the emergence of citizenship education in South Korea. Han (2002) reveals that citizenship education in the South Korean context has special historical and political roots. Citizenship education in South Korea was established from the demo-cratic movement during the 1970s and 1980s. Since the mid-1990s the Korean civil movement has grown, resulting in citizenship education for adults and young people becoming an important social agenda (Kim et al., 2006).

Officially there is no subject called 'citizenship education' in the national curriculum in Korea. Citizenship education is carried out in diverse forms of education, such as social studies, or moral education in the formal national curriculum (Kim, 2009). Kang (2008) explains that the contents in the social studies and moral education imply citizenship education. This is why social studies as a subject in the national curriculum is also regarded as a citizenship education in Korean context. According to the 2007 revised national curriculum, the main objective of social studies is to help young people to recognise social phenomena and acquire the values and proper attitude as a citizen in a democratic society by learning the knowledge and functions of a society. The national curriculum defines a citizen as follows:

Respects human rights, possesses tolerance and a compromising attitude
Works for social justice, prioritises community,
Participates in social events
Takes responsibility

As stated in the national curriculum, social studies is designed to help young people learn to become and live as a citizen in a democratic society; however, the exam-oriented school system does not allow them time and space to practice their citizenship. In addition, social studies is not taught as a compulsory subject. That is why I argue that social studies cannot meet the full aims of citizenship education. Citizenship education should embed the knowledge, skill, attitude as well as active participation in their community. If the social studies or moral education include the community involvement and student's compulsory participation throughout the curriculum and school activities, it can be regarded as citizenship education. Yet, Kim (2009, p. 231) argues that students participate in debates, discussions or much different type of club activities underpinned by themes including universal values, environment, human rights, anti-war initiative, peace, and welfare. I argue those activities can be easily ignored for the exams or for other school events (Park, 2007). Further, why have Korean students shown the lowest participation will and future expectation of participation in ICCS 2009. Social studies can contribute to develop civic knowledge but active participation ought to be promoted through experiential learning.

5 Character education

The previous Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (2012) introduced its policy for creating a paradigm shift in character education. According to the Character Education Promotion Act, character education is defined as an education which aims to cultivate one's inner life for right and good and develop humane character for others, community and environment. Character education can be conceptualised through key virtues of character such wisdom, courage, integrity, temperance and filial piety, and some of the virtues came from moral and ethical backgrounds(Um, Kim, & Jeon, 2014). The key virtues are different from who defines. The Character Education Promotion Act prescribes key value virtues as the aims of character education: courtesy, filial piety, honesty, responsibility, respect, consideration, communication, and cooperation. Accordingly character education is for developing virtues of character. Another concept of character education is described as an education system for students which cultivate with desirable character (Yang, Cho, Park, Jang , & Eun, 2013). Therefore, character education is an education which helps children and young people to build the key moral and ethical virtues or desirable characters.

Traditionally, families and the society used to fulfill a central responsibility for character education; now, however, schools must assume a leading position with respect to character education, wherein both one's family and the rest of society will take part (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2012). It does not mean that schools played no role in character education. Building character of children and young people were embedded or hidden within the curriculum or school ethos, rather than being a conspicuous part of the National Curriculum. The introduction of character education originated from government's concerns about the increasing likelihood for a lack of good character among children and young people due to the prevalence of knowledge- and competition-centred education (Ministry of Education, 2014). Moreover, the Ministry of Education asserts the need for the expansion of character education to help young people's holistic development and to increase their happiness (Lim, Kim, & Kim, 2015). However, if we need to help the young to be happy and to achieve their potential competencies, the education system should be changed from knowledge-competition based education to children-centred education.

In 2012, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology presented "a strategy for preventing school violence" through strengthening and implementing character education due to increasing numbers of anti-social behavior and youth problems (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2012). However, there has been no evidence that character education was efficient for either preventing or reducing school violence. One of the NGOs called 'Happy Trees' conducted a fact-finding survey across the country and reported that school violence was getting worse and increasing (Happy Trees, 2015). I argue that school violence can be caused from the exam and competition-oriented school environments rather than from a lack of character. Young people need to learn how to protect and respect human rights for themselves and each other. According to the 'Happy Trees' annual report, young people did not have any precise motive for involving themselves in school violence. It seemed that school bullying among students was perceived by students as one of their social activities rather than their having a particular intention to attack others.

