

A Study in the Effects of the Maum Meditation Program on Self-Esteem of Students
in Middle and High School
Focusing on the Maum Meditation Youth Camp

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effects of the Maum² Meditation (mind meditation) program on improving the self-esteem of students, as the school has emphasized the role of self-esteem in clarifying students' identities.

Quantitative and qualitative research methods are concurrently used in this study. Among 462 students from middle and high schools who participated in the Maum Meditation program for 12 days from January 5th to 16th in 2010, 10 students were selected for this study. Research methods included observation of students' routines and behaviors, individual interviews, and analysis of additional surveys.

As a result of the Maum Meditation program, 10 students showed positive changes in gratitude, interpersonal relations, peace of mind, establishing one's identity, discarding inferiority, and self-reflection. Despite a variety in degree, 8 out of 10 students showed a decrease in negative and aggressive dispositions, including

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² *Maum* in Korean has several translations including mind, heart, feeling, and inclination.

annoyance, use of abusive language and cursing. Therefore, all of the students showed positive changes as well as a decrease in negative and aggressive dispositions, which resulted in improvement in self-esteem.

Moreover, the result of quantitative research indicates students' average score of self-esteem increased from 73.7 prior to the youth camp to 80.6 after the youth camp, indicating statistically significant results. Thus, the results of observation, personal interviews and survey indicate that the Maum Meditation program implemented in the youth camp has a relatively significant effect on improving the self-esteem of participating students.

In applying meditation into schools, it is found that the lower students' grades are in elementary school and elsewhere, the faster they show changes in their character as they easily perform the meditation which cleanses their memory. It is reported that the number of case studies applying Maum Meditation in schools has increased. Maum Meditation leads students to find their true mind, and presents the possibility of restoring human nature, which is life's fundamental purpose. Therefore, Maum Meditation as an alternative to ethics education should be considered.

It is desirable that Maum Meditation should be introduced and practiced in schools as an alternative to ethics education because it contributes to the transformation of students' character and makes it possible to recover human nature. Lastly, it is suggested that the government and affiliated organizations support and introduce this program in order for the school to employ it as a regular program in its curriculum.

Keywords: Maum meditation; self-esteem; meditation

I. Introduction

1. Research Objectives

Today's education is designed only for living a better worldly life. But when humans come to know the origin and live as the original mind, then all of mankind will become one. We will know how to be thankful to our country, to the world; we will no longer have whimsical minds but trust each other, have confidence in each other all the time and have better lives. But in order to do this everyone must recover their original mind; then their minds will be one... and everyone will live for each other. In other words, an education that allows us to do the above is truly a well-rounded education for human completion (Woo Myung, 2006, p. 271).

The current state of our education system is knowledge-based and focuses on teaching the means to earn well, rather than provide a well-rounded, complete education.

The academic objective of Korea's middle and high school is university admission. Rather than an ethics education that emphasizes becoming an upright and sincere person, the more important task to accomplish is entrance to a prestigious university. Because parents prefer their children graduate from prestigious universities, students have no choice but to strive for acceptance to well-known schools. Transmission of knowledge geared towards university admission, rather than an ethics and morals-based education, has become the core of the school curriculum. Because of the pressure regarding admissions, the result is many students experience a sense of inferiority caused by academics and loss of self-esteem.

A 2009 survey of 4,073 elementary, middle and high school students on school violence determined that school violence is considerably high (Foundation for Prevention of Adolescent Violence, 2009). Therefore emotional programs to improve motivation-driven sense of accomplishment, the ability to change negative thoughts to

positive energy, and improvement in sense of self-esteem are needed.

Research of ethics education programs has shown meditation programs liberate the mind from existing mental pains and guide one back to one's origin, free from pain. Additionally, they allow one to experience change in mind, body, and action by redirecting one's consciousness, which had been focused on the outside world, to the internal world. These studies in meditation stand out amongst others in mainstream psychology because of their use of scientific methods to reveal change in consciousness and transcendence psychology (Cho Hyun-hak, 2006).

This study investigates the special characteristics of adolescent psychology, self-esteem, theoretical approaches to meditation, and the special features and principles of Maum Meditation. Among the elementary, middle and high school students attending the Maum Meditation Youth camp, middle and high school students (who fit the definition of adolescent) were chosen as subjects. Qualitative and quantitative research methods were used to see the effect of Maum Meditation on students' self-esteem and to determine the usability of Maum Meditation as a strategy to promote mental health and a happy adolescence.

2. Research Questions

In order to achieve the objectives of this study, the following research questions were established:

- What does self-esteem signify to middle and high school students?
- What are the principles and content of the Maum Meditation program?
- What effect does the Maum Meditation Program have on middle and high school students' self-esteem?

3. Research Content and Methods

A. Research Content

- 1) Understand the significance of self-esteem to students by examining preceding research and materials regarding adolescent psychology and characteristics, self-esteem and meditation, and the theoretical background.
- 2) Understand the content of the Maum Meditation Youth Camp by examining previous research and materials regarding the summary, characteristics and principles of Maum Meditation.
- 3) Determine the effects of Maum Meditation on students' self-esteem through the Maum Meditation Youth Camp by analyzing observations, interviews, surveys, and personal testimonies of subject students during the Maum Meditation Youth Camp.

B. Research Methods

- 1) Research Methods: Research through observation, interviews, and surveys
 - Analyze and understand the records of observations and interviews as well as additional materials and survey answers.
 - Use the inventory to measure self-worth developed by Coopersmith(1981) and translated by Jun Gyu-hyuk(1999). Separate the investigations to pre-camp and post-camp and analyze and understand the qualitative results.
- 2) Research Period: January 5, 2010- January 16, 2010 (11 nights 12 days).
Research was conducted during the Maum Meditation Youth Camp.

II. Theoretical Background

1. Characteristics and Conditions of Adolescent Psychology

A. Characteristics of Adolescent Psychology

This study aimed to theoretically approach middle and high school students' self-esteem. However the limited research in the characteristics of middle and high school students' psychology is insufficient; only material regarding adolescents is widely available.

