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Multicultural Aspects in Education in Finland and South Korea

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The reasons are slightly different for each country, such as the internationalization of industry, easier movement between countries, or refugee and asylum seeker admission, but the world is becoming increasingly globalized. Naturally, the coexistence of various cultures in one country is becoming a norm. In a multicultural society, it is important to develop intercultural sensitivity and understanding of differences (Kim et al., 2021), and to provide non-discriminatory and safe education opportunity for any students. Although, it is still often wrongly understood that multicultural education is only for those who are disadvantaged or distinguishable from the dominant culture, it is rather an inclusive form of education that regards all students to achieve its goal of social justice (Nieto, 2000). Having found similarities for example, in terms of history, economic growth in the 20th century, free public basic education system, the fact of having ethnic minorities, and recently increased influx of immigrants, Finland and South Korea were selected as the research theme aiming to explore and contrast major critical multicultural aspects in education. Furthermore, it seeks to figure out perception and implementation of multicultural education, discriminatory practices and areas for improvement in both countries. The thesis starts with defining essential terms, diversity, multiculturalism, multicultural education, and the different dimensions of these concepts such as critical theory, which challenges the society's power hierarchy, referring to various scholars including Banks (2012) and Torres (1998). Next, it explores Finland and finds out that Finland seems to aim to develop student's multicultural awareness and promote equality and inclusion by implementing multicultural elements in the curriculum. While at school, those who are labelled as immigrant students were often stigmatized by the teachers to show more problematic behaviors (Juva & Holm, 2016). On the contrary, South Korea seemed to view multicultural education mainly something for students with multicultural background (SMB) yet as in the 2023 Multicultural Education Support Plan published by the Ministry of Education (MOE), the policies were mostly about language support for SMB while multicultural education for all students were merely a recommendation for schools. At schools, SMB tend to be reluctant to reveal their different background and the teachers also showed colorblind attitude. Although there was this sort of differences in implementation methods of multicultural education and attitudes towards SMB at school, both countries were pretty much at a similar stage that is they both were rather passive when it comes to actual practice of critical multicultural education. In addition, various difficulties students experience due to their backgrounds still remained, and many teachers appealed to be unfamiliar in handling these issues. Consequently, it seems necessary to develop education overall to address multiculturalism.

Keywords: Multiculturalism, diversity, multicultural education, Finland, South Korea

Contents

Introduction

As globalization progresses, racism is currently one of the most addressed social issues. Although many people are aware now that this is ethically inappropriate, racism still exists and the idea that a nation can only be strong if it is unified at the linguistic and cultural level is still prevalent. In a multicultural society, it is very important for students to develop intercultural sensitivity and understanding of differences (Kim et al., 2021), and naturally it has become important for education to develop to support this. Despite being outdated, there is still a common misconception that multicultural education is only for those who are disadvantaged or different from the mainstream culture, however, in fact it is an inclusive form of education that requires all students to be part of to achieve its goal of social justice (Nieto, 2000). This paper examines how multiculturalism is dealt with in educational settings in Finland and South Korea (Korea hereafter), and what discriminations and rooms for improvement exist by reviewing various policy documents and research literatures.

Finland and Korea, although different duration of being under ruling, they were both liberated from neighboring country in the 1900s then civil war and Korean war each occurred almost immediately after. Both countries had a reformation in their education systems in the mid-to-late 20th century along with the rapid economic growth (Kim, 2003; Kalalahti & Varjo, 2023), and although Finland has showed a decline in the latest result (YLE, 2023), they had been two of the highest achieving countries in Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) (Takayama et al., 2013) and belong to an axis with little regional differences schools, which also offer free compulsory basic education. Additionally, in both countries in most regions except the capital metropolitan area are prone to be highly homogeneous (Kalalahti & Varjo, 2023; MOE, 2023). Furthermore, there have been preexisted ethnic minorities even before modern globalization, which are Finland's case Sámi and Roma people as well as Swedish speaking population and Korea's case, for example, Korean-Chinese and North Korean defectors. Due to these significant similarities in their social contexts despite one located in Northern Europe and one in East Asia, I found it to be worthwhile to contrast the two countries through this thesis with the following research questions.

1) What are some of the main multicultural aspects in education in Finland and Korea?
2) How is multicultural education perceived and implemented in Finland and Korea?

To find the answers from Finnish context, Finnish National Core Curriculum for basic education (FNCC) and various journal articles studying Finnishness and multicultural issues in education were used. For Korea, numerous recent reports and publications from different government ministries including 2023 Multicultural Education Support Plan published by MOE and journal articles about globalization and multicultural education in Korea were mainly referred.

This thesis will start by touching upon fundamental concepts and their various dimensions and meanings according to multiple scholars. Next is the section 1, context of multiculturalism in Finland that briefly explores the composition of the country in general, the current point of multiculturalization, and general information related thereto. Then it continues to section 2, educational policies regarding multiculturalism to figure out for example what kind of system do they have to enhance students' multicultural awareness and support certain students. It is followed by the section 3, multicultural aspects at schools in Finland where it discusses mostly how school members are experiencing certain difficulties. And the same are explored for Korea as well. In these parts, I acknowledge that the dividing line between section 2 and section 3 is rather unclear, and they are very much interconnected. For example, to elaborate, in the case of national curriculum, it falls into category 2, but how it is implemented in schools may also fall into category 3. However, as it was more convenient to explain its implementation right after each policy is introduced, all policy-related content is included in section 2 and multicultural aspects outside of policy level are discussed in section 3. Finally, I contrast the findings from the two countries and conclude.

