

## ABSTRACT

### An Analysis of the Growing Process of Middle School Students

: Focusing on schools, families, and communities(III)

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This study is 3rd year study among total 4 years of qualitative longitudinal study tracing and embodying the story of life of middle school students. Core contents are overall life, learning experience, and identity in terms of self recognition of middle school students who became 2nd grade. Also, it studied the characteristics of middle school students in Korea through international data. The questions of the study are 1) what are the characteristics of middle school 2nd grade life, 2) what are the characteristics of middle school 2nd grade learning experiences, 3) what are the characteristics of the identity of middle school student in terms of self recognition and what influence it has on life as a learner, 4) what are the causes of the characteristics shown in the life of middle school 2nd grade student and 5) what are the characteristics shown by middle school students in Korea in

terms of international statistics.

Considering family economic situation and regional conditions, study case groups are selected as 1) 'students at schools in urban low income family concentrated region (AA middle school, tentative name)', 2) 'students at schools in urban middle income family concentrated region (BB middle school, tentative name)', 3) 'students at schools in urban high income family concentrated region (CC middle school, tentative name)' and 4) 'students at schools in rural region (DD middle school, tentative)'. For each case study group, things shown many students or in terms of tendency were observed and compared. Study method for entire 4 years is qualitative longitudinal study, and main study method of this 3rd year report is qualitative case study. For each school, at least 6 male and female students were selected, interview was carried out 2 times in summer and winter with total of 51 students, and as the reference data, 1 time interview with one parent each and 1 time interview with home room teacher were carried out.

The limitations of the study are 1) since consent of students and parents were required due to study ethics, students who participated in the study had to be relatively earnest and in the situation growing with attention of the parents, 2) this study rather tried to find out about 'growth' shown in the path of life of the students through comprehensive concept network than proposing precise analysis, when this study searched 'growth process' of the middle school student, 3) this study mainly depended on interview for data collection and 4) considering the independence and differentiation of the yearly published report, yearly report is centered on cross-sectional analysis and analysis with longitudinal flow is concentrated in the last year, 4th year report.

When you look at the common points and differences of each of 4 groups, first, commonly in the family life, they recognize home as comfortable space, but the trend of absolute gradual decrease of time sharing with family continues starting from middle school. Cases of conflict with parents continuously show up, but the

way of solving the conflict is different in each family. When you look at the differences, with AA middle school students, parents are interested in grades, but show abstract aspect, and since there is no specific intervention, pressure is less, and it is normal to participate in housework at home. With BB middle school students, while close tie with mother continues, they relatively respect role of father in society, role of the head of the family and knowledge, and compared to other cases, father's intervention in child education is relatively high. With CC middle school, intervention of mother in child's learning shows very specific and detailed in various areas including test preparation, voluntary group activity, etc., and control on smartphone usage by parents continues. With DD middle school students, while securing independence from parents, they are required for "capability to live without being reviled by others", and daughters, unlike sons, are also required for housework.

When you look at the common points in school life, school is the place with bigger meaning to meet friends while expanding the range of social relationship and living daily life. They are full of dissatisfaction of class, which takes the most of the time, or even furthermore, it leads to discourage and indifference on class. It was the common reason that, as they had free semester program in 1st grade, as they become 2nd grade students, it returned to 'progress' centered class which has the characteristics of preparing for mid term test and final test. When you look at the differences, AA middle school students, in overall, relatively has no burden for high school entrance exam, so they do not give special meaning to grades, and students, in overall, approve and acknowledge normative position of school. BB middle school students are deeply immersed into test and grades, so each student has one's own ways and strategies to prepare for test, and to prepare for "difficult test" rather than "easy class", becoming more dependent on academy, and excessive complaints by parents and passive life education by teachers make vicious circle. Also, with CC middle school's case, difficult test,

complaint and strict school rules are shared with BB middle school, and while fierce atmosphere for higher grade is deepening, there are also cases of choosing strategic overseas study. DD middle schools are small size schools, so friends and teachers are almost the same as the grade changes, so it is somewhat depressed, but when they become 2nd grade and number marked grade and ranking fully become ‘secret known to everybody’ and becomes source of stress. Students acknowledge the authority of teachers in some level.

