

역량지각에 영향을 미치는 가정환경과 또래환경 결정요인의 공변량구조모형

Structural Equational Modeling of the Determinants of Home Environment and Peer Group Environment for Children's Self-Perceived Competence

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목 차

I. Introduction	IV. Results
II. Literature Review	V. Discussions
III. Method	References

<요약>

이 연구의 목적은 아동의 연령과 성에 따른 아동의 역량지각 발달의 경향을 조사하고, 연령, 성을 포함한 가정환경과 또래 환경의 변수들의 역량지각에 미치는 영향을 구조평형 모델을 통해 알아 보았다. 또한, 이러한 역량지각의 발달 성향을 서구 문화권과 비교하여, 역량지각발달의 문화적 보편성이나 차이점을 알아 보고자 하였다. 유아, 또는 초등학교 저학년 아동은 면접으로, 그리고 3학년이상은 설문지를 사용하였다. 조사 대상은 유아, 초등학교 1, 3, 5학년, 중학교 1학년 아동 750명과 그들의 어머니이다. 인지, 사회, 신체 영역에서 모두 역량지각은 연령이 증가할수록 낮아졌다. 인지, 신체 영역의 역량지각에선 연령과 성의 상호작용효과가 나타났다. 그러나, 서구 문화권의 연구에서는 이러한 상호작용이 발견되지 않는다. 역량지각의 공변량구조모형 에서는 또래환경 변수가 모두 포함시키기에 부적합한 변수로 나타났다. 연령, 성과 가족의 수입, 아버지의 교육수준, 가정의 물리적 환경, 부모의 정서적 지지가 아동의 역량지각에 의미 있게 영향을 미치는 것으로 나타났다.

I. Introduction

One of the most important developmental tasks of childhood is the establishment of a secure yet realistic sense of one's own competence or worth. Studies of children's self-perceptions have included constructs such as "self-concept", "self-efficacy", "self-esteem" and "self-perceived competence"

In order to measure these constructs, instruments (Coopersmith, 1967; Piers, 1969; Rosenberg, 1969; Bandura, 1977) have been developed that include a variety of domains, such as cognitive competencies, social relationships, physical skills, appearance, and personality; the total score is interpreted as an index of global self-regard. The assumption of these instruments has been that children do not make distinctions among the different domains in their lives. This assumption was questioned by Harter (1982), who reported that children age 8 and older not only make distinctive judgements about their competencies in different domains but that by this age they have also constructed a view of their general self-worth as a person. Harter's approach stresses the hierarchical nature of the self-evaluative process, whereby self-worth is viewed as a superordinate construct and competence judgements represent one type of lower order evaluative dimension. Harter's concept of domain specific self-perceived competence has been validated by Stigler and Mao (1985), Cause (1987), Van Dongen-Melman, Koot and Verhulst (1993), and Worth, Gavin and Herry (1996). Although the idea of domain specific self-perceived competence has proved valuable both conceptually and methodologically, it's culturally appropriate for all cultures across the world? That is, Harter's Scale of children's self-perceived competence for American population can be applied to Korean children?

Preschoolers begin to develop the conception of

"self" based on their particular culture. Korean society has a collectivism like almost Asian societies, emphasizing the relatedness among people in both hierachical and equalitarian groups. Koreans have two very frequently used concepts of relatedness, uri ("we") and chong ("affetion"). Uri in Korean denotes an inclusive group, and chong is the affective bond that unites and integrates in-group members together in Korean culture (Kim and Choi, 1994). Koreans in culture as mentioned above, tend to consider themselves as parts of a larger social network in which they are interdependent on individuals both young and old, as well as on their peers. In contrast, children in Western cultures are more likely to develop an individualistic view of the self, emhasizing personal identity and uniqueness of the individual. They tend to see themselves as self-containd and independent, in competition with others. Consequently, children in Western cultures are more likely to focus on their uniqueness and what makes them special(Feldman, 1997). Definition of competence is culturally relative. So, in each culture, definition of competence, especially social competence might be different. But, Harter's Scale of children's self-perceived competence, especially in social domain is limited to focusing only on peer relationships. Therefore, Harter's Scale of children's self-perceived competence might be culturally inappropriate for Korea. Also, with Harter's Scale for self-perceived competence, it's impossible to investigate developmental trends of self-perceived competence from early childhood across late childhood because two different forms of Harter's perceived competence scales, the pictorial version for children under 8 and the written version for children 8 and over are not the same in item content or structure which make it difficult to determine whether differences across the two instruments represent

changes due to the instruments or real developmental changes (Harter, 1990). Thus, there is a need for a unitary scale in order to examine age effects on the development of self-perceived competence from early through late childhood.