The current Ministry of Education also focuses on character education. It suggests strategic promoting plans as follows: *implementing practical education on basic character and virtues on a regular basis, encouraging the participation of students and strengthening cooperative learning, creating a school culture that focuses on character, and others* (Ministry of Education, 2016). Consequently, the curriculum has been revised, in line with the aim to implement character education. However, the foundation of the education system itself is still not completely ready to implement character education in school education (Yang et al., 2013). Particularly, delivering character education within an integrated subject can be a superfluous load for teachers and the preliminary objects of a subject may be confused. Further, there was not enough time for preparation among teachers as well as school governors. Another criticism is that the evaluation about character education lacks clarity. Further, there can be teachers who maintain that character education is already delivered through every kind of activity within school life. Therefore, we have to ask whether character can be taught as a subject or not. Those kinds of obstacles in the provision of character education provide fundamental evidence for the collaboration of citizenship and character education in line with non-formal learning, such as youth work activities. Park (2014) supports my idea that humanity education (character education) can be delivered through extra-curricular activities.

As it is said by the Character Education Promotion Law, the aims of character education should be to secure human dignity and value according to the constitution and contribute to the national development through people who have good character. The law defines character education as an education for developing humane character and competence both in inner life and community and nature. The key virtues for character are: *courtesy, loyalty to parents, honesty, responsibility, respect, consideration, communication, and cooperation.*
This definition of character is not clear and often causes confusion. The notion of character is related to the perception of neo-Confucianism, Aristotle's ethic, and even various psychological theories (Yang et al., 2013. p. 2). Kim (2015) explains that character was traditionally developed by virtue education. Even Jung (2015) criticises that character education is dealing with the problems in the society and thus, needs to be reconceptualised in character education and the Character Education Promotion Law (Sim, 2015). In this light, conceptualising the meaning of character or character education can be regarded as very controversial as well

as difficult (Park, 2012). Prior to providing character education through integrated subjects, we need to discuss how to evaluate good character through integrated subjects.

Instead of integrating character education with other subjects, character education can be provided through non-formal learning. There have been youth programs for character education from youth work fields. All of the programs from youth work are not titled as character education; however, a study from National Youth Policy Institute found that youth activity programmes provided by local youth centres encourage young people to develop their competencies for character (Lim et al., 2015). The study also proved that character education in cooperation with local communities such as youth centres were effective in developing positive character traits such as self-esteem, sincerity, concerns for others, social responsibility, courtesy, self-control, honesty, courage, wisdom, righteousness, and even citizenship(Lim, et al., 2015). In this respect, I argue that character education should be presented in diverse forms and that much care must be taken to ensure that character education is not treated as part of a knowledge-based subject through National Curriculum.

6 Discussion: Comparisons between citizenship and character education

Firstly, citizenship education and character education have different implementation methods. Citizenship education is delivered through social studies subject, but character education is delivered through all subjects in the national curriculum. However, the framework of the curriculum design clarifies that democratic citizenship education and character education should be delivered through an integrated subject and educational activities, including extra-curricular activities (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2009. p. 32-33). This can be understood that both citizenship and character education is an important educational issue in Korean society.

Secondly, character education is necessary to specify which elements need to be integrated into the different subjects. Another challenge can be an evaluation, or asking the question how we evaluate whether a subject deals with the very right citizenship and character education. And what evidence is there for good citizens or good character? This leads us to a fundamental question about whether character can be taught in schools. Given this context, provision of both citizenship and character education could be efficient when it is implemented through non-formal learning such as youth work. Youth Work Survey reports that participation of youth work has increased key competencies for young people such as communication, respect, relationship-building, cooperation, problem-solving, citizenship and career development (Moon, Park, Yoon, & Jeong, 2016). Those key competences were part of key virtues for character education and component for citizenship education.

