



## Research Article

# Mediating Effect of School Nurses' Self Efficacy between Multicultural Attitude and Cultural Sensitivity in Korean Elementary Schools



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## SUMMARY

**Purpose:** This study examined the mediating effect of school nurses' self efficacy, which is one of the significant cognitive factors influencing cultural sensitivity, on the mutual relationships between multicultural attitude and cultural sensitivity in Korean elementary schools.

**Methods:** A cross-sectional descriptive survey design was used. Participants were 157 school nurses in elementary schools located in Gyeonggi-do, South Korea. The survey instruments included Teacher Multicultural Attitude Survey, Teacher Efficacy Scale, and Multicultural Sensitivity Scale. Data were analyzed using three regression equations to test the mediation model.

**Results:** The mean score of the school nurses' cultural sensitivity was relatively low. A positive correlation among multicultural attitude, self efficacy, and cultural sensitivity was noted. Self efficacy of school nurses showed a significant mediating effect on the relationships between multicultural attitude and cultural sensitivity.

**Conclusions:** Given the meaningful influence of positive multicultural attitude on cultural sensitivity and significant mediator effect of self efficacy as a school nurse between the two variables, the strategies to cultivate a positive multicultural attitude and enhance school nurses' self efficacy in their unique role should be considered in a training program. School nurses' health care services will benefit from the improvement of cultural sensitivity toward young children from multicultural families.

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## Introduction

Korea has gradually evolved from a homogenous society to one in which multicultural families are on the rise. The number of cross-cultural marriages—a social issue highlighted as the main factor behind the upsurge of multicultural families in Korea—is rapidly rising, accounting for 8.7% of all Korean marriages in 2012 [1]. Along with the growing number of international marriages, the number of children born into multicultural families is increasing. With an estimated 46,954 children born to multicultural Korean families in 2012, this figure is a 5.8-fold increase from the 7,998 born in 2006, and is anticipated to reach 1 million in 2020 [1,2].

As “migrant wives” and their children are considered Korean nationals, the way in which they might adapt to Korean society and its culture is an important social agenda directly linked to Korea's future [3–6]. The period of childhood is in need of even greater attention and care. Children from multicultural backgrounds are, in particular, more likely to experience an enhanced degree of conflict and personal crisis during their acculturation in addition to the typical changes and issues that accompany physical and psychological development at that age [7]. From the time that multicultural children start to engage in the public system, such as school, it is critical to provide them with the psychological and social support necessary to ensure their healthy physical growth.

In this context, the role of school nurses is vital, as they are in a position to provide direct support for the child's physical and psychological health. A school nurse in charge of health care services for children who are enrolled in school needs to have a level of cultural sensitivity to effectively communicate and deliver qualified

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nursing care to children from multicultural families [8,9]. Cultural sensitivity is defined as the awareness of subtle cultural differences between oneself and people from other cultures that results in applying one's knowledge, showing appreciation and respect, and adjusting one's behavior with regard to other cultures [8,10]. The various variables such as cultural desire, cultural awareness, cultural knowledge, cultural skills, caring, or cultural encounter has been reported as the subconstructs of cultural sensitivity [11,12].

One of the most important prerequisites for achieving certain levels of cultural sensitivity can be multicultural attitude [13]. When a school nurse has carefully internalized qualities based on comprehension and sympathy toward multicultural children and their families [14], it is possible to hypothesize that a positive multicultural attitude is an antecedent to promoting cultural sensitivity [15].

Another critical variable that affects the cultural sensitivity of school nurses is self efficacy—a significant cognition affecting one's cultural sensitivity. Due to the legally required dual roles as an educator and health care provider for children in elementary schools, a school nurse is referred to as “health teacher” in the Korean society. The self efficacy of school nurses has been defined as the self-perceived capabilities in performing the role of health educator and health care provider for young children in schools [16], including children from multicultural families. Dawson and Lighthouse [17] emphasized the role of self-efficacy, in properly managing education and healthcare for a group of people comprised of various races and cultures. Self-efficacy can be applied to a school health environment as school nurses' self-efficacy, which is the self-perceived capabilities of performing the job of a school nurse, rather than the objectively assessed professional abilities a school nurse has [16]. The cognitive factor of self efficacy was a key element in attaining cultural sensitivity [18]. Therefore, school nurses' self efficacy can be considered a significant variable in facilitating their cultural sensitivity.