Researches with the existing measures provide some evidences for developmental trends toward more realistic and less positive self-perceived competence. Specially, younger children's self-rating were very high in preschool and kindergarten, but decline markedly around 3rd grade (Benson & Dweck, 1982; Eshel & Klein, 1981; Frey & Ruble, 1987; Harter, 1982; Nicholls, 1978, 1979; Stipek, 1984). This shift seems related to more general developmental changes in cognition such as are captured in Piaget's shift from pre-operational to concrete operational thinking, and environmental changes, like entering the school, which is somewhat challenging and competitive. Researches on gender and children's self-perceived competence have shown that self-perceived competence in cognitive and social domains did not vary by sex (Harter, 1982; Kudek & Krile, 1982; Stigler, Smith & Mao, 1985), although it did in the physical domain (boys perceived themselves as more competent than girls) (Harter, 1982; Stigler, Smith & Mao, 1985). No sex by grade interaction effects have been found for self-perceived competence in reading skill level (Frey & Ruble, 1983). In the physical domain, likewise, gender by age interaction effects were not found (Horn & Hasbrook, 1987). In summary, thus, previous researches on the development of children's self-perceived competence indicate a broad trend toward less favorable assessments with increasing age, and this trend seems independent of gender. But, here, cultural context should be considered. According to their own cultures, boys are expected to do something different from girl, which play important role in forming the self and

strengthen gender-typed self-images and behaviors.

In principle, it seems reasonable to assume that children's self-perceived competence is influenced not only by developmental changes and gender, but also by social contextual factors. A broad range of studies have demonstrated the importance of home environment for children's cognitive, social and physical development (e.g. Bradley and Caldwell, 1980). Specifically, Fitts(1971) reported home environment, especially, family members' emotion, attitude and behavior toward children impacted on children's self-concept very much. Children with high self-esteem tend to have parents who are warm and democratic (Coopersmith, 1967; Isberg et al, 1989; Lamborn et al., 1991). These parents are loving and supportive, they set clear standards for their children to live up to, and they allow their children to state their opinions and participate in decision making. The relationship between high self-esteem and this nurturing, democratic parental style is much the same in Taiwan and Australia as it is in the United States and Canada(Scott, Scoti & McCabe, 1991). Also, In the Home Observation for Measurement of the Environment(HOME) developed by Bradley et al, stimulation provided by the physical setting and parental encouragement, involvement and affection repeatedly predict infant and early childhood IQ, no matter what the child's background(Bradley & Caldwell, 1982; Bradley et al, 1989). Researchers found that there were significant differences in the quality of their interactions and the stimulation parents provided(White, 1975a). These parents encouraged their children to explore the world by providing a variety of toys that were appropriate to the children's level of competence. They used language their children could understand well(Seifert & Hoffnung, 1994). These parents were also more likely than the others to praise them for their children's accomplishments

(White, 1975a). Natural outcome of such parenting is development of a strong sense of self-esteem throughout childhood. Thus, based on previous researches, It can be foreseen that HOME validated in KOREA by author(1992) would influence children's self-perceived competence.

Children's reliance on peers versus parents appears to increase with age. One of functions of peers is that they promote concern for achievements and integrity of the self(Zarbatany et al., 1990). Peer relationships become powerful environments for strengthening their beliefs and behavior. The importance of the peer environment, likewise, is demonstrated by Damon and Hartup's (1983) finding that children's self-evaluations are influenced by their peer relationships. So peer environment which is supportive and stimulating children's cognitive, social and physical competence will influence on children's self-perceived competence.

Furthermore, the broader cultural context of child development, including expectations of parents and others for children's social roles and differential development of competencies, has been shown to affect children's behavior in many domains (e.g. Super & Harkness, 1997; Whiting & Edwards (1988).

The aims of the present study are to (1) investigate Harter's Scale of children's self-perceived competence is culturally appropriate for KOREA? (2) investigate developmental trends of children's self-perceived competence by using a unitary self-perceived competence scale from early childhood through late childhood; (3) investigate relationships of children's self-perceived competence with home environment and peer environment; and (4) examine these patterns in a non-Western setting in order to gain a finer understanding of developmental and contextual influences on children's self-perceived competence.