There is no unified definition of adolescent ages in current general, civil and laws protecting youth, a variety of definitions are used. In this study, the term adolescent is applied to the group of youth in Korea's middle and high school, between 12, 13 years old to adolescents before they enter university, the age which shows clear difference in growth characteristics from children (Kim Hye-lan, 2008).

Erikson(1959) showed that the human development process throughout one's lifetime is guided by the principle of maturity. If the psychological crises that occur during the growth period are satisfactorily resolved, a positive self characteristic is strengthened and gradually absorbed into the growing and developing self, creating a healthier development. On the other hand, if conflicts continue or crises are not satisfactorily resolved, self development is damaged and negative self characteristics are strengthened (Lee Young-hee, 2009).

Emotional characteristics in the adolescent period are unstable due to physical growth and excessive schoolwork demanded by society. The emotional characteristics that appear in the adolescent period have the following effects on adolescent psychology and actions. First, emotions are volatile and sensitive. Second, self-consciousness is high. Third, one is zealous, very curious, and has strong tendencies to follow or copy.

One tends to become overexcited at events, lose sense of reality, and fall deeply into one task (Kim Hye-lan, 2008).

Accordingly, in order to overcome the physical and psychological confusion that occurs in the adolescent period and mature into a healthy adult, adolescent sense of self identity, self-esteem, positive thinking, psychological maturity, positive personal relationships, ability to adapt socially, and social maturity are required.

B. The Reality of Korea's Adolescents

A 2009 survey on the reality of school violence surveyed 4,073 elementary, middle and high school students and reported the following results: 22% had experienced school violence; 14% had suffered school violence a countless number of times; 64% among students who had experienced school violence felt pain; 16% felt pain great enough to want to die. These statistics show high levels of school violence. As school violence becomes common, students become insensitive to violence. Injury rates have increased and instances of group violence have become more common. Violence in elementary schools and amongst female students, which had traditionally been low, is also increasing at a fast rate (Foundation for Adolescent Violence Prevention, 2009).

From this we learn that today's adolescents are quite exposed to violence and that aggression is increasingly becoming a severe problem. Aggression in adolescents is being realized in society as adolescent violence. Because there are instances of adolescents who suffer violence to the point where they eventually commit suicide, proactive and realistic preventative measures are urgently required from outside the school place as well (Lee Eun-sook, 2009).

In order to address these problems, there are several articles and studies which refer to self-esteem as a key point in adolescent psychology characteristics and personal lifestyle satisfaction. Approaches and measures to increase self-esteem are necessary

for adolescent psychological and emotional stability, and for a meaningful life.

2. Self-esteem

Due to globalization and the age of information, our society is in a whirlpool of sudden change, causing many people to live day to day with mental stress. More than ever people are living an abundant life, but modern man's mind cannot keep up with the material wealth (Jung, Choon-in, 2008).

These days, schools are confronted with academic stagnation, antisocial tendencies, and gaming addiction. The biggest issue and cause of problems is a deficiency in self-esteem, man's most basic requirement (Jung Choon-in, 2008). Self-esteem, which is one of the main requirements of a happy life, the foundation of education, and main components of ethics education, helps us to lead an emotional, social, intellectual, and moral life.

According to Germain Duclos, self-esteem is the awareness of one's worth in various areas. Self-esteem has a strong influence on one's attitude and ability to confront reality or the world. He defined self-esteem as the energy from the emotion or memory of one's natural disposition or capability, which allows one to overcome hardship and face the future with hope (Duclos, Germain, 2007).

People with high levels of self-esteem can live full lives acknowledging their value through forms of positive thinking such as self-control, decision-making, autonomy, creativity, and acknowledgment of value. On the other hand, people with low levels of self-esteem are prone to negative thinking and passive behavior such as self-mistreatment, sense of inferiority, lack of value, depression, lack of motivation, self dissatisfaction, self denial, which can cause an inability to adapt to school, violence, or deviant behavior.

Accordingly, exploring measures to improve self-esteem in students is more

important now than ever before. Among the development and application of diverse ethics education programs to increase self-esteem, this study explores Maum Meditation, classified as a meditation program, to confront the issue.

3. Meditation

People complain that they have no blessings... A blessing means to find the place which speaks of oneness. In other words, it means to see the place that speaks of Truth, which is oneness. People speak and act to the extent of what they have in their minds. Therefore only when they have blessings in their minds are they blessed. Those who do not have blessings in their minds envy other people's fortune... Blessings will reside only in those who have a big mind, who have a clean mind. Moreover, blessings come from one's actions, and those actions come from their minds. Therefore, when people truly cleanse their minds and are reborn as Truth, they will have their worldly blessings as well (Woo Myung, 2006, p.331).

In order to be blessed, one must first have a wide, large, clean, container of truth in which to receive blessings. In order to receive this container, one must have self-examination of the mind. Meditation, which cleanses the mind, is necessary and important in this endeavor.

Instead of only focusing on meeting the material conditions for happiness, the importance of the mental conditions for happiness is gradually being recognized. The mental conditions for happiness are satisfaction and a calm state of mind. Regardless of the material conditions, one can feel satisfied by fulfilling even just some of the mental conditions of happiness. The fact that the happiness indices of developing Southeast Asian countries are higher than developed nations supports this fact. Meditation is widely considered the way to have interest in the key mental points of happiness and the way to create the necessary mental conditions (Kim Moon-sook,

2007).

Meditation liberates the mind from existing pain and returns it to the original existence, free of pain. Currently meditation is the focus of scientific research revealing consciousness change and transcendence psychology. Although it stands out as a central component of modern psychology, it is difficult to state one single definition of meditation (Cho Hyun-hak, 2006).

The differences and similarities between Maum Meditation and other meditations, religions, and psychological therapies are various. First, Maum Meditation, unlike other focused meditations or discernment meditations, does not designate a target to focus on, or ask one to recall, observe, and let concepts subside. Maum Meditation simply and easily defines the mind and with a fairly active method, allows the meditation student to recall and cleanse his mind.