1. Defining diversity, multiculturalism, and multicultural education

Before delving into the main part of this thesis, it is necessary to start by comprehending a few main concepts on this topic: diversity, multiculturalism, and multicultural education. Learning about the definitions and levels of these terms will let us understand the research questions more precisely and contrast how Finland and Korea are handling these concepts.

1.1 Diversity

The dictionary definition of diversity is the condition of having differing elements, in other words, variety, and also the inclusion of people of different races and cultures (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). According to Grant and Ladson-Billings (1997), diversity refers to differences

among people, however, to elaborate in the context of multicultural education, it means especially group differences of such aspects as race, language, religion, socio-economic class, age, gender, sexual identities, and disability. According to them, the meaning of diversity has largely expanded, and as complicated as it may seem, it is important to recognize the issues of different groups that coexist and their relations to the dominant group of the society when understanding diversity (Grant & Ladson-Billings, 1997).

Milot (2007, p.52) relates diversity with academic and linguistic skills, background, culture, and religion and that we should view having various students in one setting as an advantage as it lets pupils utilize their unique skills in learning driven from their diverse backgrounds, instead of forcing them to merely represent their difference. As such, she considers diversity to be an important element of cooperative learning as interacting with diverse pupils leads to learning to live together in society (Milot, 2007). However, Dervin (2013, p. 20) critically evaluates the idea of labelling someone as "diverse" or "multicultural" and the power dynamics involved in this sort of defining because often it is those in higher social hierarchy who puts the labels no matter the people in question agree or not. This sort of label might follow these people, interrupting them to be no longer seen as "others" (Dervin, 2013). It is especially important because diversity is frequently used to refer to the immigrants who are considered the others that are in need of additional support, which often results in being indifferent to diversities that exist within the mainstream group as well (Dervin, 2013).

1.2 Multiculturalism

The concept of multiculturalism started in Western countries such as the United States and Australia in response to mass immigration and various rights movements (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997; May & Sleeter, 2010). Kymlicka (2010) says that multiculturalism has been around since humanity started, which makes sense looking dictionary, which describes multiculturalism as cultural pluralism or diversity within a society (Merriam-Webster, n.d.), because there is always some sort of diversity in any group. Torres (1998, p.180) says, multiculturalism means differently depending on the person, from antiracist philosophy and movement that claim cultural diversity should be applied to any social structure, especially in education (Banks & Banks, 1993 as cited in Reading Grant & Ladson-Billings, 1997) to a normal thing that everyone experiences (Goodenough, 1987 as cited in Reading Grant & Ladson-Billings, 1997). It is complicated to define exactly, multiculturalism not only indicates foreign origins as it often does in

a lot of contexts, but also issues that were also mentioned in the previous paragraph such as language and socio-economic status (Banks, 2008 as cited in Dervin, 2013; Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997)

Kymlicka (2010) says that multiculturalism most importantly promotes human rights, deconstruct social injustice, and is necessary for establishing democratic citizenship. Kincheloe and Steinberg (1997) mention that multiculturalism is something that we cannot deny the existence of as it is the core of multicultural society in which we are living, thus, while we cannot change the reality, we can decide how we respond to it. Among numerous theories of multiculturalism, liberal multiculturalism whose perspective is that everyone is naturally equal regardless of their differentness, could be one of the most commonly seen approaches in our society (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997). However, one of the main limitations of liberal theory is that due to the emphasis on this sameness of humanity, sometimes it begets colorblindness (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997), where difficulties caused by material inequalities and power structure in the society are often overlooked (May & Sleeter, 2010).

Critical theory, which is often considered the last step which we aim for when classifying multiculturalism, started from Germany in 1920 (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997). It challenges traditional multiculturalism, such as conservative and liberal, by emphasizing the constitutive nature of 'sameness' and 'difference' between social groups (McLaren and Ryoo, 2012 as cited in Hummelstedt-Djedou et al., 2021). It also criticizes asymmetric power dynamics and promotes a more socially just perspective on education and changes in the social structures that maintain inequalities beyond just racism (May & Sleeter, 2010; Hummelstedt-Djedou et al., 2021).

1.3 Multicultural education

There is no agreement on the exact definition of intercultural education and multicultural education, and both have very similar concepts and orientations, so both words are often used interchangeably (Dervin et al., 2012). In this thesis, the more commonly used term multicultural education will be used. Multicultural education emerged from the civil rights movement in the United States in the 1970s and began as a concept to address diversity within the country against the institutional racism and unfair power relations prevalent in the United States and around the world (Sleeter & Bernal, 2004 as cited in Kohvakka, 2022).

Even though different scholars have different definitions for multicultural education, they agree that multicultural education aims to eliminate discrimination and develop the full potential of all students (see e.g. Bennett, 2003; Banks, 2002). Dervin (2013) says that inclusivity in education could be achieved by recognizing not single, but various identities beyond just cultural or linguistic level. Torres (1998, p. 181) suggests four main objects for multicultural education where the first is the development at literate and individual dimensions for example by revising a more inclusive curriculum and fostering pride in one's identity (Torres, 1998). Followed by promoting multicultural competence by confront such as stereotypes and racism (Torres ,1998). Next is to improve fundamental skills as language of whose background is different from the majority and to achieve equity and academic success through an inclusive learning method (Torres, 1998). Finally, it is to empower individuals and create society towards equality (Torres, 1998).