III. Method

1. Subjects

Subjects were 750 Korean children who attend kindergarten, first, third, fifth, and seventh grade. 409 of the subjects were boys, and 341 were girls. The study was conducted at 3 kindergartens, 2 elementary schools and 2 middle schools(one is middle school only for boys, the other is for girls). These schools were drawn from middle and upper class areas in Seoul, KOREA.

2. Measures

Perceived competence. Harter's (1982) perceived competence scale for children was translated and validated in Korea by author (1991). In the present study, however, a new version of the scale was devised to cover the span of early through late childhood. This new version draws on Harter's (1984) pictorial scale of perceived competence for children under 8 and Lee's (1991) written Korean version of PCSC for children 8 and over. Both protocols were adapted to be culturally appropriate for children in kindergarten throughout 7th in Korea, and achieve items identical in content and factorial structure. An extensive pilot study led to several revisions in terms of cultural adaptation, consistency of items in content and structure from early childhood through late childhood, rewording and modification of picture plates. In the pilot study, items reflecting Korean culture which emphasize on social skill for collectivism and educate children earlier than America were included. For cultural appropriateness of Harter's PCSC to KOREA, 4 items were added to Harter's items in cognitive, social and physical domain for kindergartener and 1st graders and for 3rd through 7th, 3 items were added to Harter's items in each

domain.(e.g good at computer, greet elderly neighbors and help a younger kid who falls for all subjects ...). And then, Items for kindergartner throughout 7th were made as much as same in content. Pretest was conducted with 346 subjects in Seoul, Korea. Items and picture plates were reworded and modified for the children's understanding. Item analysis through κ coefficient was performed. Items removed by factor analysis. And then, it was preceded by a varimax rotation, which resulted in three factors having 6 items in each cognitive, social and physical domain. Items without discriminating power($\kappa < .20$) were eliminated and which reduced total scale's reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha > .89$) were also eliminated. The 30 items were, also, factor analyzed by Principal Component Method, the criterion for factor selection(scree test) resulted in three factor solution with eigenvalues above 1.0. All items eliminated by item analysis and scale's reliability, also, belong to items removed by factor analysis. And then, it was preceded by a varimax rotation, which resulted in three factors having 6 items in each cognitive, social and physical domain.

The final version of the scale for young children is a 18-item self-report measure that assesses self-perceived competence in the cognitive, social, and physical domains. For each item, the child was presented with a pair of pictured children and asked first to choose the pictured child "most like you," and then indicate whether it was true for them "always" or "usually". Scores per item ranged from 1 to 4, with score of 4 indicating highest perceived competence. There are separate picture sets of males and females so that boy and girl subjects can respond to pictures depicting a same-gender child.

For children 8 years of age and older, the Korean Perceived Competence Scale is a 18-item

questionnaire which is very similar to the pictorial scale in item structure and content. Items were read aloud by teachers, but children made their own responses. A structured alternative response format, similar to Harter's (1982), was used to reduce the tendency to give socially desirable responses.

Reliability of the three subscales (cognitive, social, and physical competence) was estimated by Cronbach's alpha based on the full sample of this study. The estimates were .81, .70, and .82, respectively.

Home Environment The Korean Home Environment scale is derived from the elementary school HOME scale by Bradley and Caldwell (Bradley et al., 1988; translated and validated through internal consistency by author, 1992) and the preschool HOME scale (Caldwell & Bradley, 1984). The scale is designed to evaluate home environmental processes as stimulation available to the child's cognitive, social and physical development. As with the self-perceived competence scales, the current study selected through a pilot study ($n = 379$) those items which could be used across the full span of Kindergarten through seventh grade. In order to facilitate group data collection, the HOME technique of observation and interview was transformed into questionnaire format. In a pretest, subjects were mothers of target children in Seoul, their age range was from twenties to fifties. Six subscales were refined through item and factor analysis: Items without discriminating power ($\kappa < .20$) were eliminated and which reduced total scale's reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha > .79$) were also eliminated. The 31 items were, also, factor analyzed by Principal Component Method, the criterion for factor selection(scree test) resulted in seven factor solution with eigenvalues above 1.0. All items eliminated by item analysis and scale's reliability, also, belong to items removed by factor analysis.