Second, in this meditation one recalls the memories from one's past, discerns the emotions buried in the memories, and allows one to cleanse the emotions. In this respect, by allowing one to discern one's actions by oneself, Maum Meditation is similar to psychological analysis therapy. Lee Dong Shik (1990) proposed a combined therapy of western psychological analysis with eastern *do*³ thought. Hence, Maum Meditation has many similarities to *do* psychological therapy as well (Lee Soo Lan, 2006).

In reality, it is difficult to find previous research or examples of meditation about the "throwing away memories, or throwing away thoughts meditation" method used in Maum Meditation. There is a memory erasure meditation method introduced abroad, but the content is very different. Because Maum Meditation defines the mind as the

³ *Do* has many translations including the way, morality, a moral doctrine [principle], teachings, doctrines, truth, reason, justice

“remembered thoughts” and is a “meditation to throw away memories (thoughts),” it is difficult to classify it into the existing categories of meditation.

III. Maum Meditation

1. Definition of the Mind

The following are dictionary definitions of *maum* (mind): the emotions, intentions, or thoughts felt or functions or attitude created by one person about another person or thing; the space or place where a person’s thoughts, emotions, memories occur or are held; refers to the section of intelligence and consciousness where thoughts, recognition, memories, emotions, will and imagination complexly occur. The dictionary definition of ‘true *maum* (mind)’ is a sincere mind without falseness, or the mind that originally did not change and exists as is (Internet dictionary, 2010).

In Maum Meditation, the mind is differentiated into the true mind and the false mind. The true mind is Truth, the original state before the existing universe, and our true nature; the false mind is our lived life and our remembered thoughts. These remembered thoughts are called the human mind, the false mind, or the fake mind. The human mind, because it is differentiated from the true mind, can be called a mind that changes. Accordingly, the human mind is a mind that changes, whereas the true mind is eternally never-changing and can be called the original mind (Woo Myung, 2003). The mind that people generally refer to as ‘the mind,’ “the remembered thoughts of one’s life” is called the false mind in Maum Meditation.

The concept of throwing away and emptying the false mind does not signify a disappearance like memory loss; rather, it signifies the disappearance of the self’s emotions which were involved in one’s situations and memories. It signifies the objective mental state of being able to view one’s life as if it is another’s (Jung Dong-myung and Lee Sang-yool, 2001).

2. Outline of Maum Meditation

Although Maum Meditation could be considered a general meditation, a practice in Zen Buddhism, *chi*⁴ therapy, etc., in this study Maum Meditation refers to the method of meditation originated in Maum Meditation. The term ‘Maum Meditation’ signifies both the organization of Maum Meditation and the meditation method that the organization of Maum Meditation operates. The Maum Meditation program is ordinarily referred to as “Maum Meditation” within the organization of Maum Meditation.

Maum Meditation was founded in January of 1996 by Woo Myung. The method delineates the true mind and the false mind, and labels the false mind as “the remembered thoughts of one’s life.” One recalls and erases the false mind according to the method. By doing so one returns to the original mind, or the true mind, and recovers one’s original nature. In September of 2002, Woo Myung, the founder of Maum Meditation, was awarded the Mahatma Gandhi Peace Award, considered the Nobel Prize of the Education Community, by the UN-NGO International Association of Educators for World Peace for his contributions to internal retrospection and recovery of original nature, as well as reconciliation and peace. He has also been appointed a World Peace Ambassador by the same organization.

3. Principles of Maum Meditation

The true existence is the pure emptiness of the universe beyond the universe. This existence existed before eternity and will exist after eternity. It is endless without beginning or end. It is the living existence, which exists as is and on its own... Unless our bodies and minds are reborn as the body and mind of the universe, we cannot become complete. What people know is only the experience

⁴ *Chi* or *qi* is translated as spirit or energy. It is the vital energy believed to circulate in the body.

they have gained from their lives. The way to become Truth, the infinite universe, is to throw away one's false body and mind. This is the method of Maum Meditation and the method to become a complete person (Woo Myung, 2006, p. 311)

The principles of Maum Meditation, the formula for subtraction of the mind to become Truth, the principle to return to the original mind, and the recovery of original nature are summarized as follows: (Woo Myung, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2008; Jung Tak, 2004)

- In the beginning there was the infinite, pure emptiness
- The stars, the sun, the moon, the earth, and all things in nature appeared
- Humans came into the world
- As humans lived, they were tainted with the individual human mind, the self's mind
- Erase the concepts (karma) and customs (habit) that occurred due to a life of individual consciousness
- Erase the individual consciousness that is aware of "I/me" and return to Truth, the place of the infinite, pure emptiness, or the place of the origin
- Be born again and live as the original human mind (recovery of original nature)

4. Previous Research and Examples of the Results of Maum Meditation

Previous research into the effects of Maum Meditation took a psychosomatic medicinal approach to the principles of Maum Meditation. Research by Jung Dong-myung, Lee Sang-yool (2001) and Kim Jae-han 2009 showed marked improvement in subjects. Research by Choi Kyung-sook (2003) targeted neurotic middle school students and verified the positive influence of Maum Meditation on their rage and anxiety.

Results from Jun Jin-kyung's research (2004) showed teachers who attended the

eight day Maum Meditation Job Training Program in August of 2003 showed reduction in stress, anxiety, anger, and depression.

Elementary school students from Kwak Jae-young's (2005) research of the effects of meditation "throwing away the mind" reported they felt more lighthearted, they threw away minds of hate, violence disappeared, and they had better relationships with their friends. Cho Hyun-hak (2006) showed that middle school males reduced aggression through Maum Meditation. Lee Sung-lan (2009) showed not only a reduction in aggression, but also suggested that the meditation can be applied to influence a positive outlook in life and a way to respect others.