Banks (2012) identified different approaches to multicultural content implementation in education in four gradual levels. The first level, contributions approach, applies ethnic heroes/heroines, holidays, and characteristic customs piecemeal to the curriculum and it is frequently chosen as it is easy to teach and does not tackle sensitive systemic issues as racism or oppression (Banks, 2012). While this might raise awareness on diversity, often those represented are biased to a single perspective that it may rather deepen stereotypes (Banks, 2012). The second level is the additive approach, which is to add multicultural concepts and perspectives as for instance, a unit or a course into the curriculum without fundamentally changing it (Banks, 2012). Although this may be efficient in terms of teaching, it has certain drawbacks in that it is mostly limited to the mainstream perspectives and ultimately does not reform the curriculum aiming towards social justice (Banks, 2012). In the third, transformation approach, students are able to look at various concepts and issues such as wars and social movements from more than a single point of view as the curriculum is reconstructed to have multiple perspectives embedded rather as a separate teaching module (Banks, 2012; Kohvakka, 2022). Finally, the social action approach takes one step further and empowers the students to make their own decisions, dismantling existing concepts and practices that are unjust and actually take actions by gaining related skills so that ultimately, marginalized people also can be actively engaged in the society (Banks, 2012). His last level, social action approach is also aligned with Nieto (2000)'s definition of multicultural education that it is a critical pedagogy that involves action for social change and advocates for social justice. She argues that multicultural education is not merely about the

affirmation of language or culture but a transformative process that challenges social hierarchy, reconstructing school systems against racism and other prejudices (Nieto, 2000).

1 Finland

2.1 Context of multiculturalism in Finland

Finland has been considered a highly homogeneous country for a long time, majority of the citizens belonging to the Evangelical Lutheran Church (Rissanen & Kuusisto, 2015). However, in Finland in 2022, with the annual growth of over 20,000 per year, persons with foreign background recorded over 500,000, which is approximately 10% of the whole population (Statistics Finland, 2023). Moreover, the foreign language speaker's population exceeded that of Finland-Swedish speakers (Shestunova, 2022). Accordingly, in 2011, Finland started Act on the Promotion for Migrant Integration to promote immigrants' equal and active participation in the society (Liu, 2022). Saukkonen (2018) argues that Finland has become a multiculturalist country, or even one of the most such nations in Europe, where ethnic and cultural diversity is recognized and supported. Currently, people from countries such as former Soviet Union, Estonia and followed by the non-European countries such as Iraq, Somalia and China are forming the largest groups of persons with foreign background as of 2022 in Finland (Statistics Finland, 2023). The Muslim population including for instance, Somali, Kurds, and Turkish, who are often mentioned regarding immigrant issues, is actually relatively smaller than that of other European nations, and only by the 2000s, did they begin to enter Finland mostly as asylum seekers or refugees (Rissanen & Kuusisto, 2015). On the other hand, Finland is also one of the few countries in Europe where there are indigenous people who are called Sámi (Holm & Mansikka, 2013). As such, Finland has other minority groups as well even before rapid globalization including also the aforementioned Swedish speaking population. In the 1990s, there has been constitutional reformation regarding basic rights, and it guarantees cultural autonomy of Sámi people who has population of less than 2,000 and recognizes other national minorities like Roma people (Saukkonen, 2018; Liu, 2022). In addition, Finland has two national churches, Lutheran and Russian Orthodox, and two official languages, Finnish and Swedish, which in some regions use Swedish as their official language, having equal rights as Finnish speakers (Saukkonen, 2018; Liu, 2022).

Yet, it is still true that Finland, too, is not free from racism. In the past in Finland, there had been studies conducted, which were intended to prove that Finns are racially distinct from Asian race and the Sami people, emphasizing that Finns are the civilized white Westerners in response to the Swedes' classification of Finns as a race of an inferior class (Rastas, 2016; Keskinen, 2019). Despite Finland being multiculturalist as Saukkonen (2018) says, racial discrimination against those classified as "other" by Finnishness still visibly remains in Finnish society to this day, such as the N-word being used by white Finns in reference to Finnish exceptionalism (Alemanji, 2016; Rastas, 2016). Furthermore, Finland is one of the countries with the most negative perceptions towards Muslims in Europe (Ketola, 2011 as cited in Rissanen & Kuusisto, 2015). Yet, similar to other Nordic European countries, Finland has an internalized Nordic exceptionalism that denies its historical connection with colonialism and promotes homogeneity, prone to ignoring racial or discriminatory issues, especially due to the fact that Finland had been under rulings of other nations thus did not have built their own colonies (Rastas, 2016).

2.2 Educational policies regarding multiculturalism in Finland

Influenced by internationalism and multiculturalism since the 1970s, FNCC emphasizes equal and fair education that stands against discrimination according to the constitution and intends to offer a foundation for inclusive and democratic education that regards important factors as human rights, minority groups, identities, language and so on (Holm & Mansikka, 2013). It also seeks to provide a foundation for comprehensive and multi-perspective history education by recognizing Finland's rich cultural diversity and encouraging education that promotes cultural identity and intercultural learning (FNCC, 2014 as cited in Kohvakka, 2022). Multicultural education first emerged in Finland as a policy in the 1990s, mainly focusing on the ethnic and immigrational aspect, which was highly non-white, non-Christian, and non-European, without other cultural diversities that already existed in the nation (Zilliacus et al., 2017; Riitaoja, 2013 as cited in Hummelstedt-Djedou et al., 2018). This is also when the big group of non-white immigrants, the Somali people started coming to Finland (Alemanji, 2016), and during this time, there was a perception that multicultural education is for those with an immigrant background (Liu, 2022). Fortunately, since the revision of FNCC in 2014, multicultural elements in education have been developing towards social justice (Zilliacus et al., 2017), expanding the coverage of multicultural education from narrow diversity of ethnicity, language and religion due to migration to multilingualism, two churches, and native people (Liu, 2022). FNCC is one of the key providers of multicultural education in Finland and it is based on equal and non-