And then, it was preceded by a varimax rotation again, which resulted in six factors (1) Accessibility of materials (the number of stimulating toys and objects available), (2) Encouragement social maturity, (3) Variety of out-of-home experiences, (4) Housing environment, (5) Emotional support from parents, and (6) Language stimulation. Table 3 presents a summary of the items. Internal consistency of each subscale ranged as follows; .45 (housing environment), .56 (language stimulation), .57 (emotional support from parent), .58 (encouragement social maturity), .63 (variety of out-of-home experiences) and .73 (accessibility of materials).

Peer Environment Based on research reviews of the social support research (Dubow & Ullman, 1989) and development of the friendship concept (Furman & Bierman, 1983), peer environment was defined for the purposes of the present study to mean support from peers which stimulates children's cognitive, social, physical development. As with development of the self-perceived competence scale, the cognitive and attentional limitations of younger children necessitated two different formats for the peer support measure (pictorial format for children under 8, questionnaire format for children 8 and over). The scale was devised in order for item content and structure in the two forms to be nearly identical. In a pretest with 400 subjects who were from kindergartner through 7th grader in Seoul, item and factor analysis led to three subscales: Items without discriminating power ($\Delta < .20$) were eliminated and which reduced total scale's reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha > .92$) were also eliminated. The 24 items were, also, factor analyzed by Principal Component Method, the criterion for factor selection (scree test) resulted in four factor solution with eigenvalues above 1.0. All items eliminated by item analysis and scale's

reliability, also, belong to items removed by factor analysis. And then, it was preceded by a varimax rotation, which resulted in three factors; (1) Emotional support (comfort, affection, advice, compliment and acknowledgment), (2) cooperation (with labor and materials) and (3) common activity (play with or getting together). Each picture plate and item was scored on the four-point scale, and subscale reliabilities ranged as follows; .74 (cooperation), .77 (common activity) and .84 (emotional support).

Procedure The written version of the perceived competence scale and peer environment scales were administered to three- through seventh- students in their classes. Teachers read the questions aloud, and students were required to mark their response on a prepared response sheet. The pictorial perceived competence scale and the pictorial peer environment scale were administered to children in kindergarten and first grade, again in their classes, but individually by graduate student interviewers. Interviewers read each picture plate description aloud and the child responded by indicating who he/she was most like. Home Environment Scales were taken home to their mothers by children who participated in this research.

IV. Results

1. Developmental Trends of Children's Self-Perceived Competence

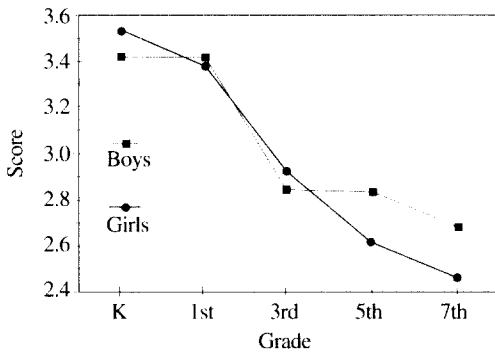
The pretest of perceived competence scale bore on the psychometric properties of the scale. The result of second factor analysis for this study sample revealed that the factor pattern has increasing differentiation with increasing grade, indicating less stable factor structure among young children. But, the result confirmed the decision to create 3

subscales for kindergarten through 7th grade even though the correspondent 3 factors have exceptions which are different with no clear patterns.

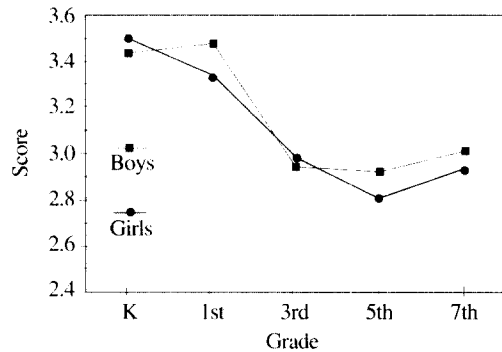
In order to investigate developmental trends of children's self-perceived competence, an Analysis of Variance by grade and sex was performed on each of the Perceived Competence subscales(cognitive, social and physical). In the cognitive domain, main effects were significant for Grade [$F(4, 737)=45.44, p<.001$] and Sex [$F(1, 740)=11.03, p<.001$], and there was a significant Sex by Grade interaction [$F(4, 737)=4.81, p<.001$]. Figure 1 presents the group

means, and it is evident that while children generally perceived their cognitive competence to be lower with increasing age, and while overall girls perceived their cognitive competence to be lower than boys did, the gender difference is greater with increasing age. This can be interpreted as socialization by gender.

