Victimized Behavior and School Adaption: The Mediating Effects of Growth Mindset and Self-esteem of Adolescents

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate mediating effects of growth mindset and self-esteem in the relationship between victimized behavior and school adaptation for adolescents. Correlation analysis, descriptive statistics, and SPSS macro PROCESS were conducted for data analysis. Main results are as follows. First, correlation analysis revealed that victimized behavior negatively correlated with growth mindset, self-esteem, and school adjustment. Second, mediating effects of growth mindset and self-esteem in the relationship of victimized behavior and school adaptation were validated. Suggestions on school adaptation of victimized adolescents from school violence are presented.

Key Words: Victimized behavior, School adaptation, Growth mindset, Self-esteem, Adolescent
1 INTRODUCTION

School violence is defined as negative peer-to-peer behavior in the school environment and behavior by one or more students towards a student (Olweus, 1973). According to the real condition of school violence, 8.5% of students experienced violence such as profanity, assault, money laundering, intimidation and bullying in the past one year among elementary, middle and high school students (Moon, 2015). By school level, 11.1% of elementary school students, 10.0% of middle school students, and 4.2% of high school students were victims of violence. In terms of specific types of damage, 33.9% were abused, 16.2% were for money laundering, and 11.4% were for bullying (Park and Lee, 2013).

The damage caused by school violence is serious. Adolescents suffering from physical and mental maladjustment in school life are also suffering from a decline in academic achievement, refusal to attend school, depression, etc. They also attempt suicide (Lee, 2005). Thus, school violence damage results in weakening school adaptation power.

In addition, school adaptation focuses on feelings of children about the school environment and defines school adaptation as the degree to which a child participates in school activities, feels comfortable, and becomes successful in life (Lee, 2005). These school adaptations are influenced by various factors such as teacher and peer relations, community, and school achievement. Among them, school violence is the most serious, causing the extreme choice of suicide among juveniles. Therefore, further research on the relationship between school violence victimization and school adaptation is needed.

Mindset is belief about themselves and their temperament (Dweck, 2006), divided into growth mindset and fixed mindset. Growth mindset is a belief that experience and effort can improve ability and intelligence, and fixed mindset is a belief that ability is fixed and cannot be changed (Dweck, 2006). People with a growth mindset believe that they can work hard and diligently to improve their intelligence and skills. Students with growth mindset also believe academic life in terms of learning, growth, and development (Laursen, 2015). In addition, growth mindset increases resilience (Brooks, 2008), in the face of challenges or adversity, affecting at-
titudes in anticipation of positive outcomes. Results suggest that the growth mindset is a predictor of school adaptation in victimized students of school violence. Therefore, we want to examine if growth mindset plays a mediating role in the relationship between victimized behavior of school violence and school adaptation.

Self-esteem is a critical variable in adolescence development. This self-esteem is defined as relatively stable feelings of overall self-worth (Rosenberg, 1965). It is also expressed in positive or negative attitudes, indicating the degree to which humans perceive themselves regarding abilities, importance, success, and value as individuals (Coopersmith, 1967). Therefore, a person with high self-esteem will not be affected by positive or negative external evaluation in performing tasks assigned to him or her, but those with low self-esteem will respond sensitively to negative evaluation (Choi, 2007), (Brockner, 1979).

In the study of the relationship between school violence and self-esteem, middle school students suffering from school violence had lower self-esteem than other students, and school violence affected self-esteem, stress and depression (Kim, 2016). In addition, Lee et al. (2016) reported that adolescents’ experiences of school violence victimization had a negative effect on self-esteem, and self-esteem was significantly impaired if redundant victimization of school violence had occurred (Kim, 2016).

Conversely, adolescents with high self-esteem are active in social activities through active and positive self-expression of many things (Lee, 2004). Therefore, adolescents with high self-esteem have a positive effect on school adaptation (Park and Kim, 2015; Kim and Jung, 2012).

Considering the relationship between variables, there is no direct study of the relationship between growth mindset and victimized behavior, but it may be inferred from previous studies that growth mindset will affect school adaptation, and self-esteem affects school adaptation, thus forming a mediating relationship. Therefore, this purpose of this study is to investigate mediating effects of growth mindset and self-esteem in the relationship between victimized behavior and school adaptation for adolescents.
2 METHODS

A. Research model

The research model is shown in Figure 1. Based on previous studies, we established and analyzed a research model in which victimized behavior directly affects school adaptation, and growth mindset and self-esteem mediate these relationships.

![Research model](image)

Figure 1: Research model

B. Participants

This survey was conducted using a questionnaire survey of 350 students including students participating in the regional network program of the Seosan Education Welfare Support Center April 2-July 2, 2016, and school students in the project area. A total of 347 questionnaires were analyzed.

Characteristics of the survey subject are as follows. According to gender, 61.4% of female students were higher than and 38.6% of male students, and 65.0% of high school students were more than 35.0% of middle school students. According to the age, the 15-year-olds accounted for 25.6%, followed by 22.8% for 16-year-olds, 19.6% for 17-year-olds, 14.1% for 13-year-olds, 9.5% for 14-year-olds, 7.2% for 12-year-olds and 1.2% for 18-year-olds. According to the type of family structure, 71.1% were composed of parents and children, 17.3% single parents and children, 6.9% grandparents, parents and children, 3.5% others, and 1.2% grandparents.
and grandchildren. According to family income level, 51.6% of the respondents responded that it is common, followed by generous 28.5%, very generous 12.7%, insufficient 6.1% and very insufficient 1.2%. According to if both parents are currently working, 58.3% are yes, and 41.7% are no. For the average score of subjects 57.8% was medium, 26.9% was poor, and 15.3% was good.