discriminatory values from international human rights treaties and the Finnish constitution, which lets all students including those with immigrant background have an equal opportunity for education and gain qualities of multiculturalism and multilingualism (Liu, 2022; FNCC, 2014 as cited in Kohvakka, 2022). Moreover, basing school culture on a rights-based principal, they acknowledge the importance of Sámi culture and Finland's diverse ethnic groups and emphasizing students' right to their own language and culture, which is the first time in Finnish curriculum when people of indigenous and minority groups are highlighted (FNCC, 2014, as cited in Kohvakka, 2022). FNCC (2014) has selected "cultural diversity as a richness" as one of its underlying values to promote diverse cultural heritage, identity, understanding and human rights for global citizenship. The curriculum contains that culture is flexible and cultural identity, therefore, is what one build by themselves, acknowledging intersectionality and that everyone is part of diversity (Hummelstedt-Djedou et al., 2018; Zilliacus et al., 2017). FNCC (2014) also aims to enhance students' cultural identity and awareness and respect for culture through transversal competencies (Kohvakka, 2022). In fact, multicultural aspects that take students' diverse cultural background and linguistic capabilities into account can be found in almost all the multidisciplinary subjects in FNCC (2014). For example, in terms of language, students are guided to develop linguistic and cultural identities even though it does not specifically refer to minority groups (Kohvakka, 2022), and also enhance awareness of multilingualism in a community as well as how to express themselves in a diverse linguistic (FNCC, 2014). It also aims to develop cultural environment through the emphasis on the significance of language and literature in a multicultural context (FNCC, 2014). In religious and ethics education, students learn the value of multicultural and multireligious society and recognize diversity, equality and multiculturalism (FNCC, 2014). Through arts and music education, students get to encounter diverse cultural content and produce arts that reflect multicultural world (FNCC, 2014). However, Kohvakka (2022) mentioned that this sort of multicultural education is often practiced superficially that is limited to merely cultural appreciation and differences instead of exploring the hierarchical structures between majority and minority groups. Moreover, despite Finnish schools strive to provide as diverse religious classes as possible, because students are divided into small groups based on their choice of religion, questions are raised about the limited opportunities to interact with people of other religions and discuss their beliefs as well as guaranteeing the quality of minority religion's education (Holm & Mansikka, 2013).

Topics related to Finnish exceptionalism, such as the aforementioned racism and history of colonialism, are often overlooked in the curriculum and left entirely to the capabilities and interest of individual teachers (Hakoköngäs et al., 2019; Rantala & Ahonen, 2015 as cited in Kohvakka, 2022). Although now there is a mention of the significance of minority groups in the society, scholars say that it is not reflected enough and is still at the superficial level in terms of issues related to social justice (Kohvakka, 2022; Hummelstedt-Djedou et al., 2021). As Nieto (2000) also says that this sort of history of discrimination is often overlooked yet essential for multicultural education, thus this means that there is room for development in this respect because if this colonial history is not acknowledged, there is a risk that the social justice-oriented goals of multicultural education will be undermined. (Alemanji, 2016; Kohvakka, 2022; Keskinen, 2019).

2.3 Critical multicultural aspects at schools in Finland

Hummelstedt-Djedou et al. (2021)'s study shows that a lot of SMB experience othering or teasing that is close to bullying by the ethic Finnish students. It is often considered by the teachers that racism and other difficulties that SMB face are up to their own responsibility of the inability to adapt to the mainstream culture (Holm & Mansikka, 2013). In fact, according to Holm and Mansikka (2013), majority of students with immigrant background (SIB) have experienced discrimination that sometimes included physical violence, yet the students also felt that the teachers are often unable to help them even though the definition of who is an immigrant student is still quite ambiguous while the Population Research Institution currently defines immigrant students as students who came to Finland with their parents or those who were born in Finland but have a different native language (Statistics Finland, 2023). Juva and Holm (2016) show how Finnish teachers tend to stigmatize students by their race or multicultural background and perceive racist biases towards them. To elaborate, the teachers often tried to distinguish SIB and ethnic Finnish students with prejudiced ideas that SIB often do not well-behave that while problematic behavior of ethnic Finnish students is considered an individual matter, that of SIB is considered caused from their different background while also saying that racism is an individual's problem instead of a structural one of the school (Juva & Holm, 2016). Acknowledging the fact that these students may have language difficulties could be helpful for offering appropriate support at times, but when they engage in problematic behavior, this factor is often overlooked, and blame is placed on their background. (Juva & Holm, 2016). To make matters worse,

schools with a high concentration of SMB are seen as problematic due to this sort of stereotyping, and as a result, some parents begin to avoid sending their children to these schools (Juva & Holm, 2016). It is not uncommon in Finland for teachers to take rather a passive and inactive attitude in racist situations, and as in Hummelstedt-Djedou et al. (2019), some teachers tend not to recognize their position as white men in these situations and consider that categorization is acceptable as long as it does not cause "actual harm" to others. Hummelstedt-Djedou et al (2021) mentioned that a lot of Finnish teachers are teaching based on colorblind theory due to the lack of critical multicultural education implemented in FNCC and that this sort of inequality detriments students' agency and positioning. Holm and Mansikka (2013) explained that it is because having ethnic and linguistic diversity in a class is rather a new and unfamiliar phenomenon in Finland that the teachers often feel unprepared and challenging to deal with. To elaborate, the degree to which social justice is addressed varies depending on Finland's teacher education program, resulting in differences in multicultural competency among student teachers (Hummelstedt-Djedou et al., 2018). Even committed and insightful teachers need additional perspectives to fully understand structural inequalities, such as othering and categorization, and to do so, it is essential to strengthen the important, social justice-oriented component of multicultural education within Finnish teacher education programs (Hummelstedt-Djedou et al., 2021). Gorski (2008) mentioned that teachers can only achieve multicultural competence when they understand their practices in a bigger sociopolitical context.