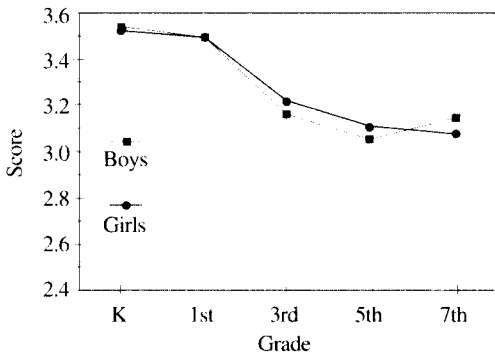
In the social domain, only the main effect for Grade was significant [$F(4, 736)=55.74, p<.001$]; neither Sex [$F(1, 739)=.72, p=.39$] nor the interaction effects [$F(4, 736)=.77, p=.55$] was significant. As can be seen in Figure 2(social-peer competence),



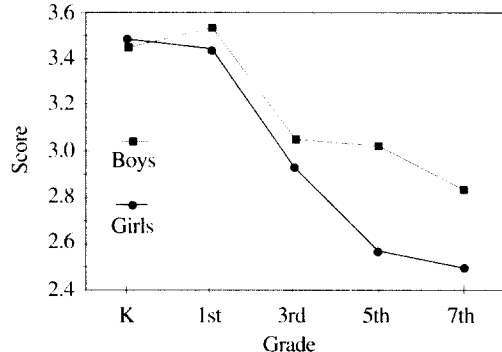
<Figure 1> Mean score for boys and girls in self-perceived cognitive competence.



<Figure 2> Mean score for boys and girls in self-perceived physical competence.



<Figure 3> Mean score for boys and girls in self-perceived social-peer competence.



<Figure 4> Mean score for boys and girls in self-perceived social-collective competence.

3(social-collective competence), self-perceived competence in the social domain decreased in the higher grades.

In the physical domain, both main effects and their interaction were significant [Grade, $F(4, 736)=25.77, p<.001$; Sex, $F(1, 739)=38.39, p<.001$; Grade by Sex, $F(4, 736)=5.20, p<.001$]. As figure 4 indicates, children perceived their physical competence to be lower in the higher grades, boys perceived their physical competence to be higher than did than girls; and the gender difference increases in the higher grades.

2. Determinants of Self-Perceived Competence: zero-order correlations

The self-report measures of peer environment, the maternal report of home environment, and demographic information regarding parental education, occupation, and income provide an opportunity for examining the correlates of self-perceived competence. Table 1 presents the main zero-order correlations, separately for the five age groups.

Several patterns are visually evident. Most striking is the high and consistent level of correlation between all the peer environment scales and all the self-perceived competence scales (with physical competence at the older ages being the exception). Second, there is a tendency for these correlations to decrease with age. Third, of the home environment measures, accessibility of materials is the most successful predictor, and cognitive competence the best predicted self-rating; however, these correlations are weaker and more scattered than is the case with the peer environment. Finally, there may be a slight tendency for the home measures to increase in power with increasing age.

3. Structural Equation Modeling of the Determinants

In order to obtain a more satisfactory assessment of the dynamic relationships among the possible precursors to self-perceived competence, we explored a variety of structural equation models, using the full data set and, separately, using the younger ages combined(Kindergarten and grade 1) and the older ages combined(grade 3, 5, and7). All the measures in Table 2 were potentially included in the model, as well as child's grade and sex. The starting model drew from the theoretical considerations outlined in the introduction to this paper, as well as the major trends found in Table2. Modeling used the LISREL 8 computer program, and modifications to the model followed the indicators provided as well as the goodness-of-fit measures. The best model using the full data set was seen more strongly when only older children were considered; no modeling was possible when considering only the younger children's data.