In regional and other lives, commonly, moving and activity boundary with friends become wider and smart phone influence gets bigger than before. When you look at the differences, AA middle school students are not heavily tied to learning, parents do not normally intervene or control the learning, so it shows relatively higher autonomy in spare time life and friend relationship, etc., and also with regard to private education, it shows various aspects such as art, sports, technology improvement or childcare, etc. BB middle school students have high dependency on academy for school grade, and the smartphone usage trend shows variously from coordinating with parents to securing many hours very freely. Also at CC middle school, unlike 1st grade, which was centered on prerequisite learning, ‘school grade specialized academy’ class learning increases, and by the control of mothers, compared to other schools, students’ close tie with smartphone shows to be less. DD middle school male students have a lot of smartphone and computer usage, and due to this, conflict with parents is big, but female students’ cases do not stand out as such. Trend of class after regular hours at school or self learning becomes bigger due to the reason such as disappointment in the only academy in the village, etc.

Common points in ‘self recognition (identity)’ are 1) sharing identity as a student, 2) ‘school grade identity’ is fully formed from middle school 2nd grade, 3) importance of friend relationship as ‘meaningful other’ increases which influences identify forming in middle school student age, 4) interest on looks

increases in overall and it seems that there is certain relation between subjective assessment on looks and self-esteem, and 5) since economic identity is formed based on the average of the school one attends and the regional society, one recognizes economic level as ‘medium level’ in overall. When you look at the differences, recognition on oneself by AA middle school students shows relatively bigger deviation, but in overall, one recognizes that one is living ordinary life similar to the same age group with positive emotion, and BB middle school students have strong identity as ‘studying person’ by themselves and think that they shall receive good grade. CC middle school students also have core identity of ‘studying person’ and think that they shall study well, and they make self recognition while comparing the present of parents and their future. DD middle school students have strong recognition that they are ‘elderly’ to lower level grade students and belongs to school activity group (musical instrument band) based on the basic recognition as ‘ordinary but earnest student in small country village’.

Discussion agendas derived from middle school 2nd grade life are 1) discussion on the trend of expanding businesslike distance in student-teacher relationship, 2) question on role and function of school that gave up education for well-rounded personal development, 3) phenomenon of early information aging and voluntary control amongst dynamics of cyber space, 4) brain development derived understanding as one explanation for extraordinary or provocative action of middle school students, 5) possibility of middle school 2nd graders with full of vitality and adventure, 6) learning stress and narrow human relationship of middle school 2nd graders which matches the result shown through international comparison. In the dimension of self recognition, identity related discussion agendas are 1) influences of parents and leisure time are big in self recognition, 2) identity as student which overwhelms other identities and meaning of school grade identity forming which is the core of identity as student, 3) conflict suffered by “model students made by” control of parents from when they were young as

they become middle school students, and 4) environmental characteristics with influence on the identity of country side small size school students.

Lastly, political implications derived from the lives of middle school 2nd grade students are as in the following table.