In Finland, language skills are considered one of the biggest challenges for students with SIB and efforts are made to support them. Public schools across Finland provide newly arrived immigrant students with a year of preparatory education that includes such as Finnish or Finland-Swedish language, necessary academic skills, and cultural knowledge (Taylor et al., 2023). These schools and teachers have the autonomy to organize education tailored to the school and students' needs, so even though they follow the curriculum of The Finnish National Agency for Education, the content varies from municipality to municipality (Taylor et al., 2023). According to Shestunova (2022)'s study, some of the biggest challenges in preparatory classes are the fact that the academic levels of the students vary a lot and that the students often struggle with regulating their emotions due to certain traumas they acquired during the process of coming to Finland. The academic achievement of SIB is still lower compared to non-SIB, but according to the 2022 PISA test results, the gap has narrowed compared to 2012 (YLE, 2023).

2   South Korea

3.1 Context of multiculturalism in South Korea

After Korea lost its national sovereignty in the early 1900s, effort was made to promote national spirit and emerged the political myth of the Korea being uniquely homogenous from ancient times to the present much so that until the 2000s Korea did not associate the concept of multiculturalism as relevant (Kang, 2019; Ahn, 2012). Researchers have found out that the usage of the terms related to cultural diversity and multicultural society started to grow significantly since between 2005-2006 in Korea (Han, 2007; Ahn, 2012). During this time, the government started establishing various multicultural policies (Kim & So, 2018). According to Article 2 of the Multicultural Families Support Act, they are defining a family composed of Korean nationals and marriage immigrants and a family composed of those who later acquired Korean nationality as "multicultural family" (NGII, 2019). In the recent report Ministry of the Interior and Safety of Korea (2023) shows that the number of foreign residents has increased by 120,000 (5.8%) compared to the previous year, and now accounts for 4.4% of the total population. It is predicted that the total immigrant population will increase by 6.9% in 2040, and it is said that Korea is entering a multicultural society (at least 5% of immigrant population) (MOE, 2023). Song and Kim (2022) propose employment and international marriage as the two main reasons of increased immigration. According to the results of a national multicultural family survey conducted in 2021, the number of children from multicultural families who are in adolescence (age 9 to 24) has increased by 8.3%, now reaching almost half (43.9%) of such children, and the proportion of students from multicultural families, which is now 3.19%, is expected to increase in the future also due to Korea's low birth rate trend (MOE, 2023; Ministry of Gender Equality and Families (MOGEF), 2022).

Since 2012, the Korean government has been conducting a survey in Korea to measure the level of people's multicultural acceptability and direction of development, which consisted of three areas, "diversity" including factors such as identity and stereotypes, "relationships" including expectations for one-sided assimilation, and "universality" including dual evaluation, reflecting the uniqueness of Korean society (MOGEF, 2022). In the most recent survey in 2021, adults scored 52.27 points out of 100, and youths scored 71.39 points, which is higher than that of adults but shows only a very small increase from the previous 2018 survey of 71.22 (MOGEF, 2022).

3.2 Educational policies regarding multiculturalism in South Korea

In Korea, multicultural education is called "다문화 교육 [damunhwa gyoyuk]," which translates exactly identically as in English when looking at the words alone. As mentioned above, as the number of adolescent children in multicultural families increases, the need for customized support at school age has also increased significantly (MOGEF, 2022). Accordingly, MOE selected the vision of the 2023 multicultural education support plan as "Students who learn and grow together, a diverse and harmonious school", with the goal of ensuring educational opportunities for multicultural students, eliminating educational gaps, and establishing a mature educational environment where various cultures coexist (MOE, 2023). Currently, Korea guarantees equal educational opportunities to children from multicultural families, and as of 2021, 92.3% of them are enrolled in school (MOE, 2023). According to the MOE's 2023 multicultural education support plan, the dropout rate is decreasing as they expanded educational support for multicultural students, including Korean language education and school adaptation support (MOE, 2023).

The Central Multicultural Education Center of the National Institute for Lifelong Education (NILE) provides customized educational support for SMB and carries out projects such as multicultural education policy research and data development in order to raise awareness of a multicultural society. According to them, multicultural education in Korean schools is generally practiced in the forms of using materials such as video content during curricular classes, guest lectures multicultural education instructors, volunteer work, and cultural experience activities (NILE, 2014 as cited in Ku et al., 2021). However, Kim et al. (2021) say that systematic multicultural education is not sufficiently implemented in most schools, which is agreeable considering that it is rather superficial and does not go beyond simply utilizing program content or introducing other cultures fragmentarily, which equals to the lowest level of multicultural education approach that Banks (2012) proposed. Currently in Korea it is often merely "recommended" to implement multicultural education except for multicultural education implemented as one of the unit contents in a few multidisciplinary subjects such as social studies and ethics. MOE has advised to utilize multicultural education as a cross-curricular topic during subject classes as well as in regular and/or extracurricular activity classes for more than 2 hours per year, but in reality, it was found to be covered mostly only during extracurricular activity classes due to lack of time to spare in regular curricular classes (Kim et al., 2021). There has not yet been enough research on teaching methods and materials regarding multicultural education,