Park Mi-lan's presented empirical research results in 2006 showing that the Maum Meditation program was effective in reducing anxiety in children.

Recent research results by Lee In-sook (2009), Lee Eun-sook (2009), Park Pil-sun (2009), Kim Mi-han (2009), and others have verified the effects of the Maum Meditation program. They have confirmed that through the Maum Meditation program or "throwing away the mind" programs, subject elementary and middle school students, college students, and adults have reduced aggression amongst peers and cultivated values. Additionally the programs had a positive effect on depression, anxiety, self-esteem.

Kim Mi-han (2009) studied 476 elementary, middle and high school students participating in the Maum Meditation Youth Camp from July 24 through August 18 in 2009. According to the survey questionnaires taken before and after the program, students reported a reduction in depression and anxiety and an increase in self-esteem.

Jung Ki-un (2009) analyzed Maum Meditation as an elective university course and saw that generally students gained a more positive attitude and belief about themselves and the world. Students confirmed they were moved by the course and the professor's

positive attitude.

Kim Ja-kyung (2010) researched the effects of the Maum Meditation program applied to a bibliotherapy program. The program was applied to thirty students in one fifth grade elementary school class using a variety of picture books. The research concluded that the program was effective in showing the need for Maum Meditation and the need for throwing away the mind.

Na Yoon-gil (2010) saw that Maum Meditation was effective in elevating the mental health of male high school students studying the liberal arts. The results reported meaningful elevation in seven primary factors of mental health and had a positive influence on obsessive compulsiveness, interpersonal sensitivity, depression, anxiety, hostility, panic and anxiety, delusional disorder, hyper-psychois etc. This study was also the first example of Maum Meditation research being used as the subject of a doctoral dissertation.

On January 7 of 2010, the Korean broadcasting station KBS 1 TV aired a program “The Secrets of Life and Death”⁵ which included a special segment on “live by emptying” as part of a search for a happy life. In order to scientifically verify the effects, the documentary team chose four volunteers to participate in the Maum Meditation program in Nonsan, Korea for one week. The results after the week were tested at Inje University Seoul Paik Hospital. The documentary broadcasted the results demonstrating the effectiveness of Maum Meditation in reducing stress.

5. Maum Meditation Youth Camp

A. Outline of the Maum Meditation Youth Camp

The Maum Meditation Youth camp is held every summer and winter break for students in third grade through high school. Every break, roughly 500 students new to

⁵ In Korean, the program was literally titled the “The Secrets of Birth, Aging, Illness, Death”

meditation and 500 returning students participate, making a total of approximately 1000 students. This research studied the 21st session of camp which took place from January 5th to 16th of 2010 and included 462 new students and 421 returning students, 883 students in total. (In July of 2010, 610 new students and 399 returning students, a total of 1009 students participated in the summer session.)

The new students meditate for 25 days from levels one through four to cleanse the accumulated minds and find their true selves. The first section of returning students, who have completed the introductory course, complete levels 5 and six in twelve days to be born again as the true self and live wisely in body and mind. The second and third sections of returning students, who have completed the previous course, finish levels seven and eight in twelve days to throw away all obstacles in the mind that arise from daily life and to live a life of wisdom (Maum Meditation homepage, 2010).

The camp takes place in Namwon Jirisan Youth Hostel, also known as Namwon Youth Center.

B. Meditation Process

- 1) The meditation helper (the person who guides meditation in Maum Meditation is called a 'helper') explains the theoretical aspect of the mind in Maum Meditation and the distinction of the true and false mind. The meditation then practices subtracting and throwing away the false mind. Every meditation session has a 20-30 minute lecture explaining the concepts followed by the practice of meditation of throwing way the false mind.
- 2) The helpers in Maum Meditation have all completed level eight of the meditation and are chosen and assigned after being deemed skilled and qualified to guide.
- 3) During the process of meditation, the helper does not use expressions such

as “do not act like this, do not do this, respect others, thank your parents and teachers” etc. After informing the students only of the necessary rules, the helper helps the students fully understand that everything seen, heard, learned and experienced since birth (the remembered thoughts) are pictures. Then the helper helps the students throw away the false mind, particularly the negative minds stored in the false mind, through meditation.

- 4) When indoors, the students usually sits on a cushion in a comfortable position for meditation. When in group meditation, there are usually seats that rest on the floor (chairs without legs) for students where they can sit with their eyes closed and follow the helper’s guidance.
- 5) The meditation differs slightly from level to level but the process of recalling remembered thoughts and the pictures (videos), feelings, emotions, etc, the false mind is thrown into a black hole or sea of fire created by one’s thoughts. Repetition of this method results in the students knowing for themselves that the false mind is being thrown away and eliminated. As much as the false mind is thrown away, that much of the true mind (which was within one originally) is revealed. As true mind begins to be revealed, one’s speech and actions naturally become more positive.

IV. Results of Research

1. Research Method

A. Research Subjects

Research was performed on 10 middle and high school students in the returning students section of participants from The Maum Meditation Youth Camp from January 5 to 16 (11 nights 12 days) at the Jirisan Youth Hostel in Namwon, Korea. In this session of camp there were 883 participating elementary, middle, and high school students (462 new and 421 returning).

In this session of camp, approximately 10-15 elementary school students and 10-12 middle and high school students were assigned per dormitory room. 9 middle school students and 1 high school student, a total of 10 students were randomly assigned to the room designated for research. As the room was assigned by the administration, and there was no request for a specific room, the students chosen for the research had no specific requested characteristics.

The research was performed on the students through observation and interview and the students were unaware they were the subjects of research throughout the camp. When the questionnaires were distributed, the students were informed I worked in the administration of the Busan Metropolitan City Education Office, that I was also attending graduate school at the Korea National University of Education, and that the content of the questionnaires were to be part of research investigating the change experienced during camp.