■ Table ■ Overall political implications

Classification	[A] Middle school 2nd grade life related	[B] Middle school student's identity development consideration	[C] Consideration of special characteristics of middle school students in Korea revealed by international comparison	[D] Consideration of characteristics of each group
[A] Education courses, class, and student guidance in overall school life of the student	<p>[A-A-1] Drastic reduction of national education curriculum, daring deletion of some subjects, rearrangement of remaining curriculum</p> <p>[A-A-2] Middle school sports club operation status monitoring and operation method enhancement</p> <p>[A-A-3] Focus on original middle school curriculum, expand free semester system to middle school 2<sup>nd</sup> grade so that students can joyfully immerse into learning and teachers can teach with specialized autonomy</p> <p>[A-A-4] If Japanese style written tests are carried out, match the level of school class and difficulty of the test questions</p> <p>[A-A-5] Provide</p>	<p>[B-A-1] Expand opportunity for students to be able to participate in school, home and society</p> <p>[B-A-2] Review multi angle cases on digital activities and prepare opportunity for active discussion among students</p>	<p>[C-A-1] Overall assessment of curriculum, minimization of connection to higher school entrance exam, and forming of middle school curriculum faithful to original quality of learning</p>	<p>[D-A-1] Regionally specialized program development</p> <p>[D-A-2] Prepare program that can offset empty space of caring</p> <p>[D-A-3] Prepare various human relationships and learning experience opportunities for small size school students</p> <p>[D-A-4] Develop various teaching methods at small size school and prepare plan to utilize advantages of small size school.</p> <p>[D-A-5] Take action for education activity to end inside school by the student at high income family concentrated region school</p>

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	<p>challenging and feeling of achievement possible various problem solving opportunities considering brain development level of middle school students and apply adequate life guidance method</p> <p>[A-A-6] Prepare high school entrance exam not requiring middle school grade and utilize special purpose schools as regional public schools.</p> <p>Reduce general high school curriculum to the level not requiring prerequisite learning.</p> <p>[A-A-7] Teachers find out sign of problem early in the student relationship and take in-advance action together with parents</p> <p>[A-A-8] Prepare multi angle relationship forming opportunities by forming various types of friend relationships inside and outside classroom in school life</p>			
[B] School faculty, which is	[A-B-1] Teachers form close trust relationship with students	[B-B-1] Teachers play the role as meaningful other		

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core of the learning relationship of the student	<p>[A-B-2] Increase class study of teachers and improve teaching ability</p> <p>[A-B-3] Set balanced teacher role considering international standard and situation in Korea and in-depth thinking of 'friendly teacher figure'</p> <p>[A-B-4] Emphasize expertise of teachers as 'relationship making specialist' in teacher fostering and capacity building education and expand 'case study' approaches</p>			
[C] School and regional education system as core time space of learning experience	<p>[A-C-1] Expand various learning experiences inside and outside school and prepare system to acknowledge it. Teachers play the role as 'village teacher' such as class outside school, etc.</p> <p>[A-C-2] Prepare system for school to respond to complaints of the parents. Prepare joint system for specialized response for the issues of school (tentative name, 'Solution Committee')</p>	<p>[B-C-1] Vitalize group activities and various opportunities that students can meet various 'meaningful others' and lead the activities</p> <p>[B-C-2] Compose atmosphere to be able to pursue subjective cultural sensitivity and individual identity</p>	<p>[C-C-1] Prepare multi angle opportunities inside and outside school for middle school students to participate as citizens</p>	<p>[D-C-1] If private education is vitalized and there is excessive climate for competition, have in-depth thinking on role playing method for school as place to be able to find balance of life</p> <p>[D-C-2] Policy study on academy types and cases is required</p>

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	[A-C-3] Regulate actions of academy that are not educational			
[D] Family and entire social culture as growth environment of the student	[A-D-1] Emphasize trust relationship between parents-children based on conversation and happy memories in parents education [A-D-2] Lead parents to have first priority in finding educational method for intervention in children's school education [A-D-3] Support parents to secure time for autonomic control of middle school students [A-D-4] Support children to be able to have balanced growth through various experiences without excessive immersion into study from when they are young [A-D-4] Carry out parents education with practicality for overall development of middle school students such as brain development	[B-D-1] Socially share importance of well-rounded growth process suitable for development stage [B-D-2] Compose social maturity and climate supporting the youth's identity forming [B-D-3] Parents operate parents community (including 'Fathers Meeting (tentative name)') as community to act and grow as regional society citizen		[D-D-1] Educational function included in all public organizations as its original business