hence, application is not systematic as there are not enough resources to refer to and utilize unless teachers do it according to their own interests (Kim et al., 2021). In fact, teachers who are obliged to teach in this sort of method provided appeal that teaching about such things as clothes and food of other countries does not develop student's cultural awareness that a new approach that respects diversity in general is required (Kim & Rundgren, 2019). Due to the lack of pre- and in-service teacher training on multiculturalism, most teachers have to adapt to different situations directly at the field. There is not any mandatory content for developing multicultural competency or multicultural education for educators in teacher education institutions except for only a few designated universities (MOE, 2023). MOE offers merely optional workshops for in-service teachers, meaning a lot of prospective and in-service teachers are not educated for multicultural issues. Korean teachers who only learn about multicultural education through online seminars about rough theories and sample cases feel that they lack practical knowledge about SMB (Kim & Rundgren, 2019).

Social studies, as one of the few curricular subjects that deals with multiculturalism, explore multiculturalism including immigrants and social subgroups, and cover elements of multiculturalism, such as cultural relativism and human rights, for a more comprehensive understanding of multicultural society (Goo, 2019). It is meaningful that it is at least implemented in the curriculum, but the fact that it was merely added as one topic indicates that a development in curriculum is required to be constructed based on diversity (Banks, 2012). Some questionable aspects were found during this part of research. Although multicultural education is implemented in mandatory multidisciplinary subjects as social studies and ethics, MOGEF (2022)'s report shows that only 53.6% of the youth has received multicultural education and out of those, only 74% has received it as a school curriculum.

In addition, one special case is the multicultural policy school system, which is implemented mainly in areas with many SMB. This school reflects elements of education for multicultural understanding and global citizenship in general curricular classes for all students, provides continuous multicultural education in the form of project classes, and operates Korean language classes when necessary (MOE, 2023). The government is planning to increase these schools from 485 to 518 by 2023 (MOE, 2023). However, Korean language classes conducted in this type of schools generally only focus on quotidian language, resulting students to have difficulty using Korean in learning (Ryu, 2023). In addition, despite the good intention, the previously mentioned multicultural acceptability survey in these schools showed only a very minor increase in multicultural acceptability (MOE, 2023). In addition, due to the differences in Korean

language skills among the pupils, it seems necessary to provide individual Korean language education to each student, but resources are lacking.

On the positive note, despite the fact that fragmentary introduction to other cultures is still being taught, it is slowly decreasing and developing towards content related to non-discrimination against people who are different from themselves and alleviating stereotypes (MOGEF, 2022,). Ku et al. (2021) proved the significant effects of multicultural education in promoting multicultural acceptance and alleviating prejudice through various literature reviews. MOGEF (2022)'s report also tells that the youth who participated in multicultural education showed a higher level of multicultural acceptance than those who did not, and the more educational experience they had, the higher the level was. However, the difference was very slight that current multicultural education still possesses a big room to develop. In the case of Korea, as mentioned above, looking at the current status of multicultural education, it is difficult to devote additional hours to multicultural education because there are already lots of subject classes. Therefore, rather than adding a separate program, reorganizing the curriculum and providing multicultural education in connection with subject classes would be more effective as well as more engaging to the students (Kim et al., 2021).

Kim et al. (2021) conducted interesting research at a primary school in Korea where they merged multicultural elements in multidisciplinary subject classes through reconstructed curriculum developed in mock for the study. As an example, through exploring publications about current issues such as climate change, discrimination and refugee crisis during mother tongue class, students gained interest in issues in the world and they were able to reflect on the stereotypes and discriminatory attitude they used to have (Kim et al., 2021). Utilizing real-life cases in lessons was highly effective in teaching multiculturalism as it raised students' awareness on injustice in their close and far environment that they did not know about before and got them to think about the solutions by themselves (Kim et al., 2021). As an example, which well visualizes the higher level approaches to multicultural education presented by Banks (2012) that reconstruct the curriculum itself and encourage students to view issues from multiple perspectives and think critically, this study shows the direction that Korean education should aim for in terms of multicultural education and proves that this sort of model is also possible in Korea, where the implementation of multicultural education is still quite passive.

3.2 Critical multicultural aspects at schools in South Korea

There are several difficult factors that SMB experience in Korea, which are mostly consisted of learning difficulties, language, emotional hardships and social isolation (Kim & Rundgren, 2019). The level of academic dropout or maladjustment issues among the total of multicultural students is rather similar to that of all students, but it appears to be higher for mid-immigration or foreign born multicultural students than for domestically born multicultural students (MOE, 2023).