B. Material Collection Method

1) Observation and Interview

For 12 days, I reside in the same dormitory as the 10 students and record my

observations of their behavior and conversations as I interact with them during guided meditation, lunch, extracurricular activities, cleaning, to bedtime. As their meditation guide and as a researcher, I spend twenty-four hours a day with the students and hold counseling sessions, interviews, and conversations with them. During this time I make records and perform quantitative research. Observe the students' speech and behavior throughout the day record observations.

- Counseling sessions are held three times during the 12 days. As a rule, counseling is done individually and the time is unlimited. (Average time is about 30 minutes.) Usually topics such as family relations, current state of mind, minds the student wants to throw away, state of awareness of the false mind, state of throwing away are discussed in a free atmosphere. Record the content of the conversation.
- Perform interviews frequently. Interview students freely at any time and place such as during breaks, mealtimes, waiting for meals, before and after meditation, bathroom, in the hall, etc. Record the content.
- Organize materials other than from observation and interviews, such as the student's personal testimonies of camp and additional thoughts.
- Organize the change in students according to the collected materials. Confirm the key points of improvement in self-esteem. Present research findings.

2) Questionnaires

A. Research Plan

This research aims to verify the effects of Maum Meditation on the self-esteem of 10 middle and high school students attending the Maum Meditation Youth Camp. Like other similar research, it implements a one-group pretest-posttest design using questionnaire tools in quantitative research.

B. Inventory for Measuring Self-esteem

Coopersmith (1981) created the self-esteem inventory tool; the questionnaire tool translated by Jun Gyu-hyuk (1999) is used. There are a total of 25 questions and each question has 4 answers. Every answer is designated a points value (4 points, 3 points, 2 points, 1 point) and there are three negatively-phrased questions.

2. Research Results

A. Survey Outline

The research subjects were 10 students (9 middle school and 1 high school student). Amongst the subjects, 5 (50%) had a religion, and 5 were the first-born in their family. This was the second time coming to camp for 9 students (90%), and the fifth for 1 student. 8 students (80%) said they were relatively healthy. Of the students whose parents had meditated, 2 students' fathers had done Maum Meditation, and 6 students' mothers had previously done Maum Meditation. The distribution of students' school locations is as follows: 4 students in Seoul; 3 in Gyeonggi Province; 1 in Gangwon Province; 1 in Chungcheongnam Province; 1 in Gyeongsangnam Province.

B. Key Points of Self-esteem Improvement and Measurement Standards

Use observation and interview methods to investigate the key points of self-esteem improvement and prepare measurement standards.

- 1) From previous research, self-esteem is defined as one's self assessment, value, and attitude. It has been explained that one who has high self-esteem has a positive mind. Accordingly, in order to investigate the primary factors influencing self-esteem improvement, this research investigated evidence of positive mind formation as a result of camp in

the subjects. Positive mind formation was the primary factor of self-esteem improvement.

- 2) This research organized key points of self-esteem improvement using evidence of positive change in the subjects from the following sources: journals from observations and interviews; students' thoughts about camp after the end of camp; students' thoughts how one should live after camp; personal testimonies about the meditation; the content from three types of questionnaires.
- 3) Changes in the subject students after camp included examples of positive mind formation such as: self-confidence; sense of gratitude to parents and teachers; reflection on parents; increase in expressive ability; physical playfulness and laughing, joking, formation of friendships; improvement of friend groups; understanding other people; respect; throwing away sense of inferiority and pride; decrease in anxiety and depression; peace of mind. Additionally negative and aggressive dispositions such as anger, cursing, annoyance, and violent language decreased. Results showed positive mind formation. Accordingly, formation of a positive mind and reduction of negative mind were chosen to be the key points of self-esteem improvement.

C. Survey Results

The research applied to the Maum Meditation program was divided into two categories. First, results from qualitative research were drawn from observation and interviews. Second, results from quantitative research were drawn from questionnaires. These results were then organized jointly.

1) Observation and Interview Analysis Results

Although results varied in degree from student to student, amongst the 10 middle and high school subject students, positive mind formation was found in the areas of gratitude, improvement in personal relationships, peace of mind, establishment of identity, throwing away of sense of inferiority, and self-reflection. With some degree of variance, 8 out of the 10 students showed a decrease in negative and aggressive tendencies such as anger, annoyance, violent language, and cursing. In the case of 3 students who were determined to have severe aggressive tendencies, aggression reduction was high. Reduction of negative and aggressive tendencies can be seen as a positive mind formation result.

In conclusion, during the 12 days of camp, the result of qualitative research through observation and interviews showed formation of positive mind in all 10 students and increase in self-esteem.

Records of observations were organized by individual, by situation and by date. These, along with the students' personal testimonies and three additional questionnaires were collected as data for the research results. The change in self-esteem according to the data from before and after camp is divided into the following five categories. (The change in each individual's self-esteem is organized jointly.)

- a. Change in negative and aggressive dispositions by individual
- b. Change shown in reflections after camp (additional questionnaire)
- c. Change shown in thoughts on how one should live after camp (additional questionnaire)
- d. Change shown in personal testimony about meditation (additional questionnaire)
- e. Change in self-esteem organized jointly

Four of the categories above (a. through e.) are expanded upon in the following.

a. Change in negative and aggressive dispositions by individual

Negative and aggressive dispositions before meditation, content from observation and interviews, reduction in negative and aggressive dispositions are divided into three categories and organized as follows:

- 5 students (Jung Kyung, Shim Sung, Kim Hyung, Sung Hyun, Lee Won) were shown to have thrown away minds of anger, annoyance, and impulsive bursts of anger. Additionally, their expressions (appearance) grew more gentle.
- 3 students (Yoon Soo, Park Joon, Lee Seung) who had aggressive expressions, cursed, were angry, and used negative and aggressive expressions at the beginning of camp showed a large reduction in negative and aggressive dispositions.
- 2 students (Jang San, Ha Hoo) did not show particular negative or aggressive dispositions.
- In conclusion, 8 of 10 students, to varying degrees, showed a decrease in anger, annoyance, negative language and aggressive dispositions. In particular, 3 students who were determined to have severe aggressive dispositions showed a decrease in aggressiveness, which can be explained as positive mind formation. Accordingly, this can be seen as an improvement in self-esteem.