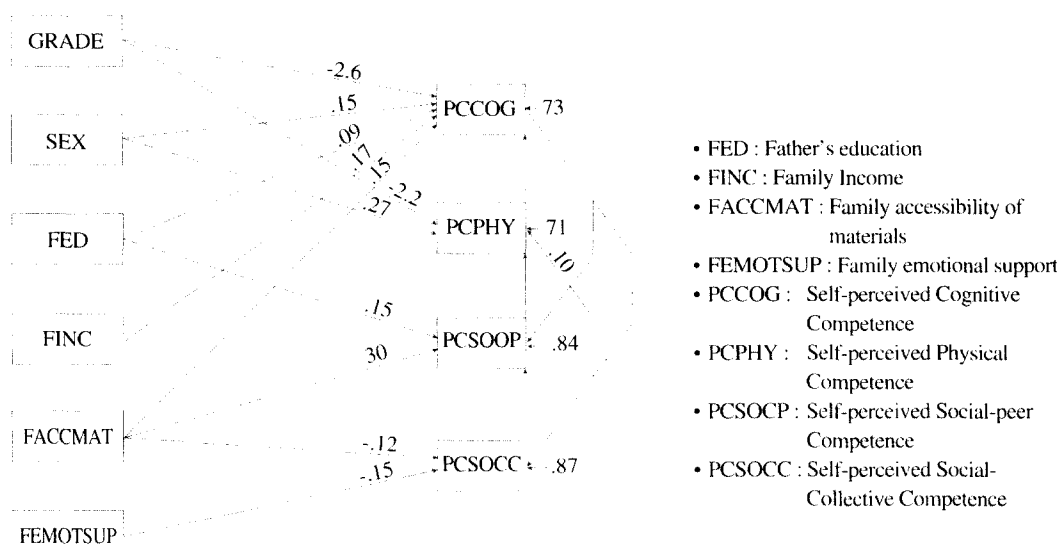
Figure 5 presents the best overall model for predicting the four domains of self-perceived competence among the older children (Poorness-of-Fit $\chi^2 = 12.25, df=14, p=.59$; Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index=1.00). Aside from the intercorrelation of the four scales, significant determinants of self-perceived competence in the cognitive domain are grade, followed by sex, father's education, and family income. In the physical domain, only grade and sex carry any power. Self-perceived competence in both social domains are influenced by the home measure of access to material goods; however there are two differences. In the domain of social competence with peers, father's education bears a positive influence, while in the domain of intergenerational and collective social competence, parental discipline and guidance are important. The

<Table 1> Correlals of Self-Perceived Compeance

Grade	K	K	1	1	3	3	3	5	5	5	7	7	7		
approx. n	125	125	115	115	170	170	170	140	140	140	203	203	203		
Domain	cog	phy	cog	soc	phy	cog	soc	phy	cog	soc	phy	cog	soc	phy	
Background :															
Father's Education	-15	-17	+07	+00	+29	.17	+14	+20	+12	-06	+31	+22	-04		
Family Income	-05	-16	+12	+09	+12	+28	+20	+09	+19	+12	-02	+31	+15	+04	
Home Scales:															
accessability of materials	+19	+10	+21	-09	-00	+07	+26	+16	+08	+20	+30	+04	+13	-08	
encourage social maturity	+07	+10	+07	-23	-16	-13	+05	-00	+13	-06	+09	+0.5	+09	-01	
variety of non-home experience	-03	-02	+06	-01	+04	+03	+11	+07	+15	+08	+06	+02	+19	-08	
housing quality	-07	-08	-10	+04	+0.5	+12	+02	+12	+14	+18	+02	-02	+16	+07	
parental emotional support	-13	-11	-09	-01	-11	-08	-00	+07	+05	-15	+03	+01	-09	-03	
Language stimulation	+02	+01	+04	-06	+08	+01	+15	+10	-03	+06	+07	-06	+20	+02	+01
Peer Scales :															
emotional support	+66	+74	+73	+52	+66	+58	+39	+56	+35	+28	+62	+27	+31	+47	+01
common activities	+64	+73	+75	+30	+50	+36	+18	+45	+36	+07	+47	+27	+19	+40	+21
sharing	+52	+67	+58	+38	+48	+36	+19	+48	+37	+13	+41	+15	+21	+33	+03

Notes : Decimals omitted. Correlations significant at .05 or better are printed in bold.

Cog = Cognitive; Phy = Physical; Peer = Social-Peer; Coll = Sociel-Collective



<Figure 5> Structural model for family and home environment influences on self-perceived competences.

efficacy of this model varies for the four scales: R^2 for the cognitive measures is .23, for physical, .30, for social-peer .18, and for social-collective .01.

V. Discussion

This study replicates one important developmental aspect of children's self-perceived competence as reported for North American samples, but it also finds several phenomena not necessarily consistent with previous US reports. The cultural differences highlight a social construction approach to children's development, which may be important even in the cross-cultural similarity.