Kim and Rundgren (2019), who studied multicultural education in Korean elementary schools from the teachers' perspective, point out that in Korea, true inclusion of SMB has not yet been established considering the number of SMB participating in classes. Bae et al. (2019) who studied ethnic minority and majority students attending grades 4-11 in Korean schools found out that SMB, especially students with Southeast Asian mothers, who account for a large proportion of Korean SMB, experienced school violence at a higher rate than non-SMB students. Kim and Rundgren (2019)'s study also revealed that even though it is hard to say that it is solely due to SMB's different culture, most of the reasons for SMB not having lots of friends were found out to be due to their low academic grades and relatively lower cleanliness, showing their learning difficulty and likely lower socio-economic home environment. Teaches who participated in the same study pointed out that the current multicultural education proposed by school curriculum rather others SMB and deepens the gap between them and non-SMB (Kim &Rundgren, 2019). Thus, it might not be surprising to see that SMB tend to be reluctant to reveal their multicultural background to others (Kim & Rundgren, 2019). Interestingly though, the teachers preferred developing their own multicultural competencies via seminars to curriculum reconstruction (Kim & Rundgren, 2019). It is understandable that teachers are already struggling with a heavy workload that adapting to a reconstructed curriculum comes as a burden, but the fact that multicultural competency for students is just as important as teachers' education should not be overlooked.

Since many of SMB have Korean names and were born and raised in Korea, while the teachers try to treat them equally, often they neglect offering necessary support due to the concern that giving extra help might have derived from their biases (Kim & Rundgren, 2019). It is a color-blinded overlooking that does not recognize the fact that it is inevitable that sometimes it may be difficult for SMB to naturally use and develop Korean language skill at home as the parents of SMB also often have difficulty learning the Korean language and culture after immigrating

to Korea (Song & Kim, 2022). Furthermore, majority of students in Korea receive additional private education to support their exam based academic performance and this is one of the main reasons of lower academic achievement of SMB (Oh & Kim, 2018). SMB's families often cannot afford private education and already have difficulty even following school classes due to their lack of Korean language skills, are bound to fall behind. It appeared as if they are reluctant to recognize aforementioned difficulties that SMB experience as students' individual problems and connect them to their multicultural background that they shift the responsibility to other factors such as disadvantaged family environment and indifferent parenting (Kim & Rundgren, 2019).

In Korea, there are lots of defectors from North Korea who come from cultural areas that have grew apart due to 70 years of division, thus, their language and culture also developed differently to the South, yet it is hardly ever mentioned in most contexts of multicultural education. The number of North Korean defector students is 2,061 as of 2022 (North Korean Defector Youth Education Support Center, 2022) and their studies tend to get delayed due to the long process of defecting from North Korea, which also makes it difficult for them to follow the education matching their age level in South Korean schools (Jang & Kang, 2019). Education for North Korean defector students is often segregated that some students even attend separate schools for them, however, we should not only focus on their adaptation and integration to Korean society, but also strengthen multicultural education so that society's attitude towards them, who are different from the mainstream people, can also change. Superficial remarks such as being of the same ethnicity or having same origin only make hasty judgments about each other instead of acknowledging the differences that actually exist and does not provide an opportunity for true dialogue (Jang & Kang, 2019).

Moreover, students in Korea spend countless hours studying English, and competition for English education is very fierce, including improving conversation and English pronunciation through native speaking instructors (Song & Kim, 2022). However, considering this passionate investment in foreign language education, few students have the multicultural experience that can develop the multicultural competencies essential in the international society. It would equally important not only to simply learn the language, but also to enhance multicultural understanding so that one can communicate with the appropriate attitude of a global citizen when the opportunity to use that language arises.

3   Contrasting Finland and Korea

This section will discuss noticeable similarities and differences between Finland and Korea, transferrable strategies, and lessons we can learn from what was explored above. Interestingly, for both Finland and Korea, multiculturalization seems to be a rather new and recently rapidly growing phenomenon as used-to-be ethnically homogeneous nations. However, looking at Finland having such as native Sámi and Swedish speaking population and Korea having such as North Korean defectors and Korean Chinse, we can acknowledge that just because the recognition of multiculturalism has only now begun does not mean that diversity did not exist before. It also indicates that many minorities who already existed have been largely overlooked from the curriculum in both countries for a long time and myths of the country's homogeneity persist (Kohvakka, 2022; Kang, 2019). Both countries are prone to having a strong sense of uniform nationality that in Korea, multiple students felt strong patriotic sense of nationality (MOGEF, 2022), and in Finland, Finnishness is often set as a default to distinguish others (Juva & Holm, 2019). A difference is that Finnish in Finland is also related to being white European (Juva & Holm, 2019; Hummelstedt-Djedou et al., 2021).

Differences could also be found in Finland and Korea's focal points in multicultural education. Even though Finland, too, have had misperception that multicultural education is only for those who need it to get integrated in the society, it is constantly changing towards an education for every student. Finland implemented multicultural aspects in the curriculum, aiming for goals that are relevant to Torres (1998)'s first, second and the fourth objects, which achieve personal and societal multicultural competency and equality by promoting inclusion, challenging discriminations and empowering individuals. On the other hand, in Korea, Torres (1998)'s third object of teaching language to SMB seemed to be the main interest in what they call multicultural education and rest were limited to recommendation of implementation. The reason for this analysis is because while Finland does not put preparatory education for SIB under multicultural education category, but Korea deals with such language support for SMB as a part of multicultural education. In Korea, even though multicultural education that accounts for all students is not fully implemented in the curriculum, policies regarding multicultural education were structured in great detail in a report, but they often seemed superficial and there were not many cases of actual practices. In the case of Finland, it was not possible to find a multicultural education plan as precise as that in Korea, but it was embedded in FNCC. This is assumed to be because Korea is still taking the approach of multicultural education as something additive, while Finland has already included multicultural elements through curriculum reform despite

the actual practice is still quite liberal (Hummelstedt-Djedou et al., 2021). Looking at the 2022 PISA report, Finland has included the analysis of immigrant students, while Korea has not included any information on immigrant students (OECD, 2023a; OECD, 2023b). This supports the view that while Finland views the education of immigrant students as an important social issue, Korea views immigrant education as a separate issue.