With a continued increase in children from multicultural families, considerable studies have addressed cultural sensitivity. However, studies on teachers' cultural sensitivity are limited and those on school nurses are rarer, despite significant increases in school-aged children from different cultural backgrounds.

Considering the school nurses' significant role as a health educator and care provider in elementary schools, where children having different cultural background from Korean main stream culture is growing, the examination on school nurses' multicultural attitude and cultural sensitivity would be meaningful. In particular, considering the reported correlation between multicultural attitude and cultural sensitivity in the general teachers' sample [25], the investigation on the mediating effect of self efficacy as a significant cognitive factor on the relationship between multicultural attitude and cultural sensitivity of school nurses in elementary schools is necessary. In this study, we examined the current status of multicultural attitudes and cultural sensitivity of school nurses in Korean elementary schools and investigated the mediating effect of their self efficacy as school nurses on the relationships between multicultural attitudes and cultural sensitivity.

The study results were expected to provide empirical evidence on the cultural sensitivity of school nurses and basic data that would be helpful in the development of an intervention program to facilitate school nurses' cultural sensitivity, ultimately improving the health status of young students from multicultural families.

## Methods

### Study design

This study is a cross-sectional descriptive survey designed to examine the mediating effects of school nurses' self efficacy on the

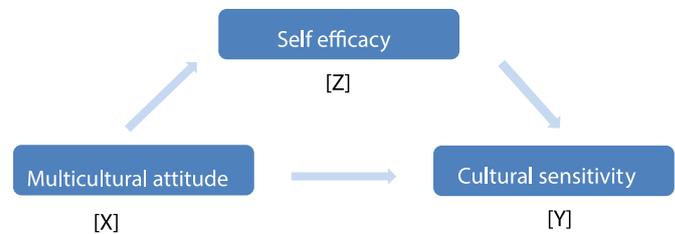


Figure 1. Conceptual framework.

relationships between their multicultural attitude and cultural sensitivity. Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of this study. It shows the hypothesized causal paths by setting a mediating variable (Z, self efficacy) between an independent variable (X, multicultural attitude) and a dependent variable (Y, cultural sensitivity). We hypothesized that the positive multicultural attitude of school nurses affects their self efficacy as a school nurse and subsequently enhances their cultural sensitivity toward children from multicultural families.

### Sample and setting

School nurses in elementary schools were the target population and 180 participants in the Gyeonggi-do region were initially recruited using convenient sampling. Using G\*power 3.1.2 software (Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf, Düsseldorf, North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany), the calculation of sample size was based on the formulation proposed by Soper [19]. When we included two dependent variables at the third step with a moderate effect size of 0.15 and significance level at .05, the minimum sample size was 107 to maintain maximum power of 0.95. Assuming 40.0% of wastage rate, the calculated minimum sample size was 167. Although a general wastage rate of 20.0% was used, we considered a wastage rate as 40.0% as we collected the questionnaire via postal mail or fax which may increase the drop-out rate. The response rate was 92.8% (167/180) and finally 157 samples were included for data analysis after deleting 10 insufficiently answered questionnaires.

### Data collection and procedure

After obtaining approval from Dongguk University (No. IRB-13-142), data were collected from July to December 2013. With cooperation from Gyeonggi-do Health Teacher Association, we initially got a list of schools and school nurses in the region. Based on convenient sampling, preliminary telephone contact with a school nurse by the research teams was undertaken. Verbal permission was obtained from each school nurse after explaining the study aims, process, procedural details, participants' rights, and potential benefits and risks. We also informed them that they could contact the research team with any questions and could withdraw from the study at any time. Upon agreeing to participate in this study, the research team sent the questionnaires and written consent forms to the school nurses. School nurses were asked to send the questionnaire back by letter mail or fax after its completion. School nurses were given a gift card (8 US dollars) as a token of appreciation for their time and effort.

### Measurements

#### Multicultural attitude

The Teacher Multicultural Attitude Survey (TMAS) [20], a 20-item questionnaire originally developed to measure multicultural attitude of school nurses, was used to examine the participating school nurses' multicultural attitudes. We used the Korean version of the TMAS

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