First, This study devised new unitary scale in item content and factor structure which covered kindergarten through 7th grade for the genuine developmental trends of self-perceived competence. This new scale developed in the present study drop off some of Harter's items, at the same time has new items which Harter's scale doesn't include. For the

cognitive domain, "good at math" and "know a lot about everything(for 3rd across 7th, good at computer for kindergarten and 1st)" were new items. Korean children perceived higher level of cognitive competence during early childhood. For instance, items such as "can answer teacher's questions easily" and "remember what was learned for kindergarten and 1st grade belong to Harter's items only for 3rd through 7th. Interestingly, item such as "good at computer" came out even for the kindergarten in the present study. This seems to reflect Korean cultural characteristics. Parents in traditional Korean society had a belief that children should be educated. Korean have emphasized the value of education. Traditionally, Korean parent's educational enthusiasm is so strong that they tend to invest much part of their income in children's education educate them from the early childhood. Therefore, Harter's items of perceived cognitive competence for young children seem not to be appropriate for Korean young children. Items of

perceived cognitive competence for Korean children seem to require higher level of competence than Harter's, especially for young children. For the social domain, "can initiate a conversation with unknown kids", "greet elderly neighbors" and "easily help younger kids" were new items. All these items reflect collectivistic Korean society where hierarchical relationship is as important as peer relationship, and it is encouraged to get unknown people involved in a group. But, Harter's items in social domain are only for peer relationship, which is not appropriate to measure children's social competence in group-oriented society like KOREA. Meanwhile, there was no new item for physical domain. The results of this study showed that children's self-perceived competence was significantly lower with increasing grade, dropping radically in 3rd grade in all three domains -cognitive, social and physical. This result is consistent with previous findings(Eccles et al., 1984; Eshel & Klein, 1981; Frey & Ruble, 1987; Nicholls, 1978, 1979; Stipek, 1984)that self-ratings of perceived competence are very high in preschool and kindergarten, but decline markedly around 3rd grade. Two explanations can be offered. First, as others have discussed (Harter, 1982), the decline may result from change in cognitive development with increasing age. Young children tend to exaggerate their competencies because of their egocentrism; they may also ignore negative feedback while integrating positive comments into their self-concept (Stipek, 1984). They also evaluate their own and others' competencies based on social behavior (e.g. friendliness) and external characteristics such as effort, rather than on real ability (Blumerfeld, Pintrich, Meece & Wessels, 1982). With increasing age and cognitive maturation, children can use internal standards (e.g., degree of skill improvement over time,

amount of effort exerted). The present data support this interpretation as a true developmental phenomena, as it appears to happen in a similar way in the two diverse settings of Korea and North America.

A second possibility focuses on cross-cultural similarities in changes in children's environments. With increasing grade, school puts greater emphasis on competition among children, rather than simply each child making an effort. This is particularly true for academic achievement, and teachers' negative feedback to children becomes more direct and concrete with increasing age. Perhaps by other means, competition with other children and with ideal standards also increases in the social and physical domains. The Korean-US similarity in decline in children's self-perceived competence may therefore result from shared changes in the social environment, and not reflect any true developmental processes.

A social, or cultural, perspective is imperative to understand the differences between the present finding of a interaction of grade and sex in the decline of self-perceived cognitive and social competence, compared to US reports of no such interaction (Frey & Ruble, 1983; Horn & Hasbrook, 1987; Margaret, Lynn & Roger, 1997). It appears that different cultural expectations regarding cognitive achievement and physical prowess lie behind this contrast, with the North American context providing more equalitarian norms and expectations.

It is also interesting to note the paucity of family influences on self-perceived competence in the present Korean sample, even at the younger ages. Although we are aware of no strictly comparable reports from other cultural settings, this pattern is in contrast to the general expectation in the literature that family influences are strong in early childhood,

while peer factors are less so. In the present study, this is clearly not the case, and it might result from a greater emphasis on the social group and social interdependence. And another explanation might be that home environment measurement includes more items which reflects direct and interactional relationship than peer environment measurement. Future studies with comparable measures are needed to evaluate this possible contrast.

Nevertheless, the present study is in general agreement with North American work emphasizing the importance of peer support for the development of self-concept and competence (Asher & Parker, 1989; Hartup, 1983; Ladd & Asher, 1985). In both settings, the emergence of the self-concept takes place over time, reflecting both the socially constructed environment and its incorporation into the developmental process.

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