Moreover, both countries use definitions such as immigrant students or multicultural students depending on their parents' background or immigration status. This is to provide them with the support they require, but as mentioned earlier, such labels could potentially be an act of confining them to the category of "others" for the rest of their lives, so it seems necessary to be critical and improve (Dervin, 2013).

Although, the fact that SMB were targeted for school bullying more that non-SMB was the same in both countries, Finland and Korea's attitudes towards SMB varied. Simply put, in Finland, differences tend to be emphasized that it sometimes even becomes a selling point, while in Korea, it seems like they try to minimize highlighting the differences. For example, in Finland, the lack of language skills of students from multicultural backgrounds is recognized as a major problem and diversity is often promoted at schools. On the other hand, in Korea, rather than directly facing the difficulties of SMB such as lack of Korean language skills, this was often attributed to their overall low academic achievement ability and disadvantaged family background (Kim & Rundgren, 2019). In cases as Finland, there is a risk of blaming all of the difficulties immigrant students experience on their cultural and linguistic differences, while in cases of Korea, despite the intention of not discriminating SMB, colorblindness can lead to completely overlooking the problems that arise due to individual's different background that need to be seen and supported. This sort of difference also appeared among the SMB themselves. In Korea, SMB often feel the need to hide their multicultural background and the teachers try to not emphasize it either, whereas in Finland, students feel a strong sense of identity related to their parents' nationality and this is not always so welcomed by other school members as explained earlier that when this multicultural identity is revealed, it is often viewed as abnormal or negative (Juva & Holm, 2016; Kim & Rundgren, 2019). It seems like both countries could significantly benefit from implementing culturally responsive pedagogy. Recognizing and integrating students' cultural experiences and knowledge into teaching and the curriculum will let students freely express their identity and create a sense of belonging as well as positively enhancing students' learning ability and critical thinking, naturally (Caingcoy, 2023). If schools become an environment that is open and accepting of diverse identities and belonging, students

will not have to try to erase their different identities nor be reluctant to integrate anymore (Juva & Holm, 2016).

In both countries, teachers did not hold enough multicultural competency due to lack of experience and structured training programs regarding multicultural education during the teacher training process and in-service education and they also appeared to be struggling from the absence of systematic multicultural education. Just as we aim to ensure that students' multicultural education is already embedded in the curriculum, multicultural education should be dealt with as a crucial part of the teacher training process as well, and practical and customized support tailored to the circumstances of each school should be provided to current teachers rather than single-sided training such as seminars to ensure that there are no difficulties in effectively implementing multicultural education.

Positively, both Korea and Finland consider school as a learning community and aim for a society where diverse identities, languages, and religions coexist and interact. As globalization progresses more rapidly and both countries still show various limitations, efforts must be made to further develop critical and transformative multicultural education.

Discussion and conclusion

The period of primary education is when pupils' identity and values are most actively established, allowing for more effective multicultural education (Kim et al., 2021). Positive relationships with peers and teachers, especially when those significant others had high multicultural acceptability, have a significant impact on the formation of multicultural acceptability in early adolescence (Ku et al., 2021). Therefore, it is important to take into account that through multicultural education and having teachers with high multicultural competence, groups of a high level of multicultural awareness can be formed where students can have a positive influence on each other (Ku et al., 2021). The reason why students have stereotypes and discriminatory behavior is because they do not have accurate knowledge or understanding about certain factors. In addition, Han (2007) says that prejudice often comes from cultural distinctiveness and superiority. Kim et al. (2021)'s study shows that when Korean students think of Korean people, they come up with general culture and characteristics which they feel proud of, on the other hand, they tend to think of negative stereotypes and outwards characteristics such as appearances when it comes to other ethnicities as Chinese, Muslims, Southeast Asians. Low awareness of

ethnic minorities and history contributes to the widespread racism and xenophobia, hence, educating students about these matters in schools is crucial, especially in the long term (European Commission, 2019; Kohvakka, 2022). The mere existence of diversity does naturally mean equal.

In Finland in 2011, the rapid growth of the pro-Finnish and anti-migration Perussuomalaiset (True Finns) party sparked a deeper discourse on multiculturalism, migration and globalization (Holm & Mansikka, 2013). Now, after over a decade has passed, a similar trend is repeating itself. In Korea, the current government's tendency to encourage private education also makes already competitive education more competitive, which could pose a crisis for SMB who are already struggling academically and economically (Lee & Kim, 2023). Especially in times like this, it is important to examine the socially disadvantaged, provide what they truly need, and realize sustainable education for peace.

The thesis acknowledges its limitation in covering a broad overview of multicultural education that is fairly shallow, being aware of the vast array of subtopics within this theme. And as the globalization and migration are ongoing processes and, in this moment, inevitable due to several global crisis, more research even in these subtopics needs be conducted in order to guarantee sustainable quality education for everyone in a multicultural society. Examples may include the experiences of SMB in school life and how they differ in regions with high SMB population like Itäkeskus in Finland and Incheon in Korea and regions with low SMB population. Moreover, SMB's post-compulsory education trajectories need to be studied as SIB are often stigmatized to be underperforming at school. Furthermore, experimental studies like Kim et al. (2021)'s should be more encouraged to test and further develop various multicultural education models. Finally, research should be conducted on establishing a constructive system of multicultural education not only for students but also for teachers, who play one of the most critical roles in education, and how factors like teachers' autonomy affects multicultural education.

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