b. Change shown in reflections after camp (additional questionnaire)

Through an additional questionnaire, students reflected on camp by answering questions about good points after camp, minds that were thrown away, minds that were not able to be thrown away. These are divided into the three categories below:

- Regarding the good points after camp, all 10 students demonstrated an improvement in personal relationships, a more peaceful mind, and gratitude. These results show a formation of a positive mind.
- 6 students (Jung Kyung, Shim Sung, Yoon Soo, Park Joon, Lee Seung) showed results of having thrown away negative dispositions related to anger, annoyance, jealousy, arrogance, rebellion, and emotion.
- Regarding minds that were not able to be thrown away: Shim Soon answered money and greed; Kim Hyung answered pride and worries; Park Joon wrote laziness and worries; Ha Hoo and Sung Hyun said friends; Jang San said comics; Shim Sung and Yoon Soo answered girls and love.

Analyzing the answers for minds that were thrown away versus those that were unable to be thrown away, the results of Maum Meditation are clearly divided into minds thrown away and those that were not. Although there are minds left that were not thrown away, the good points after camp and the answers written for minds that were thrown away show that all 10 students experienced a formation of positive mind and an improvement in self-esteem.

- c. Change shown in thoughts on how one should live after camp
(additional questionnaire)

The answers to how one should live after camp were divided into the 2 areas of inside the home and outside the home (at school, etc.). All 10 students answered that inside and outside the home they should be thankful and respectful towards their parents and teachers, to respect others, understand others, find their true mind, treat their friends well, seek internal change, etc., showing a positive mind formation and improvement in self-esteem.

d. Change shown in personal testimony about meditation (additional questionnaire)

Students were asked towards the end of camp to write about their experience with Maum Meditation. Their answers are summarized and organized as follows.

- Yoon Soo (Middle School, 2nd year) had a history of violence in school and long-term nonattendance. He answered, “After camp, “I learned about the principles of the universe (the origin) and the will of nature. (Maum Meditation) is a faultless, complete education.” The extent to which he wrote in his answer shows a sincere attitude regarding human duty. “If everyone in the world enlightened (through Maum Meditation), the world would not have crime and would not need the police.” These thoughts expressed the need for Maum Meditation in ethics education.
- Lee Seung (Middle School, 1st year) got angry and swore during camp. Because of fights with this mother and

friends, he was naturally made an outcast. He even took sleeping pills and went to sleep praying he wouldn't wake up in the morning. After camp, he said "I would always fight with my mom, but now I understand why she would swear at me and hit me. I always hurt others with my words. I was sarcastic and disrespectful to my elders." His answers showed deep self-reflection and he added "I am sorry to my parents. I am thankful to my parents."

- Park Joon (Middle school, 1st year) did not like studying, liked playing around, and smoked cigarettes. In his thoughts on camp, he wrote honestly "Meditating was irritating and boring and made me angry. But as I threw away (false) minds things started to change for the positive and stress disappeared."
- Jung Kyung (High school, 2nd year) wrote that his faults were fixed and that he became more joyful.
- Shim Sung (Middle school, 3rd year) came to camp at his parents urging, but wrote that his annoyance and aversion disappeared and he changed to become more positive.
- Jang San (Middle school, 2nd year) wrote he became more peaceful and free and that he wished to recommend Maum Meditation to people who are troubled.
- Ha Hoo (Middle school, 1st year) wrote he feels happy, that he should live as the body and mind of the universe, and that he wishes to suggest Maum Meditation to his friends.

- Sung Hyun (Middle school, 1st year) answered his personal relationships improved and that he is thankful to his parents and the Maum Meditation method.
- Lee Won (Middle school, 1st year) wrote he didn't want to come at first but after he threw away his mind, he became more positive.
- Amongst the subject students, 5 students (Shim Sung, Kim Hyung, Park Joon, Ha Hoo, Lee Won) wrote that they didn't want to come to camp but after coming they enjoyed it (examples of what they wrote include: I need to live as the body and mind of the universe, positive change in life; disappearance of feelings of laziness and dislike, etc.). 9 out of students experienced self-reflection, establishment of identity, gratitude etc., indicating formation of a positive mind.

In conclusion, in the students' accounts of their experiences with camp, all 10 students experienced gratitude, peace of mind, positive change, establishment of identity, self-reflection, feeling happy, discovery of true mind, throwing away laziness and dislike, fixing personal flaws, etc., leading to positive mind formation and improvement in self-esteem.

e. Change in self-esteem organized jointly

The four categories above (a. through d.) were organized as evidence to show change in self-esteem. The individual changes in self-esteem, from observations, interviews, personal testimonies (additional questionnaires) are organized jointly as follows.

- Among the 5 students who displayed a timid and passive personality and showed a lack of confidence (Jung Kyung, Kim Hyung, Jang San, Ha Hoo, Lee Won), 4 students (excepting Lee Won) exhibited a more active and confident personality after camp.
- Regarding friendships and interpersonal relationships, among the 10 students, 9 (excepting Lee Won) showed improvement in the areas of excessive computer game usage, inappropriate physical interaction, group sports, conversation. Lee Won showed average behavior in play and conversation, thus did not display any particular improvement in interpersonal relationships.
- Regarding change in negative and aggressive dispositions (displayed by anger, violent language, cursing, etc.), Jung Kyung Shim Sung, Kim Hyung, Lee Won showed a reduction in such dispositions. 3 students (Yoon Soo, Park Joon, Lee Sung) who were determined to have severe negative and violent tendencies also showed a reduction. 2 students (Jang San, Han Hoo) did not display any significant dispositions in this area.
- Regarding a formation of gratitude, 7 students (Shim Sung, Kim Hyung, Jang San, Yoon Soo, Park Joon, Sung Hyun, Lee Seung), developed gratitude towards their parents and experienced self-reflection through camp.