Thirdly, citizenship education and character education have different backgrounds. Citizenship education came from the civil movement background in order to achieve the democracy in Korea in the 1980s and 1990s. However, social studies within the national curriculum used to play as government propaganda during the authoritarian government before 1990 (Park, 2007). However, the social studies do not aligned with government policy after the democratisation. Character education came from the conservative ruling party which is originnated from the authoritarian government before 1990 to prohibit school problems such as school violence, juvenile crime, drop out, etc. It was a top-down provision to resolve youth problems. A good citizen does not mean an active citizen, and vice versa. It is possible to argue that the conservatives do not want to have active citizens who actively participate in their society; they may well prefer citizens who have good character but who lack critical thinking skills and active participation to keep society in order. As I noted earlier, the virtues which form character education mainly focus on an individual's development rather than community perspectives. However, the progressives may want to have active citizens in order to promote their social development because citizenship education highlights community involvement and political literacy as it was written on the Crick report (QCA, 1998). The current conservative Korean government supports character education; we have to think what the hidden meaning is in the political contexts.

Table 1: Comparison citizenship education and character education

	Citizenship education	Character education
focus	Individual's rights and responsibilities as a societal and community members	Individual and personal responsibilities for national development and integration
aims	Changing society and individuals	Good citizens
impact	Participation in the community	Practicing virtues in inner life
Legal status	Not legislated, rules	Legislated (nick name : prevention of captain Sewol)
Political background	Progressive political backgrounds	Conservative political background

In conclusion, I would like to raise issues regarding the characterization and collaboration of the citizenship and character educations. Firstly, the character and citizenship educations share the goal of solving issues concerning young people and Korean society, while there are some contradictory aspects between the two types of education. Therefore, we need to make sure of the difference, aims, goals, and definition of citizenship and character education in advance. The concept and definition could be different in the different contexts, yet the fundamental goals for both modes of education should not be changed. In this regard, I claim that the definition and concept of both modes of education

should be discussed in terms of young people-centered education.

Second, these two fields take different social and political approaches for the needs of citizenship education and character education. I argue that citizenship education should focus on active participation and youth development, but that character education should encourage individual persons to develop their character through daily life-based activities at home or within informal settings. Consequently, I argue that character education is not a method for anti-violence or anti-social behaviour education; and character education would focus on the virtues which are suggested in the Character Education Promotion Act. Further, citizens are not born into citizenship. They are raised as citizens, and therefore, citizenship education should be expanded both through formal learning and non-formal learning.

Finally, this study suggests that non-formal education such as youth work can constitute an ideal channel to bring together the two fields due to the nature of youth work. As I mentioned earlier, character education has shown to be efficient when it is delivered through non-formal learning through youth centres in the local communities (Lim et al., 2015). The national curriculum does not have enough space for the two educations and the teachers are not prepared with character education. In Korea, there are about 900 youth centres and youth organisations across the countries which provide youth work under the professional youth workers (Ministry of Gender and Equality, 2015). They are trained as youth experts in non-formal learning by the Youth Work Act (1991) which aims to support citizenship education as a fundamental philosophy. Moreover, youth centres and youth organisations have been providing citizenship and character education through extra-curricular activities since 1991. Thus, I have solid confidence that youth work can collaborate with schools in the provision of citizenship and character education. Unfortunately, the values of youth work are not adequately recognised in Korea. By contrast, youth work policies are part of the key policies for young people, and the partnership between schools and youth work are very much encouraged in the European Commission (European Commission, 2009, 2015). Schools are not sufficiently able to deal with all the various kinds of competences needed for assisting young people in our fast changing society. When it comes to delivering the citizenship education and character education, only a solid partnership forged between schools and youth workers can guarantee educational efficiency through working together to help young people to be well equipped with civic competence and good character. In order to have a solid partnership between formal learning and non-formal learning, there should be long-term initiatives for the implementation of citizenship and character education

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