C. Research tools

C.a. Victimized behavior of school violence

Based on the Korea Child and Youth Panel Survey, a scale of victimized behavior of school violence which Cho (2014) developed (we added a cyber-violence related item) was used for this study. The 5-point Likert scale consisted of the '1' and 'always'. Measurements were conducted on a 5-point Likert scale. The higher the score, the more extensive the experience of victimized behavior of school violence.

C.b. Growth mindset

We used the growth mindset scale developed by Dweck (2006) and translated into Korean by Lee et al. (2016). The scale consisted of four items that measured belief about change in intelligence and four items that measured belief about personality change. Measurements were conducted on a 5-point Likert scale. The higher the score, the higher the set of growth minds. The overall reliability of Cronbach’s \( \alpha \) in this study was .735.

C.c Self-esteem

We used the Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) developed by Rosenberg (1965). The scale consists of 10 items, from 'not at all' to 'highly agree' and 5 points Likert scale. The higher the score, the higher the self-esteem. The overall reliability of Cronbach’s \( \alpha \) in this study was .746.

C.d. School adaptation

The school adaptation scale developed by Kim (2002) was used. The scale consisted of 20 items in total, including four subscales of teacher relations, peer relations, school classes, and school rules, and was measured using the Likert 5-point scale from 'not quite at
all (1 point) to ‘very agree’ (5 points). The higher the score, the better the adjustment to school life, and the overall reliability of Cronbach’s $\alpha$ in this study was 0.893.

D. Data analysis

Correlation analysis and descriptive statistics were conducted among variables before validating the research model. Then, we used SPSS macro PROCESS as suggested by Hayes (2013) that tests mediating effects in a single model.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As shown in Table 1, correlation analysis revealed that victimized behavior was negatively correlated with growth mindset, self-esteem, and school adaptation, while growth mindset, self-esteem, and school adaptation were positively correlated. Therefore, it is critical that school violence is prevented because victimized behavior has a negative correlation with school adaptation, but it is also critical that we improve school adaptation ability for victims. To accomplish this, it is necessary to identify variables mediated by victimized behavior and the school adaptation and to indirectly improve school adaptation ability.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE I</th>
<th>CORRELATION AND DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Victimized behavior</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Growth mindset</td>
<td>-.306**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Self-esteem</td>
<td>-.301**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. School adaptation</td>
<td>-.343**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>1.2541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>0.5105</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

As a result of analysis of each path coefficient in Figure 2, victimized behavior had a significant negative impact on growth mindset. In contrast, growth mindset had a significant positive impact on school adaptation. Results indicated that growth mindset
plays a mediating role. And victimized behavior is a negative effect on self-esteem, but self-esteem had a significant positive effect on school adaptation. This also meant that self-esteem is mediated in relation to victimized behavior and school adaptation. In addition, when mediators were applied, the total effect of victimized behavior on school adaptation, $\beta = -0.3956 \ (p < .001)$, was reduced to $\beta = -0.1921 \ (p < .01)$, the direct effect. This also implies multiple mediating roles of growth mindset and self-esteem.

**Figure 2: The result of path analysis**

Mediating effects of growth mindset and self-esteem were analyzed by the bootstrapping method and shown in Table 2. Indirect effects of growth mindset and self-esteem are $\beta = -0.0916 \ (-0.1465, -0.0475)$ and $\beta = -0.1119 \ (-0.1788, -0.0604)$, respectively. Because the bootstrapped 95% CI did not include zero in 5,000 corrected bootstrap samples, the indirect effect was significant.

Therefore, it is critical to promote growth mindset and self-esteem in to improve school life adaptability of school violence victims. Especially, considering the seriousness of victimization from school violence relative to suicide, it is imperative that policy efforts are aggressively pursued to promote school adaptation by promoting growth mindset and self-esteem. In addition, it is critical to develop growth mindset and self-esteem in a separate program or
as an integrated program in the education field, so that it is implemented for victimized students as well as students in general.

There was no significant difference between the mediating effect of growth mindset and the mediating effect of self-esteem ($\beta = 0.0204$) (-0.0646, 0.1115).

### 4 CONCLUSION

This study examined if growth mindset and self-esteem mediated the relationship between victimized behavior of school violence and school adaptation. As a result, victimized behavior directly and negatively affected school adaptation. In addition, growth mindset and self-esteem were used as mediating variables, and these two variables played mediating roles in the relationship between victimized behavior and school adaptation.

However, even if these two variables played mediating roles, negative impact of victimized behavior of school violence on school adaptation outweighs the positive influence of growth mindset and self-esteem on school adaptation. These results indicated that the negative impact of victimized behavior on school adaptation was significant, suggesting that it is critical to identify more effective mediating or moderating variables that may enhance school adaptation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Boot SE</th>
<th>BootLLCI</th>
<th>BootULCI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>-0.2035</td>
<td>0.0304</td>
<td>-0.2703</td>
<td>-0.1512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth mindset</td>
<td>-0.0916</td>
<td>0.0251</td>
<td>-0.1465</td>
<td>-0.0475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
<td>-0.1119</td>
<td>0.0290</td>
<td>-0.1788</td>
<td>-0.0640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth mindset minus self-esteem</td>
<td>0.0204</td>
<td>0.0449</td>
<td>-0.0646</td>
<td>0.1115</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Despite this significance, this study should be supplemented with further studies because it is limited to one area. In addition, despite differences in school adaptation according to various characteristics such as school level and gender, they were excluded from the analysis and should be explored and expanded in future studies.

References


[18] Olweus, D., 1973. *Personality Factors and Aggression, with Special Reference to Violence within the Peer Group 1*. Univ. Inst. of Psychology,