The joint summary above shows that through Maum Meditation, all 10 students

formed positive minds through development of gratitude, improved interpersonal relationships, peace of mind, establishment of identity, throwing away sense of inferiority, self-reflection, development of self-confidence, etc. 8 of 10 students showed positive mind formation through reduction of negative and aggressive tendencies (exhibited by anger, annoyance, cursing). Accordingly, the results show that all 10 research subjects experienced improvement in self-esteem.

2) Survey Research Results

A. Self-esteem Research Tool

The method to measure self-worth developed by Coopersmith(1981) and translated by Jun Gyu-hyuk(1999) was used. The coefficient of reliability in the increase in self-esteem in this research is Chronbach's Alpha = .917

B. Data Collection and Data Analysis

The data collected was analyzed using the SPSS WIN 12.0 Program. The variables

analysis method is as follows:

- For statistical purposes, the number of students was represented by percentages.
- To represent the change in self-esteem before and after Maum Meditation the average, standard, and wilcoxon signed ranks test were used.

C. Research Results⁶

⁶A research paper by Lee Seok-ki titled "The Effects of the Maum Meditation Youth Camp on Self-esteem and Aggressiveness in Middle and High School Students was published in the 2010 Publication of the Spring Symposium of the Journal of Human Completion. In this paper, on page 34 of the

Examination of the change in self-esteem before and after the Maum Meditation program showed a score of 72.9 points before camp and a score of 80.6 points after, resulting in a statistical increase ($p=.014$). The change in self-esteem is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Change in Self-esteem Before and After the Maum Meditation Program

Variable	Before Camp	After Camp	z	p
	Average +	Average +		
	Standard Deviation	Standard Deviation		
Self-Esteem	72.9±11.53	80.6±8.62	-2.451	.014

Explanation of Survey Questionnaire Results

- Of the 25 questions in the survey questionnaires, 23 questions showed a positive increase in self-esteem scores, while 2 showed a decrease.
- Of the 25 questions, 7 questions (numbers 5, 10, 11, 12, 23, 24, 25) showed an increase in 5 points or more.

D. Results of Investigation

The qualitative research from observations and interviews and the qualitative research survey results from questionnaires during the implementation of the Maum Meditation program are synthesized as follows.

First, among the 5 students who displayed timid and passive personalities as well as lack of confidence, 4 showed an increase in confidence and a more proactive personality after camp.

publication, it was reported that the self-esteem survey showed no statistically significant results. There was an error at the time of data input, however, and a recalculation concluded statistically significant results.

Second, 9 out of 10 students showed an improvement in making friendships and interpersonal relationships.

Third, 5 students reduced negative and aggressive dispositions (displayed through anger, violent language, cursing) and 3 with high negative and aggressive dispositions showed a high reduction in such attributes. The remaining 2 students did not exhibit particular negative or aggressive dispositions.

Fourth, 7 out of 10 students developed gratitude to their parents, leading to an opportunity for self-reflection.

Fifth, 5 out of 10 students did not want to come to camp but displayed positive changes after the program. They said they should live as the body and mind of the universe, that they experienced positive change in their lives, including disappearance of laziness or dislike.

To summarize the observations, interviews and the results of qualitative research, all 10 students experienced gratitude, improvement in interpersonal relationships, peace of mind, establishment of identity, throwing away of sense of inferiority, self-reflection, improvement in self-confidence, all indicating positive mind formation. Additionally, 8 out of 10 students reduced negative and aggressive dispositions (displayed through anger, annoyance, cursing etc.), indicating positive mind formation. Accordingly, the influence on self-esteem was meaningful for all 10 students. Analysis of the survey questionnaires shows an increase in self-esteem scores from 72.9 points before camp to 80.6 points after camp. This displays a statistically significant impact on the subjects' self-esteem.

It can be concluded that, from the results of research through observation, interview, and questionnaires, the Maum Meditation program has a meaningful impact on middle and high school students' self-esteem.

E. Discussion

At a time when schools are realizing the importance of self-esteem in the area of ethics education, this research investigated the effectiveness of the Maum Meditation program on improving students' self-esteem.

This research took place at the Maum Meditation Youth Camp from January 1 to January 16 (11 nights, 12 days). For purposes of meditation and sleeping arrangements, students were grouped by "rooms," with 10 to 20 students per room. Therefore, the 10 middle and high school students assigned to the researcher's room were chosen as the subject students for the research. Through observations of behavior and change, interviews, the data was objectively recorded. Examination of the observation record journals show detailed records of even the smallest situations. Observation and interviews were executed as part of qualitative research with an emphasis on objectivity.

From observation and interviews at the Maum Meditation Youth Camp, 8 out of 10 students honestly answered the minds they could not throw away included money, greed, pride, worry, laziness, relationships with friends and family, comics, girls, love, etc. Examining the minds the students could not throw away shows that that the meditation results in a clear distinction between minds that were thrown away and those that were not. Accordingly, if the Maum Meditation program was continued, the minds that could not be thrown away would eventually be discarded.

Although there was a difference in degree, all 10 students experienced positive mind formation through improvement in gratitude, interpersonal relationships, peace of mind, establishment of identity, throwing away sense of inferiority, self-reflection, increase in self-confidence. 8 out of 10 students, to varying degrees, experienced a reduction in negative and aggressive dispositions (expressed through anger, annoyance, violent

language, cursing) and 3 students determined to have high levels of negative and aggressive dispositions experienced a high level of decrease. Reduction of negative and aggressive dispositions can be seen as a result of positive mind formation. All 10 students experienced positive mind formation and accordingly experienced improvement in self-esteem

Qualitative research was executed simultaneously with quantitative research through survey questionnaires. Analysis of the surveys shows an increase in self-esteem scores from 72.9 points before camp to 80.6 points after, statistically showing the meditation program's impact on self-esteem. Quantitative research from surveys from a group of newcomer students from the July 2009 Maum Meditation Youth Camp (Kim Mi-han) and the self-esteem improvement tool by Coopersmith (1981) translated by Jun Gyu-hyuk were also used.

In conclusion, the results of research from observations, interviews, and surveys during the Maum Meditation Youth camp show that all 10 middle and high school students experienced positive mind formation and an improvement in self-esteem.

In accordance with the research by Kim Mi-han (2009) of 476 elementary, middle and high school students participating in the July 2009 Maum Meditation Youth Camp as well as other research of the application of Maum Meditation programs, this study showed that the students participating in Maum Meditation experienced an improvement in their self-esteem. The results show the value of implementing the Maum Meditation program in order to improve self-esteem in students.

After having completed the 25 day long camp for newcomers, returning students participated in the Maum Meditation Youth Camp for 12 days. Through camp, students were able to subtract negative minds through the method to subtract the false mind. The change in participating students showed surprising results. Education is

admission-centered education and has no understanding of what true mind or original nature is. It promotes a self-centered ethic which creates fixed notions and habits. Coming from this academic background students were able to break fixed notions and habits and recover the true mind from within through the method of subtraction. Through this research, the potential for recovery of original character, the ultimate goal for humanity, as well a direction for holistic education was discovered.

The Maum Meditation program enabled middle and high school students to discover their true minds. Additionally, from the investigation of participating students, the program enabled students to experience positive mind formation and had a significant influence in improving self-esteem. Accordingly, this program should be considered as an alternative to ethics education for youth in middle and high school.

The limitations of this research are as follows. First, because only a small test group, 10 students, was investigated, this research may not be applicable to all groups. Further research with more participating students is necessary. Second, because there is the possibility of subjective opinion when recording and organizing records from observations and interviews, there is a limit to the objectivity of this research.

V. Conclusion and Recommendations

1. Conclusion

The cases of students leaving school, misconduct, violence and suicide caused by low self-esteem are rising. Consideration of this reality demands an alternative to ethics education which improves self-esteem.

The human mind is a negative mind. It is self-centered. It only knows itself, and thus everything other than its mind is negative. Everything it thinks is right and everything other than that is wrong. The human mind is negative. It cannot accept

and insists only it is right. One without the mind of self, that is to say, one who has the mind of the universe, has a positive mind. Everyone in the world thinks they live well because they are qualified to, and they cannot acknowledge and accept others because they do not have the positive universe mind. If everyone changes from negative to positive, everyone will live better than before (Woo Myung, 2008).

Maum Meditation leads by example. It does not enforce change by saying respect others, love, don't do wrong deeds. Maum Meditation provides the meditation method of subtraction to throw away the false mind, the human mind, the negative mind recorded as "the remembered thoughts of one's life" throughout one's life. By subtracting, one recovers one's original true mind and makes recovery of one's original character possible.

During the short 12 days of the Maum Meditation Youth Camp, the students were able to throw away the negative, false mind. Through discarding, all 10 participating students experienced gratitude, self-reflection, reduction in negative dispositions, establishment of identity; the positive change was visible. Confirming the results of previous research investigating the effects of Maum Meditation, this research showed the Maum Meditation program to have significant influence in improving students' self-esteem. The results showed that this program is a suitable addition to ethics education.

Observation of students from across Korea meeting each other for the first time and living together for 12 days in one dormitory room, being able to play and laugh with one another was a good example of how students could have a happy adolescence through improvement of self-esteem and mental health. It is predicted that the Maum Meditation program will soon be an alternative to ethics education in Korean elementary, middle, and high schools.

2. Recommendations

These days, ethics education and programs related to mental wellness are being put in place. In order to improve students' character and guide students to adulthood, effort and diverse programs and policies are being implemented. However, correctly guiding students and promoting upright and truthful change is no easy task.

It appears now is the time to take an interest in Maum Meditation which, as opposed to other meditation programs in ethics education, cleanses the recorded memories from one's life stored in one's mind. If all of one's self-centered memories are erased, then one can naturally adapt to the other, accept everything as is, and live as the wide and large, the clean and original mind, the true mind, the original character.

If one lived until now adding and storing memories in one's mind, now is the time to throw away the "remembered thoughts of one's life," the false mind through the method of subtraction. An ethics education program which allows one to recover one's original true mind and recover one's original character is wholly lacking throughout the world.

In Korea, Ilsan School has implemented a memory-cleansing meditation through Maum Meditation. The results show that elementary school students and younger students are better able to practice the memory discarding meditation, and that change is quick regarding human nature. In a similar vein, research into the application of Maum Meditation in schools continues to be produced, as well as examples of the application in the media, universities, hospitals, companies, and other organizations.

It is desirable that Maum Meditation be introduced and practiced in schools as an alternative to ethics education because it contributes to the transformation of students' character and makes it possible to recover human nature. Lastly, it is suggested that the government and related organizations support and introduce this program in order

for schools to employ it as a regular program in their curriculum.

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[Appendix]

Self-Esteem Inventory (Survey Questionnaire)

Number	Question	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)
1	I have confidence in the things I do.				
2	I think of myself with pride.				
3	I do not worry about anything, no matter the situation.				
4	*I think there are a lot of things to fix about myself.				
5	I am not easily hurt.				
6	I am happy.				
7	I do my best in the things I can do.				
8	I do not surrender easily.				
9	I always pay attention to the things I do.				
10	I understand myself.				
11	I am rarely scolded.				
12	I stick to my decisions once I make them.				
13	I like that I am a boy (girl).				

14	My parents understand me.				
15	All of my family members understand me.				
16	I like it when my name is called in class.				
17	I always speak when I have something to say.				
18	I am popular with my friends.				
19	I think my teacher likes me.				
20	My friends easily follow my opinion.				
21	*I am often outcast at school.				
22	I am as important as the other children at school.				
23	I think I do well in school.				
24	I easily become familiar with new things.				
25	*I am embarrassed when speaking in front of people.				

Self-Esteem Inventory: Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (1981) translated by Jun

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